



YEARS **in**
HIS SERVICE

**TRANSFORMING LIVES,
CHANGING COMMUNITIES.**



**TRANSFORMING LIVES,
CHANGING COMMUNITIES.
50 YEARS IN HIS SERVICE.**

Compiled and edited by

Santosh Gnanakan
Edmond Vanderpuye
George Marriott

with a foreword by Mel Newth

Transforming lives, Changing communities. 50 years in His service.

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Compiled and edited by Santosh Gnanakan, Edmond Vanderpuye
and George Marriott

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BEYOND THE NUMBER: THE SPIRITUAL ESSENCE OF A JUBILEE

Jubilee is a common term for a 50-year anniversary. But it's so much more.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, God designated every 50th year a jubilee, at which time slaves were released from bondage, seized property was returned to its original owners, and farmland would lie fallow to restore the soil. The jubilee was a time of restoration, equality, and social justice, revealing God's heart for the redemption of His creation.

In the New Testament, the concept of Jubilee is expressed through the teachings of Christ, which focused on proclaiming freedom, forgiveness, and restoration. His kingdom ministry emphasised the release from spiritual bondage, liberation from sin, and the restoration of our relationship with God through grace and love.

Looking back on our first 50 years, we can paint a joyful picture of our daily mission in the words of Isaiah, which Jesus read aloud from the scrolls in Luke 4.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

As you journey through the pages that follow, we pray that you will see how God has been at work, and how you are also painted into the jubilee picture of International Needs.



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Reviewers

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Shona Dimock (New Zealand)

Nicanor Tamang (Nepal)

Walter Pimpong (Ghana)

Justus Miwanda (Uganda)

Euan Menzies (United Kingdom)

Geoff Weinstein (Canada)

TRANSFORMING LIVES, CHANGING COMMUNITIES. 50 YEARS IN HIS SERVICE.

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50 YEARS IN:

IN PARTNERSHIP IN SPIRIT IN SERVICE IN ALL THE EARTH

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FOREWORD

There is nothing more captivating than reading about the Church in action as it shares with men, women, boys, and girls the love of God and His redeeming/transforming power across the world. That is why I could not put down *Transforming Lives, Changing Communities* because of its thrilling recounting of International Needs 50 years of doing just that. I hope it enralls, enlightens, and inspires you as much as it has me! Having had the privilege of serving with International Needs for 36 years, I can vouch for the authenticity of this account and know from firsthand experience that God has blessed the International Needs ministry in phenomenal ways.

The recounting of Ray & Lorna Harrison's call of God to start International Needs and their obedience to do so – even though it represented a somewhat radical new wave of doing mission – is a clarion call, I believe, to all of us to keep up the good work and to 'Do Something' as Ray was oft to say.

The multitude of personal testimonies and stories throughout these pages touched me deeply and lifted my spirit because it shows that Jesus Christ is still in the business of transforming lives, despite the ravaged and dark world we are faced with each day. Yet he chooses to use ordinary people like you and me to help make it happen.

As I reflect on these 50 years, two experiences come to mind. Meeting around the Lord's table in the local church in Adidome, Ghana and feeling 'this must be what heaven is going to be like' as the congregation sang and was enriched by the more than 300 freed Fetish slave women's voices singing their praises and thanks to God. Then standing in a remote community in Nepal as the taps were turned on for the first time and one of the women – who used to spend 6 hours a day carrying in water from a distant stream – saying 'it is like heaven in our village now'.

This book is beautifully written, is easy to read and follow, and is so uplifting. Yet it also is straight forward about the state of our world, the terrible conditions that most of our fellow men and women face each day, and the opportunity to do more. This is so sobering. The amazing impact of International Needs over these 50 years is apparent in these pages and I hope will be an encouragement to all who have been a part of this journey – prayer partners, donors, staff from both lead and support partners, volunteers, and friends.

For those of us who were there at the beginning, celebrating IN's 50th Jubilee is a time to be filled with wonder, to praise God who has made it all possible, and to salute the thousands of dedicated and faithful 'servants' who said, 'yes', 'use me', 'send me'.

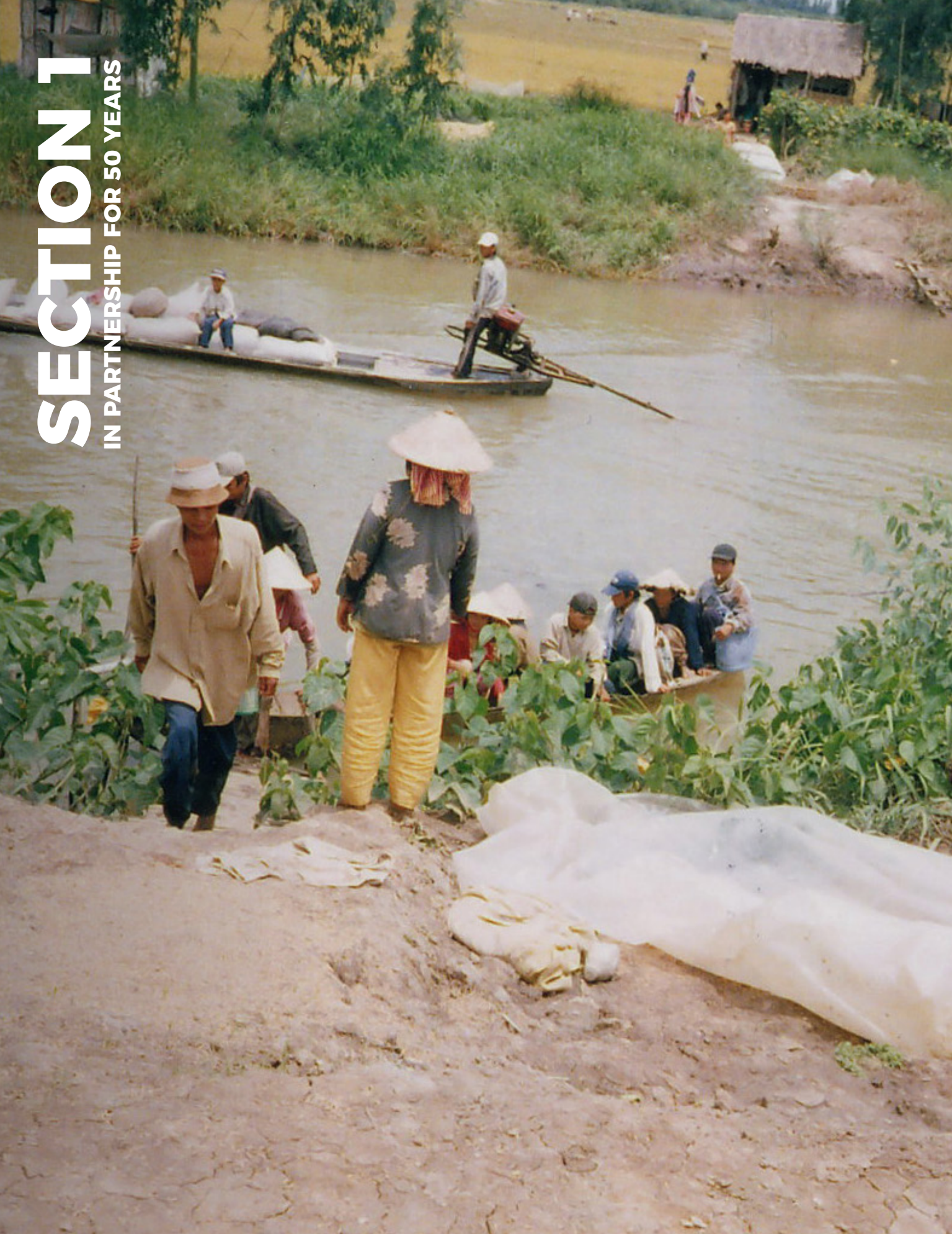
Transforming Lives, Changing Communities – what a noble enterprise for us to join with.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Mel Newth
President, International Needs [1988-2008]
Kelowna, BC, Canada
February 2024

SECTION 1

IN PARTNERSHIP FOR 50 YEARS



PROLOGUE

DAWN OVER AN ASIAN RIVER, 1974

They come down to the river before the dawn to avoid being seen. They carry baskets of precious but dangerous cargo, and they know what they're about to do brings great risk of arrest – or worse – to themselves and their families. Together they pray to Jesus Christ in the faith that carries grave risks in their nation, under their authoritarian regime.

Then they crouch, open their baskets and begin placing small, flat plastic bags into the river's flow. For a moment, full of hope, they watch as the river carries their cargo away, towards the crowded city downstream. Before these believers disappear again into the rising day, they pray that by God's will and action, their little plastic pouches will be found and opened – and that what is inside will change the lives of its finders, forever.

PRESENT DAY

Decades later, it is time to look back and see how their prayers were answered. The contents of those plastic bags were small and humble, but they were foundational to a half-century of ministry that has encompassed the world.

This is the Jubilee of International Needs: the 50th Anniversary of a unique ministry partnership founded in 1974 by a wonderful man, a legend in heaven I am sure: Ray Harrison – known as Uncle Ray to so many.

It is my great delight to invite you to join me on a pleasant, often exciting and at times perilous stroll through our first 50 years. As your guide, let me introduce myself. I am Edmond Vanderpuye from Ghana. It is my joy and privilege to be the General Secretary of this remarkable organisation.

In time, I look forward to revealing to you what was in those small plastic bags, and why they

needed to be placed into a river, in such secrecy. That comes later, when we look forward to where the river of our ministry may take us, within the will of God, into our future. For now, let this scene of believers by the river be for you a portrait of Ray, our pioneers, worldwide partners, donors, workers, and prayer supporters, all with a driving urge to “Do Something” for God and for people – to cast the bread that is in our hands upon the waters, relying on God's promise that in time it will yield a great return. Over the last 50 years, starting with a handful of Ray's associates, many thousands have joined him in placing their bread, their gifting and call into this river, not knowing where its course may take them. As you will see, untold numbers of people have been able to draw important things from this river, be it material blessings, help in troubled times, meaning and purpose for their lives, and most importantly, an eternal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

I am one of those people who have drawn much from this river. I joined International Needs at the age of 19 and I have been with the organisation for more than half my life. In fact, we are both the same age. International Needs was born in 1974. So was I! I am very curious to see how the course of my own life has reflected the flow of International Needs first half century. So please, come and celebrate with me our Jubilee year, as International Needs turns 50. Let's go and **Do Something..**

Throughout this book you will be seeing small boxes like this, separate from the main body of the text. I offer them to you simply as inspiring and encouraging vignettes and testimonies, from the ongoing story of God at work through faithful men and women over the past 50 years.

A TRANSFORMATIVE IDEA: LOCALS TAKE THE LEAD

50 YEARS IN, International Needs has become a well-established global network of partners operating in over 30 countries on six continents. For half a century we have been working at the key intersection of the physical and the spiritual. That is to say, there is a very practical aspect to our work, in which we focus on the physical and material needs of human beings and their communities. Behind that, above it, below it and all around it is our profound focus on showing God's love and compassion. For us, God's heavenly Kingdom permeates everything on earth. God's Word and divine inspiration is at the core of everything we do. With all our heart we try to be like Jesus: living out our faith in love, asking nothing in return, serving people regardless of their own beliefs, and always ready to share the Good News.

This work, this model, this identity, is summed up in the four words that we now use to identify ourselves and our mission: **Transformed Lives, Changed Communities**

This is not the first identity statement International Needs created, and as we continue to adapt to the world's physical and spiritual needs, I'm sure it will change again. In the years we have used it though, this statement has been a source of much meditation, encouragement and inspiration for me.

The more I reflect on *Transformed Lives, Changed Communities*, the more it resonates with its absolute commitment to innovation. Transforming. Changing. Not looking back, always

going forward in new ways that constantly take us closer to our goals. We have always been fresh and new – and we began life as an organisation with a very innovative idea for its time: **The best people to build the Kingdom of God in each country are the people of that country.**

On the cover of our first brochure, we expressed our motivating idea like this: **International Needs is a partnership of Christians helping one another serve God in their own countries.**

Today it may be hard to grasp how fresh this thinking was, but for centuries the missionary-sending model had held sway – itself an innovative idea when it first began. Missionaries, driven by a deep and sincere call, travelled into new places and cultures, knowing very little about the people and their ways. With a great deal of effort, often in the face of great resistance, persecution, and hostility, they slowly built relationships and shared the Gospel with those who were open to outsiders. They required enormous resources and generosity from donors at home. It took years to learn languages and local customs – and it was often challenging to distinguish the true nature of God's Kingdom because of their own cultural identities and biases.

By the 1960s, it was becoming apparent that missionaries from afar were requiring very high levels of financial support, while facing onerous government-imposed entry restrictions. Missionaries from overseas were becoming limited in what they could realistically achieve. The missionaries' home churches struggled to encourage and support them. There was a clear need for a new approach.

This was the beginning of an ongoing decline of the missionary era in the part of the world known as the '10/40 window', from nations such as Egypt and Sri Lanka at 10 degrees north of the equator to the likes of Tibet and the '...stans' at 40 degrees north. The Resistant Belt, it was called. This band around the earth's waist encompasses the heart of Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian cultures. It is often hot and hostile, while also known for hard-to-learn local languages... yet something must be done to reach this region, because 90% of people untouched by the Christian faith live there - and 90% of missionaries do not.

He saw that he could not in good conscience only preach the Gospel – he had to *Do Something* for those who were vulnerable to such extreme poverty and physical suffering.

Ray Harrison was seeing this for himself, right outside his front door, for in the mid-1960s he moved with his wife Lorna and their children to New Delhi, India, where Ray served as Vice President of Youth for Christ (YFC) in South Asia. In that role he was confronted with huge humanitarian needs across the sub-continent. He saw that he could not in good conscience only preach the Gospel – he had to ***Do Something*** for those who were vulnerable to such extreme poverty and physical suffering.

Many have responded that way to human suffering, which is why there are so many aid and development agencies in the world today with their roots deep in Christian mission. Ray saw something more though, perhaps because of his very successful background in business management: he saw that it was very expensive for financial donors to support missionaries and their families. The foreign missionary model was

not offering a fruitful return on investment of both human and financial capital.

While the use of indigenous evangelists and church planters has changed the global landscape of missions, there will always be a place for those called to minister in a strange land. One foreign evangelist supported by International Needs wrote to Ray about how hard it was to work as a missionary in Asia, facing danger, enormous challenges in health, and struggling to be understood by the locals. Even so, he told Ray, "I would rather die here, doing God's will and with his people, than live anywhere else."

Ray Harrison realised that the cost of sending one missionary family could support 50 or more indigenous church planters. Local leaders have learned how to live within the local budget. They can also be far more fruitful than foreigners: often fluent in multiple languages, they speak the heart language of the locals. They know the customs and culture, they have lifelong networks of family and friends, and they have grown up with the street wisdom to navigate heavy regulations, capricious authorities and outright persecution and hostility towards Christians.

Ray Harrison's breakthrough vision was to share the Gospel by partnering with local Christian nationals around the world. How normal and right this approach seems today, and it is now widely accepted as the best way to reach the world with the message of Jesus Christ. Yet in the late 1960s this concept of letting locals take the lead made International Needs a pioneer in the missions arena. Our origin story really is revolutionary – and truly transformative.



In Ray's own words (and to help you keep track, I will put all Ray's words in italics, because he is a major voice in this book), he had this to say about International Need's founding concept: *"More and more, I thank God for showing me that this is His plan. The nationals with whom we work around the world are the heroes of the faith, but they don't know it. They're the ones who risk their lives and their freedom and endure hardness and live often in poverty, but they are also the ones who reach the millions in their part of the world, and we have the privilege of helping and standing with them. As I share this with friends, I find them saying 'This is a new day in missions'. As I re-read the book of Acts, I wonder whether it really is. I think we're finally just getting back to where it all started! Paul never stayed more than a few years in one place, and often only weeks or months. He kept going back for visits and prayed and agonised over the churches he'd established, wrote frequent letters to them and sent others to see how they were doing, but basically he, as soon as possible, put local leaders in charge and moved on."*

In a country hostile to Christianity, a young man became a believer when he saw what happened at his sister's deathbed. A Christian came to the house, prayed for the dying girl and she was instantly healed. The young man accepted the Lord, as did his sister and their mother. All hell literally broke loose because of their conversion. They were persecuted by the siblings' father, their relatives and neighbours. They were taken to the police and beaten up. They were tortured and cast out from the community. To drive them away forever, the father will have nowhere to stay, but we don't fear. God will provide everything we need, if we trust Him." He became an evangelist with International Needs.

INTERNATIONAL NEEDS NOW

From a small group of Ray's friends, International Needs grew slowly through the 1970s in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. The partnership model was broadly this: believers in "support countries" like New Zealand, Australia, Canada, USA and the UK contributed funds to support local leaders in the "frontline countries", where the missions and ministry activity was happening. For donors it really was an exciting opportunity to be involved in breath-taking work and breakthroughs that seemed like new chapters for the book of Acts, as local evangelists and church planters were unleashed into outreach they would never have been able to afford on their own.

Towards the end of the 1970s, African connections were established, which expanded to several countries on the continent in the 1980s. Then came a major global upheaval – the fall of communism in the 1990s. This led to new freedom to share the Gospel in Central and Eastern Europe. Previously closed countries opened up to revival, which led to a wave of expansion for International Needs and very exciting times for our donors and supporters.

At the same time, this growth phase naturally produced some growing pains and adolescent awkwardness. People who are gifted in ministry are not necessarily so gifted in administration or inter-partner communication. In these teenage years for our ministry, there was a lot of action, but not so much co-ordination. Wisdom and maturity grew, and an interesting change occurred in the partnership model. Where there had been a fairly clear division between support and frontline countries, we started to see a move

towards self-sufficiency, or at least a commitment by country teams to contribute towards their own needs, and also the sharing of resources among the partnership.

Ray Harrison quoted Psalm 18 – *He makes my feet like a deer's to stand on the heights.*
"Some Nepali International Needs workers take that literally - travelling across the mountains to spread the good news."

There was also a change in the way the countries in the partnership ministered to each other. In our first quarter century, there had been many exchanges of people between countries in the IN family. Teams from the support countries would visit the frontline countries to preach, teach, provide volunteer labour, participate in outreach, and encourage the local leaders, as well as visiting humanitarian projects, and child sponsors would visit the families they were supporting. In return, leaders and cultural groups from the frontline nations would come to the support nations to encourage and motivate donors. These ministry connections were much loved and cherished. The last 50 years have been a challenging time for the Christian faith in the West, in the face of post-modern materialism and consumerism. The countries that once sent people to the mission field now need spiritual support and encouragement from the countries they are supporting financially. Deputations from the support countries brought an amazing impact into the Western church.

A beautiful exchange has taken place. It is like the Apostle Paul in his (quite firm and forthright) fundraising among the Gentiles for the poor in Jerusalem. "For if the Gentiles have come to share

in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.” In a similar way, wonderful visits and testimonies of transformed lives and changed communities in the frontline countries have continually refreshed the spirits of International Needs donors, sponsors and supporters in the support countries.

In the central part of this book – Transformations, Trials, and Testimonies – you will see the vivid and powerful interplay of our partner countries, but because the lines between our support nations and our frontline nations are no longer as clearly defined as they once were, I offer you this list of our lovingly interwoven family partnership of nations.

Australia	Kenya
Bangladesh	Myanmar
Bougainville	Nepal
Bulgaria	Netherlands
Burkina Faso	New Zealand
Cambodia	Papua New Guinea
Canada	Philippines
Colombia	Romania
Czech Republic	Slovakia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sri Lanka
Dominican Republic	Switzerland
Egypt	Türkiye
Ethiopia	Uganda
Fiji	United Kingdom
Ghana	United States
Guatemala	Vietnam
	Zambia

The new century has seen increasingly sophisticated and fruitful growth and expansion in the International Needs network. With around 1,200 staff members in more than 30 countries, we have the privilege and purpose of touching over 10,000 lives each week.

We are a formal federation of autonomous partners, united by shared purpose and a covenant of partnership. An International Congress of delegates from our partner countries sets overall strategy and elects our Executive Committee, who shepherd the partnership strategically between the biennial meetings of the Congress. As I said, I am currently the General Secretary - the first, in fact, after a series of Presidents. The IN partners decided that General Secretary fits us better than President, because our partnership strives to operate in a truly congressional and collegial spirit. I am based in Ghana, from where I lead the Global Office that co-ordinates and supports all our partners.





Together, by God's grace and favour, we have become a well-established and effective global humanitarian development organisation, yet we remain committed to the single focus that gave us birth in 1974: introducing men, women, boys, and girls to Jesus Christ.

As interconnected yet autonomous partners, we have a flat structure, allowing us to act and respond in the moment as a new need arises. We aim to be like the mustard tree Jesus used to describe the embracing nature of the Kingdom of God, where all can thrive – and the Baobab tree, where some vital parts are unseen, but all contribute to a sustainable and thriving environment, according to their gifts and calling.

50 years on, our strategic foundation remains the same: our transformative model of partners

supporting gifted national leaders and teams operating as embedded indigenous workers. They have the great advantage of knowing the local language and culture, so strong, trusting relationships are built quickly and firmly. They live as their peers do, so they are invited into places that outsiders will never see. They are passionate for their people. Whether through excellence in humanitarian solutions, or the saving truth of Jesus Christ shared with love and humility, the people of International Needs continue to bring a compelling message of hope for the future.

We want people to know both the saving grace of Jesus and also His compassion – so we will not stand by while people struggle. Our desire is to see people thrive – spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially.

SIX WAYS OF WORKING

The work of International Needs was about Christian witness, of course, but right from the start the ministry focus was holistic, expressed as Evangelism, Discipleship, and Compassionate Care. Ray Harrison realised you cannot give a starving child just a Bible, they also need food, shelter, and education. How can we in good conscience fail to act in the face of poverty, war, disease, and environmental upheaval? It is our God-given duty to respond. We want people to know both the saving grace of Jesus and also His compassion – so we will not stand by while people struggle. Our desire is to see people thrive – spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially.

Throughout our 50 years, certain threads of gold have shone brightly through the braided cord of our partnership:

To those who are sick, we bring healing.

To those who are vulnerable, we offer hope for those who struggle; shelter for the refugee; freedom for the prisoner; and help for widows and orphans.

To the women and girls who bear an unbalanced burden in the world, we bring education, skills, and independence through livelihood.

For the exploited and oppressed, we press for justice.

Our promise is that we come in love and we believe love has the power to transform life for all who suffer.

In all this we see the work of God in six main ways. 1. **Education**; 2. **WASH** (Water, Sanitation

and Hygiene); 3. **Health and Medical Services**; 4. **Advocacy and Social Justice**; 5. **Agriculture and Livelihoods**. Foundational to these is our commitment to: 6. **Church Ministry and Gospel Outreach**. In the coming chapters I will be sharing exciting testimonies and amazing outcomes of these six dimensions in the central section of this book. For now, let me briefly touch on these six ways we work.

1) EDUCATION

Learning is the astonishing gift and powerful force that empowers children and adults to rise above poverty and oppression. Through high-quality education people learn how to make their own way through life. Lack of such education leaves precious people vulnerable to the traps of menial grinding work, exploitation, human trafficking, and crime.

In developing countries, even well-meaning governments lack the resources to educate every child, so families living in poverty face an unsurmountable wall of school fees and education costs. Through 50 years of child sponsorship under our banner of the International Needs Child Assistance Programme (INCAP) our supporters have generously achieved what families and communities sometimes could not do on their own: helping children break the grip of poverty on their lives and go on to achieve great things.

Gertrude teaches Economics and Geography at one of Uganda's most prestigious schools. She heard about nine girls who had qualified for university but could no longer attend because



of the financial catastrophe of the Covid pandemic. Gertrude made it her mission to advocate for these girls, right up to a meeting with the First Lady of Uganda, resulting in financial support for the education of all nine. Gertrude herself had an International Needs sponsor. She knows what doors education can open.

Our commitment to education stems from a simple vision inspired by the story of Peter in the book of Acts: giving a man the chance to rise up and walk. The opportunity to learn is the best way in the world to help a person rise. At International Needs our education programmes have ranged from pre-school, through significant work in primary and secondary education, and even into tertiary education. Sometimes we support students; sometimes teachers and administrators.

In some cases, we support complete platforms for educational opportunities, such as the ACTS Group of Institutions in India. A particular passion of mine and of many in International Needs is education for girls, which drastically reduces the risk of early marriage for a girl - a practice that perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Education is a positive good in itself, but it also provides an excellent platform for presenting the Gospel. Ray Harrison was once in a high school in Korea, speaking with 2,000 boys. He was asked about his homeland, so he was happily telling the boys that New Zealand has more sheep than people. The headmaster sharply rebuked Ray, saying: "Don't talk about that. Talk about Jesus!" So that's what he did. Teachers who really care about the full lives of their students often ask us to talk about Jesus.



2) WASH - WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Nearly a quarter of the way through the 21st century, billions of people still lack these basic essentials of life. No safe drinking water – 2 billion. No fundamental hygiene – 2.3 billion. No safely-managed sanitation – an astounding 3.6 billion.* Close to half the human race is at risk from the diseases, hunger, malnutrition, and poverty that stem from being unable to keep themselves clean and healthy. For 50 years International Needs has been helping communities gain sustainable supplies of safe water and the good health that comes from best practice in sanitation and personal hygiene, by constructing wells, rainwater filtration systems and installing latrines.

**Source – United Nations, 2021 (Note: these figures appear under WASH on the ING website)*

3) HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

We rejoice when God reaches down and miraculously heals a person, and in the upcoming section on Transformations, Trials, and Testimonies, you will read exciting accounts of miraculous healings, as unreached people look to Jesus in desperate need – and yet we know that God also works wonders through the health practitioners, vaccinations, and medications of

high-quality healthcare. For 50 years we have been operating clinics and hospitals for those who cannot afford such care, along with rural health teams offering health and wellness screenings for schools and villages, while also strategically training the medical professionals that communities need as their healthcare infrastructure improves.

If there is a condition or disability that prevents someone, especially a child, from grasping hold of their potential to thrive, we want to help through kindness, compassion and excellent care for everyone in need. Every aspect of healthcare is a tremendous gift from God, and we bring it joyfully as part of our ministry.

4) ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

In my own country, Ghana, I have seen the most amazing example of a social justice breakthrough. Since times unknown, our culture has been afflicted by a dreadful form of sorcery-based child slavery called Trokosi. I have much to share on this later, but the impact of International Needs on Trokosi traditions has literally transformed the lives of generations of children at risk.

We oppose all forms of injustice in God's name and we work to liberate men, women and children from the oppression and discrimination that holds them so cruelly captive. We cannot rest. We will not. Our love for God and people

drive us to denounce evil and exploitation. God detests injustice; people are made in God's image, and God calls us to love our neighbours just as He does. Where people are intimidated, disadvantaged, or disempowered for any reason – race, religion, colour, culture, class, gender, age, or all the other myriad aspects of human identity – we will stand with them to oppose and end their oppression.

5) AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOODS

“And one of you says to him, ‘Goodbye, keep yourself warm and eat well.’ But if you do not give him what he needs, how does that help him?” This admonition in James 2:16 echoes in my spirit, urging me on to make sure people in need are warm, fed and sheltered. The best way to do this is to give them the opportunity to do it for themselves, through a sustainable livelihood. I find it very satisfying to reflect on the vast range of ways people are making a living because of the training, skills, and resources they have received through International Needs. From dressmaking to carpentry, hair styling to construction, from micro-finance for a market stall to livestock management for a large farm that employs numerous people who otherwise would be struggling to survive in poverty - women and men have been empowered with a wide variety of skills. For 50 years we have helped vulnerable people find work, grow food, and earn enough to support themselves and their families – and share their blessings in ways that improve food security and livelihood for their communities.

We do not force our beliefs on anyone who benefits from our work. We simply offer

ourselves as an expression of God's compassion and loving kindness for people and the world.

6) CHURCH MINISTRY AND GOSPEL OUTREACH

Along with all this humanitarian work, we desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ with people who do not know Him. We do not force our beliefs on anyone who benefits from our work. We simply offer ourselves as an expression of God's compassion and loving kindness for people and the world. Many Christian organisations have worked to help in these ways, and they have done very well. What we have seen with other organisations, though, is that many of them decide the humanitarian arm of their work will function better if it separates from ministry activity. We beg to differ. With all our hearts we want to deliver excellence and best practice in Education, Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Healthcare, Medical Services, Advocacy, Social Justice, Agriculture and Livelihoods. We just happen to believe, as we always have, that our active and living Christian faith makes our practical ministries even better. Our faith and actions are woven together in everything we do.

Why has International Needs stayed in this river of passion for God's cause, when the swelling flood of humanitarian need around the world over the last two generations could easily have swept us across to a purely secular current? To find out, let's go back to that one man, Ray Harrison, who was in that group of believers who first put our small, slim offering to God into the river, not knowing where it would flow.

IN GREAT DANGER OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

I have already mentioned Ray Harrison many times, as the pioneer of our innovative missionary model. Ray is very dear to us, so just before we get into the hugely exciting body of our work over the last 50 years, I would like you to gain a deeper sense of this inspiring and dedicated Christian from Wellington, New Zealand. Here are his own words about his life:

“Though my Dad had a good job, we were brought up during the Depression. There must have been a lot of financial struggles, although we were not really conscious of them as children. I was one of ten children, so we had lots of close fellowship. There were so many in a two-bedroom house – the porch, the passageway and the lounge all became bedrooms too. Looking back I don’t know how we managed each night with everybody crowded into the one little dining room around one big table, but at the time we were not especially aware of that. The only embarrassment I remember was when folk came to visit us and knocked on the front door. We had to yell out to them to go around to the back because we had beds across the front door and the passage-way!

“Our parents not only made a warm home for us but we often had visitors and even had missionaries and others to stay. I thank God for Christian parents. My great-grandfather came out from England in the 1880s as a missionary. His oldest son, my father, was a lay preacher. None of that made me a Christian, but it put in great danger of becoming one. My father used to pray for everybody. It was somewhat frustrating as he

usually used to do it during grace before the meal, but we saw his belief in prayer and the power of it. My parents were balanced Christians and encouraged us in a lot of activity, including sport. We spent many happy hours too, up in the hills.

“The first 15 years of my life, as I look back on them, were a learning experience in so many ways. I see many individuals who touched me for eternity. We were taken off to service on Sunday morning, Sunday school on Sunday afternoon and another service in the evening. All my Catholic friends thought I must be a great sinner because I went to mass three times on Sunday. And they were right. The Spirit convicted me that I had gone astray, that I was a sinner, that if I got what I deserved, I would end up far from God. But also, thankfully, when He died on the cross, He died for all. And that included me.

“As a very young man I committed my life to Jesus and I was saved. Although young in the faith and in years, I was invited to testify and even to speak at Crusader activities, and taught how to lead others to the Lord. I’ll never forget the first time I did that, sitting in a hay loft in Nelson (in New Zealand) and saw another life changed by the power of the Gospel. A taste of that changes you forever.

“At this time too we saw a real miracle, which was one of many, with my mother’s health. I well remember being called by my father to say that she had less than a day to live, after an operation of several hours with many doctors in attendance. Suddenly the well-meant expressions of sympathy from my non-Christian friends and work companions meant very little. They were genuine people and doing their best to encourage me but somehow it didn’t help much

to hear ‘while there’s life there’s hope’ or ‘hang in there!’ Many people prayed and God worked a miracle. While we were called again to her death bed several times following that, my mother lived on almost another 40 years, to be a tremendous influence in the lives of all her children, grandchildren and even her great-grandchildren before she finally went home to be with her Lord in her 80s and to join my father in Heaven.

“I have no doubt that from that time I was ready for heaven, but I had not faced up to the challenge of commitment. God took hold of me at a camp many years later. I still remember one of the missionaries preaching: launch out into the deep, telling us to get our feet off the ground and not be just paddling around the edge, but launch out into the middle of God’s will. Another preacher was saying, Do it. Young people, Do It. The Lord really challenged me. At that point I tried as best I could to give Him everything I had in my life. I left my job and spent a week in prayer and fasting, sure that I was going to end up in India. But in a dramatic way I was led back into the business world.

“The way I was led into this new job was so clear and so positive and so God-like, that I couldn’t argue with it, except ... I didn’t know why. And I learned one lesson. I learned that often when we talk about God’s will, we think about the end of it. We think, I’m in a tunnel at the moment and I’m not quite sure what God’s doing, but some day in the sweet by-and-by, I’m going to burst out the other end and I’m going to be in India, in Africa, I’m going to be principal of a high school, or running the youth group and I’ll have God’s perfect will for my life. And that’s not true. I’m in God’s perfect will now. And if somewhere I end up

in Africa, or India later on, that’s just a change in direction. So, the light is on now, not just at the end of the tunnel.”

Ray never gave up on his dream of international ministry. As many of us do, he tried to make a bargain with God. He said, “If I do have to stay in the business world, please give me the top position in the company, so that when you do call me to the mission field (as I am sure you will) I will have something good to give up for you.”

“He really took me at my word,” Ray wrote. “Within a couple of years, I was a senior executive in that organisation and although I was still in my early 20s, I was responsible for men more than twice my age.”

Ray was involved in Youth for Christ in those days, and he would wear a ‘Youth for Christ’ badge everywhere except at work. It was not the word ‘Christ’ that worried him – it was the word ‘Youth’.

“I was trying to look older, as I supervised men and women who were old enough to be my parents!”

He met and married a Lorna, a God-fearing woman who shared his faith and passion. Lorna was also very good at writing letters to supporters, encouraging them to be excited about the work – and to be generous too. As Ray wrote on their wedding night, God gave them a scripture: “The last verse of Psalm 48. ‘This God ... is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide, even unto death.’” The Lord did indeed guide them well, for the rest of their lives.

A particular turning point came for Ray at an event featuring the American Director of Youth for Christ, who was asking New Zealand Christians to consider joining a mission to India, because

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God gave the vision
International Needs New Zealand.

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American evangelists were generally barred from that country. As Ray tells it in an interview about his life, Christians faced no such barriers if they were part of the British Commonwealth, or the British Empire as it was called at the time. *“I was in this rally of about 800 people. I was the song leader and the light turned on for me. I thought, Now I’m going to get to India after all. Young people from New Zealand and Australia can go in and out, no problem. So, I stood up to answer the appeal.*

“I really didn’t know what I was in for. For six months I had seven meetings every day. Some of them were in the villages, but others were crusades of 20,000 or 30,000 for a week. I don’t keep records. God does, but probably I preached to a million people in that time and thousands responded. God just put the whole thing together, because I was nobody. I’d sung to big crowds, but I’d never preached to more than 100. I arrived with three messages. Six months, seven messages a day. You can work it out. That’s a little more than three. I had no training. I’d never been to Bible College. I had no gift. I don’t think I’m an evangelist. I think I come under the heading where it says, Do the work of an evangelist. I had no reputation.

“The biggest struggle: I had no confidence. If someone’s shy or nervous, join the club. I had a terrible nervousness, which I still have to this day. I’ve sweated over this interview now for the last five months. But God takes it away when I’m up here. It was just Almighty God. God uses ordinary people. The International Needs story is the confirmation that God uses ordinary people. I remember back in the early days of Youth for Christ in New Zealand when our leaders used to come through and speak to us. So often they used to quote 1 Corinthians, Chapter 1. God

uses the weak things and the foolish things and the despised things and the things that are nothing. ‘That’s our chapter’ they would say. Anyone who knows me well, will know that I have no outstanding talent and am not even an outstanding Christian. I have failed many times and still have my struggles, but God in His grace has given me opportunities far beyond my abilities or training and far exceeding my expectations or sometimes even my desires.”

After those six unforgettable months in India, Ray was radiant with the joy of the Lord, and wanted more. *“I felt so enthusiastic. I wanted to just come home, get hold of Lorna and my daughter and head straight back to India. But it didn’t work like that.”*

Ray returned to the business world for five more years, while working hard as a volunteer for YFC – until he was offered the chance to become the first fulltime employee for Youth for Christ New Zealand. He said, *“I had longed to be serving Him fulltime, especially since my experience of 1955 in India, but when the call came, I struggled with it. I was ready to trust the Lord for myself and Lorna, but not for my children. I had a good position and didn’t want my children to suffer as I had seen in the children of some other Christian workers. I had the means to give them the things they wanted but wondered if I was earning a doubtful income of a Christian worker whether I would be able to do that.”*

He’d felt the pinch of low financial support in ministry while he was attending conferences in the United States – yet he had also seen God move powerfully in the lives of the most unlikely people. *“That week on the Lower East Side (New York) with Helen Petrale was a great blessing to me. She lived with her former-marine son right*

down amongst the gangs and was out on the streets, often all night, just moving around giving out tracts and with her team of converted gang leaders, shouting out the Gospel. As she found someone interested, they would go back to her little flat. She would sober them up and share Christ with them. I had never been man-handled so much in my whole life as I was in that week. We would be down a back alley and a group of gang leaders would just stand around in a circle and push me from one to another. Whoever caught me would hold a knife against my throat. There were certainly plenty of opportunities to look to the Lord! I really praise God for this dear lady and the testimonies of the young people I met there, transformed by the power of Christ.”

Emboldened to put financial concerns aside, Ray entered fulltime ministry and he was eventually called to India with Youth for Christ. He loved to share his family’s testimony of God’s provision for their first Christmas away from New Zealand. “The kids were all missing the folk at home: their grandparents and cousins and uncles and aunts. We wanted to give them a really good Christmas, so we’d worked out what it would cost to do a few extra little things there in Delhi. We were asking God specifically for this amount, so we could have a good Christmas, and we were watching the mail. One day a letter came from New Zealand and in it was a cheque with exactly the amount that we’d been asking God for.”

However, Ray’s testimony was not going to be quite so straightforward. “There were two letters in the mail that day. The other one was from a man who I led to the Lord in a crusade in South India. And this letter says, Dear Brother ... telling me how he’s getting on in the Lord. And then he

said, I have five children and I’m out of a job and Christmas is coming and I really want to give them a nice Christmas and ... could you lend me ...? And the amount he asked for was exactly the amount that we had asked God for, for us.

“This man is just a new believer. So, we sent a cheque away to him. Then we thought, ‘Well, there’s still two days before Christmas, so there might be another cheque in the mail.’ But there wasn’t. Christmas Day, we sat in the front room of our apartment with no gifts, no money and no food.”

However, they were now living in a country that didn’t shut down for Christmas – and that included the postal service. “The postman comes along on his bike and says, ‘Sahib, there are some parcels for you at the Post Office’, so we managed to take a taxi down to the post office expecting to receive a couple of parcels. There in the middle of the Post Office, on the floor, there were 15 large parcels.

“But then I thought, ‘Well, I can’t do anything about it because they charge duty. I’ve got no money.’ And the Postmaster says, ‘We know this is your Jesus’ birthday. So, we won’t charge you any duty.’ And the kids had the most wonderful Christmas they’ve ever had.”

After his stint in India, Ray Harrison was invited to become the World Director of Youth for Christ International. It was in his YFC capacity that Ray attended the first Billy Graham International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. In a photo of Ray from that event, against a beautiful backdrop of the Alps, Ray is shaking hands with Billy Graham, alongside Korean evangelist Billy Kim. Both Billys knew what it was like to preach to a million people at once.



That's impressive, but what really shook Ray was the sense that something important needed to change in the nature of worldwide ministry. *"I think there were 5000 delegates there from 150 countries, and we were all going to say, 'this is what we think is the best way to reach the world for Christ.' I had no doubt at all: the best thing I could do was to pour my life into the leaders; the national leaders in their own countries - helping them to reach their own people, trusting them and supporting them.*

"These 5000 people were almost all saying the same thing. They didn't use the same words. They were talking about problems of cross-cultural evangelism and things like that. It seemed to me as though God was telling me that I had to quit Youth for Christ, a very difficult thing for me to do.

"All our leaders met straight after Lausanne and all the world leaders were there, plus all the wives; leaders like Billy Graham and all his team and their family, and Bob Pierce from World Vision and Paul Little from InterVarsity, they're all there. And I had to stand up and say 'I resign', which it wasn't easy to do, but we felt God was telling us. So that was what we did. "

The hardest thing was to convince people who were supporting us, and whom I knew and loved

and trusted, and were even mentors to me. They found it hard to understand. They were saying, Are you sure you're doing the right thing? You've got the world at your feet, spiritually speaking, and you're giving all that away.

"But it was just God's call was there. So we just thought, well, He's going to do something. And we waited for Him to do it. We felt that God was telling us we must support the national leaders. So we have never said, Look, here's a country where we should be, what can we do there? We've waited until God brought us his man or his woman in that country. Then we've got behind him in an amazing way. We've got leaders all over the world."

In a sense, Ray's vision was true to his national character as a New Zealander. Equality is very important to Kiwis – and with International Needs, nobody was anybody's worker. It was pure partnership: definitely not a matter of big, successful countries helping their little brothers. At that point in time it was already clear that God was doing exciting, unique and sovereign work among unreached peoples. Ray saw that the best way to support that work was to find local leaders with a passion for ministry, then step back and give them whatever they needed to succeed.

FIRST DAYS, SMALL BEGINNINGS

International Needs (IN) officially started in Bangladesh in July 1974 – three months before I was born in Ghana.

Soon International Needs had an office – in the National Bank Chambers in Courtenay Place, Wellington, New Zealand. Ray’s administrative matters were kept in order by an extremely capable woman from his home church (Elizabeth Street Chapel), who has been part of International Needs’ story right from the start – and still is today: Shona Dimock. Ray actually officiated over Shona and Rod Dimock’s wedding – and as Shona remembers, *“He had to renew his Marriage Celebrant’s license, and I remember getting all the paperwork organised for him to sign! Great days.”*

Here are two examples of how small IN was at first. Two of the people in the UK who knew Ray, but not each other, began volunteering. One was Andrew Hubbard, helping with the finances. Andrew says, “I can remember to this day, in our first year our income was £176. So, it was hardly a hobby.” Another volunteer was a young woman named Jenny. She helped by typing newsletters and filling envelopes for Ray. These two total strangers, Andrew and Jenny, joined the same church, met each other, fell in love and were married without ever realising they were both wonderful players in the UK International Needs team being led by Peter Honour in Britain. Jenny and Andrew Hubbard remain dedicated

International Needs supporters to this day and they recently told me something that is very important to them and to many International Needs people. They said to me, “Organisations are getting taken over by the secular side, and losing the Gospel. We haven’t. Frankly, if we do, I don’t want to be part of it.” I know many of our supporters feel that way.

Similarly, International Needs Australia began in the bedroom of Glenda and Ray de Jager’s home in 1974. Glenda writes: ‘We had both just turned 22, and had been married a few weeks when Ray wrote to us and asked if we would look after a mailing list he had of about 30 names in Australia. We said yes, but had no idea what God had planned for the future, and that this small decision would influence the next 30+ years of our lives. We started with a small desk in our bedroom wardrobe, graduated to the dining table and eventually to an office in a local church.’ Supported by churches and a number of individual supporters, the de Jagers led the organisation from strength to strength, as one of the first Australian NGOs to be recognised and funded by what is today the Australian Government’s Australian NGO Cooperation Programme (ANCP) – a level of recognition that has been maintained over 50 years.

Despite these small beginnings, Ray was “President” right from the start. Such a title is quite unusual for an egalitarian Kiwi, but Ray knew it would help potential supporters in larger donor countries to understand his role and his goals.



Next Generation

In founding International Needs, Ray Harrison had lost the security of the large Youth for Christ name, position and organisation – but Ray knew that many others lost so much more to follow the call of Jesus. As Ray wrote: “A Nepal evangelist suffered persecution because of coming to Christ. Coming from a wealthy home, he had lost his inheritance. He said, ‘If God was not with us, we could not tolerate it. But God is with us!’” For Ray’s new indigenous partners in the field, the stakes were very high. “Another evangelist said his brother tried to kill him because he had become a Christian, but God had saved him.”

The first offerings to frontline leaders set the pattern for the next 50 years of wide-ranging support: literature for evangelists, a roof for a church, a motorcycle for a church leader, and money for serious surgical operations. Additional support was to directed to some Christian advertising in Japan, some funding for the global youth evangelism ministry Operation Mobilisation, and a modern translation of the Bible for French-speaking people across the Pacific Islands.

Whenever Ray was preaching and telling the stories from around the world he would share the needs, trusting God to provide the finances needed. What donors discovered was that supporting indigenous disciple makers and church planters offered almost incredible returns on investment. Dollar-for-dollar, their small gifts made a huge difference in people’s lives.

International Needs was the goal toward which Ray had always been moving. He knew that God had something more and new for him. The World Congress in Lausanne, Switzerland,

confirmed that for him. So did the fervent support of a weekly prayer group in New Zealand, made up of the early pillars of International Needs, such as Malcolm Taylor, Noel Garret, Fred Gardener and Ray’s father, Charles.

Lorna too always had a key part in Ray’s ministry roles. He often acknowledged that he could not have done any of this without her full support, which Lorna gave Ray from before they were married and for the rest of her life.

I honour Lorna and the original trustees. David Wall, Graham Yarrall and Jim Dixon were soon joined by Malcolm Taylor, Trevor Wyness, Ian Lysaght and, of course, Mel Newth.

It was in 1974, while Mel was living in Canada, that Ray shared his vision for International Needs. Ray asked Mel to incorporate IN Canada, which Mel did – just before returning to live in New Zealand at the start of 1975. Mel was invited to join the Board of Trustees and took part in the very first formal meeting of the Trustees in March, in the city of Rotorua, a centre of Māori culture which graciously welcomes us again with a warm “Haere Mai” in 2024, celebrating International Needs’ 50th anniversary. Mel became the Executive Director of International Needs New Zealand on 1st January 1979, moving its base from Wellington to the beautiful seaside city of Tauranga, where it remains to this day. In 1986 he also became the interim Executive Director of IN Canada – and led both country teams until he became President of International Needs in 1988. Mel was formally inducted at the Manila Congress in 1990 - our sixteenth year. He remained President for two full decades, then served for two more years as a mentor and encourager. During his tenure as President, new International



Needs partnerships were established in Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ireland, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Slovakia, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda and Vietnam. We are very grateful to God for all Mel has done for the ministry and the people and the Lord we serve.

Blessed to Give – Leading in the Support Countries

All this work of transforming lives, changing communities could not have happened without the faith, empathy, and generosity of all the International Needs supporters, donors and sponsors who are intimately and strategically connected to the effort, even though they may be on the other side of the world from where the ministry action is taking place.

Allow me a moment to honour the visionaries who have built, led, and sustained a new kind of ministry: the International Needs national offices in the support nations, whose

role was primarily to encourage and fund spiritual and humanitarian programmes in the frontline nations.

Australia – Glenda de Jager, Clive Stebbins, David Ayliffe, Sheldon Rankin, Pri Fernando, David Ensor, and now Andrew Catford.

Canada – Bernard Camper, Glenn Fretz, John Denbok, and now David Marshall.

Netherlands – Kees & Miep Hondsmark, Erik de Keijzer, and now Theda Dejong.

New Zealand – Mel Newth, Lloyd Ashworth, Jeremy Denmead, Gradon Harvey, and now Shaun Sutcliffe.

Switzerland – Peter and Anneliese Schneller, and now David Amstutz.

United Kingdom – Peter Honour, Peter Staley, and now Danny Morris.

United States – Jerry Major, David Culross, Rody Rodeheaver, Michael Cooper, and now Jeff Johnson.

Many thousands of people have served humanity and God through International Needs, as donors, supporters, trustees and workers. Each of these people is a much-cherished treasure in our story – and I thank you for your part in our story as well. Through 50 years of ministry, there has been high drama, even chaos at times. Ray Harrison himself had to contend with being in a plane on fire, in another plane hijacked in Sierra Leone, and after one conference in Calcutta, he was caught up in what should have been a very alarming scene. People were pressing up against the window, screaming into the car Ray was riding in. What did they want? He couldn't understand a word of what they were shrieking. It turned out ... they wanted to hear about Jesus! So Ray got out of the car in the back streets of that bewildering city and just talked to them about the Lord. Ray was a big man – with an even bigger heart – but as he says, "I am not particularly a brave person, and should have been very fearful. Looking back on that, I am amazed. I had no fear at all!" On that night, among people he didn't know and couldn't understand, God gave him and his translator the boldness they needed.

He was often astonished at the courage of people who were finding Christ in lands hostile to the Gospel. In the support countries like Ray's New Zealand, people were completely free to be Christians, but in countries where the ministry work was being done, it could be a life-or-death decision to follow Christ. Ray once wrote, "*One of our co-workers in Africa was formerly a teacher in Islam and can quote the Quran word-perfectly. Since he trusted the Lord Jesus he has, every day, been seeking to share Him with others, often at great risk, but wrote telling that he is 'now*

at peace' ... is 'reconciled' ... 'and that is worth everything.'"

Once Ray was visiting a district outside Colombo in Sri Lanka, where the poorest of the poor made their shelters out of anything they could find – mainly mud and sticks. One of the smallest huts was so small, one sheet of plastic covered the whole home. The people inside had put a sign on their mud wall, behind the plastic. Ray peered through the sheet, expecting perhaps to find a family name. Instead, with the barest resources they had, they had put up the most important message in their lives. The sign said: "Jesus never fails".

Ray treasured the transformation the Gospel was bringing into lives like those. "*I remember one of our workers in Fiji sharing his testimony. Telling how, from a very wicked life, he had come to know the Saviour. I'll never forget the tears running down that man's face as he said, 'Now I want to use every breath I draw, to tell everyone I meet, about the Saviour who changed my life.'*"

A young man in North India came from a high caste Brahmin background. Some family members heard he had become a Christian, so they came to find the young man, knocked him to the ground, kicked him senseless and left him for dead. By God's grace he survived the attack and was taken in by some local Christians. Hearing he was still alive, his family returned to kill him, but he escaped. Ray said, "*I shall never forget the peace in his voice, as he said that he could never go back, because he had found 'the true God' – and he wanted to serve Him for the rest of his life.*"

Ray wrote, "I smiled as I read a report from one of our co-workers who works way up in the mountains of Nepal. The evangelist says,

‘Not much is happening here ... apart from regular healing and releasing of demons.’

Ray always respected – and often desired for himself - the zeal with which people grabbed onto this new hope in Christ: *“As I travel around the world and have the privilege of working with leaders in remote areas like the mountains of Nepal, I am challenged by their lives. I have been a Christian for 50 years longer than most of them. I am better educated than most of them, but I find that in a simple way, they prove God much more than I do, and I hope that some of that will rub off on me. They realise they need God’s enabling. They appropriate it... they stand on the promises ... they make it theirs and claim their rights, and God wonderfully uses them. The rights are ours too. Let’s appropriate them and live effectively for Him.”*

Ray travelled extensively, preaching, telling the stories of the ministry, relying on God to provide the necessary funds through generous people who supported the work. Ray toiled passionately to see the work of God fulfilled in the nations. Today, the International Needs ministry is present in more than 30 countries worldwide. Together as partners, we proclaim the Gospel that brings God’s saving grace to people; we empower the vulnerable and deprived in society; we extend potable water to communities; we provide opportunities for Christ-centred education for children; and we seek justice for those who are abused and exploited.

Ray once wrote - “One of our International Needs evangelists from the mountains of Nepal was sad. So many people had come to the Lord, and so many churches had been

established, he and so many churches had been established, he didn’t have any time to preach the Gospel. He said, I won’t be an evangelist any more. I’ll just preach the Gospel to everyone I meet.”He talked about going to the mountains for a month. Being beaten. Escaping. Put into jail. A murder in the jail. But then he said, he was able to share Jesus!”

Despite all this, Ray was not an organisational man. He was not envisaging a large corporation with a big structure, brand, or banner. He was a quiet person, dedicated to serving the Lord in a team, with a humble heart. He was often amazed at how the ministry he started developed a momentum of its own: *“...where even, if I do nothing at all, the blessing still continues. I knew that every day, around the world, the Gospel was being presented to thousands.”*

He was kind, gentle in speech yet profound in his words, putting his faith into action and working hard as he travelled the world connecting partners for the Kingdom of God and fervently raising funds for our ministries. Like the Apostle Paul, he prayed without ceasing, immersed himself in the Word, ran a good race, kept the faith, stayed humble and strong, touching a multitude of lives.

“Ray Harrison stayed in our home in Brisbane when travelling through, to tell of the International Needs worldwide ministry. It was off to meetings each night and weekends in homes and churches. It was a hectic time and even though we were exhausted at the end, we were sorry to see him go. I can still hear him playing the great hymns on our piano. We praise God for Ray and Lorna for their life and ministry. - Graham and Alison Jacobsen.”



THREE GIANT PROFILES

Ray's other great discovery was that in places where it is hard to be a Christian, pressure produces diamonds. The full chronicles of International Needs would contain the names and deeds of many great pioneers – and I will be attempting to include many of them in the next section of this book. Yet, for now, please allow me to mark our 50th anniversary with three profiles of the kinds of indigenous leaders it took to establish International Needs in the nations. These are just three of the many diamonds God has given us. They combine to reveal so much of the full character of International Needs.

Success and growth despite immense persecution: Pastor Nicanor Tamang in Nepal.

Building a remarkable group of enduring institutions in the service of God: Rev. Dr Ken Gnanakan in India.

Changing the culture of his entire nation towards what is good and right: Rev. Walter Pimpong, in Ghana.

Nicanor Tamang was a Bible College student in South India when Ray Harrison challenged him to serve in Nepal. In fact, Nicanor had sold his watch and overcoat to pay for Bible college. Although Nicanor himself was from Darjeeling,

the beautiful tea-producing region in North India close to the border with Nepal, his parents were Nepalese. Ray said to Nicanor, *"You know the language and the culture. Brother, I think you will do a marvellous job in Nepal. I believe and trust in you."* That had a big impact on the young man.

Affirming words of that sort from Ray were probably a great motivator for many others who were starting the work back in the 1970s: "I believe you can do a better job than me. I trust you."

Nicanor says, "Those sentences were magic. If this man has so much of a burden for my own people, I must go there to Nepal. If this man can trust me so much, I must not break his trust."

Work was difficult because the Hindu monarchy was exceedingly hostile to Christianity. Nicanor and his wife Elizabeth had to work in the shadows for many years. Then, just as the International Needs Council meeting was taking place in November 1987 in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu, Nicanor Tamang was arrested.

Ray Harrison wrote an extraordinary account of what happened in the face of this persecution. "Nicanor Tamang was put in prison for his faith. Every day Hindus were coming to the church and saying We want Nicanor's God! They knew he was in prison for his faith, and if they received his God,

saying We want Nicanor's God! They knew he was in prison for his faith, and if they received his God, it might happen to them too, but felt it would be worth going to prison to find the God that Nicanor knew. There are millions of gods in their religion, but not a God like Nicanor's God."

Nicanor's example of strength in the face of imprisonment greatly encouraged other faith workers in Nepal. Ray wrote about one of these workers who was put in prison because of his faith. "He was very sick and he was in a crowded cell, with a pretty hardened bunch of criminals. In an amazing way, God gave him favour with them. Like the thief on the cross, they said, 'We deserve to be here, but you are a good man and should not be in prison'. Somehow in that crowded cell, they were able to make room for him to have a bed on the floor. They washed his tin plate after his meal and gave him honour."

Nicanor explains how the government tried to stop his ministry by exiling him. "I was called to the police station and put behind bars for 26 days and released with an expulsion order."

What followed were years of struggle, with repeated arrests and exile, but as you will see in the next section of this book, persecution like Nicanor's has borne extraordinary fruit – in Nepal and all over the world.

Dr Ken Gnanakan has a remarkable life story of complete transformation, which he has passed on to countless others. He discovered Jesus when he was a young musician playing in one of India's top bands. At a venue called The Tami Club he met some young Christians who shared their faith

with him. Strongly drawn to this Jesus Christ, Ken soon met Ray and Lorna Harrison, and came to the Lord in their home in New Delhi. With his wife Prema, Ken got to know the Harrisons very well through their time with Youth for Christ in the 1960s. Ken completely changed his focus, from his music career to the endless possibilities of his new life in God. Dr Ken Gnanakan became a visionary theologian and educator, a distinguished scholar, a truly outstanding teacher, an accomplished minister to every aspect of human need – and a leader capable of guiding his teams to achieve even the most ambitious goals for Jesus Christ. He spoke at many conferences, published in many books and journals, and trained many pastors and mission leaders. Inspired by Peter's call to the man with disabilities at the Beautiful Gate to stand up and walk, Dr Ken founded a skills-training ministry called ACTS, which stands for Agriculture, Crafts, Trades and Studies. It started small, but it is small no longer. Today ACTS is a mighty group of institutions in which Christian love and excellence combine, as over 1,000 staff expand the skills, horizons, and opportunities for many thousands of students.

Ray Harrison saw in Dr Ken's work a profound connection to the Church's first days. Here is what Ray wrote about the outlook he shared with Dr Ken. "I looked up the Bible ... and noted again that the Church was not founded by the Apostles but by the common people who were scattered abroad through persecution and went everywhere preaching the Gospel. This was the passion of Dr Ken Gnanakan. God gave him the vision of the ACTS Institute, which has not only become a great force for God in India but has become part of our ministry in other countries too. As he read through the book of Acts and realised again that God

spread His church through the lay people, his burden was: that India needs not just professional Christians but dedicated Christian electricians, farmers, carpenters, nurses, sweepers etc. This is my own experience and conviction too. I have sought to preach it with a passion. To be used by God, the main requirement is not ability, but availability.”

I could give you so many examples of the impact of ACTS in India – and yes, the next section of the book has several – but one of my favourite expressions of ACTS achievements is a young girl named Raphel who was rescued from a relative who was going to sell her into servitude. She was lovingly raised at the Sano Diyo (Little Lighthouse) orphanage that is part of the ACTS group. Through high-quality education and training, Raphel has become a successful IT manager close to the main ACTS base in the high-tech city of Bangalore. This is a woman who was going to be sold into slavery!

There are thousands of such stories from ACTS, but I would love to draw your attention to the model of ministry Dr Ken pioneered. He called it the Three Selves of Indigenous Mission. Self-governing. Self-propagating. Self-supporting. As you can see, he is the perfect partner for the ministry goals of International Needs. What a marvellous legacy Dr Ken Gnanakan has left for India and the world.

tribute to Ray, he wrote, “My parents fondly remember your warm, friendly, and loving heart. I also know how much you loved rugby and cricket and will especially miss our conversations about whose was the better cricket team! Uncle Ray, you first met me in 1975, when I was a little four-year-old. But our history goes back even further. My father, Ken Gnanakan, came to know Christ in your home on 20 October 1965!”

Rev. Walter Pimpong is a wonderful brother in Christ who you will soon get to know quite well, as you read further and enjoy exciting testimonies from 50 years of ministry. Rev. Pimpong changed my country of Ghana for the better in countless ways – and he was even able to transform a cultural practice, so that the ancient tradition of Trokosi fetish slavery is now utterly repugnant to Ghanaians – to the eternal liberty of girls and women who were held captive by this demonic bondage.

It is a very exciting story, but for now I would like to give you a window into Ray Harrison’s gentle, persuasive and affirming way of inviting potential leaders into this empowered ministry that ran counter to traditional mission models at the time. As you can see from the address of this letter, Ray was inviting a national leader to return home and make his presence felt in his own place and culture, which the Rev. Walter Pimpong definitely did, to God’s glory.

Santosh Gnanakan, the CEO of ACTS group, is the son of Ken and Prema Gnanakan. In a

December 17, 1982

Mr. Walter A. Pimpong
Slaakstraat 6
1078 BD Amsterdam
HOLLAND

Dear Walter:

Thank you for your letter dated November 23, and the enclosures. It was certainly good to hear from you again.

I was wondering what had happened. Apparently, the letter had gone astray somewhere but I'm glad that it finally reached you. As you say, sometimes God has His timing in these things.

I had heard that you were in Amsterdam. There's a possibility yet that I may turn up there though I'm not sure at this stage.

We're praying for you as you seek the Lord's direction in your return to Africa. I know this won't be easy after your time in Europe but I'm sure the Lord will guide you and we want His will for you even more than we want you to be with us!

If it did work out for you to be with International Needs, either on a full-time or a voluntary capacity, we'd certainly praise Him. Let me try and answer your questions.

One - As you'll see from the enclosed Newsletter, we have an eight-point program of evangelism. Our total reason for existence is to spread the Christian message but included in our outreach is a place for social concern because of the kind of world we live in where human suffering can't be ignored. Jesus didn't ignore it and we mustn't either.

Having met the needs of people, we still need to tell them about the Lord.

Two - As you will know, we work through the national leaders. Our whole philosophy is based on the fact of having God's man in any given situation and if we did anything in Guyana, it would be because of our confidence in you.

Three - We believe in accountability. If we did start a ministry in Guyana, we would ask you to get together a group of key Christian leaders as a National Board. Any ministry we did there was channeled through them and any of our stuff would be accountable to them. They would make the decisions best to what was best for Guyana. We believe that Guyanaian leaders know more about that than we do.

Four - The projects that we would take on here would be because of your recommendation and that of the board. It would be because of our confidence and trust in you.

Five - If you are willing to go full time, it would take us time to work that out. We don't have a fund on hand, but would seek to raise that and perhaps even ask you to travel to one of our sending countries to help us do that. I'm not even sure what we're talking about when we discuss that kind of money.

What I'm saying therefore, really is that if you are interested in helping us on a voluntary capacity, ideally what I'd like you to do would be to recommend ways in which we can be involved in your country, not just for the sake of building a ministry but to meet real needs physically and spiritually and through a board set up there to give us recommendations not only of the program but of funding costs and the channel that we can trust for distribution.

If you are talking in terms of part-time and full-time in the ministry, then again, we'd be guided by you as to which direction we could go in the way of helping in the cause of evangelism in your country. We would then seek to find sending countries to accept these various challenges and to build a ministry steadily.

Also, of course, we would want you and representatives of the board to be part of our World Council which meets every three years and which really is the international body of International Needs much the same as the Youth for Christ program except that I think perhaps we're demonstrating more than most organizations in that we really do believe in the nationals. Our World Chairman is from New Zealand, or Vice Chairman is from India, our secretary is from Bangladesh!

Get back to me Walter, as soon as you can. Please know that we are really interested in working with you and are anxious to have your advice as to ways and means that we can help the cause of Christ in your country. We are looking forward to hearing from you in due course and with warmest Christian greetings,

I am,

Yours in His service,

Ray
Ray Harrison, President
International Needs

As you can see, Ray spelled our country name as Guyana – which is in South America of course. I hope he was not too disappointed to land in Ghana and find himself deep in the heart of equatorial Africa, rather than a pleasant hop away from the Caribbean.

Seriously though, I like the man who comes through in that letter! A confident man, but a humble one. A man who loves God and is fully dedicated to Christ's service. Looking back on 50 years, I see how sensitive Ray was to the will of God, as he made the decisions that shaped the paradigm of world missions. He empowered national leaders who had vision and the call to reach their own people with the Gospel through partnership with Christian nationals in other countries. His model promoted respect and trust, and this built authentic partnerships to bring the Gospel to the world. He worked hard to make his vision a reality. First in Asia, Africa, then other parts of the world.

We are so very grateful to Ray for his vision and faithful servant leadership. His wonderful partner in life, Lorna, was called home to heaven at the age of 93 in 2017. Ray completed his own race two years later, at 91 on October 26, 2019 in Wellington, New Zealand – a much loved father, father-in-law, granddad, great-grandfather, mentor and friend to all, to the glory of God.

Although our ministry is the work of many thousands of labourers, partners and friends, Ray Harrison nonetheless has had a phenomenal impact. We salute our Founder for his tireless efforts, the rich heritage he built, the sacrifices he

made, and for the vision and fortitude that drove it all.

The torch of quiet yet passionate leadership has been handed over from Ray, Lorna and the pioneers, to many - and I am so thankful that I, as General Secretary, am one who was asked to help carry that torch. That is what keeps me awake at night. To be able to hold this torch and remain truthful and faithful to the hope that they had, even in the face of great persecution in places like Bangladesh, Nepal and India. To encourage my colleagues to stand firm - so we can run this race together. Then, when it is time, to pass the baton on to the next generation. What an exciting prospect it is, to see how this partnership of peers – formed in the year I was born – has grown worldwide and met so many profound needs, always with the promise that the Gospel will be preached! Committed to excellence; always able to promise Kingdom value for money to every donor and supporter; navigating the secular and the spiritual in a complicated world; and always looking forward, moving ahead. In our 50th year I am filled with a great appetite to see what God will do through us for the people of the world in the next 50 years. Now will you join me for the central section of our book, not to dwell on the past, but to celebrate the exciting, world-changing work our partners have been doing with such relentless dedication. Get ready for extraordinary times, brutal trials and amazing testimonies, as we take a fast and exciting flight through the first half-century of International Needs.



SECTION 2

IN SPIRIT - TRANSFORMATIONS,
TRIALS, AND TESTIMONIES



THE WORLD IN GOD'S HANDS

In this vast landscape of 50 years of International Needs testimonies, please allow me to begin with my own story. My dream for life in Ghana was respectable, but not very spiritual. I simply wanted to be a successful chartered accountant in a big blue-chip company somewhere. It never occurred to me to serve in a mission organisation. This all changed when I was 19, almost against my will, like stepping into a swiftly flowing river, unable to resist the current. I was sitting in a youth meeting on the first Sunday in 1995, listening to our pastor. After he spoke, he asked our leaders if anyone present had a background in accounts. "You can speak to this gentleman," the leaders responded, pointing to a tall, skinny, lanky guy. That was me. "Come and have a chat with me tomorrow, in my office," he said, while looking intently into my eyes.

The next day, the 9th of January 1995, I entered the offices of International Needs Ghana for the first time. Ten minutes of conversation ended with an offer that was part invitation, part demand. "You should start working here. A temporary arrangement for six months." I started the next day. Long story short, six months turned into three years and my dream was going off course.

I told myself - and my International Needs director, who was also my pastor - that I could not continue. I needed to return to my studies. It was agreed between us, so I left and qualified as a chartered accountant. I started working at a manufacturing company, with a fat cheque and

a young man's dreams, which included marriage. Naturally I asked my pastor to officiate at our wedding.

Right there at my wedding, as the bridal party moved to sign the register, my pastor spoke up in front of everyone and asked, "Edmond, will you work with me again at International Needs?" What a bold time to ask – on my wedding day! I didn't want to answer that question. More mission work?! International Needs at that time was small. It didn't pay very much. I had big dreams of what my certification could bring. Not relenting, he asked again! Not wanting to be embarrassed, I just nodded and signed my wedding certificate. That nod was enough, apparently, because he followed up on our conversation, visiting us newlyweds at our home. I spoke with my wife and parents and we all agreed that two years and no more would indeed be an acceptable sacrifice. However, two years has mounted into 27 wonderful and challenging years! Counting the first three years, that is a total of three full decades with International Needs.

I stayed because I was seeing momentous change in our country through International Needs. I realised that while money is important, and accountancy is worthwhile and profit is good, these material things are not the be-all and end-all. What I wanted to do – and still desire today - is to seek to transform lives and change communities. There is simply nothing better. I remember one example among so many. I had seen a young lady in one of our schools, which was so sparsely resourced she had to carry her own chair from home to have somewhere to sit in class. Yet despite the lack of equipment, there

was education there, solid learning. Through the years, because of the partnership between donors in other countries and national workers in mine, she was able to complete college and obtain a degree. I was amazed and impressed to see her life transformed – and so many others.

In time I became the head of finance and administration in the Ghana office, then the Deputy Executive Director, then Executive Director for Ghana. As the worldwide IN Partnership was expanding, a call went out to find someone to become the first General Secretary of International Needs to help shepherd and encourage the national partners. I was involved in the search, as I was serving the overall partnership as International Needs' treasurer while I still was the Executive Director for IN Ghana. The search team shortlisted five out of twenty fine candidates but still could not find quite the right person who could understand the International Needs model and the proposed role of a General Secretary – after our series of Presidents. The search team was praying and contemplating next steps, when someone on the search team said to me, "You really are the General Secretary we are looking for." I thought, *I'm serving Ghana as the Director. I'm not looking to be General Secretary.* After much soul-searching and talking with my wife and seeing that people were serious in what they were saying to me, the Ghanaian Board gave me their blessing to take the role – and I am more than blessed. I was elected in 2019 by the International Needs Congress and since then it has been a joy

to be, as I see it, a global ambassador for the great things our partners, donors, supporters, and workers are achieving in human lives and communities.

It was in this capacity, as General Secretary, that I travelled to Ray Harrison's homeland of New Zealand to help plan the 50th anniversary celebration of our organisation. I had to wonder, how did such a world-spanning organisation get its start in such a small and distant island nation? I think part of the answer may stem from Ray Harrison's hometown of Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. It is about as far from the rest of the world as it is possible to get, yet that very fact probably gives rise to young Kiwis' sense of wonder about the people and places that lie "out there".

Wellington city is dominated by the beautiful forested hill of Mount Victoria. It is famous among movie fans as the place where the Hobbits of The Lord of the Rings had to Get Off the Road! to escape the deadly Nazgul. At the summit, though, is a far more uplifting scene. As you look out through the mouth of the near-circular Wellington Harbour, with the airport runway also pointing straight out to the open ocean, the vista gives you the sense that the whole world somehow lies just beyond the horizon. It is as if the vast bowl of the Pacific is being held in God's hands – and somewhere out there, over the sparkling sea, are all the lands in which the Lord has been changing the world through International Needs for the last 50 years.



Join me as we move across those lands, exploring those years: the transformations, trials, and testimonies that are laid out before us as we stand on the mountaintop of half a century of service. It is quite complicated to cover such varied work, over so much time, in so many places, so let's survey as we move through one country at a time, giving you the highlights of International Needs' ministry story in each nation. It means we will be bouncing forward and back through time, I'm sorry - but I hope it helps to visualise us on top of Mt Victoria, ranging roughly west to east across the huge span of the world and the work. Let us begin with what lies across 11,500 km away to the west from Mt Victoria: the South Asian and Himalayan nations where International Needs first began its work.

Ray was enthralled by the growth of God's Kingdom in places that were largely

unreached by the good news of faith in Jesus Christ. Ray writes, "In one Himalayan kingdom, where there were less than 100 believers when I first went there, there are now many hundreds of thousands ... some say a million Christians! The growth of the church has been through simple believers. Once they had found the only true and living God, they headed off over the mountains, to go from house to house in those little villages. As one of them said, 'To tell everyone what Jesus has done for me.' In some of those countries, receiving Him is not the pathway of ease. Unpopularity with the authorities may mean ... losing the family, an education, your job, an inheritance ... may even mean imprisonment, but having counted the cost, and having experienced the joy of knowing the Saviour, they are ready for that."

PART ONE – SOUTH ASIA NEPAL

Curving across the middle third of the Himalayas, Nepal in the mid-20th century was the only Hindu kingdom in the world and was extremely hostile to Christianity. In 1950 there was not a single known Christian there. By the time the work of International Needs began in 1975, the country had around 2,000 believers. Just fifteen years of hard work later, building on the past prayers and toil of so many people, that total had grown to around 70,000! Today there are more than ten times that! Christians now make up around 2% of the Nepalese people. The Christian faith has grown fast, just as in the book of Acts, through vibrant and dynamic personal witness – “each one reach one, each one teach one” – because little in the way of mass evangelism has ever been allowed. As one of our workers reported in the 1990s: “Lives are changed, people are healed, and the demon-possessed are delivered. Such changed people are constantly sharing their faith.”

Nicanor Tamang was raised in India by Nepalese parents before he was called to service in Nepal. “I met Mr Ray Harrison in 1971 and started working with Nepal Youth for Christ, supported by International Needs, which was not officially formed.” Indeed, International Needs Nepal was not allowed to formally exist until 1990. “The highlight of all programmes in Nepal was supporting rural evangelists, starting with just 10 to over 50 over a period of time.”

Nicanor’s constant support and partner was his wife and she writes, “Hello! I am Elizabeth

Tamang. I met the Founder of International Needs, Mr Ray Harrison, as Nicanor and I had just married on 1st of June 1974. His visit is still so fresh in my mind. A gift for our wedding from Ray and Lorna Harrison is still treasured in our home.

“After that we had many more visits from Mr Harrison and Dr Victor Monogram who brought Nicanor to Nepal in 1972 to work with Youth for Christ in Kathmandu, sponsored by Mr Ray Harrison for a couple of years. Mr Ray Harrison continued to encourage, love and support us. International Needs was like a big family to us. Our partners in every country made us feel special and never stopped encouraging, loving, and praying for us.”

Believers come from all strata of those South Asian societies. Nicanor wrote of three baptisms in the city of Dehradun in Northern India, close to the Nepalese border. “It was amazing to see three people baptised from totally different backgrounds. A Nepali lady, working as a maid; a Punjabi lady, teaching in a school, and a South Indian man who is a scientist and highly educated. During the ceremony we prayed in three different languages – Nepali, Hindi and English. It was amazing to see all becoming one in Christ.”

Reaching people was incredibly challenging for Nicanor, Elizabeth and the evangelists. Nicanor has written, “Our ministry in Nepal is going from strength to strength. God has opened the hearts of thousands of people and our evangelists are one of the groups who are reaching the people

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with the Gospel. My wife needs special credit and recognition as she was the main person to help me as I was busy pastoring, visiting various countries to share the work of God in Nepal and India.”

They were allowed to live their Christian religion, but they were forbidden to share it with others, with the threat of lengthy imprisonment. Indeed, in the late 1980s, Nicanor was imprisoned in Nepal for preaching the Gospel, then expelled from the country.

As Elizabeth recounts it: “The most touching experience for me was in 1987 November, when Nicanor was arrested for the second time on religious purpose. The International Needs Council meeting was held in Kathmandu at that time and so we had many IN Board members with their wives visiting Nepal. On the last day, the arrest took place in the evening, when some of the visitors had already left or were leaving. Mr Ray Harrison and Mr Mel Newth stayed back in Nepal for many days.”

Ray Harrison adds, *“Right at the conclusion of this historic gathering in the midst of the blessing and fulfilment, police arrested Nicanor Tamang illegally and without warrant, and although he is required to be brought before a judge within 24 hours, 14 days later no charge had been laid and he was still being kept in police custody in crowded unpleasant conditions. It sounds dramatic, and it was, but this is par for the course in Nepal.”*

“I’ve heard Nicanor say many times in meetings, ‘Never in the history of the Nepal church has there been a time when Christians were not imprisoned for their faith.’ Just a week before, a whole group of Christians were arrested out in the valley as they were on their way back from a church service. Three of them had

been imprisoned, awaiting trial.

“On the Saturday morning in the church service, I personally knew that among the 350-400 present, the interpreter was facing seven years rigorous imprisonment, the Sunday School leader had herself in fact been in police custody, as had her husband, her father, her sister, and many others in the congregation.

“I shall never forget the moment when it was announced to the church that Nicanor had been arrested. Spontaneously everyone stood. While the leader led in prayer, each one in a quiet undertone personally poured out an urgent Spirit-led prayer to God for pastor Nicanor. The power of the Lord was evident and it was a moving, humbling experience. I shall never forget, either, what the pastor prayed for Nicanor. He did not pray for his release. He prayed that Nicanor would be strengthened, encouraged, bold and faithful!

“I had stayed on to help and if necessary to appear at his trial, as local Christians felt that this could be useful.”

As Elizabeth said, Mel Newth remained in Nepal as well. “Ray and I were allowed to see Nicanor, through the small window into his cell, for a brief time. He was in with about 20 other prisoners.”

Elizabeth goes on to write, “They were not allowed to meet Nicanor in the police custody, but they visited the government offices along with Mr Samuel Sharma and Mr Charles Mendies (brother-in-law) and tried to find out how they could help. They were the silent pillars of interfere in the law of the land but stood fast with us until the end.”

Elizabeth Tamang also writes, “After the arrest and over a month behind bars, a notice to leave the country within two weeks was given to us.

Nicanor Tamang writes like an epistle from Paul about his imprisonment and his court cases. "Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ from Nepal. We are constantly grateful for your prayers and concern. Your interest for our family gives us courage to face each day. My court case is still pending at the District Court. I and my two friends have to go each month to court to report, so that they know we are not absconding. If we lose the case, then we will be sentenced to six years in prison. We are thankful to the Lord that we have happiness of the Lord to bear all things. The Lord has been wonderfully working in our midst for the past few months. Due to obvious reasons, I cannot write them down here. Only eternity can actually tell what has been accomplished in the lives of many people." Note Nicanor's astute courage, in finding a way to keep the church running in the face of an official ban: "The local authorities have verbally ordered us to close down the Church, but we have meekly and firmly asked them to give us the order in writing, which they have not yet given."

With a heavy heart we left Nepal in February 1988 and settled in Dehradun, India. Since International Needs was still supporting Nicanor financially, we started praying and asking God for guidance for the ministry of IN in Dehradun. We were led to start on a small scale of supporting children (that is through INCAP child sponsorship) mainly of Nepali parents who migrated from Nepal. We found Bible students who were struggling to pay their college fees and thus started the support of Bible students from Nepal."

1990 was a momentous year of political upheaval, including in Nepal. With a new

democratic constitution, the monarchy lost much of its power. All religious prisoners were freed and their cases were dismissed. Nicanor was free to return from exile in India – and International Needs Nepal was formally established.

After the repression of 35 years, this was the first time Christians could be together for Christmas. There was even a message of good wishes to the Christian community from the Prime Minister.

Still, no-one was allowed to convert another person to any religion. Did that mean people could convert of their free will? Nepali Christians at last were a recognised minority, but could they share the good news of the Gospel? No-one was sure.

When the law finally became clear, it was very harsh: three years in prison for attempting to convert someone, and double that if they actually became a believer.

Nicanor began broadcasting Christian radio messages every week with the invitation and technical support of the Christian-based Far East Broadcasting Company, transmitting from Manila in the Philippines with signals capable of reaching the plains of Nepal. There was great demand for tapes of the messages to be carried far into the steep valleys of the Himalayas, where the radio could not reach.

We never want anyone to suffer persecution, but we can look to our sisters and brothers in Nepal to see the resilience and courage such opposition creates. Ray wrote, "One of our co-workers in Nepal was a very quiet shy lady. It was very difficult to get her to say anything publicly, until she was in police custody for her faith. That completely changed her and gave her a new boldness."



Ray said of those times, “What happens in Nepal could fit comfortably into any chapter of the book of Acts. Christians share with each other and have everything in common. The ordinary believer goes everywhere ‘gossiping the gospel’. Souls are being added daily and miracles are a common occurrence.”

Great testimonies flowed like swift rivers from Nepal’s towering glaciers. Nicanor was asked to visit a family that wished to destroy their idols and religious articles. “The room I entered was dark. In a corner sat an old man and his wife. The man was 97 years old and I wondered if the couple really understood what we were about to do.” With a glint in his eye, however, the old man said he was fed up with the worship of these useless gods. Now, with full understanding, he had decided to throw away his worthless idols and follow Christ. “The lady was equally fervent in following the Lord. At the end we prayed for the family and threw away their idols.” A few weeks later Nicanor

returned to see them. “They were happy in the Lord. They said they are willing and ready to meet the Saviour.”

An evangelist called Nani Ram said, “In my village there was a man with palsy disease for many years. He was brought for prayer and was miraculously healed. As a result, the whole family has turned to the Lord and news of the healing has spread in many villages.”

Evangelist Sarah Pradhan was travelling by bus in Nepal. The bus driver lost control of the vehicle and it skidded off the road and plunged down into a ditch. Sarah was hurt, with several broken ribs, yet even from her bed she was witnessing, with people coming to her house to enquire about the Lord.

A Buddhist lama (priest) found an International Needs booklet, read it, became a believer and was baptised. Later on, his Buddhist followers also believed – resulting in a group of believers 140 strong, in a village more than 10,000

believers 140 strong, in a village more than 10,000 feet above sea level.

Believers went to incredible lengths to share their faith. As Ray Harrison wrote, *“One of our team has walked as much as a week at a time across the mountains of Nepal, to go to a village to teach the women there about the Saviour. It is a lonely and dangerous journey. I remember one time asking her about that. Her simple response was ‘He is with me.’”*

As an accountant I cannot help reflecting on the incredible value for money donors were receiving from the Gospel growth in Nepal. At that time, it cost just US\$1,200 to support an evangelist – for an entire year!

Donors, supporters, and prayer partners visiting from other countries were astounded to see the conditions in which International Needs evangelists were working. Visitors found themselves travelling on barely moving buses, sleeping in little village huts, crossing rivers in knee deep water in pitch dark, eating simple village food, and meeting families whose children were infested with head lice, their bones weakened by rickets. Up in the squatter housing settlements, visitors met women and children who eked out a basic income from spinning wool – including some children supported by the INCAP programme. Still, they saw that even the very poorest believers contributed what they could to spread the Gospel. Farmers from the Tahru tribe had no money, but every day they gave a fistful of the rice they were growing. The evangelist who supported them (she had baptised 23 farmers at the time) used a sewing machine to supplement her income.

We have said that understanding the local

culture is a great advantage that indigenous evangelists can use to share the Gospel. One Nepalese evangelist used the new-found freedoms to reach people through ‘melas’ – a type of religious cultural festival on a high hill or near a holy river. People come by the thousands to celebrate and worship local deities. “In recent days we were able to visit such a mela. We had to walk for four full days to reach the spot. During the day we distributed literature without anyone opposing us. At night we shared the Gospel. Around 5,000 people were reached!” Another evangelist wrote, “Praise God that through our labour we were recently able to baptise 39 people!”

After 20 years of ministering on motorcycles, supporters finally funded a car for the Tamang family in 1992. It took Nicanor three days to learn how to drive. Elizabeth said, “Each time we went out, we crossed our fingers but gave a good clap or pat on his back when he made a good turn or successfully passed another vehicle.”

Sadly, in 1994 Nicanor was quite badly injured in a car accident, but within a few months he was well enough to be speaking near the mountain nation of Bhutan, “I was glad to be among the Dukpas, who are the original inhabitants of Bhutan and hear their testimonies. They have come to the Lord in an incredible manner and at great sacrifice.” Although there is no specific law against conversion in Bhutan, Christians are persecuted in many visible and invisible ways.

For me and for many others, one of the outstanding hallmarks of International Needs’ ministry has been the empowerment of women. In Nepal, with its iron wall up to resist the gospel,

it once seemed unthinkable that WINN – the Women’s International Needs Network – could hold a women’s conference in the country, but finally they were able to do so, and hundreds of women endured great hardship to attend. One woman walked for three days to be there. At the conference they heard the testimony of a church leader and his wife, who were being mercilessly beaten for refusing to return to their Buddhist faith. Despite the intense persecution, which left the pastor almost dead, he reported that more people had been added to their church. While the conference was happening, all the Christian prisoners were set free. They had been in jail for more than a year for attempting to convert their Nepalese neighbours.

The women at the conference looked at each other and agreed that women in Nepal not only needed Biblical teaching, they also needed training in health, nutrition, and childcare. They also decided that they must go where the women are, because women in rural areas have great difficulty in leaving the constant toil of their home or food garden, even for a few days. Evangelist Danmit Sharma took this challenge to heart and began travelling through remote villages to share her wisdom as a trained nurse and community health worker, teaching basic hygiene and nutrition. She showed women such essential life skills as how to deliver a baby safely, how to make a latrine, and how to boost nutrition with easy-to-grow leafy plants. She ran local conferences and spearheaded the Nepal village women’s outreach. Returning over time, she saw much fruit of her work: families that had their own latrines, healthier children, and fewer deaths. Along the way she shared the Gospel, finding that around half the people she witnessed to would

accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. “After all the problems our country is having,” she said, “they’re ready for it.”

Danmit Sharma did this for 25 years, trekking thousands of miles, mostly on foot, to bring the Gospel and good health education to the women of Nepal. With improvements in transport networks, she decided it was time to provide women with a central ministry location. She founded the Lydia Vocational Training Centre, named after the woman who expertly traded in sea-snail purple dye in New Testament times – a very successful entrepreneur. The Lydia Centre seeks to endow impoverished young Nepalese women with the same kinds of skills and livelihood mindset. The Centre houses a training facility so our young sisters can develop marketable skills in tailoring, knitting, adult literacy and handicrafts. The centre also cares for children, so they too can learn and experience the Gospel.

Janaki is a typical graduate of the Lydia Centre. She became the only Christian in her Indian Brahmin family. She returned to her village with skills in sewing and teaching. Soon she had a second sewing machine and started her own school, with another 15 women learning to knit and sew – and many have found the Lord.

Despite the soaring peaks to their north, 70% of Nepalese people live on the Tarai – the low hills and plains where most of Nepal’s food is grown. Over the years supporters and donors have equipped evangelists with a marvellous tool for this terrain, an Atlas bicycle. One wrote, “My cycle has been a great asset in preaching in the interior villages. Sometimes I cycle up to four hours to reach a house group.”

There has been much success, but opposition has taken many forms. Maoists have consistently attacked church buildings, burned Christian literature and threatened to kill Christian leaders. Also, just as in Bible times, revival has attracted false teachers, like snarling wolves amid innocent new Christians – with several cult groups making inroads in new and growing churches. Over the years much prayer for Nepal and other countries has gone up to God to give Christians courage to face down these cults and strengthen the budding fellowships.

A new evangelist was on the receiving end of sharp opposition from local priests and witch doctors. Many people were turning to the Lord, so the priests have seen their income decline. “Lal was waylaid by some of these people at night,” says Nicanor. “He was beaten and his Bible was torn to pieces. Still, Lal’s eyes are not on his enemies but on the people who have become new believers.” Listen to this - one of the people who mistreated him became a Christian. We are living in wonderful times!

Despite so much opposition, God has greatly blessed our work in Nepal with joy. The neighbours of an evangelist were very unwell – a mother and daughter. “They had visited doctors and spent all kinds of money on medicine and witchcraft, but there was no healing of any kind. I prayed for them and now in a wonderful way they are fast recovering without any medical help.”

You may be interested in the founding principles Nicanor used to carefully allocate his resources and support:

1) We do not give to individuals. All giving goes

through the local church, with their knowledge.

- 2) We support workers and deserving children only if they are recommended by the local church.
- 3) Generally we do not support pastors, as it is the responsibility of the local church.
- 4) We liaise closely with the Nepal Christian Fellowship and there is proper accountability.
- 5) Ministries are supervised either by International Needs or the local church.
- 6) Our support plays a supportive role and does not dwarf or hinder local incentives for giving. In fact we motivate local giving at all times.

There is much emphasis on the local church. Such a wise strategy has borne wonderful fruit. As Elizabeth says, “Our hearts lift up in praise when we see little kids of yesterday now working as teachers, IT professionals, nurses, doctors, engineers, business people, etc. Simple and timid Bible students are now expanding their ministries among the local areas, having 10 to 50 churches under their supervision as pastors, moderators, and some even as bishops.”

Praise be to God for his wonderful outpouring of grace and favour upon Nepal. God truly gave us excellent direction in guiding Ray Harrison into Nicanor and Elizabeth Tamang’s lives, at a very strategic location: the “chicken neck” of India. This is a narrow part of India called the Siliguri Corridor. Darjeeling is right there too – the tea-producing region. So, when Nicanor was exiled to Darjeeling after being imprisoned in Nepal, he was still very close to the work. Positioned just as strategically, for the Lord’s purposes, is the second nation we will visit in this survey of our first half century – just a few kilometres south, where marvellous things have happened, in Bangladesh.

BANGLADESH

The first frontline ministry project of International Needs began in Bangladesh in July 1974, to care for six orphaned children in a rented building in the capital city, Dhaka. One of those six children, Mary, was sponsored by Ray Harrison's mother, and another, Khushi, by Ray and Glenda in Australia.

Our beloved friend and former partner Smith Adhikary had received a vision in 1966 that he would one day start a church in that crowded city. He began preaching that year and continued to do so throughout his labour of establishing International Needs in his land.

The centrepiece of Smith's legacy in Bangladesh is the Savar Children's Village, where for decades hundreds of children from Dhaka's slums have found a loving refuge where they can be housed, clothed, and fed in a Christian atmosphere – and they can learn. This is possible because all the children, from ages 3-17, are sponsored by International Needs supporters. Countless children have given their lives to Christ and many have gone on to become evangelists and church planters.

As well as educating children, the Village has been home to the Lorna Vocational Training Programme – similar to the Lydia Centre to the north in Nepal, but named after our dear sister, Ray Harrison's wife. Women and children have been able to learn skills there, to achieve the livelihood they need to rise out of grinding poverty. This includes printing, carpentry, fish and poultry farming, and sewing. The Village also has a

healthcare facility that not only keeps the children healthy, but also serves the local community as the Savar Clinic.

The impact of the printing department has been immense. As well as equipping children with excellent skills, the department has been one of Bangladesh's leading sources of Christian literature. The Secretarial Science School produced thousands of secretaries and typists, while the Office Assistants Training Programme equipped students for productive careers – and as the students saw the love of Christ at work through the staff, most of them accepted Jesus. The Village also has a Bible school and a sister Bible school, the Bethel Bible Institute, was established in the Mirpur district of the city.

In the spirit of self-sufficiency, a kindergarten was established for well-to-do families to help fund the total pre-school programme. In the same way, as a measure of independence, International Needs Bangladesh began to run its own evangelistic conferences. All costs were raised by prayer partners sending in coins. In the first year they had 45 kg of coins. The next year, 78 kg!

Sraboni's father died shortly after she was born, then her mother and her other relatives were killed in a bus crash. Sraboni went to live in the International Needs Savar Children's Village. One night at the orphanage, Sraboni had a dream in which Jesus spoke clearly to her. Sraboni did not exactly understand the meanings of His words about forgiveness and wellbeing – and she realised that as a Hindu she could face hardship for acknowledging the



Christian God – but her heart was “bumping and pushing” her towards Jesus. She knelt down and accepted Him as her Saviour. After finishing school, she completed courses in Christian Ministry and New Testament Survey at Savar Bible School, before returning to her village to share about the Jesus she came to know at the Children’s Village.

As you know, International Needs never forces our faith on others. That is very important – and most of the children at the Village come from Hindu backgrounds. So, when the team decided to set Friday afternoons apart for fasting and prayer, it was purely voluntary and the staff did not expect many children to join in. To their great surprise, more than 70 of the children came along, praying for their sick friends, for their sponsors and for the people of their city and nation, whose needs are extreme.

One of the girls in the Village became seriously ill and was taken to hospital. So grim was the outlook that the adults on staff lost all hope for her survival. They returned from the hospital at midnight with broken hearts, expecting tragic news in the morning, but the Village children had been praying. “In the morning we heard she was out of danger!”

One boy, with no earthly parents but with a wonderfully loving heavenly Father said, “I have been in the Savar Children’s Village for the last 10 years. You brought me here when nobody cared for me. God not only gave me food and accommodation through International Needs, but I came to know about the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour. Please allow me to serve Him in any way I can.”

Many children fall in love with Jesus, of course, so there is a Savar Village tradition of small groups of children visiting villages to share their love of Christ through music and Bible readings.

This tradition has extended overseas, with groups of children travelling to the support countries to thank and delight supporters with their beautiful singing and dancing. In international missions ministry, however, visas are an eternal thorn in our side. Immigration officials can be unpredictable and capricious. One group of Savar Village children was facing the prospect of being turned away from their North American destination. An official asked a young Savar boy called Andrew, “Why are you going to Canada?” “To sing and dance!” “Sing me a song then.” Andrew began singing the beautiful song, “I am Your Child, Lord Jesus.” The officer was overwhelmed. “May God bless you as you travel to our beautiful cities,” he said, “so people will enjoy your singing.” The entire group then received their visas, no more questions asked.

At the other end of life’s spectrum, International Needs Bangladesh has run an aged home in the city, offering love and dignity to those who have no-one else to care for them in their final years. This is one of many programmes that Smith Adhikary and then his son McDonald Adhikary have nurtured with their teams.

Every hour spent earning is an hour not learning. So many children are being denied an education because they must work.

As I highlight the ministry in Bangladesh, I feel the need to give further explanation of one particular project, because it can create complicated thoughts and feelings for us, especially among our Western friends. I am talking

about child labour: children who must work to help support their families. Some of these school-age children labour in the most difficult circumstances. It is for these children that the Drop-In Centre in Dhaka was created. Yes, that is challenging, isn't it? We don't want children to work in difficulty, but for many in Dhaka, their families cannot survive without the income children bring in. Of course, every hour spent earning is an hour not learning. So many children are being denied an education because they must work. They grow up without any sense of safety because their working childhood exposes them to dangerous workplaces, abuse, violence, and exploitation. They are vulnerable to human trafficking. And they cannot play. They never get to be children. The Drop-In Centre is for these children. It gives them a safe place where they can find food, social support, mental health care, precious leisure and play, healthcare, a face wash, shower or bath, legal aid if they need it, and the basics of an education.

One of the key roles of the Drop-In Centre team is to negotiate with employers, to obtain free time for a hardworking child. When Farzana was seven, she was working full time as home help: cleaning floors, washing dishes, and doing laundry. She earned just a pittance, but that meant food in her family's little shelter in the slum. The Drop-In team talked to the family that employs her, gaining an agreement that Farzana can spend two hours each afternoon at the Centre, with no drop in her income. That is a good outcome! She is playing, learning, washing – and hearing about Jesus too.

Noyon is another child who must work to keep his family alive. His shift at the tea stall is 11

hours long! His parents don't want this for their boy, but his tiny income makes a critical difference in their lives of deep poverty. As with Farzana, the team negotiated for Noyon to work a little less for the same amount – and spend that free time at the Drop-In Centre. Was he well-behaved because of this generosity? No, he was not! He quarrelled, he acted up ... but then he was taught a few letters in Bengali and English ... and he quickly developed a deep hunger for learning, along with a much better attitude. He learned manners and how to get along with others – vital personal skills for a lifetime beyond poverty.

The model of allowing local leadership to hear God's call to ministry and lead in ways that are culturally relevant is proving to be very fruitful in spreading the Gospel, that all may have life and have it abundantly through Jesus Christ.

Those are two children with families – but many of the working children live by themselves on the streets. They are abandoned through poverty and neglect, through the ravages of heart-numbing substances, or escaping from forced labour, sexual assault, slavery, or simply because poverty has killed their parents. This happened to Tuhin. His father died and his mother could not provide for him. He found work repairing bicycles for long hours and little pay. He was a child but looked like a stressed and exhausted worn-out little man. Through fun, food, education, and counselling at the Drop-In Centre – and by fixing a few less cycles - Tuhin was able to break the tragic Dhaka cycle of children living and dying on the streets.

Once again, the model of allowing local leadership to hear God's call to ministry and lead in ways that are culturally relevant is proving to be



very fruitful in spreading the Gospel, that all may have life and have it abundantly through Jesus Christ. We live in an imperfect world, so we create solutions that reflect realities, while pointing people towards the One who is perfect; the One who offers eternal hope, even in the crowded streets and slums of Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Along with Nepal, Bangladesh has been at the heart of International Needs since 1974. So it was natural that work would also begin in the huge and vigorous nation just next door to these countries. It actually took a full five years to begin, but as you are about to see, the team there quickly made up for lost time. Let's go to India!

INDIA

This vast nation and people were very important to Ray Harrison. The very name International Needs echoes the human suffering he saw when he lived and worked in India with Youth for Christ. India is where his hunger to give supporters a chance to **"Do Something"** began. The first meeting of the International Council of IN was held in New Delhi in 1978 with a small group of delegates from various countries meeting on the platform of Mavalankar Auditorium. Joining Ray Harrison were Smith Adhikary from Bangladesh, and Nicanor and Elizabeth Tamang from Nepal. From the USA came Don and Sharon Ingram, and John McCullough, along with UK guests Peter Honour and the Hubbards – Andrew and Jenny. Glenda and Ray de Jager came from Australia, while New Zealand was represented by Ian Lysaght and the new Executive Director of INNZ, Mel Newth. Among the other attendees were the three leaders from IN ministry in India itself: Sheila Massey and Alex and Janet Singh. (These three officially registered IN India as

a Society under the Karnataka Society Acts on May 24 of that year.)

Towards the end of that first International Council, Ken Gnanakan returned to India to share the vision he had for ACTS. With such a team in place, transformations and testimonies began to flow.

At meetings in Chennai, Ray was preaching and singing. On the last night he sang "I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold". A young woman heard that and wrote to him, saying how much those words moved her. "I'd give anything to know a God like that, who is so wonderful that He demands everything I've got." She gave her heart to the Lord. Ray wrote about her, *"She worked in a telephone exchange and immediately started a little Bible study group there, touching the lives of many girls. Forty years later I heard she was still going on for her Lord."*

In a hut on the outskirts of Calcutta, a woman had collected an image of every god she could find, from every religion, just to be sure she had all her bases covered. Sure enough, one of the images was a picture of the Lord Jesus. One day a Christian neighbour came in and pointed to the picture and said, "Let me tell you about that one. He is the only true and living God." The woman heard, believed, and gave her heart to the Lord – then went on to spend her life repeating what her neighbour said – "Let me tell you about the only true and living God" – as a team member of International Needs.

A man in North India told Ray about his experience in captivity, like Joseph in Egypt. He went to prison voluntarily, because as a new Christian he wanted to confess his crimes from before he believed. In the jail, God honoured him and the guards favoured him. He was put in

charge of the other prisoners – just like Joseph.

India was proving to be an exotic land that invited this kind of bold and dangerous profession of faith. In Western India, community tensions threatened to disrupt Ray's evangelistic meetings, but thousands came and whole families were challenged to follow the Lord.

Local evangelists bravely took the good news of Jesus Christ to cities like Varanasi, possibly the oldest living city in the world – where there were 5,000 temples, but only three churches. (One is the St Thomas Church in Godowlia, where Jesus' doubting disciple is reputed to have preached just a few years after the Lord's ascension.) Varanasi is a city steeped in Hindu religion – where people come to bathe in the Ganges river at the 'ghats', the steps leading into the river. Despite the heart-breaking spectre of such idolatry, Christians are right in there, sharing the truth of Jesus' pure and living water as Hindu pilgrims try to cleanse themselves in the river.

Here is a snapshot of the early work in India from Colin Hewen, grateful for regular monthly donations. "Thank you for caring. One burden the Lord has given me in India is the level of nutrition in the food here. Lots of rice, few vegetables or meat, virtually no raw or fresh food. I prayed and lo, an anonymous addition of \$70 arrived. This should provide fresh salad every night for two months. 72c to feed 30 people! Bean sprouts, tomatoes, cucumber, capsicum, cabbage, onions, carrots and dressing! It makes a nutritious addition to their diet. May God richly bless that kind donor in His service."

A young Hindu man became a Christian through Ray's ministry and was so excited, he insisted on sharing his testimony wherever they went. When Ray returned to India a few years later, Ray saw this man in a meeting, looking rather downcast and trying to hide. It turned out he had returned to some of his Hindu ways – and he was ashamed: "How can God love me now?" Ray said it was a joy to be able to tell him that our God is a pardoning God, "otherwise none of us would be in business".

One of International Needs foundational ministries in North India was the wonderful discipling work of Sheila Massey and her Shalom ministry. Shalom began by visiting churches to provide teaching to new disciples. Then she started a Bible Club in her home with nearly 100 happy children, while a smaller group of disciples became prayer warriors and evangelists. A regular Bible study group at a hospital saw 40 hospital staff giving their lives to Christ.

Sheila's ministry expanded to embrace more children's Bible clubs, more hospital Bible studies, prayer cells, counselling, Bible study groups, women's ministries, teaching and preaching, crusades, leadership training, Bible school training, and projects of service. She set strategic goals for herself, such as helping families raise their household income by 20%. Sheila was formidable!

Brajen, a young autorickshaw driver in the state of Tripura became a choir master for a Christian crusade. He sold his autorickshaw so he could give all his time to the Lord's ministry, running Sheila's International Needs Shalom Bible

clubs in his state.

Partei and Thuampui were twin sisters who could not go to school because of their family's poverty. Sheila arranged International Needs child sponsors for them. Soon the girls were at school and became champion long-jumpers.

Ray wrote about Sheila Massey, from the time she was ministering in Meghalaya. She lived in a house with snakes and scorpions. Later, she said she had graduated from that and was now in a house where the floor was sealed. She only heard the snakes hissing under the floorboards when she went to sleep. Ray asked Sheila how she could sleep with the snakes hissing. She said, "I just tell the Lord that I am tired and I am going to sleep. And he must take care of the snakes. He does!"

"Share and Care" was another International Needs ministry in North India – this time pioneered by Dr Shirin David in Allahabad, who began ministering to children with disabilities. Many had been shunned by their parents because of their deformities – and some parents had added to the children's challenges by beating or burning them. While their bodies were scarred and marred, their hearts were open to the good news of Jesus Christ, shining through Dr Shirin's gentle love and care.

She also set up a mother and child clinic, along with a tailoring unit called the Neva Development Centre to train Hindu girls in livelihood skills – equipped with a home-based business making petticoats, pyjamas, shirts, blouses and suits. Shy timid teenagers were

transformed into self-confident young women – and as the Neva Centre expanded into literacy, the women's horizons became ever wider. This was an innovative ministry in a region where it was highly unusual for girls to attend school.

Neva Centre became a launch pad into more formal education – and Dr Shirin developed a primary level healthcare course, including first aid, nutrition, and home care. When it became clear that the local boys also were struggling to read and write, she added a literacy programme for young boys.

Shirin David's prodigious workload ran from Ladies Club meetings through to digging wells for nearby villages. Even so, "Evangelism has always been our main activity in all these projects. Our team regularly shares the Word of God with the people in and around the villages, amongst Hindus and Muslims. Three young Hindu men from our village programme have accepted the Lord Jesus and were baptised by Dr Ken Gnanakan."

In Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, our ministry leaders ran a school in the town of Kachhwa, with around 400 students – and it has won many awards and is recognised by the government for the quality of its education.

A beautiful and enduring ministry in India was established right at the turn of the new millennium, close to where Nicanor Tamang served his exile from Nepal, in the Siliguri Corridor near Darjeeling. Two young Christians, Prasanna and Arpana Khaling, told Nicanor they wanted to work among children. After much prayer and waiting, they established an orphanage and girl's home called Sano Diyo, which means The Little Lighthouse.

Nicanor took responsibility of San Diyo's

fundraising and administration, while the Khalings ran the orphanage and cared for the 35 girls. The Little Lighthouse may be far from the sea, but it is shining God's light in a region where vulnerable children are at a very high risk of human trafficking. Within a ten-minute drive, a snatched child can be made to disappear into any one of three crowded countries. As a community outreach, the Khalings adopted Dr David's Share and Care ministry, so local children can come to Sano Diyo and hear about Jesus. Each Saturday morning the children eat a healthy breakfast together, share stories about Jesus Christ, and sing their little hearts out! What a wonderful bond-builder. Now, when Prasanna, Arpana, or any of the Sano Diyo girls are out in the community, children run to them, sharing what is happening in their lives. A mother of a Care and Share child says, "Each morning when my son gets up, he asks if it is Saturday."

Nirmala is one of the Sano Diyo girls. She says, "I was born in the foothills of Darjeeling. My father died when I was a child and left my mother, my brother, and me alone. Many times we went to bed hungry. I did not go to school. I did not even know there was a school. I fell sick frequently. Life was very miserable. I did not know the living God and worshipped all kinds of idols. One day a pastor came and told my mother about Sano Diyo. As God says in Jeremiah 1:14, God knew me before I was born and He chose me to come to Sano Diyo. After I came to Sano Diyo my life changed. I know the living God. He is my everything. He has done many great things in my life. He has healed me from all my sickness. Through His grace I was able to go to school all the way through high school. If it is God's will, I look

forward to university in my future. I am 19 and I am proud to be a girl. Today I can stand among the rest and fight for my rights."

I am filled with gratitude towards our supporters for making such transformations possible. Now that Sano Diyo has been shining its light for a generation, it is beginning to turn in another direction, to include a vocational training centre, like the original ACTS ministry in India that we will be visiting soon. I am sure that in the years to come Sano Diyo will be a great blessing in vocational training, just as it has been a haven for empowering vulnerable girls to become confident young women.

Ministry in India expanded, as local leaders saw needs and opportunities to meet them. In Kolkata we fed people amid the smog, terrible poverty, and armies of homeless people sleeping in the streets. In villages we established schools. In Sikkim, near Tibet, Sarah Pradhan had a mountainous ministry as a tireless alpine explorer for Christ. She was constantly on the move, bringing news of salvation, baptism, and healing to the mountain valleys. "On 12 April," she wrote, "a big extended family came to know the Lord through my door-to-door contacts in my own town. On 21 April we went to a place called Rateypani – red mud water – and several people were baptised. Among them were two families who had come to know the Lord a few months back. They come from a Buddhist family." And this is when Sarah was not at all well!

Now we turn to the mother of all International Needs projects in India – in the south, in what is now the high-tech hub of Bangalore but was certainly not booming like that when Dr Ken Gnanakan and his brother Ricky



began working with us there.

They called their project the ACTS Institute, based on the evangelistic thrust of the Bible's book of Acts, the get-up-and-walk healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate, and the time when the Apostle Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth and worked with them as a tentmaker to finance his ministry. It was certainly a **"Do Something"** ministry in keeping with the vision and challenge of Ray Harrison.

As always, funding was precarious but birthed and bathed in prayer and in God's miracles of provision. As Ray explained, *"Our ACTS Institute in India was in its early stages. The agricultural side of it had been planned for some time, with a big thrust forward, and funding had been arranged for many thousands of dollars to purchase equipment, seed, animals, etc. On the assumption of that promise, all the plans had been made at the India end and the timing was crucial because the rainy season was coming shortly. Suddenly, through an unexpected series of events, the promise fell through and the funds were not available. I had an urgent call telling me about this. Realising that the Indian brethren were in a desperate situation, I contacted a few farming friends to see whether they could share. In a wonderful, incredibly generous response, within a week, gifts*

came in from several small communities who had given very generously. We only had about a week to get the money in. I had decided that if it was not there in the mail by Tuesday, we would need to take some drastic action and maybe mortgage our home. We still needed about \$15,000. Tuesday morning, I planned as usual to leave home in time to clear the mailbox around 8.30 am. However, one of my boys had trouble with his old car. I spent an extra half-an-hour or so pushing it up and down the road trying to get it started, so instead of arriving at the box at 8.30 am I did not get there until almost 9 am.

"A telegram arrived in the box at 10 minutes to 9 am, from a generous friend promising several thousands of dollars and guaranteeing to underwrite whatever extra was needed on a temporary basis until the funds could come in. Had I opened the box at the normal time the telegram would not have been there, but because the Lord graciously delayed my arrival by just a few minutes, the timing of the message was perfect, the need was met, and the prayers of the folk in India (where they had a day of prayer and fasting) were wonderfully answered too."

Like training tentmakers in the Apostle Paul's era, ACTS Institute began training Indian evangelists in vocational skills so they could be

self-supporting as they moved from place to place, preaching the Gospel – and what an ambitious and successful ministry this has been. As well as comprehensive theological and Biblical studies, ACTS offered a three-year on-the-job curriculum in such subjects as agriculture, horticulture, metalcraft, electronics, woodwork, nursing, home management, commerce, computers, and accounting. They had a screen-printing unit – and could take on commercial jobs. The tailoring department even included a leather-making section. There was a typing school in a nearby village. Always concerned about caring for God’s creation, ACTS pioneered a rubbish recycling centre – collecting, recycling, and even composting. They paid local women a good wage as sorters. With the reputation of ACTS enhanced in the community, staff were able to go door-to-door, collecting waste while also ready to offer the treasure of the Gospel of Christ in exchange. ACTS values were clearly on display here – and continue to be, with ACTS as a national leader in environmental management. As a government representative said of their recycling program: “We have not seen anyone else do this so quickly and faithfully.”

Rain and plague. ACTS was due to hold an important conference for new believers, but the event was threatened by a confluence of two frightening outbreaks. The first was rain. So much rain. Days of rain. The second outbreak was bubonic plague! The ACTS team prayed fervently ... and half their prayers were answered. “The plague was brought under

control,” said Ricky Gnanakan from ACTS, “but the rains showed no signs of stopping. We began to doubt.” Even in their doubts, more prayer went up. In answer, the rain kept falling – except directly over the conference venue. Even just a short distance away, heavy rain kept thundering down, but the event was dry. “Our converts say this is the miraculous doing of the Lord. They were overwhelmed by His awesome power over nature.”

Implicit in all ACTS activities was the drive to be economically self-supporting – as well as funding ACTS’ evangelistic ministries. Evangelists and church workers-in-training visited many nearby villages to run Sunday schools, church services, and outreaches. Dramas brought villagers to tears. Even while snake worshippers were adorning a cobra’s nest, ACTS children were charming the villagers, singing praises to God.

Our partners in other countries quickly responded as the local leaders invited them to participate in opportunities for cross-cultural ministry, with Christian teachers coming from all over the world to teach subjects such as electronics – with the joyful chance to be involved in outreaches, speaking to local people, seeing miracles that rarely occurred at home, and inviting the people of India to receive Jesus as their Saviour.

In an outreach to the Singasandra suburb, where prime apartments now stand in tall blocks, low caste women learned how to become self-reliant and ease their crushing economic



ACTS INSTITUTE

hardship. In Ootacamund (shortened to Ooty), there was the Ooty Booty project, teaching village women how to grow “booty treasure” – nutritious vegetables in their gardens, along with other basics of vocational living skills.

This kind of work is a breakthrough witness to the families of those who are being blessed. The brother of a tailoring student began attending church simply because ACTS treated his sibling so well. He believed, was baptised, and then disciplined through regular visits from the ACTS team.

A young lady’s marriage was breaking up because of infertility. At the ACTS medical clinic, the doctor and an evangelist prayed with her and asked her to trust in the Lord for a miracle. She prayed, believed, and became a mother.

Fed up with such a hard life of unending poverty, an old lady tied a rope to a tree to hang herself. A young girl intervened, saying “Visit the Jesus Family” – the ACTS evangelism ministry. She set aside her rope and followed the girl to the ministry, where she met the Lord and became a living witness of Jesus Christ.

Nagaraj invited the ACTS team to pray in his house, because his whole household was being tormented by a mysterious oppression. After prayer, he felt the spectre lift. He accepted Jesus as his Lord and asked the team to hold more prayer meetings in his home so he could invite his friends and neighbours - like Nalini, who found great deliverance in her family life through the weekly prayer meeting.

A 60-year-old village watchman in Bommasandra was suffering endless headaches and sleepless nights. He was delivered through to visit the ‘holy place’ of his goddess. Finally,

he set aside his vow – but he still feared God’s punishment for his lingering doubt, until Jesus came to him in a dream, bringing tremendous compassion and reassurance.

Within Hindu culture, house churches and door to door ministry find more open hearts than traditional church services. This kind of indigenous home church approach puts more pressure on individual Christians to lead others in their faith, so ACTS created PEWS – People in Witness Seminars, which combine Biblical teaching with practical discussion on actual issues people face every day, using role models from the Bible. This kind of training provides a fruitful framework for running house churches and teaching others how to reach out and share Christ.

In its first fifteen years, ACTS grew from a two-bedroom house to a four-acre campus and 140 staff – and expanded more than 500 km north to Hyderabad. A generation later, today, the ACTS Group of Institutions includes a higher education academy, high schools, ACTS Play’n’Learn creches and slum schools, primary schools, Christian schools, the Sano Diyo orphanage and vocational training centre, a theological book trust as a platform for Christian writers, a community development programme in Allahabad, the Programme for Environment Awareness in Schools (PEAS) ... and even a workshop that makes and sells world-class guitars! ACTS also exports extension courses to build skills in countries like Indonesia.

Dr Ken was always committed to achieving sustainable growth. Through expertise and the

grace of God, ACTS is now fully self-sufficient and has equipped thousands of people to earn a livelihood and live for the Lord. Today, like the man at the Beautiful Gate, ACTS has indeed been able to rise up and walk. No longer called International Needs India, today it is prominent in its markets as ACTS Group of Institutions. As Dr Ken's son and ACTS CEO, Santosh Gnanakan says, "This is only because of God's grace and mercy, despite us! We acknowledge the generous support of International Needs, whom God used to plant seeds so many years ago. We might be independent and fully self-sufficient, but we don't want to go on this journey alone. We want to continue to partner with all of you. After all, we are all serving one God, one Kingdom! And that's what we would like you to remember whenever you think of ACTS!" And we do think of ACTS, often, as a beloved partner and a huge lighthouse of hope, for the whole of India.

SRI LANKA

I love this testimony from Sri Lanka that shows the power of a Christian after-school group to bring a whole family to Christ. Cynthia and Alfred Devadason are beautiful International Needs partners. As Sri Lankans with a God-given vision for ministry, they decided to show their love by starting an after-school group for slum children. This was no small group – they brought the Good News of Jesus to 800 children and young people every week. One day they were catching a ride in a taxi rickshaw, which prominently displayed a sign saying, 'God Is Love'. They asked the driver about it. He said, "I was a Buddhist, but my children have been attending an after-school Christian programme. The change in their lives was so remarkable that my wife and I decided to become Christians." Cynthia and Alfred were filled with joy to discover that it was their own International Needs programme that God had used to bring this family to Christ – without them even knowing. I love that.

The children they were reaching had no choice but to live in extreme poverty, in stark contrast to the island beauty of Sri Lanka. The families live in slums along canals that are more like sewers – often with two families in one tiny room. The one bright point in their children's lives was the after-school ministry, where they received nutritious food to take home, along with clothing and Sunday School supplies. Every Christmas the families received a new bucket, to carry water from the community pump, back to their shacks. The Devadasons put on regular Sunday School and Bible studies for them, while putting the word out for child sponsors (along with heart-stirring



photographs of the children singing, dressed in lovely new uniforms provided by International Needs). Such a beautiful ministry.

No wonder so many Hindu and Buddhist parents have come to the Lord since International Needs Lanka (INLK) began in 1997, with projects in the areas of education and children's rights starting up the following year.

A mother and father were badly injured in the Sri Lankan civil war, leaving them with permanent disabilities and sight loss. To survive, they took to felling trees and trying to sell firewood. This is illegal and dangerous work that barely fed their young children. Pastor Kannagalingam found this family and arranged for International Needs to provide the makings of a small poultry business. They can look after their family, avoid prosecution, and gain an income despite their disabilities. Pastor Kannagalingam is very good at spotting these opportunities, since his ministry is supported by his own form of Paul's 'tent making' – a well-established fishing business.

Just before the turn of the millennium, in November 1999, the six-floor Harrison Child Care Centre was dedicated in Colombo. It was a beautiful new building of six floors, to meet the needs of hundreds of children living in the Badowitta slum community, in family homes built from scrap wood and plastic, with no proper sanitation. Yet when those children came to the Harrison Centre they were neat, clean, and eager to learn. There was a Montessori programme for pre-schoolers, after school tuition for primary aged children, and so much more. All the children regularly learned about the love of Jesus every

week.

In time, a vocational training centre was added for the mothers, empowering them with skills and training to enable them to lift themselves out of the grinding poverty of their circumstances. Today that community has been transformed. Children are educated and able to take their place in society.

A family came to live with Alfred and Cynthia after they came to Christ through the actions of Cynthia's sister. The children, Rebecca and Timothy, became part of the family. Their grandfather was the Hindu priest of the village where they were born, high in the tea plantations. Today, Rebecca and Timothy lead their own Christian ministries in Sri Lanka, reaching out to children and families with the Gospel, along with education, empowerment projects and poverty relief – especially in these very difficult recent days for Sri Lanka. International Needs is indeed seeing generational transformation through the Gospel.

INLK reflects that commitment in their mission: empowering the marginalised to restore human dignity – physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. We want to see change and transformation, and see it spearheaded by their own community members.

As I write this, Sri Lanka is still in the grip of a terrible economic crisis that has lasted half a decade so far, with food prices soaring, annual inflation hitting 55%, and state institutions nearing collapse. In this crisis, we have been supporting home vegetable-growing projects and garden gifts, so families can use the same soil that produces such wonderful tea, to grow their own food. We are also supporting simple livelihood initiatives. We look with hope towards a time when we are standing with the people of Sri Lanka as they begin to experience better days.

PART TWO: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

INTO AFRICA – THROUGH TANZANIA AND INTO GHANA

As we stand together on Mt Victoria in Ray's town of Wellington, looking out across the bowl of the world, the countries we have visited so far are to the extreme west – on our left. As we begin to consider Africa, which way do we turn? We can look either way. Whether to the east or to the west, left or right, the continent of Africa is roughly the same distance from New Zealand. It is a long way. Likewise, International Needs has come a long way in Africa, from our first project in Tanzania – back when International Needs, like myself, was still in its infancy.

Tanzania is no longer in need of our support, but that first programme showed how useful the International Needs focus on national leaders was going to become, as transitions were taking place after the long tradition of sending foreign missionaries. International Needs had been asked to support roving church planters there. These indigenous Christian leaders had a problem. Like Paul on his missionary journeys, they travelled from rural village to village. Most rural people could not do this, because they needed to stay close to home to tend their own food gardens. A travelling church planter, by the very nature of their gospel-sowing ministry, could not spend enough time at home to grow vegetables. They needed another source of support – and they received it generously, through International Needs partners.

This kindness and partnership led to a growing

network across the country where the church planters had sown gospel seeds and congregations had grown. To keep the spiritual soil deep and fertile, International Needs developed programmes alongside local churches, to improve village resilience. Over time, more than 30 Tanzanian villages have joined these programmes, being blessed with better health and greater environmental awareness. A health centre was established, training community health volunteers, launching a mobile clinic, and supporting pregnant women and children.

After the first five successful years of partnership in Tanzania, it was time to expand International Needs' African presence. My life has been shaped greatly by the decision that was made at that time - to establish links with my home country, the Republic of Ghana. Roughly the size of New Zealand, but 16,000 km from Ray Harrison's home.

It all began in 1982, when Ray Harrison met a man who is very special to me: the Very Reverend Walter Pimpong, who at the time was working for Youth for Christ in Switzerland. As you saw in Ray's letter that I included earlier, they had discussed the possibility of Rev. Pimpong's return home to establish International Needs in Ghana.

They subsequently met again in 1983 for the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists, organised by the Billy Graham Organisation in Amsterdam. Ray introduced Rev. Walter to some friends in the USA, who graciously began raising funds for the work in Ghana. Rev. Walter assembled a board of Ghanaian believers, International Needs in Ghana was founded,



becoming incorporated three years later. In parallel, Rev. Pimpong served as pastor of Accra Chapel in the nation's capital and taught at Maranatha University College and Trinity College.

With International Needs Ghana soundly established, our team began the great and glorious work of profoundly altering our society. Demonic activity had been widespread in Ghana – so had the problem of syncretism, where the purity of Christianity had been corrupted with the damaging yeast of traditional religion. The nation was peppered with shrines for fetish sacrifices.

Trokosi became our prime target: an ancient cultural tradition of fetish slavery and ritual servitude where young virgins are taken into captivity to serve in shrines as slaves to the local priests. When our work began, Trokosi was still a significant part of village life. The girl was usually 12 years old but could be as young as 6. Whether by force or deception, she was offered to the priest to appease the gods for crimes committed by her family. She would 'marry' the god of the shrine and works for the shrine priest, elders, or owners – without pay and absolutely without consent. She was forced to work long hours in the fields, often with a child strapped to her back, fathered by the priest. She was there for life, or until the priest tired of her – and if she ran away, the village would be required to kidnap another girl to take her place.

Led by Rev. Pimpong, through a mix of social activism and pressure on politicians to make this practice illegal, the Trokosi Modernisation Programme shot International Needs Ghana to prominence and saw the release from ritual servitude of over 3,500 girls and women. Trokosi Liberation led to tremendous excitement and

blessed freedom, but also to a great need for healing from unimaginable physical and spiritual trauma. This work met with a huge degree of opposition and resistance from the fetish priests and the demons who controlled them.

As you can imagine, it was not enough simply to extract the girls and the women from their slavery. They were demonised, stigmatised, penniless, and lacking any resources for building a life after their slavery. Because of International Needs' combination of spiritual and practical ministry, the district governor supported us in our strategy of rescuing the girls and women from this demonic captivity, then offering practical help in the form of education, livelihood training, trauma counselling, and spiritual hope.

After initial hostility to Christianity, the government of Ghana recognised what a positive influence Christians could be for society. We were allowed to acquire 22 acres of land for a vocational training facility and a nursery school. We established the International Needs Vocational Training Centre in Adidome (now called Centre for Empowerment and Enterprise Development) in the Lower Volta Region, offering a livelihood programme for young women rescued from this life of servitude. After gross neglect and abuse by their captor priests, they came to us malnourished, unclothed, uneducated, and traumatised. A third of the girls were pregnant. Many were too far from home to travel to Adidome each day – if they were even able to return home after the public shame of their servitude. They needed a home. Accommodation, nourishing food three times a day, and a loving family environment were waiting for them at the Adidome Centre. New uniforms helped create a

a far different identity for them after their slavery. In a spirit of determined self-sufficiency, the girls supplemented international donations and sponsorship by growing cassava. The gift of a fishing canoe cut food costs, as fish added protein to their diet.

The young women were able to master the essential life and livelihood skills that empowered them to earn a living. They trained in high-quality cloth weaving, mat making, batik, hairdressing, home management and ceramics, as well as horticulture and agriculture, while their children were being taught at the nursery school. They also had the chance to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and study the Bible.

The fetish priests were furious, bringing down curses upon the name of Walter Pimpong. As Rev. Walter said, “Can you imagine what it is like when a whole group of psychics and practitioners of traditional religions in your country meet to pray after you by name?”

If the priests were angry, their rage was far outweighed by the joy and excitement of the fetish slaves who were being released, looked after, and empowered through education. Many of these precious sisters accepted the Lord as their personal Saviour, were baptised and were also eager to learn about the faith that brought them freedom.

Emancipated slaves received a certificate of emancipation, stating that the chiefs and traditional rulers: Do hereby emancipate and forever free... the name of the woman or girl being liberated... from said Trokosi system – spiritually, psychologically and physically – forthwith!

Partners worldwide rallied around us, from inside and outside the International Needs network. I want to honour the support of a phalanx of faithful partners: the Laing Trust Fund; Anti-Slavery International; Comic Relief through International Needs UK; support through International Needs Australia from the Australian Agency for International Development as it was at the time; from International Needs Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency; International Needs New Zealand; churches in America; UNICEF; the Sentry Movement in Switzerland; the Trokosi Abolition Fellowship; Every Child Ministries; Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement; and many more, including all the people around the globe who prayed and gave so we could fight Trokosi and liberate its victims. Because of the sustained advocacy of International Needs Ghana, the criminal code was amended by the Parliament of Ghana, making the Trokosi practice a crime.

Rev. Walter said, “It will go into history that International Needs spearheaded the fight to abolish a form of slavery.” Liberated fetish slaves received human rights awards around the world, on behalf of thousands of their sisters who were being set free through the efforts of International Needs Ghana. I am very proud of those who went before me in the organisation, starting this fight and allowing me to play some small part in it as a young man when I first joined International Needs.

Such is the glory of God and the power of His grace that even some of the fetish priests turned to Jesus! The Jesus film had a particularly powerful effect on them. Evangelist Paul Sepenu spoke of one priest who deeply feared receiving



the death penalty from other priests and their demons for turning to Christ – but bravely did it anyway and lived! Sampson Amegah was a fetish priest who became a Christian, then went on to serve as a church planter! He said, “I was dedicated to an idol when I was in my mother’s womb”, but he threw off that yoke, as did the thousands of women he was party to enslaving.

New believers brought out their ‘small gods in my room’ to destroy them and sing songs of victory over the devil, creating an atmosphere for the miraculous. Visiting supporters from overseas were empowered to work wonders. One visitor, Francis Dogbey, was confronted with a girl who had died. He prayed for the faith to revive her – and she came back to life!

Out of this great liberation the work of International Needs Ghana expanded in all kinds of directions. The model established at the vocational training centre in Adidome became

a wider programme, helping Ghanaian women and children acquire the skills to overcome their poverty. Classrooms were built, wells were dug, clean water was piped into villages. Church planters were trained, churches were established in unreached regions, such as Volta in the remote north. Medical teams provided unheard-of village healthcare. The awareness of all Ghana was raised with respect to child protection, child marriage and human trafficking.

Through it all, International Needs child sponsors gave the hope and means for a better life to children like Samuel. His family’s constant struggle to survive meant there was nothing left over to pay for Samuel’s education. Sponsorship created a place for him at International Needs’ Amrahia Community School – and ultimately he became a doctor through the University of Ghana Medical School and an advocate for all whose poverty is holding them back from achieving their potential in life. I am so grateful for all that our supporters have helped us to achieve in my country of Ghana.

ACROSS THE CONTINENT - KENYA, UGANDA, ETHIOPIA, ERITREA

Now we are entering the 80s and 90s: the teenage years of International Needs – and my own. A time of great turmoil in life and in the world – but also a time of growth, hope, a strengthening sense of identity, and a wealth of emerging opportunities.

KENYA

The first International Needs foray into Kenya happened long ago, when our organisation was less than ten years old. As a great land in the heart of the wandering paths of herding and nomadic people, Kenya has always had porous borders. In the early 1980s International Needs donors supported a Service In Mission (SIM) outreach in the Muslim Somali community in remote northern Kenya. The IN spirit of self-sufficiency was already in place, and portions of Christian scripture were not simply being handed out free of charge, they were being purchased by hundreds of Muslims! Imagine! Muslims buying Bible tracts! SIM missionary Warren Modricker said, “Many Somalis here are very much afraid of anything that is Christian. So this kind of interest is truly the Lord’s doing.”

International Needs Kenya itself was born out of a delightful visit to Canada by three Kenyan pastors, who not only shared the Gospel with their new North American friends and spoke about the needs of their great African country – they also sang! Wonderfully well! The Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya confirmed these pastors’ God-given vision for their homeland, and the work in Kenya began in 1989 as Kingdom Children,

which ultimately merged with International Needs Canada ... and eventually was registered in 2016 as International Needs Kenya.

In the early days David Boyes brought out a team of ten very capable young Canadians who blessed the new ministry through many practical projects, from building a family’s chicken coop through to starting up a business manufacturing solar-powered ovens, which have improved family life immensely in a culture where open-fire cooking has caused untold misery through respiratory illness and the disabling contractures of serious burns. So many children have been saved from falling into the cooking fire! The team used drama and preaching to bring Jesus into public schools, open air markets and onto the streets. Through this one visit, hundreds of children and 159 adults came to know Christ.

The subsequent years have been filled with life-bringing projects such as a Street Girls programme; building classrooms and school blocks; transforming the Ark Quest school from mud buildings to a self-funding education centre that is in the top 2% of Kenyan schools; providing mosquito nets to set families free from malaria; rehabilitating street youths, restoring them to their families, and empowering them to find jobs and start businesses; and helping students complete university and medical training.

There is also a second wonderful strand to our work in Kenya: Homecare Spiritual Fellowship International. In 1985, 25 women joined in prayer for the households of their nation to find salvation through Jesus Christ. Today, more than 1,000 members are impacting Kenyan families through prayer and evangelism, interwoven with social transformation that is changing families



forever. Meanwhile, Saturday Bible Clubs in Africa's largest urban slum, Kibera, are introducing 600 children to the God who knows them and loves them. Homecare Spiritual Fellowship International was founded and is still led by Rev. Dr Judy Mbugua, a respected Gospel minister, a matriarch to the nation of Kenya, and a former International Needs board member. International Needs began supporting the Homecare Bible Clubs' feeding programmes in 2007, through five existing Bible Clubs. Support primarily included food supplies, learning resources for children, rent for venues, and stipends for volunteer teachers. Over time, the programme has extended to give children from the sprawling slum the chance to attend a formal government school, and thus pursue a sustainable future for themselves.

One of the earliest families in the programme had moved to Kibera to minister Christ to people in the slum. The father became the pastor of a Homecare Bible Club, for which he was mocked and ridiculed by his friends and family. They told him that if he raised his children in Kibera, they would never amount to anything. Try to tell that to their son Nehemiah. As a sponsored child through Homecare and International Needs USA, Nehemiah has received the stable education he needed to attend university, study law and rise to the Bar as an advocate of the High Court of Kenya.

Young people who spent their childhoods sleeping on dirt floors are becoming the Christian professionals who will build Kenya's future, thanks to the partnership between International Needs and Homecare Spiritual Fellowship.

Some years ago, a Kenyan woman named Rhoda lost her husband to HIV, resulting in such shame, stigma, and rejection from family and society that she decided to take her own life. She walked out to the highway, planning to end her torment under the wheels of a speeding truck. Jesus had other ideas. He prompted every single driver to slow down, keep their eyes on Rhoda, and make sure she was safe. Was she grateful? No! She was frustrated and angry at God for not letting her die. As she walked home, still in despair, she passed a sign on a building: Homecare Spiritual Fellowship. The words "Care" and "Home" spoke deeply to her. Those were the two things she wanted most in her life. Care and Home. She turned, walked in and found herself in the midst of a Christian worship service. She heard of God's love, gave her life to Christ, and began to walk with the Lord. She went on to graduate from the Fadhili Women Support Programme. Today, Rhoda is working in a hospital and running her own business, transformed by God's amazing love.

UGANDA

In Uganda, Justus Miwanda was just three months old when his teenage mother and father abandoned him. He was handed around from home to home, and he became very angry with God. He was a kind man, though, so when he became a schoolteacher, he adopted five young boys and financed their education, because their families could not afford to keep them in the home, let alone pay their school fees. “I felt so happy,” Justus said, “because they were without any hope if someone did not take them in.” The happiness soon became grief and more anger towards God, though, when his fiancée died in the tragic wave of HIV/AIDS that has decimated whole generations in Africa.

Justus went on to meet and marry Deborah, who embraced his five adopted boys as her own. Soon they had three more children. Through Deborah’s testimony of love, Justus overcame his animus towards God and began to follow Him. He was convinced that God had used his troubles to prepare him for service to the hurting and disenfranchised. When International Needs was looking for someone to help run our programme for 500 orphaned and displaced children, the local church knew who to recommend: the Reverend Justus Miwanda – yes, by then a Reverend. A year later, in 2003, Justus became Executive Director of International Needs Uganda. “I’ve been what they are. Most of them have histories like mine, sometimes worse. I can relate with them. I understand why they cry, why they are sad. My very poor history has been turned by God into a

story of hope.”

International Needs Uganda was launched in 1994 by Rev. Bernard Bogere and his wife Elizabeth. Their work included child-to-child evangelism, formal and basic education for children, youth, and adults; Christian living classes and the Makonge Project – a health centre providing maternal and primary health care; as well as basic education and training for adult literacy. Also, a vocational school called Makonge Junior College of the Applied Arts even had its own chapel.

Do you see what is missing from that list? Orphanages and group homes. Back in the 1990s, war and disease had orphaned over a million Ugandan children, yet the government had banned new orphanages. Children fended for themselves in two main ways: through crime as street children and through fishing as lake water children. Since we could not create an orphanage, the team of staff and volunteers took as many children as they could into their own homes. They had their plans ready for whenever the government would allow the ministry to move ahead: dormitories for hundreds of children.

The law changed, children were housed and educated, and today International Needs Uganda has a wide range of well-established ministries, such as Trinity Bible College, church planting, Kiyindi Primary School with its 700 students, the Buikwe Girls School and the Makonge Health Clinic. Adult literacy classes are offered, along with one of the most proven and effective tools for elevating people from poverty: micro-credit enterprise.

ZAMBIA

Rev. Kashima Shiyama founded and pioneered International Needs in Zambia in 1986, then Rev. Waddy Shibemba and Rev. Thomas Lumba led the ministry for many years. Joining this gifted group was a man who had been a boxer, a cellist, and had earned his Master's degree in Theology at Wheaton College in the US, but in the early 1990s the Rev. Everest Kabwe returned home to become the Principal at a new kind of school in Africa, modelled on the ACTS Institute being pioneered in India: ZACTS. This stands for Zambia Agriculture Crafts Trades and Studies. Built on 259 acres across the Solwezie river, near the border with what was Zaire and is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ZACTS gave hundreds of young men and women the chance to receive well-balanced threefold training in Biblical studies, vocational training, and outreach evangelism. Local women learned how to improve dietary balance, keep their families safe through healthy practices in hygiene and sanitation, and they discovered an important breakthrough for overcoming the diseases and disabilities of extreme poverty – how to grow enough food to feed a family of five.

At first all the funding for ZACTS came from International Needs supporters, and grants from development agencies. Just as with ACTS in India, ZACTS aimed for 'the three selfs', including becoming at least partially self-funding. Thanks to gifts from donors and supporters, 40 acres of maize were planted, along with 20 acres of nutritious vegetables and vast flocks of chickens. ZACTS built a hammer mill to crush their maize

into meal flour to sell. They also offered the milling service to local families, who had only ever been able to sell unprocessed kernels, to improve their incomes.

Many of the ZACTS students have been sponsored by their praying and supportive friends in International Needs' support countries. Claudine says, "It's a joy to me to find that God is so faithful as to give me a sponsor. You're really a blessing to me." Michael adds, "With your sponsorship I have covered much in agriculture and Bible. I have learned chicken production. I can now produce chickens through both commercial and small-scale farming. I can tell good and bad breeds of cattle. I have done soil science. I am doing cereal production, pig production, cattle production, and engineering. I will be able to repair a tractor. Every Thursday I go to evangelise the Word of God. I have hated to see people perishing. I wanted to do God's work."

After 20 years ZACTS evolved dramatically, with the opening of the ZACTS School for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), to nurture a community of more than 1,200 children and give them a basis for future livelihood through trades, farming, livestock, and even fish farming. The quality of the education at ZACTS OVC has had a remarkable effect on the surrounding community's sense of pride and hope for the future. They were deeply traumatised by the impact of HIV/AIDS, with many children being raised by uncles, aunts and grandparents.



Poverty and hopelessness seemed inescapable because not even the most basic education was available for children in their area. With the OVC school, all that has changed – and life has also improved for the many impoverished women who look after these orphans and vulnerable children in their homes. A Women’s Co-Op gives them a chance to turn menial labour into a meaningful livelihood for their families.

In the early days of ZACTS, some refugees from Zaire plundered an International Needs property. The IN team felt sorry for the refugees, but the theft and damage put the whole future of ZACTS under threat. The team prayed for an amount that seemed impossible – but far away in New Zealand Ray Harrison returned home to find a flood of unexpected donations: exactly the amount of money the ZACTS team needed. Ray praised God – you really can trust Him for confidence and courage.



ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA

In the year International Needs was born, the communist regime in Ethiopia began burning churches, imprisoning pastors, and confiscating church properties – and they did so for seventeen years, until 1991. From then on, though, the Christians who were once severely persecuted began to experience a new openness to the Gospel.

Werku Golle was imprisoned for 13 months for being a Christian, including six months in solitary confinement. Even during his time in prison, Werku distributed Bibles and translated portions of the New Testament into the Gedeo language of south-central Ethiopia. When he became the leader of International Needs Ethiopia, Werku helped coordinate the work of hundreds of churches, deploying church planters from a Bible school and ministry training centre at Dilla. A major evangelistic push touched 20 million souls who had been largely unreached by missionaries, including the Oromo people.

Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993 and the Eritrean Kale Heywet Church – KHCE – has been a steadfast ministry partner with International Needs ever since. Our supporters have contributed to their very well-run Bethel Orphanage in Decamere, where hundreds of young boys found refuge from the ravages of famine and war – many also found the Prince of

Peace, Jesus, while at Bethel. One of those boys at the orphanage went on to become Bishop of Kale Heywet Church. The ministry has been hard though: new believers were driven from their homes and a Coptic priest incited a crowd to stone Christians from our partner church.

We will return to sub-Saharan Africa later as we survey our work in the new millennium, but as we consider how hard it can be to bring change to a reluctant nation, I want to mention Liberia, as it was in 1994. Liberia is named for freedom, but a certain Liberian believer was not free to return to his homeland because of his commitment to build the Liberian church. Instead, he worked in neighbouring Guinea with the help of International Needs, where he developed holistic humanitarian care and Christian ministry for nearly half a million frightened and hungry Liberian refugees who had fled across the border.

International Needs was ready to help in that crisis, even though it was not attracting much in the way of media attention and headlines. I am grateful that as an organisation we strive to be where the need is, not to follow the focus of news cameras. Sometimes, though, we really are operating where the world's eyes are watching. On that note, let us stay in the 1990s, but move thousands of kilometres north of Liberia, where communist Europe was tearing itself apart, revealing hearts open to God and lives being crushed by the most intense humanitarian crises.

PART THREE: EUROPE

As International Needs approached our twentieth anniversary, it felt as if we had found our footing. As we began the final decade of the 20th century, our original founding idea and our innovative position had become mainstream. Yes, local leaders were indeed taking their place as a global force, through International Needs and across the whole realm of Christian missions. At the tri-annual Council meeting in 1991, we adopted a plan for ambitious growth. (I say “we” – I was just finishing high school, but many of us can relate to the late-teens surge of confidence that the organisation was enjoying.) In those days, before *Transformed Lives, Changed Communities* became our identity statement, our 1990s catch cry reflected our founding idea: *International Needs Helping Christians Serve God in Their Own Countries*

The success of this local-leader model told us that we were on the right path, empowering indigenous ministries and humanitarian projects, but as I was finishing high school in Ghana and thinking about a stable future as a chartered accountant, International Needs was confronted by a new zone of action: the momentous instability and chaos as communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe began to shatter and fall.

THE BALKANS

For 3,000 years various rulers have tried to unify the countries and kingdoms strewn like captivating gems along the north coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The most recent such

experiment was Yugoslavia – a communist nation for the ‘Southern Slavs’, as its name suggests. For 45 years after World War II, religious freedom was harshly suppressed under the country’s communist bondage. Halfway through this totalitarian era, a brave Christian couple began to minister in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. This was Mirjana Lovrec and her husband Dr Branko Lovrec, who first met Ray Harrison in 1966.

At the turn of the 1990s, communist regimes in Europe suddenly faltered and fell like houses built on sand. In Yugoslavia this astonishingly quick collapse created a huge wave of opportunities for the Lovrecs and their team to freely share the Gospel through their ministry, Duhovna Stvarnost – which means Spiritual Reality.

As much as they could with their limited funds, they took full advantage of Yugoslavia’s new openness, covering Croatia and their neighbouring lands with the Gospel. With unprecedented freedom to buy time on FM radio, they reached an audience of one million non-evangelised listeners. Their daily morning broadcasts of Bible readings were called ‘Seven Minutes of Spiritual Realities’. (As humanitarian conditions deteriorated through the 1990s, it became ‘Seven Minutes of Hope’.) They ran radio call-ins on spiritual subjects; callers asked for blessings, encouragement, and Christian literature. In the beautiful town of Split, a new church was planted solely because locals had heard about Jesus on the radio.

The Lovrecs wrote letter after letter to our supporters, seeking help as their budgets strained to meet the demand from libraries, schools, prisons, and hospitals – all wanting reading material about our faith, which had been outlawed and severely punished under

the Yugoslav regime. “We have every opportunity to spread the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ,” Dr Branko wrote, and yet ... the Lovrecs confronted us with an uncomfortable reality: “When we recollect our past 20 years of work with Christian literature and evangelism, we see that during more restricted times we have been helped more than today! Today we can distribute tracts on every street corner, mail to every person in the country, use the radio stations to preach the Gospel and give them free literature. We can go from door to door with free tracts and literature. We are restricted, not politically, but economically.”

How challenging! What a riddle the human spirit is - help from the West actually declining after the fall of communism! There they were, presented with the greatest opportunity for Christian witness in the history of their splintering collective of nations, only to find themselves unable to fully rise to the occasion for lack of funds. For instance, there were numerous requests from local schools to screen Moody science films about God’s creation, but the cost of translating them was too high.

At the same time, others were taking advantage of the new openness, but there were wolves among them – cults, sects, the New Age movement, and materialism. Today, as we look back thirty years, we can see that although there is indeed enduring spiritual fruit in Central and Eastern Europe, consumerism has been a big winner. For a short while, the atmosphere seemed so hopeful. To the north, Czechoslovakia separated peaceably into Slovakia and the Czech Republic – a transition so amicable it was dubbed a ‘Velvet Revolution’. Tragically, there was no velvet cushion for Yugoslavia’s fall. As so often

through history, the Balkan countries once again exploded against each other in brutal civil war, with killings, roadblocks, rail blockades, bombings, and civil war. Historic grievances and hatreds were unleashed in ethnic cleansing. Minority populations were forcibly shunted from their homes, with no regard for their human rights or property. Tens of thousands died. Over a million human beings became displaced refugees.

Dr Branko’s reports became horrifying. “We are struggling for existence,” he said of his country. “Day and night bombing towns and villages, massacre of civilians, old people, and children. Our centre of young people, called Home for Spiritual Rehabilitation, has been burned to the ground. The loss is great. In the midst of severe fighting among people who lived together for centuries, we are sending you our love and plea for sincere and fervent prayer.”

The courage of this couple amazes me. After a generation of repression, then a small glimpse of freedom, then devastating collapse into war and genocide, surely the Lovrecs could not endure. But no, they responded to the human agony in their midst by expanding their ministry into urgent humanitarian aid – while at the same time continuing their commitment to spiritual outreach. “We are recognised as a charitable organisation and are able to start helping the victims of the war in hospitals and refugees. Even if peace comes tomorrow, the country has been badly destroyed and it would take at least 10 years to rebuild. People are distressed and they need encouragement, our love and sympathy. Christian message of hope and peace is what they need mostly.” At the Lovrec’s church, attendance doubled, with refugees eager for spiritual food.



One of the smallest evangelical groups in Eastern Europe became a church of 5,000 people. Through long hours in crowded bomb shelters, teams from the Spiritual Reality ministry of Duhovna Stvarnost were witnessing about Jesus, while aiding people in need. Everyone they helped received a marvellously uplifting book called *Peace with God* by Billy Graham, in their own heart language.

Duhovna Stvarnost relief warehouses were manned by refugee volunteers, paid for their work in food and clothing, sustaining their self-respect. Each day long lines formed outside the distribution centre to receive food, blankets and clothes. As teams distributed beds and blankets house to house, military tanks were blowing homes to bits – many with human beings still inside.

In 1992, International Needs formally took responsibility in the West for supporting Duhovna Stvarnost. As Dr Branko put it: “To represent our needs, to raise and channel support and assistance for our personal and staff support, and the ongoing ministries of Duhovna Stvarnost.” They continued to distribute Christian literature and publish Bibles, including the first Protestant New Testament in Croatian and a much-needed children’s Bible. They began broadcasting ‘Our Daily Bread’ on national radio, while in Bosnia they set up the country’s first Christian radio station.

Out of the devastation of civil war grew spiritual fruit that will last, including a wonderful body of works translated by Mirjana. The Lovrecs left us for heaven in the 2010s, having made an impact that will last far longer than the despotic communism that tried to suppress their faith. We are very grateful to them and all who served and

supported the spiritual and humanitarian work of Duhovna Stvarnost.

As Glenda de Jäger from Australia recounts, “I will never forget meeting Branko Lovrec. We had heard about this man and his work for many years when Ray Harrison would visit Australia. Ray never used Branko’s name due to the sensitivity of the ministry. At one International Council meeting, Ray called a man forward to the front and started asking questions about the work he was doing. Everyone present suddenly realised it was Branko himself – and there wasn’t a dry eye in the place.”

It is worth noting, however, that not every region set free by the fall of communism and the Soviet Union has been so fruitful. In Russia, the early signs were so positive. A Billy Graham campaign far exceeded all expectations. Indoor stadiums were jammed full to overflowing, night after night. International Needs immediately went to work supporting the process of training church planters and discipling new Russian Christians. There was joy in the hearts of believers, even though government systems were collapsing, and the people of Russia were left to fend for themselves as food and power prices skyrocketed. And yet, within a year of believers being set free, Russia began to impose laws to forbid disseminating the good news of God in any way other than through the Orthodox church. Once again it became extremely difficult to minister the Gospel. The old ways do not die easily!

The Lord’s people are everywhere, though. What regime was more hostile to our faith than the world’s first officially atheist country, Albania? Under the dictator Hoxha, any expression of Christian faith was severely punished. Even so,

in the wake of the Kosovo crisis, just before new millennium, Albania's fledgling evangelical community set up a crisis centre for people fleeing into their country. International Needs supporters sent gifts to repair roofs, distribute food, aid, and medical care. God has proven to have many people in the beautiful Balkans.

ROMANIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, UKRAINE, HOLLAND

Through the unthinkable poverty, oppression, and terror of Romania's communist regime, Daniela and George Pribac continued to believe that the Lord would rebuild their country. As they lifted Romania's anti-communist revolution in prayer, the brutal regime came to an abrupt end on Christmas Day, 1989. Their dictator's reign of terror had left the country in ruins. Daniela committed herself to restoring those ruins by sharing the Gospel, planting churches, and empowering women, children, and young people. As the Executive Director of International Needs Romania, she brought the light and love of Christ into the lives of many people whose spirits were gravely wounded.

One of those people was Ioana, abandoned by her parents in her first years of life. She was raised – probably too optimistic a word – in one of the barren orphanages that shocked the world in the 1990s. With none of the love and support that is so important for a growing child, Ioana did incredibly well to build a life for herself. Then she discovered she had cancer. As her treatment began, she felt very unwell and alone. Daniela invited Ioana to take part in the Ark ministry for

women and children. She began to attend church. She heard of the almighty power and love of God, how nothing is impossible for our heavenly Father. Every day, she read her Bible and prayed for healing. So did her Ark group. The Lord worked a miracle in Ioana's life and her cancer disappeared! Wanting to minister to others who are hurting, Ioana joined a team ministering to women in prison. She shares her expertise in cosmetics and hygiene to make these prisoners feel beautiful on the outside. To show them how they can feel beautiful on the inside too, she shares the good news of God's love.

For many, the word 'Romania' still conjures up the austere and impoverished wards of those orphanages. The appalling sight of the children tied to their beds, rocking backwards and forwards in silent suffering, shocked us into action. We found a better place to nurture children who have been orphaned, abandoned, or abused. For many years International Needs has supported the Caminul Felix Home in Oradea, where families in two villages provide mother and father figures for 200 children.

As well as home and education, the children also have the chance to learn practical and technical skills that can lead to a lifetime of livelihood, such as tailoring, carpentry, or farming, as well as car servicing in the village workshops. Meanwhile, in downtown Oradea, the Bethesda Medical Centre has offered low-cost healthcare, free medicines for 2,000 patients a month, plus the chance to hear the Gospel – usually from a doctor or nurse. When patients leave, they take with them a Romanian Bible and a tract in their language.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Another national team combining overseas support and domestic ministry is International Needs Czech Republic (INCZ). The work there began right after the peaceful removal of the anti-Christian communist regime. INCZ became an official registered organisation in October 1995, with Otakar Vozech as co-ordinator for Czech Republic and Slovakia. As a Czechoslovakian Christian he had to leave the country in 1968 to survive the persecution of Warsaw Pact occupiers. While he was exiled, he became the main Czech language speaker, evangelist and teacher for the world's largest Christian media broadcaster, Trans World Radio. Otakar was only able to return to his homeland after the country's Velvet Revolution in 1989.

It was wonderful for International Needs supporters worldwide to read Otakar's reports, rejoicing with him in returning home to respond to a long-suppressed hunger for God in his people. "It's an opportunity to freely present the Gospel on a scale that we've never seen before. There is a fantastic mission going on in schools. Teachers invite pastors in. After 40 years of forced atheism, there is great interest in spiritual things. People are willing to stop and listen when you talk about Christ. They want to come to church."

Since then, the Czech team has been supporting church planting, publishing Christian media – literature, music, and video - running youth ministries and camps, renovating churches,

and providing scholarships for seminary students. One core ministry that has been highly impactful and enduring is Healthy Youth Ministry, the foremost Christian outreach in Czech public schools, touching the lives of 80,000 young people every year. Thousands of young people have been given a copy of the New Testament. At first their activities were fully funded by international donors, but now they produce 40% of their budget on their own. In addition, the country's International Needs supporters - Christians and non-Christians alike - are supporting humanitarian programmes in seven nations.

Of course, as the good news of Christ came flooding in, so did cults and sects, from Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons to the New Age movement. Along with capitalism, materialism, consumerism, atheism, internet mis- and disinformation, Covid and the spirit of the times, it has been very hard for Christians in ministry to sail against the flow. Our partners are worried about their people, saying: "The spiritual situation in the country, especially among young people, has worsened in last some years. New ideas about sexuality and gender just made young people confused, the pandemic and the following Ukraine war brought next pressure on their minds. We never experienced such volume of disaster and troubles in lives of young people like we see it now: broken families, broken relationships, zero self-esteem. They need Healthy Youth workers more than ever and they are grateful for their impact."



SLOVAKIA

While Healthy Youth was becoming an engine for hope and encouragement in Czech schools, Otakar Vozech was co-ordinating parallel activity across the border in Slovakia, after a team of International Needs leaders, including Ray Harrison and Mel Newth, visited the country after the revolution. The ministry began in 1994 and one of the 'projects' was a young mission worker named Pavel Sinko, who became Executive Director and has been leading International Needs Slovakia (INSK) for almost 30 years.

There is a stunningly beautiful alpine valley in Slovakia called Račkova Dolina, where Christians once built a camp and retreat as a haven of peace after World War II. Shortly after it was finished, it was confiscated by the communist government in 1948. Forty-five years later it was given back to the Church in a very poor, rundown condition. International Needs has supported its rebirth as

a wonderful Christian facility called the Comenius Centre, named after the 17th century Moravian philosopher who was not only an influential theologian, but is also considered the father of modern education. A very International Needs-style of thinker – and a religious refugee.

Since 2004 the Centre has been a delightful venue for seminars, for seminars, conferences, marriages, family reunions, school and church camps and retreats, theological study, and training for lay ministers, church planters, and youth workers – welcoming around 2,500 guests a year.

A highlight of the Comenius ministry is its English camps. There can be up to five in a summer, as 50-60 of our American friends come to share their language and their faith with hundreds of children and youth, resulting in many coming to Christ.

Around the same time the Comenius Centre opened, IN Slovakia began a ministry among the marginalised Roma people. In a community centre

in the village of Cinobaňa - a name connoting Acceptance, Help and Truth - they offer ministry and practical support to children, youth, women, mums, and people struggling with social needs, autism, and addiction. "Praise the Lord," IN Slovakia says, "after almost twenty years we can still serve people and it is full!"

800,000 guests at their wedding. The Cinobaňa community centre is run by a Roma couple, Jozef and Julia. As a young boy Jozef was sexually assaulted by a grown man, which led to a life of increasing despair, with Jozef trying but failing to find solace in drugs, alcohol, and same-sex encounters. He tried to take his own life several times. When he heard of a better love, from God, he turned to Jesus – and has gone on to lead many people to the One who saved him. He earned his Master's degree, then met and married Julia. Together they effectively had 800,000 guests at their wedding, when a documentary about Jozef's testimony was broadcast on national TV.

International Needs Slovakia also helped to establish the first and only Bible seminary in the country, at Banská Bystrica. In fact, in all Central and Eastern Europe this is the only accredited evangelical theological institution, serving 150 students at a time, from nine denominations. IN Slovakia also provides scholarships for students and teachers to attend. Almost all pastors and missionaries serving in Slovakia studied there. In that same theological line, they are writing and publishing Christian books, along with the general school supplies that Slovakia's young learners

need. They have also been building up Christian families for an entire generation, by translating and publishing several thousand copies of Our Daily Bread.

Like their siblings in International Needs Czech Republic, IN Slovakia raises their own resources to support overseas projects, such as sponsoring a large number of children in Uganda.

Raised in a family of atheists in Slovakia, Chello was a tough and streetwise child. His life was barren, spiritually and physically. The family often did not have enough to eat. His alcoholic father beat Chello's mother severely – and when Chello was old enough to try to intervene and protect his mum, he too was savagely attacked. As a teenager, Chello turned to drugs and alcohol. He played in a punk band and stole the cash he needed to numb his pain. He scoffed at religion, believing only weak people need God.

Chello accepted an invitation to spend a week at the Comenius Centre, thinking he would shake things up among the Christians, but they were such different people from those he knew at home. They exuded joy and kindness. When he returned home his heart began to soften towards God. Within a few months he had received Christ and was baptised. Returning to camp as a believing helper, he fell in love with Meghan and together they began full time ministry with International Needs. As you can imagine, Chello's heart is for all those who are overlooked and abused. He tells them how the Lord reached into his own troubled life to claim him as his own.



UKRAINE

Very recently, when Russian forces attacked Ukraine in February 2022, the team started a ministry to the refugees who began pouring in from the east, as well as sending convoys with 70 tons of food back across the border to support the people of Ukraine.

International Needs teams in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria (through Teodor and Dimitrina Oprenov, who have been ministering there for over 20 years) have all helped Ukrainian refugees recover from their physical and emotional wounds. An endless pounding soundtrack of exploding shells has had a traumatic effect on the young minds of many children. Talkative toddlers can now hardly speak. They are receiving the counselling they need.

Early in the war, Pavel Sinko, Executive Director of IN Slovakia wrote, “So far around 70,000 people have crossed the Slovak border. Right now, most refugees just need transportation from the border, rest, and refreshments. They stay for a night or two and require help with transportation to their destination in Slovakia or other parts of Europe. Most of them have relatives or friends somewhere. We and local churches are involved with other volunteers and humanitarian organisations. There are now 50 families in the Racková Centre (nearby in the Czech Republic). They each have their own room, bedding, and a safe place to stay.”

From serving homeless people in Lučenec and Veľký Krtíš, to marriage ministry and prison visits, International Needs teams and supporters are enjoying the complete freedom to be a Christian in Slovakia, and yet the worries of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth prevent many people from thriving. In a recent update from the ministry, they sadly reported, **“Now people have no desire in spiritual issues. Less interest to visit church. Growing selfishness. People less trust to God’s word. Liberalism. Many believe lies.”**

What astonishing transformation within one generation. From total oppression, to openness, to indifference and despair. We keep going, for if God says this about the hostile town of Corinth – “I have many people in this city” – then how many more people must He have across an entire continent? We will keep doing our best to find and support them, while also meeting the humanitarian needs of those who need our help.

HOLLAND

Before we leave Europe, I should note that in the west of the continent there is another International Needs country team that has been operating in both capacities – support and ministry. International Needs Holland has been fulfilling these dual strategic roles for more than 30 years. Their ministry areas cover Christian schools and ministry groups, along with raising support for our ministry projects, bolstered by matching grants from the European Union.

PART FOUR: EAST ASIA

VIETNAM, HONG KONG, CHINA, INDONESIA

Since the huge Vietnamese ‘boat people’ diaspora of desperation in 1975, when 75% of the fleeing refugees were believers, Christians have been both threatened and considered a threat by the communist government of Vietnam. In that long curving land of 100 million incredibly resilient people, the whims of the ruling party make it always difficult to be a Christian – and sometimes downright dangerous. Ever since International Needs began work there more than 30 years ago, guided by Cam Loc Le, our activity has been hazardous, anonymous, and almost completely underground. Church planters work in teams of five, knowing very little about each other’s activities, to reduce the risk of exposing fellow believers to the authorities. Yet despite such restrictions and dangers, a vast amount of mission, ministry, and humanitarian work is taking place. This is church history in the making.

Hundreds of church-planting teams of evangelists work from village to village. Potential believers are invited to enter ‘the hallway of God’, in the form of fellowship meetings between believers and friends. If they want to move further, they can experience the church itself.

“Crowds of people attended the worship service on Sunday,” explains one anonymous report to International Needs supporters. “The sanctuary is so full. For the past months, we had no electricity, so the sanctuary was so hot and dark, but thank the Lord the congregation worshipped the Lord with all heart. They didn’t

care about it. As you know, the follow-up ministries are difficult. Almost all of them are poor, unemployed, so some of them follow the Lord for bread, expecting to get some material support from the church for their difficult time.”

Whether there for bread or the Spirit, Christ is being preached to them and generous love is being shown. However, the people who minister like this must use an alias so they cannot be tracked down. Alias Nguyen Kieu Lan was riding a bus when he felt compelled to stand and begin preaching.

“Seizing the opportunity, I talked about Jesus’ love and the heart of a sinner. At first only a few people listened, but soon all of the passengers around listened. Seeing sinners thirst for the Good News, I forgot that I was breaking the religion law of the government.” At least one family on that bus found the Lord.

Ray Harrison wrote in awe of these workers who must face such risks and opposition. *“One of our staff in Asia wrote telling of the struggles she was going through, in an area of physical danger, with fighting going on around her and bombs going off, but concluded, ‘Pray with me. The Lord will see us through.’”*

Another church planter, alias Phan Van Sanh, was ridiculed by a friend: “you’ll end up very poor believing that. I have no interest in Christianity, only money”. Poor Phan didn’t know what to say. So, he simply left a little pamphlet with his friend. That was enough. The next time they met, Phan braced himself for more mocking – but instead his friend humbly showed his true hunger: “Tell me about the thing I need more than money, food,



and clothing.” Soon, that money-hungry friend was devoted to God.

Someone bravely organised a very large evangelism event that could have attracted the wrong attention, but cleverly entwined it with a programme of eye checks and free glasses for people with vision loss – all with a backdrop of traditional Vietnamese music, so that spiritual conversations could not be overheard. In total, 250 invitees heard a message about Jesus – and 200 of them believed and received!

Likewise, children’s evangelism activity is discreetly worked into the cultural festivals for summer, Christmas, and harvest. Hundreds of children attend, and hundreds accept Jesus Christ. Yes, Christmas is celebrated as a gift-giving time, but any hint of the Spirit and the season’s true meaning can exact retribution from the authorities in the name of national security and social unity.

The Kitchen of Mercy for the Children’s Hospital provides meals for families in poverty. While they eat, they hear testimonies of how God’s power can heal your family and transform your life. The elderly, those with disabilities, and people who are lonely come to have their nails done and their hair washed and cut. They enjoy a delicious meal, learn Bible stories, and absorb the Christian faith by singing hymns. Stocked medicine cabinets are sent to remote areas where the poorest people lack medications. In amongst the bottles and boxes ... tracts about God’s love.

What extraordinary ways to conduct the ordinary activities of the Christian life – caring and sharing – while under the constant scanning eyes of authorities and powers that hate our faith.

Seven-year-old Thuy had fallen into a lake. After an hour of desperate searching, her family found their little girl, lifeless. Rushing her to the children’s hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, they were told by doctors, “Only God can save her”.

At that moment there happened to be a group of International Needs community workers in the hospital. They met the devastated family and shared about God’s love and healing power. Thuy’s family put their hope in the Lord. A week later, Thuy was sitting up and reading a children’s Bible. When the community workers visited Thuy’s home, 15 family members received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Just along the coast from Vietnam in Hong Kong, International Needs was helping with the activities of Youth for Christ as far back as the early 1980s. Through that work we formed an association with Stewards, a Christian charity involved in schools, medical clinics, dental clinics, disability care, and church planting. Despite official resistance, Stewards was able to establish two Peace Clinics and the Pooi Kei primary school.

After ten years, in 1992 the time was right to set up International Needs Hong Kong, to support church planting in Hong Kong itself and help with ministry into China.

In mainland China, believers were required to officially register as Christians. To constrain their ability to share their faith, they were only allowed to buy a maximum of two or three Bibles. Possessing more Bibles risked being blacklisted, with untold social costs and punitive



consequences. Add in the high cost of a Bible and Christian life was precarious for poor rural people in China. Our goal was to equip evangelists with Bibles to give out without charge, to skirt the purchasing rules.

In Beijing we had a contact who absolutely could not and probably can never be named, except in heaven. This person risked all to co-ordinate large-scale printing of New Testaments through an underground press in the capital, along with 100,000 copies of gospel tracts destined for the vast and remote region of Xinjiang. The Xinjiang Christians received their Bibles and tracts with immense joy and longing.

INDONESIA

The world's most populous Muslim country is a string of islands more than 5,000 km end-to-end, with numerous language groups who have no Christian witness at all. It may well be that the last people on earth to hear the Word of God in their own heart language will be one of Indonesia's

island tribes. Three international students on an International Needs work and study programme visited a remote village where all the people worshipped a traditional island deity. In a scene similar to Elijah versus the prophets of Baal, the students overcame the spirit worship of the tribe with the power of the living God. Almost the entire village of 600 people came to the Lord and established a Christian church in their midst.

Sharing Jesus is not always that straightforward. Community opposition was intense when International Needs supported the seminary of The Faithful Christian Church. Even landlords turned against the church, vigorously evicting the ministry from the buildings they had rented.

Perhaps the way ahead in Indonesia is through the powerful testimony of excellence in education. ACTS Institutions are present in the nation's capital, Jakarta, offering local students high-quality training and academic degrees through extension courses served from the ACTS base in Bangalore, 4,000 km away in India.



in

INTERNATIONAL NEEDS

NOVEMBER 4-10, 1990
MANILA MIDTOWN HOTEL

PART FIVE - THE PACIFIC

PHILIPPINES, PACIFIC ISLAND NEEDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, COLOMBIA

Imagine leading a Christian aid organisation in a country that constantly struggles with inconceivable poverty, a continuous barrage of typhoons, a Roman Catholic culture replete with syncretism from Pacific folklore, and a growing threat from Islamic militants and ethno-nationalist insurgents. All that is just a day in the life of International Needs Philippines, directed by inspiring leaders like Rev. Paul and Josuena Mortiz. They founded and pioneered the ministry, then saw unprecedented church growth in the barrio neighbourhoods. Their successors were Pastor Nestor and Beth Flores. Many church planters were supported in taking the good news of Jesus to many areas of their country. There was an extensive child sponsorship program in the barrios, where learning centres were established for children. Livelihood projects such as pig rearing and shoemaking flourished.

Sherwin Mariano was one of the young people living in the barrios: still a child, yet he was head of his household. Through INCAP Sherwin was assisted with his education and his youngest sister received medical assistance, including surgery which changed her life. Sherwin now leads a Christian organisation partnering with International Needs Australia. Their work has been remarkable. With a Christ-centred Child Sponsorship programme, 90% of sponsored children in the Philippines have come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour!

Church planters such as Bert and Wenila

Argonillo have found that despite 500 years of Roman Catholic influence in the nation, local folk are keen to learn the basics in Christian teaching – although a culture of fervent idolatry breaks these pastors’ hearts. After the island of Cebu emerged mainly unscathed after Typhoon Thelma, this was the Argonillos’ report. “Our hearts are grieving over the whole island, because instead of thanking and praising the living God for special protection, they paraded the statues of the Virgin Mary, the Virgin Fatima and St Nino through the streets – with people both young and old falling in line and kissing the hands and feet of the statues, showering them with flowers and money.” Even so, God still reserves people for his glory. “At present people are personally approaching us and asking the real way of salvation. They confess that they are beginning to have doubts about their religion because they are calling and praying to many saints and they are not sure who is listening to their prayers.”

There is no end to the missions activity here: a chapel built in Mindanao, a church established in a Quezon City school, training for Sunday School teachers, radio shows on Sundays on DZAS, youth conferences, and retreats for exhausted pastors desperate for the sweet encouragement of fellowship and sharing the hardships of the mission field.

Smokey Mountain was a vast smouldering Manila garbage dump where thousands of people foraged, trying to get enough to eat. Children from the scavenging families attended Sunday School. One said, “Even if I don’t have toys and nice clothes, that doesn’t matter, because I know that Jesus loves me.”

Alongside missions work goes constant humanitarian effort. In squatter camps, hundreds of children have received care for their health and education. The Open Arms project has given families in the barrios – the rural villages – the chance to breed and sell piglets, providing a basic income for each household. This kind of project aims to become self-funding and a launchpad for more forms of livelihood and better incomes. For example, the Dorcas sewing project teaches women how to make simple items like bags, slippers, and stuffed toys. This gives them a choice. They can have a small home-based business, or they can build on their new skills in a garment factory. The factories love having trained staff. The women love having jobs – and we love that they have been exposed to the Gospel while they learn to sew. A clinic for squatters offered free treatment from the nurses and doctors in a Chinese church in Manila – along with spiritual follow-up. Practical help often intersects with the spiritual: when scholarships help 19 students graduate with a bachelor's degree, most of them turned to Jesus out of sheer gratitude.

A team of evangelists trekked for more than two hours through rugged mountain terrain to bring the Gospel to the Manobos, a remote tribal people with no electricity, radio, or TV. On the first night, around 1,000 people attended and almost all came forward to receive Christ. The second night, attendance doubled and 75% came forward to become Christians. A missionary church planter was assigned to help the new Christians develop and grow their roots in the faith, through home visits and a church planted in their community.

A tribe of 70 people, the Mamanwa, were squatting on a waste dump of mining slag where nothing could be grown, in an inhospitable corner of the island of Leyte. A Philippines Christian community promised to help them find a new home – and could afford to pay half the cost of buying some land by a river, then building 23 homes, a toilet for each pair of homes, along with cows for breeding and milk. The tribe carried out the building work – and International Needs provided the missing half of the funding. They took possession of this beautiful new tribal village in 2018. In addition, they no longer need to trudge up a steep hill for water anymore, with a new filtered water system coming on stream in 2021. Most of the Mamanwa were animists, who worship nature spirits. As part of the resettlement, two guest cottages were built so church planters can live among them, sharing about Jesus.

In 2021 a new ministry was established, called IN-HOPE. Although active in the Southern Philippines, it is actually a Swiss ministry founded by David Amstutz, a senior leader of Open Doors in Switzerland. The executive board of IN-HOPE are all passionate volunteers with a heart for empowering vulnerable communities in the Philippines.

Further south, there is a huge diaspora of people from the Pacific Islands living in New Zealand and Australia. Their young people are caught between cultures: Pacific Island traditions versus their new Western ways. The Reverend Tavale Matai'a came to New Zealand in the 1980s and saw many young Pacific Island

struggling. He made it his mission to draw rebellious youngsters back into the church. “They have a lot of adjustments to make,” he said. “New Zealand is a totally new world from the Islands. There is a whole new freedom – freedom with time, freedom with money, and a freedom from the Church and the strict Matai system which binds villages together. They feel they are neither Islanders nor Palagi – which makes for a lot of confusion for the kids. They need to find an identity. I believe the key to it is seeing themselves as Christians. We are trying to bring these people into a relationship with Jesus and feed them back to the churches. Then they can stand up and hold their heads high and apply themselves as valued and respected members of the New Zealand community.”

This mission became Pacific Island Needs, based in New Zealand. Volunteers helped new immigrants with their physical needs, finding homes, furniture, food, and clothing for families until they adjusted to Kiwi life. They produced a regular morning radio programme in the Samoan language, with hymns, contemporary Christian music, testimonies, children’s stories, preaching, and answers to questions about the Christian faith.

Rev. Matai’a was often welcomed as a go-between to help the strict traditional parents and grandparents relate with their more modern teenagers. “We need to help whole families appreciate the New Zealand way of doing things.” The movement was blessed to have fine role models in very successful Pacific athletes like rugby players Michael Jones, Va’aiga Tuigamala, and Eroni Clarke – all three were All Blacks. They had become beloved figures in New Zealand society while keeping their Christian faith and

Samoan culture to the fore.

There is a beautiful link between Rev. Matai’a’s Pacific Island Needs ministry and the final country I want us to visit in the western Pacific: Papua New Guinea (PNG). I am thinking of the time he took a mission of 17 Samoan evangelists to the South Pacific Games in PNG’s capital, Port Moresby. They received a warm welcome, because the people of PNG remember that Samoan missionaries were among the very first to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to their Papuan shores all the way back in the 1870s. Rev. Matai’a marvelled at this. “It was miraculous in many ways to be following in the footsteps of our forefathers. We will never be the same again!”

Over the course of the Games more than 15,000 local people were enthralled by the cultural performances and the preaching of the Pacific Island Needs group – and more than 500 people made firm commitments to Christ. The local churches were quite unprepared for this flood of new converts: “They thought we were just an entertaining group”.

Here is a testimony resulting from that trip, from Pacope, a deeply moved Christian in Papua New Guinea. “Since you came to our country during the South Pacific Games, it has left us with fondest memories that will linger in our hearts forever! Before that, we were not living a good life. Our family life was hopeless. We were always fighting and quarrelling. Neighbours were always being disturbed. Now we have changed! Everybody is wondering what has happened to us!! Thank you – or Fafetai tele as you say. We really know the Truth and do not want to get away from it.”

Papua New Guinea has its own magnificent ministers of Christ and we have been blessed with

friendships and joyful partnership with them for many years. They do not have an easy field. Some of the reports and prayer items from our dear friend Pastor Manuko Yautaki and his wife Simamu are alarming - killings and 'rascal tribal fighting', pleas for prayer against witchcraft and body-snatching, speaking strongly to crowds to urge for peace and ceasefires when fighting breaks out. "Over 70 houses burned down in Amomonta village where two pastors live – Abraham and Tayo. They have lost their homes – and Abraham's mother's home."

Pastor Manuko wrote, "On my way home from 12 Kilometre Church, we were attacked by seven armed and masked rascals. They kicked a young boy. Stole my boots, watch, jacket, umbrella, cape, and purse with \$100 in it and my notes. We praise God our lives were spared. This happened three times to me last year, which makes my wife and children anxious when I go out. Please pray for protection and peace of mind for my wife and family."

Other reports and requests concern simple, positive Christian ministry – "bringing the good news and love of Jesus to our own people": visiting churches, distributing soap, rice, and Bibles, holding open-air in marketplaces, visiting the sick, sharing and praying with people, running a Bible Club for children whose families work in the coffee plantations – and teaching religious instruction at a community school 20 km from his home: "I walk there every Tuesday. Thirty-four girls and boys at school gave their hearts to the Lord. There are many things happening here. As we walk to other villages, please pray that God

will keep watch over us so that we can deliver His message of holiness to the people here. To reach the alcoholics in the villages. How alcohol spoils their lives. You are moving and working with us here in Papua New Guinea! May God richly bless each one of you for your love, prayer, and gifts."

Another long-term friend and minister in PNG is Pastor Ompasi, who has visited prisoners in Bundaira Prison hundreds of times over decades, encouraging them to give up their 'rascal ways' to seek God, for a complete change in their lives. They join the Bundaira Inmates Fellowship and Pastor Ompasi quenches their thirst for God's Word with piles of Bibles he brings for them on the back of his motorbike, which can climb almost all of the steep and slippery rainforest tracks he traverses in his ministry to share Christ across the Eastern Highlands.

Far across the Solomon Sea is Bougainville, part of PNG but strongly autonomous. In 2022 we celebrated the 20th anniversary of International Needs' partnership with Kidron Ministries. Their Bible college has trained many pastors. They say, "Many students come from all walks of life, some with little knowledge of the Christian life. They are like a sponge." As well as learning through classes and outreaches, the students develop self-supporting skills such as raising cocoa trees and farming chickens. As well as running an early childhood education programme and Maranatha Guesthouse, Kidron Ministries supports evangelists working in the frontier islands of Papua New Guinea and the Solomons.



COLOMBIA

As we stand on top of Mt Victoria in Wellington, looking out towards the world of International Needs, countries like the Philippines and PNG are on our left. As we turn to the right and look out over 11,000 km of ocean, our attention is now focused on the eastern rim of the Pacific. Let's go to Colombia.

The early 1990s was an incredibly fertile time for the expansion of International Needs into new and exciting places. In 1994 our two North American support countries began supporting Colombia. For twenty years an orphanage in Mariquita was sustained by International Needs USA (IN-US) and in 2001 International Needs Canada (INCA) began a generation of support for the Rosa de Saron Christian School in Barranquilla. While the children are at school, their mothers are working hard at the International Needs Sewing Centre. It started as a vocational training project, but has grown into a business-as-mission – improving incomes and introducing the sewing mothers to the Gospel.

In addition, for homeless children, support has flowed through the Instituto Salem, which has provided street children with food, shelter, hygiene and education. With child sponsorship,

love, support and learning, these projects have greatly improved local living conditions in children's lives and in the surrounding communities.

In doctors' campaigns in the La Playa barrio of Barranquilla, tens of thousands of people have received medicines and medical care, along with dentistry, ophthalmology, and glasses.

Children and their families from Venezuela have had to flee into Colombia, displaced by violence in their own land and economic desperation. This has separated the children from any education system, so we have supported programmes that offer food baskets, education, literacy, and spiritual support.

What an astonishing range of nations we have visited. In many of these places we have been looking at ministries, projects, and events spanning from the 1970s right up to the present day, our 50th Jubilee. All the countries so far saw International Needs begin work before the year 2000. Now it is time to visit the countries that have joined us since then. Come and see how we developed a second transformative idea that propelled International Needs into this challenging new millennium.

PART SIX – A NEW MILLENNIUM

We approached the year 2000 with gratitude for God's faithful leading, and with a great desire to go forward in God's wisdom. The organisation was in its twenties, as was I. It was an age for building strength, establishing foundations, and setting directions. To see if we were on the right track, we commissioned a study paper to consider whether we had fallen into the trap of fostering a sense of dependence on our support countries, which is one of the charges brought against Western mission agencies. We liked what the study found. Because of our insistence on partnering with people who were proven and effective national leaders, we had developed a lovely and productive culture of interdependency, rather than counter-productive dependency.

Dependency leaves partners feeling like children, whose hearts say: You are responsible for my choices, successes, and failures. This leads to passivity and the risk of being controlled by the donors on whom they depend. Programmes can rise or fall because of their funding, not their success or strategy. Dependence can also lead to an adolescent or teenage reaction: desiring independence and a break in the relationship. We were pleased to discover that our partnerships had developed a more mature and productive culture: interdependency, centred on shared goals and objectives, where hearts say: We are jointly responsible for our choices, successes, and failures. We move forward together. Interdependency is marked by open communication, teamwork, co-operation, mutual trust, and mutual accountability, which of course is very much in

keeping with the Body of Christ.

We were pleased with that, but there is another important aspect of being in our twenties: learning the value of admitting mistakes, understanding them and learning from them. Our mistakes have been useful, because in our youthful years we did not have many established blueprints to follow. Praise God for His unending patience and grace.

We continue to believe in the power of integrating the spiritual with the physical.

You will have seen that in our first generation, from 1974 to 1999, the emphasis was on missions and spiritual ministry. Practical aid and development flowed naturally from our Christian love and compassion. After all, how could we share Jesus and not work hard to ease people's suffering? Our focus in our second generation to find a more fruitful balance between the spiritual and the material ministries. The spiritual is wonderful of course, and I hope it has been thrilling for you to read so many testimonies of the power of our faith to transform lives. However, if we look back on our twenties and ask how we could have done better, our takeaway is that we should have been more deeply involved in the lives of the communities in which we were operating. In a way this did start to happen naturally, as we became more experienced and capable in the areas of aid and development. You may have noticed us growing in confidence in the countries we have covered so far. As our five decades have passed, our capacities and capabilities in aid and development delivery has become more sophisticated and far-reaching. Other Christian agencies were experiencing this as well. However, whereas many other agencies



were experiencing this as well. However, whereas many other agencies tended to decouple their development arm from their missions work, we continue to believe in the power of integrating the spiritual with the physical. This is where our second transformative idea comes in. We aim for International Needs to be the agency that has earned the trust to speak into the spiritual heart of the communities we serve, because they can clearly see that our material solutions are so good at meeting physical needs. Rulers, government departments, local authorities and community leaders are all looking for partners. We aim to be the best possible partner for their people's needs – and in that capacity we believe we will also have deeper and more influential opportunities to advance the Kingdom of God.

With that in mind, I want to spend some time

exploring the capabilities International Needs has developed in our wide-ranging areas of aid and development work. That represents the next major section of this book. First though, I would like to finish this section by continuing our survey of where we have served since the turn of the millennium.

If you recall the direction we were facing, we were looking north over the great expanse of the South Pacific Ocean and to our right, to the north-east, was the Pacific coast of Colombia. Good. Let's keep looking that way, but 7,000 km further, beyond Colombia and over the Atlantic Ocean, to a place where it can be very difficult to be a Christian. It can be a matter of life and death, in fact, in the face of great hostility to the Gospel in Islamic North Africa.

ISLAMIC OPPOSITION AND OPENNESS - EGYPT, NORTH AFRICA, TÜRKIYE

When the world was finding its way onto the Internet, International Needs did too. Our first website had a rather unwieldy address. It took almost as long to type it into the new web browsers as it did to read our entire site: www.ualberta.ca/~dharapnu/intlneed/. Eventually we had a much more user-friendly online presence at internationalneeds.org, and around the same time, we also had a new partner and presence in the ancient and challenging Biblical land of Egypt.

“I ask that you always pray for the safety of the Christian community in Egypt – their homes, jobs and churches.” Since the late 1990s, this has been the constant call to supporters and prayer partners worldwide from Pastor Nathan Bassaly and his wife Sawsan.

Nathan Bassaly and his family have borne a heavy cost for being Christians in Egypt. His father, a pastor, was gunned down and killed for his faith.

In the early 1990s, trained as a veterinarian, Nathan had found refuge in Canada, where he was looking forward to a safe and steady career in animal medicine. Then the Lord called him back to Egypt in quite a remarkable way.

“We thought Canada will be the land of rest for us and the future of our children,” Nathan remembers, “but after three months in Canada the Lord spoke to our heart and asked us to go back to Egypt, to be involved in ministry. We decided to obey, even though it was a difficult

decision. One day before leaving Canada we met, by accident, the President of International Needs, Mr Mel Newth. We spoke together and shared our vision with him. The next day we were supposed to leave for Egypt in the evening. Mr Newth asked me to go with him to meet with the US Board. I did, and shared my vision with the Board, then the same day we returned to Egypt. From this point IN started to partner with us until now.”

Nathan and Sawsan returned to a land where only one in a hundred Egyptians professed to follow Christ. “Throughout the past years we have been doing a lot of ministries among different types of people (poor families, Sudanese, refugees, etc). We have seen lives changed, people get to know God, churches grow, and pastors starting new churches. We also have a lot of projects such as micro loans: over 200 loans each year for people starting small projects to help them financially. We have been helping poor families from different areas and trying to satisfy their needs. At the beginning of each academic year, we distribute school bags for all the kids from poor families. Our training centre is one of the best in our area, to teach the youth small crafts such as hairdressing, makeup artist, computer skills, electronic maintenance, and much more.

“Once a month we have more than 20 young pastors from different areas in Egypt gather in Cairo for four days to receive teaching by the best speakers. We provide the accommodation and hospitality. With Life in Christ magazine, although everything is online now and through our phones, still our magazine is printed regularly and distributed in all Egypt. It is a blessing for many people. Our Sunday School curriculum is being used in many churches all around Egypt. We are

always updating the curriculum and printing more copies. Demand is high. We have three or four training conferences each year for church leaders and young pastors. We visit an addiction rehabilitation centre monthly, to share the Word of God with them. We have seen lives changed, people get to know God and be completely cured from addictions.”

Nathan travels from village to village in southern Egypt, equipping church leaders to reach their own people. After six months of training, they are ready for ministry, so Nathan starts his classes at the next village. He also launched a Bible correspondence course, which has been used by thousands of people throughout the Arab world – Christians and Muslims alike. Such is the hunger for news about Jesus.

2018 - urgent prayer requests came from out of Egypt after a massive wave of violence against Christians in the south of the country. “Christian homes and businesses are being targeted and destroyed. Pray for Nathan and the IN Egypt team on how to help persecuted brothers and sisters.”

For some years Sawsan Bassaly continued her career as a pharmacist, while being a great help to Nathan in his ministry. Finally, seeing so much need, she joined the ministry full time. “I felt it was time for me to give more to the ministry. There is such great need in Egypt right now.” Nathan and Sawsan’s hearts – and their carefully managed, discreet and capable care programmes – go out to the three million children who live on the Egyptian streets because they are orphaned, or they are abandoned by families who cannot afford to keep them at home.

When the Bassalys were still in Canada, God

reminded them that in all things, love casts out fear. They draw strength from this promise every day. “We knew that life in Egypt would be difficult,” says Sawsan. “But we have faith that God is with us. We believe God will open more doors and use us more and more. It is a great joy to see people change when the love of God catches their hearts.”

The Bassalys minister openly and are often at risk, but in other North African Islamic nations that level of openness is just not possible. We have partners who proclaim the Gospel privately, person-to-person, in places where the population reaches 99.7% Islamic. Si Hamed – his name changed here for his safety - took part in a Christian correspondence course. His struggle with the Christian faith was that he just could not believe in the Trinity, especially that Jesus is God’s Son. One night he had a dream in which Jesus appeared to him and said, ‘I am the Spirit of God’. Muslims give great weight to what they see in visions and dreams. This was what Si Hamed needed. He gave his life to the Lord. His wife and family were opposed at first, but within a few months his wife and some of his children were following Christ.

TÜRKIYE

Rody Rodeheaver was a former President of International Needs USA. He made contact with Behnan Konutgan, a pastor and Bible translator in Türkiye. Through God’s call to them both, International Needs was formed and began to serve the local church and its communities by the end of the 2000. This included prayer for the nation, children and youth ministry, and a church camp – all in the region of Marmara, where Europe meets Asia. The ministry, the extremely



popular camps, and a movement of church planting have spread out along the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea – and also into another Turkic land, Turkmenistan, across the Caspian Sea. Despite being hugely outnumbered by Muslims, their active use of social media is introducing thousands of Turkish people to the Gospel, leading to salvations and baptisms.

A prayer request from Türkiye shows the difficulty and reality faced by every Christian in Islamic nations when they choose to follow Jesus. “Pray for the safety of those who have claimed to be Christians, but are still afraid to make the claim in public, for fear of rejection and harm from their family and friends.”

BURKINA FASO

Where the deserts of North Africa are spreading their relentless fingers of sand over the green of sub-Saharan nations like mine, Burkina Faso is a rapidly-drying land that is two-thirds Muslim. In January 2004, International Needs sponsored

Burkina Faso Pastor Jean Kone on a chilly but fruitful ministry trip to London. So began our partnership with Pastor Jean’s nation. A low-cost secondary school was established to provide education for families who could not afford to keep their children in the local school. With healthcare being virtually non-existent, along with many people being injured in terrorist attacks, medical clinics with high-quality hospital facilities were set up in Bobo-Dioulasso, to tend to wounds and disabilities, provide life-saving medical care, and support pregnant women and their children.

The Kones ran evangelism crusades in a small drought-ridden community – first bringing the good news of Jesus Christ for those who thirst spiritually. This message was so pure and refreshing, the Kones were able to build relationships and trust with the local village chiefs, who then prevailed upon Jean to help bring water to their people, who had to haul barely potable and often toxic water from distant sources, for hours every day. This endless trekking for water wasted huge portions of people’s productive time, while putting everyone’s health at risk. In

response to the chiefs' plea, IN Canada started promoting water projects to our Canadian supporters. There have now been several projects to drill boreholes in the villages, bringing abundant supplies of clean water, along with better health and livelihoods, in a life-giving connection between water for the spirit and water for the body.

Sadly, as I write this, Burkina Faso is becoming another place where it is dangerous to be a Christian, as extremists supported by Al Qaeda come from the north and Mali to wage terror upon our fellow believers.

“My name is Ouedraogo. I would like to say thank you for your support. I am now able to continue my studies. Our village, 100 km from Bobo, was attacked by armed groups. My parents were able to flee with me and we found refuge in Bobo-Dioulasso. My parents lost everything we had, including a field to feed us. Without your help, I would be a street child having to beg with my mother. You have given me the chance to continue my studies and have a good future. May God bless you.”

INTO OUR FORTIES – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, FIJI, CAMBODIA, MYANMAR, UKRAINE

In 2008 the Samaritan Foundation began their mission to see lives transformed in the Los Algodones community in the heart of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. Villa Esperanza – the Village of Hope – was created to change life for nearly 1,000 individuals living in precarious shacks on dirt floors, with no

amenities at all. Brand new cement houses were built just a few metres from the shacks, with running water and electricity. This is a village that was rebuilt from the ground up – with a church, a school, a medical clinic, and health and nutrition programmes for the wider community. The walls of poverty, disadvantage, and unemployment have been broken. Bibles are being distributed and Bible competitions are spurring people on to impressive levels of literacy and spiritual discovery. Legal aid is securing people's right to a stable and secure future.

Fiji is one of the closest countries to New Zealand and Kiwis are constantly challenged by the fact that extreme poverty exists just a three-hour flight from Auckland. There is great need there – and spiritual hunger (at an early International Needs conference in Fiji, our newly-elected Honorary Director for the country led the venue's photographer to the Lord!)

Our work in Fiji really began to accelerate ten years ago when we spent time with households whose makeshift homes cluster around the airport road near Suva's capital. These families had moved in from the island hinterland, looking for opportunities in the city. Often, they simply traded rural poverty for city-fringe desperation. We found households of utterly destitute solo mothers who had been abandoned and often violently abused by their children's fathers. This is a hugely disadvantaged group of human beings – both socially and economically.

To empower their lives, a major solo mothers project has been created, so the women can master the high-level craft skills they need to find jobs and create self-sustainable businesses. Over twenty weeks of intensive learning, they unleash their trapped potential in cooking, sewing, baking,

housekeeping, screen printing, jewellery making, parenting, self-care, and sexual health.

When they graduate, they are well equipped to improve their lives and find better work and income. Many want to begin a business, so they receive resources, support, mentoring, a mother figure in their lives, and a low-interest micro loan to start catering and baking businesses in their communities. Others produce artisan crafts to sell online or at a store in Suva. This gives these creative mothers a far better return on their work, compared with the traders who charge high prices to Fiji's tourists, but only pay creators a pittance.

To allow the solo mothers enough breathing space from their children while they focus on learning and creating their wares, International Needs also began the Headstart early childhood education programme, which prepares children for school and builds them up with nutritious food. The Christian curriculum gives the children a beautiful introduction to the God who loves them.

Little Sheemal joined the Headstart pre-school programme held in the New Life church near Suva airport. One day at home, Sheemal asked her Hindu parents if she could pray before they all ate. This was a new experience for them – and their first introduction to the wonders of life in Jesus Christ. Because of Sheemal's joy in attending the kindergarten, her parents accepted an invitation to visit the church ... and they now know Jesus Christ as their own Lord and Saviour.

By this time, I was entering my 40s and like many people at that stage I was fairly sure of my identity, career, and my direction in life as a

husband and father. At 40, International Needs was grounded with the same sense of identity, expressed in our banner statement:

transformed lives, changed communities

The life-flow of this organisation had been like my own and many others. A person accepts Christ, becomes a Christian and develops knowledge of who God is. Then, as a parent, we pass on the values we believe in. In the same way, International Needs was consolidating and building on our strengths in delivering aid and development infused with Biblical principles. For instance, in 2018 International Needs New Zealand was accredited as an active member of the CID – the Council for International Development – in recognition of our robust systems, policies, and accountability measures.

Accreditations like these are opening borders for us. In Myanmar, for example, we have achieved official name registration with the government and in 2018 our partners Hope for Now began to provide English classes, computers, and children's ministry in Myanmar villages.

We want our supporters and our partners to know they can trust us to enter any field and meet any need with well thought-out programmes, resources, solutions, and strategies. This is always important, and especially when lives are on the line, as they certainly are in our recent forays into new lands, territories, and trials; such as Cambodia, where we recently began working with the Chab Dai Coalition, our very effective anti-trafficking partners.

Bopha was a toddler in central Cambodia's Kampong Chhnang province. To earn more money, her mother moved to the capital city, Phnom Penh. Bopha was left in the care of her grandmother, who was already caring for other

grandchildren. A year later, the neighbours told Bopha's grandmother that they had taken quite a shine to the little girl and expressed their desire to adopt her. Bopha's grandmother was under a great deal of stress and financial pressure with all her other grandchildren, so she agreed. From that day on, separated from family, Bopha experienced constant sexual violation. In 2022, when Bopha was old enough to escape, she reached out to her mother, desperate for refuge. Together, Bopha and her mother filed a complaint with the police, who referred her to the International Needs partner in Cambodia, the Chab Dai Coalition (Chab Dai means Joining Hands in the Khmer language). Their legal support team began work immediately, taking Bopha's case through Cambodia's courts. Her abusers were arrested, tried and sentenced to many years of imprisonment – sending a message to others that abusers will be pursued and justice will be dispensed.

Bopha is now continuing her study and receiving counselling and care at a Chab Dai shelter. Through her experience we can see the two arms of an effective solution to combat human trafficking and abuse: 1) legal support to ensure justice – including funding lawyers who will advocate and prosecute for those who are abused; and 2) essential care for restoring a survivor's life.

As you have seen, there is so much good news from the last 50 years. Millions have risen from extreme poverty. Humanity is living much longer. Literacy and education have increased enormously. Human rights and the importance of wellbeing are now much more considered – be it social, physical, economic, emotional, mental, or physical. Hunger, thirst, and unsheltered exposure

have fallen in ways that would stun our forebears – and more than 30% of the human race follow Jesus Christ – more than 2 billion people!

These are all positives ... and we rejoice that God is at work and has used International Needs' workers, teams, partners, supporters, donors, friends, and prayers to be part of His Gospel work.

Yet along with all the good news, hundreds of millions of human beings still have no reliable access to food, clean water, healthcare, and livelihood. Wars between major powers have decreased, but conflict is rising. We have tensions between peoples and religions; huge numbers of people live with the relentless misery and powerlessness of being a refugee or displaced; water is scarce, resources are depleted, and the effects of climate change are crushing the most vulnerable people on earth.

What can we do? Oh, let me tell you, Ray Harrison has such a good answer to that – ***Do Something!*** This is the call to action that frames the next section of this book, on the humanitarian expertise International Needs has built and will call on in our next 50 years. Thank you for figuratively standing with me on top of Mt Victoria in Ray's hometown, to look left to west, ahead to the north and right to the east, to see what God has done through us.

Let us now look up, towards our future ... and ***Do Something.***

SECTION 3

IN SERVICE - DO SOMETHING



RAY'S CALL TO ACTION - DO SOMETHING...

In a tribute to Ray Harrison from Peter Sara, the Chair of INNZ, Peter mentioned asking Ray a key question: *What is the secret of getting the wider body of Christ involved in missions?* Peter said, "I will never forget Ray's response." class.

The answer is: everyone must... **Do Something**

Everyone has a different Something, according to their gifting and call, but the last 50 years have indeed shown how much can be achieved when people just Do Something.

What if you had no access to safe drinking water? What if you never had the opportunity to attend school? What if you were never able to hear the Gospel message? What if you were a girl forced into early marriage? What if you were a young boy trafficked into a lifetime of forced labour? All these questions concern life's most basic needs. If people lack them, the shortfall in their life's outcomes is huge. So, we aim to level this playing field. When people don't need to worry about these most basic needs, they are able to thrive: to explore life and leap forward, pursuing the dreams God has laid upon their hearts, and bless their whole community along the way.

This is where our Six Ways of Working come into play – as we covered briefly at the start of the book. I would like to spend a bit more time on them in a moment. For now, I think it is worth recalling how things started, with child sponsorship.

INCAP - THE INTERNATIONAL NEEDS CHILD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME.

From the first six children sponsored in a rented room in Dhaka, to the Lydia Centre in Nepal, to the Bible Clubs of Kibera slum in Kenya; from refugee training in Egypt to the drop-in centres for children in bonded slavery in Bangladesh; from women's sewing in Colombia to village awareness of children's rights and protection in Ghana and the Sano Diyo rescue home in India: it was child sponsorship that started it all. The generous gifts of our child sponsors have truly brought our motto to life: transformed lives, changed communities.

In Nepal, families of subsistence farmers, porters, and labourers lived in tiny thatched houses of bamboo and mud. Just one room, maybe two, with animals hitched to a pole outside. Income was far too low to send their children to school. Then INCAP started. As well as going to school, the children took part in Christian clubs and got to know the Bible. All the potential needed for their community to thrive was right there in those children. A full 95% of them passed their exams and they have gone on to achieve lives and livelihoods that their parents dared not dream for them.

In Kenya, baby Doria was abandoned at birth, dumped into the bottom of a latrine in Kawangware slum by a mother who was probably barely more than a child herself. Our team was alerted by people who heard the baby crying.

With the help of nearby young men, the concrete cover was broken and Doria was rescued. She needed three months of hospital care to overcome infections from swallowing faeces, but she survived, grew, and thrived by being sponsored through INCAP.

In Uganda, one sponsored child had a hearing disability. His father was so touched by the generosity shown to his son that he said: "I am a Muslim, but because of what Christians have done for my son, I want to get to know this Jesus."

Romila grew up in a leprosy colony, helping her parents cope with severe disabilities caused by their untreated disease. Thanks to her sponsors, Romila completed her Auxiliary Nursing course so she could continue with her passion for looking after people who need care.

Because of their grounding in the Christian faith, many sponsored children grow up wanting to share it with others. Miya says, "After completing school I will serve God, helping to preach His Word to unreached people." Hom said, "I want to tell other people about Jesus Christ and His wonderful love." Rhoda says, "There is no nurse in our village. I want to be a nurse and serve people who are poor and need help." Bikram says, "We are the only Christian family in our village. My parents work at the bank of the river. They crush stone, for very little money. My parents and I are very grateful to you for providing financial support for my education. I am studying diligently. Thank you."

Junu was not a sponsored child, but her life shows how much impact spiritually-oriented community development can have. She married at a very young age, with minimal primary education. Then she joined Nepal's Lydia Vocational Training Programme. When she

graduated, she received a sewing machine and a small loan to build a tailoring business. Her work flourished, so she could send her own children to school. Then she began influencing her community, leading women's groups and being elected to her village council.

Our teams have served in some of the hardest-to-reach places in the world, whether on foot or by car, bicycle, motorbike and even canoe. It is labour that often costs our workers dearly. "Osie" - Josephine San Jose, our Sponsorship Coordinator in the Philippines – had her house burned to the ground in a fire that affected hundreds of people. Forty people sheltered with her under one tarpaulin, trying to clean up the mess and wondering how to start their lives over again, when the only possessions they had were the clothes they were wearing.

We started with six orphans in a rented room and over 50 years we have been able to become quite sophisticated in our delivery of sustainable development that leads to long-term change and lasting improvement in the quality of life for people and communities, without negative impacts on their environments. By sustainable development, we mean being faithful stewards who meet today's needs now, without compromising or undermining the needs of future generations. This holistic call, covering needs that are spiritual, physical, economic, and social, is framed by Jesus quoting from Isaiah in Luke 4:18-19.

"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 broken hearted,
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.”

What an amazing manifesto for changing the world! In these powerful words we see a window into the key ministries we have honed over 50 years.

DO SOMETHING ... IN EDUCATION

Education is my passion. My heart was moved when I saw a girl the same age as my daughter, working as a full-time babysitter. She was a child herself! I could not imagine my own daughter having to work full-time at that age. With the permission of her mistress, we arranged for her to spend a little time with International Needs each day, to give her some respite from her labours ‘and do a little learning. She gets a hot meal, she interacts with other children, and most importantly she has been able to develop her literacy, comprehension, and social skills.

I once heard a proverb that stuck with me: educate a man, you educate a person; educate a woman, you educate a nation. I believe it, and a 15-year-old girl at the Savar Children’s Village in Bangladesh agrees with me! “They say in my country, it is a waste of time to educate a girl. I would like to tell them that they are wrong! When you educate a girl, you also educate her family, her community and eventually you will educate the country.” Hear, hear.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh was a girl once. What if someone had kept her home to toil in the backyard, or the kitchen? She would never have been able to develop her gift of leadership, or the skills and abilities to impact other young women. When we speak of International Needs,

we can speak confidently of thousands receiving education, to become health workers, social workers, teachers, university professors, church bishops – all possible because of the faithfulness of our sponsors. I am so grateful to those who make it possible for children and adults to rise above poverty and oppression through this powerful force of learning.

Without a quality education, how will people ever be able to make their own way through life? They will stay trapped in a cycle of menial work, crime, human trafficking, and all the other forms of exploitation the human heart can devise. More than 250 million of the world’s children are not in school, often because their families simply cannot afford school fees. When Kenya eliminated school fees, two million more children immediately began attending school.

For those reasons and many more, International Needs has been running educational programmes from our earliest days. As well as sponsoring children to attend existing schools, we have built and run schools and facilities, supported teachers, provided technology, and offered scholarships. As you saw earlier, ACTS started in a two-bedroom house. Today it has 5,000 students.

We always aim for excellence. A visitor to a school in Ghana said, “I’ve travelled to many areas of Africa in my career, and seen hundreds of schools. What I saw at Kuve was amazing. Organised, developed, quality education, even a computer lab! They didn’t just build a school, I saw an education system at work. It was wonderful.”

The Ark Quest Education Centre in Kenya makes careful use of its resources by matching aid

to the individual child's need. Some might need only their classes paid for, but other children need meals and all their learning supplies. In fact, Ark Quest even operates an agriculture and horticulture programme for parents, so households can become self-sufficient. Out of a survey of schools in Kenya, Ark Quest was in the top 2% for learning outcomes.

It is not just children who need holistic support. At the Lydia Centre in Nepal, women building their livelihood skills also receive regular health checks and medical care, along with extra education on children's rights, child labour, child marriage, health, hygiene, and gender discrimination. This kind of social education is also shared with the wider community, as an outreach.

"I have learned about protective behaviour and the disadvantages of child marriage," said 11-year-old Sravanti. "These are very important, especially for girls our age. I have also shared these with my parents. Like me, they had no idea. They were amazed and decided not to arrange my marriage before my 18th."

In the Czech Republic, in the long tail of communism's aftermath, a generation of young people are growing up disillusioned and listless, but each year 80,000 of them are given a far more hopeful perspective through the IN's ministry of Healthy Youth. Schools ask our Healthy Youth presenters to come and discuss important issues, such as gender, pregnancy, abortion, cyber bullying, and the sadly common scourge of alcohol poisoning. Youth worker Pavel Kotouчек was asked to share the dangers of alcohol – but he forgot to bring his presentation. Instead, relying on the Holy Spirit, he shared events from his life that suited this theme. The young students responded with topical stories from their own lives. A teacher said, "I have never experienced a

better lecture".

The International Needs Drop-In Centres are dedicated to assisting street children and child labourers by providing basic education, nutritious meals, and healthcare. These children often suffer abuse, slavery, or homelessness. The centres offer an informal, supportive learning environment in subjects like reading, writing, and math. They also ensure the children receive proper nutrition and engage in recreational activities.

At Naogoan in northern Bangladesh, we estimate that by adding a school when creating a children's home, we can potentially impact the lives of 100,000 local people.

In Tonga, students were dropping out of high school. We supported a campaign to win back their hearts and their growing young minds. The campaign was called School is My Friend.

I am always amazed at the impact of International Needs education in my own country of Ghana. John Anum Tetteh started attending the IN Amrahia Community School when he was in kindergarten, as part of the child sponsorship programme. He was a smart boy, so eager to learn, but when he finished primary school, his family did not have the extra money to pay for high school. He had learned a lot at school, so he was equipped for a far better future than he could have achieved by himself. However, he really did want to continue learning. One day he received great news. The Lord had provided! Because of his excellent marks, Anum received a full high school scholarship through International Needs. He went on to receive his first degree in Chemistry, then his Master's ... and even further, his Doctorate, becoming a truly gifted scientist capable of enhancing the future of Ghana. His primary school, Amrahia, is such a blessing to this country. Before it was built by International Needs, local families



did not send their children to school. While it was being built, we needed to mount a major campaign to convince parents that they should bring the children in from the fields and send them to school instead. As a result, every year more than 5,000 Ghanaian children receive an excellent education – and hot meals, which is absolutely essential for good learning. School food programmes are an important part of IN school ministries around the world.

Josephine lives in another region of Ghana. After her father's death, her workload increased immensely, simply in terms of chores and a part-time job to support her mother's efforts to keep the family afloat. Josephine was too exhausted to focus in class, and she began to fall behind in her learning. Thanks to sponsorship, Josephine was able to give up working so she could concentrate on school. She received school supplies, coaching, and a new uniform, bag, and shoes. She is not just doing better; she is excelling academically. "I dream of becoming a police officer. I think I am getting there, gradually. The greatest part of my life was when my mother received a goat to rear. The extra income is supporting my schooling. I am the happiest person now!"

We are hearing similar things from our education partners in the Dominican Republic. "One of the most profound shifts we've observed

is the transformation in our students' outlook on life. Where there was a resignation to poverty, now there's a burgeoning belief in a future filled with possibilities: aspiring to become professionals, like doctors, lawyers, and teachers. The children of Villa Esperanza have begun to dream big."

One of the hardest education challenges is to bring the blessing of learning to a place that hates us because of our faith. In Egypt, a local businessman helped Nathan and Sawsan Bassaly establish the New Life Centre, a classic International Needs vocational training centre. New Life empowers struggling individuals and families through low-cost courses in computers, hairdressing, air conditioning repair, mobile phone maintenance, English, and ... with great courage ... the Bible. Graduates receive starter kits to help them launch their own business. Welcoming people of all faiths, New Life complies strictly with Egyptian law forbidding Christians from sharing their faith with Muslims. "We cannot share directly by talking about our faith in God," Sawsan says. "But we can share indirectly, by sharing our love with the people."

Education. What a great blessing it is. For as long as International Needs exists, we will always be absolutely committed to **Do Something ...** IN Education.

DO SOMETHING ... IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

If we taste Jesus, we will never thirst spiritually again – but if we thirst physically, if we lack water, if we cannot cleanse ourselves or ward off infection, how limited and miserable human life becomes. I think about schools that have no water or sanitation. In these places, girls stay home during their time of the month, so they miss as much as a quarter of their education. An entire year’s worth of high school, for lack of water, plumbing and privacy. So, when we build a school, we make sure we include a girls’ changing room as part of the water and toilet facilities, so the girls can maintain their dignity, attend all their school days, and receive just as much education as the boys. Sanitation is improved, health is improved, educational outcomes too. The provision of this critical need for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene improves whole lives.

The statistics are staggering. Two billion people lack safe drinking water. 800 million don’t have water anywhere near their homes! 3.6 billion people lack safely managed sanitation; 2.3 billion lack the conditions needed for basic hygiene. Without these essentials of life, people suffer disease, hunger, malnutrition, and an unproductive life of poverty. In a March 2023 report on child mortality, UNICEF states that the lack of WASH “is still responsible for the deaths of around 400,000 children under the age of 5 each year.” That is more than a thousand little ones dying every day!

That is why we dig wells, sink boreholes, repair collapsed shafts, harvest rainwater and use reverse osmosis to purify unpotable water. Where

children can drown while gathering water from a dirty spring, we install pumps, filters, and 10,000-litre storage tanks. We help communities develop sustainable alternatives to the pool of toxic sludge that may be a community’s only source of water – and in these days of failed rain, it could be miles from home. Instead, they enjoy clean, life-sustaining water, which also allows them to improve sanitation and personal hygiene.

Where our team is working in Uganda’s Buikwe, half the population has no clean water and four out of ten don’t have sanitary conditions, so they are under constant threat from fatal diseases. In response, we installed 36 new water sources across 12 villages.

In another part of Uganda, you would think the world’s largest lake would offer all the water you could ever need, but when the water’s edge in Lake Victoria is green, the water stings and the waterborne diseases kill. In Kokola-Gimbo local people had to walk up to 2 km to reach safe water, then carry a 20 kg jerrycan all the way back. That means at least one trip a day, possibly more. Now they have safe drinking water.

“The children no longer have blood in their urine”.

A short statement from a village in Ghana says it all about their new water supply: “The children no longer have blood in their urine”.

In the Kavre district of Nepal’s Kathmandu, a two-storey-deep well was dug – by hand. Clean water for the whole community. Even though water flows endlessly from the Himalayas, there was a village called Barne where the nearest drinkable water was a six-hour round trip on foot! Now they have water and all the installation work was done by the community members



themselves. Village and family life have been transformed.

When it comes to sanitation and hygiene, villages and churches need latrines suitable for people living with disabilities. Washrooms need ‘tippy taps’ for handwashing and waste bins for sanitary pads. Girls need training in good hygiene, menstruation, puberty, and sexual/reproductive health.

In one Ugandan programme, 8,018 households and a total of 57,000 people gained access to clean water and sanitation. One village, Ssanga, received two boreholes, a storage tank and five community toilets to end the ancient practice of open defecation – drastically reducing disease. “People are no longer suffering from diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid, malaria, and the fever,” reports the local village Water Use Committee.

These Water Use Committees are vital. Self-ownership and self-accountability are the only ways to make sure water infrastructure endures. Villages elect a committee of elders and respected adults who will keep going, long after International Needs leaves. The committee will continue to promote WASH education and push for important health goals - such as Zero Open Defecation. Likewise, each village appoints and

trains its own water-well expert, with the tools, parts, and knowledge to keep the water flowing.

Esther had a two-hour walk to collect water every day – and it wasn’t even safe water. The pond was putrid. It gave people typhoid and diarrhoea. Nor could Esther carry enough to give her children what they needed for hydration and washing. Then a deep borehole well was sunk in her village. Now they have a reliable supply of clean water – and Esther was trained in the principles of hygiene and sanitation, which she now passes on to the community as a member of the well’s Water Use Committee. Her children’s health and wellbeing are greatly improved.

It’s easy to take safe water supply for granted, but in 2016 Nepal’s capital experienced a sudden and traumatic water shortage. People dug into the ground, frantic for water. At our school in Kathmandu staff queued for a week and only received enough rations for 18 schoolgirls plus a handful of parents and the staff. When water is scarce, life is desperate, but when a human being has access to basic healthcare, safe drinking water, and hygienic sanitation, their quality of life improves dramatically.

DO SOMETHING ... IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

What if you become ill? In places where the ratio of doctors may be less than 1-in-10,000 people, any illness or accident can be a death sentence. Official statistics may say there are doctors, but hundreds of millions of families cannot afford a bus ticket to a clinic, let alone a doctor's care. We must be strategic, focusing on prevention, awareness and keeping people healthy so they can achieve their potential in life; and above all, absolutely the greatest urgency of all: training the next generations of health professionals to improve access to healthcare in communities where so many of the world's people have no access at all.

How can we preach the Gospel when people are too ill, rundown, or disabled to receive the words of life? In the harsh desert conditions of Burkina Faso, this means inspecting the condition of people's eyes and their eyesight; raising awareness of serious health hazards, such as the use of smoky and dangerous open fires and cooking stoves in the homes of the poorest people in the world; distributing food and preventative health supplies; teaching preventative healthcare in schools; providing emergency medical supplies and support; running medical clinics and treatment teams, and providing pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and assistive devices for people living with disabilities.

Young children are particularly susceptible to malaria – and worldwide, malaria kills more than a thousand children a day. Slum children in Bangladesh, whether living on the street or with their families in tiny, crowded homes are tormented and kept awake by mosquitoes and the diseases they cause. Parents know mosquito nets are the answer, but they cannot afford them, so we supply them.

In Africa in the 1990s we were involved in the global response to the AIDS epidemic in Africa, when up to 25% of people in countries like Uganda and Zambia were HIV positive. 1 in 4! Huge numbers of children were orphaned, a tragic catastrophe Africa will be recovering from for generations.

In Uganda, medical clinics in 15 villages screen tens of thousands of people for waterborne diseases, carry out de-worming, test for HIV and malaria, provide STI checks and counselling referrals, dispense Vitamin A to preserve sight and immunity, and provide family planning advice – all while sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Increasingly, our programmes include mental health support, such as simple, friendly, and effective Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. In more severe cases, we provide anti-psychotic medication so people who have been in torment for their entire lives can be treated, released, and encouraged to find employment and even start a family of their own. That kind of mental health transformation is truly astounding.



The costs of running health services are simply enormous, so we and other agencies are alert to any possibility to save funds or avoid doubling up on solutions. When another ministry begins operating a medical programme similar to ours, we suspend our programme. There are many parts to the Body of Christ, and we do our best to be stewardly with the precious resources entrusted to us.

A little boy named Angel slipped and fell onto a railway track, right under the wheels of a passing train. To save his life, Angel's leg was amputated, leaving him deeply traumatised. The loving care he received through the IN Families in Crisis fund has covered his trauma counselling and the creation of a fine new prosthetic leg that fits him perfectly. As Angel plays with his friends at school, it is very hard to tell which boy has lost his leg. This is medical and spiritual care that his family could never have paid for on their own.

DO SOMETHING ... IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY

I have already told you much about Ghana's demonic ritual enslavement of women and girls, and their freedom through International Needs' support for the Trokosi Liberation Movement. It means so much to me, and to the whole of Ghana. What a wonderful testimony of love towards the women and girls of our nation. As a result of our advocacy, Parliament amended the legal code and made the practice of Trokosi a crime. Over 3,500 women have been freed.

Our empowerment programmes brought together children, their parents, and community stakeholders such as traditional and religious leaders, to publicly oppose sexual and gender-based violence. Child Rights Clubs were established in schools and communities so children could champion their own protection and empowerment. Through training in fashion, hospitality, and cosmetology at our Centre for Empowerment and Enterprise Development (CEED) vocational training centre in Adidome, the victims of Trokosi have been empowered with employable skills and have been able to rejoin society. One woman I know has been travelling the world and speaking about her liberation. She has four children without a father, but because of International Needs she has a good place to live now, and her children can go to school.

We share God's concern for justice, and we work to liberate men, women, and children from many forms of oppression and discrimination. People are made in the image of God and should not be exploited or denied justice because of their race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex, age, or for

any other reason. We denounce evil and seek to spread the love of God in the midst of an unrighteous world. Our advocacy and social justice activities are an outworking of our faith and an expression of love for our neighbours.

It is interesting to note – and surprising to many people – that by far the largest amount of human trafficking is for the purposes of forced labour. Half of human trafficking is this kind of work-based slavery. Trafficked men are forced to work on fishing boats, building sites, farms, and orchards. For trafficked women, all power over their lives is stolen from them, as they are forced to work in domestic servitude or sweatshop factories. One in four victims of trafficking is a child – most are forced into child labour, to mine minerals for our cell phones, or fishing in dangerous rivers and oceans. Or they are forced to beg and turn over their earnings to their enslavers who exploit the compassion and kindness of strangers. People are trafficked every day into forced marriage, for body organs, labour, or into the sex trade. It is a gross evil that degrades human life, and robs God's children of their rights and dignity. With the help of our supporters, we are doing everything we can to identify ways to make human trafficking, slavery, and servitude abhorrent to all – and end it forever.

Around the world, untold millions of children live on city streets, without love or care. There are 450,000 such children in Dhaka alone, the capital of Bangladesh. They face physical violence, sexual assault, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, neglect, and untreated grief over the death or abandonment of their parents. Of all human beings, they are the most vulnerable to forced labour and human trafficking, domestically or being taken overseas to disappear into a captive



lifetime of abuse and fear. Or they become victims of homicide.

International Needs runs two drop-in centres in Dhaka, providing a haven of safety, along with nutritious food, education, healthcare, bathing facilities, social support and psychological counselling, legal aid, and a chance to play and be a child with other children. As you read earlier, if they have a job, we negotiate with their employers to give them time off at the centre, without reducing their wages.

Two more of the world's most vulnerable groups are refugees and displaced people. Living in exile, they have very little power to protect themselves from being exploited. International Needs partners with local churches to support refugees as they seek a place of security and the chance to begin life again. When disaster strikes, as it so often does for vulnerable and disconnected people, we quickly mobilise to provide resources and support. We have provided food, blankets and hope for Syrian and Iraqi refugees

in Türkiye. In Egypt, many Syrian and Sudanese refugees fleeing vicious conflict have needed relief supplies, spiritual support, and vocational training. Venezuelan refugee children have been attending the Rosa de Saron Christian School in Colombia. Increasingly, the oppressor is the climate, such as when Filipino families need food and supplies after a devastating typhoon. For many years a community in Dehradun had been squatting on government land, but the High Court told them to leave, displacing tens of thousands. This is the kind of cause we are compelled by the love of Christ to support; to raise our voice with others, for justice and to gain favour for vulnerable people who are being ignored and oppressed by greedy, powerful people.

We will always stand up to advocate for the vulnerable and oppressed; we will advocate for them with our voice and the combined strength of our supporters; and we will do all we can to make sure their voices are heard above those who press their hopes into the dirt.



DO SOMETHING ... IN AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOODS

The incredible work of ACTS in India has been an inspiration to us all, through nearly the entire 50-year life of International Needs. In fact, at a time of entrenched high unemployment for one of our support countries, Ray's own New Zealand, a mini-ACTS was formed by Ken and Wendy Fraser, to create job skills and opportunities for severely disadvantaged young people. Indeed, the ACTS model worked well, with students able to establish themselves in the workforce – while winning some to Christ.

It is nearly impossible to climb out of poverty alone. Through community programmes we aim to give families the chance to raise their household incomes together. It could mean agricultural assets like crops or livestock; commerce such as market stalls, hair salons and tailoring shops; or learning marketable skills – whatever will ensure food security and long-term sustainable livelihood – from a rubber plantation in Uganda to village savings and loan programmes in Sri Lanka and Kenya. International Needs' economic empowerment programmes give people the hand-up they need to break free from an endless cycle of poverty.

Samser Achhimi lost his livelihood in Nepal's huge and destructive 7.8 earthquake of 2015. He resigned himself to leaving his family in search of work over the border in India. When he heard he had been nominated for the International Needs livelihood programme,

he said he felt like the luckiest man alive. He could stay with his family and support them by growing vegetables in a plastic polytunnel. It wasn't long before he was expanding beyond his own field, leasing his neighbour's land for another six tunnels. The vegetables boosted the health of his family and provided a steady income, because of the ability to grow off-season vegetables in these wonderful weather-protecting tunnels.

Serikewa was a struggling single mother of three children in Fiji. Thanks to the Solo Moms programme, Serikewa received counselling for past trauma, vocational training in sewing, and financial help to get her started in her work. She now has her own independent business, and a confidence beyond anything she could have imagined for herself.

Surya Bahadur in Nepal drove for a living, but an accident at home shattered his leg. In an instant his ability to support his family disappeared. Nor could he afford to pay his medical bills. His accident seemed to have destroyed his life – but International Needs had a simple solution: raising goats. The animals do almost everything themselves – from feeding to breeding. Surya has paid his medical costs and his profitable little herd of goats is supporting his family. This was only possible because he was given that first set of goats. They were more than Surya could afford, so he is incredibly grateful.

DO SOMETHING ... IN DISASTER RESPONSE

Yes, International Needs is actively involved in long-running planned programmes to bring God's love to communities around the world. Yet, we know that some of the most intense human suffering happens quickly and unexpectedly. Whether through earthquake, floods, climate, conflict, or the self-seeking greed of human nature, disasters cause untold suffering in the moment – and without help to rebuild, the aftermath can last for generations. International Needs is often involved in the urgent and ongoing response to disasters, because with our model of ministry, led by nationals, we have frontline workers who live and work among those who are suffering disaster and catastrophe. As a partnership, International Needs rallies to respond.

At Christmas in 2021 an urgent prayer request went out from West Africa to International Needs supporters worldwide. Terrorists had formed a ring right around Burkina Faso's 600 km border and they were moving inwards to crush and overrun the country. Thousands fled for their lives as these Islamic extremists murdered other Muslims, destroyed schools, and killed teachers for using French rather than Arabic and teaching a secular curriculum. Schools closed – 3,000 in all – denying education to half a million children. Refugees were able to take shelter with International Needs.

In Bangladesh floods displaced huge numbers of people, and when fire swept through the Chalandika slum area of the capital near the heart of our partners' programmes, we mounted an urgent appeal to fund food and relief packages for

thousands of people who lost their homes.

In the South Pacific in 2022, the largest volcanic eruption of the millennium created ash and a tsunami that destroyed island crops and polluted drinking water supplies. We responded with an emergency appeal for Tonga. For Ukraine our supporters and partners have provided food, medicine, blankets, and warm clothes, along with a kindergarten, books, toys, and counselling for terrified children. One boy, Sasa, said it was a great feeling to be able to change his socks after 12 days of walking.

The record of disaster response across 50 years of humanitarian care is overwhelming. Typhoons hit the Philippines. Fires race through slums and houses. More than a generation ago, in 1991, the worst cyclone in over 20 years killed 130,000 people in Bangladesh and made ten million homeless. A 6.1m storm surge swept in from the ocean, the worst tidal wave ever to hit the country. Rice crops and cattle were destroyed. Cholera threatened lives. Communications were down. Winds reached 250km/h! International Needs began building houses for people whose lives were completely upended by Cyclone Marian. In that same year Mt Pinatubo in the Philippines became a killer volcano, made even worse by the savage landfall of Typhoon Yunya, raining lethal ash on hundreds of thousands of people evacuating the Manila metro area. The International Needs team helped to mobilise local churches, friends, and prayer partners, to meet immediate needs for food and clothing. People had to find a new place to live, carrying nothing more than perhaps a cooking pot and minimal items of clothing. When tribal leaders told us their food, 160 kilos of nails, 20 kg of wire for making walls of tied vegetation, and roofing materials.



One village leader became hostile – not because we gave too little, but because it was so much. He was worried we were trying to lord our generosity over his people. It was good to be able to tell him about our desire to, in this small way, emulate our God who gives with such abundance and grace.

At the turn of the millennium a tribe in the Philippines called the Tboli suffered a terrible drought, with 30,000 people in dire need of food. People were dying of starvation because it had not rained for a year and their entire crop failed. Enough grain was sent to feed people until the next crop came through.

How could one wall of water kill so many and destroy so much? A quarter of a million souls perished when a tsunami hit the nations surrounding the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka,

on the day after Christmas in 2004. Our supporters and relief teams provided 1.6 tons of medicine through a mobile clinic, with clothing for 20,000 stranded people and milk for more than a thousand infants and children.

In the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal, some of the ladies from the Lydia vocational training school had their homes damaged or destroyed. Rainy seasons bring landslides. Rockfalls bury and kill. Floods drown and displace. Through it all we provide container-loads of baby diapers, women's personal hygiene supplies, underwear, baby clothes, winter mittens and hoods, children's socks, winter jackets and pants for children and adults, dental supplies, food, emergency first aid kits, mobile kitchens, and tents to shelter survivors.

2021 brought war in Ukraine. Katya and her husband Kolya (Nikolai), both in their 70s, are from the Ukrainian capital. They wanted to share their testimony of healing and gratitude for being able to stay at the beautiful Comenius Centre in Slovakia. “We are very grateful to everyone who financially gave us the opportunity to spend three months in this wonderful place – a paradise for us. Here, through all the people, we saw a lot of God’s love. We felt very good here, as in the arms of the Heavenly Father. After all the horror that we experienced in Kiev, we had the opportunity to sleep peacefully in our beds, not dressed and not in bomb shelters; to pray with others, eat well, study the Bible, heal ourselves inside. My soul has found friends here, my soul has found peace and rest here! My spirit saw here an example of ministers who served us 24/7. This example teaches me to give more than take. Here I managed to cast all my worries on God and trust Him. Thanks to the clean mountain air and clean water, my health has been improved here. My asthma is completely gone. I can breathe here without an inhaler. Thanks to your service. God gives strength to live on, to serve. We love. We appreciate. We pray. We bless! We believe that God will turn evil into good. With love, Katya and Kolya Matsko.”

In our 48th year Türkiye experienced its worst earthquakes for 350 years. This was a double disaster for the Syrian refugees we were assisting, after they had fled across the border to escape years of murderous civil war. The International

Needs team in Türkiye responded quickly and is continuing in this work to bring encouragement and relief to refugee children and their families – sometimes with a tent, a warm blanket, a jacket for cold days, food, shoes for growing feet or a cuddly stuffed animal for those lonely times when tears come.

Last year the economic crisis in Sri Lanka collapsed the pillars of the state, with truly dire troubles for the nation and its people – especially the food insecurity being endured by the economically vulnerable families we work with there. We are doing all we can to give families what they need to grow food from the ground, with seedlings of six varieties of vegetables for 1,000 families. After three months we heard that families can meet their food needs, with more to share with neighbours and to sell to meet non-food needs. As I write this, I know we will continue to support them as their nation slowly rebuilds from its economic collapse.

That is the thing about disasters. They grab the world’s headlines for a short time, but recovery takes much longer. I am grateful for the good and kind hearts of International Needs supporters who continue to pray and give, long after the news reporters have moved on to the next sensational headline.

Now, we cannot talk about International Needs’ work over the last 50 years without a brief mention of an event unlike any other in the living memory of the human race today...



DO SOMETHING ... IN THE PANDEMIC

Covid is the single most impactful global phenomenon of our first 50 years. It is important to remember what happened, how people suffered, and how we tried to help.

Around Christmas of 2019 the people of the world began to wonder what to make of rumours of a new virus. It seemed to be about ten times worse than influenza and it was incredibly contagious. This particularly frightening combination compelled governments to shut down their societies in ways human history had

never witnessed, not even in the 1918–1920 flu pandemic a century earlier.

“We, the poor, are immune from the coronavirus,” claimed a Mexican governor at the start of the pandemic. He could not have been more wrong. The virus hurt the poor far more than the wealthy.

The disease itself caused panic, death, suffering, and overwhelming chaos in the fragile health systems in the countries we serve. We are still mourning millions of people who are no longer with us. Many would not have died if everyone on earth simply had access to basic healthcare.

Then there are so many vulnerable people who never caught Covid but suffered greatly nonetheless. Keeping people at home did contain and restrict a catastrophe that could have been far, far worse – but for families in poverty with no resources at home, hunger turned out to be a much worse enemy than Covid-19. Lockdowns had devastating effects on people who rely on day-to-day hand-to-mouth living.

We did all we could through the three years of the globe-spanning pandemic, as the virus mutated into the optimal form for its own survival: much less lethal but still so very easy to catch and transmit. In Bangladesh we provided parcels of food, face masks and soap. In India, thousands of families received emergency food hampers and home supplies, along with shelter for those with nowhere to go during community lockdowns. In Uganda, with schools closed, Justus and his team provided online learning and at-home workbooks so children could continue their studies. Covid-19 absolutely shattered Fiji, through loss of life, income and livelihood – including a hiatus for our priceless Solo Moms project. Tomu and his team helped many families, with food aid and temporary shelters for those with nowhere to live. In the Philippines, church planters turned to providing food aid and support for communities ravaged by the effects of lockdowns on people trying to earn enough to eat and survive. Not only were families fed, but many children were also able to keep studying online, thanks to donations towards smart devices and Wi-Fi for the young learners. In Vietnam, food bags and necessities for poor families were assembled and handed out by churches. Teams

gave out free face masks emblazoned with *I Love Jesus*.

To prevent widespread deprivation exploding into social chaos, we worked with local communities to develop sustainable livelihood programmes such as vegetable growing and goat farming. Helping many families to grow their own food was instrumental in making it through the pandemic - and the positive impact lived on in remote rural communities after the crisis passed.

Countless times we saw the devastation that Covid-19 has inflicted on our world. In one of the poorest areas of Cairo, an abandoned Egyptian mum had nothing left to meet the basic needs of her four children. Covid had closed down her domestic cleaning work. She was desperate. The International Needs team stepped in and provided food and funds to cover those needs. Then they went an incredible step further. They contacted her husband, who was deep in drug addiction, and they arranged a drug rehabilitation programme for him. He has returned to the family as a happy and healthy husband, dad, and provider. I think that is wonderful! Their lives have been changed forever by the testimony of love they received in the depths of the pandemic.

These have been the practical ministries of International Needs over the last 50 years. Can I remind you, though, of where we started: with a group of believers casting their bread upon the waters at dawn, in the form of slim little plastic packages. Now let's find out what those packages contained – then finish by lifting our heads and looking for what might lie ahead of us, around the river's next bend.

IN THE RIVER TO THE FUTURE

They say it all started at a bazaar in India. Ray Harrison was conducting a mission with Youth for Christ in the early 1950s, when he was put off his game by the aggressive sales tactics of street vendors trying to sell him oranges. “Taste it for yourself, Sahib. Have you tried it?” Those words shot into his heart. He began to use the Taste it for yourself tactic at his Christian campaigns. It turned out to be very effective, so Ray wrote a small evangelistic tract that he called Have you tried it? How can you say ‘no’ to meeting Jesus, if you haven’t even tried Him? A few years later the question in the title became a very compelling call to action: Taste and See.

Over the following years that little Taste and See tract often found its way to the heart of Ray’s widening evangelistic activities. It was given out at the Tokyo Olympics and again at the Games in Mexico City four years later. One print run in Japan alone was for half a million copies ... and Taste and See was dropped into every single letterbox in Iceland. God’s hand was clearly on this simple little booklet, so people started sending in money to print and distribute even more copies of Taste and See.

When Ray moved from Youth for Christ to the newly-formed International Needs, Taste and See came with him. In a New Zealand prison, inmates who had found the Lord wrote to ask for copies of the tract. They said, “We are serious about our faith and want to grow in it and love for the Lord.”

Ray Harrison brought his own charming brand of humility to the success and impact of ‘Taste

and See’. *“As a young Christian with much more zeal than knowledge, I tried to work out a plan to reach the world. I decided the ways that I could have the greatest outreach would be:*

1. *To preach and sing everywhere I could;*
2. *To write an appeal hymn like ‘Just As I Am’, which would touch the hearts of millions;*
3. *To write a Gospel tract which could be translated and printed around the world.*

“In actual fact I wrote an appeal hymn which was sung a few times in our own church and broadcast once to New Zealand over the radio service, and hasn’t been heard of since! With God’s grace I’ve had the privilege of preaching and singing the gospel message in over a hundred countries and often over radio and television for the past 40 years, but in total have probably reached just a few million people.

“Through the little gospel tract, ‘Taste and See’, which God graciously put His hand on, we do know that over 100 million copies have been printed and distributed in 70 languages. But adding all of that up, and including the countless billions who have come into the world over the past 40 years, we haven’t even started to scratch the surface! Over the past 20 years or so though God has made me realise that the best way to get the job done is in multiplication! Training, equipping, encouraging, trusting and helping others to do the job.”

100 million copies of that tiny tract! Astonishing!

This brings us back to where we started, with the scene beside a river, as believers cast their small, sealed plastic bags onto the waters, so they could float downstream. Inside the bags were



copies of *Taste and See*, because that is how the tracts were sometimes sent out, in countries like Vietnam and rivers like the fabled Mekong, because it was too dangerous to pass Christian material hand-to-hand. Putting them in the river placed them in God's hands, to distribute as He willed, to be picked up downriver and read, to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

For 50 years we have been in God's hands, on God's river, not knowing where the next bend will take us. At first we set out with the breakthrough idea that missions are best handled by well-supported national leaders who know their own communities best. Then we came upon another transformative idea that separates us from so many agencies that have turned away from Christ towards secular aid and development: we believe humanitarian action is at its best when it is firmly welded to Christian faith – and ministering Christ is most profoundly effective when we meet physical needs first and very well, so we become deeply trusted to meet their spiritual needs. In other words:

TRANSFORMED LIVES, CHANGED COMMUNITIES

We do not know where the river will take us in the next 50 years, but we certainly have more of a blueprint than Ray and his friends did when they were starting out. What can we say about the stretch of the river that lies ahead?

We have already been blessed beyond many of our dreams, but our hearts desire more. We aspire to expand our efforts, with even greater impact, with unwavering hearts and constantly innovative minds – always scanning the horizon

for sustainable ways to bring transformation to people and communities. As John 15 says, Fruit that will last.

We dream of embarking on ambitious projects that provide sustenance and stability, healthcare, and education. At our scale, we cannot do everything, but we can change the world through the power of models. Model homes. Model villages. Model schools. Model hospitals and clinics. When communities can see what works, they can build it for themselves.

As well as building, we will advocate. We aim to become experts in managing the complexities of language, culture, and bureaucratic hurdles; and resolving tensions between communities – such as balancing the needs and rights of displaced people with those of indigenous people. We will challenge and encourage those who impact our environment to do whatever it takes to reduce the impact of climate change on the poor and vulnerable. Trusted deeply by the communities in which we live and work, we can become involved more deeply in regulated areas, while being prayerful and prepared for rapid and radical changes in government policy.

Our greatest challenge will continue to be gathering enough resources and funding to meet more of the needs that surround us. We want to be an organisation that says 'yes' more often and 'no' less often. Which village gets a borehole? Which children receive support? Allocating limited funds can be heart breaking.

Generosity needs to be part of our wider culture-building programme in every nation. Whether believer or not, giving a portion of our assets and income for others is a natural part of

human life. The best example of that is, of course, the generosity of Jesus Christ. Let us also rise to the challenge of communicating the depth and quality of this ministry. We have incredible stories to tell, but the marketplace of ideas and causes is noisy and crowded. We need to speak up. We also need to take care of our donors and supporters, so they do not become bewildered or confused by the scope of our work and the proliferation of our partners. We appreciate those who support us, but we need to depend on them less, by diversifying our funding streams; to be entrepreneurial in pursuing fruitful interdependence, and teach others to do the same.

It is also going to be important to find the right balance for those who can pay something for services and those who cannot pay anything at all. As much as possible, we want our projects to be self-financing, but without being unaffordable for people in need.

The second greatest challenge is personnel and lack of workers. We pray that God will deliver committed and capable leaders at the local level. In all areas that demand trained professionals, such as teachers or medics, we need to make sure that sufficient staff are being equipped and accredited. We hope to train many young people, so as older workers move on, they know their groundwork is in good hands. Together, we will be a global family of partners and friends, bringing glory to God.

Our hope is to build communities where we are all learning to live in the fullness of our skills, abilities and talents: where people don't have to

live hand to mouth, or paycheque to paycheque; where life or learning is not interrupted by power cuts; where people can put food on the table; where every child has access to education, skills, knowledge, wisdom and moral values; where every child, adult and family has access to basic rights, services and security. Imagine seeing all human beings thriving in all facets of life. With all our human needs met, we can look up from our labours long enough to think about our spiritual needs.

We continue to pray and trust that God produces a harvest from the seeds we sow in His name. With our strategy of building great trust through serving communities, we pray for a substantial increase in the number of people coming to Christ; a turning in the tide of spiritual decline; a good balance between risk and safety for those who minister in hostile and dangerous places as terrorism continues to rise. It can be very dangerous to work openly as servants of Jesus Christ, but it has always been that way. We need to encourage and support God's workers who face persecution, because it is hard to end up in prison, accused of being a traitor to the people you are working so hard to serve.

We will continue to seek dialogue and understanding with those who oppose us, to soften their hearts. We will be courageous in the face of demonic activity and traditional practices such as sorcery and voodoo, and we will lovingly oppose false hopes held out by cults and materialism. We will push for greater freedom to proclaim the Gospel and use every opportunity when that freedom comes. We will advocate for



safety for all people – especially those who cannot confess their faith in Jesus without dire consequences. In many places we face opposition not only from radical anti-Christian groups ... but also from the very governments that should be looking out for our well-being. It is important that we try to make it easier for people to live as Christians when their government is making it hard.

Our experience has taught us that God raises up faithful and innovative individuals in some of the most unlikely places throughout the world. It is through these that God fosters creative bursts of culturally relevant ministry. Our focus is to come alongside these people as partners. Like bends in a river, we cannot usually see very far ahead, but we know from where we have come and we

are assured of our gracious God who is going before us.

What a wonderful organisation International Needs will be – and everyone who loves the Lord can be involved, as a vessel of God's grace, meeting the needs of the people He has made in His image. Through prayer and ministry, we strive to see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.

Exciting times lie ahead, inspired by what has gone before. Thank you for joining me to celebrate our Jubilee, our first 50 years of love and liberation. Please think of this story we have shared, not as a monument, but as a stepping stone to even greater things. While we may not yet know where our river leads, together let us agree with Ray Harrison's call ... and ***Do Something.***

APPENDIX

IN ALL THE EARTH -
OUR FAMILY OF NATIONS



AUSTRALIA



ORIGINS

International Needs Australia (INA) originated in 1974, catalysed by an initial encounter between Ray and Glenda de Jager, and Ray Harrison. Working from her kitchen table, Glenda began to develop the International Needs ministry within Australia, beginning with a first donation of \$124 on 28 February 1975. The foundation of INA was rooted in the care of a small mailing list, which quickly grew into a large base of supporters, leading INA to become one of the first Australian NGOs to gain recognition and funding from what is today known as the Australian Government's Australian NGO Cooperation Program. This standing has been maintained for over half a century, reflecting the organisation's enduring commitment and impact.

From the outset, INA's mission focused on empowering local believers to reach their communities, aligning with global efforts to train, trust, and empower individuals in need. The establishment of a child sponsorship programme, which initially assisted children in Bangladesh and India, exemplifies INA's early dedication to addressing the immediate needs of children while also providing opportunities for spiritual growth.

KEY FOCUS

INA's work focuses on two key areas: livelihoods and education, particularly for the most marginalised women and children. Recognising that livelihoods are a crucial issue for the communities we support, INA endeavours to provide sustainable assistance, favouring a 'hand up' rather than a 'handout' approach. This methodology aims to break the cycle of poverty and elevate educational aspirations, ensuring immediate and long-lasting benefits for families.

Education, especially for girls, is their second strong lever for breaking the cycle of poverty. INA's programmes are designed to enhance children's education and health, ensuring girls remain in school, while and improving maternal and child health outcomes. These efforts are complemented by initiatives that empower women's livelihoods through training, equipment, and community loans, thereby fostering independence and supporting family health, nutrition, and gender equity.

INA's commitment extends to social finance for livelihoods, impacting investing, grants, and loans, focusing on scalable models that incorporate relevant technology and community-based approaches. These efforts are aimed at fostering sustainable community development, prioritising the welfare of women and children.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking to the future, INA remains dedicated to enhancing their impact among the world's most marginalised communities, focusing on regions with the highest levels of poverty in Eastern Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. They aim to create pathways out of poverty through holistic and sustainable initiatives in education, health, and livelihoods, which also support gender equity and climate change outcomes.

As a fully Australian Government DFAT-accredited NGO, they are committed to creating and maintaining robust systems that ensure high-quality programme management and contribute directly to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The organisation expends 86% of its funds on international development or education programmes, reflecting their role as a responsible custodian of resources.

INA also places significant emphasis on engaging Australian youth, partnering with schools and universities to inspire awareness, compassion, and action against global poverty. This approach aims to empower young Australians to contribute to creating a brighter future for the world's most vulnerable people.

In their continuing journey, International Needs Australia faces the challenges of reaching the most isolated and disadvantaged communities, ensuring sustainable change, and adapting to the evolving needs of the people we serve. Yet, driven by a vision of social

justice, equity, and poverty reduction, they remain hopeful and dedicated to seeing local communities empowering themselves, while they will continue to advocate for those who live with disadvantage. Even as poverty declines and wellbeing improves, they aim to extend the reach of their mission for many years to come.

BANGLADESH



ORIGINS

In April 1974 Late Ray Harrison was visiting Dhaka, Bangladesh seeking to start a Youth for Christ programme. At that time Bangladesh experienced one of the devastating floods that had profound and far-reaching effects on the nation. Triggered by excessive monsoon rains, the flood submerged vast areas, causing immense loss of lives and property. People were forced to evacuate their homes, and essential infrastructure like roads and bridges was washed away. The flood exacerbated existential issues, leading to widespread poverty, food shortages, and a surge in waterborne diseases.

Ray Harrison and the late Rev. Smith R. Adhikary, a young local leader at the time, rode on a 50cc motorbike to a place called Mirpur where they found a number of starving and orphaned children. The sight of these ailing, helpless children moved Ray Harrison to tears, prompting him to turn to Rev. Adhikary and ask, “Smith, can we do something?” Though their immediate capabilities were limited, Ray Harrison’s concern persisted even as he departed Dhaka. Before leaving the airport, he placed \$5 into Smith’s hand, urging him to take action. This moment ignited a profound commitment to alleviate suffering. On July 7, 1974, International Needs Bangladesh (INBD) took its first steps, operating from a humble house in Pallabi Mirpur, Dhaka. This initiative began with just six children orphaned by the catastrophic event. It marked International Needs’ inaugural project in Asia.

KEY FOCUS

Since its inception in 1974, International Needs has been actively involved in impactful projects across Bangladesh. One of its flagship initiatives is the “Savar Children’s Village” orphanage ministry located in Savar. This dedicated facility offers residential support and prioritises education for 200 girls from diverse demographic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. INBD is committed to nurturing their physical, mental, and spiritual development, alongside skill enhancement.

Furthermore, International Needs has extended its outreach to the southern part of Bangladesh- Barisal, where it operates the second-largest children’s village known as “Bethany Children’s Village” providing a nurturing environment for 100 boys. These boys, often from underprivileged families, benefit from comprehensive programs aimed at their holistic development.

The community development initiative of International Needs is complemented by various projects. These include a Free primary school at Banasree, Dhaka; no-cost Vocational Training Program designed for local women and young ladies, a Free Primary School in Jashore, and a Free Primary School and Vocational Training in Naogaon. These initiatives are currently operating seamlessly, contributing to the organisation’s holistic approach to uplift and empower communities.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

In Bangladesh, International Needs is dedicated to its mission of “empowering the poor and marginalized people of Bangladesh to restore their physical, emotional, socio-economic, and moral identity.” The organisation focuses its efforts in areas of Bangladesh where poverty is prevalent, striving to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those facing economic challenges and social marginalization.

- i. Ministry expansion: We aspire to broaden the reach of our ministry to various corners of Bangladesh, aiming to extend comprehensive support. This includes endeavours in education, healthcare, nutrition, emotional well-being, and spiritual nourishment with the overarching goal of ensuring the holistic development of every child within the community. Our dream is to impact more lives, fostering positive change and creating a lasting impact on the well-being of individuals and communities across diverse regions in Bangladesh.
- ii. Spiritual Growth: Continue fostering the spiritual growth of our program participants by integrating religious practices, offering age-specific religious education to those who are interested, and creating a nurturing environment for children to develop a strong faith foundation.
- iii. Education and Vocational Training: Work towards improving and expanding educational initiatives, offering quality schooling and vocational training programs to equip children

with the skills needed for a brighter future.

- iv. Healthcare Access: Enhance healthcare facilities and services in rural areas focused on preventive care, access to essential medical treatments, and promoting overall health and well-being within the community.
- v. Empowerment of Families: Implement programs that empower families economically, socially, and spiritually, aiming to break the cycle of poverty and create self-sustaining communities.
- vi. Community Infrastructure: Collaborate with local communities and authorities to develop essential infrastructure, including clean water sources, sanitation facilities, and housing, to improve living conditions and overall community resilience.
- vii. Advocacy and Awareness raising: Engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about child rights, education, and healthcare, influencing policies and practices that positively impact children and families in Bangladesh.
- viii. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity: Embrace and respect the cultural diversity of Bangladesh, ensuring that development programs are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and tailored to the specific needs of the communities served.
- ix. New Partnerships: Foster strong partnerships with local churches, NGOs, government bodies, and international organisations to leverage resources, share best practices, and collectively address the complex challenges faced by children and families in Bangladesh.
- x. Long-Term Sustainability: Develop sustainable models for community development, focusing on long-term impact and empowering communities

to become self-reliant over time.

Despite its successes, INBD faces a multitude of challenges that impact its mission and effectiveness. Political instability and unrest in Bangladesh have been recurring issues, disrupting project implementation and posing risks to the safety of both INBD staff and beneficiaries. Bangladesh is a diverse country with a significant Muslim majority, and Islam plays a crucial role in shaping the social and political landscape. While the government of Bangladesh officially promotes religious tolerance and secularism, there can be instances where religious considerations influence the functioning of NGOs.

Navigating complex regulations, bureaucratic hurdles, and government restrictions poses obstacles to operating freely. Cultural norms and social hierarchies present barriers, demanding sensitivity and adaptation in engaging with marginalized communities. Natural disasters, including cyclones and floods, pose threats to community development efforts, causing widespread destruction and displacement. Additionally, INBD's reliance on external funding sources, subject to volatility and fluctuations, adds complexity in sustaining long-term projects and operations.

Despite Bangladesh facing political turmoil and enduring various hardships, it's crucial to recognize the remarkable resilience and contentment embedded within its people. In Bangladesh International Needs stands resiliently at the forefront, celebrating 50 years of unwavering commitment. More than a project-centric organization, INBD is a vessel for

expressing God's love—a force driving meaningful change, empowerment, and holistic development within individuals and communities across the nation. In the face of numerous challenges, including political and social unrest, the dedicated staff of INBD remains resolute in their commitment to serving the kingdom of God. INBD's journey is not merely a response to challenges but a testament to its enduring mission to uplift, empower, and bring positive change to the people of Bangladesh, embodying the spirit of resilience and service in the face of adversity.

BULGARIA



ORIGINS

Teodor and Dimitrina Oprenov, known fondly as Tedi and Didi, have been ministering in Bulgaria for over 20 years. They were born into Christian homes during the long rule of communism in their country. Their church – Sofia Baptist Church – has deep evangelical roots in Bulgaria, having been founded in the 1880s.

KEY FOCUS

Tedi and Didi have been running Alpha courses and are very committed to social ministry to serve those in need. They have supported the homeless, orphans, Roma, and refugees from Syria and Ukraine (offering a live translation of their church services in Russian – more than half of the families are not Christian and are hearing God’s Word for the first time.) They have also been involved in youth, children’s and women’s ministry and rallied teams of volunteers for different ministries. They are also involved in the theological training of pastors and leaders, to answer God’s call to spread the Gospel.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The city of Sofia is quite an unreached territory for the Gospel. “We would see this building as a centre of inspiration and God working throughout the entire city. There are five different congregations that all started from this one.”

The Oprenovs aspire to accelerate their reach on the country’s burgeoning Christian media ministry, to reach the people of Bulgaria through worship and the Word of God.

BURKINA FASO



ORIGINS

The journey of International Needs in Burkina Faso began in January 2004, following a collaboration between Pastor Jean Kone and International Needs UK. This partnership heralded the establishment of a secondary school aimed at offering educational opportunities to children otherwise deprived of such prospects. Alongside the educational initiative, sponsorship programmes were set up to support underprivileged children, allowing them to realise their potential and aspire to greater achievements.

Central to their story is Samba Traore, the first headmaster of our school, whose vision and leadership laid the groundwork for our ministry. His commitment to integrity, discipline, and leadership has been a source of inspiration to many. Equally influential, Dieudonne Kone has been instrumental in the success of their projects through his dedication and tireless efforts.

KEY FOCUS

Key initiatives have included healthcare through the establishment of a medical centre, support for displaced victims of terrorist attacks, and the provision of clean water via borehole drilling in villages. These programmes have significantly improved quality of life, offering not just basic necessities but also hope and a sense of security to the communities they serve.

Memorable moments have marked their journey – from the joy of a father witnessing his daughter attend school for the first time, through

to families able to access clean water, food, and medical facilities. These experiences have left indelible marks on their hearts and continue to fuel their commitment to the people of Burkina Faso.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

They face considerable challenges, particularly in the allocation of resources. The most significant challenge is the gap between needs - such as the demand for boreholes in several villages – and their limited capacity to fulfil only a fraction of the requests they receive.

Similarly, educational needs often exceed their capacity, forcing them to make difficult choices. Additionally, the security situation caused by terrorist activities remains a complex challenge that impacts their operations and the communities they aim to assist.

Looking forward, they are determined to broaden their impact through ambitious initiatives. They dream of establishing farms and gardens to provide sustenance for displaced communities. They envision creating a hospital to offer comprehensive healthcare services. Their ultimate goal is to see society transformed and see people grow spiritually through the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. They are optimistic about the future and the potential for more impactful projects, thanks to unwavering faith in their mission. Together, they are committed to driving meaningful change and improving lives in Burkina Faso.

CANADA



ORIGINS

International Needs Canada (INCA) began in 1975 following the meetings at the Lausanne Conference in 1974. The organisation was incorporated by Mel Newth at the request of Ray Harrison, after Ray shared his vision for IN with Mel. In the early years, many of the early Canadian Board came from Banfield Memorial Church, Toronto. The first Canadian paid staff person was Bernard Camper, also from Banfield Memorial Church. Key individuals who have led this work have included:

Chris Hindley: As a businessman and strong Christian with international experience, he was a great support for Mel Newth, then President of International Needs, until Chris' untimely death.

Denis Bell: A former board chair of INCA and son in law of Alf Rees, a Canadian missionary to Calcutta, India. He was a passionate advocate of the work.

John Koot: As current board chair, he has given selflessly over many years. His expertise on governance has been invaluable and fortunately his sense of adventure and fun have made it possible to travel wherever needed to get the work done.

Barry Klinck: Currently, the longest serving board member. They are thankful for his longevity, institutional knowledge, discernment, and wisdom
Corrie Mulder: Like John, a Ray Harrison awardee Now there's a character!

KEY FOCUS

Over half a century, the INCA team and its supporters have helped to change lives in many ways in many places. They have supporting Naogoan school in Bangladesh. In Burkina Faso, they have supported water projects that have seen boreholes drilled in villages, bringing clean and plentiful water, better health, and improved livelihoods. In Ghana, with the help of the Canadian International Development Agency, INCA contributed to the global Trokosi Modernisation Project, to eliminate traditional fetish slavery of women and girls. A visit to Canada by three Kenyan pastors, resulted in work beginning as Kingdom Children in 1989, which in time merged with International Needs Canada ... and eventually became International Needs Kenya. INCA supported projects there have included Safe House Kenya with RHYCO. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, programmes have included Ephphata School for children with hearing loss and Clinique Papillon. Other projects have included medical outreaches to many countries with Dr. Neal Stretch and team – and the Umoja Journeys: luxury 4WD adventures to raise funds for global work. Since 2001 Canada has supported the Rosa de Saron Christian School in Barranquilla, Colombia – with a parallel livelihoods project for the children's mothers. International Needs Canada also supports the Juan Calvino Christian School in Dominican Republic and backed ZACTS – the Zambia Agriculture Crafts

Trades and Studies Institute.

Alongside all this practical ministry, the Canada team and its leaders played a very important role in helping forge and reinforce the identity of International Needs globally – particularly through the courageous advocacy of Denis Bell and John Koot over many years. Canada advocated for the concept of congress; helped strengthen organisational capacity and governance; and encouraged the transfer of international leadership to frontline countries – always with a desire to see lives transformed and communities changes through a stronger, better organisation, both locally and globally.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Over the years two consistent challenges have been to find the right leadership with vision in place; and receiving government approval or support for some projects to move forward. In the future they look forward to truly effective collaboration within the partnership, with an empowered global office taking the role of fostering this cooperation, for even greater impact around the world. They are also working towards a larger and even more deeply engaged donor base. INCA's inclusive philosophy is that the people who benefit from the work of International Needs are by no means restricted to the frontline countries. Donors too – in Canada and elsewhere – are having their lives enriched by embracing such worthy and wonderful work.

COLOMBIA



ORIGINS

International Needs commenced its operations in Colombia in 1994, initiated by Rick Brekelbaum during his work in this country. He forged links with an orphanage in Mariquita, Tolima, which was supported by resources from IN USA until 2006. The project advanced as Walter Viafara and Olga Villamarin stepped in as intermediaries, in a supportive partnership between the orphanage and International Needs USA.

The organisation expanded its influence in 2001, establishing a supportive connection with the Rosa de Saron school. This marked the beginning of a long and fruitful association, which later included support from IN CA and subsequently, IN US. These early endeavours aimed to transform lives within communities beset by poverty, hopelessness, and a lack of spiritual growth and educational opportunities.

KEY FOCUS

The principal activities of International Needs in Colombia are centred around education, healthcare, and social outreach. The Rosa de Saron Christian School has been at the heart of these efforts, providing educational programmes grounded in Biblical principles. The organisation's sponsorship has significantly improved living standards and educational achievements within the community. Healthcare initiatives, particularly in Barranquilla, have delivered essential services, impacting approximately 15,000 individuals with a range of medical, dental, and ophthalmological care.

Furthermore, the organisation has been dedicated to supporting Venezuelan migrant children and those displaced by conflict, focusing on literacy and foundational education to welcome them into society and the educational system. Complementing these educational efforts, spiritual and humanitarian support has been a cornerstone, including food distribution and the dissemination of the Gospel, aiming to uplift the community's spirits and wellbeing.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

As International Needs Colombia looks to the future, they remain steadfast in their commitment to broaden their impact and reinforce their initiatives. Foremost among their objectives is the ambition to sponsor all students at the Rosa de Saron School and to extend educational support to additional schools in neighbouring cities such as Cartagena and Santa Marta. This expansion aims to provide more of students with access to quality education and support.

Additionally, they pledge their continued support to the Koggi indigenous community and they aim to extend this support to other indigenous groups, fostering cultural and spiritual growth. A significant goal is annual training in tailoring skills for classes of 100 mothers who head households, empowering them economically and socially. They are also committed to crucial support for Venezuelan migrant families, through food distribution and educational programmes.

Evangelical outreach remains a core focus, with plans to establish churches in municipalities yet to encounter the Gospel. This effort aligns with their broader mission to provide spiritual support to local communities.

The journey ahead for International Needs Colombia is filled with both hope and challenges. They are determined to keep building on their work, driven by the transformative power of God's

love, striving to improve the living conditions and futures of Colombian communities. This commitment is embodied by the dedicated team members such as Aida Beatriz Avila and Martha Estela Villamizar, whose sacrifices and efforts have been pivotal to their successes. As International Needs moves forward, they aim to extend their reach, increase their impact, and continue to serve as a beacon of hope and transformation in Colombia.

CZECH REPUBLIC



ORIGINS

The journey of International Needs Czech Republic (INCZ) commenced informally in 1994, catalysed by the fall of the communist regime and the initiatives led by the IN President's office and the CEE Coordinator, Otakar Vozeh. Formal recognition came in October 1995. From the outset, two foundational principles guided them: all their programmes were to be designed and approved by local individuals, ensuring relevance and cultural sensitivity, and they committed to not only receive funds but also to support God's work financially themselves, both domestically and in less fortunate regions. This ethos has underpinned their activities, ensuring that their endeavours resonate deeply with their community's needs and the broader mission of International Needs.

KEY FOCUS

Their central ministry, the Healthy Youth Ministry (HY Ministry), emerged from a clear vision and a strong sense of divine guidance. This unique initiative allows them to work within public schools, a rare opportunity that they embrace wholeheartedly. Despite initial challenges, HY Ministry has become a vital Christian outreach within Czech public schools, impacting over 80,000 students annually. Their approach, which includes distributing New Testaments and engaging in meaningful dialogues, has garnered significant support from both Christian and non-Christian community members.

Their efforts extend beyond evangelism; they are deeply involved in addressing the complex issues facing today's youth, from sexuality and gender confusion to the mental strains exacerbated by the pandemic and geopolitical tensions. Through the testimonies of their workers, such as Monika Sluneckova and Radek Hejret, they've seen first-hand the transformative power of faith and empathy in the educational setting. Their workers' stories, including the inspirational journey of Martin Stavjanik from a cook to a respected leader, embody the spirit of service and the love of Christ.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking to the future, the Czech team wants to see expansive growth and deeper impact, guided by God's grace. The spiritual landscape, particularly among the youth, presents both a challenge and an opportunity. They aim to extend the reach of HY Ministry to every school that asks them to come and foster an environment where young people can explore life's big questions and encounter God's love.

They are blessed with a stable and experienced leadership team, with figures like Jiri Krejci and the dedicated service of Otakar Vozeh in their foundational years. As they move forward, under the guidance of current ED Petr Horacek and the seasoned expertise of Martin Stavjanik, our goal remains clear: to sow seeds of hope and faith that can flourish into a brighter future for the Czech Republic.

The dual INCZ mission, combining local evangelical work with international support, stands as a testament to God's love, appealing to a wide audience, including many who do not share our faith but are moved by the team's commitment to making a difference. Their desire is that their work will not only transform individual lives but also contribute to a more compassionate and understanding society, reflecting the love of God through the words and actions of INCZ.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



ORIGINS

In 2008, International Needs began its transformative journey in the Dominican Republic, anchored by the Samaritan Foundation's mission in the north coast region. This marked the inception of Villa Esperanza (Hope Village), born from the need to provide nearly a thousand individuals living in substandard conditions with new homes equipped with essential amenities. The foundation's vision extended to constructing a village from scratch, integrating a school, a church, and a medical clinic to cater to the holistic needs of the community. This vision materialised into tangible symbols of hope, with the Juan Calvino Christian School emerging as a beacon of educational renaissance, initially spearheaded by Mission Direct and subsequently nurtured by International Needs UK, complemented by the supervisory assistance of International Needs Canada.

KEY FOCUS

Over the last 15 years, the focus has centred around the Juan Calvino Christian School (JCCS), which has been instrumental in reshaping the future of many in Villa Esperanza. Their approach has facilitated a significant shift in the community's outlook, enabling children to envisage futures beyond poverty, evidenced by their academic successes and spiritual growth. The school's influence extends beyond the classroom, with initiatives aimed at addressing malnutrition, fostering cultural integration, spiritual growth, and promoting active parental engagement. These efforts have collectively contributed to the development of a robust community fabric, underscored by spiritual enrichment and socio-economic upliftment. Their commitment has also been reflected in infrastructural advancements and legal aid initiatives, providing new opportunities for education and community development.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

As the team looks to the future, their aspirations are underpinned by a desire to deepen their community's spiritual foundation and educational excellence. They aim to expand their outreach, to ensure every child in Villa Esperanza and beyond has access to quality education and the opportunity to develop in a nurturing environment. Economic empowerment through technology-focused training and entrepreneurship programs remains a priority, aiming to foster a self-sufficient community. Challenges such as resource limitations, cultural and language barriers, and legal hurdles persist, but the commitment to overcoming these obstacles is unwavering. They envision a future where collaborative efforts lead to sustainable development, reinforced by spiritual and emotional support for children and their families.

Their mission is further inspired by the dedication of individuals like Elio Madonia, whose perseverance laid the groundwork for their community, and Claire Hodson, whose contributions bridge the gap between sponsors and the needs of the school. The legacy of figures such as Juan Ovalle and Ruben Garcia continues to guide their path, serving as a constant reminder of the transformative impact of committed leadership and community engagement, inspired by God's love.

In essence, this work with International Needs in the Dominican Republic is a testament to the enduring power of collaboration, faith, and shared humanity. It is a story of transforming lives through collective effort, hope, and the unyielding belief in the potential of every individual to rise above adversity and thrive.

EGYPT



ORIGINS

In 1996 the couple who would establish International Needs Egypt – Pastor Nathan Bassaly and his wife Sawsan - had moved to Canada, seeking a new beginning; however, a profound calling led them back to Egypt, compelled by a mission to serve their homeland. A providential encounter Nathan had with Mel Newth, President of International Needs, just one day before the Bassalys' departure, laid the groundwork for a partnership that has flourished to this day. This encounter was not merely by chance but a clear directive for the founders to return and initiate the transformative work that International Needs is known for, rooted in faith and committed to service.

KEY FOCUS

Over the years, Nathan's work with the IN Egypt team has spanned various ministries and projects, touching the lives of diverse groups such as poor families, Sudanese refugees, and others seeking hope and change. Initiatives include providing microloans to encourage small-scale entrepreneurship, supporting families with essential needs, distributing school supplies to children, and offering vocational training through the esteemed training centre. The Bible school they conduct monthly has become a nurturing ground for young pastors across Egypt, bolstering their spiritual and pastoral skills.

Efforts also extend to publishing the 'Life in Christ' magazine, a source of inspiration and guidance for many across Egypt long after

the onset of the digital age. They developed a Sunday school curriculum, widely used in churches across denominations. Their training conferences for church leaders and a dedicated ministry for individuals struggling with drug addiction reflect their desire to address both spiritual needs and practical challenges.

The team is the heartbeat of their mission, with dedicated individuals like Sawsan, who initiated the microloans project, and Afaf Wadie, their longstanding accountant who also plays a crucial role in their publication efforts.

Eman Refaat, notable for her language skills, supports their international communications and children's ministry. Maggie Bassaly enhances their overseas links, while Martin Bassaly and Ibrahim Adly contribute significantly to the training centre and hands-on ministry activities, respectively. Their collective efforts, underpinned by a shared passion for service, drive the success of their initiatives

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking to the future, they long to see a greater spread of the Gospel in their nation, with more people experiencing the transformative love of Jesus Christ. Their vision extends to achieving greater freedoms in proclaiming the Gospel, coupled with the desire to see a vibrant youth equipped for ministry.

However, they face considerable challenges, most notably in resource limitations, which restrict their ability to meet the overwhelming needs they encounter in their country. Additionally, while some refugees have found faith, the inability to publicly profess their new beliefs due to societal constraints remains a significant hurdle.

As they move forward as a team, their collective hope is to foster a deeper understanding and relationship with Christ among the people they serve. They aspire to see their community transformed by the Gospel, marked by an outpouring of love, service, and spiritual awakening. Their work, while challenging, is a testament to the power of practical love and the transformative message of the Gospel in Egypt.

ETHIOPIA



ORIGINS

In 1997, the seeds of International Needs in Ethiopia were sown through a fortuitous meeting between Mr. Bekele Gedecho, a member of the church from Ethiopia, and Mel Newth. Bekele, who was in Vancouver, Canada, for educational purposes, shared the zeal of his church to reach the unreached people of Ethiopia with the good news of our Lord. He expressed that financial constraints were preventing the church from achieving its mission. Touched by this, Mr. Newth extended generous financial support to the Gedeo Zone Evangelical Kale Heywet Church, enabling them to send more evangelists to share the Good News with the Ethiopian people.

KEY FOCUS

Since inception, International Needs Ethiopia has been blessed to support 48 church planters, sending them into the field with great joy and prayers. This initiative has been monumental, allowing 344,265 people to hear the Good News, and leading to 29,451 individuals embracing faith. The establishment of 202 churches stands as a testament to the hard work and dedication of Ethiopian evangelists and the grace of God. The team, including notable evangelists like Haile Lole, Beyene Terro, Tadesse Dukalle, Birhanu Gemedede, and Nigusse Assefa, worked tirelessly, faithfully proclaiming the Good News and planting churches.

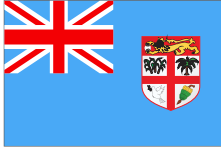
Operational support has been diligently managed from their coordinating office by committed individuals such as Beyene Hail and Tesfaye Mengesha, ensuring smooth communication with the evangelists, organising their reports, and facilitating the monthly support through banks, as well as evaluating their ministries to ensure the effective spreading of the Gospel.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, they remain committed to the mission entrusted to them, continually praying for the ministry of International Needs and the people of Ethiopia. Their hope is for increased cooperation with International Needs globally, to further reach the lost, and plant churches among the least-reached groups in Ethiopia, for the glory of our Lord and the salvation of Ethiopian people. As they say, this vision aligns with the words of Lord Jesus: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” The need for more workers is acute, as their churches face challenges in sending and supporting evangelists.

They urge the global community to remember the people of Ethiopia, particularly those in regions like Amhara, Oromo, Tigray, Afar, Ethiopian Somalia, Benshangul & Gumuze, and Gambella, as well as small groups along the borders with Sudan. Although the Amhara and Tigray people may follow Orthodox Christianity, many lack a personal relationship with Jesus and have yet to receive the life transformations that stem from God’s teachings. Therefore, there is a vast opportunity for International Needs to showcase God’s love through prayer and support, helping the team to proclaim the good news to the Ethiopian people. Their journey is filled with both hope and challenges, but with faith and collaboration, they believe they will make a significant impact for the good of their communities and the advancement of God’s kingdom.

FIJI



ORIGINS

International Needs Fiji (IN Fiji) began its mission in 1989. After a period of dormancy, 2018 marked a new chapter of revival and recommitment to their core focus: to cater to the physical and spiritual needs of those less fortunate in Fiji. Their work is inspired by a desire to share transformative love and salvation offered through Jesus Christ. From the outset, they have focused on evangelistic outreach and support programs for children, youth, and leaders, dedicating themselves to the training of national Christian youth leaders and providing relief to those experiencing poverty and distress.

KEY FOCUS

IN Fiji's primary mission revolves around the Solo Moms Project, through a partnership with the International Needs New Zealand Humanitarian Aid Trust (INHAT). Each year this initiative empowers up to twenty single mothers with life skills and practical skills, enabling them to establish independent enterprises, to achieve their economic independence and social participation. Their holistic support system includes early childhood education, post-program mentoring, and assistance in marketing the products the women create.

The Oasis Daycare Centre cares for the children of participating mothers, allowing them to fully engage with the Solo Moms programme. At the same time, evangelistic efforts have expanded, including outreach activities with school groups from New Zealand, aiming to foster a new generation of young believers in Fiji.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The strategic plan for 2023-2026 outlines a clear path forward, focusing on sustainable funding, quality of care, improved communication, and legal compliance. These goals are designed to strengthen local presence and extend service delivery, alleviate poverty and enrich lives through the ministry's evangelistic efforts.

The IN Fiji board is led by President Ms. Leba Ciriyaawa Halofaki Mataitini, and together they are committed to navigating the challenges of legal compliance, staff capacity building, and strategic implementation. We honour the contributions of past and present members, whose wisdom and dedication have been instrumental in the ministry's revival.

International Needs' future in Fiji is filled with optimism and grounded in faith. Their aim is to be a beacon of hope and transformation, fostering a nation blessed with strong values and empowered individuals. Through their programmes and the grace of God, they aspire to build cohesive, sustainable communities, where empowered families can move beyond their disadvantages, to reflect International Needs' deep love and commitment to the people of Fiji.

GHANA



ORIGINS

International Needs in Ghana (INGH) began in 1984, through a collaboration initiated by Ray Harrison, the founder of International Needs, and Very Rev'd Walter Pimpong. This partnership was forged during their time at the Youth for Christ Mission in Switzerland and further discussions at the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, organized by the Billy Graham Organization. Following these pivotal meetings, Very Rev'd Pimpong, alongside fellow Ghanaians Mr. Reindorf Perbi, Rev'd Samuel Otu Pimpong, Mr. Kweku Hutchful, and Mr. Ernest Commey, laid the groundwork for INGH. By October 1987, International Needs Ghana was formally established, with Very Rev'd Walter Pimpong as its first Executive Director.

KEY FOCUS

Over the past 36 years, INGH has profoundly impacted numerous lives across Ghana through multifaceted interventions in Education, Health, Child Rights, Gender and Empowerment, and Christian Witness.

EDUCATION

INGH established 10 schools in underserved communities, notably the Amrahia Community School in 1993. These establishments have provided education to approximately 2,500 pupils annually, significantly boosting their life prospects. A school feeding programme was also initiated to improve student health, enrolment, and retention.

HEALTH

Starting in the mid-1990s, INGH has collaborated with Ghanaian and international medical professionals to provide healthcare in underserved communities, reaching an average of 4,500 individuals annually. Initiatives have included medical outreaches, WASH programmes, and HIV/AIDS prevention projects, significantly improving community health standards.

CHILD RIGHTS

INGH has been at the forefront of addressing child exploitation through community-led programmes, resulting in the rescue and rehabilitation of thousands of children. Partnerships with the European Union, UNICEF, and others have strengthened child protection frameworks, reducing incidences of child labour, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation.

GENDER & EMPOWERMENT

INGH has made notable strides in empowering women, particularly through the Trokosi Liberation and vocational training at the Centre for Empowerment and Enterprise Development (CEED). These efforts have facilitated the reintegration of women into society and equipped them with valuable skills for economic independence.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

The ministry extends beyond social initiatives, to embrace evangelism and church planting, particularly in communities affected by the Trokosi practice. Efforts include reaching out to Least Reached People Groups and translating the New Testament into local languages, spreading the message of hope and salvation.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, IN Ghana's vision remains focused on enhancing the well-being and empowerment of underserved communities. However, they do face challenges such as ensuring the sustainability of projects and overcoming economic constraints that limit the ministry's reach and impact. Despite these hurdles, they are committed to innovating and collaborating with local and international partners to drive meaningful change.

We honour the contributions of founders and past leaders, such as Very Rev'd Walter Pimpong and Edmond Vanderpuye, whose dedication and vision have been instrumental in this journey. Their legacies inspire INGH to continue addressing the critical needs of Ghanaian communities, while fostering sustainable development.

In the future, they aim to secure more resources and strengthen partnerships to expand their services. Their commitment to community collaboration and innovation will guide them as they strive to transform lives and empower individuals across Ghana, reflecting the love and compassion at the heart of International Needs' Christian mission.

INDIA



ORIGINS

International Needs began in India on 24 May 1979, when it was officially registered as a Society under the Karnataka Society Act 1960. Our Founder Dr Ken Gnanakan and his wife Prema had known Ray Harrison very well from their time at Youth For Christ (YFC) in the 1960s. In fact, Ken Gnanakan gave his life to Jesus in 1965 in the home of Ray Harrison. Today, we no longer go by the name “International Needs”; we are known as the “ACTS Group of Institutions”, although we will always gratefully acknowledge the support of IN over the years.

Dr Ken was committed to achieving sustainable growth for the organisation. Through the grace of God, ACTS is now fully self-sufficient, and our employees have learned to earn a living through their hard work. ACTS is renowned for creating wealth through immovable assets, funded through bank loans and initially some invaluable support from International Needs. We were fortunate to have purchased several properties during a downturn in the real estate market, and today, by God’s grace, ACTS Group owns property worth USD 34.55 million.

KEY FOCUS

ACTS Group has established educational projects, both secular and religious, in many states of India. Our schools’ revenue and surpluses have contributed to the charity projects ACTS has been running. However, we understand the need for contingency plans if the schools’ income stops. Hence, we have invested in floriculture and

agriculture projects in Hosur, Tamil Nadu.

The land we acquired five years ago has appreciated more than five times in value, as Hosur has become a real estate hub in Tamil Nadu. We are delighted that ACTS now holds more than 100 acres of land.

There have been certain restrictions imposed by the government, which have been challenging. Also, minorities in North India, mainly, have been targeted by radical anti-Christian groups. The Central Government recently introduced a New Education Policy, which comes with its own set of challenges. Thankfully, a lot of the good from this new policy had already been implemented, thanks to our Founder. Another challenge is the shortage of qualified teaching staff, which has led to the appointment of inexperienced teachers.

We have had many great servants over the years – Ken and Prema Gnanakan, Ricky and Valsa Gnanakan, Viji Raju, Pervez and Shirin David, Nicanor and Elizabeth Tamang, Aruldass Gnanamuthu, and David Anand, to name a few. Sadly, we lost two of our senior staff members to COVID in 2021. Losing valued team members who had dedicated over 25 years to the ACTS Group was challenging. One of them, Kumar, was an efficient worker in the finance department, well-versed in governmental procedures and taxation. Rajagopal, the other person, worked in the maintenance department and was faithful in his services to the ACTS Group. They were valuable members of the team, and we miss them.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Our dream is to build a community of people learning to live. Learning to live with the talents, abilities, and resources God has already blessed us with. Our longing is for people to serve each other. We hope for stronger partnerships and continued prayer support for the ACTS Group of Institutions. Sharing technology and partnering with different programmes and projects will definitely benefit us as a global family, ultimately bringing glory to God.

Today, as an organisation, we are able to stand on our feet, with our heads held high. Indeed, we have been able to rise up and walk (Acts 3:6), the Bible verse that inspired Ken Gnanakan to start ACTS). But this is not our doing. This is only because of God's grace and mercy, despite us! We acknowledge the generous support of International Needs, whom God used to plant seeds so many years ago. We might be independent and fully self-sufficient, but we don't want to go on this journey alone. We want to continue to partner with all of you, after all, we are all serving one God, one Kingdom! And that's what we would like you to remember whenever you think of ACTS!

KENYA



There are twin aspects to International Needs' ministry in this great land in the heart of Africa: International Needs Kenya and Homecare Spiritual Fellowship

INTERNATIONAL NEEDS KENYA

ORIGINS

International Needs Kenya was officially registered in Kenya in 2016, dedicated to service and community transformation. Their origins trace back to the earlier formation of Kingdom Children, which merged with INCA. Rooted in Christian values and a commitment to improving society, the organisation has addressed numerous challenges facing Kenyan communities.

KEY FOCUS

Key initiatives include the founding of RHYCF and launching a program specifically tailored for street girls. They constructed educational infrastructure such as classrooms at RUSH and an IT centre, significantly impacting local education standards. The transformation of Ark Quest school from mud buildings into a self-sustaining institution exemplifies the commitment to durable development.

In the health sector, initiatives in Vihiga county have reduced malaria incidences in over 60 families along with effective preventative health strategies such as a mosquito net distribution campaign. Beyond health, INK has championed community development through

chicken rearing projects, and aiding disengaged and isolated young people in setting up businesses and reintegrating with their families. Educational support programmes have seen six youths complete university education, including a medical doctor, funded by INNZ.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, INK is committed to fostering sustained economic growth within communities and diversifying our funding sources through local fundraising efforts. Future projects aim to address a wide array of societal challenges, reflecting INK's adaptive and responsive approach to community needs. Nevertheless, the journey is not without obstacles: navigating high-threat environments, managing expectations in slum areas, and bridging gaps among diverse ethnic, political, and religious groups. Building on the legacy of members such as Nancy Muturi and Alex Mwangi, the INK team will continue to meet these challenges through dedicated and compassionate Christ-centred service.

HOMECARE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

ORIGINS

Homecare Spiritual Fellowship, a beacon of hope in Kenya, was founded over four decades ago by the visionary Rev. Dr. Judy Mbugua. This indigenous ministry has grown into a significant force for good, impacting countless lives through unwavering commitment to the Gospel and social enrichment. The partnership with International Needs USA, initiated after Rev. Dr. Mbugua's impactful tenure on the International Needs board, has been instrumental in extending outreach to orphaned and vulnerable children within the challenging environs of Kibera slum.

KEY FOCUS

Core initiatives have evolved significantly over the years, from the initial feeding programs to a comprehensive educational support system that has enabled children from Kibera to attend formal government schools. Stories like Nehemiah Moronge's illuminate the profound impact of this work. From a life marked by hardship and low expectations, Nehemiah has been able to enter the legal profession through the support of Homecare and International Needs USA - embodying the promise and potential within every child they serve.

Similarly, Dennis Munai and Purity Elusa have been able to rise from poverty to academic excellence and professional qualifications in applied statistics and engineering respectively. This transformative power of education and faith-based mentorship is also seen in whole families, as they change track from cycles of deprivation to paths of prosperity and purpose.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The path forward holds both hope and hurdles as HSF confronts the pervasive challenge of reversing a deep-seated dependency syndrome, cultivated by years of NGO relief work in Kibera. The response will continue to be multifaceted, incorporating parental responsibility and community engagement in sponsorship programmes, fostering a culture of self-help and mutual support.

The future vision for Homecare Spiritual Fellowship is ambitious yet attainable. They envisage the Homecare Prayer and Training Centre becoming a hub for vocational training, spiritual development, and community empowerment. This centre will not only serve as the foundation for national and regional prayer ministries but will also be a catalyst for sustainable change, providing under-resourced youth with valuable skills and opportunities.

As the team forges, led by the inspirational Rev. Dr. Mbugua, they remain committed to serving "the least of these": transforming lives through faith, education, and empowerment. They hold onto the belief that through collective effort, faith, and God's grace, they can expand their reach and deepen their impact, bringing hope and healing to more families and communities across Kenya.

NEPAL



ORIGINS

International Needs (IN) in Nepal began with the pioneering efforts of Nicanor Tamang, who, inspired by Mr. Ray Harrison, embarked on a mission intertwined with Nepal Youth for Christ prior to the official formation of IN. The seeds of this collaboration were sown in the early 1970s, and by the late seventies, small-scale child support initiatives started taking shape in Kathmandu, under the stewardship of Mr. Samuel Sharma, as Nicanor was deeply engaged in church activities. Elizabeth Tamang, alongside Nicanor, has played a crucial role, especially after their marriage in 1974, which Mr. Ray Harrison himself celebrated. Their journey saw them fostering connections and receiving encouragement from global supporters, significantly shaping the trajectory of IN in Nepal. As Christianity's presence in Nepal grew at a remarkable rate, the International Needs team experienced deep and wide-ranging persecution, including official and social harassment, arrest, imprisonment and exile from the country. The political revolution in 1990 marked a turning point, catalysing the formal commencement of IN's operations in Nepal. There has never been a time when Christians have been peacefully unopposed in this country, yet the decades covered by International Needs' presence in Nepal has seen remarkable evangelism, revival, salvation, miracles and Kingdom growth.

KEY FOCUS

IN Nepal's core mission has been characterized by its dedication to supporting rural evangelists, a movement that burgeoned from ten to over fifty individuals over time. Aradhana Church, which started in 1977, symbolizes the spiritual heart of IN's work in Nepal, growing rapidly to cater to a large congregation, embodying the community and faith-driven ethos of the organization. In 1997 the Lydia Vocational Training Centre was established, encompassing both spiritual and practical skills training. Efforts extended beyond Nepal's borders, with Nicanor and Elizabeth also influencing the development of IN in Dehradun, India, focusing on supporting children and Bible students, further reflecting the broad scope and impact of their ministry and social outreach.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The landscape of IN's work in Nepal is laden with both aspirations and hurdles. Despite the founders' transition to a consulting role post-2020, their vision continues to inspire the current leadership, aiming to uphold and expand upon the foundational values and objectives established over the decades. The overarching goal remains to address the multifaceted human needs in the nation, encompassing both spiritual guidance and practical assistance, amid the predominantly Hindu community and the broader socio-political challenges. The future of IN in Nepal is envisioned as a continuation of its legacy of compassionate outreach, education, and evangelism, striving to meet the evolving needs of the local communities while adhering to the Christian faith's principles of love and service. The organisation's journey is seen as an ongoing testament to faithfulness and dedication in the face of adversity, with a hopeful outlook towards achieving sustained impact and nurturing the spiritual and material well-being of the Nepali people.

NEW ZEALAND



ORIGINS

International Needs New Zealand (INNz) was established by Ray Harrison in 1974, who was then serving as the International Director for Youth For Christ. Recognising the critical importance of supporting national church leaders to grow the Church within their own cultural contexts, Harrison initiated an innovative strategy designed to empower local nationals to identify and address their communities' needs, while keeping the Gospel central to their efforts. Departing from traditional missionary models, this approach has since been recognised as effective in fostering sustainable growth and poverty alleviation within churches globally. The foundation of INNz marked a pioneering step towards building global partnerships between New Zealand Christians and churches and their counterparts in partner countries.

KEY FOCUS

The main thrust of INNz's work lies in its partnership model, linking New Zealand's Christian community with Christian workers and churches in over 30 nations worldwide. This collaborative effort focuses on long-term sustainability, local needs assessment, and Gospel-centred projects, aiming to uplift and empower communities while spreading the Christian faith. Significant milestones include the expansion of the IN network and the cultivation of associate partnerships, which have enabled broader, more effective outreach and support.

The work of INNz is underpinned by dedicated staff and volunteers, including leaders such as Malcolm Taylor, Ian Lysaght, Kit Jensen, Robyn Cotton, Peter Sara, Robert Keam, Gradon Harvey, Jeremy Denmead, Lloyd Ashworth, and current Executive Director Shaun Sutcliffe. Their collective efforts have been instrumental in shaping the organization's trajectory, enabling it to provide meaningful support to partner countries while navigating the challenges and opportunities of international development and mission work.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, INNZ aims to enhance its visibility and impact within New Zealand, inspiring more individuals and churches to engage with and support the international work of the IN network. The organisation seeks to overcome challenges such as effective storytelling to inspire supporters, navigating the post-Covid-19 landscape, and carving out a distinctive vision that differentiates INNZ from other NGOs while staying true to its founding principles.

The future of INNZ is geared towards amplification of its mission, drawing on New Zealand's reputation for 'punching above its weight' on the global stage. The organisation hopes to continue growing, sharing its message, and encouraging New Zealanders to partner with God's work across the globe, thus fulfilling the vision and mission laid out by Ray Harrison. As INNZ looks to the next 50 years, it is driven by a commitment to uphold its unique ministry approach, striving to meet the evolving needs of its partners while remaining anchored in the Christian faith.

PHILIPPINES



ORIGINS

International Needs Philippines (INPH) was founded by Evangelist Paul Moritz and his wife Jo in 1983, under the guidance and inspiration of Ray Harrison, the founder of International Needs. Since its inception, INPH has become an integral part of the International Needs network. The Moritz couple's commitment laid the groundwork for a transformative mission aimed at addressing both spiritual and material needs in their nation.

KEY FOCUS

The primary focus of INPH has been child development and educational support through the International Needs Child Assistance Program (INCAP). This program has successfully enabled numerous children to reach college and tertiary education levels, while positively impacting their families and communities.

The stories of Jocelyn Barcoma and Juvilin Reyes show this transformative effect: from children in need to individuals contributing significantly to society and the mission field. Jocelyn, once a struggling child from a family with no steady income, became a licensed teacher and now serves as a missionary teacher in Cambodia. Similarly, Juvilin, having been part of the sponsorship program from a young age, now works as a Service Area Coordinator in Carigara, Leyte, having dedicated 20 years to serving others through INPH.

INPH has also been active in church planting, witnessing considerable growth and participation. The Evangelism Expansion by Extension (EEE) program has reached over 32,000 people, with more than 15,000 accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour since 2021. This evangelistic effort has significantly contributed to the spiritual transformation and church growth within the Philippines.

The organisation is supported by a dedicated team, including Area Coordinators, Admin Staff, and Volunteer Pastors, who play vital roles in guiding children towards fulfilling their potential and serving their communities.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

INPH envisions a future where the educational initiatives of the INCAP ministry continues to create brighter futures for families and the nation. These educated children, having personal encounters with Jesus Christ, will become agents of renewal in society, contributing to a more righteous, moral, and God-fearing nation.

However, this vision faces several challenges: establishing effective partnerships between churches, government, and INPH; ensuring consistent impacts of educational programmes on family and community development; securing sufficient resources for outreach in the most remote areas; and addressing the welfare and health concerns of workers and staff.

Despite these obstacles, INPH remains committed to its mission. The organisation hopes to raise leaders with deep roots in International Needs' values and goals, who will contribute strong moral, political, and spiritual leadership for their nation advancement. The goal is not just to produce well-educated individuals, but to foster leaders who embody kindness, integrity, and godly values, leading the Philippines toward a prosperous future.

ROMANIA



ORIGINS

International Needs Romania (INRO) was founded in 1994, five years after the Romanian Revolution of 1989 ended 50 years of communist regime. This historic change opened the doors for freedom of speech, religion, and the opportunity to build connections with Christians worldwide. Inspired by Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, INRO embarked on a mission to reconstruct the country's physical and spiritual landscape, for the restoration and development of their nation.

KEY FOCUS

INRO has made significant impacts through various programs aimed at societal transformation and spiritual growth, beginning with covert Bible smuggling during communist times. The Church Planting initiative has seen new churches planted and evangelists equipped to spread the Gospel across Romania. Ark - Women and Children Social Programme has offered hope and assistance to those who are impoverished, incarcerated, or orphaned. The Wings programme focuses on nurturing future Christian leaders to foster societal progress – and has seen Romanian students achieve global recognition. The Forumul Dialogos aims to integrate Christian values within the community and culture. Stefan Bârniş has worked tirelessly to translate the Bible has been translated into the Rromani language, ensuring that the Roma community can access the Word of Life. Humanitarian efforts such as the STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING campaign and literacy programs in

prisons have been a significant influence in changing communities.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

INRO faces continuous challenges, particularly the recent impact of the Ukrainian crisis, which has seen an influx into Romania of refugees seeking solace and support. The "I Care For You" project reflects INRO's commitment to providing care and hope to those affected by war and loss. Looking ahead, INRO remains committed to its motto "Care For Future," working towards sustainable development, spiritual growth, and societal transformation.

The organisation aims to continue its work in church planting, women and children's welfare, and refugee support, all while fostering hope for a better future in Romania and beyond.

As INRO celebrates 30 years of ministry, it honours the contributions of international partners and local staff who have been instrumental in its journey. The team, led by workers like Daniela Pribac and Ştefan Bârniş, looks a future filled with peace, prosperity, and spiritual awakening, not only for Romania but also for neighbouring Ukraine. The collective dream is for the nation to rebuild stronger, inspired by faith and community, echoing the hopes of their partners and supporters worldwide.

SLOVAKIA



ORIGINS

The ministry of International Needs in Slovakia (INSK) began in 1994 when a team, including Ray Harrison and Central Europe's coordinator Ota Vozeh, visited the country. They engaged with leaders of Evangelical churches to identify key needs and projects, leading to the support of mission worker Pavel Sinko. This partnership led to the founding of an official NGO with a dedicated board, some of whom are still serving to this day. Pavel Sinko, who has been at the helm as the Executive Director for nearly three decades, has been instrumental in shaping the course of INSK, witnessing the organisation grow and adapt to meet the evolving needs of the Slovak community.

KEY FOCUS

INSK's mission has been marked by diverse projects addressing the spiritual, educational, and practical needs of the Slovak people. The JAC Center, reclaimed and renovated after years of neglect under the Communist regime, now serves as an oasis of hope and learning, offering seminars, camps, and retreats for a wide range of guests, including theology students, church planters, and families. The establishment of the first and only evangelical Bible Seminary in Banska Bystrica in 1994 has been a significant milestone, supporting the spiritual and educational development of over 150 students across nine denominations. Summer English Camps, initiated in 1996, have been a remarkable outreach, bringing together volunteers from the US and serving hundreds of children and youth annually. Since 2004 the Community Center 3Pe in Lucenec,

has offered community members a nurturing environment in which to find acceptance, help, and truth. The ministry has also reached out to the Roma community, transforming lives through engagement and support, and has been active in translating and publishing 'Our Daily Bread' in Slovak, further nourishing spiritual growth. INSK aims to be adaptable in meeting immediate needs, as seen in its response to the Ukraine crisis and projects like Housing First.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Slovakia is facing growing secularism and spiritual indifference. The initial days of freedom and eager receptivity have given way to diminished interest in spiritual engagement, impacted by materialism, online distractions, and liberalism. This is a considerable challenge, yet the INSK team – including Ota Vozeh, Ondrej Kerekrety, Tomas Kriska, and Pavel Sinko – has always been driven by hope that the Kingdom of God will expand in Slovakia.

To that end, and with over 30 staff members in ministry, INSK is committed to becoming an even brighter light, guiding the people of Slovakia towards a fulfilling life in Christ and in community service, while successfully navigating and overcoming the complex challenges of their society. The ultimate goal for INSK is for their fellow Slovaks to acknowledge and glorify our Father in heaven and recognise that God's love alone has the power to truly transform lives and change communities.

SRI LANKA



ORIGINS

International Needs Lanka (INLK) was established in 1997, with its initial outreach commencing a year later, focusing on community needs in the capital city, particularly in education and children's rights. The roots of INLK are deeply entrenched in the mission of empowering the marginalized to restore human dignity, encompassing their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual identity. Under the guidance of Cynthia Devadasan and the support of notable board members like Rev. Asiri Perera and Rev. Duleep Mendis, INLK expanded its reach from the suburbs of Colombo to the Northern, Central, Western, and Southern Provinces, addressing various community needs including women's empowerment and livelihood enhancement.

KEY FOCUS

INLK's work has been characterized by a commitment to holistic community transformation, demonstrated through the provision of education, vocational training, and nutritional support. The organisation has played a pivotal role in the lives of individuals like Sugeetharan, Gnanamanogaran, and Gnanapragasam, who have benefited from agricultural support and livelihood programs, leading to improved living conditions and economic stability. The testimonies of these individuals reflect the tangible impact of INLK's efforts in fostering self-reliance and hope among communities affected by economic instability and the repercussions of the civil war.

The organisation has been instrumental in creating platforms for youth engagement and reducing substance abuse through sports and recreational activities, as seen in the establishment of a community volleyball facility in Nochikulam. The introduction of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in post-war communities like Puthukuddiyiruppu has facilitated women's empowerment, financial independence, and social cohesion, illustrating the transformative power of collective action and mutual support.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Facing a backdrop of political and economic turbulence, natural disasters, and the remnants of a prolonged civil conflict, INLK continues to navigate through Sri Lanka's most challenging periods. The organisation's journey has been marked by resilience and adaptability, whether responding to the Boxing Day tsunami, enduring the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks, or mitigating the impacts of the recent economic crisis.

Looking forward, INLK aspires to realise a vision of model villages by 2025, where every individual can harness their God-given potential, leading to sustainable community transformation. The organisation envisions becoming a model NGO in Sri Lanka, characterized by its commitment to holistic development and empowerment. Despite the challenges, the spirit of hope and restoration remains central to INLK's ethos, as it continues to support Sri Lankan communities in overcoming adversity and building a future marked by joy, restoration, and hope.

SWITZERLAND



ORIGINS

International Needs Hope (IN-HOPE), originally known as International Needs Switzerland, was established in January 2021 through the visionary efforts of David Amstutz, a senior leader with Open Doors in Switzerland. This new entity emerged from the amalgamation of the prior International Needs operations in Switzerland and HTO Zamboanga, an association active in the Southern Philippines, also initiated by David Amstutz.

The consolidation addressed the previous segmentation between two separate International Needs factions in Switzerland, one catering to English speakers in the Swiss French region and another in the Swiss German area, which had operated independently due to linguistic differences. The resurgence under IN-HOPE marked the revitalisation of these efforts with a unified vision, steered by individuals such as Jack Minor, Gerald Bourgeois, Otakar Vozeh, and Jürg Streckisen, who have formed a link with previous activities that had drawn to a close around 2015.

KEY FOCUS

IN-HOPE operates under the stewardship of an executive board composed of dedicated volunteers from diverse church backgrounds, exemplifying ‘unity in diversity.’ They share a common commitment to empowering vulnerable communities. In the short span since its inception, IN-HOPE has significantly expanded its support base, nearly tripling the number of families assisted. This growth facilitated the establishment of a community centre, the “Hope-Hub,” inaugurated in October 2023, serving as a beacon of support and activity. The organisation’s efforts are supported by individuals like Cedric Berney, Marianne Pascal, Bernard Coucheman, Rosalie Bulawin Sørensen, and the foundational support of Rita Bonazza and Irene Fong Amstutz, who have contributed significantly to community support through initiatives like Charity Dinner Events and fundraising activities.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The journey of IN-HOPE is paved with challenges, primarily the recruitment of engaged individuals and board members willing to leverage their networks for the ministry's growth. The organisation faces the task of attracting younger supporters and expanding its board. Despite these challenges, IN-HOPE remains committed to maintaining close ties with its field partners and supporting communities effectively.

The executive team, while modest in size, harbours ambitious hopes for the future, including the aspiration to partner with more foundations to bolster their support framework. Their collective vision is underpinned by humility, a dedication to volunteerism, and a desire to foster close relationships with partners and communities, striving towards a future where every individual can realise their potential, supported by the compassionate and united efforts of the IN-HOPE team.

TÜRKIYE



ORIGINS

The journey of International Needs in Turkey, now Türkiye, began in 2000, following the foundational visitation by Rody Rodeheaver, the former president of INUS. His connection with Pastor Behnan Konutgan, a Bible translator, marked the commencement of a dedicated service to local churches and communities through prayer and outreach. This collaboration signified a new chapter for Christian ministry in the region, focusing on empowering and supporting the spiritual and communal needs of the local population.

KEY FOCUS

The ministry's key areas of focus have evolved significantly over the years. Next-generation ministries began a camp in the Marmara region in 2000 and have since expanded to four regular camps across three regions: Marmara, Black Sea, and Mediterranean Sea. This expansion, marking the highest participant numbers in the history of IN Türkiye, reflects the organization's commitment to youth and community engagement across diverse cultural landscapes.

Church planting remains a cornerstone of their mission, aiming to reach more individuals and seekers. Utilizing both online platforms and physical outreach, IN Türkiye has effectively shared the Gospel with over 5,000 people through social media channels like Yasam Agaci, Hristiyanlar, and BBK. This digital evangelism has led to tangible results, including ten new believers and three baptisms last year alone, showcasing the power of modern communication in spreading faith.

The mercy ministry aspect has been particularly poignant, responding to crises such as the Syrian war, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the devastating earthquake in February 2023. The distribution of food parcels, hygiene kits, tents, and clothes not only provided essential aid but also served as a bridge for changing perceptions about Christianity within Muslim communities, fostering respect and understanding.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Despite the successes, the journey is not without its challenges. Societal opposition to Christianity in Türkiye presents significant obstacles, from harmful acts against believers to legal and safety threats that can obstruct ministry efforts and endanger lives.

Looking ahead, IN Türkiye has deep hopes and prayers for expanding their outreach further into new regions and touching the lives of the next generation. They envision a future where local churches thrive with the support of young, committed Christians, nurtured through more camps and training programs. This vision is underpinned by a steadfast belief in the transformative power of faith to shape communities and individuals alike.

As they navigate the complexities of their mission in a predominantly Muslim society, IN Türkiye remains dedicated to sharing the Gospel and fostering environments where people can encounter God's love. Their ongoing prayer – and their plea to all others to join them in this prayer - is for an increase in seekers of God within the country, aiming to extend their reach and impact in the years to come, while navigating Türkiye's societal and religious challenges with courage and faith.

UGANDA



ORIGINS

International Needs Uganda (INUG) was established in 1995 against the backdrop of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which left many children orphaned and in dire need of support. Initially founded as a Foster Child Organization, INUG aimed to provide homes, education, healthcare, and essential life services to affected children. The operation was centred in Buikwe, where educational opportunities for girls were scarce, and in Kiyindi, where boys often missed schooling due to fishing activities with their fathers.

The presence of widespread health issues stemming from HIV/AIDS and cultural practices like witchcraft, exacerbated by the geographic challenges of Lake Victoria and surrounding hills, underscored the urgent need for comprehensive community interventions focusing on education, healthcare, and spiritual development.

KEY FOCUS

Since its inception, INUG has seen remarkable growth, evolving from three initial projects in two areas within a single district to a vast programme spanning five districts. This expansion has allowed INUG to impact over 100,000 people annually across various sectors, including education, healthcare, spiritual growth, water and sanitation, disability inclusion, and family income enhancement.

The transformation is evident in the success stories of beneficiaries who now contribute to their communities as professionals, including eight former sponsored children who currently serve on INUG's staff. This serves not only as a testament to the organisation's impact but also as inspiration for current children and their families. The commitment to spiritual development has seen numerous children embracing Christianity, aligning with INUG's vision of introducing young individuals to faith.

Personnel, both past and present, play a pivotal role in INUG's journey. The organisation extends heartfelt gratitude to God, its dedicated board of directors, and staff members who have committed their lives to serve in challenging rural settings. Special recognition and thanks is due to individuals like Chris Hindley and Hon Peter Nyombi, whose contributions have been invaluable in steering INUG through turbulent times.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Despite its successes, INUG faces ongoing challenges, particularly in shifting the community's mindset from dependency to ownership and active participation in projects.

The reliance on donor funds often fosters a culture of expectation, hindering full community engagement and sustainability of initiatives. Efforts to involve various stakeholders aim to foster a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to project goals.

Looking forward, INUG aspires to expand its reach and impact, exploring new geographical areas and project domains while fostering church growth and biblical literacy among the communities served. The ultimate goal is to empower a self-reliant community, capable of sustaining the developmental strides made through INUG's interventions.

The organisation envisions a future where individuals not only know of Christ but are actively engaged in ministry, embodying the Christian values and teachings imparted through their programmes.

INUG's story is one of resilience, growth, and unwavering commitment to transforming lives through holistic support and spiritual guidance. As it looks to the future, the organisation remains dedicated to reaching out with God's love, leaving an indelible mark on individuals, families, and communities across Uganda.

UNITED KINGDOM



ORIGINS

International Needs in the United Kingdom (INUK) began with a vision from Ray Harrison after the first Lausanne Congress in 1974, following his tenure with Youth for Christ. His commitment sparked a supportive base in the UK, eager to contribute. Donations began in 1975 – totalling £104! Ted Hubbard, a UK lawyer, established INUK as a charitable trust on 27 March 1976. The initial setup was modest, with Ray Harrison, Peter Honour, George Graves, Christine Graves, and Peter Green serving as the first trustees. This period marked the humble beginnings as a 'kitchen table' operation, with treasurer Andrew Hubbard and his wife Jenny embedding INUK activities deeply into their family life.

KEY FOCUS

Over the years, INUK has undergone significant transformations, initiated by the appointment of its first paid part-time National Director, Peter Staley, in 1998. This step marked a significant turning point, leading to increased income and enabling Peter to transition to a full-time role, fuelling further growth.

The organisation has been active in wide-ranging ministries, including theological training, international deputation visits, GoGlobal visits to partner countries, and the development of new relationships, such as with Ogilvy Mather for educational projects in Uganda and Nepal.

The results of this shift towards a more professional model saw INUK working in education, church planting, evangelism, and broader humanitarian projects. Engaging with schools like Eltham College and partners like the Bishop Radford Trust produced strategic and impactful collaborations fostering Christian values and supporting communities in need around the world.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

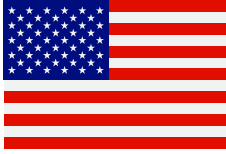
Looking ahead, INUK aims to expand its support base in the UK and build on its global ministry, with greater support for existing programmes while exploring new leadership opportunities to see empowerment programmes flourish.

This ambition is in face of headwinds such as maintaining quality communication from the field, adapting to a professionalised mission scope, and navigating the complexities of a post-pandemic world.

Despite these hurdles, INUK's spirit of faith and dedication is unwavering among the staff and trustees, who have grown from the compact early team to a more robust structure led by Danny Morris.

The ultimate goal for INUK is to continue serving as a beacon of hope and transformation, upholding the values of Christian ministry while adapting to the changing needs of the global community. The story of INUK is one of growth, challenge, and unwavering commitment, underpinned by a collective desire to foster change and spread the Gospel, ensuring a legacy of empowerment, community transformation, and shared faith for the next fifty years.

UNITED STATES



ORIGINS

In the early days as Ray Harrison was building a global partnership, he worked with the American directors Jerry Major, David Culross, and Rody Rodeheaver to forge International Needs USA (INUSA). These visionaries, along with key governance contributors such as James Barton and Mark Bleyer, played pivotal roles in shaping the organisation's direction and the development of the Congress network model of ministry. This model has enabled INUSA to establish a strong foundation based on relationships and strategic vision, facilitating a robust framework for their Christian ministry initiatives across the globe.

KEY FOCUS

INUSA has been instrumental in fostering relationships and developing ministries in various countries, notably in Turkey and Egypt. The vision tours led by Rody Rodeheaver and partnerships with local leaders like Behnan Konutgan have significantly contributed to the ministry's expansion in Turkey. Similarly, the collaborative efforts of Nathan Bassaly, David Culross, and the IN Network Board, along with Don Engram's leadership, have been crucial in establishing and developing the ministry in Egypt. Throughout the continental USA, deputation tours and leadership engagements have significantly expanded INUSA's donor base, underpinning the organisation's broad impact.

Recent highlights include the successful Million for Million campaign, which generated substantial funds to reach who have never encountered the Christian message. The relentless efforts of individuals such as Don Engram, who often ventured into hard-to-reach areas, underscore the commitment of INUSA to promote the Gospel and support global ministries effectively.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

INUSA is poised to tackle the challenges ahead with a focus on enhancing communication and visible presence within the United States, particularly by communicating the depth and quality of IN ministries and the extraordinary people who lead them in the frontline countries.

INUSA partners with over 20 countries and there is a recognised need for levels of support to increase: to give partners the time, attention, encouragement, and resources they need in order to achieve their shared dreams, desires, and goals. This will require even greater generosity from INUSA's support base, with the aim of doubling or even tripling the assistance INUSA provides to partners to transform lives and change communities through the Gospel and humanitarian expertise.

Beyond finance, this support will take the form of prayer and deep personal engagement between INUSA supporters and the ministry partners they support. This relationship is already profound and enduring. As INUSA looks forward, it cherishes the hope of continuing this tradition of heartfelt support, aiming to further the cause of Christ and make a significant impact on communities worldwide. The INUSA friends of IN care deeply on a personal level. They give to the mission and the individuals and the cause of Christ NOT to an organization for charitable purposes. They care about the individuals not just the mission. They exemplify the family aspect of the IN Network.

VIETNAM



ORIGINS

International Needs Vietnam (INVN) was established in 1991, marking the start of a significant and enduring Christian ministry in the region. INVN started with five dedicated church planters, committed to serving God full-time. As the need for outreach and testimony grew, INVN expanded by forming church planting teams, each with five members. Over 32 years, with consistent support from the IN family, INVN has grown to the point where today there are 12 individual church planters, 24 church planting teams (totalling 120 people), and two evangelism coordinators, culminating in a collective force of 134 people working in collaboration with 22 churches across Vietnam.

KEY FOCUS

The ministry has organised numerous fellowship meetings to introduce people to the Christian faith, paving the way for larger church crusades. Unique evangelism strategies have been employed, such as combining eye examination services with traditional Vietnamese music, through which a significant number of people have come to embrace Christianity.

INVN has also focused on youth, by organizing special evangelism programmes during significant cultural festivals. This has created a joyful environment in which children and young people can learn about and encounter God.

The ministry also cares for the elderly and for those with disabilities – through personal care, spiritual nourishment, and companionship. Initiatives like the Kitchen of Mercy and Tinh Thuong medicine cabinets highlight INVN's commitment to serving physical needs as well a spiritual – particularly in the physical and spiritual needs of communities.

During challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, INVN has increased its efforts to distribute food and essentials to those in need, reinforcing the message of God's love through practical service. The ministry's outreach extends to dangerous and hard-to-reach areas, demonstrating the dedication of church planters to spread the word of God, regardless of the obstacles.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The future holds both challenges and hopes for INVN. The organisation faces obstacles such as a scarcity of workers to follow up with new believers, leading to a risk of fading faith among believers in the community. The economic difficulties following the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted people's focus towards material needs, impacting their spiritual engagement. Additionally, governmental restrictions pose challenges for new believers who fear attending church or openly reading or speaking about God's Word.

Despite these challenges, INVN remains optimistic, with a strong desire to train and empower the younger generation within the church to continue the work of spreading the Gospel. This vision includes cultivating a robust missionary spirit that persists regardless of external circumstances, ensuring the longevity and impact of the ministry.

Through the sustained and long-term support of International Needs, INVN hopes to overcome these challenges and continue its vital work of bringing the word of God to the people of Vietnam. They seek a future where long-term workers for the Kingdom can confidently pass the baton to a well-prepared, passionate younger generation committed to their Christian mission.

ZAMBIA



ORIGINS

International Needs Zambia (INZM) was founded in 1985 by the late Reverend Kashima K. B. Shayama, after being inspired by the ACTS model from India while studying at the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies in Bangalore. Upon returning to his hometown Solwezi, in the North-western Province of Zambia, Reverend Shayama founded ZACTS - the Zambia Agriculture Crafts Trades and Studies Institute. Backing by International Needs Canada and underpinned by the philosophy of Worship, Work, and Witness, ZACTS aimed to train young Christian men and women in practical skills along with their biblical studies. The institute's courses received accreditation from the Zambian government, enabling graduates to compete strongly in the job market.

KEY FOCUS

INZM has expanded its focus, responding to needs such as orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. ZACTS Institute became the ZACTS OVC primary school in 2011.

In its commitment to community development and education, especially among marginalised people, INZM has initiated other projects like FAMCARE Ministry in Ndola, Emele Memorial School for adult literacy and orphans, and Misaka Home Based Care, supporting those affected by HIV/AIDS.

HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

INZM aims to expand its projects, in pursuit of a future where the quality of life in Zambian communities continues to improve. The keys are sustainable development, creating a sense of ownership among those being blessed by the programmes, and possibly establishing a commercial arm to raise ministry income.

Challenges include resource limitations in the face of the vast range of community needs, poverty and lack of education opportunities for children. Despite this, INZM is excited and full of faith to provide the people with practical and spiritual support, to build on a very strong track record of Transforming Live, Changing Communities.



50 years ago a global partnership was founded on a game-changing new idea for transforming the lives of people in need and their communities. Come and share the exciting and world-changing journey of International Needs. You will see slaves set free; believers in Jesus go to prison for their faith; generations find freedom from poverty and oppression through education, clean water, healthcare, social justice, and better livelihoods; lives saved and sustained through the world's worst disasters, conflicts, and emergencies; and you will witness an immense appetite for the Gospel among those who have never heard of Jesus, despite persecution, opposition, and war.

International Needs was born in 1974. So was the narrator of this chronicle, Edmond Vanderpuye, who has grown from a young boy in Ghana with a call on his life, to become the General Secretary of this organisation that spans more than 30 nations. Join him in this gripping account of 50 years in the service of Jesus and humanity, as ordinary believers achieve extraordinary things out of their love for God and for people.

