

PROJECTS OF KINDNESS

By Robert Costa

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ✓ Single mom's free oil change. Most single moms have car problems regularly.
- ✓ Neighborhood windshield washing. Going door to door washing windshields in driveaways.
- ✓ Mother's Day carnation giveaways. Set up outside grocery stores on Sunday before mother's Day.
- ✓ Sunday morning newspaper and coffee giveaway. Going door to door early in the morning to houses without a paper in the driveway.
- ✓ Snow removal from driveways and sidewalks. Rescue people from the ditches, etc.
- ✓ Pulling out cars stuck in the snow. Help people dig out the snow.
- ✓ Empty garbage can returned from street. Bring cans back to people's houses garage.
- ✓ Kitchen clean up. Humbling but powerful service, especially for older people.
- ✓ Food delivery to shut-ins.
- ✓ Praying in the neighborhood.
- ✓ Car drying at self-serve car washes.
- ✓ Leaf racking. Who likes to rake leaves? We do it for them.
- ✓ Car interior vacuuming. Set up in small parking lot or at a gas station and vacuum cars.
- ✓ Filling windshield washer fluid in cars. Refill washer reserves in cars and clean off wiper blades.
- ✓ Cleaning fireplaces. Remove ashes.

- ✓ Checking air on car tires. See if tires are properly inflated. Adjust pressure if necessary.
- ✓ Memorial service. Advertise complimentary memorial service in newspaper or telephone books.
- ✓ Radon detectors. Give out complimentary detectors in areas where radon is a concern.
- ✓ Carbon monoxide detectors. Give out complimentary carbon monoxide detectors.
- ✓ Smoke detector batteries. Give out complimentary smoke detector batteries for refills.
- ✓ Outdoor window washing. Wash first floor windows.
- ✓ Yard clean up. Look for messy yards.
- ✓ Easter basket giveaway. Every child wants an Easter basket.
- ✓ Rainy day grocery escort. Help shoppers to cars with packages.
- ✓ Toilet cleaning. Clean toilets of restaurants and stores.
- ✓ Christmas gift wrap. Everyone needs their Christmas gifts wrapped. Do it at the mall for free.
- ✓ Lawn care. Find unkept lawns and go for it.
- ✓ Soft drink giveaway. On a hot day, nothing refresh like a cold drink in Jesus' name.
- ✓ Free hot chocolate. Set up tables at store exits, bus/train stations, or sporting events and serve hot chocolate on cold days.
- ✓ Water stations at marathons and running events. Offer electrolytic drinks in disposable cups to the runners.
- ✓ Windshield washing. Hit every car in the lot at stores and shopping centers. Leave a note: "While you were away from your car, people from the Vineyard SDA Church washed your windshield".
- ✓ Grocery store bag packing. Go to self-bagging grocery store and help people bag their groceries.
- ✓ English classes for immigrants.
- ✓ Can collecting in Halloween to be distributed on thanksgiving.
- ✓ Thanksgiving dinner for the needy.
- ✓ Balloon giveaway. Go to a park and give balloons and cards to children with parents.
- ✓ Free bird feeders to convalescent hospitals. Share God's love with birdseed.
- ✓ Free house number painting on curbs. Address number painted on the curb with stencils.
- ✓ Free community dinner. Throw a party for a neighborhood or for children.
- ✓ Shopping assistance for shut-ins. Shop for those that can't get out on their own.
- ✓ Collect trees after Christmas for proper disposal. Meet a practical clean up need.
- ✓ Doggie dirt clean up of neighborhood yards. Clean up doggie mess.
- ✓ Shoe shining service. Free shoe shining at stores, malls, other public places.
- ✓ Feeding parking meters. Find expired parking meters before cars are ticketed and leave a note of explanation. Light bulb service. Go door to door with light bulbs, offering to change burned-out bulbs.
- ✓ Laundromat outreach. Pay for washing machines and dryers at local laundromats.
- ✓ Blood pressure screening. Check people blood pressure at public places.
- ✓ Car safety light check. Replace burned out bulbs in cars.
- ✓ Killing weeds. Spray for weeds and poison ivy on sidewalks, driveways, etc.
- ✓ Seal blacktop driveways. Help homeowners seal driveways.
- ✓ House gutter cleaning. Clean gutters on houses of leaves, sticks and debris.
- ✓ Birthday party organizing. Organize and run parties for children. Advertise in the newspaper, radio or TV.

- ✓ Polaroid pictures. Find lonely people or couples at parks or malls and “shoot” them, and give them the picture. Add a sticker with a Bible promise.
- ✓ House/apartment repair. Fix broken things. Limit repairs to your capabilities.
- ✓ House/apartment cleaning. Who doesn’t need housework help?
- ✓ Winter car wash. Spry off salt and road grime.
- ✓ Free summer car wash. Signs, “Free car wash – No kidding”
- ✓ Free haircut.
- ✓ Operation Baalm. With the official permit from the Cemetery, leave a flower with a card with a message of hope in every grave early in the morning on “All Saints Day”.

Additional projects

Adopt a grandparent	Families of prisoners	Marriage seminar
Adoption services	Family camp	Meals on Wheels
ADRA mission trip	Family Counseling	Medical Clinic
Adult day care	Family finance seminar	Migrant Ministry
Advocacy services	Family life workshop	Newcomer ministry
Alcohol program	Phone Friend program	Operation Overcoat
Baby care class	First aid class	Operation Paintbrush
Bible study group	Field trips for children	Parenting seminar
Big Brother/Sister	Field trips for seniors	Preparing for Baby class
Blind camp	Financial counseling	Prison Dress-out program
Blind services	Food Pantry	Prison ministry
Branch Sabbath School	Food distribution	Refugee resettlement
Camping for children	Foster grandparents	Self-help groups
Chaplaincy	Foster parents	Senior citizen group
Child care	Furniture bank	Senior citizen lunches
Children's story hour/puppets	Grief recovery seminar	Sewing class
Clothing/bedding program	Handicapped services	Shoes for Little Shavers
Community surveys	Health appraisals	Shoes for the Shoeless
Cooking school	Health screening	Soup kitchen
Counseling services	Home nursing	Stop-smoking program
Craft class	Home nursing class	Street ministry
Day camp	Homemaker services	Stress seminar
Deaf services	Homeless shelter	Suicide prevention
Disaster Response	Immigration assistance	Support group
Dental clinic	Information & referral	Tax assistance
Divorce recovery seminar	Job-finding service	Teen run-away shelter
Domestic violence program	Job training program	Thrift store
Door-to-door contacts	Layettes	Transportation assistance
Drug abuse detox	Legal aid Transitional housing	Traveler's assistance
Drug abuse prevention	Literacy program	Tutoring program
Drug abuse rehabilitation	Literature rack	Vision clinic

In the natural world as well as in the spiritual world, there are laws of the harvest. One of the most basic is simply this: "To have a crop, it is necessary to plant the seed." No farmer expect God to work a miracle and germinate seed he has not sown.

- The only **visits** God can bless are the ones we make.
- The only **literature** God can bless is literature we distribute.
- The only **prayers** God can bless for souls are prayers we offer.
- The only **Bible studies** God can bless are the ones we give.
- The only **evangelistic seminars** God can bless are the ones we conduct.

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