

## Local Missions at Foundry Church

*by Steve Toomey*

I happened to come across three stories, in a relatively short period of time, that collectively shook me. I don't know why, except that two of them hit relatively close to home and the third, coming on the heels of the first two, is a sad example of the cycle so many are in. Allow me to share these short stories with you, along with some thoughts about *Why we do what we do and Who we do it for*.

Monday evening, during the Foundry youth gathering, a sixth grade boy I'll call "C" showed up. I understand he attended Foundry Family Camp a couple years ago, but had since fallen off the radar. Turns out he and his mother have been living on the street and in homeless camps for quite some time. When he showed up Monday, it was painfully obvious he had been severely neglected. His mother is caught in drug addiction and does not provide the basic care a child needs.

Several nights ago a 27 year old man robbed two businesses in Bend, stole a car, and led police on a high speed chase that ultimately led to his being shot to death just outside Gates, Oregon. The man, Brad Masters, had been a student at the Central Oregon Adult and Teen Challenge up to the time he was asked to leave last week for bringing meth into the house. My understanding is he had the kind of childhood of which nightmares are made.

Last week I listened to an NPR interview with a reporter who had written the story of a 68 year-old man given

back his freedom after spending 50 years, for murder, in the state and federal prison system. The man had only been released due to a terminal medical condition. He had been raised and abused by drug addicted parents and, because he was young and small, he was sexually abused throughout his stay in the system. He died shortly after being released, afraid, according to the reporter, of going to hell.

Why do I feel compelled to communicate these incredibly depressing stories to you? They must be shared because they happen far too often. Mostly I share because I know you care. How do I know you care? Because I hear the stories about how you personally give of your time to get involved both with your time and your finances. I also share because I want to remind you of the work our Local Missions Team, fueled by your financial contributions, is doing to support a multitude of ministries who serve those in our community who are mostly forgotten. It is most convenient, in the face of such suffering, to look the other way, and yet you do not. Through giving of your time, your finances, and your prayers, you have chosen to look directly into the eyes of lost and broken lives, and offered light in great darkness.

After the last Local Missions meeting, I was struck by the breadth of different ministries we support. After reflecting on these stories, I have come to see how the different notes come together to form one song. The following ministries, highlighted in red, all represent

organizations you support through Foundry Local Missions.

I see, through our own **Adoption Ministry**, parents reaching out to unwanted children, making them their own, and giving the love and care they might never have had otherwise. Forever! I see organizations such as **Friends of the Children** providing loving, caring mentors (Friends) who “adopt” the least wanted children in our society and promise to stay with them, no matter what, all the way through high school, teaching many life skills, but above all showing them they are loved and valued.

For the kids who have not found their way to adoption, in one form or another, we support **Kindred Connections**, who find temporary homes for children whose parents are proving unable to care for them due to addiction, prison, homelessness, etc.

When thinking of unwanted children we cannot overlook the mission of our local **Pregnancy Resource Center**, whose work is not to condemn, but to help desperate mothers connect with the life growing inside them and, if necessary, assist in finding a loving family for her child. The children served by these organizations, and many more, live chaotic lives with uncertain futures. Often, a lack of unconditional love will define and haunt them for years.

How appropriate then, that **Child Evangelism Fellowship** has made it into some schools and is able to introduce Jesus to them. Faith based organizations like **Central Oregon Adult and Teen Challenge**, along with countless other drug and alcohol counseling and in-house programs, attempt to deal with the fall out when these broken children become broken adults.

Transformations do happen. Praise God! But so much damage has been done, over so much time, that “success” is elusive and, if found, must be redefined and waited on with patience. **The Shepherds House** offers not only food and shelter, but grace filled friendship. Both organizations introduce the person of Jesus as the mainstay of their mission and have found that many find Jesus, long before they find life stability.

Many of these broken children-broken adults will spent significant time in prison and on the streets. Unable to keep a job, or a family, they wander from one shelter, camp, or underpass, to another. The men usually alone, the women with maybe a child or two in tow. Feeding this community seems to be a major occupation of the church and the community at large. **Family Kitchen** is one organization, made up of volunteers from several local churches, including Foundry, has been serving the community for over 20 years.

There are many other organizations providing food to those most in need, in fact, Foundry Church’s **Food Pantry Ministry** hands out free food bags nearly every day, right out of the office. What of the trail of tears left in the wake of these broken adults? Wives, husbands, children. The cycle continues. In Central Oregon, from the streets of Bend to **The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs**, violence and in many cases near starvation and always, despair, surround us.

Policemen, firemen, and medical personnel spend a great deal of time serving these households. Often, these first responders are left traumatized as well. So much so that there exists the **Central Oregon Public Safety Chaplaincy** to offer counseling and comfort. The cycle seems never ending and indeed it may be so, until Jesus comes again.

In the meantime, we offer to the future the training of our youth through **Fellowship of Christian Athletes** for high school students and **Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU)** who are active on our local college campuses. Those two groups are not only intent on introducing students to Jesus, but also the training up of young, Christ centered leaders. We support **Ochoco Christian Camp**, primarily offering camping opportunities where youth can learn about Jesus and come under the leadership of Godly men and women. We must continue to reach our youth for Christ and train them to know and love Jesus and reflect The Light into a dark world.

Thank you all once more for your unsparing generosity. As always, if you want to know how to get personally involved in any of these ministries, or just have questions, please feel free to contact any member of your Local Missions Team: Ken Mays, Dara Christoff, Paul Strauser, Lisa Skaggs, Bill Sager, Ken Cox, Sam Lampe, Joy Waybright and Steve Toomey.