

# COMPASSION LINK

Assemblies of God World Missions

---

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
THEORY AND PRACTICE IN COMPASSION  
MINISTRIES



THEME—SUSTAINABILITY

VOLUME 3—SUMMER 2011

# COMPASSION LINK

---

## PURPOSE

This publication is a service of the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) Compassion Ministries Planning Committee with the purpose of providing relevant and current information on theory and practice of compassion ministries in AGWM circles and beyond.

The publication is intended to become a resource link between AGWM regions and ministries, and to offer information to our Assemblies of God churches and constituents, as well.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

- JoAnn Butrin Ph.D. (*Editor*)
- Bob McGurty
- Doug Sites
- Peggy Johnson Knutti
- Diane Campbell
- Neil Ruda

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

The journal was proposed by a group of missionary practitioners who feel a need and desire to pursue knowledge and research in the field of compassion work.

Though a great deal of information can be found in books and other periodicals, as well as on web sites, it was felt that having information that came from our own practitioners and theorists would not only be a rich source of information and allow for cross-pollenization of regions, but would also begin to give written record to some of the great things being accomplished in and through compassion ministries work for the Kingdom of God.

It is hoped that the reading audience will find this journal not only a source of information, but also one of inspiration and hope.

—JoAnn Butrin

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction to Sustainability . . . . .                                   | 4  |
| JoAnn Butrin   |    |
| Appropriate Technology in International Community<br>Development . . . . . | 8  |
| Carol Young  |    |
| Radical Environmentalism—Creation Care . . . . .                           | 13 |
| Carol Young  |    |
| Christian Survivalists—Saving, Preparing or Hoarding? . . . . .            | 27 |
| Carol Young  |    |
| What Would You Do If...? . . . . .   | 33 |
| Case Studies   |    |
| Book Review—When Helping Hurts . . . . .                                   | 35 |
| Kayla Reish  |    |

# COMPASSION LINK

---

## INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

by JoAnn Butrin, PhD

Monuments to poorly thought out solutions exist all over the world. Rusted images of plans gone awry—tractors, heavy machinery, combines, and more sit in the place where they breathed their last breath of life. They are a reminder to us of technology that didn't work. There were no funds for fuel, no spare parts available, no one with the ability to make repairs, and/or maybe just not the right equipment for that group of people or that project.

Buildings can also be a similar reminder and often an embarrassment to those who were involved in plans gone awry. These would include multi-storied buildings that were intended to be hospitals, orphanages, community centers, or factories. The internal workings, however, were not figured into the budget or the plan of those who so enthusiastically constructed them. And so they sit, empty shells, often monuments to egos or to those who thought they knew best. They

hadn't gone through the arduous and often time-consuming steps of figuring out what's happening and what needs to happen along with the people who know. No thought was given to local ownership and things arising "from the roots up."

Sustainability has become somewhat of a buzzword in many circles today, but for the purpose of effective missions strategy, it remains a very important concept. When sustainability becomes part of the equation of considering solutions to problems, there is more likelihood for an ongoing, long-term effectiveness to whatever is undertaken.

### Defining Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as the ability of an entity to fulfill its mission effectively and consistently over time by developing, procuring and managing sufficient resources (human capacities, giftings, finances, etc.) without creating dependency on external

sources. It is obvious from this definition that sustainability is about more than just finances. The entire spectrum of human experience needs to be considered in whatever is undertaken—human resources, spiritual impact, emotional outlay, as well as finances. Can, for example, volunteerism be sustained over the life of the outreach? Will those same volunteers be able to withstand the tragedy of seeing persons die from AIDS if home care ministry is a goal? The life and ongoing impact of a project can be threatened by the inability to sustain any part of the outreach by the people who are involved.

## **Sustainability Over Time**

Sustainability also refers to the ability of the impact of whatever is undertaken to continue on into the future. That may or may not be a goal, but certainly at least some of the aspects of the outreach will want to be able to be sustained over time. Is that possible, and if not, should the

outreach be undertaken at all or scaled back to a manageable proportion so that sustainability might be achieved?

In Christian circles, we tend toward thinking of it with the idea of “fruit that remains or lasts” (John 15:1–7), looking at ministry outreaches and programs that will produce followers of Christ, disciplined in the knowledge of the Lord and becoming a light and life to their own circles of influence.

We try to assess, analyze and work together with local people and churches to establishing a plan at the onset of any program, project or ministry that will look at the expected life of the undertaking and determine how it will continue into the future until its mission or life is fulfilled.

*Sustainability seeks to prevent dependency on outside resources which includes not just funds, but human and materials resources as well.*

There are times when outside funds or outside human energy are infused at the onset, but a

# COMPASSION LINK

---

plan is designed that allows for the withdrawal of the exterior inputs at a specified time in the life of the project. For example, if the community assessment determines that a bakery will not only help to supply food for the community, but will be an income generating source to help with children's school fees, then there may be an infusion of outside funds for the start-up costs of the ovens, a six-month supply of ingredients for the baked goods and perhaps even funds for the main baker's salary for a specified period of time. Once profit begins to be realized, the outside donations decrease and withdraw entirely at a certain time. If it looks as though the project will never be self-sustaining, then the outside donations may be cut off entirely and the idea scraped. Hopefully valuable lessons will be learned for the next venture.

In the above scenario, it would be probable, in best practice of sustainability, that the ovens and necessary equipment for the bakery would be purchased and/or made locally, rather than being

imported, so that repairs could be made and replacement parts could be easily obtained.

## **Sustainability of Volunteerism**

Sustainability of volunteerism is another important consideration. An outreach may be designed with the idea that volunteers will provide the major input of energy or momentum for whatever is being done. Let's say, in the bakery above, that the women decide they will take turns each day keeping the baking going. How long will that willingness continue? What happens if two of the volunteers have to attend to sick children or family members and they cannot continue? How much accountability can you expect from volunteers and for how long? These are all important questions as one considers sustainability.

*This is another important principle of sustainability – affordable and locally available technology and resources are usually a part of assuring*

# COMPASSION LINK

---

*that whatever is undertaking has a greater chance of success and being able to be maintained (See article on appropriate technology).*

## Ownership

Ownership is a key factor in the process of sustainability. If the undertaking is primarily outsider-controlled and owned, then participants/and or recipients of whatever is being offered will not feel a part of the solution.

A goal of most missions' endeavors is that whatever is undertaken will have spiritual impact. What is not always so clear is how that impact will be

sustained. Is there a plan to follow up on the persons who accept the Lord during an outreach? Is there an active church that will be able to provide discipling for the new believers and a broad range of family-oriented activities that will keep them engaged? What will the spiritual impact look like in five years?

Sustainability should be a consideration in every aspect of missions service. If this is a part of the beginning plan of every outreach, there is a much greater probability that there will be long-term impact and God will be honored by our efforts to assure "fruit that remains."

---

**Visit the CompassionLink web site for more articles and helpful resources, including numerous related web sites. It's also the place to register for the annual Compassion Forum and Forum on Human Trafficking. These are two events you do not want to miss—the practical, informative helps received at the forums are indispensable for field work. The URL for the web site is <http://www.compassionlink.org>.**

---

## APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

by Carol Young

### Introduction

The term *appropriate technology* is a non-conventional approach to helping impoverished communities by utilizing low-tech ideology originated by the community (the users are the choosers). instead of shipping in technology goods based on outside experts' recommendations for solving problems of other people. But what do these terms and approaches really mean and how can we begin to move from being *providers* over to *partners*, thus supporting sustainable indigenous principles in contrast to unhealthy dependent roles in the technology realm?

Poor selection of technology and equipment in the developing world leads to the landscapes being littered with rusted, broken tractors, non-operating pumps and wells, and the list goes on and on. Many projects are incomplete or not long-term as a result

of being dependent on outside funding and people, lack of local knowledge, and limited access to training, tools and parts. Billions of dollars are wasted each year.

The premise of appropriate technology is that the ideas are from within the local community, not from outside experts. This lends to long-term success in that the community owns the project or technology. The members of the community are the dreamers, goal setters, and ultimately the designers and the keepers of the project.

The opportunities for the local church as part of a community is to minister and reach out to their neighbors by jointly engaging in appropriate technology projects to better lives, both physically and spiritually.

### What is Appropriate Technology?

Appropriate technologies are



# COMPASSION LINK

---

methods which utilize local materials that the average person can make, use and maintain.

*“Appropriate technology is being mindful of what we’re doing and aware of the consequences. Appropriate technology works from the bottom up; it is not an overlay to the situation; it is a genuine grassroots solution to economic needs... Third World craftspeople, farmers and other villagers invent, create, and contribute to the technological process of their area much more than outside experts do.”*

Source: <http://www.gdrc.org/techtran/appro-tech.html>

Appropriate technology is small-scale technology. It is simple enough that people can manage it directly and on a local level. Appropriate technology makes use of skills and technology that are available in a local community to supply basic human needs, such as alternative fuels, clean water, food, waste disposal, and microenterprises. Source: <http://lsa.colorado.edu/essence/texts/appropriate.htm>

The goal of appropriate technology (AT) is to increase the standard of living for the developing world. Typical AT inventions are more labor-intensive, require fewer resources, and use low-cost or readily available materials wherever possible. Special attention is paid to the social, cultural, and ethical aspects of the communities the technology is intended for.

*“The idea of appropriate technology is that local people, struggling on a daily basis with their needs, understand those needs better than anyone and can therefore suggest or in fact, invent the technological innovations necessary to meet those needs. Not only that, local people can prioritize solutions to save precious funding and labor. The result is consistency in the carry-through of the work by locals and continued maintenance and interest in the well-being of the project over the long haul.”*

Source: <http://www.gdrc.org/techtran/appro-tech.html>

A key ingredient for any of the

# COMPASSION LINK

---

technology initiatives to be sustainable is that the local community determines the design, and plans for the project. The local community has ownership from the beginning, not something that we as outsiders have started, even funded, and then hand off once it is up and running. An assessment, in short, is meeting with the community and talking things through and asking simple questions as to what they want to accomplish. It is important to look at the assets and skills that they already have in place and then build on those items. The most important phase of working with appropriate technology is to pray for the Lord's wisdom and direction. The issues and situations are so complex and, more times than not, beyond our strength and ideas.

For example when there is a lack of clean water, oftentimes an outsider will first think of digging a well and placing a pump on the well. This requires the expense of electricity or fuel (typical fuel-powered pumps fail within the first year of use), tools and

knowledge to maintain a pump and well, and funds to purchase replacement parts. (Hand pumps normally fail within the first two years of use). While wells and pumps are not always a bad idea, it is important to look at where the people are already getting their water. Would it be possible to utilize a bio-sand filter that simply uses sand, gravel and a bacterial layer to clean the water? The pump, well and filter technology all would need to fall under the VLOM—village level operation and maintenance. This scenario again reinforces the philosophy of using local materials. If any of these items are shipped from the United States, how would one get replacement parts? If made in the USA, are the parts metric or SAE? Would the proper tools be available to make repairs? How does shipping replacement parts in negatively impact the local suppliers, even if the items were donated to us?

Another consideration when considering appropriate technology is not giving a community a shopping list that includes the

# COMPASSION LINK

---

skills and abilities that we the outsiders bring to the table. At Sustain Hope our team has training in various low-tech, practical areas that would possibly be an asset in impoverished areas, such as alternative fuels, clean water, livestock, beekeeping, improved agriculture, etc. We don't promote those skills to the community during the assessment, but as we work with the community looking at various issues then we can see how those might assist the community within the framework of their dreams and plans.

*“While grassroots activity is vital in developing appropriate technology, a larger view is definitely called for in understanding how organizations can combine funds and human resources to develop and market technologies. Communication among international aid agencies and missions organizations can greatly enhance efficient use of funds for appropriate technology and a reduction of the ‘reinventing the wheel’ syndrome.”*  
Source: <http://www.gdrc.org/techtran/appro-tech.html>

It is also essential to understand that technology in itself does not change the heart. Appropriate technology to be used as effective transformation must include a Christ-centered focus. When the community members are focused on self-reliance, self-sustainability and technology, without a relationship with Christ, their ability to help others around them is not a priority. It is more of a survivalist, self-focused, selfish state of being. One example in El Salvador is when the national church wanted practical ways for the local churches to minister in the communities. Solar cooking dehydration, gardening and solar water disinfection training was offered in all the zones to both the local church and community members. Also the Royal Rangers are constructing solar ovens as a means of fundraising for the free medical clinic that is provided for pastors and their family members.

Our attitude toward those we are serving is critical. Often it seems we have (and often do have) so much more than those we are working with in the field.

# COMPASSION LINK

---

Working together as friends with mutual respect and maintaining their dignity is far more important than any project that could be accomplished. It is through this type of relationship that we have the opportunity to share Christ holistically.

*“The definition of appropriate technology changes with each situation. One quality that remains the same, however, is taking care of things. In each situation, the essence of AT remains appreciating, helping, and caring. Planned obsolescence, throw-away products, and poor quality all go against intelligent decision-making and the true spirit of appropriate technology.”*

*Source: <http://www.gdrc.org/techtran/appro-tech.html>*

## Key Points of Appropriate Technology

- It meets people’s needs.
- It helps protect the environment.
- It uses local skills—It helps establish a self-sustaining and expanding reservoir of skills in the community. It can be understood, built, controlled and maintained by villagers without a high level of specific training.
- It uses local materials in order to lower costs and reduce supply problems.
- It is open to modification or innovation.
- It is smaller in scale and therefore better-suited to meet local needs.
- It minimizes transportation of goods, reducing petroleum dependency, lowering costs, and promoting local cooperation.
- It is more labor-intensive than modern technology, but less labor-intensive than outdated technology.
- It helps people earn a living, creates jobs.
- It is affordable.
- It brings about transformation.
- It fosters an awareness of new ways of solving problems.

- It makes the gospel relevant to peoples' needs.

## **A Few Examples of Appropriate Technology**

**Fuel Briquettes**—These are made from agricultural plant waste such as leaves, coconut husks, saw dust, paper etc. Slurry is formed in water, and then made into a briquette using a wooden press. This is then used instead of fuel wood or charcoal for cooking. See <http://www.legacyfound.org/> for more information.

**Solar Cookers**—These can be made of wood or cardboard, aluminum foil and white glue. They are very effective method for cooking. Food can be left unattended to cook, as it works like a slow cooker. Smoke inhalation from biomass cooking fuels cause 1 in 5 death in the developing world and is the number one cause of blindness in women over 40. See <http://solarcookers.org/>.

**SODIS (Solar Water Disinfection)**—This water treatment is

accomplished using a plastic 1 liter clear soda bottle. The bottle is filled and placed on the roof in a stand or in a solar oven for 6 to 8 hours. The UV rays and heat kill 99 percent of all water borne pathogens that cause diarrhea. 2.2 million children will die from diarrhea and related diseases this year. Eighty percent of them die in the first two years of their life; 42,000 a week, 6,000 a day. For further information, see [http://www.sodis.ch/methode/index\\_EN](http://www.sodis.ch/methode/index_EN) and [http://www.sodis.ch/methode/forschung/mikrobio/index\\_EN](http://www.sodis.ch/methode/forschung/mikrobio/index_EN).

**Solar Food Dehydrators**—These can be made of wood or from a cardboard box. It uses two pieces of screen. Fruit or vegetables are sliced thinly, place on the screen and then the box is covered by another piece of screen to keep insects away. The box is then placed in the sun for 24 to 48 hours. This process allows people to preserve food.

## **RADICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM— CREATION CARE**

by Carol Young

I stood in an amusement park in Florida and was surrounded by screens of a moving video on saving whales, accompanied by amazing audio. Somehow my heart sank. I had just returned from Africa, and yet again experienced seeing poverty which I hope I never get used to. But at this moment of great compassion for the animals I thought of children I had just visited that didn't have enough to eat and suffering from ailments from parasites to malaria. Yet the plea of the video was to continue a multimillion dollar campaign to save animals. I believe in conservation. I believe that when God created the universe that he put complex, interconnected systems into place that all rely on each other to work. But I also believe in balance.

I work in the area of International community development. In that type of work are a lot of people sensitive to environmental issues, but sometimes obsessed. I

also think that as Christians we can tend to be extreme, as well. Creation care vs. stewardship vs. nature vs. creation, and the list continue on. Some are mere semantics; others are philosophies that have become what looks like a religion in itself. In fear of New Age philosophies, we tend to shy away from some good practical concepts that are more biblical than not.

Simplistically I personally believe in stewardship basically treating God's creation with respect and care. However, there are habits I find myself practicing—such as drinking out of a Styrofoam cup—as I ponder these issues and how our individual choices affect our environment both negatively and positively. These can be related to awareness as well as discipline or a lack thereof in choices we make every day.

There are some that are vehemently opposed to what they consider radical environmentalism. They refer to it as the “green

# COMPASSION LINK

---

dragon.” This advertisement for the video describes it as “A Biblical Response to One of the Greatest Deceptions of Our Day.” See <http://www.resistingthegreendragon.com/>. The agendas are described as elevating nature over the needs of people. It does not support the right to life by looking at the state of the earth’s well being by population control. It does not consider political power based on environmental regulations. See <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/press/read/americas-leading-voice-of-faith-on-stewardship-issues-announces-new-initiative-to-expose-serious-dangers-of-green-dragon-environmentalism-says-the-time-is-now-to-stand-and-resist/>. I believe that we should not be radical environmentalists or radical evangelicals when it comes to God’s creation and its care. I also believe that our pastors and churches for the most part are able to discern those issues.

There is also a great debate as to whether the church should be the platform for what some consider social issues and agendas. If based on scripture, who better to take

a stand on what is just and right? Should we become consumed by it? Caught in a panic? By no means! Nor should we be consumed by all other things that come and go and fit the current buzz.

I grew up in “Bone Valley,” one million acres located in central Florida. It was once one of the richest deposits of phosphate in the world. Familiar sites were strip mining. Our own well went dry because of the mining affecting the aquifer. In those days, smoke billowed from stacks at chemical and fertilizer plants. Acres of wetlands were daily destroyed by mammoth draglines. In 1970, I was in the second grade. That year the EPA was established along with the first “Earth Day.” As a kid I didn’t sense we were radical, if anything I wanted things to change and for us to protect the environment. I think a lot of good came to our area by establishing common sense rules for pollution control. My family’s livelihood was based on the phosphate industry. Yet left unregulated to its own



# COMPASSION LINK

---

greed, our area would have been destroyed, not to mention our health. So while there is political power connected to regulation, that power, when used correctly, does not always hurt the poor.

Scripturally (See Appendix A) when we look at God's plan for caring for the environment, there are numerous references in the Bible. It brings us back to the "balance" issue. I hear the arguments of we are to have dominion vs. spending our time and resources dealing with creation care. I don't think one is mutually opposed to other.

## Creation Care

Many groups and churches are working toward a balanced Christ-centered, scriptural approach to environmentalism know as "creation care." For example, this is a statement from the EEN's website:

*The Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) a ministry that seeks to educate, equip, inspire, and mobilize Christians in their effort to*

*care for God's creation, to be faithful stewards of God's provision, and to advocate for actions and policies that honor God and protect the environment.*

*Founded in 1993, EEN's work is grounded in the Bible's teaching on the responsibility of God's people to "tend the garden" and in a desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to follow Him. EEN publishes materials to equip and inspire individuals, families, and churches; and seeks to educate and mobilize people to make a difference in their churches and communities, and to speak out on national and international policies that affect our ability to preach the Gospel, protect life, and care for God's Creation.*

*As a biblically orthodox Christian organization, EEN totally rejects nature worship and pantheism. Nothing is clearer in Scripture: we are to worship only the Creator—never His creation. There is only one God in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy*



# COMPASSION LINK

---

*Spirit—to whom all praise, glory, and honor are to be given. EEN's Evangelical Declaration puts it well: "Our creating God is prior to and other than creation, yet intimately involved with it, upholding each thing in its freedom, and all things in relationships of intricate complexity. God is transcendent, while lovingly sustaining each creature; and immanent, while wholly other than creation and not to be confused with it."*

*Source: <http://creationcare.org/blank.php?id=41>*

I look in awe at the wonders of the world, even the colors of the sky. I wonder if God painted an image for each and every day, or allows the natural process he designed to control the color. But I know in my heart and mind that this is his creation that I am seeing, and not him.

True environmental care is respect for God's handiwork, not a return to idolatry. Stewardship is the recognition of humanity's high created position, not a pantheistic ruling out of our re-

sponsibility before God. Source: <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-c021.html>

## **Pantheism**

Pantheism is the position that God and nature are the same thing. "Pantheism" comes from two Greek words, 'pan' meaning 'all' and 'theos' meaning 'god.' So, it would teach that all the stars, galaxies, planets, mountains, wind, and rain, are all one and the same—part of what God is. So, pantheists would say that all is God.

Biblical Christianity teaches that God is separate from his creation and he created it (See Genesis 1:1-30), whereas pantheism says that God and creation share the same nature and essence. Source: <http://carm.org/questions/about-philosophy/what-pantheism>

I thought this was an interesting post on a blog in reference to creation care:

*Croswell Wesleyan Church*

*There is no question that*

# COMPASSION LINK

---

*God's careful attention to every aspect of creation in the beginning brought Him great satisfaction. He looked at everything He had created and said it was all "very good." And truly, His eye is on the sparrow and He notices when one sparrow falls from the sky. He also clothes the lilies in beauty beyond any clothing that Solomon could have had made for himself.*

*But, in the verse He talks about the sparrow that falls, Jesus also says, "So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:31; Luke 12:7).*

*I simply do not agree that Jesus had sweat drops of blood to save the spotted owl. He went to the cross so that "Whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." He came to seek that which was lost. And when He separates the sheep from the goats at the judgment (Matt. 25), it will not actually be sheep and goats. Jesus died for people. This world will be destroyed, and a new heaven and new*

*earth will be revealed.*

*This becomes important at the point of where the church is going to use the resources God has given us. Are we going to pour man-hours and tithe-dollars into saving a rare frog, or the millions of people who are headed for destruction? It is hard enough to motivate believers to help needy people. Should we take their attention off of people and set up animal shelters?*

*God may not have to do one or the other exclusively, but we need wisdom to discern what His will for the church is. While I believe in keeping air as clean as we can and that we should treat animals humanely, I do not believe there is any great commission to stop global warming.*

*Source: <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=116076035089772&topic=254>*

## Appendix A

Genesis 1:26 (NIV)—“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let

# COMPASSION LINK

---

them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Leviticus 25:23–24 (NIV)—“The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.”

Ezekiel 34:2–4 (NIV)—“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.’”

Isaiah 24:4–6 (NIV)—“The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.”

Jeremiah 2:7 (NIV)—“I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.”

Revelation 11:18 (NIV)—“The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

## Appendix B

### Positional Paper on Creation by the Assemblies of God

## The Doctrine of Creation

(Adopted by the General Presbytery in session August 9-11, 2010)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The Bible begins with creation, declares at the outset that God is Creator, and reiterates this understanding of origins from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible makes no claim to be a scientific textbook, nor should it be understood as such. However, the Bible declares itself to be trustworthy in whatever it teaches to be true, whether relating to matters of faith, history, or the created order. “All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). We affirm with Jesus the authority, certainty, and finality of God’s eternal Word (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35).

## The Bible Reveals God as the Creator

Scripture focuses our attention

not so much on the act of creation as on the Creator. From Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, God’s presence and activity are primary. We read that “God created,” “God said,” “God saw,” God “separated,” “God called [named],” “God made,” “God set [placed],” “God blessed,” and God “rested.” The creation accounts show God to be intelligent, loving, and personal. In contrast to pantheism, He is distinct from His creation (Psalm 90:2). In contrast to deism, He continues to be personally active in His handiwork; He upholds, sustains, and preserves it (Nehemiah 9:6).

The relational nature of the Creator is seen in His expectations of His human creatures. We are to worship and serve Him as the Creator (Isaiah 40:26, 28, 31). We are warned not to strive against our Maker (Isaiah 45:9). We are to commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19). We also recognize that our help comes from the One who made the heavens and the earth (Psalms 121:2; 124:8; 146:5, 6), and there is nothing too hard

# COMPASSION LINK

---

for Him (Jeremiah 32:17). The Bible also emphasizes that God is the Creator of all things, a vitally important truth repeated often in both Testaments (Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 146:6; Acts 14:17; Revelation 4:11; 10:6).

In contrast to ancient paganism and modern materialism, the Bible teaches a definitive beginning of the universe and everything in it. Early pagan thinking tended to be dualistic, teaching that the universe in some form existed eternally alongside the gods. In pagan mythologies, the gods are seen as having created certain things but always from preexisting materials. However, the very declaration that God is the Creator of all things sets Him apart from idols (Psalm 96:5).

Materialists teach that matter and its laws are eternal and are the sum total of all existence, thus ruling out the idea of God altogether. But the Bible declares that God existed before all things and is the Creator of all things (Psalm 90:2). Moreover, He also brought the universe into existence out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), that is,

without preexisting materials (Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3).

The Bible also teaches that creation was a cooperative work of the Trinity. In addition to naming God as Creator, the Old Testament shows that the Spirit of God was active as well (Genesis 1:2). The New Testament further reveals that Jesus, who is the one Mediator between God and humankind (1 Timothy 2:5) in our redemption, was also the Mediator in Creation. Christ, called “the firstborn” because He has first place, the place of the heir (Colossians 1:15), was the active Agent in creation. “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). The Greek word translated “through” (*dia*) is a word of secondary agency, used, for example, where God spoke through the prophets. So God created by or through Jesus. Jesus is the living Word through whom God spoke the worlds into existence. He is the One who made humankind from the dust of the earth. He is before all things and is the Creator of

# COMPASSION LINK

---

the invisible spirit world as well (Colossians 1:16).

## **The Biblical Account of Creation Reveals Order, Progress, and Climax**

Order, progress and climax are part of the biblical account of creation. Order is seen in the careful structuring of the various stages of creative activity in a six-day format, evening to morning. Progress can be seen in the increase of personal attention God gave to His creative work. Of the vegetation we read that God said, “Let the land produce vegetation ...’ And it was so” (Genesis 1:11, 12). Of the animals we read that God said, “Let the land produce living creatures...’ And it was so” (vv. 24, 25). But of the human race God said, “Let us make man...’ So God created man... male and female he created them” (vv. 26, 27). The human race is thus a special and distinctive creation.

All this evidence of order, progress, and climax shows careful, intelligent planning. That God

planned the creation rules out the idea that any part of creation came into being by mere chance. God exercised His wisdom and control at all times (Psalms 136:5; 148:5; Isaiah 45:12; 48:12, 13) and brought the entire created order to a complete and well-designed end (Genesis 1:31).

## **Only God Can Create**

It is also evident that no part of God’s creation, whether angel or human is creative in the sense God is. The Hebrew word for create (*bara’*) always has God as the subject of the verb. This word is used for God’s work of creation and is also used to indicate that God will do something unusual and unprecedented. For example, it is used when God said to Israel at Sinai: “I will do wonders never before done [*bara’*, “created”] in any nation in all the world” (Exodus 34:10).

The significance of the Hebrew verb *bara’* is also illustrated when God spoke through Isaiah to his stubborn people, “From now on I will tell you of new things... They are created [*bara’*] now, and

not long ago” (Isaiah 48:6, 7). As in the first chapter of Genesis, the word *bara*, “to create,” is used only of completely new and unprecedented acts of God; that is, of the creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning, of the creation of the first animal life in the sea (1:21), and of man and woman in God’s own image (1:27). At other times the word “made” (*asab*) is used. The word “create” (*bara*) thus emphasizes that God alone is the Creator, and His acts of creation are unique and unprecedented.

## God’s Creation Is Purposive

God had a stated purpose in creation. He created “for his own ends” (Proverbs 16:4) and for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). He “formed [the earth] to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18). All creation is thus an expression of His will and His power. The creation story depicts human beings as the zenith of God’s creative activity. Their unique nature and role are portrayed in two separate

and complementary accounts (Genesis 1 and 2). God lavished particular attention on both the man and the woman. It was only humans of whom God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule... over all the earth.” (1:26).

Thereupon, God gave them a mandate to be benevolent and nurturing caretakers of the created order (Genesis 1:26, 28; Psalm 8:5–8). Being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27), human beings are free, rational, capable of self-appreciation and self-expression, capable of moral and spiritual understanding, and created for fellowship with God. That the first human pair, made in His image, would fall and lead the race into sin (3:1ff.) was hardly a surprise for the Creator, who purposed to create them anyway. The image of God divinely stamped on the race would be marred by sin. But Jesus Christ (Romans 5:15) was destined to redeem fallen humankind and include those who believe in Him in the final reconciliation of the universe (Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthi-



# COMPASSION LINK

---

ans 15:20–28; Colossians 1:19).

## **The Reality of Creation**

Genesis 1–3 accurately communicates God’s creation of the heavens and the earth. Using language that appears to employ both prose and poetry and that contains both literal and symbolic elements, the story is a simple yet beautiful and compelling narrative intended to speak to all humankind. The complexity of creation is such that humans will never fully comprehend it. But the message that God alone is Creator plainly has been communicated to all who, through the ages, hear and read the Genesis account.

Our understanding of God as Creator is rooted in a divine revelation of real events that occurred in time and space. Moreover, our understanding of God as Redeemer is rooted in the revelation of God’s dealings with Israel in history and in the historical events of the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. Likewise, the New Testament treats the first Adam as a historical person (Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy

2:13, 14). Some have contended that the first two chapters of Genesis are poetical and are to be taken as parables. But a comparison of poetical references to creation (Deuteronomy 32 and 33; Job 38:4–11; Psalms 90; 104:5–9) shows that the Genesis account is in prose form, though it may contain some poetic language. Even so, however, poetry in the Bible often describes actual, historical events, so the use of poetry does not make this account fictional.

It is significant that although creation events are not stated in modern scientific terminology, divine accommodation to human limitations puts them in vivid and understandable language that provides a reliable record for all peoples in all times (Ephesians 1:18).

## **Theories of Creation**

The advance of scientific research, particularly in the last few centuries, has raised many questions about the interpretation of the Genesis accounts of creation. In attempting to reconcile the Bible and the theories and conclu-



# COMPASSION LINK

---

sions of contemporary scientists, it should be remembered that the creation accounts do not give precise details as to how God went about His creative activity. Nor do these accounts provide us with complete chronologies that enable us to date with precision the time of the various stages of creation. Similarly, the findings of science are constantly expanding; the accepted theories of one generation are often revised in the next.

As a result, equally devout Christian believers have formed very different opinions about the age of the earth, the age of humankind, and the ways in which God went about the creative processes. Given the limited information available in Scripture, it does not seem wise to be overly dogmatic about any particular creation theory. Whatever creation theory we individually may prefer, we must affirm that the entire creation has been brought into being by the design and activity of the Triune God.

Moreover, we also affirm that the New Testament treats the creation and fall of Adam and

Eve as historical events in which the Creator is especially involved. We urge all sincere and conscientious believers to adhere to what the Bible plainly teaches and to avoid divisiveness over debatable theories of creation. Christians have historically believed that “all truth is God’s truth” and that God reveals himself both in Scripture and the created order. Therefore, when God’s Word and God’s Work are properly understood, there is no disunity. Paul seems to have expressed that truth when he wrote, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

In summary, we see that the Bible from beginning to end identifies God as the Creator. “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Hebrews 11:3). “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:9).

# COMPASSION LINK

---



Partnering with local missionaries and responding to the identified initiatives of national churches and communities, Sustain Hope provides on-site consulting, research, training, identification and support with set up of locally available (appropriate) technology as well as with community involvement, assessment, program design, and evaluation.

For individuals and communities in impoverished areas to develop sufficiently, be self-sustaining and healthy, Sustain Hope believes that local resources need to be utilized effectively and efficiently through available technology.

Sustain Hope is committed to best practice program principles.

As the message of Jesus Christ is consistently and compassionately shared alongside the local church, lives will be spiritually, physically, and socially impacted providing a holistic response to the felt needs within individuals and their communities.

The purpose of Sustain Hope is a Christ-centered, best practice approach to improve lives through community initiated, sustainable solutions that utilize local resources in areas of agriculture, alternative fuels, water and sanitation.

*Sustain Hope • PO Box 8374 • Springfield, MO 65801 • 417.866.1292  
• [www.sustainhope.org](http://www.sustainhope.org) • [carolyoung@sustainhope.org](mailto:carolyoung@sustainhope.org)*

## CHRISTIAN SURVIVALISTS—SAVING, PREPARING OR HOARDING?

by Carol Young

### **The world may be coming to an end... but we do have canned chili!**

I grew up in Florida, a state that sees its share of tornadoes and hurricanes. Living there, it is wise to have emergency hurricane supplies. These include canned food items, several gallons of water per person, a flashlight, weather radio, tarp and most importantly, a can opener.

On a recent visit to my parents, I decided to check on their hurricane stock. Up in the top of the pantry was a case of chili. When I checked the dates on the cans, they had expired in 2001. I realized this was the remnants of their Y2K stash. Remember year 2000, and the expectation of a worldwide shutdown of computers, resulting in food shortages, collapse of government, etc.? That theoretically could have happened but didn't; otherwise, the chili would be long gone by now.

I believe in the wisdom of stocking a bit for the emergencies of life and in saving. But when our focus becomes being our own sustainer and we take on the survivalist mode, the outcome is that often a type of hoarding occurs.

When I find a can of pineapple stuck to the shelf liner, I am once again reminded that I cannot prepare for "forever." Jesus was pretty clear on rust and dust as well as the tomorrow subject. It begins to resemble fear rather than preparation, at times.

**Matthew 6 (NIV)**—<sup>19</sup> *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

<sup>25</sup> *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will*

# COMPASSION LINK

---

*eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?*<sup>26</sup> *Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*<sup>27</sup> *Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?*<sup>28</sup> *And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.*<sup>29</sup> *Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.*<sup>30</sup> *If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?*<sup>31</sup> *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'*<sup>32</sup> *For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.*<sup>33</sup> *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*<sup>34</sup> *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

## Saving/Preparing

There are plenty of scriptures in the Bible promoting saving. The question can be asked, how much should I save? The answer is not necessarily about an amount but your attitude. Am I saving up things in order to be independent of God, or storing out of fear and anxiousness? Am I willing to give away anything I have if the Lord leads me to do so?

I think about the story in Exodus where God provided manna from heaven, and how those that obeyed God's commandments enjoyed what he had provided for them. Those that didn't obey and stocked up for themselves had wormy manna.

*<sup>17</sup> The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little.*<sup>18</sup> *And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.*<sup>19</sup> *Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning."*<sup>20</sup> *However, some of them paid no*

# COMPASSION LINK

---

*attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.*

Some scriptures about saving:

*“Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow” (Proverbs 13:11).*

*“In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has” (Proverbs 21:20).*

*“A good man leaves an inheritance for his children’s children, but a sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous” (Proverbs 13:22).*

<sup>24</sup> *“Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: <sup>25</sup> Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer” (Proverbs 30: 24, 25).*

<sup>6</sup> *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!<sup>7</sup> It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, <sup>8</sup> yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest” (Proverbs 6:6–8).*

## Hoarding

It is estimated there are over 3 million compulsive hoarders in the United States. We even have reality shows on TV about these people. Our generation is becoming far removed from our depression era grandparents that seemed to keep every scrap in case they ever needed it. Now we’re becoming a generation that finds security in things. It’s now to the point that it controls us and limits our lives.

In John Ortberg’s book *“When the Game of Life is Over It All goes Back In the Box,”* he takes a look at how we often replace richness towards God into a collecting of things. We build priorities focused on material things that are not ours, but just on loan from God. He states, “There are now more than 30,000 self-storage facilities in the country offering over a billion square feet for people to store their stuff. In the 1960’s, the industry did not exist. We now spend \$12 billion a year just to pay someone to store our stuff! It’s larger than the music industry.”

I’ve used storage units from time to time, and often if I were

# COMPASSION LINK

---

to tally up the value of the items I feel I just have to hang onto, in a matter of 6 months to a year I could easily replace the old items with new items if I consider the cost of the storage rent. The storage units remind me of the rich man's "bigger barns" in Luke chapter 12. How much is enough?

<sup>13</sup> "Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."<sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."<sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.<sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'<sup>18</sup> "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.<sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."<sup>20</sup> "But God

said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'<sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:13–21)

## The survivalist

I like being prepared. I always carry a pocket knife and a few quarters in my pocket. My truck always has a working flashlight, shovel, axe, gloves, fishing rod, and rope, to name a few things. What happens when I try to outfit my vehicle for every possible scenario? One thing is my gas mileage will suffer and just like any other project; it always seems I am missing something. I believe being prepared is a great idea. However, self-reliance can be a burden, not a gift. The concept can remove our dependence on God and places it on our shoulders.

There are web sites that list the types of food, guns etc. that should be stocked up for the future. There are different lists

# COMPASSION LINK

---

for different scenarios—even for the event of end of life on earth as we know it. How can I possibly prepare for that? Is purchasing some acreage in a remote area and isolating yourself a good plan? Is gun toting, food hoarding, and bomb shelter dwelling going to help you save yourself? How does loving your neighbor and reaching the lost equate with a “Trespassers Will Be Shot” sign? Some will offer another opinion that by storing up rations and water, they will be in a position to minister and help those that didn’t prepare. How would you decide who and how many to help in such a disaster or crisis?

I also think about Philippians 4:11–13; where we are told that there will be abased times, hungry times and that we will suffer need. Christ is the one that strengthens us during those times. *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to*

*abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:11–13).

I enjoy reading various gardening magazines, like the *Fox Fire* series, where it tells me how I can raise a hog, slaughter it and use its dried stomach filled with peas for a baby rattle. I like knowing how to pump water without electricity, having a garden and raising livestock. I however know that God is my provider as he is the one that gives me my “Daily Bread.”

## **A grateful heart**

Down the hall from our pantry used to hang a painting of an old man bowing his head over a bowl of soup with bread located next to a Bible. It was originally a photo by Eric Enstrom entitled “Grace.” The weathered old guy in the photo was a poor shoe scraper salesman going door-to-door when he called on Enstrom in 1918. Enstrom’s thought was that one should be grateful for what one had, not what one was



# COMPASSION LINK

---

without. (“This man doesn’t have much of earthly goods, but he has more than most people because he has a thankful heart.” Eric Enstrom) All through my growing up years I would stare at that painting (thinking it was of my grandfather until I saw it hanging elsewhere) and be reminded to be thankful to the Lord for all he provides, daily.

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread”* (Matt. 6:9–11).

*“I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread”* (Psalm 37:25).

*“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your*

*heavenly Father knows that you need all these things”* (Matthew 6:31–32).

*“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”* (Matthew 7:11).

*“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows* (Luke 12:7).

*“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything; you may have an abundance for every good deed”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

*“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

*(All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).*



## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF...?

### Case Study #1

What if you were a pastor of a struggling congregation in the inner city of a developed country? Your church needs new paint and some other basic repairs. Your congregation has been having a fundraising drive to raise enough money to cover the needed repairs and is planning a series of work days for the congregation to perform the repairs and to paint. Many of your members have caught the vision for improving the church building and have given sacrificially to the cause.

You happen to tell an old friend from seminary about the project, who pastors a much larger and wealthier church not far away. A few days later, your friend calls you and tells you that his youth group would like to make fixing up your church their summer missions project. They will do all the work and cover all the costs. You know the wealthier church would be able to do a much higher quality job than your

congregation, and you could use your repair funds elsewhere, but this is a very important project to many in your congregation. What do you do?

### Case Study #2

What if you were a missionary in a small village community? The national church has many ideas of how they can reach out to the community around them, but they are limited in the resources they have available to them. One of their plans is to build a community center that can be used for community meetings, educational seminars, and outreach. They have plans to upkeep the building once it is built by having different members donate their time; however, they ask you to help donate the funds and resources to build the building. What do you do?

### Case Study #3

Imagine that you are a field leader in a resource-limited na-

# COMPASSION LINK

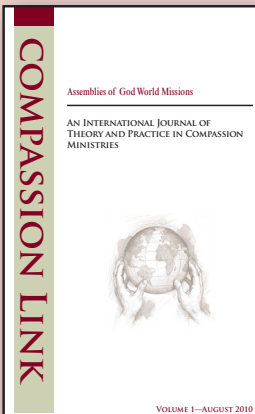
---

tion. A medical team from the United States has established a relationship with a community they have worked in multiple times. The national church for that community and the visiting teams have talked about setting up a clinic in the community that could be used by the team while they are there, and staffed by nationals between their visits. Both parties would like you to act as the liaison to get the project going. What do you do?

## Case Study #4

You are a relief agency responding to a natural disaster in a

resource-limited setting. What little infrastructure there was in the community was destroyed by the disaster. The survivors of the disaster are in need of basic supplies such as food and clean water. Several members of your team focus on setting up water filter systems and have set up several in the community. A few weeks into the relief effort, the water team is called away to respond to another crisis in another part of the world. There are several dozen more water filters that need to be installed, and the existing filters need to be maintained. The water team leaves in two days. What do you do?



## Subscribe to CompassionLink Journal!

To receive four quarterly journals each year, subscribe to *Compassion Link Journal* today. To receive it electronically as a PDF file, email [nruda@ag.org](mailto:nruda@ag.org). The cost for the PDF version is \$15. To receive a printed copy, the cost is \$25. Email [nruda@ag.org](mailto:nruda@ag.org) with your mailing information. Payment can be made by check or account transfer (if AGWM).

## BOOK REVIEW: WHEN HELPING HURTS

Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert  
(Moody Publishers, 230 pp.)

With over forty percent of the world's population living on less than two dollars a day, and the western world seemingly eager to help, the question of how to alleviate poverty around the world is a global concern. How to alleviate poverty without draining the strength of those helping and creating dependency in those receiving the aid is an even trickier, but no less important, question. In *When Helping Hurts*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert tackle these questions, directly providing biblically-based strategies with universal application.

This book builds its case for using wisdom in helping the poor, starting with the biblical basis for compassionate response, adding in the social/cultural/economic realities of poverty, and cumulating in the strategic response of the church. The book is designed for either a personal reading or a group study, accompanied by discussion questions.

In the first section, the authors provide the Scriptural basis for confronting poverty, focusing mainly on the example of Jesus during his earthly ministry. They contrast the mindsets of evangelicals to respond only to spiritual needs of people and to make knee-jerk, emotion-based decisions, with Christ's example of concern for the whole person and strategic empowerment of his followers.

In the final section of the book, they outline the methods that churches, short-term mission teams, and non-profit organizations can take to change the helping landscape and bring real change to the communities they work in. This section is extremely practical, with clear directions on how to involve communities in assessing their needs and assets and bringing change in various cultural settings.

—Reviewed by Kayla M. Reish,  
RN, Global AIDS Partnership,  
Springfield, Missouri.

# COMPASSION LINK

---



## Assemblies of God World Missions

1445 N. Boonville Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65802-1894

Phone: (417) 862-2781  
Email: [info@compassionlink.org](mailto:info@compassionlink.org)  
Web Site: <http://www.compassionlink.org>