**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO START A RESCUE MISSION?**

*A survey of new Rescue Mission leaders was conducted to find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions regarding starting new missions. Below are the questions and corresponding answers.*

1. **HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO START (OR RE-START) A MISSION?**

Well, for us, it meant trying every other option available because quite frankly, Ken was never going to work at a RESCUE mission again! God kept closing doors in unusual ways. No one wanted us?! How can this be??!! We were too young. Not enough education. Not enough money backing us with our small church. It was a lot of the same excuses that people used when the Lord blocked our path to the foreign mission field, so it became obvious… particularly when our house and all its contents sold for a nice profit in only a few days of having it up in a private sale.

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

Eight years ago, I was working in a small publishing company in Public Relations. I was setting up book tours with Nebraska Football celebrities and bookstores. I was beginning to feel like my time had ended there and God had another purpose for me. I was approached by a board member of the then failing Crossroads Center. She had mentioned my name as a possibility for Director in a board meeting. I said I was honored, but not interested. I couldn't sleep that night. I committed it to prayer and scheduled an appointment for my wife and I to tour Crossroads Center. I took me less than 10 minutes to realize that this was God's calling for me. Many people use the analogy of God opening a door. This was no door, this was a drawbridge lowering. This was the first time in my life that God made my direction so absolutely unmistakable. It wasn't the building, the board president, or even the staff that I was drawn to. It was the people. I saw their plight and wanted to help. There is no other work quite like Rescue! In college, the day I changed my major from pre-med. to religious studies, I told God that I was changing my major for Him, but he better not make me a pastor. My God knew exactly what to do with me. I am blessed that He knows me better than I know myself.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

In the first city we went to, I was asked by some Pastors to please pray about coming to their city to start a Rescue Mission. First, I consulted my wife. We prayed and even visited the city just to drive around the city and pray. Then my wife and I visited the Pastors who initially asked us to pray, and also visited with other social workers in the city and with the Chief of Police. (We wanted to verify the actual need.) We also visited with and prayed with many older, more mature, more experienced Christians for counsel. God assured us it was His calling. In response to prayers, God would raise up a local "Steering Committee" to give us guidance. In the second city we went to, we were asked by a "little old lady" to take over a small shelter she had been operating. She was old and wanted to rest. It was only 40 miles away from the

"first city." I consulted my Board of Directors in the "first city" and they encouraged us to accept the invitation. We prayed that God would raise up a local "Steering Committee" to give us guidance. They instructed us to expand the small shelter to a full-service Rescue Mission. In the third town we went to, I was asked by some local residents to help them start a Rescue Mission. For 18 months I helped "from afar" as a Board member and advisor. During this time, we (the Board) began to pray that God would raise up an Executive Director to replace the "founder" who was in failing health. Eventually, my wife and I both received God's leading to actually move to the town and get involved "hands-on." We offered our services to the Board and they accepted. At that time, I resigned from the Board and became an employee.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

We did a lot of praying and a lot of homework. I am convinced that starting a mission takes both. Proverbs 22:15 says, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.” Do your research. Conduct informational interviews with leaders of the community in government, non-profit, and the business sector. Find out what the need is in the community. Visit every social service (Christian and secular) to learn what they do and how they do it. Don’t judge them for serving…just observe and learn. There is no need to burn bridges before you even start. Finally, through every step pray that God reveals His plan for you. Be open to the fact that His plan for you may not include a Rescue Mission…that is why it is so important to do your homework while praying.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

In my case, I woke up one morning with a burning desire to donate some time at a homeless shelter. After a couple of calls, I found our local sheriff's dept and he chuckled and said, "When you get one started, let us know". I pondered this question for a week and firmly decided that this was how I wanted to served the Lord and get purpose in my Life. I would leave this life in a blaze for God by getting one started in a county that did not have one. Many times in the next three and a half years I prayed and questioned God if this was His will and every time He would produce a miracle or let me know that, Yes, this was His will, through prayer and physical manifestations. Some days I would wake up and ask Him what He wanted me to do and ALWAYS, He would lead me to something that would progress my knowledge or toward the opening of a shelter.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS IN GETTING A MISSION STARTED?**

FAITH… seems obvious, but there are times of extreme discouragement and “what-the-heck-are-we-doing-here moments.” The enemy will try and stop you at every turn and when you aren’t secure in your calling, you will shift with the Saskatchewan winds. Our entire story is how God did one thing after another. Over and over, and over again, He proved that He was the one starting Regina RESCUE Mission. We were just along for the ride.

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

RELATIONSHIPS! The relationships that need to be made are not just with the Christian community, but the city, county, law enforcement, businesses, civic groups, and individuals. Rescue is the most unique platform I've ever experienced. I believe the mission has a responsibility to model, witness, and teach the community about Christ. God has planted Christians in strategic places. The Rescue Ministry is a great avenue to take advantage of these strategically placed people. Their prayer support, influence, and financial support can and should significantly further the mission's work. Be careful not to ignore who God puts in your path! Some of the mission's biggest advocates may be someone of influence and wealth that is not a Christian, but someone that is looking for a cause or loves helping struggling people. I have met plenty of wealthy people who are not living a Christian life, yet generously support this mission knowing that we are preaching the gospel. In my experience, very few people have withdrawn support because we boldly admit that we are faith-based and Christ-centered. Be a part of the community. Join the chamber of commerce, go to city council meetings, have lunch with the chief of police, join a civic group like Kiwanis, and speak at every venue you can. We have an outstanding relationship with our Mayor, chief of police, and chamber of commerce, but it didn't come without a lot of effort. When we moved across town, the chief of police and the mayor were two of our biggest supporters.

PRAYER! Gather a group of ten people to pray for the efforts to start or plant a mission. The enemy hates to see hurting and hopeless souls be won to Christ. Prayer support is vital to getting a mission started.

WISE COUNSEL! Surround yourself with wise counsel, especially in the areas where you are weak. I came into rescue ministry with no knowledge of non-profit law and no idea how to fundraise. Starting out, everyone makes mistakes. I made a few very large mistakes. They were great learning experiences. It was a blessing to have people around me that been where I was and gave me encouragement, taught me how to repair the mistakes I made, and gave me wisdom for the future. The majority of my guidance came through the family of rescue and the AGRM headquarters.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

Without reservation, God's call is the most critical element. In all three places, knowing with certainty that God was the One behind the idea, we knew we couldn't fail. We knew He would provide all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. From a human standpoint, the ability to persevere is critical. Many people end up being deceived and used by Satan to discourage the work. But of course, God raises up encouragers to help you persevere.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

God’s call, Personal Drive, Insatiable curiosity, Location, Community awareness, Spirit of humility, and collaboration. I recommend you think long term. The trap is to only think about what it takes to open. Honestly, opening a mission will not mean much if you don’t have the funds to pay the worker his wages, and the electrical company to keep the lights on. Invest a great deal of energy researching what it will take to operate your future organization. I also recommend asking the question, “Am I qualified?” In today’s world, it takes more than a vision and a bible to run a Rescue Mission. Get trained. Here are some great places to start:

* Attend Regional and National AGRM conferences
* Volunteer for several months at another well established Rescue Mission. I recommend a “Certified” Rescue Mission.
* Visit 15-20 Rescue Missions before opening. Continue visiting other Rescue Missions and Social Service Agencies once you open.
* Seek training in fund raising. I recommend the Indiana Fund Raising School’s Principles and Techniques course. Two of my staff members have attended this course. It dramatically impacted our development program. The Christian Stewardship Association has a similar course. These courses seem expensive but will help you tremendously.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

The founder must be 100% committed to the Lord and His will. Have a good foundation with one of more local churches. The founder must have a "whatever it takes" attitude because I had absolutely no idea how much work it was going to take. You must have your 501-c-3 or nonprofit status right away or file. You must have some income stream in the beginning even if it is from your own earnings, if it is, even better so that you are investing in the Kingdom and the ministry. Join the AGRM and get yourself to a convention to network and learn. Get a mentor from the AGRM. Visit or work in a large mission. Develop a board of directors that are as unselfish as possible (no ulterior motives). Set up your office. The building is not important today but the computer, heavy duty printer, copier, fax and yes a cash register, (I could not have tracked our income very well without a register) are important. Speak at every event possible. Get the press involved early. Get experienced upper level AGRM people to your mission in its early stages. You don't need the money as much as you think or as much as you need weathered mission people’s advice. Malcolm Lee, Steve Burger, Barbara Clemenson and Bruce Gimbel, all had a great impact on us by coming here and spotting improvements. (I still use them, it doesn't end. Blessed is he who has many counselors)

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **WHAT ARE THE PERSONAL SACRIFICES INVOLVED IN STARTING A NEW MINISTRY?**

Everything. You sacrifice everything. Not to scare you away, but you better be ready to give every single thing you have to God. Time. Money. Health. Don’t do it if you have a rocky marriage. Don’t do it if you think your children will turn wayward.Don’t do it ifyou’re afraid of losing anything at all. It’s not a Cruise Ship, people, it’s a Battle Ship! God desires that we give everything we have to Him. People who aren’t called do not understand that sacrifice, and if you don’t understand it, you will be unwilling to make it. It’s about giving all that you have to Jesus. Not because you have to, but because you want to pay Him back. You want to give Him the honor and debt that is due. Although we can never repay it, we spend our lives for Him because it is He who gives us life. “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.” (2 Cor.12:15a)

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

There have been times that required long work weeks. My family understood there would be times of sacrifice, but it is difficult to see them suffer to further the ministry. I try to be sensitive to their needs and remain balanced, but there are times that it does get tricky to effectively manage everything. A good board can help take some of the load. My board has been a tremendous blessing and wonderful encouragement. The other sacrifice that I did not anticipate was my identity. Any time that I am out in public I am the Director of the Crossroads Center. I get questions everywhere about volunteering, donations, statistics, and anything else they can think of. I value these moments, but it does get tiring. I relate it to wearing a cast. Everyone asks you how it happened and you have to relate the story every time you’re asked.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

We had to leave our "comfort zone," -- our established home, our dependable income, our long-term friendships and relationships, etc. There were other "sacrifices," but none that dampened the knowledge that we were walking in an intimate, utterly-dependent relationship with God. And along the way, God blessed us abundantly in many ways. The Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want. We have never lacked for anything. In fact, He has blessed us above and beyond anything we could have ever dreamed or imagined.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

Time. Money. When we started Hope Gospel Mission it was just the three of us: Me, Myself, and I. To undertake this endeavor you must have your priorities in order. Your God, Family, and Church must come first. The work of the ministry is FOURTH on your priority list. Get these out of order and your life will fall apart. Also your family must be 100% committed to the ministry, remember they will be sacrificing as well.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

You reap what you sow. I personally knew I must give up everything and I did. But being consumed by this mission was painful pleasure. I did very little without thinking of the mission or the Lord. When my focus fell off a little, so did I and the mission. I irritated some people because that is all I talked about (another sign that you are called to it) My first mentor, Gary from Lighthouse, said "don't get personal mixed up with the mission.” It sounds simple but to this day I think about that phrase and if anything looks like selfishness, don't do it. Looking back at the blessings, the sacrifices look real small.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **HOW DID YOU SELECT THE CITY IN WHICH YOU STARTED YOUR MISSION?**

The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions had asked us to do a needs assessment in another large Canadian city and upon investigation, we knew we could not afford to live there and start a work. Plus, we would have been duplicating service with another well-established Christian mission. We had driven through Regina many times on the TransCanada Highway on the way to visit Ken’s parents. We wondered if this small city of 200,000 could possibly be in need of a mission, so we came and did a needs assessment. The word from other agencies and Christians we met was, “Come! We need a long term Christian recovery program!”

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

I attended college in Hastings, Nebraska. I was minding my own business when the call came. God chose to plant me in the city eight years before I took over the earthly reigns of the Crossroads Center.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

We were invited to each of the cities (towns).

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

I live there. Western Wisconsin has both the need for and the resources to support a Rescue Mission.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

For me, this was easy. I started where I am. I learned that even if you do not see "homeless people", that does not mean there is not a need. The Lord showed me that every county and city needs people of God to reach out and help them in the name of Jesus.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

**5. HOW DO YOU GET THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT YOUR MINISTRY WHILE IT IS STILL “A VISION?”**

Actually, we weren’t sure we could do that! We figured having any building was better than none, since not all are visionaries like Ken! So, we prayed for a building to begin the work by January 1, 2000, and God gave us a great Christmas present: a “crack shack” complete with the live-in clients! Ken put up a poster that announced the new management of the building. Some of the occupants asked him, “What’s a RESCUE mission?” Ken said, “No booze, no women, and you have to go to Bible study!” And so, with this castle in hand, we approached churches and Christians in Regina and we all got busy with work bee after work bee, cleaning, painting, removing needles and bug infested mattresses, serving soup, and, of course, starting Bible studies. People were excited, word spread quickly, and churches began coming to us to offer help.

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

RESEARCH. Gather as much data as possible showing the median income of the area, number of people in poverty, number of kids on free or reduced lunch programs, number of HUD section 8 housing vouchers in the area, and anything else that will show not just homelessness, but how close some people are to homelessness.

ECONOMIC IMPACT. One of the greatest arguments that I have discovered is using the value of the ministry and how it translates to economics for the city and county. It costs the Crossroads Center $14.20 a day to shelter, feed, provide basic needs, purchase prescription medication, and case manage a homeless individual in the long-term program. It would cost the city or county $2,000 if this person ended up in Emergency Protective Custody, just for the intake. The hospital would lose $700 in the first hour if this person was admitted to the emergency room. Not to mention the tax dollars if this person is receiving food stamps or housing assistance and remains unemployed. What about the cost if this person remains

homeless and has to turn to crime to survive?

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

We prayed that God would raise up supporters and for people to "adopt" the vision. I took advantage of every opportunity to speak to anyone who would stand still long enough to listen to me. I joined the Chamber of Commerce and talked to businessmen. I contacted churches and civic groups and talked to them. I also wrote numerous articles for the local newspapers. (There were no television stations in any of the cities/towns.)

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

First, you must have a clear vision. No one will follow you if your vision is fuzzy. Next, you need to “press the flesh.” Meet with the community’s leaders from all areas: business, churches, government, other social service agencies, etc. Share your vision and ask people to join you.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

This never happened for me. While it was a vision my community would not support it. Many people liked the idea but they were skeptical to back something they could not see. In God's timing, when I was ready, I preached to a woman about investing in the Kingdom of God and she handed us our first $20,000. We had a miracle after that from a small newspaper classified ad and a realtor helped us get a donation of an uninsurable piece of property. This had God's hands all over it. I had always heard that if God called it, God will supply for it. In my case, it was true!

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

**6. HOW DO YOU INITIALLY MAKE POTENTIAL DONORS AWARE OF YOUR FINANCIAL NEEDS?**

Blitz them with everything you've got! I try to use every avenue possible to reach as many people as possible. We do monthly press releases to keep the Crossroads Center out in front of people. We do a bi-monthly needs list in the newspaper. I encourage all staff to join a service club (the mission usually pays for the membership). We attend local meetings and play our part in consortiums and continuums of care (taking a leadership role if available). I offer my services to fill the pulpit if pastors need a week off. We try to be creative and involved in the community. The staff is a great resource to carry the message of the need. Our staff knows what we would do with additional funding or what our current financial challenge is. Very rarely do I have a conversation in the grocery store that doesn't involve the mission (one benefit of a small town). With limited resources, my suggestions would be to sit in on city council meetings to get to know the council, but also see who else is attending. Go to lunch once a week at busy restaurants or coffee shops and get to know people. Call churches and ask to speak to adult bible study classes or circle groups. Ask the chamber of commerce to do a free advertisement in the newsletter. Be creative with resources. You have to spend money to make money. Find a couple of donors to fund a donor acquisition mailing. Make sure whatever you send out is researched and tested for your market. For example, in Hastings, Nebraska there is not a street homeless population, so putting a picture of a man in his fifties panhandling on the streets will not appeal. This community is very conservative, so flashy mailings that look expensive are viewed as poor stewardship. You need to know your market.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

Through direct mail, newspaper articles, and speaking engagements.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

This seems obvious, but share it with them! Communicate using public relations methods, foundations, and those you know. Remember: Ye have not because ye ask not!

*Gary Steward – Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

Talk, talk and talk. I wish I could be more specific but I can't. Everywhere I went, I spoke about the mission and the needs. I spoke about the budget, how much it was costing us to run, where we needed to go and how much it was going to cost. The amount donated was very much up to the donor and what God put on their heart. Often, the donor was moved but wanted to give time or material first and we were not always ready for that.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **HOW DO YOU BUILD YOUR DONOR BASE?**

When I took over the mission we had 48 active donors. The United Way was 40% of our funding and the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program added another 40%. I couldn't find a church in our community with a smaller budget than ours. The Crossroads Center needed money and needed it fast. I looked for ways to connect the community with the work the mission was doing. We needed to get the attention of the community. We advertised an open house and placed our Office Administrator in a bed loft and told him he couldn't come down for four days or until we had commitments from 400 people to give at least $10 a month or $120 a year. In the bed next to him, we asked community leaders, business men, and friends to spend 60 minutes in bed to show their support of the mission. After the weekend was over we had almost 200 new donors, a great TV story told from an anchor who spent an hour in bed, and 60 new friends of the mission who had also spent an hour in the bed. In my third year as executive director, we managed to build our database to 300 names with a 70% retention rate. With the help of Strategic Consulting, I managed to convince the Board of Directors to spend $5,000 on a holiday appeal. We placed inserts in the local newspaper and cable bills. In two months we tripled our database to over 900 names. Now that I am a semi-seasoned director, we have a development officer and a planning session to layout the fundraising strategy for the year. The plan incorporates newsletters, direct mail appeals, events, advertising, celebrations or anniversaries which total 7.5% of the total operating budget. Our goal is to retain donors and find new donors. Our geographic giving area continues to increase as the good work of the mission becomes known and our services offered increase.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

At speaking engagements, I had a "sign-up list" for those interested in being on our mailing list. For the new-donor-acquisition mailing, we obtained a list of households from Experian. From a local newspaper, I obtained a list of all other local newspapers and their circulation numbers, and then ordered newspapers inserts from Strategic Consulting. Whenever I could, I obtained Church Directories and entered them into the database.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

Strategic Consulting has a small envelop that was inserted into our local newspaper to get us started. Most start up missions do not have the money or Faith to blanket a whole area with a direct mail piece. We had successfully marketed our mission for a couple of years with a store and newsletter. When the donors found our giving envelop for feeding the hungry, the donor list began. If it had not been for Bob Slaughter’s free program, Right Trak, this would have been very difficult. You must have software for tracking and receipts. After doing this for 3 years, three weeks every Thanksgiving, we built our donor base to 1400 in a county of 120,000. I'm sure it would have been much higher in a city. Once on a mailing list, an appeal is sent every month and last year we grossed over $40,000 in this area alone. Because of this fast pace of donor growth, we are now one of the largest non profits in our county and quickly bypassed the local United Way offerings, which is a totally new subject.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **HOW IMPORTANT WERE VOLUNTEERS TO YOUR INITIAL EFFORTS?**

**HOW DID YOU INITIALY ATTRACT VOLUNTEERS?**

**HOW WERE VOLUNTEERS USED EARLY IN YOUR MINISTRY?**

Eventually we desired to start more ministries and partnered with the local Christian college. We set up two groups, “Compassion Teams,” who did door to door and downtown outreach, and “Prison Ministry Team.” We then partnered with another college, and set up a team for a Friday night Coffee House. We had an Intern from Seminary who, with his wife, moved his inner city Care Group to the Mission on Saturday nights. This gave us a bit of a break, and allowed us to run programs without much supervision. Our goal was to have volunteers whom we could just turn over the keys and say, “You’re in charge.” I think the Lord handpicked the most quality Bible college students and the RESCUE bug bit them. They graduated from RESCUE College and are still with us today. We have a very high staff retention rate and I know it is because God has actually CALLED these young people. I don’t care what your position; you are a missionary if you work at Regina RESCUE Mission! A few local pastors and Godly men also joined forces with us to lead and teach various groups, classes and studies. They are still with us today and very loved by our LifeChange residents.

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

Honestly, we have done a poor job attracting volunteers in the past. I didn't realize that donors

become your biggest advocates. Today, our Operations Manager also serves as the volunteer

coordinator. One day this will be a paid position. Volunteerism is the best way to connect people with the mission. Even if it is for just one meal, a group or family will be able to serve and see real people being helped. They will go out into the community and tell the story about the day they helped in the mission.

Broadcast the needs in any venue possible. While speaking share the needs, no matter how

specific they seem. You may find that there is a graphic artist willing to donate their creative

services or an attorney willing to help with filling the 501(c)3 papers. I remembered talking to a

leadership class at the Chamber of Commerce a few years back and asked them to consider

their skills and how they could help. A physical therapist came forward. Through this connection,

we were able to provide rehabilitation services to a man with a cane at no charge.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

Volunteers are always important, although not always dependable. We prayed for volunteers

and God brought them in. Many (most) of the volunteers were simply people God was calling to

Himself (they needed saved!). They were involved in the kitchen, remodeling, maintenance,

groundskeeping, wherever... Sometimes we actually needed the volunteers. Other times we

involved them wherever could "make work" for them.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

Volunteers are a critical resource at any stage of a mission’s life cycle. The temptation with volunteers is to take anyone with a pulse. However, here are the facts: volunteers are expensive. They take screening, training, managing, and recognition. You can’t afford to let a volunteer with a negative attitude on your team. Instead, think of volunteers in two ways: first, as donors of their time and second, as unpaid staff. You should treat them as well as you would treat a donor and introduce them to volunteer opportunities in much the same way. I personally believe the volunteers deserve honorable work roles…not just the work you don’t want to do. My style is to interview the volunteer and learn about their gifts and interests and then try to match it to our needs. I try not to give toilet duty to a person who hates cleaning…they tend to be better volunteers that way. You would never let staff hang around not doing much or doing projects that do not add value to your ministry. Why would you ask a volunteer to do that? Honor their time as you would an employee’s and give them honorable work and you will be off to a great start.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

This is an area I struggled with greatly. The mission automatically attracts people. It's a God thing. Volunteers were very important because we could not pay anyone but, everyone has an agenda and it took me years to figure out that not everyone has pure motives to serve the Lord and does not need or want a thank you, a plaque, a trade or warm fuzzies for their work. Clients and myself did most of the work in the beginning. Some volunteers felt "used". I treated others how I wanted to be treated. When I volunteered, I did not want a whole bunch of people to know about it, get pats on the back or be called up on stage to get an award. I want to do my service unto the Lord quietly and go home. Working with clients can be very difficult and volunteers often underestimated it as I did. They went home very disappointed. Now that I am learning people better, the volunteers are getting better. I warn them about their expectations, try to train them about jobs (no training is often a disaster) have meetings, talk a lot and try to figure in the amount of time I must spend with volunteers about certain functions being accomplished. Give a thank you, pictures and compliments whenever possible. Taking Al Newell's classes on volunteers was also very helpful. Volunteers are now used for everything from running our banquet, doing large yard sales, helping with the clients, folding newsletters and sorting at the store. This is an area that I still have not implemented most of what Al taught me. BUT, I still find the key is direct staff involvement, which, if you are a startup, you want to leave out!

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*

1. **WHEN DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE “TURNED THE CORNER” AND THAT YOUR MISSION IS GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL?**

We always gauged success on the 5-year mark. As in business, most businesses that stick around 5 years will be successful. Still, we know of several missions that have not made it and how discouraging for the founders it must be. However, I look at the churches the apostle Paul founded and where are they today? God will rise up a ministry in HIS time and for HIS purposes.

*Michelle Porter – Regina Rescue Mission, Regina, SK*

When I was hired as Executive Director, there hadn't been a director for eight months. The previous director was fired, and the "shelter" had $6,000 in the bank. The Board of Directors told me that they didn't fault me if we had to close the doors. I told them that I didn't believe God called me here to fail. Eight years later there is still plenty to accomplish. Though we have moved into a new building and have begun to build an endowment, we have not arrived at where we need to be. I hope that we never feel like we have reached our destination, because there is always more we can do.

In my opinion, we "turned the corner" when we moved into our new building in June of 2005. We

finally have the staff, the facility, and the resources to provide for the ministry. The staff has the

technology to produce quality materials. The mission looks clean and organized (we used to have pink, brown and green chairs next to each other in the old building). We have appropriate space for living quarters, class rooms, and services. We used to have staff sleep overnight in the mission. During the day, this room served as the health clinic. Now we have security on duty overnight. It took us eight years to get to this point. For five years we sought advices from and toured other missions in order to build a strong life changing long-term program. During program development we continued to pursue a new facility and prepare for a capital campaign. We moved as God moved us. We have been rewarded for our faithfulness (although I had many moments of doubt along the way). I am very thankful for the journey. Having to start with virtually nothing taught me to completely rely on God.

*Paul Spence – Crossroads Center, Hastings, NE*

God has not called us to results. He has called us to faithfulness. When we determined that God was indeed calling us to the work, we knew that God would be faithful in supplying all our needs, and all we needed to do was to persevere in faithfulness. We always figured that whatever success was, it was up to God.

*Tom Beatty – Panhandle Rescue Mission, Gordon, NE*

I don’t ever want to “turn the corner” if this implies complacency. We should never be satisfied with work we are doing, thus we should always be looking to ways of improving our processes and programs. Remember we are working for the Lord. He wants our best. In this world, we will never achieve what we are created for, but we can always continue to reach.

*Gary Steward – Former Executive Director, Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI*

I have never felt this, nor am I sure I should. The needs are dramatic and there is always something more to be done to help people. Although I have recognized many milestones we have accomplished for the Lord, I still see so much to be done. I am a little ashamed of begging other missions for money now that I have been around a while. I can see that no matter how big you get, it doesn't matter because you can see the needs that are not being met around you at your mission. I hope that we are not perceived as the whiners anymore at the convention and that I can help the next expansion "whiner" through this phase. It was better for us to learn how to stand on our own and build strong legs.

*DuWayne Sipper – The Path of Citrus County, Inverness, FL*