

GIVING
DEBTORS TO EVERY PERSON
THAT
Transforms

HOWARD GULBERTSON



Nazarene Publishing House
Kansas City, Missouri

Copyright 2013 by
Nazarene Publishing House

ISBN 978-0-8341-2960-3

Printed in the
United States of America

Cover design: Kevin Williamson
Interior design: Sharon Page

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*® (NIV®). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by *Biblica, Inc.*® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptures marked CEV are from the *Contemporary English Version*. Copyright © by American Bible Society, 1991, 1992. Used by permission.

Scriptures marked Phillips are from *The New Testament in Modern English*, copyright © 1958, 1959, 1960 by J. B. Phillips and 1947, 1952, 1955, 1957 The Macmillan Company, New York. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked NLT are from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (NLT) copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction: Let's Talk About Money</i>	7
1. Because You Give	13
2. WEF: Mission Critical Funding	24
3. Three Key Players: WMB, Missionary Care/ LINKS, and Alabaster	37
4. Work & Witness: It's Not About the Money	49
5. A Potpourri of Giving Opportunities	60
6. How the Money Gets Raised and Disbursed	74
<i>Call to Action: Where Is Your Treasure?</i>	89
<i>Pronunciation Guide</i>	95

INTRODUCTION

Let's Talk About Money

Let's be clear. This book is going to be about giving money for world evangelism. At the same time, it needs to be clear that, by itself, money will not complete the Great Commission. Money does not bring people into the Kingdom. To complete Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20 requires that sanctified, missional people with the Holy Spirit working through them get involved.

Even so, we cannot get around the fact that deploying missionaries and guiding young national churches to full partnership takes some money. Barbara and I knew that, because we were Nazarene missionaries for fifteen years. Faithful giving to missions supported us when we were in Italy and Haiti, making it possible for us to mentor rising leaders and help them in evangelism and discipleship ministries. Missions money made it possible to feed hungry children, provide medical care for sick people, and to preach the Good News to the poor (Luke 7:22).

Therefore, while money alone will not get the job done, it must be said that the job cannot be done without money. That is the reason giving for world evangelism is one core value—or objective—of Nazarene Missions International (NMI); the other core objectives being praying, discipling future mission leaders, and providing education.

To be sure, people sometimes say that money is a touchy thing to talk about. Maybe it is, but Jesus talked a lot about money. He mentioned it more than once in the Sermon on the Mount. He had a conversation with Zacchaeus about money. As Jesus was sending out the Twelve, he gave them instructions regarding money. He talked about it in His parables. He compared a widow's temple offering to what the well-to-do were giving. He discussed money with a rich young ruler. Jesus even answered a question about paying taxes. So, if we want to faithfully pass our Lord's teachings on to others, aren't we obliged to talk about money?

Being asked to give of our financial resources should not surprise us. Genesis 1:27 declares that we are made in God's image. I take that to mean that we should reflect Him. The Bible uses "give" in relation to God at least 160 times. If we truly reflect Him, won't we be known as generous givers? Indeed,

2 Corinthians 9:7 (CEV) declares: "God loves people who love to give." By the way, Paul wrote those words as he concluded an appeal to Corinthian Christians to give to a compassionate ministry offering.

The "perfect love" that is so central to God's will for His people motivates giving to meet spiritual, emotional, and physical needs and to seek justice and to care for the marginalized. We are a missional people, and because of scripture's call to proclaim the Good News to the whole world, we freely donate for world evangelism. We could, of course, dream up some scenarios in which Gospel proclamation could be done without any human involvement. That was essentially what some British pastors said to William Carey in the late 1700s. As they tried to discourage Carey from becoming a missionary, they told him, "When God chooses to save the heathen, He will do so without your help or ours."

Those pastors were wrong. God chose to use human instruments to make Christlike disciples in the nations, which is another way of saying "go and save the heathen." Calling on believers to support those doing missionary work follows a pattern set by the apostle Paul. As he wrote to believers in Rome, Paul said, "When I go to Spain, I hope to visit you . . . and

to have you assist me on my journey there" (Romans 15:24).

Paul knew how to make tents, and he used that trade to support some of his missionary work (Acts 18:3, 1 Corinthians 9:6, 12). Because of that, missionaries today who earn their living from secular employment are called "tentmakers." Still, in whatever measure Paul supplied his monetary needs through tentmaking, his words "to have you assist me on my journey" were clearly a request for financial support. That request makes scholars say that the Book of Romans can be considered a first-century missionary fund-raising letter.

"Resources follow vision," veteran missionary Bill Porter said one day as a guest speaker in a Southern Nazarene University missions class. His words echoed what Christian Rath, who helped direct Assembly of God earthquake relief in Haiti, wrote to me recently: "Money should chase ministry; ministry should *never* chase money." The point that Bill and Christian both make is that money should not be what drives global outreach decisions. What should determine our priorities and govern our decision-making is the vision of a "great multitude. . . from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing

before the throne and before the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9).

We must never give the impression that collecting money *is* the mission. It is just a resource for accomplishing the mission.

Bill Porter's years of missionary service validate his statement about resources following vision. He helped lead Puerto Rican Nazarene churches to Phase 3 (or regular) district status. Among other accomplishments, Bill's leadership helped that district achieve financial self-sufficiency. Then, after serving in New Zealand, Bill and Juanita went to Venezuela to pioneer Nazarene work in that South American country. Not long before the Porters retired, I spent three weeks in Venezuela and saw firsthand several of the churches planted in the first decade of Nazarene presence. The work the Porters began has continued with Nazarene churches in Venezuela growing by fifteen percent in 2010 and 2011.

Some financial resources aiding the Porters' work came from a seventy-fifth anniversary denomination-wide offering. World Mission Broadcast funds paid for radio broadcasts that provided initial contacts. The World Evangelism Fund supported the Porters and other missionaries, and Work & Witness teams built numerous church buildings and a campground

in Venezuela. However, even with resources flowing from several sources, it was not money that spawned flourishing holiness evangelism in Venezuela. Vision came first. Resources simply followed that vision.

If Bill Porter were here today, he would insist that using a strategy in which "resources follow vision" is valid for more than just one South American country; it is the way missional people called Nazarenes should function around the world.

one

BECAUSE YOU GIVE

After preaching one Sunday morning in a mountain church in central Haiti, I enjoyed a meal at the parsonage and then pointed my red, four-wheel-drive vehicle in the direction of Port-au-Prince. The first leg of the trip was down a dirt trail masquerading as a road, so my mind was completely occupied with driving.

Finally, the road widened and leveled out in a valley floor. I disengaged the four-wheel drive, picked up a little speed, and relaxed a bit. My thoughts began to wander, and I found myself thinking about Christ's command to "go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15, NLT). I knew there were many places around the world where the Gospel had not yet been preached. I also knew that missionaries and national evangelists were working to reach those places, but on that day

progress seemed excruciatingly slow. Two thousand years had gone by and 1.6 billion people still knew little or nothing about Jesus of Nazareth.

I was thinking about that when I noticed someone ahead of me coming down the mountainside. The path that person was on crossed the road and went up the other side of the valley. As I neared that crossing point, I realized it was Pastor Merzilus, so I stopped. He looked up, and through the glare of the sun and dust I had stirred up, he saw who it was. Breaking into a smile, he hurried over to my vehicle.

“What are you doing here?” I asked after we said hello. I was curious, because I thought he was supposed to be planting a church in a neighboring valley rather than in the one where we were.

“Well,” he said, pointing up the trail he was on, “there is a village up there that has never had a church. We have just started weekly services there, and I’m going up to preach for them tonight.”

That he was serving in such a way did not surprise me. Pastor Merzilus was a tireless evangelist and pastor. His leadership had brought excitement and spiritual life back to some declining congregations. Also, along the way, he had found time to plant three or four new churches.

I had met Pastor Merzilus in a pastoral training program through which he completed ordination requirements. Up to that point he had been largely self-taught. After his conversion, Merzilus had felt a call to preach, and although he had little formal education, he became a pastor. By the time the Haiti Nazarene Bible College started its extension training program, Pastor Merzilus had years of pastoral experience. Nevertheless, he applied to be in the first group of extension students. He was accepted, and for the next four years he spent two weekends a month in classes that took him through the ministerial course of study. On more than one occasion I heard him scold younger pastors who seemed less than serious about their course work.

When we met that Sunday afternoon, Pastor Merzilus was carrying a battered leather satchel that I had seen him carrying before, so I knew it held his Bible and hymnal. I guessed it also contained some first-aid supplies. While Pastor Merzilus was not a doctor or nurse, I knew he was a principal health-care provider in that mountain valley. Over time he had picked up some first-aid skills; he even knew a few things about helping women during childbirth. That Sunday afternoon, Pastor Merzilus was on his

way up a mountain trail to save some souls and to heal some hurting bodies.

There by the side of the road we chatted about the church he and his wife were planting in the other valley and about the building his congregation had just constructed. We talked about the elementary school he had started and his hope for it to have a hot-lunch program. He asked about the possibility of Mission Specials money, which is money collected through designated world evangelism giving opportunities, to add to what his church members had already collected to buy materials to make pews for their rustic building.

After talking for a while, we said good-bye, and I drove on toward Port-au-Prince. My mind reverted to those earlier thoughts about the progress of getting the Good News "to everyone in the world" (Mark 16:15, CEV). I thought about Pastor Merzilus and his wife. They took the Great Commission seriously. Thus, while planting a church in one valley, they also began holding services at an outreach point in another valley. I began to think that, with enough leaders like them, Jesus' followers would fulfill His command to get to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) and make disciples among all peoples (Matthew 28:19-20).

I thought about the sixty years of Nazarene investment in Haiti. Pastor Merzilus and his wife and their ministry were fruit of those investments. That does not mean they were paid with Nazarene World Mission money. This fact reflects Nazarene global mission strategy that says pastors of churches must be supported locally.

For the pastoral training classes, where I first met him, Pastor Merzilus bought his own books and paid a small portion of the program's expenses. To make the cost affordable for subsistence farmers like him, the program was subsidized by the World Evangelism Fund. Because Nazarenes gave, Pastor Merzilus's ministry was enriched, and he was finally ordained.

Pastor Merzilus had acquired his first-aid skills when volunteering in the clinic on the Nazarene Bible College campus near Port-au-Prince. Some of that clinic's operating costs are borne by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries giving. When Pastor Merzilus' wife began experiencing some blindness, the World Evangelism Fund helped with medical expenses. Alabaster money helped buy the land on which Pastor Merzilus's new congregation built their building. Clearly, Pastor Merzilus's ministry in those mountain villages was enhanced by Nazarene giving for world evangelism.

Because Nazarenes are giving to a vision, villages in Haiti, as well as in nearly 160 other world areas, are hearing the Gospel and passing it on. This does not mean we are almost finished. While some countries, such as Brazil and Mozambique, each report more than 100,000 Nazarenes, others, such as Egypt and Hungary, report less than 100. So there is still a lot of work to do. Pastor Merzilus and his wife give me hope that we will do it.

“We seek . . . the preaching of the gospel to every creature” was the bold announcement of the first Nazarene *Manual*. That was not unrealistic day-dreaming. When three holiness church associations signed a uniting charter in 1908 to form the Church of the Nazarene, the new denomination was present in eight countries: Canada, Cape Verde, Cuba, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. I’m not sure any other denomination has come into existence with work already going on in that many countries. With a global vision and active world evangelism efforts from day one, the DNA of the embryonic Church of the Nazarene clearly included global outreach.

Because a world missions ethos still permeates Nazaredom, many Nazarenes know the number of world areas in which the denomination is at work;

the tally stood at 159 in early 2012. That running tally in our heads testifies to our embrace of founder Phineas F. Bresee's declaration: "We are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure in which we have received it."

"Because You Give" was used as a slogan to promote the 2010 Easter Offering for World Evangelism. That phrase was more than good advertising. Because Nazarenes have cooperated with God's mission by giving generously for world evangelism, they have seen amazing global advance. In 2010, for example, Nazarenes worldwide started 1,900 new churches.

Barbara and I experienced a wonderful "Because You Give" vignette in Ecuador. We arrived there for a sabbatical semester in 2009 just as a Work & Witness team from a Missouri church was finishing its two-week trip. We joined that team for its final evening in Ecuador, and that is when we first encountered Luis, a Quichua Indian pastor.

Ecuador is a fascinating country. It is diverse in the ethnicity of its population, as well as in its climate, geography, and plant and animal life. In addition to people of European and African descent, Ecuador is home to several indigenous tribes. The largest of those are the groups of Quichuas, an An-

dean people descended from the Incas. Quichuan women wear colorful clothing and bowler-style hats. Quichuan mothers carry their babies on their backs.

Pastor Luis's congregation is near Otavalo, a city famous for its craft market. Like many Quichuas, Luis earns his living making and selling handcrafted goods. When Nazarene Work & Witness teams arrive in Ecuador, Pastor Luis will often fill an oversized duffel bag with tablecloths, wall hangings, clothing, and other craft items and make the two-hour bus trip from Otavalo to Quito to meet them. As the evening we spent with the Missouri team began, Pastor Luis arrived with a huge duffel bag and two young children in tow.

After team members finished their meals in the Work & Witness Center, tables were cleared, and Pastor Luis opened his duffel bag and spread out what he had brought. Admiring the colorful things, the people from the States purchased some of them, and then went to a nearby missionary home for their final devotion time.

Barbara and I were left in the eating area with Pastor Luis and his two young children. Our transportation back to our apartment on the campus of the seminary eventually showed up, but for a time, there we were—just the five of us. The pastor and his

two children didn't know English, and at that time, Barbara and I didn't know much Spanish. We certainly did not know any Quichua.

After repacking his duffel bag, Pastor Luis picked up a guitar someone had left in the room. Sitting down by his two children, he began to play. Smiling and nodding at us, he sang a Quichuan song or two. Then, he pulled out his Quichuan Bible and coaxed Barbara into reading John 3:16 aloud. Because Quichua is written phonetically, she was able to stumble through it. The forty-five minutes we spent alone with Pastor Luis and his two children were unforgettable. Christ's love transcended language and culture, and our hearts came together.

Pastor Luis and his Quichuan congregation are fruit of Nazarene missions giving. Because of a vision and the resources that followed it, descendants of the fearsome Incas have come to faith in Jesus and are partners in a global holiness church.

To be sure, the global church that includes Pastor Luis and other Quichuas began as a North American and British denomination with some overseas mission work. By the time the first "foreigners" attended a Nazarene General Assembly, the denomination was forty years old. In 1948, two men—Samuel Bhujabal from India and Alfredo del Rosso from Italy—were

the first of what eventually became a tide of General Assembly participants from around the world. The presence of those two men presaged that the long process of internationalization was going to speed up.

Bill Porter was right in saying, "Resources follow vision." Faithful local church giving for world evangelism has given birth to some strong national churches. Most of the more than 400 Nazarene districts worldwide are led by indigenous district superintendents. The emergence of national leaders has permitted the redeployment of missionaries and resources to new areas. The eight world areas with a Nazarene presence in 1908 have multiplied almost twenty times, and at the same time the missionary force itself has become very international.

That realized vision is reflected even in denominational leadership. Most regional directors are not Westerners. Not long ago we elected our first non-Western general superintendent, Eugenio Duarte from Cape Verde. At the same event, we also elected the first non-U.S. global NMI president, Jennifer Brown from Jamaica.

I have spent part of three summers in Venezuela helping train leaders for Haitian immigrant churches. On one trip, I was part of a Sunday morning conversation that would have sounded strange to any-

one listening. That conversation took place as Gail Zickefoose, Alfredo Mulieri, and I were driving from Caracas to visit a Haitian congregation in Maracay. While Gail and I spoke English, Alfredo did not. Those two Nazarene missionaries, Gail and Alfredo, spoke Spanish, but I did not. Alfredo was Argentine, but his ancestral roots are in Italy, so he could speak some Italian, a language I speak because of our years in Italy as missionaries. Thus, Alfredo and I spoke to each other in Italian while Gail and I conversed in English and he and Gail communicated in Spanish.

Conversation never faltered as we flipped back and forth between three languages. A fourth language was added when we pulled up in front of the Maracay Haitian church and people greeted us in Haitian Creole. Both Gail and I had served in Haiti, so we could understand them, and that morning I preached in Haitian Creole. Our Sunday morning multilingual experience demonstrated the amazing results of resources following a vision. Guided by a vision of making Christlike disciples in the nations, Nazarenes have given generously, and very good fruit is ripening.

two
WEF
Mission Critical Funding

The earliest Nazarene missionaries went out as "faith missionaries," raising their individual support before leaving their homelands and then praying it in while on the field. General Superintendent H. F. Reynolds was the first Nazarene world missions administrator. One day, he heard Roger Winans testify that he had a missionary call to South America. While the General Church had no money to send Winans, Reynolds was wise enough to say, "Brother Winans, we cannot send you to South America, but if God has called you, you need to go or you will backslide." Winans did go, and he successfully planted churches in a previously unreached area of Peru.

The system for supporting Nazarene world evangelism has been an evolving one. At its core now is the World Evangelism Fund (WEF), a fund to which Nazarene churches contribute worldwide, thus sup-

porting a missionary force from different countries. Supplementing the WEF, as it is often called, are numerous designated giving opportunities called Mission Specials. Giving to the WEF and all Mission Specials counts toward a ten percent benchmark for missions that local churches are encouraged to reach.

Through contributions to WEF, every Nazarene church—large and small—is involved in the work of hundreds of global missionaries. These include missionaries who receive full support from the World Evangelism Fund and Mission Corps volunteers who raise their support individually along with tens of thousands of national workers. The Church of the Nazarene is not a specialized mission agency working only in certain areas or doing only specific kinds of ministries. Our vision is holistic ministry everywhere. As a result, Nazarenes have planted churches in the upper floors of Asian skyscrapers as well as along tributaries of the Amazon. I've been in Nazarene churches on the equator, and I've been in a Church of the Nazarene at the edge of the Arctic (Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada). World Evangelism Fund money flowing from every local Nazarene church supports evangelism, church planting, leadership training, education, health care,

economic projects, and child development programs all over the globe.

Each local church's World Evangelism Fund share is 5.5 percent of what that congregation receives in tithes and offerings. Because WEF shares are calculated as percentages, they have been likened to the tithe principle. Like tithing, WEF share calculations fulfill the biblical precept: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded" (Luke 12:48*b*).

Using a unified fund to fuel world evangelism parallels how churches operate locally. I have never been in a church that came up with the pastor's salary through one offering appeal and the monthly electric bill in another and funds for janitorial supplies in still another. It is just not done that way. Instead, churches ask people to give to a unified local fund that cares for all those things. To be sure, congregations may take special offerings for mission projects, such as a new sign or projection equipment or a church van. However, most ongoing local ministry is funded out of a unified budget. That use of a comprehensive funding strategy is exactly the principle behind the World Evangelism Fund.

When what is now the WEF was established, each church's share was a percentage of money it had

spent the previous year. That seemed simple. Then calculations became increasingly complex with exceptions and deductions trying to account for numerous special situations. Eventually pastors and global leaders petitioned denominational leaders to (1) simplify the WEF calculation, and (2) lower the amount being asked. Both requests were honored by moving to 5.5 percent of current income.

The genius about using the World Evangelism Fund as foundational funding is its often unrecognized behind-the-scenes support role. I saw clearly how that works during a trip I made to Bulgaria to visit eleven Mission Corps volunteers who were there with the hope of starting a church-planting movement. By the time I arrived, they had finished a month-long intensive language course and were ready to launch into ministry.

How and where to begin? At that time, Dr. Nancy Hardison, a Point Loma Nazarene University business professor, was on sabbatical in nearby Albania. Hermann Gschwandtner, Eastern European coordinator, invited her to Bulgaria to lead an organizational retreat for the group of volunteers.

I was able to join them for that event. We got up early, took a trolley to Sofia's central train station, and boarded a commuter train to Bankya, a resort

town west of Sofia. The September air was crisp and cool. The leaves were showing off their fall colors and some were beginning to drop. I remember kicking at piles of them as we walked from Bankya's train depot to the guesthouse where we were staying.

That first morning, Nancy divided the volunteers into groups according to individual interests. Then she asked each small group to brainstorm a plan of action for its area. By the end of the two-day retreat, the volunteers had a game plan for relationship-building ministry in five categories:

- English language instruction
- Small business entrepreneur mentorship
- Medical support
- Agriculture
- Humanitarian aid

Nancy asked the volunteers to decide what they thought could be accomplished during their eleven remaining months in Bulgaria. In the last session, she asked increasingly pointed questions:

- What, under the Lord's leadership, would you like to do this year?
- What would you like to get done this first month?
- What will you do on Monday when we are back in Sofia?

Not all the dreams of those first volunteers came to fruition. However, what those volunteers—along with others who followed them—did was opened doors, built relationships, and drew people to Jesus. Almost twenty years later, there are two dozen Nazarene congregations in that country known for the fabled Orient Express train that ran from Paris to Istanbul.

A casual observer might think the money given by friends and family to support enthusiastic Mission Corps volunteers was what started the now-flourishing movement in Bulgaria. That would be incorrect. As important as those funds were, the real key was World Evangelism Fund money.

Long before the volunteers arrived in Bulgaria, missionary Hermann Gschwandtner had been there evaluating what seemed to be an open door. As he prayerfully followed up on contacts, Hermann concluded it was time to enter Bulgaria. He settled on a plan to use a volunteer group of recent college graduates, a plan embraced by World Mission leaders and then by Southern Nazarene University, which provided the bulk of the early volunteers. To demonstrate that Nazarenes were not a spurious cult trying to brainwash people, Hermann envisioned beginning low-key with compassionate ministry activity. To

give the volunteers some official footing, he put together a humanitarian-aid foundation and registered it with the government.

As productive as the volunteers were, what created the vision, shaped the project, and kept things on track was World Evangelism Fund support. The WEF funded Dr. Gschwandtner's ministry. The German churches supporting humanitarian-aid efforts were fruit of the World Evangelism Fund. WEF underwrote the supervisory ministry of the general superintendents and of the Eurasia Regional Office. It subsidized leadership training given by European Nazarene College. It supported the Global Treasury Services pipeline through which donations from family and friends were sent to volunteers. Without the elements provided by the World Evangelism Fund, the Church of the Nazarene might not be in Bulgaria today.

Strategic planning consultants often ask organizational leaders to name the things they consider "mission critical." By that they mean the things that would result in crippling an organization or perhaps result in the organization's demise if they failed. For an online business, for example, electrical power and Internet access are mission critical. For a food pantry ministry, a dependable supply of food is mission criti-

cal. For the International Church of the Nazarene, the World Evangelism Fund is mission critical. Most other Nazarene missions offerings are earmarked for specific things; World Evangelism Fund money is not. That pool of unrestricted money allows denominational leaders to pursue a comprehensive strategy in which they allocate resources based on a plan rather than simply doing ministries that attract donors.

Vic Diffie, longtime Nazarene and automobile dealer in central Oklahoma, and I were talking one day about religion classes at Southern Nazarene University. He urged us to “keep the main thing the main thing.” That phrase wasn’t original with Vic, but it was superb advice. Keeping the main thing the main thing is something the World Evangelism Fund does for the Church of the Nazarene. It keeps strategy from being determined by flavor-of-the-day emphases. The WEF keeps us on track to do all we need to do to make Christlike disciples in the nations.

To be sure, there are still designated missions offerings to which Nazarenes can give. While we’ll look at some of those in this book, Nazarene world outreach could survive without many of them, although their disappearance would hurt. On the other hand, if mission critical WEF giving were to falter, the fallout would be disastrous.

Items funded by designated offerings are enhancements for the fabric woven by the World Evangelism Fund. Take, for example, the marvelously successful JESUS Film ministry. Local Nazarene teams worldwide have shown the JESUS Film to more than 62.5 million people. Millions of those viewers have responded to the invitation given at the end of the film. God's forgiveness has been received. Hope has replaced despair. Destructive habits have been broken. Relationships have been repaired. Thousands of churches have been planted and nurtured.

Someone figured out that for every three U.S. dollars given to JESUS Film Harvest Partners, one person has come to faith in Christ. For a business analyst, that is an impressive ROI (return on investment). Of course, there's more to the story.

If we step back and look at the larger context, we'll see that World Evangelism Fund money is critical to the JESUS Film's effectiveness. Such things as the organizational structure pulling together and supervising the teams showing the film, the cooperating churches from which team members come, the equipping and mentoring of new pastors, and the churches worldwide supporting the effort with prayer—all are fruit of the World Evangelism Fund. So, as impressive as "\$3 per convert" sounds, it is

only possible because of the fabric being woven by the World Evangelism Fund. What is true about the ministry of the JESUS Film's dependence on WEF is true of everything else funded by Approved Mission Specials offerings.

While in middle school I learned to do taxidermy. Today my friends find that strange, but I did learn the craft, and I made some money doing it. I haven't used my taxidermy skills in decades, but I remember that one critical thing is the mount or form over which the skin goes. If the mount is not right, the finished product will never look right. Even worse, without a mount the skin with the fur or feathers will harden into a shriveled mess. For Nazarene global outreach, the World Evangelism Fund is the form, or mount, that provides the shape. From time to time people find things funded by designated offerings more appealing than the WEF, and they are tempted to give *only* to those offerings. Frankly, the World Evangelism Fund is so foundational to everything that without the overall shape it provides all the other things would be lumpy and shriveled messes.

Nazarenes have embraced this cooperative fund concept so well that churches and even entire districts frequently overpay their WEF share. Sharon Thornhill, Philadelphia District NMI president, says, "The

elation that a district experiences when this happens is a great morale booster." To be sure, occasionally someone will talk about the World Evangelism Fund as though it were a crippling tax. That is a sloppy and inaccurate comparison. To begin with, no one intentionally and joyfully overpays their taxes. Furthermore, those WEF overpayments do not simply make up for budget shortfalls created when some congregations fail to pay their complete WEF share. Since 1992, WEF overpayments have been used to open and sustain outreach in new world areas. Amazingly, those overpayments have enabled the Church of the Nazarene to enter sixty new world areas, including nine Creative Access Areas. On that impressive list of sixty new areas are:

- Croatia and Hungary on the Eurasia Region
- East Timor and Vanuatu on the Asia-Pacific Region
- Madagascar and Benin on the Africa Region
- St. Martin and Aruba on the Mesoamerica Region

Passion and Urgency

Not long ago the world was mesmerized by the plight of thirty-three miners trapped underground in Chile. People around the world were glued to television coverage of the rescue efforts. Specialized equipment was brought in, and for two months emotions were on edge until the miners were finally rescued. Recently, Christy Dick, a missions student from Pennsylvania, wrote to her online classmates: "Why is the church not more concerned with those now dying who will be forever lost? Would I stay up late at night to watch their rescue—or salvation—like I did watching the Chilean miners?"

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, General Superintendent J. G. Morrison untiringly exhorted people to give to the World Evangelism Fund. Nazarenes of that era became familiar with his plea, "Can't you do just a little bit more?" Occasionally individuals and local churches today feel they have so many other commitments that they are tempted to forego doing anything for world evangelism. With the World Evangelism Fund being so mission critical, Morrison's passionate plea to stretch, to give a little bit more, needs to be heard again and heard clearly. As NMI leaders have challenged people to understand the reason for supporting world evangelism ef-

forts, they have sometimes said, "There are souls in those goals." An estimated 55,000 unreached people die every day without ever hearing the Good News about Jesus. If we are truly missional, shouldn't we be mobilizing resources to reach those people with the same passion and urgency with which we prayed for thirty-three miners in Chile to be rescued?

Three

THREE KEY PLAYERS

WMB, Missionary Care/LINKS, and Alabaster

A young man listening to a radio in a country closed to evangelistic work hears an Arabic program broadcast by the Church of the Nazarene. He becomes a regular listener and eventually opens his heart to the Lord Jesus.

A lady in South America watches *Mujer Valiosa*, a Spanish-language television program produced by the Church of the Nazarene. That program starts her on a life-transforming journey. Stories like these are heard often by those working in Nazarene radio and television ministries. Indeed, Brian Utter's NMI missions book, *Nothing Stands in Our Way*, was full of such stories. Airtime and recording equipment for these broadcast ministries are paid for by money from an annual Mission Specials offering called World Mission Broadcast

(WMB). The role of radio and television ministries in evangelistic outreach makes that offering a key player in Nazarene global outreach. Indeed, it might even be called a “star player.”

Let’s think for a moment about how star players function on a team. I’m not much of an athlete, but I know that a star athlete can only be a star if teammates do what is expected of them. Occasionally, one player may seem to have single-handedly won a game. Having a winning season, however, requires that the entire team be involved. Isn’t there a parallel to this in Nazarene missions funding? We have some designated Missions Specials offerings that could be called star players. As happens with star athletes, people know the names and accomplishments of these offerings: Alabaster, World Mission Broadcast, Missionary Health Care and LINKS. Those giving opportunities, which all count toward the Ten Percent Giving benchmark, have star player power because WEF money is present, caring for all kinds of things—just like the teammates of a star player on a sports team. Offerings, such as Alabaster and World Missions Broadcast, would not accomplish what they do now in the same way that one basketball player could not be a star if there were not four other players on the court playing alongside him or her.

World Mission Broadcast

The decade immediately following World War II saw significant advances for Nazarene world outreach. For one thing, when Alfredo del Rosso's independent Italian work merged with the Church of the Nazarene, we entered the European continent for the first time. We also began asking churches to promote two new missions offerings: Alabaster and World Mission Broadcast.

At an average cost of \$4 per minute for airtime, World Mission Broadcast is a very economical evangelist. It began with a Spanish radio program broadcast across Latin America with funding from an annual, designated offering. That offering, traditionally received in June, now finances the production and airing of programs broadcast in three dozen languages to more than seventy countries. In many cases, those programs are aired on secular stations. Amazingly, Arabic MTV has carried Nazarene television broadcasts produced in the Middle East! Sometimes, the broadcasting is done by Christian organizations, such as TransWorld Radio and Far Eastern Broadcasting Company (FEBC).

Radio is an excellent way to get the Gospel into restricted or closed countries. It can also prepare the way for planting churches in new areas. Radio was a

key, for instance, to starting Nazarene work in Venezuela. As Bill and Juanita Porter went to Venezuela, they had contact information on 500 Venezuelan listeners who had written to *La Hora Nazarena*, a Nazarene radio program. Many of those 500 people did not turn out to be prospects, but some did. Today scores of churches across Venezuela testify to the door-opening role of radio broadcasts.

In terms of what is needed for Nazarene global radio and television broadcasting, this annual denomination-wide offering (WMB) is the major funding source. In addition, quite a few individuals passionate about radio and television ministries give to World Mission Broadcast needs throughout the year. Ann Baldwin, communication coordinator in the Global NMI office, tells of a long-time Canadian donor who has purchased microphones, recording equipment, software, and computers for Nazarene media centers worldwide. This retired postal employee may be WMB's all-time largest individual donor.

Ann notes, "He says giving equipment to broadcast ministry is his way of passing out tracts. He can't go to remote parts of the world and share Christ. Instead, he gives quality equipment so listeners can hear clearly the Good News."

To carry on his electronic-tract ministry, this retired postman is, in essence, partnering with Nazarenes around the world. He buys equipment, and through the WMB offering other people pay for air-time while WEF contributions finance all-important listener follow-up—something that can be challenging in Creative Access and 10/40 Window countries. (The 10/40 Window refers to a rectangular area from ten degrees to forty degrees north of the equator that stretches from North Africa to South Asia.)

Missionary Care

Missionary Health Care and LINKS are separate giving opportunities with different objectives. If we use the star player analogy for them, we need to think of them as two different players. However, they are here under the same heading because both are about caring for missionaries.

For my two children, "LINKS" evokes memories of a packet of greeting cards they received in Italy. The packet of cards came from children in a Pennsylvania church. I doubt anyone in that church remembers sending those cards, but over the years Matthew and Rachele have remembered receiving them. In their minds those cards meant that people in a LINKS church cared about them.

Some people could tell you that LINKS is an acronym for the phrase "Loving, Interested Nazarenes, Knowing and Sharing." More people, however, simply know that their church is "linked" to specific Nazarene missionaries. LINKS helps local churches put a face on world evangelism. Indeed, the idea of being linked together was the impetus for starting the program. It began in Southern California as a "box work" initiative. The idea was to send packages of clothing and personal items overseas to missionaries. It grew out of a desire to personally connect with missionaries, and it follows somewhat the pattern of parents sending boxes of goodies to college students. While those small packages from home do not pay college tuition, they symbolize a relationship bond and are thus enormously supportive for students.

When LINKS works as it is intended, it begins with a local church and a missionary or missionary family assigned to that church getting acquainted. The missionaries send biographies and photos. Churches begin receiving newsletters from their adopted missionaries and begin following their blogs. They exchange letters, e-mails, and even Skype and phone calls.

Persons in the adoptive churches nurture the relationship by sending birthday, wedding anniver-

sary, Christmas, and other greeting cards to the missionaries. In return, missionaries send to their adoptive churches small personal wants, and the adoptive churches try to meet some of them. The churches send Christmas gifts, often cash. From time to time, arrangements will be made for LINKS missionaries on home assignment to visit their adoptive churches.

Except in the case of retired missionaries, the actual sending of items has almost disappeared. Soaring shipping costs and customs duties make it financially impractical to send packages to many locations. The opportunity to lovingly make something by hand or pick it out, buy it, and send it to a missionary is becoming rare. Most LINKS churches now send money to their adopted missionary so things can be purchased on the field or acquired during a home assignment time.

To be sure, in terms of money needed to support missionaries, LINKS does not raise all that much. However, in no way does that mean LINKS is an insignificant support component. The relationships created and the ensuing emotional support are significant for the missionary on the field as well as for people in the adoptive church.

Not long after we arrived in Italy, we began receiving birthday, Christmas, and anniversary cards

from an individual in one of our LINKS churches. As time went by, we found out that a lady named Wilma Browning was doing more than sending cards. She had unequivocally “adopted” us and was praying for our family every day. Through all our years of service in Italy and Haiti, Wilma Browning was our most faithful prayer partner. It would be difficult to calculate the value of what that LINKS-fostered relationship did for us.

The fraternal twin of LINKS is Missionary Health Care, an emphasis encouraging people to give for missionary health-care needs. Some of those funds are raised in interesting ways. For instance, a few years ago when I stepped down after serving for a decade as Northwest Oklahoma District NMI president, I was presented a Distinguished Service Award (DSA). When I look at that framed certificate, I get “warm fuzzies” thinking about the memories associated with it. Just as importantly, I know that the DSA presentation meant the council had given money toward missionary medical expenses. After my dad passed away, the Southwest Oklahoma District NMI council gave me a Memorial Roll certificate bearing his name. I knew the cost for that certificate also went to meet the medical needs of missionaries.

Funds from Distinguished Service Awards and Memorial Roll certificates join Gifts from the Heart certificates to form a “basket” of giving opportunities. The least known offering in the basket is probably Gifts from the Heart. High traffic areas of Nazarene church buildings sometimes have a rack of two kinds of Gifts from the Heart cards—“In Memory” cards and “In Honor” cards provide ways for individuals to remember or honor someone by making a donation for the health-care costs of missionaries.

Alabaster

The Alabaster Offering is likely our most well-known designated Mission Special. It’s an offering that could be called Nazarene global building fund. Usually received twice a year, Alabaster funds are used on all six regions, including U.S.A./Canada, to annually fund between two hundred and three hundred projects.

Across the years, Alabaster-financed projects have been in the landscapes of my life. The first Nazarene building Barbara and I saw after arriving in Italy as rookie missionaries was the Alabaster-built church/parsonage in Sarzana. Missionary homes in Haiti had been built with Alabaster money. We now live in Oklahoma City and worship in a renovated

World-War-II-era warehouse in an economically distressed neighborhood. Purchased with the help of Alabaster funds, the building now houses Reaching Our City (ROC) compassionate ministry and the ROC Church of the Nazarene. At Alabaster time our pastor reminds us that we are paying it forward—repaying a good deed by doing something for someone else instead of for the person who did the original good deed. Rev. Dick Sowder, Oklahoma District NMI president, says he's heard the same pay-it-forward speech in Dededo, Guam, where a parsonage was built with Alabaster funds.

The Alabaster Offering began because Global NMI council member Elizabeth Vennum agreed to dream up some way to raise money for purchasing property and constructing buildings. While traveling from Kansas City to her Florida home, Elizabeth's thoughts were drawn to the woman who bathed Jesus' feet with perfume from an alabaster container (Luke 7:36-50).

Elizabeth envisioned a global building fund to which people would give money they had planned to spend on something special for themselves. As she promoted the new offering, she challenged women to delay purchasing a new dress or to put off buying