

2005

The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month
by Karen Grubb Gilbert



Resourcing the church for mission activities

The work we do is only our love for Jesus in action. And that action is our wholehearted and free service — the gift to the poorest of the poor — to Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor” (Mother Teresa, *Words to Love By*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1983).

Reading this quote reminds me of those words in the Bible when someone asked Jesus: “When did we see you hungry, and naked, and needing clothes?” He replied: “When you cared for the least of these, you cared for me.”

The people of God are to be about loving God and caring for neighbor. Caring for people comes in many ways. Following are several suggestions for helping individuals, families and whole communities of faith take action and care for people.

Gather a global missions offering. Although this should be a yearlong effort, the fall is a good time to give special emphasis. A speaker to help with this emphasis might be needed. Face2Face, an initiative of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, can provide staff and field personnel who can help connect the people with the work on the field. The Global Missions Offering supports field personnel working around the world with the most neglected peoples of the world. For more information, visit www.thefellowship.info.

Sponsor a food drive near the holidays. Select a recipient organization in your community or use the food in your own ministry. Collect or purchase brown paper bags. Create a shopping list of food items that will fit into the bags and



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attach a copy of the list to each bag. Distribute the bags to church members, asking that they be returned within a given time period filled with the specified food.

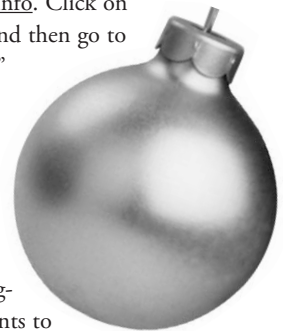
Fill a shoebox for Samaritan’s Purse. Operation Christmas Child provides an opportunity for individuals of all ages, mission groups, Sunday school groups, school classes and families to be involved in a hands-on project. The shoeboxes are filled with gifts and the good news of God’s love and then distributed to children in desperate situations around the world. For details, visit www.samaritanspurse.org and click on Operation Christmas child.

Participate in a Habitat for Humanity building project. Local Habitat affiliates can provide information on volunteering as a church group or individual in building decent, affordable homes for families. Information is available at www.habitat.org.

Provide a simple meal after church to promote a world hunger emphasis. Offer a buffet of soups served in plastic bowls with plastic spoons. Set up the room with tables and chairs. On the tables, place information about hunger needs in your community and around the world. Ask people to donate to the

hunger offering what they would pay for a meal if they had eaten at a restaurant.

Create a catalog for “alternative” gift giving. Include ideas and opportunities for helping persons in your local community and around the world. For suggestions, visit www.thefellowship.info. Click on “global missions,” and then go to “online gift catalog.” There one will find various projects and the dollar amount needed to provide specific items. Use the items in the online catalog as suggestions for ornaments to decorate a tree in a central area in your building or home. Write the specific items on an ornament and hang it on the tree. Invite people to take the ornaments and purchase the item or make the donation as a way of participating in sharing God’s love with those most neglected.



Go on a mission trip. There are many ministry opportunities that can be done from September-December. This could be a weekend project in your community or state or a two-week trip to work in an area of the world where the summers are too hot for mission groups.

“Love cannot remain by itself — it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service” (Mother Teresa). If we want to serve God and neighbor, we cannot be still. Love requires us to do something. Have fun in doing and being the presence of Christ at home, in your community of faith, in your neighborhood and around the world. **BT**

THE RESOURCE PAGE is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month’s page was written by Karen Grubb Gilbert, associate coordinator for volunteer and partner missions with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and former minister of missions at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.