

## **Compassion International:**

### **30 Years of Challenge**

### **Since 1952, Compassion has put**

### **Christ's Love into Action**

**By Mary Erickson**

---

*Communist tanks with thundering guns rolled into Seoul, Korea on June 28, 1950. One of the bloodiest wars in history had begun. When it finally ended in 1953, one and one-half million soldiers and one million civilians were dead, more than two and one-half million people were homeless, and the mountainous peninsula had been devastated.*

When an American evangelist named Everett Swanson came to Korea in 1952, he was prepared to preach to and pray with the troops of the Republic of Korea, but his heart was not prepared for the sights he saw. Tiny tramps shivered in doorways, and begging and thieving ragamuffins tugged on his coattail and his heartstrings.

When Reverend Swanson left Korea to return to the United States, a missionary said to him, "You have seen the tremendous needs and unparalleled opportunities of this land. What do you intend to do about it?"

The Holy Spirit burned that question deeply upon Everett's heart, and he prayed, "Oh, God, show me a way." Soon afterward, he began sharing his experiences. In response, friends and churches gave him money to start a new ministry. With the early gifts, he purchased a Korean house that became the first orphanage - Faith and Love. Loving Korean Christians brought beggar boys in off the streets and cared for them. Compassionate people opened their private homes or pitched tents in their yards to care for the wandering children. Others donated money to buy rice, fuel, and warm clothing.

A short time later, Reverend Swanson developed a special one-to-one sponsorship program. For only a few dollars a month, individuals began providing destitute Korean children with food, clothing, shelter, and medical aid.

The evangelist began devoting all his time and talents to the work and set up an office in the basement of his north side Chicago home. Soon he realized that he must form a nonprofit corporation to handle the funds of the rapidly growing ministry. In 1956, the ESEA (Everett Swanson Evangelistic Association) was registered with the state and federal governments.

1950

Department of the Interior

Division of Reclamation

Washington, D. C.

June 15, 1950

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter of June 10, 1950, regarding the proposed project in the State of California. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works. The project is being considered for inclusion in the National System of Public Works.

Very truly yours,

God continued to bless the ministry. Reverend Swanson often said, "To God be the glory and to our wonderful sponsors and supporters be the credit." The work mushroomed on the field, and so did the responsibilities of the home staff. In 1952, ESEA constructed a one-story office building in Chicago, Illinois. By this time, 10,000 needy children were experiencing and benefits of sponsorship.

As Koreans and Westerners alike joined the ESEA staff, Reverend Swanson and his wife became uneasy about using his personal name for such an expanding ministry. They wanted a new name - a biblical term that would express the concern and motivation of the workers and contributors - and were led to Matthew 15:32, where Jesus said: "I have Compassion on the multitude....I will not send them away hungry." So in 1964 the ministry to orphaned and abandoned Korean children was named Compassion.

The support of Compassion has benefited thousands of Korean children during its 30-year history. Every year Compassion workers hear of formerly sponsored children who have become independent, responsible adults. Let me tell you about two of them.

Miss Im Ja Hee spent 13 years in the Faith and Love Children's Home. Today she is a registered nurse at the Kwangju Presbyterian Hospital in Korea.

Dr. Son Ik Kyung was eight years old when his parents died. After he roamed the streets for a year, begging for food and sleeping in the gutter, authorities took him to a Compassion children's home where he received love, shelter, food, clothing, schooling, and Bible training. Although as an orphan, he was once considered a "non-person," today he is a dedicated Christian and reputable doctor, treating hundreds of patients weekly. What a difference a loving sponsor made in his life!

When Reverend Swanson was stricken with a brain tumor in 1965, the Board of Directors appointed Reverend Henry Harvey, a veteran missionary-statesman, to serve as president. Miriam Swanson carried on the work of her husband as vice-president. Her love for orphaned children on her the title of "Mommie" up and down the Korean peninsula.

Until 1968, the needs were so great in Korea that Compassion concentrated all its efforts there, supporting orphaned, abandoned, and handicapped children in institutions. However, as the Korean government became more stable and war orphans became adults, Compassion began phasing down its work in institutions. Needy children in other lands were begging for help, and the Lord was opening doors for a new Compassion program.

Ed Kimball, Director of Overseas Program, pioneered the new program. As he traveled throughout the islands of Indonesia, he saw hunger, poverty, and disease draining the life from poor families. Husbands has been killed in revolutions or had died from accidents or disease, leaving behind destitute widows with large

1000

1001

1002

1003

1004

1005

1006

1007

1008

1009

1010

1011

1012

1013

1014

1015

1016

1017

1018

1019

1020

1021

1022

1023

1024

1025

1026

1027

1028

1029

1030

1031

1032

1033

1034

1035

1036

1037

1038

1039

1040

1041

1042

1043

1044

1045

1046

1047

1048

1049

1050

1051

1052

1053

1054

1055

1056

1057

1058

1059

1060

1061

1062

1063

1064

1065

1066

1067

1068

1069

1070

1071

1072

1073

1074

1075

1076

1077

1078

1079

1080

1081

1082

1083

1084

1085

1086

1087

1088

1089

1090

1091

1092

1093

1094

1095

1096

1097

1098

1099

1100

1101

1102

1103

1104

1105

1106

1107

1108

1109

1110

1111

1112

1113

1114

1115

1116

1117

1118

1119

1120

1121

1122

1123

1124

1125

1126

1127

1128

1129

1130

1131

1132

1133

1134

1135

1136

1137

1138

1139

1140

1141

1142

1143

1144

1145

1146

1147

1148

1149

1150

1151

1152

1153

1154

1155

1156

1157

1158

1159

1160

1161

1162

1163

1164

1165

1166

1167

1168

1169

1170

1171

1172

1173

1174

1175

1176

1177

1178

1179

1180

1181

1182

1183

1184

1185

1186

1187

1188

1189

1190

1191

1192

1193

1194

1195

1196

1197

1198

1199

1200

families. How can we help these widows and children, he thought, who are starving on a few pennies a day?

Although institutions had become substitute home for thousands of forsaken orphans, Compassion leaders felt parental love and care could never be equaled. If Compassion could give a widow monthly support for two or three of her children, they reasoned, she would not be tempted to abandon any of them.

In 1968, the Family Helper Plan was established in Indonesia to preserve the family unit. The Plan allowed children and their widowed mothers or handicapped fathers to live together the way God had planned. That same year, the Family Helper Plan was introduced in India and later into other impoverished countries.

As Compassion field worker explored other lands - Haiti, Colombia, Thailand - they found another kind of poverty, poverty of opportunity! There, deprived children never had the opportunity to learn how to read or write. Remoteness of villages, lack of money, and scarcity of schools had been insurmountable obstacles for children of subsistence farmers or widows. These children wanted and needed, but could not afford, an education.

Under the direction of Reverend Wally Erickson, Field Director of Central and South America at that time, Compassion designed a school sponsorship program tailor-made to meet the needs of Caribbean and Latin American children. Recognizing that education was their greatest need, Compassion was determined to help them attain it.

To satisfy the myriad and peculiar needs of children whenever they found them was becoming a firm policy of Compassion's leaders. Needs were not the same in every land or in every generation. Compassion was challenged to meet the differing demands and changing circumstances of each culture and each era.

Sponsorship of children through school sponsorship, which started in 1970, operated differently from the orphanages or Family Helper Plan. Sponsorship of children in school projects pays teacher's salaries and buys books, supplies, and school uniforms. It also provides medical care and, in many instances, hot nutritious meals each school day. In recent years, the School Program has become Compassion's greatest avenue of service to deprived children.

As Compassion's ministry expanded throughout the world, enthusiastic people from many countries joined the sponsorship program. By 1964, so many Canadians had become sponsors that it was necessary to organize Compassion of Canada, Ltd. In 1975, TEAR Fund, a Christian relief agency in Great Britain, became affiliated with Compassion International. Just three years later Australian sponsors formed their own Compassion LTD. of Australia.

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

Under God's divine direction, Compassion enjoyed continued growth. By 1976 sponsorship has tripled to more than 30,000 needy children in 18 countries. Such expansion required larger headquarter facilities, and in October, 1979, the Board of Directors purchased seven acres of land in Colorado Springs, Colorado and approved plans for a new building. Wally Erickson, President since 1975, supervised the building's construction. Two years later on October 3, 1981, Compassion's leadership dedicated the new headquarters to the glory of God and the care of needy children.

Now it's 1982. We at Compassion are reminiscing and reviewing the highlights of 30 years. Thirty years of ministering to needy children; 30 years of challenge and change. From one country, one project, and 35 beggar boys in 1952 to 31 countries, 1211 projects, and more than 68,000 children in 1982.

We still praise God for His blessing and remember Reverend Swanson's theme song: "To God be the glory, great things he has done. To God be the glory and to our wonderful sponsors and supporters be the credit.

... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..

... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..

... ..  
... ..  
... ..