

*The*  
*KINGDOM*  
*ASSIGNMENT*

Stories from the participants  
in the Kingdom Project,  
Beverly Hills United Methodist Church  
Beverly Hills, Michigan

## ***The Kingdom Assignment***

### **Background**

Years ago I read a book titled *The Kingdom Assignment*. The book was about a pastor in California that decided to have his congregation live out the parable of talents. After preaching on the parable he gave everyone in church that Sunday \$100 dollars. He instructed his members to expand God's Kingdom with the money. The book describes what was done with the money and how this "Kingdom Assignment" impacted the life of the church and it's members.

A friend and colleague also read the book, and several years ago lead her congregation in a Kingdom Assignment. It was such a meaningful experience for her church, she has been encouraging other pastors to do it in their churches. One member of my friend's church was so moved by the "Kingdom Assignment" she gave \$30,000. This money was to be seed money. The Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church would match what a local church raises for the Kingdom Assignment

This past Fall, one of our members, Helen Sharpe informed me that she had received an inheritance from her brother and sister-in-law's estate. Helen told me she wanted to give some of the money to the church for special projects. Helen asked if I had any ideas. While contemplating Helen's request the Kingdom Assignment came to my mind. After learning about the Kingdom Assignment, Helen was excited that some of hr money would support this project.

There is an irony in this story. Half the money that was handed out came from Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church. The other half of the Kingdom Assignment money came from Helen Sharpe's gift to the church. Helen's brother and sister-in-law were members of Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church.

### ***Our Kingdom Assignment***

On December 6th, I preached on the parable of the Good Steward (Matthew 25:14-30). At the end of my message I asked for 15 volunteers. Fifteen individuals came forward not knowing what I had in store for them. I then handed each person a \$100 dollar bill.

With the \$100 in their hands I then instructed our volunteers to remember that the money they held was God's and not theirs. They were to use this money to expand God's Kingdom. Like the servants in the parable they could try to multiply the money, or they could just give away the \$100. It was up to them to decide what to do and who was going to receive the money.

I gave the volunteers 90 days to do what ever they were going to do. After 90 days, I asked for a short description of what was done. If there was a connection to the recipient of the money, I asked that they include those details in their report.

This booklet contains those reports. From the original \$1,500 and additional \$1967.50 was raised to support a variety of programs. It is fascinating to see how God lead our fellow church members. I hope these stories will inspire us to do more to help a hurting world.

Besides the good that will come out of this experience, the main reason I wanted to participate in the Kingdom Assignment was to help change the way we view wealth. All that we have is God's. If we understand our roles as managers of this wealth, we might be more thoughtful in what we do with our treasure.

### **The Dimitry Family Story**

**Carolyn:** For my Kingdom assignment, I asked friends and family to donate money in my name for my birthday. For those who gave me cash, I donated to the Michigan Humane Shelter. I donated to this charity because I think that many people don't know just how serious animal cruelty is so they aren't helping to stop it. So I donated to shelters to help stop this problem. With the \$100 that was given to me at the start, a total of \$262 was donated.

**Irene:** Dustin and I decided to work together and chose Pro-Literacy Detroit as our cause. I'm on the Board of Directors for Pro-Literacy Detroit because I love to read and want everyone to have that skill. Recent studies have shown that 44-48% of Michigan adults read below the sixth grade reading level, which means they don't read well enough to even qualify for state and federal job training programs. Pro-Literacy Detroit is the largest literacy organization in the State of Michigan, and has trained over 5,000 tutors and assisted over 11,000 over the past 25 years.

In order to leverage the \$200 provided for the Kingdom Assignment, we held a book and toy drive seeking donations from friends, family, school mates, and church members. A sale was held on March 6th, raising \$292.50. Dustin also donated 10% of the money he received as Christmas presents, which Irene & Kevin matched. Those funds were used to advertise and buy supplies for the sale. In total, \$492.50 was donated to Pro-Literacy Detroit as a result of our Kingdom Assignment. Many thanks to all who donated items or money to this great cause.

**Dustin:** I picked Pro-Literacy Detroit because it helps Americans get jobs and gets them so they can read. We held a fundraiser at school to gather up all of the toys and stuff.

### *Corinne Dowell's Story*

When I received my \$100 for my Kingdom Assignment, I was excited, honored and challenged to put the money to good use for God's purpose. I have always felt more fulfilled when I am involved in some manner in a mission project. There are so many worthy causes and needs both domestically and globally.

Through the experiences of family members I have seen that you don't see what true poverty is like until you see it in an underdeveloped country. For that reason, and because a dollar goes so much further in such locations, I chose to donate my money to Kiva, an international micro-finance organization. Through their website, donors choose a loan recipient by country or occupation. I wanted to share this experience with others so I chose four friends to take up the challenge to invest \$25 a piece to a recipient of their choosing. Two of my friends gathered with their children. One chose a shop owner in Africa and the other chose a Filipino woman who needed money to buy material scraps to make rag rugs. Another friend supported a mother in Nicaragua to finish building her house for her and her three children. My fourth friend invested in a group of fifteen individuals that are using their loans to support them in various enterprises.

My daughter loves donating through Kiva. As a bonus she wanted me to join in on the excitement too, so she donated \$50 dollars to my cause for two more loans. For one I chose a single mother of four in Honduras who runs a catering business to support her family. For my other loan, I chose a married mother of two from the Philippines who needed money for supplies for her restaurant. Both of these are close to my heart as my grandmother supported herself and four girls by operating a family restaurant during the Depression.

All of us involved in this process feel rewarded, humbled and have accepted the responsibility to reinvest these revolving loans as they are re-

paid during the next year. So, the original \$100 grew to \$150 and that will be reinvested in perpetuity. I thank God for this experience and hope we are in His favor for what we have done.

### **John Winkworth's Story**

As this project began I wondered to myself, what is the true meaning of this assignment. What would the Lord want me to do with this time and money? How am I going to make a "difference" while doing this? I did not know how to answer these questions so I waited for an answer, and eventually everything seemed to fall seamlessly into place.

As I spent time with my girlfriend at work, people began to take interest in what I was doing. After a while, I had people helping me from both different religious and ethnic backgrounds. This was good (to see people coming together to do the Lords work, regardless of their religious faith, but just because they knew it was right in their heart ).

I had decided to use the money to help children via the Children's Miracle Network (through Beaumont Hospital's ...). It was pretty easy to get people in the Pediatric Ward to help raise money for sick children... (the best part was that they were doing this for the Lord ). I am thankful for this experience. I feel as if I have learned a valuable lesson which has opened my eye's to see the world in a different way.

### **Ron Rucker's Story**

I am very pleased to have been chosen to serve the Lord by the giver to those in need. The Lord gave me two groups in need during the Christmas Holiday. So I donated to both Groups. I also chose to donate to the Good Fellows. This group I will always remember.

When I was a little child , my brothers and I would always look forward to

our Christmas boxes from the Good Fellows. There would be fruit, candy, nuts, toys and especially clothes. As kids we loved the toys and candy. But our mother appreciated the clothes more.

I always donate to the Good Fellows with the hope that the Lord will make some other kids as happy as he made us. The Lord uses these groups to help the needy and they do a wonderful service. I thank them all.

### **Alma Winkworth's Story**

Having \$100 of God's money placed in my hands was a total surprise. At first, I feared that I couldn't handle such a challenge. Since the busy Christmas Season had already begun I followed Pastor David's advice to begin my assignment with prayer and to not rush to make a decision. Prayer heightened my awareness of the needs of God's people. Everywhere I looked there were ways to use his money for good. After making a list of my favorite charities I decided to support two (2) of them: The American Cancer Society and South Oakland Shelter.

Part of our challenge was to increase the amount of money we were given so I turned my thoughts to something that could be handcrafted and sold. In order to do something about homelessness, I decided to raise money for South Oakland Shelter. I chose to knit felted wool roses to be worn in support of the shelter or to given as gifts. I started with \$15 worth of materials and made seventeen (17) roses. The sale of these flower pins resulted in \$95 to be given to S.O.S. in honor of Winifred Covintree who organized the shelter at Berkley First United Methodist Church during the last week of January this year.

The second part of my challenge was to do something to fight cancer. A number of my close friends have gone through chemotherapy to treat their cancer. Because my husband, Bob is a volunteer driver for the American Cancer Society, one of the people he drove to an appointment told him about her support group at the Providence Park Cancer Center in Novi. He told her that I was interested in making a quilt to donate to the

Cancer Center. That led to conversations with the social worker, Jenny Bailey, who leads the cancer support group. Jenny told me about a fund they call "Believe in Miracles" set up to help people who are struggling financially to pay for chemotherapy. All monies in this fund go directly to people in need with no administrative costs taken from it. Funds are distributed by the social worker and her supervisor at Providence Hospital .

I then decided that I would make the quilt as a fund raiser by asking people to make a donation in return for each personalized quilt block to be sewn into the quilt. When the quilt is finished it will be used to comfort people in the infusion area while they receive cancer treatments. I asked each contributor to dedicate their block to a person or to give a word of encouragement to persons with cancer. Since prayer is an important part of support group meetings I felt led to include scripture verses on the blocks and Jenny gave her blessing to that idea.

There have been many blessings associated with this project. For me, one of the best blessings has been talking with friends about who they would dedicate a block to and what verse they would choose to encourage or remember someone. I am inspired by the generosity of friends who have donated more than \$400 to help others in need. My prayer is that those who will use the finished quilt will find physical and spiritual comfort and that God will be glorified in the process.

### **Marlies Richardson's Story**

When I first volunteered on Sunday morning (not knowing what was going to happen), I was really very surprised to be handed a \$100 bill! Right away I started to think of what I could do. I had an idea. I already had a few scarves I had knitted and couldn't wait to go to the yarn store for more of it. I started selling my scarves and taking orders for more. Since it was before Christmas they would make nice gifts. I could hardly wait to start Well, I could hardly keep up with the demand! Thank you everyone from the church and elsewhere who has helped. By January I already had

\$250 and was thinking of where to send it. Then the Haiti earthquake

happened. Right away I knew that was the first "charity" I would pick. I sent the \$250 to Haiti through UMCOR who thanked me with a nice letter.

Meanwhile, I already have accumulated another \$150 and I'm still taking orders for scarves, hats and felted purse. I am having so much fun selling my handiwork that I am not about to quit anytime soon. I have been thinking long and hard where to send more money, and I have come to the conclusion that the reconstruction of Haiti was the most needy place at this time. I intend to send another \$250 as soon as I have made that much again.

I know that the Kingdom Assignment will be complete by the end of March, but it has me so excited that I will just keep going. I intend to keep you posted.

### **Hildy Tyson's Story**

After receiving \$100 for the Kingdom Assignment on December 6, 2009, I was asked by several members at church to bake Christmas cookies and sell them the next Sunday. I baked and made hard candy and asked some of my friends to bake also. I then sold them and the generous people at Beverly Hills gave \$136. I was able to give \$236 to Cass Community Social Services before Christmas.

I chose this organization because I know Faith Fowler and the work she does to fight poverty. Because of donors there were 200 food boxes distributed. The Christmas Store had presents for needy children and parents. They were able to turn utilities on for some and offer shelter for others.

In doing this, it made me feel that I helped my fellow human beings in

some small way.

### **Sandra Jackson's Story**

When I think of helping someone less fortunate than I, it makes me feel as if I am doing my small part in a world full of givers. When I volunteered as a Kingdom Builder, my first thought was about the many different organizations here in the United States that needed help.

I wondered how I could impact families in such a way that this donation would make a big difference in their lives. That is why I chose to donate to "Feed the Children" Organization. The Feed the Children's U.S. Program distributes food to families in need. With the \$100 that I received from the church, I was able to raise an additional \$54. I donated the entire amount totaling \$154 and plan to make more donations to this organization in the future.

With all the destruction happening around the world, I wanted to make sure that those closest to us should not be overlooked.

### **Lee Elliott's Story**

I have invested the \$100 of church money which was entrusted to me with Cass Community Social Services, Inc., 11850 Woodrow Wilson St., Detroit, MI, as seed money in planting a vegetable garden. The yield from the garden will be used to feed the homeless residents and any excess sold to raise money for their many programs. The garden will be planted and cared for by the homeless residents of the facility. Thus the garden will not only benefit the community with food but will teach the homeless how to grow their own food.

The services were started by and now managed by Rev. Faith Fowler of the Cass Community United Methodist Church. CCSS is a non-profit op-

eration, which services the community. She promised me that she will advise as the value of the crop from our investment at the end of the season.

More details of the operations of CCSS are available at <http://casscommunity.org>.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this program.

### **Connie Huseltine's Story**

On the Sunday Kingdom Assignment started I was somewhat mad at dad. He was forcing me, and my friend to come up during church and he wouldn't tell us why. When I came up along with the others I was shocked when I got \$100. My first thought was (I have to admit) Build a Bear and Video Games. But then dad explained about Kingdoms and I thought AWW, but I also thought about the charities I liked, the ASPCA, and the Humane Society, also Nothing But Nets. So first I wanted to have more than \$100 to donate so I started a Can and Bottle Drive. I passed out fliers in my subdivision and asked for any cans and bottles they might want to give away to a good cause. Then I collected the cans and bottles left on the porches of people's houses. I then, with the help of my dad, returned the cans and I got \$75 out of the drive. Then I divided my money between Nothing But Nets and the Humane Society. Nothing but Nets Received \$87 and the Humane Society received \$88. So I'm pretty happy with the amount I raised for charity, and that's what I did for my Kingdom Assignment.

### **Joanie and Jerry Stoll's Story**

Well before the Kingdom Assignment came along, Joanie and I decided to go on a journey for our church. We decided to write a letter and send it to our "circle of friends". This "circle of friends" happens to include every

household in the Village of Beverly Hills.

In that letter we introduced ourselves as well as our church. We wanted our neighbors to be aware of the great church we have and the capacity of our church to minister to groups of all ages. Our dream was to fill the pews on a Sunday as a surprise to Pastor David.

Our story follows as to how our desire to send this letter meshed with the Kingdom Assignment.

Just prior to and including the date on the attached letter, I wrote a second letter to George Groves to see if he thought it had any chance of drawing a few new members into our congregation. He said it sounded sincere and he offered financial assistance to get it started. I got out my Oakland County map and drew a two-mile radius circle around the intersection, thinking that would let people (almost within walking distance) know that we exist. To start things out, I went to the Village Office to get a list of the names and addresses of everyone living in Beverly Hills, and I was told the address labels would cost two cents each.

My first disappointment came when I got this bill that was way out of proportion for the labels and my second disappointment was when I found that everyone in Beverly Hills was named "Resident". I was already out almost \$84.24 and couldn't quit then, so I took another look at the map. A two-mile radius comes to 12.66 square miles, and by cutting the radius in half reduced the area to 3.14 square miles. Since the area of the village is 4.2 square miles everyone should live almost with a mile. So with 4,212 residences, the postage would cost \$1,853.28...gulp. I quickly realized that we were not dealing with pocket change here.

Then on Sunday, December 6, 2009, Pastor David, challenged the congregation to a Kingdom Assignment. Since neither Joanie nor I knew what a Kingdom Assignment was, we both volunteered. While standing in a group of 15 in front of the congregation, Pastor David explained the situation. Pastor David gave each of us a brand new \$100 dollar bill.

Then he explained the rules of the challenge.

True to his word, George Grove gave me five brand new \$20 dollar bills to go with the two brand new \$100 dollar bills already in our pocket. Joanie and I did the same, bringing the total cash up to \$415.26 (\$84.24 already was spent on address labels). Now we had only the \$1,853.28 to find at a postage rate of 44 cents. At the Post Office I was told a bulk rate could be had by opening a bulk rate account for \$286 and our rate then would be 27.6 cents instead of 44 cents. But wait, Joanie and I are both members of the United States Power Squadrons and they already have a bulk mail account so we could eliminate the \$286 fee. But wait again: The Squadron bulk rate then is only 17.2 cents.

With the bulk rate, the amount needed to mail all the letters was \$718.62. The difference between the \$718.62 and the \$415.26 we had was made up by the contributions from church members.

From the \$200 received for the Kingdom Assignment, \$802.86 was used to help spread the news about our church. The final "accounting" will of course be determined by you as you look out over the congregation in the Sundays to come.

**{ A copy of the letter sent is at the end of this booklet }**

### **Eleanor Roleston's Story**

There are so many worthy causes it was difficult to make a selection. One day I was chatting with my son, Todd, and we were discussing the high illiteracy rate. Your world and your options are seriously limited if you cannot read to say nothing of your low self-esteem. Voila! I will use my \$100 bill to try to affect illiteracy in some positive way.

At the same time, Detroit was the target for a bomber on Christmas day. I felt helpless to fight terrorism. What can a woman living in Southfield, Michigan do that would have a positive effect in combating terrorism,

which is the direct opposite of Christianity?

I decided that I can contribute to Greg Mortenson's cause in Pakistan as outlined in the book "Three Cups of Tea". "In a part of the world where Americans are, at best, misunderstood, and more often feared and loathed, this soft-spoken, six-foot-four former mountaineer from Montana has put together a string of improbable successes. *Though he would never say so himself, he has single-handedly changed the lives of tens of thousands of children, and independently won more hearts and minds than all the official American propaganda flooding the region*".

Greg was rescued by a village named Korphe after an aborted attempt to climb K2 in Pakistan and getting lost on the descent. He was nursed back to health and became friends with the chief of the village, Haji Ali. While there he observed that there was no school and the children sat on the ground scratching their lessons in the dirt. He vowed he would repay their kindness by building a school.

He returned to the states, sacrificed his own comfort by living in his car and writing appeal letters in a public library as he strove to accumulate enough money to build a school for Korphe. Finally the inventor of the computer chip, Jean Hoerni, gave him the money he needed. "Three Cups of Tea" is the story of Greg Mortenson's challenges and triumphs in building schools in Pakistan and a few in Afghanistan and the respect and goodwill he garnered in the process. David Oliver Relin writes about Greg Mortenson, *"he is fighting the war on terror the way I think it should be conducted. Slamming over the so-called Karakoram "Highway" in his old Land Cruiser, taking great personal risks to seed the region that gave birth to the Taliban with school. Mortenson goes to war with the root causes of terror every time he offers a student a chance to receive a balanced education, rather than attend an extremist madrassa."*

Greg believes that terrorism can be combated most effectively through education, in particular the education of girls. Girls are the future mothers and nurturers in a society and as such exert a strong influence on morals and the desire for an education. Greg is not searching for a quick

fix. He is trying to affect long-range literacy and by so doing, combat terrorism. As of 2009, he had established eighty-one schools, including fifteen new schools in Afghanistan.

I not only want my \$100 to go to Greg Mortenson's program, the Central Asia Institute, I want to increase the money in my charge. I have decided to create a program about peace, which will not only multiply my money, but will hopefully give the audience and the participants a sense that there is a chance for peace in the world. This program must be dramatic enough to stir the soul so that it makes a lasting impact on everyone there.

This is how I see the program, which would be held, in our sanctuary:

The program would start with the sanctuary in darkness with a spotlight on a person on the platform in front of the church who would be lamenting terrorism in the world. The stained glass window should be lit from outside so that Jesus would be visible from behind the figure, a reminder that Christ is the shepherd of all of us. Another person would join in lamenting the low level of literacy in much of the world. They would fade away as the spotlight dims.

Then the spotlight would hit a soloist with a strong clear voice who would sing, "A Plea for One World".

**A Plea for one world  
Is heard in many different lands.  
This is a plea for a world that is hungering for peace.  
Let all men come together  
Let us live well together  
Happily in any weather  
Pledging our lives to peace.**

As the soloist finishes the song, another person (a good voice planted in the audience) stands and joins the soloist in singing the song. Then a third person joins in from a different part of the sanctuary. Then a fourth person and finally the words on the screen would help the entire audience join in the song.

A narrator will tell the story of Three Cups of Tea in segments. A table with three cups will be placed in front and will be softly lit as the story is told which will include the significance of the three cups.

Songs such as "Peace Will Come" will separate the segments of the story

Peace  
Peace will  
Peace will come  
Peace will come  
And let it begin with me

The program will end with the hymn, "Let There Be Peace on Earth".

The program will list local organizations on the back that will assist literacy in which people might volunteer should they be interested.

Goals of the program:

1. To multiply my \$100 bill to \$500.
2. To work positively toward elimination of illiteracy in the world.
3. To do a part in the process of eliminating or minimizing terrorism.
4. To provide a program which will attract not only members of our congregation but also the community. The program would give exposure to our church.
5. To provide a program about peace to the public and our congregation that is so moving they will feel called to assist in the peace process as well as retaining an image of the power of joining together to do good.
6. The program will not include a position on war, but rather be directed toward the goal of peace

A Time Line or steps toward the production of this program:

1. Contact Bob Martin, the Choral Director, at Southfield Lathrup High School and find out if he is willing to participate with a choral group.
2. Contact the choral director of Groves High School to see if he is willing to participate.
3. Contact the Folk Singers from East Lansing who play guitar and will sing, "Peace Will Come".
4. Produce a poster to be placed in public places.
5. Contact the papers.
6. Form a committee to plan the logistics of the program, such as a publicity person, a committee for refreshments after the program, free will offering or tickets and so on.
7. Contact Greg Mortenson's organization for literature to help with the program.

Since Ken died and there is so much paperwork etc. to deal with, my time has not been able to be directed toward this project with the intensity that it deserves. I will also be in Europe for approximately 2 months in June and July so that time is out. I will contact both high schools before I leave on my trip to see if I can count on their participation. I am thinking that it really can't be produced until January or February 2011. It really deserves to be done well if done at all.

Joanie and Jerry Stoll  
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Dear Neighbor:

Since you live in Beverly Hills, you may already be familiar with the Beverly Hills United Methodist Church on the north east corner of 13 mile and Evergreen roads. You might even have children attending Groves High School next door.

About five years ago my wife and I joined the church when I was almost 80 and she approached 70, and therein lies our problem. We fit right in with the friendliest of any church group I have ever met, but they keep leaving us. The number of funerals keeps exceeding the number of new members joining our ranks. And that's a shame. The current membership can no longer afford the luxury of maintaining a facility as classy as ours.

But the real shame is: We just got a new Pastor about a year ago, and he is about the greatest I have ever had the privilege of meeting in any of the former churches I have ever attended. By being so well prepared all of the time, he changes Sunday Worship from interesting to being outright intriguing. He's amazing. And we really need more young people to come and see how religion is taught by a master. We have all the facilities and events to handle children of all ages. We have facilities to handle all ages of adults too, but we need more of the kind that still have their own hair, especially hair that has retained its natural color. We call them young adults and boy could we use more of them.

Our new pastor, Pastor David Huseltine, originally didn't know that I was writing this letter to my "circle of friends", which happens to be the Village of Beverly Hills. The village office is where I went to make sure all the addresses were correct. My dream was to fill the pews on a Sunday as a surprise with my thoughts being that "Advertising pays".

Regardless of what the ACLU and many politicians say, **Religion is not dead**, nor is it a disgrace to be a believer. Quite the opposite! Ask any of our troops serving overseas if they have ever had reason to pray to God or if they have faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, the way this country is heading recently, I'll bet there's plenty of praying going on around here these days.

If you're at all interested, please stop in any Sunday at 10:00 am and ask for either one of us. Or, don't hesitate. Call and we will try to answer any questions you may have regarding our really neat little church. We just need more people to make it a great church. But, without more members, we quite likely could lose our pastor.

Joanie and Jerry Stoll

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