

## **CHURCH ATTENDANCE GROWS**

### **Church Establishes Christian Student Center**

A pastor and leaders of a church in Peru attended workshops on how to conduct wholistic ministry and how to evaluate needs of the local community.

Using what they learned, they conducted a survey and found that a large number of children were getting very low grades in school. They decided this was a problem the church could help address. They established a Christian Student Center to provide free tutoring and classes for needy students in the primary and secondary grades. The help was offered during vacation time in the months of January to March, consisting of four hours of classes per week for the different age groups. Eight teachers helped the 120 students who participated.

The pastor had such an interest in helping these students that he built an area on the roof of his house so he could move to the second floor and live. He offered the first floor of his house to use as the classroom for tutoring. He borrowed seats and desks from a local school. A Christian teacher and seven of the most prepared believers in his church served as instructors. They were able to assist the students with their studies, as well as to share the Christian faith with them.

This effort earned the attention and good will of parents, the gratitude of the public school teachers, and favorable opinion from the community. As a result, the church is currently seen with other eyes. Now, 20 of these children are attending the church, and their parents have received church orientation teachings and family counseling.

### **Ministry Stimulates Dramatic Church Growth**

A pastor of a small Ugandan church of 50 regular attendees participated in a Vision Conference in 2000 where he learned the biblical mandate of wholistic ministry and how to put it into practice. Returning to his congregation, he soon led an effort by a group of men from his church to construct a well for the community that was badly needed.

This effort was followed by a series of additional seed projects and ongoing ministry activities for the community. These activities included improvement of damaged roads, building of a pedestrian walkway over one busy street, establishment of a health clinic by doctors in the church that provides free checkups for children, and the operation of a used clothing store. The church also started a school for children of poor families who could not afford to send their children to public school. The school started with 50 students and now has over 200.

This varied demonstration of God's love has caused people of the community to see the church in a very favorable light, and has contributed to substantial church growth. By 2005, there were over 2,000 regular attendees at worship services.

### **Compassion Brings New Life**

For two decades, a shy pastor with a primary school education had 30 members in his church in Nicaragua. A handful of people gathered every night for services, and the church maintained a separation from the community. Then, God began to open the eyes and hearts of the pastor and members regarding the biblical mandate to serve the needs of others. They called a community meeting and publicly repented of their lack of compassion for the community.

The pastor changed his leadership style and began working with small groups, teaching them to serve in the community. Within 18 months, the church grew to over 200 members, with 700 children attending home Bible clubs. The church began an adult literacy program, a micro-enterprise loan program, three neighborhood preschools—and recently purchased land for a Christian school. The pastor credits this significant turnaround to a radical change in his understanding of the mission of the church and its relationship to the community.

### **Churches Work in Partnership to Help Pygmies**

Two churches in Bujumbura, Burundi, one Lutheran and the other Anglican, are working together to minister to a group of Pygmy people—previously forest hunters and gatherers—who had become refugees because of war. The churches arranged to obtain clear title of a piece of land for these people, where they could live and farm. Then they taught them how to grow their own crops. Many of the adults are learning to read and write, and most of the children are attending school. Many are also attending church and becoming a part of the Christian community. The success of this project has begun to attract other Pygmy people to settle in a village and leave their primitive life. The spiritual dimension of the ministry to these people has been a key factor in its success.

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