“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

Matthew 5:14-15

SHINING LIKE STARS
Twenty Thousand Disciples Create a Bright Light

The good deeds have always been there, but they were far more visible across the U.S. on October 1 than on any other day so far in the short fifteen year history of God’s modern-day movement. Twenty thousand excited disciples working for HOPE for Kids, signing up over ten thousand “at risk” pre-school children in fourteen cities, is newsworthy. No wonder we have become “stars” in President Clinton’s Immunization Program. When I told the supervisors at Willowbrook Park in Los Angeles to plan for 5,000 people to attend our Immunization Day Rally, I could see the skepticism in their faces. They thought that perhaps 500 would be more realistic. Their skepticism turned to amazement as 5,000 turned out. The county health officials likewise expected us to sign up a few hundred children, rather than the actual 2,500 names we gathered.

More positive TV footage was aired about HOPE For Kids and the church in just one day than in the previous fifteen years combined. Nearly all project cities were covered by at least one major station. The rally in San Diego was shown on four stations including ABC, NBC and CBS.

The officials and dignitaries who came to speak were profuse in their praise. State Assemblyman Sam Hoyt of Buffalo, New York said, “This is the most exciting group of people I’ve met in a long time.” The representative of U.S. Senator Harris Wofford’s office in Philadelphia began by saying that he thought he was supposed to speak to the group to inspire them, but instead he was the one who was inspired. Carl McCall, the highest black elected official in New York City said, “In 25 years of participating in meetings and rallies in Harlem, I’ve never seen a group that brought all races and colors together the way that this group does.”

Even though most of the East Coast cities held their rallies in heavy rains, neither their number nor their spirits were dampened. Upon hearing a comment that people in Harlem turn out for rallies – rain or shine, Ruth Messanger, Borough President of Manhattan, responded “No, no! Not in the rain. God and the church produced this!” To top it all off, one large local Baptist church was so impressed with the results and excitement of HOPE For Kids that they asked for someone from the New York City Church of Christ to preach for them the next Sunday and tell them what we are doing for people.

We do not do what we do to be seen on TV, or so that influential people will say nice things about us. We do it to help those in need, and to please God. But Jesus says that a result of our effort will cause people to praise God when they see our good deeds. Our purpose is and always will be to seek and save the lost as Jesus did (Luke 19:10). However, our nature must also be the same as Jesus – to help those in need (Luke 4:18-19). Helping those who can give us nothing in return is Jesus’ expectation (Luke 14:12-14). We will not stray into the “social gospel” where people are helped, but no one is saved. Likewise we cannot be so “spiritual” that we become the priest or Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, who ignored the obvious pain of the man in his path. On October 1, the efforts of the US churches were an incredible beginning in meeting the needs of children at risk.

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On another front, I cannot say enough good things about our new managing editor Roger Lamb, the former editor of the late, great Upside Down Magazine and my longtime friend. He also serves as the director of KNN. His creativity and hard work are already bearing fruit in our transforming the bulletin into a news magazine for the Kingdom. Our new design will be released soon. With this issue we start a new column entitled “Miracle Stories.” The world is full of broken relationships, yet multitudes have been healed in God’s kingdom. We believe that God’s miracle stories will be an encouragement to all our readers. We have no way of hearing about all the great stories in your church. If you know a particularly good one, please send it to us in care of the news magazine. Who knows, it just might be used to inspire thousands of disciples around the world.
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1994 WAS NATIONAL Immunization Day in the United States. In fourteen cities all over the country, 20,000 disciples knocked on the doors of 100,000 homes to inform parents about the importance of vaccinating their children against serious infectious diseases.

It is estimated that in the inner cities of the United States, only one in five children receives a complete set of vaccinations, and are therefore unprotected from disease until the age of six when they are required to be immunized before they enter kindergarten. These unprotected children are at real risk for contracting diseases such as measles, polio, and spinal meningitis which can cause serious lifelong injury and in some cases, even death.

Currently, free immunization clinics exist in every major U.S. city, yet children still are not adequately immunized. Clinics may be far from their homes and hard to reach; the long lines and red tape make it difficult for a parent to work and take care of this need as well, and a full series of vaccinations takes a total of fifteen months to complete. Because of this, epidemics of preventable diseases are breaking out in large cities, crippling and even killing young children.

HOPE for Kids, a part of the benevolent arm of the International Churches of Christ, is radically changing this situation. On National Immunization Day, 20,000 disciples canvassed neighborhoods, knocked doors and spoke with parents about childhood immunization. The 14 cities include New York and Buffalo, NY; Newark, NJ; Chicago, IL; Miami, Orlando and Tallahassee, FL; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA; Dallas and Houston, TX; Los Angeles and San Diego, CA; and Washington DC.

Nearly 5,000 disciples of Jesus Christ descended on South Central Los Angeles to reverse the sad trend - with tremendous success! Speakers at the Saturday morning rally included Dr. Betty Jo Warren, Chief of Pediatrics at Martin Luther King/Drew Medical Center, who expressed her gratitude to the cheering crowd.

Then the task began. Talking individually with parents, Christians walked through surrounding neighborhoods and identified children in need of immunization, explaining the services now available to them.

The success of this effort is based upon biblical principles. Rather than seeing the needs and suffering of others without doing anything about it, HOPE for Kids is building relationships between the local clinics and the community by serving as mediators who put needy people in touch with available services. Contrary to past low turnout for community volunteer programs, the International Churches of Christ provided an unprecedented number of people willing to lend a hand.

Our goal is to connect inner-city infants with medical care. We want to achieve a 90% or better rate of protection from childhood diseases, and we are doing it through an entirely volunteer-driven tracking system.

Just as Jesus was unafraid to reach out to the sick to demonstrate God's love, his modern-day disciples are committed to helping the needy in a "hands-on" way. Our Christians have also been strengthened by putting their faith into action - and the smiles of healthy children made their efforts worth it.
On October 1 the Light of HOPE did shine— even in the rain— all across the nation.

IMMUNIZATION

"LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."

– Matthew 5:16

On October 1 the Light of HOPE did shine— even in the rain— all across the nation.

Pictured from top to bottom:

5000 L.A. disciples at Willowbrook Park.

"Not the Pops but the Shots" – Boston rally at the Hatch Shell early Saturday morning.

"A Family Affair" – The campus students were involved as well as the children. Pictured— Amy Jones, a senior at Northeastern in Boston with eager helpers.
All across the nation –

Clockwise from above left:

Connie Mancini, Women’s Ministry Leader for the L.A. North Region, knocks on another door to inform a family about immunization availability.

“Love them. Immunize them,” says Barbara Porter, Women’s Ministry Leader for the Orlando Church – pictured with son Joseph.

Ron Brumley, elder in the Chicago Church, equips the disciples to go out and help others.

A shot in Orlando.

Steve Johnson, lead evangelist for the N.Y. City Church addresses the crowd amid a sea of umbrellas.

“We love the babies in Harlem,” says Cynthia Powell, Women’s Ministry Leader in the NYC Church along with the daughter of a friend.
A FAMILY COMES TOGETHER

“All the riches in the world cannot come close to what Jesus has done in our family.” – Cesar Lopez Jr.

BY MARYANN ROSE

October 18, 1990. Cesar immediately flew to San Francisco to see what changes had taken place in her life. She stunned him by refusing to let him stay at her apartment that night, referring him to the Bible passage against “even a hint of sexual immorality” (Ephesians 5:3). He stayed with brothers from the church, hoping to get into a fight with them out of his anger. Instead, he was humbled by their humility, hospitality, and willingness to understand his confusion. Returning to Los Angeles, Cesar wanted to study the Bible and see the church there.

Cesar was introduced to Willie Flores and immediately began to study the Bible with him. When he first got to know the Flores family, he was certain that their closeness was “just a show.” Soon, however, he saw that Christians had found what he had longed for his whole life—real family. Cesar was baptized in the ocean at Manhattan Beach just a few weeks later.

Cesar’s and Jennifer’s families rapidly became unified in Jesus Christ. Cesar’s sister Gina was baptized three months later. She is now a part of the AMS region of the L.A. Church and was recently engaged to be married. Their youngest sister, Angie, was in the Philippines at that time, studied the Bible there, and was baptized. She is now a strong disciple in L.A.’s West Region.

Cesar and Jennifer were married on October 19, 1991. They entered the full-time ministry together, and Cesar had the great joy of baptizing his mother five months later. However, Cesar’s father was disappointed in him for leaving the family business to go into the ministry. The business itself began to decline. He refused his wife’s efforts at reconciliation. Cesar and Jennifer prayed for Cesar’s father every day for an entire year. Cesar spoke to his father by phone, urging him to study the Bible in the Manila Church; he agreed to visit the church, but refused to study with anyone except Cesar—who was miles away.

He saw that Christians had found what he had longed for his whole life—real family.

Cesar wondered when his next trip to the Philippines might be so he could study with his dad. Two short weeks later, he and Jennifer were asked to move to Manila to assist in leading the church there with Preston and Sandie Shepherd. His prayers had been answered! They arrived in Manila on June 4, 1993, and Cesar held his dad to the promise of studying the Bible with him. Cesar then watched his father’s amazing transformation as the Word of God penetrated his heart. He repented of his sin, reconciled with his wife, and was baptized into Christ on July 23, 1993. Since that time, they have both been a very fruitful couple in the Manila church and have an average of five visitors with them every Sunday.

Reflecting on his life as a disciple, Cesar Jr. is overwhelmed with gratitude to God and to the Church for all the miracles in bringing his family together in Christ. He explains, “It is so amazing to me—my father and I have Quiet Times together, my mother shares with me what she is learning about God, I hear their prayers, or see them singing with the biggest smiles on their faces. All the riches in the world cannot come close to what Jesus has done in our family.”
O NLY FIFTEEN YEARS AGO A LITTLE church of 30 people had a dream to grow a powerful church in one of the most difficult mission fields of the United States of America—Boston, Massachusetts, home of the Puritans, the witch burners, the revolutionaries and now the academic and humanistic elite of the most powerful nation on earth. Three years later that little group had become a multiplying church with a Sunday attendance of nearly 600. The inspired young evangelist, Kip McKean, stretched the dream. He called the church to plant similar churches in all the major cities of the world that would, in turn, plant churches in their areas of the world. Many scoffed, more doubted, some believed. Some feared, “But would our own cities and hometowns be reached?”

Today, fifteen years later in that difficult mission field, the Boston Church of Christ is the largest single congregation in the history of New England with an attendance of 5,500 on Sundays. Also, the International Churches of Christ are made up of 173 churches in 65 nations of the world. The largest of those churches is the Los Angeles Church which averages over 7,100 on Sundays with a weekly contribution of nearly $140,000.

Incredibly, the Denver church has sent out five mission teams this year.

These international churches are averaging one new church planting every two weeks. The US churches are also growing and building new ones to reach their own states, cities and towns. From July through September, 1994, churches have been planted in the cities indicated below.

Of these churches, seven were the first church plantings in their states. Incredibly, the Denver church has sent out five mission teams this year. When the Little Rock planting goes out in December, 1994, the Dallas church will have planted churches in all of the states under her charge in only four years. With the church plantings scheduled for next year, Lord willing, by the fall of 1995 the International Churches of Christ will have at least one church in each of the fifty states.

In Pittsburgh last month, 16 disciples working for three weeks saw 330 come to the first church service. Our growth shows that when disciples take the gospel to the whole world, we also take it next door.