ANDERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

BIOGRAPHY AS MISSIOLOGY: THE LIFE OF CHARLES SMITH
FOUNDER OF HEART TO HONDURAS

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# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................. vii

GLOSSARY ............................................................................. ix

ABSTRACT ............................................................................. x

A Brief Biographical Sketch of Charles Smith ........................................... 2

Chapter 1. Biography as Missiology in the Life of Charles Smith .......... 3

Chapter 2. The Church with a little “c” ............................................. 12

Chapter 3. A Theology of Food .................................................... 19

Chapter 4. Worship and Music ..................................................... 25

Chapter 5. The Word of God – The Mother of All Frameworks .......... 34

Chapter 6. The Value of Unity ..................................................... 46

Chapter 7. Partnerships ............................................................. 58

Chapter 8. Compassion ............................................................. 68

Chapter 9. Giving/Money ........................................................... 77

Chapter 10. Righteousness/Justice .............................................. 84

Chapter 11. The Value of Simplicity/Solitude ................................ 93

Chapter 12. Leadership ............................................................ 103

Chapter 13. Charles Smith as Visionary ....................................... 112

Chapter 14. Passion ................................................................. 122

Chapter 15. Conflict Resolution ................................................. 131

Chapter 16. Death and Dying ..................................................... 139

Chapter 17. Lessons for Leaders of Mission Organizations .............. 149
Chapter 18. Lessons for the Church as an Agent of Change

Chapter 19. Lessons for Living a Lifestyle of Simplicity

Chapter 20. Lessons for a Transformational Development Vision

Chapter 21. Learning lessons for Conflict Resolution

CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

A. Five years of rapid growth of Heart to Honduras – 1989 to 1994
B. Charles Smith’s grease stained recipe for Chicken Curry
C. Beti, the La Joya prostitute introduced to Christ by Charles Smith
D. The many partners who have networked with Heart to Honduras
E. “Paid by Grace” – Sister Church loan default signed by Miguel Pinell
F. “Fifty-Eight Reasons Why I Love Charlie Smith” by Lorna Kardatzke
G. Charles Smith’s last letter to his sibling
H. Time line of Charles Smith and Heart to Honduras
I. Charlie Smith’s cooking video sharing his theology of food
J. Fourteen Ways to Know the Church is in Trouble

BIBLIOGRAPHY
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GLOSSARY

Ambassador Mountain. site where Charles Smith requested to be buried in Canchias

ass. a word that refers to the little burro that symbolizes the spirit of humility

Brazos Abiertos. “Open Arms”- name for CPH association of churches

Corazón Para Honduras. the ministry name for Heart to Honduras in Central America

encuentro. a weekend retreat where believers seek God in renewed commitment and radical obedience via Bible study, prayer, fellowship and power encounters

H.E.A.R.T. (Hunger Education and Resources Training) Institute located in Lake Wales, Florida designed to prepare people to serve in developing countries

Hand to the Plow. mission organization with headquarters in Sarasota, Florida, called to the nation of Haiti under the leadership of Stephen Coder, former student of Charles Smith

“My Daily Diary”. a sixty-four page journal Charles Smith wrote during an extended stay at the Martha House from April 12 – May 13 of 1997

Martha House. one-room residence in Canchias, Honduras built as a model for improved housing in Honduras and used as a residence by Charles Smith on his visits

“My Medical Condition”. a forty-seven page summary Charles Smith wrote during an extended stay in Honduras from April 12 – May 3, 1997

power encounter. spiritual warfare that includes signs, wonders and miracles

Project Global Village. a development ministry located in San Isidro where Charles Smith worked for four years

“The Book”. a fifty-six page draft of a book written by Charles Smith from July 10, 1997 to his death in October 1997

The Great Century. the nineteenth century when Christianity had never before been introduced to so many people, by so many volunteers (100,000), to such a great area

The Reminder. the name of Heart to Honduras’ first newsletter in memory of Charles Smith’s father who also wrote a newsletter for his home church called The Reminder
ABSTRACT

The field of missions is always in a state of flux with institutional and para-mission organizations popping up like mushrooms. This dissertation gives a “face” and shares the vision of Heart to Honduras by focusing on the working principles and Kingdom values of Charles Smith, its visionary and founder. It explores the motives of his heart, “listens” to his teachings, describes his visions, evaluates his behavior, learns from his failures, cites his successes and values his wisdom. This dissertation documents his core values such as social justice, denominational unity, leadership, conflict resolution, transformational ministry and simplicity.

This project describes how biography can be healthy missiology when the life of a person is written with balance and integrity. This project initially defines the role biography can serve in missions as well as the dangers of hagiography.

Righteousness and justice are two socio-religious strands that thread this document. It examines these two societal strands or themes and how they were executed on behalf of the poor by an applied anthropologist not only with a Christian perspective but with the local church as the pivot upon which true mission revolves. It brings to light how central the theme of righteousness was to Charles Smith and how he created a beautiful mosaic of justice through the church in all he accomplished in Honduras.

This project reveals his frustration with institutions bogged down in red tape, his impatience with bureaucracy and his disdain for regulatory systems that delayed the distribution of commodities, funds and resources while the poor were dying. It shares the power of the right vision at the right time in the right place for the right reason.

In addition to Charles Smith’s core values, this project scrutinizes his beliefs,
values and behaviors, delineating how his beliefs determined his values and his values determined his behaviors.

Because he was a pioneer in missions and exhibited peculiar behavioral traits within and outside the secular and religious institutions, this project uses him as a learning model. This project was also written to assist others attempting to pioneer a transformational ministry and share how they might learn from lessons modeled by Smith.
The Charles Smith family

Charles, Karen, Felicia, Anne-Marie
A Brief Biographical Sketch of Charles Smith

For those unfamiliar with the life of Charles Smith and as a framework upon which to hang the contents of this project, this biographical sketch and the timeline in Appendix H may be helpful.

Charles Smith was born and raised in Louisiana in a Church of God, (Anderson, IN) family. After graduating from high school, he spent two years in the Navy, then earned his undergraduate degree at Northwestern University in Louisiana. His rebellious teenage years came to an abrupt halt when he met Karen Stone there. They married on September 1, 1960, and through Karen’s influence they joined the Peace Corps and served two years in Malaysia. Back in Louisiana, he became the Director for a Community Action Center. Later they lived six years in Kentucky while he pursued a doctorate in Applied Anthropology and where their two daughters were born.

In 1976 the family moved to Lake Wales, Florida where he taught at Warner Southern College, served on staff at the South Lake Wales Church of God, briefly opened a restaurant, and participated in founding the H.E.A.R.T. Institute. One of Smith’s students at WSC was Miguel Pinell, with whom he founded Heart to Honduras in 1989 after four years serving as a consultant with Project Global Village in Honduras. Continuing to live in Lake Wales, Florida, and traveling a half dozen times a year to Honduras, Smith served as visionary and overseer for Heart to Honduras.

In January of 1993 his beloved wife Karen, who was 57 at the time, was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer which took her life seven months later. Just three years after his wife’s passing, Smith was diagnosed with a rare pulmonary disease which took his life 15 months later in October of 1997. He was fifty-nine.
Chapter One

Biography as Missiology in the Life of Charles Smith

In the eyes of many people, Charles Smith was so giving of his resources, so kind in his deeds, so righteous in his living, so creative in his visions, so simple in his lifestyle, so identified with the poor and so in love with the Word (Jesus) that he would qualify for some kind of sainthood status. This would be the last thing Smith would desire – to be elevated in any way above the rich or the poor. Smith was a commoner who lived among common people. He would prefer to be remembered as one who rode on a donkey (asna) into the poor village of Canchias, Honduras, rather than on a white horse into the political districts of Tegucigalpa. This dissertation is an attempt to illustrate how written biography is as much mission as Ida Scudder’s ministry was to the females in Vellore, India or Cameron Townsend’s linguistic ministry was to unknown tribes.

Statues, monuments, buildings and libraries are built to honor a person’s life such as the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California or the statue of Lafayette in Le Puy, France. The William Carey Library in Pasadena, California and William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi honor Carey’s historic mission to India. The William Carey Library exists because of a life – William Carey. In one sense, this library is missiology for it is doing missions by inspiring people from within and without. Likewise, a biography of Charles Smith is missiology because it does mission by telling a story from which others draw inspiration and motivation.

Missiology as biography is a methodology in Scripture in that it is a book of stories of great men and women of God. It is a mandate in that Jesus issued the Great Commission. It is a message of the redemptive nature of the Kingdom of God. It is a
motif in that mission is its theme. Patrick Johnstone agrees with missiologist Ralph Winter who sees missiology as a "missional breakthrough" meaning a point in evangelism where the impact of the Gospel is so great it becomes a viable component of an indigenous culture.

Biography as missiology is Jim Elliot surrendering to a spear rather than firing a bullet. It is Bruce Olson removing pink eye pus from a local tribesman and placing it on his eye to show the healing power of God and medicine. It is Hudson Taylor dyeing his hair black and weaving it into a pig tail to identify himself with the Chinese. It is Gladys Aylward, a single missionary, taking only a suitcase and some dangling pots and walking toward China. It is Adoniram Judson staying on course even though it took seven years to win his first convert. It is C. T. Studd giving away seventy-five thousand dollars and departing to Africa. It is the apostle Stephen, the first Christian martyr, accepting stoning rather than denying his Lord. All of these saints modeled Christian character as missiology by who they were (missiology) and Whose they where (theology).

Missionary biography is a powerful tool for communicating and teaching missiology. The written word is a story just as the living out of that word is a story. Seventy percent of the Bible consists of stories. During the Great Century of missions, scores of mission organizations recruited thousands of missionaries and more students were recruited through testimonies and stories than any other recruitment method. When saints like C. T. Studd, Robert Moffat, David Livingstone and Adoniram Judson returned home to speak, tens of thousand responded. One simple statement by Robert Moffat

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2 Loren Cunningham, “Making Disciples of All Nations” (sermon, Living Word Church, Dayton, OH, November 1, 2007).
about the thrilling opportunities in Kuruman, South Africa rallied thousands to the mission field and did more for recruitment than a thousand chapel sermons: "...the vast plain to the north" where he had "sometimes seen in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary had ever been."³

These missionaries documented their testimonies not with footnotes or endnotes but with the power of their testimony. It was who they were, not what they had accomplished, that appealed to potential recruits. A widely admired theologian with Southern Baptist roots, James McClendon inspired the theme "biography as missiology" in his book Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology. He refers to it as a "theology of character" in which theology incorporates the study of character or biography as theology.⁴ Philip Holtrop did a study of Protestant Reformers. He examined the lives, theological positions and personality traits of Bullinger, Beza and Calvin. He discovered that "... they respected each other – but their temperaments seemed to shape their theologies in different ways. In a large part, theology is autobiography – and both are forged in the crucible of history."⁵

Ruth Tucker, well known missiologist in North America, prefers "biography as missiology" rather than "biography as theology,"⁶ although both are true. Biography does missiology by doing mission. It has a method. Theology does missiology by revealing the nature of God and communicating His Word. It has a message and mandate. Tucker believes missiology is practical in that its very nature deals with how

³ Ruth Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 156.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
one does mission, whereas, theology relates more to understanding the nature of God and how He relates to humanity.⁷

On the other hand, in writing of a “saint’s” life, great care must be taken to prevent elevating biography into hagiography. Hagiography, as defined by Thomas Head, is derived from Greek roots (hagios-holy; graphe-writing) and has come to refer to the full range of Christian literature which concerns the saints,⁸ or biography that treats its subject with undue reverence.⁹

Tucker sees them working together, “… biographies and autobiographies must be evaluated and ranked as to their trustworthiness and merit within the whole body of literature available. But even works of hagiography, in which missionaries are portrayed uncritically in idealized accounts, can be valuable sources….⁴⁰

Biography is like a domesticated sheep that grazes inside the fence as the shepherd watches nearby. Hagiography is a wild stallion that is careless about literary fences, reality or documentation but finds satisfaction in grazing on the elevated mesas of fictitious stories, fables and myths to teach moral lessons, biblical truth, or to elevate a saint. Yet there are those who believe like Thomas Head that the sheep of biography and the stallion of hagiography sometimes nibble in the same pastures. He states, “The term hagiography has come to refer to the works of contemporary biographers and historians whom critics perceive to be uncritical and even reverential. For example, critics of

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⁹ Ibid.
historian Arthur Schlesinger often called him a "Kennedy hagiographer" regarding some of his writings about the life of John F. Kennedy, Jr.\(^\text{11}\)

Christian hagiography and biography are not twins, but they are first cousins. The common goal of biography is information and inspiration for the audience. Hagiographical writing is not confined to the religious sphere. Secular hagiography is celebrated in such notable writings as Ernest Thayer's *Casey at the Bat*, Scottish novelist J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* and the old English heroic poem *Beowulf* by an unknown English writer.\(^\text{12}\) And the word *autohagiography*, in some hagiographical writings, is sometimes used when the author writes about himself in an adulatory way.\(^\text{13}\)

From the world's perspective, the saint lives on the edge of the insane and abnormal. Many of Smith's colleagues and friends perceived Smith as a non-conforming, off-center, unconventional, spiritual maverick who lived and thought outside the box of the status quo. G. K. Chesterton's description of Saint Francis of Assisi could be written about Smith. He writes of this sixteenth century saint who "... always hung onto reason by one invisible and indestructible hair...The great saint was sane....He was not a mere eccentric because he was always turning towards the center and heart of the maze; he took the queerest and most zigzag shortcuts through the wood, but he was always going home."\(^\text{14}\)

Neely believes most hagiographers purposely distort truth. It should be obvious to them the difference between truth and tale, fact and fiction and level-headed common


\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

sense and legendary nonsense. He writes, "Several years ago, U.S. Supreme Court
Justice Potter Steward was asked to define pornography, and he responded that he could
not. He quickly added, however, 'I know it when I see it.'" Missiologists, according to
Neely, ought not only to be able to define and recognize hagiography, but if they intend
to write or teach history, they have a duty and obligation to do so.15

Following Smith’s death, many Hondurans began to look upon him as a saint. The term “saint” abounds with a myriad of shades of understandings and meanings: a
dead person, a patron, a holy person, Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus, a National Football
League team called the New Orleans Saints or one separated from the world.

The term “saint” is derived from the word sanctification which has two
understandings, one each from the Old and New Testament. For Moses and the Hebrews,
it signified separation unto God that matures into a manifestation of a quality of holiness
in personal conduct as distinguished from mere human beings. In the New Testament,
saint refers to all believers; most of the time it refers to a group of believers.16 Within
the context of this definition, a six year old child who believes but cannot spell the word
martyr, or a seventy year old man recently saved, are each saints.

As Smith rode into Canchias for the last time, he was neither jeered nor
humiliated as were the saints in the early church. He was venerated even while he lived.
Many afternoons mothers would come with their children and stare through his front
porch window and weep as they saw him asleep. They would gaze out of curiosity as he
typed his final words on his laptop computer or exchanged greetings with them.

It is difficult not to elevate Christ-like saints because divine mentors are needed to give common people direction and purpose. Smith’s daughter shares about the danger of elevating her dad, “Sometimes I think people might think you idolize and glorify them more since they are your dad. You put them up on a pedestal because they are gone. I think I was like that all the time with my dad. When he was alive I just didn’t think that he could do any wrong.”

According to some North Americans, Ambassador Mountain, Smith’s final resting place, is similar to a Middle Ages shrine where people come and worship the saint. One team member from a church in Ohio, after visiting Ambassador Mountain and reading Heart to Honduras’ quarterly Update, wrote to Gordon Garrett, president of Heart to Honduras:

I have been concerned about how much focus is spent on Charlie Smith both in your newsletters and when I have spent time in Honduras. I am in agreement that Charlie was a great man of faith and obeyed what God wanted him to do in as far as starting this great mission field. Yet, Heart to Honduras is seemingly using him almost as an idol. Not only is he spoken of frequently but look how his burial site is set upon a hill like a worship temple. Doesn’t that say something to someone? At times, I hear more about Charlie Smith and his wife than I do about Jesus Christ. That’s a problem and it absolutely has got to stop! Charlie was faithful, was called home and that is it. Move on. He was just a man. Jesus is the one who should be your center piece of your organization....Please address this with your board. There needs to be some very serious discussion in regards to this issue. I hope and pray that this will be resolved in the near future.

It is this misconception of Smith that sometimes occurs on Ambassador Mountain that this dissertation seeks to correct. It seeks to be missiological in order to reveal Smith’s passion for doing mission. It seeks to be biographical to show the life behind this mission. It seeks to humanize Smith without canonizing him. It seeks to portray his

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17 Anne-Marie Dezelen, interview by author, Indianapolis, IN, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, April 15, 2006.
18 Team member, e-mail to Gordon Garrett, folder S500, Miguel Pinell Library, March 4, 2006.
feet of clay as well as his heart of gold. It seeks to show how his life was a missional statement for the glory of God. He never wanted to be the focus. His burial on Ambassador Mountain was not for show but to show others the Way.

From the bassinet to the mountain, Smith’s life was a mix of flesh and spirit, rebellion and religion, music and madness and vision and vice. His daughter Anne-Marie set forth guidelines that if heeded will tame the hagiographers and give a degree of balance to any halos that others might place on her father’s head.

All I ask is that you not simplify Daddy. He was a complex and deep man. I know a lot of your writing is geared towards reaching the general public and needs to be simplified in metaphors and similes for them to get it. Please don’t simplify Daddy. Please don’t make it appear it - the organized church, etc., was altogether okay with him. Please don’t pretend he didn’t enjoy Corona, wine and chewing tobacco, Beechnut, as a matter of fact....Remember he was a Democrat. You can show the people who read your work that Christian is not synonymous with Republican. He would be livid with our current administration, guaranteed.19

Wiley Hilburn, Smith’s best friend in high school, speaks of the radical change that took place in Charlie’s life his senior year in high school without elevating him to angelic status, “His change was not like the apostle or someone in jail. It was completely voluntary. It was just like a bright star that suddenly appears in the sky. It was no pain for anybody. It was all gain.”20

While acknowledging the danger of allowing hagiography to creep in since the author was a close friend of the subject of this document, it seeks to use historical biography to inform and inspire and challenge others to live out the doctrine of *imitatio Christi* (the imitation of Christ) as Smith did among the poor in Honduras. The approach will not be “cradle to grave” but rather it will examine some of the seminal beliefs and

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19 Anne-Marie Dezelan, e-mail to author, folder S500, Miguel Pinell Library, January 5, 2005.
20 Wiley Hilburn, interview by author, Ruston, LA, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, May 18, 2005.
values as well as the behaviors that shaped his vision in hopes that it can provide lessons for other mission organizations and encourage and guide other visionaries.

The purpose of this document is to take the reader up a literary mountain to tell the story of Charles Smith's life. But unlike the story shared on Ambassador Mountain with various team members that highlights his vision for ministry to the Honduran poor, this paper begins not on a mountain in Honduras but in a bassinet in Monroe, Louisiana where Smith was born and had few angelic qualities until he met his wife Karen Stone at an All-State Chorus musical competition.
Chapter Two

The Church with a Little “c”

Every Sunday, from the cradle to the time he was a popular cheerleader for the Bearcats of Ruston High, Charles Smith attended church with the regularity of a Swiss watch. Sunday morning worship was not high on his top ten list for things to do on Sunday. His mother’s usual roast beef and potatoes meal and the sound of his friend Robert Barham’s horn outside signaling “The Blue Jersey Gang” had arrived for a Sunday afternoon roustabout did figure high on the list. But there was another male figure in the family who had his own top ten list for the family on Sunday. Frellsen Smith, Smith’s father, expected his family to be in their pews on Sunday with the discipline of an army roll call. It was more than a priority. It was a mandate.

Frellsen was a calm, peaceful, and deliberate man. He was the guiding light for the family. He stood tall and radiated the love of God, righteousness and godliness before family and community. Well respected in the social and academic circles of Ruston, he was like a lighthouse that steered his son to the Anchor – Jesus Christ – who would one day pluck this little rebellious child out of the grip of the destructive influences of Robert’s Buick. It would take many years of a father’s patient love and his mother’s prayerful tears before the church would come to mean more to Smith than Robert’s Buick. Smith writes Pastor John Martin of the Ruston Church of God about the seeds both his grandfather and father planted that eventually caused him to give his life for the church: “The Ruston Church of God (Ruston, Louisiana) was where I was nurtured into the Kingdom of God. My earliest memories are listening to my grandfather preaching, and sitting through services playing with my father’s hands and whatever he
Charlie loved the singing of the beautiful hymns from the old green and red Church of God hymnals. He was a bit of a rebel during his younger days at church but when all was said and done, he would never forget the lives lived before him and the lessons taught. He reflects on these precious days of his childhood: “I gave my teachers headaches, no doubt, but their words and more importantly their lives impacted mine for all eternity. Through those early years there was being implanted in my heart the Word of God that has stayed with me to this day. I shudder to think where I would be if the church hadn’t played such an important part in the life of our family.” Though he strayed away from his spiritual roots during his teens and his two year stint in the Navy, he rebounded and his return to Christ was as intense as his straying.

Smith had a love affair with the bride of Christ – the church of God. Rarely did he speak in a village church in the country of Honduras without referring to the church. His theme was always unity of the believers. His favorite book in the Bible was the Gospel of Luke because of the teachings of Jesus and His themes of justice and reconciliation. His favorite book in the Old Testament was the book of Isaiah because of the prophetic calls to feed the poor, care for orphans, house the homeless and clothe the naked. His favorite chapter was John seventeen in which Jesus calls the disciples to unity. It was this chapter that Smith used in his first official meeting in January of 1989 with the Honduran pastors as he and Miguel Pinell launched the fellowship that would eventually be called “Heart to Honduras”.

Smith struggled all his life balancing the institutional church and the true church

1 Charles Smith, letter to John Martin, folder 527, Miguel Pinell Library, September 18, 1997.
2 Ibid.
the body of Christ without denominational bureaucracy or alignment) in such a way as not to alienate the former at the expense of the latter. In a letter he writes of this tension: "All human-operative social organizations go the way of bureaucracy, oftentimes preventing the spirit of God from working. No, I am not saying that all that is bad. Surely some good is being accomplished. But there is so much more that needs to be done and I tire easily with the pettiness...It’s like putting a Band-Aid on a person eaten up with cancer." This pettiness in the Body of Christ frustrated Smith so much that in the spirit of Martin Luther, who nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the Wittenberg church door, Smith penned "Fourteen Way to Know the Church is in Trouble". To read Smith’s list see Appendix J.

Smith’s father, Frellsen, was instrumental in bringing his son up in the church. He instilled in his son the meaning of the church with a small “c” as opposed to the big “C”. Big “C” was Anderson, IN, the headquarters where national agencies, the printing press, the missionary board and the college were located. It was physical and organizational. The little “c” church was spiritual. Frellsen explains in notes found in Smith’s files, “It was a movement without a tightly structured organization...It was a reform movement...that plays down denominations and seeks practical togetherness with other Christians....It stresses unity, the work of the Holy Spirit and the need for personal redemption.”

The church was very dear to Smith. She was the Bride of Christ called out of the world to be light that dispelled darkness, yeast that permeated culture and salt that

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3 Charles Smith, letter to Jim and Carol Lynne Usher, folder S222, Miguel Pinell Library, October 5, 1983.
preserved and promoted the teachings of Jesus. She was peculiar to other groups – more of a movement with a divine function than an institution with bureaucratic form. She was a body not a building, an organism not an organization, a human temple where God took up residence not a cathedral where frescoes and icons took precedence. She was the little “c” church that was all inclusive without rules and regulations not the big “C” church with labels that made others feel on the outside. She was the divine agent of human transformation that Smith would use to bring together in unity the poor believers in rural Honduras to extend the Kingdom of God.

Smith and his father Frellsen held tightly to this core tenet of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), which stated there was only one church and it was made up of all Christians in all denominations. However, Smith felt more strongly than his father that the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), was becoming more and more like another denomination. Hence, he made unity the quintessential theme of Heart to Honduras in hopes that it would bring unity to all Christians seeking to reclaim the purity of the doctrine of unity proclaimed by the early pioneers of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), movement.

Because he was such a visionary, he had little patience with denominational regulatory policies and procedures coming out of headquarters. With his prophetic nature, he was always an outsider working on the inside with tension and frustration. Smith expressed his frustration in the following words:

The denominational or institutional church has watered down the teachings of Jesus and turned them into a set of ‘Preferred’ rules and regulations not different from the Pharisees in Jesus’ day. Grace has been replaced by law... Jesus vigorously chastised the Pharisees and would do the same to the church today.
This is the very opposite of Jesus’ non-conforming, grace-filled life which he taught and practiced. It is wrong to make laws out of Jesus’ demands.5

Charlie’s prophetic inclinations often instilled discord and misunderstanding in church leaders. He was a misfit, as prophets often are. The upside is that prophets hold the church accountable and provide a cleansing agent for its sanctity. The downside is that they can become loose cannons without accountability and create ecclesiastical monsters worse than the institutions they seek to reform.

He believed God’s way for helping the world’s poor and hungry people was through spiritual healing that would give them intrinsic motivation to help others. This is why he set out to encourage, equip and empower the church to do divine exploits first – justice and needed social change would follow.6

Smith worked for Project Global Village in Honduras, a holistic development organization promoting self-reliant communities, for approximately four years. However, Smith felt something was missing in this organization regarding their support of the church. It was not being given the central role of executing justice and reconciliation to Christ. He resigned and began to chart a new path and partnership with the rural churches and local pastors in Honduras. He asked Miguel Pinell, a former student of his at Warner Southern College, to partner with him. Smith began to ingrain in Pinell the importance of a holistic ministry with the church at the center. Pinell would be crucial and central in launching this ministry for he would be the driving force behind all of what Heart to Honduras would become and accomplish in Honduras. The key to this ministry would be the church, and Smith constantly put this “key” before Miguel:

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It is the church that is the focus of all that we do. It is the church that is the fellowship. It is the church that is the expression of Christ in us, the hope of Glory! It is the church that reaches out to the little children, to the sick, and to the man, woman of God that is bound by sin. It is the church that gives the cold glass of water, or the bowl of hot bread and rice, the warm embrace of acceptance into the family of God. Lift high the cross of Christ Jesus, the head of his Body, the church of God, the family of God, the Kingdom of God on earth.  

Smith continued to refine his vision for the church to be the primary agent for change. He writes, “This is the single most important ‘fundamental assumption’ that undergirds this ministry. The church, the body of Christ, made up of the ‘redeemed’, the ‘born again’, the ‘new person in Christ’, and gifted to do the work of Christ in the world, is God’s plan for reconciliation. It is as simple as that.”

Smith saw the church as a collective with a personality of its own, drawing its nature from Christ. It was a colony of heaven but at the same time a decisive community in transforming the earth and shaping the destiny of those who inhabit it. Through a common relationship with Jesus Christ, it becomes a new community in Christ in place of another that once existed outside of Christ. It was designed to be the pattern community in history to bless the whole historical community of mankind. It is Christ’s body – the instrument of God’s glory in history. But at the same time, the church is to be the historical organ (not organization) of a purpose which lies beyond history.

Smith’s great desire was to train pastors so that they could establish hundreds of spiritual communities or “colonies of heaven” that would permeate the culture with the teachings of Jesus like yeast impregnates dough. Teaching all that Jesus commanded was crucial to the role of the church according to Smith. In the aforementioned letter written to Pastor John Martin of the Ruston Church, Smith addresses the importance of teaching

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7 Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, May 12, 1992.
8 Ibid.
9 Charles Smith, notes, folder 720, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
everything Jesus taught: “Pastor John, Sunday school teachers, parents: make disciples. Teach the church and your children to live everything Jesus commanded. Read and re-read – even study – the four Gospels to seek out the commands of our Lord, then teach them until they have been internalized into your minds and your hearts. When you do this, the New Testament Church will be just as alive today as it was on the day of Pentecost!”\(^\text{10}\)

He sought to bring about a counter-culture community of those redeemed by the blood of Jesus and a new order of justice and righteousness for the oppressed and marginalized. He had little hope the institutional church could bring this about. He believed preaching and teaching the truth was the purpose and goal of the church. He believed strongly that a watered-down Gospel would dilute the power of the church. He would seek to bring about this counter-culture community through the church with a little “c”.

\(^{10}\) Charles Smith, letter to John Martin, folder 527, Miguel Pinell Library, September 18, 1997.
Chapter Three

A Theology of Food

To Charles Smith, food does for people what a shrimp boat does for sea gulls – it brings them together. He believed food should be more than an understudy in the glorious drama of worship but rather a leading character of the experience, a lead sentence of the paragraph, a chapter and not just an appendix. It was central to the community of faith. It was created for more than just to tantalize the palate but to harmonize and realize the “Body”.

Early on in the ministry of Heart to Honduras, Smith sent Miguel Pinell a fax stressing the importance of community building fundamentals: “The bringing together of the people of God for worship, for instruction, for fellowship, for food...will be the fiery backbone of this ministry – cooking and eating facilities with everything we do!”\(^1\) The first three are non-material components dealing with praise and adoration, knowledge and wisdom, and community. Although the first three are essential, Smith believed food would be the key to make the others gel.

The Hispanic fiesta was a cultural event Smith used to bring about the joy of the Old Testament Jubilee to the poor in Honduras. It was joy that would sustain the poor but it would be best done in an atmosphere of the fiesta. He wrote Pinell explaining his position for an upcoming medical team: “I want to recommend that a temporary kitchen be set up outside away from the church building and that the women of the church in Canchias prepare and provide the food: beans, rice, tortillas, salad. This will turn the day

\(^1\) Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, August 12, 1993.
into a rather ‘festive’ occasion, as it should be. The medical team is coming to Honduras to care for the sick: Praise God!”²

While remaining as an associate staff at the South Lake Wales Church of God, Smith began to hatch another vision related to food. It was an outreach ministry with a coffee house setting providing a place for students and the community to come together on the weekends. It was called Father’s Place, a name inspired by Smith’s former H.E.A.R.T. student Phil Murphy. Murphy shared the name with Smith and he accepted it as an appropriate name.³

A young couple from Jackson, Mississippi, Greg and Valerie Moak, met Charlie on a visit to Lake Wales and agreed to partner with him in this vision. As reported in Warner Southern College’s monthly Royal Courier about how Father’s Place started, Valerie explains:

Charlie saw an opportunity. Warner Southern College did not serve a Sunday night meal. After church on Sunday night the students had to find a place to eat. A lot of times Charlie served a meal at his house, but the crowds got too large for his home. He talked to someone, I guess the Church Board, who had a vacant church building they were not using. So Charlie requested some of the big stock pots from the college and on Saturday afternoon we would cook either at his house or at the old church and transport the food for Sunday night. It was then that we started talking about a coffee house. Charlie believed food always brought out people. It was a universal thing for him. He always used the words, “This is the key.” For him, food was the key.⁴

When asked his goal for Father’s Place, Smith replied, “Ultimately, by the leading of the spirit, we will be an outreach to the community....We want to be spirit led; we believe God is putting it together; that He has a plan for it. He will work it out and fulfill the vision for the church to be a beacon light. We are not doing work as disciples till we

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³ Dela Owen, “Meet Your Friends at Father’s Place,” The Royal Courier 17, no. 3 (October 12, 1984): 1.
⁴ Greg and Valerie Moak, interview by author, Clinton, MS, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, March, 2007.
serve others. Father’s Place is just an outlet.\footnote{5}

Smith had a unique theology of food, believing that God cares not only that we have sufficient food to eat but that we eat the right kinds of food. It was this understanding of food that caused Smith to make “Food for the Hungry” one of five primary core values of Heart to Honduras.

He was a student of the Bible and understood that there were reasons for clean and unclean animals, dietary laws in the Old Testament and a desire on God’s part that there should be equality in the distribution of food. He believed the feeding of the five thousand and the equal distribution of the manna to the Israelites was proof that God cared that all should be fed. Smith even had a desire to feed five thousand people. He wrote his parents a letter stating:

I am spending some 30 to 40 hours per week working with Father’s Place, the ministry I told you about that has been directed to college students. Two weeks ago we fed over 250 people during one weekend, which included the feeding of the Sunday worship service. We are getting quicker and better at preparing large quantities of food economically. In ten weeks we have fed over 1,200 meals, have received over $1,400.00 in contributions and have $133.00 in the bank. I know we are not talking mega-bucks, but the ministry is paying for itself, minus, of course, the many hours of volunteered labor from Greg and Val Moak, myself and others. The important thing at this point is that we are learning the procedure for feeding large numbers of people economically with nutritional international foods that they enjoy. We believe that we are on the threshold of a much wider ministry. Next semester, beginning in January, we are considering involving college students in taking meals to the sick and the shut-in’s who live in our community. Whatever happens, I believe that “food is the key”; food for the body and food for the Spirit. Just lately I have been impressed with the goal of preparing and serving food to 5,000 people at one time. I know I am “touched in the head” but visions with hard work are the stuff of life! Visions, in fact, give me encouragement and remind me that I am still young, for the Prophet prophesied that old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions. Did he not? I see visions continually for helping the poorest of the poor of the world meet their needs for living on their own, and I know that such visions come from God.\footnote{6}

\footnote{5} Dela Owen, “Meet Your Friends at Father’s Place”, 2.
\footnote{6} Charles Smith, letter to Frellsen and Myrtle Smith, folder 998, Miguel Pinell Library, November 11, 1984.
Dennis Turner, former student of Smith's, recalls how Father's Place began to reach out beyond the church and into the orange groves. Smith used food to bring in the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the skilled and the unskilled. When asked if he had a memory that stood out in his mind regarding Smith, Turner replied:

Yes, I remember the time Charlie, Steve Coder, Eddie Joiner and I went in the old Lake Wales church bus that was used by Hand to the Plow to take people to the airport who were going to Haiti. Charlie asked us to go throughout Lake Wales and the orange groves and pick up all the migrants we could find and bring them to the church. He wanted to have a banquet for them. Charlie would always talk about going into the highways and byways and bringing in the poor. He wanted to provide them food from Father's Place. And when they got together there were about thirty or forty migrant workers in the church. They were gathered in the fellowship hall of the old Lake Wales Church. Charlie came in and made a big announcement and said, "It is great to have you here. This is a banquet for you and I want you to eat this food brought in from Father's Place. I want you to eat until you can't eat anymore but I want to tell you something about food. There is another kind of food that is better than this." And then he spoke the Word of God to them.\(^7\)

Charlie learned the value of food from his parents. His sister Lorna relates: "I believe Charlie learned the value of food for social gatherings from my parents, especially my mother because we always had company in the house. She always invited people into their home for a meal after church on Sunday. She was a fabulous cook and there was always room for somebody else. There was a lot of fellowship around food."\(^8\) Smith's brother Alvin agrees with his sister Lorna: "Yes, it comes from our house. Food is a time when people share. When we are together there is great fellowship when there is food. Food is very much a part of the Carver family on my mother's side. And it was from the Carver family that our mother learned its value in bringing family and

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\(^7\) Dennis Turner, interview by author, Wichita, KS, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, May, 2005.

\(^8\) Lorna Kardatzke, interview by author, Wichita, KS, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, May, 2005.
community together.”

Smith’s daughter Anne-Marie also believed her Dad used food to bring people together. “Dad loved bringing people together in community. That is why he started Father’s Place. He learned so much from that experience. He said, ‘I have never worked so hard, learned so much and made so little.’”

Owning his own restaurant was not an ego trip for Smith. It gave him a sense of fulfillment. He had to do it. “Coming home after he had spent so much time in India,” Anne-Marie notes, “Dad had to do this restaurant as he loved to cook with curry. Cooking was just the center of my house and you know how small our house was. It was ridiculously small. It was so small, but those burners were always going, those crock pots were always simmering.” Candy Pischel, friend and Heart to Honduras staff member agrees, “For Charlie, everything related to food because it brought people together.” Her husband Dave remarks, “Food reflected his sensitivity to the poor of the Third World. His big thing was a stock pot of beans over rice.”

This informal culinary school at Father’s Place prepared Smith for an important component of his vision which was the Assembly Hall for what later came to be known as the School of Discipleship in the village of Canchias. This hall was important because every activity revolved around food. It was here that Smith introduced many of his recipes to his Honduran friends. (For a copy of one of his recipes see Appendix B.) It might be said that if Smith’s vision were a human eye, his holistic vision would be the

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10 Dezelan, interview.
11 Ibid.
12 Dave and Candy Pischel, interview by author, Leesburg, FL, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, April, 2005.
13 Ibid.
eyeball, the Assembly Hall would be the pupil, the kitchen would be the iris and the food would be the gleam. The Assembly Hall was the only building on which Smith allowed his name to be placed. The spot he chose was in the kitchen. The plaque still hangs today and reads, Cocina de Charlie – Charlie’s kitchen.

Following God’s mandate to feed the poor energized Smith. His theology of food was motivated by the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of his favorite theologians. In his journal he copied one of Bonhoeffer’s quotes relating how faith and food work in tandem to administer grace to the hungry and the poor, “If the hungry man does not attain to faith, then the fault falls on those who refused him bread. To provide the hungry man with bread is to prepare the way for the coming of grace.”

Smith even encouraged imitating Joseph in the preserving of food: “As in the days when Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh’s dream, the children of God were enslaved in Egypt, there will be a famine in the land and the church is not ready. Store and preserve food....It is imperative for the church to read the signs that abound, and respond in life-giving, life-sustaining ways. Heed the message for your own sake and for the sake of the church of the redeemed.”

Smith’s theology of food laid the ground work for facilitating his two primary goals for Heart to Honduras: teaching all the commands of Jesus and feeding the poor. One was the garlic and the other was the olive oil that produced the fragrance of grace in the believer. These two components were the underpinnings of Smith’s personal theology and food would be the condiment to facilitate and carry them out.

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15 Ibid.
Chapter Four

Worship and Music

Smith loved music and had a beautiful tenor voice. His aunt Judy Hicks remembers how much Smith loved to sing even if it was while kneeling on the floor: “I remember when Charlie was in the Navy. He hitch-hiked to New Orleans. He had his Navy uniform on. Now in those days, Mom and Dad always found things to do around the house. We had these parquet floors. Mom wanted them waxed. With Charlie there, this was absolutely terrific. So we got a Broadman hymnal, as we were Baptist, a rug for our knees, a piece of cloth and a can of wax. And we would wax those floors while we sang those Baptist hymns.”

Smith loved bluegrass hymns, especially instrumentals. He loved to sing out of the old green and red Church of God hymnals. He loved the simple strumming of a homemade guitar. He loved barbershop quartets. He loved congregational singing. He loved to sing solos in the church. He loved a cappella. He loved to lead worship. He loved the simple singing in the small village churches of Honduras.

While a professor at Warner Southern College, he formed his own singing group, The Gospel Pioneers. They sang in the churches throughout Florida to encourage the church for the difficult days ahead. There were seven people in the group and Smith was the prime mover getting them organized, excited and committed for the discipline it would take to practice and travel. Smith’s favorite singing group was The Ambassadors, worship leaders at the Prince of Peace church in Canchias, Honduras. When they brought

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1 Judy Hicks, interview by author, Baton Rouge, LA, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, May 16, 2006.
their homemade instruments (two guitars, an upright bass, a mandolin and wood block), to the Martha House porch to play and sing for him, he recalled his days with *The Gospel Pioneers*. "I learned that this group is a wonderful treasure for the ministry of Heart to Honduras. When I played some of the old songs of the church on my mouth harp, they jumped right in and made me sound good. It was a wonderful time together. It reminded me of the bluegrass gospel band we had at Warner Southern....This group has got something very special – a genuine, down to earth, honest presentation of music from the soul."2

Smith extended his classroom outside the institutional doors of the college and practically lived among the students by teaching them at church, feeding them at his house and singing with them on the weekends. He was different and did not fit the traditional mold of a college professor. Because of this, he always had an "image" problem with his institutional mentors, professional colleagues, church leaders and personal acquaintances in general. And because he was real and transparent, he was suspect until a person got to know him in a personal way. Because he liked gospel hymns in an age of charismatic choruses and enjoyed bluegrass music with a bit of clogging in the background, he was prejudged as provincial or lacking in urban sophistication, which was far from the truth.

Smith was an independent free-spirited enigma wrapped up in a suspicious puzzle that had most people guessing what he might look like when the final piece was inserted. He was an academician who spent six years in a doctoral program only to fail in earning his doctorate due to the untimely transfer of his professor to another university. He loved bluegrass but one of the fondest memories on his return from the Peace Corps occurred

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2 Charlie Smith, "My Daily Diary" folder 1, Charles Smith papers, Miguel Pinell Library, 51.
in 1965 in the city of Rome when he and his wife Karen visited the _Teatro dell'Opera di Roma_ and were spellbound by Leontyne Price in the lead role in Giuseppe Verdi's opera _Aida_.

Late one night in 1991, Smith stopped by Simeon’s house where the church in Canchias was meeting. Simeon was the village patriarch and a member of _The Ambassadors_ worship team. He and a few of the elders came out. Smith shared with Simeon and the elders that the ministry was going to build them a house of prayer so that they would no longer have to worship in a crowded little house. As the truck drove away, the expression on the elder’s faces reflected their gratitude for this unexpected gift.

Years later on a spring morning in April of 1997, Smith anticipated the arrival of _The Ambassadors_. They were coming to give him a private concert to express their sorrow for his illness and appreciation for his love. All had been employed by the ministry at one time or another: Pastor Miguel and Manuel played the guitar, Santos played the mandolin, Simeon played the bass and Chilo played the drum and gong. Charlie reflects on the experience: "Their music was straight from heaven! Song after song my soul and spirit (How do you separate the two?) were lifted to new heights."³

But it was a sad day for Smith when the government brought in the naked pines that provided support for the tentacles of electrical lines that branched off like spider webs into the rural mountain villages. These lines attached themselves to houses, huts, hamlets and houses of worship. Tattered JBL and Peavey speakers imported from the States were connected to steel guitars and the sounds of the simple string guitar faded into the background. The music was loud, raw, screeching and decadent for Smith.

³ Charles Smith, “My Daily Diary” folder 1, 13.
On April 17, 1997 a ministry team from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania came by the cabin where Smith was convalescing to share devotions with him before their day’s work. He writes about how music is good for the soul and serves as a means to express one’s theology,

Throughout their sharing I would pick up on things related to their experience this week and the foundation that has been laid – our purpose, reason for being here - spiritual foundation and the like. We then sang “In the Light of God” and “I Stand Amazed”. The singing was good as we sang and praised the Lord. It always helps when groups can sing. Singing is so good for the soul and the spirit. Songs unify the body and put every one on the same topic. There is a wonderful teaching in the songs of the church.⁴

Team worship was very important for Smith. He insisted that each North American team have morning and evening devotions with a time of singing, reading of the Word, sharing and prayer. Along with the orientation field manual, Smith printed a twenty-five page worship manual he referred to as “The Sayings of Jesus”. It also included prophetic writings and numerous psalms. This worship manual was passed out for corporate worship. The devotional times were often held on the porch of the Martha House, Smith’s residence while he was in Honduras. Team members often shared on their evaluation forms that these overflow sharing times by candlelight, often with a spirit of brokenness and tears, were their most memorable experiences in Honduras.

Smith believed there were three essentials or fundamentals for church and personal worship. The first was music, especially congregational singing. He believed that congregational singing was being given a back seat to praise choruses. Hymns had become secondary to slick performers and Hollywood type entertainment. It was superficial and many were professionals with careers using the concert circuit to make money rather than being called to make music that glorified God. He wrote, “Praise

choruses have become more important for generating feelings rather than the hymns that teach truth.”

Smith sought to revive congregational singing. He believed a singing church was one of the keys to a growing church and if a people would be willing to put their heart into their music, worship and singing, they would be amazed at the power singing produces.

Teaching was the second fundamental of worship. Smith believed teaching was needed more in the church than preaching. Teaching the Scriptures was central to worship and knowing God. He writes, “Teach the Word. Be done with lesser things. Let the Holy Spirit be the ultimate teacher.”

The third fundamental was prayer. Smith believed worship should always include both personal and corporate prayers. He believed it was important to listen and talk to God. One could not know God without being still. And God desires one to tell Him their need, trials and struggles. Smith wrote that the one praying should, “Mouth the words, whisper, speak aloud and pay no attention to your neighbor.”

In corporate prayer, Smith rarely prayed without seeking unity in the church, justice for the poor, reconciliation for the lost and workers for the harvest. He once prayed the following prayer, “Bind us together in mission ....the fields are white and ready to harvest....Help us to see no one from a worldly point of view. Show us the harassed and the helpless. Help us speak clearly the message of reconciliation....Help us hear the cries of your children...those who are thirsty, the dirty, hungry, naked, lonely, sick and in prison.”

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Smith was suspicious of the charismatic movement and saw both good and bad in its style of worship. It was good in that a dead church was given renewed spiritual life because Smith believed religion without emotion was dead and countless believers had found spiritual meaning through this means. The downside was that their message focused more on what Jesus could do for the individual rather than how the individual believer lived as a follower of Jesus.¹⁰

Smith had great difficulty with the life styles of these “super-Christians” riding around in their sleek black Mercedes and living in million dollar houses. He did not see this in the Word of God or in the life of Jesus. He writes, “Television depicts a life-style contrary to that of the One they are supposed to represent – glitz, gold, showmanship. Slaying in the spirit; blowing on people and they fall over, where in the Bible is this?”¹¹

Smith was bothered by slick preachers with alligator shoes, fancy suits and hair shellacked with half a can of spray. He writes in reference to these fast-talking, yarn-spinning, charismatic Elmer Gantry types, “Good looking, smooth talking, egotistical snake oil salesmen who move from town to town when they tire of the people as the people tire of them.”¹² In his notes next to the initials TBN he writes, “They don’t hear Jesus’ commands. There is too much glitter, gold, purple carpets and flashy clothes.”¹³ Smith did not believe it was all fake as he often listened to godly men he respected on Christian television. Yet, he felt so much of the worship on Christian television and in charismatic churches was pretense and hypocritical because so many pastors and leaders failed to back their words up with their lives. In his final days, he writes a message to

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¹⁰ Charles Smith, “My Medical Condition” folder 2, Charles Smith papers, Miguel Pinell Library, 40.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Charles Smith, notes, folder 815, Miguel Pinell Library.
¹³ Ibid.
his charismatic friends to relax in their worship: "Performance is the death of spiritual worship....A word to my charismatic brothers and sisters, who when caught up in the spirit, are working mighty hard to convince God to do something for them: quit trying so hard in prayer. How does an apple ripen? It just sits in the sun."\(^{14}\) He felt this kind of worship was divisive as he stated: "Do not allow non-scriptural emotionalism to destroy worship and praise. Slaying in the spirit is not scriptural. Tongues are for personal edification, not for corporate worship. It is confusing and divides the Body. Unity, unity, unity is our theme.\(^{15}\)

Smith was also disaffected with the “Holy Laughter Movement” which invaded the church in the early 1990’s. He wrote:

Uncontrolled laughter, rolling on the floor in laughter, being “slain in the Spirit” and other more bizarre manifestations represent some type of mass social hysteria, and is not in any way to be confused with the truth of the church found in God’s Word. Instead of laughter, there should be mourning. Blessed are they who mourn - who mourn for the decaying social world in which we live, mourn for the countless lost children who have no roots in the faith. It is mercy I require, not sacrifice. Who has time for such foolishness? The world is going to hell. The poor are dying. The sick are lonely. God is calling you to help and you feed yourselves with carnality."\(^{16}\)

Smith believed that uncontrolled laughter in the church confused people. He wrote, “Uncontrolled laughter, rolling on the floor, dancing in the aisles, being slain in the Spirit and other such bizarre behaviors are prompted by distorted shared expectations and should not be confused with the Truth of the church found in God’s Word.”\(^{17}\)

Instead, Smith believed that laughter should be turned into mourning for the poor and disenfranchised. Bemoaning this fact, he laments, “These laughers should be mourning for a world that has lost its way, for broken families, for abused children, for

\(^{14}\) Charles Smith, notes, folder 815, Miguel Pinell Library.
\(^{15}\) Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, 1996.
\(^{16}\) Charles Smith, notes, folder 227, Miguel Pinell Library.
\(^{17}\) Charles Smith, “The Book” folder 3.
hate crimes, for random street killings, and for nations killing one another because their leaders crave power, not service to their fellow beings. The oppressed of the world are crying softly, now loudly, calling for help while the Church feeds its flesh in carnality.\textsuperscript{18}

Smith also believed the Church had virtually lost her most vital component of corporate worship – music. Congregational singing was becoming a lost art. For Smith it unified the believers in the sense that individual voices were blended into the whole and the believers were unified through the theology of the lyrics. He felt it was difficult today if not impossible to tell the difference between sacred and secular music. In his last days, he began to doubt that Christian rock or pop music has any lasting value for the church.\textsuperscript{19}

Possibly this attitude was due to his sensitivity to the eternal things of life as his impending death was on the horizon. On the other hand, it might be that Smith truly loved the simple congregational music that could be sung by simple people with simple instruments or no instruments at all. He writes of this desire:

Turn down or turn off the amplification – the sound system and let the congregation of God’s people sing together in unity the songs of the church. It is far better that the churches sing the hymns that have been passed down through the generations as well as the new hymns that are being written in this day. And to sing those songs without loud instrumentation for ego-centric leaders who want to be seen as cute and in control rather that facilitating the congregation in her singing of the hymns where no one individual stands out above the others. If the church would return to congregational singing in the Spirit, she would be revived and unbelievers would be attracted to the music.\textsuperscript{20}

On April 12, 1997, a poor Honduran man came to visit Smith. It was Manuel the poorest man in the village. Smith writes of this visit and it defines the essence of his philosophy of worship and music: “I rested for a while, and then Manuel came for a visit.

\textsuperscript{18} Charles Smith, “The Book” folder 3.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
I asked him where his guitar was and sent him to the dining hall to get the ministry guitar. He then sang to me like David sang to Saul. How sweet and tender was his music. It lifted my spirit and strengthened my soul. How blessed I am to be in this place and to have so many simple, humble, poor people as my friends.”

21 Charles Smith, “My Daily Dairy,” folder 1, 2.
Chapter Five

The Word of God - The Mother of All Frameworks

Realizing he had weeks not months to live, Smith wrote with a feverish pace at his cabin retreat in Canchias. He reached deep into his spirit and mind to bring all the loose academic, experiential, social, religious and anthropological threads of his life together into one theological motif. It would be a triangular canvas with three theological concepts in what he referred to as The Mother of All Frameworks. This framework would provide answers to the fundamental questions about life. It would be simple. It would be easy to understand. It would be broad. It would be complete. It would address every need spiritually and physically. It would hold the basic concepts that would provide meaning, passion, truth, joy and purpose for life.

Smith sought a theological framework to communicate his philosophy of life. In a telephone conversation with sister-in-law Kathy Smith, Smith revealed: “We need to have a framework on that which addresses the broader issues of life. When I share with others, I paint broad strokes, filling the canvas with the story of creation and God’s means to reconcile all things back to Himself and how he pulled it off.” He also informed Kathy that for anything to make sense, it had to fit within a framework that answers all the fundamental questions about life from the beginning to the end. For many years Smith dreamed of putting these thoughts in a book.

Smith referred to this framework or life synthesis as “Truth” and recommended it to all who would accept it. This was a term Smith often included in his definition of vision. He took a thesis (in the beginning was the Word) and a spiritual antithesis (and

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1 Charles Smith, “My Medical Condition” folder 2, 11.
the Word became flesh) and developed a life synthesis (and the Word stands forever). He writes, "I am writing a synthesis of the knowledge, beliefs, and values (my personal culture gleaned from the secular and sacred wisdom of the ages that I have found through experience to be true) – on which I have built my life or rather which has built me through the years. I recommend to you – a very personal letter about the issues of life from creator and creation, to physical death and the life to come."\(^2\)

Smith's *Mother of All Frameworks* was based on the Word of God, and embedded in the text was hidden a simple plan for addressing the needs of the homeless, the naked, the lonely, the sick and imprisoned. The three theological concepts were: In the beginning was the Word, the Word became flesh, and the Word stands forever. These three strokes on Smith's theological canvas were broad but all life's needs, values, knowledge, beliefs and values could be plugged into this frame. Once plugged in and connected to the Word, Smith believed that meaning would be found as long as the individual accepted, believed, received and honored the Word – Jesus Christ.

The first frame was *In the beginning was the Word*. Smith wrote, "The written, spoken and lived Word is humankind's most powerful possession. Without the Word we would live not differently than the great apes, the orangutans or the chimpanzee."\(^3\) Smith believed people should value words and the Word. His understanding of the nature of God was derived from his anthropological understanding of the necessity of symbols to create words to formulate concepts and then communicate them with understanding and meaning for the recipient. He saw intelligent design in God's craftsmanship of man by the use of symbols as contrasted with the use of signs and sounds in the animal kingdom.

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\(^2\) Charles Smith, "The Book" folder 3.

\(^3\) Ibid., 10.
Words constructed out of symbols are powerful because they introduce humankind to the Word. Smith wrote, “The creator empowered humankind with the mind and the ability to symbolize which enables me to write these words ....in such a way that you will understand the message and perhaps use it to your own advantage for higher purposes.” Here Smith suggests that words lead to the Word which is the higher purpose. Words are good but the Word is greater for it leads to the eternal.

Smith believed the Word was in the beginning. The Word has always been and always will be. The Word could be understood but not completely. Smith wrote of his deep appreciation of the Word as being “so powerful, so mighty, so incredibly awesome.” The Word spoke the “Word” and sun, and moon and stars appeared. Smith writes, “For reasons known only to the Word, out of the infinite universe, the Word created a world, a planet, and gave it an environment compatible with life, and gave that world living things: plants, insects, animals on land and sea, birds in the air, mammals, primates, and human beings, male and female.” Smith believed the first frame was “In the beginning was the Word.”

The second frame was The Word became flesh. Smith believed this was made possible through the message and life of Jesus, relationships and missionary journeys of the disciples and by defending the poor. This could only happen by the Word becoming flesh or as Eugene Peterson writes “…the Word entered the neighborhood.” Smith believed it had to happen in the neighborhood so that the Gospel could be preached, the
church could be birthed, relationships could be cultivated with God, one another and the world, and the poor could be defended. This is why the Word had to leave His heavenly kingdom and enter the neighborhood as a man.\textsuperscript{10}

The third frame was \textit{The Word stands (is) forever}. Smith believed that the Word was eternal. There was no time or space with God. There is no beginning or end with God. The Word spoke and things came into existence. Smith wrote, "It matters not how this was done for this we can never understand, nor does it matter how long it took since time is a human created concept. There is no time with the Word. The Scriptures state that a day is as a thousand years, yet even this view is limited. There is no beginning and there will be no end."\textsuperscript{11}

Smith's \textit{Mother of all Frameworks} did not occur overnight. It developed over the years as he delighted in the first love of his life when he met his beautiful wife Karen. It was stretched when he joined the Peace Corps. It was questioned when he was a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kentucky. It was surrendered when his wife died. It was refined when he contracted his fatal illness. And it was completed the last year of his life when he realized God was calling him home.

The secret of his final framework can be found in his great love for both the living Word and the written Word. Smith marinated himself in the Scriptures as he would shrimp in sizzling butter. The Bible was to him as Mao Zedong's \textit{Little Red Book} was to the Communist Party. But it was the red letter Words of Jesus that arrested Smith's attention and captured his heart.

On his desk he would have many different versions of the Bible not far from his

\textsuperscript{10} Charles Smith, "The Book" folder 3.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
fingertips. He always took God’s Word with him to Honduras. Most all of his visions were Word based. With less than ten days to live, he brought his staff to his bedside and shared two priorities that he wanted them to execute after he was gone: “There are two things I want you to continue after I am gone. I want you to teach all the commands of Jesus and feed the poor.”\textsuperscript{12} The Words of Jesus served as Smith’s manifesto to engage the hearts and minds of the people to be about the Father’s business.

The Word simply consumed his life. He was rooted in the Word through study, memorization, meditation, reflection and teaching. This hunger for the Word deepened after he left the H.E.A.R.T. program in 1983 and continued to grow as he served as an Anthropologist/Consultant for Project Global Village. Scott Crews, a close friend of the family, visited Smith a few weeks prior to his death. After supper one evening with Smith, he writes: “Charlie and I finished reading the book of Luke and started the book of Acts. He told me that these two books are the best ones to start with when studying the Word. They lay the whole story out. Luke tells about the birth of Christ to his death and resurrection. Acts explains the beginning of the organized church.”\textsuperscript{13}

Smith also loved the writings of the Apostle Paul so much that he would memorize whole chapters. He even grew a beard for over a year and dramatically presented the Word to congregations wearing a robe and sandals.

Smith’s daughter Anne-Maries gives a unique perspective on Smith’s love for the Scriptures. She shares in response to a question about the way Smith’s parents raised their four children on the Word:

Oh, for that family, Christ was the center of all things – always. We would study the Luke story and I guess you know that Luke was Dad’s favorite book of the

\textsuperscript{12} Charles Smith, addressing staff in Martha House, Canchias, Honduras, October 1997.  
\textsuperscript{13} Scott Crews, diary, folder S136, Miguel Pinell Library, September 19, 1997.
Bible. Well, at least it was his favorite of the four gospels. Dad was always in the Bible. I used his Bible for my message at his funeral. His Bible was a work book. He never understood thin pages trimmed in gold. You are supposed to use that Bible – the thicker the pages the better. Thickness prevented ink from bleeding through so that you could mark it up. He was offended by thin pages with gold trim. For him this was just senseless. Why would a Bible be trimmed in gold? That showed riches. Dad was so practical. He was always in it and he quoted Scriptures. He memorized Scriptures all the time.14

Smith’s older daughter, Felicia SmithGraybeal, now an Episcopal priest, commented on her dad’s love for the Word, “Oh, it is huge. I think his passion for the Scriptures and the marginalized impressed me the most. He knew how to communicate with the people. This inspired my preaching. He was down to earth. He did not engage in fault finding. He had a good education. Often I saw him reading his Bible. I would attend his Bible studies. Even though he was my father it was not boring. He made it come alive.”15

Staff members Monty and Kelly Harrington spent a year in Honduras and lived next to Smith both in Honduras and Lake Wales. Both were influenced by the Christ-like walk Smith lived in front of them. Over ten years have passed and Monty continues to feel Smith’s presence, “Charlie still lives in me.”16 Regarding Smith’s love for the Word, Kelly remarks, “Charlie was always studying the life of Christ. He had a special love for the Gospels.”17

Monty remembers the many times he would walk into Smith’s study and see him pondering over the Word of God: “Charlie had a great love for the Scriptures. I would go in his office and he would be reading the Scriptures. He would make you stop and share

14 Dezelan, interview.
15 Felicia SmithGraybeal, interview by author, Denver, CO, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, June, 2006.
17 Harrington, interview.
his reading with you. He would almost have tears in His eyes going over certain Scriptures. He would say to people, ‘Here is the Word of the God, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’ and that always stuck with me.”

The Scriptures were the seedbed for Smith’s visions. God’s Word guided Smith’s concepts and ideas toward intelligent biblical solutions. The principles of anthropology and the disciplines of sociology would provide societal data, understanding of human behaviors and explain cultural beliefs. But for Smith, the Scriptures served as the primary compass to minister to the deepest moral, physical and spiritual needs of people. They would guide him through a land and people physically oppressed, morally bankrupt and spiritually ignorant to paths of righteous and justice.

Smith became so intimate with Jesus that he began referring to Jesus as the “Word”. One will note in Smith’s journals, as he approaches his divine exit from his deteriorating body, that the reality of Jesus as best friend, confidant and lover, is expressed in how he addresses his Lord as “Word”. Reflecting on his physical death, he writes, “... if the “Word” calls me home...” He understood this as correct theology as the Apostle John wrote in the fourth Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

Thinking about the first events to be held in the new Discipleship Center, he wrote, “I want the best video possible of all of the events surrounding the opening ceremony/dedication of the Discipleship Center, the first banquets with the poor, and my Home Going Celebration should it not be in the Word’s plan to heal me of this

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18 Harrington, interview.
19 Charles Smith, notes, folder S166, Miguel Pinell Library, September 13, 1997.
20 John 1:1 (KJV).
infirmity." Contemplating his future and reflecting back on his life, Smith writes, "My name is Charlie Smith, and I am thankful to the Word who was in the beginning for giving me life and purpose for living."

Smith even used these occasions to improve his skill at speaking the Spanish language. He writes of this language learning and meditation in the Word, "I sat on the porch this morning and read the first four chapters of Luke in Spanish, sometimes aloud and sometimes not. I love to read the Word in Spanish. I want to be able to read it with great clarity and with meaning conveyance."

One day a stateside staff person visited Smith at the Martha House in Honduras. Smith said to him, "Guess what? I have learned how to read and speak Spanish. I can now understand the language by reading the Spanish Bible." This was about a year before Smith died and it was truly a breakthrough in his ability to speak Spanish. Smith loved the Word so much that he fed his soul while at the same time learning the language.

Smith was so passionate about Scriptures, that often he would lose his sense of concentration. He was driving to his sister Lorna’s retreat house in Branson, Missouri, and was stopped by a policeman because of his passion for the Word. His daughter Anne-Marie recalls the incident as Smith was driving: "Daddy was quoting scriptures and I am sure his hands were up in the air and he was getting into the Scriptures with everything he had. He got pulled over and got a speeding ticket. He tried to use the quoting Scripture thing and it did not work. He did get a ticket but he knew the Bible

21 Charles Smith, notes, folder S166, Miguel Pinell Library, September 13, 1997.
22 Charles Smith, notes, S166, Miguel Pinell Library, September 13, 1997.
23 Ibid.
24 Charles Smith, conversation with author, Martha House, Canchias, Honduras, April, 1997.
backwards and forwards. Felicia has his Bible and the spine is broken. The pages are coming out. It is all underlined and marked up. He just used it and knew it.25

Smith believed that the creative power of the Word that brought all things into existence was comparable to the physical healing of the body through its natural process. Creating through the spoken Word was as natural to God as the healing of a scab was for the human body. Smith wrote:

We cannot comprehend a God so powerful that the Word can be spoken and things come into being, they are created. I do know that the creation is incredibly intricate and complex. This last week I scraped my arm and with my fragile skin, about a one-inch piece of skin was lifted off my arm. Elsa began to come every day to change the bandages, first cleaning the wound and then applying antibiotic ointment and a bandage. I watched the sore every day as she changed the bandage, and observed marvelous things taking place. Finally, after about seven or eight days, a large piece of protective crust shaped like a honeycomb biscuit fell off and I had new skin – beautiful, pink, new skin. What a miracle of healing.26

As the ministry of Heart to Honduras began to grow and more and more facilities were necessary, Smith envisioned an effective means to keep the Word before the people. He began to name these facilities with biblical names such as Martha, Mary, Joshua, Tabitha, Cornelius and Ananias. Smith shares his “Theology of Names” as follows, “We have come to the conclusion that giving biblical/spiritual names to houses is probably a good practice – it keeps us in the Word. Each house should have a small plaque telling about the person after whom the house was named.”27 Smith named his own retreat house the “Martha House” to communicate the importance of fellowship around food. Naming one house “Mary” communicated the need for prayer. Naming another house “Joshua” conveys a pioneering spirit and naming a house “Cornelius” communicated equality.

25 Dezelan, interview.
26 Charles Smith, “My Daily Diary” folder 1, 45.
27 Ibid., 17.
Putting into practice the commands and teachings of Jesus was one of the cardinal tenets of Smith’s faith. He was encouraged one day when he saw a couple from Pennsylvania putting into practice one of Jesus’ teachings. They were walking down the road to Karen’s Hope Clinic to visit a little two year old blind girl named Lillian and a six year old paralytic named Heidi. This couple, for Smith, was a living letter, as the Apostle Paul referred to in the New Testament, walking as the Word to put into practice the teachings of Jesus. He wrote observing this couple, “Perhaps they are taking them to the river for a dip in the cool water. It is obvious that they are going to put into practice one of the commands of Jesus, to attend to the needs of the least of these. That is what the Discipleship Center is supposed to be all about. Learning the commands of Jesus and putting them into practice in daily life.”

There were rare occasions when Smith had time to be alone. Smith was Heart to Honduras. He was needed. Thus he was always surrounded by Miguel, the staff, the workers and the poor. But on those rare occasions when the village of Canchias stood still, Smith would slip away to spend time in the Word: “It is now about 7:30 p.m. I sat out on the porch most of the day, reading the Word from the Ambassador Hand Book. The selected passages touched my heart many times, several to that point of being broken, knowing that our God cares for us, loves us, and is there to help us through any and every situation....” Ten days later he continues this time of reflection: “Today was a lay-back day. I did not do much of anything. It was nice having the group gone and having the compound virtually to myself again after two weeks of people. Solitude is

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28 Charles Smith, “My Daily Diary” folder 1, 17.
29 Ibid.
very important to me at this time in my life. I need the time to reflect, to write, to pray, to read the Word and just rest.”

Smith had a real problem with preachers manipulating the Word of God for their own self interest. Modern day preachers were making God’s Word complex, confusing and clever. They were compromising the Word. It needed to be down to earth like the teachings of Jesus who spoke in the vernacular of the people, using words like bread, water, love and light, or if in Honduras, pan, agua, amor and luz. He writes, “Preachers or pastors rarely teach the Word pure and simple. Rather, they preach words that tickle the ears of the hearers, what the hearers want to hear, such as the false teaching that Christians will be healthy and wealthy. Love not the world, seek His Kingdom. You do not need 10 steps to prosperity. You need only to seek His Kingdom.”

Smith lived life with a passion and sought out the kernel of truth in all his studies, life experiences and classroom instruction. He would walk in this truth for the rest of his life, though imperfectly as a struggling believer.

For a while, his truth had an anthropological base filtered through the soft sciences of sociology and psychology; but eventually this would flip-flop and truth would have a biblical base filtered through the lens of the Holy Spirit. He wrote of this passion and search for truth, “I came across this note in my files: My life has been characterized by intensity, by a solid sense of purpose, meaning and motivation. I have been driven by a search for Truth and the living of the Truth. As I searched, I found my understanding deepened over time. I am so different than I was 20 years ago, but that same voice has

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30 Charles Smith, "My Daily Diary" folder 1, 17.
31 Charles Smith, "The Book" folder 3.
been behind me saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.' And I have taken that path with few diversions."

From all accounts of Smith’s life in the last two decades of his life, he lived out this truth by walking this path with integrity. This path was triangular in design. It was framed with three planks to give it purpose and meaning. They were labeled: In the beginning was the Word, the Word became flesh and the Word is eternal.

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32 Charles Smith, “My Daily Diary” folder 1, 55.
Chapter Six

The Value of Unity

Church unity was for Smith like the harmony and team spirit of a covered wagon train moving westward during the 1849 gold rush to California. Unity was essential. It was the grease easing the friction on the wheels. It was the smoke from the peace pipe. It enabled the wagons to circle at night to keep at bay the Apaches. It gave equality in the sharing of bear meat. It made possible the fording of rivers, the climbing of mountains and the sharing of sorrow.

This theme of church unity was instilled into Smith by his father. In the ministry publication, *The Reminder*, Smith wrote: “The church universal and the Ruston Church of God were the most important things in Dad’s life. Yes, he loved and tenderly cared for mother and us children, and he thoroughly enjoyed teaching technical English at Louisiana Tech, but to be in the presence of other believers, ‘to unite in songs of praise’, was what he lived for.” Due to his father’s influence, Smith would proclaim this doctrine with passion in almost every message he preached.

Smith sat under the powerful preaching of many key leaders of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), in the late 1940’s and 1950’s. The one unique doctrine that stood out among these men of God more than any other was “a united church for a divided world”. This doctrine, based primarily on Jesus’ Words in John 17, “Father I pray that they may be one even as we are one.”, was to Smith what the text “The just shall live by faith.” was to Martin Luther. It became central to his vision for Honduras and rarely did he speak to the village churches in Honduras without teaching on this subject.

The need for unity was great among the village churches in Honduras in the early stages of Heart to Honduras. When Smith sent Miguel Pinell out into the rural mountains to bring the pastors together, Pinell noticed the disunity among the churches. He shared: “I first came to Honduras in 1987 and began to work with Charlie in 1988. I went from village to village looking for pastors and asking what needs they had. I found disunity in the churches. This is what Charlie wanted to do. He wanted to bring about unity.”

Smith’s appeal and vision for unity were not relegated just to the church in Honduras, but his challenge was universal. During his closing remarks at his ordination service he appealed for unity in the Body of Christ: “Thank you everybody for loving me. I love all of you. Forgive me. Forgive me. Forgive me if I have wronged anybody. I love every one of you. We are one in the Body. We are one in the Kingdom....We are a body of believers. We are a body of Christ as we yield our lives to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We are the Body of Christ with each other.” After these remarks, approximately four hundred people gathered to lay hands on Smith and his wife Karen as they knelt at the altar, symbolizing the great unity of the Body of Christ.

Smith believed in the one universal church and that Jesus was the head of that one church. It was His Body. He taught that the church is composed of individual believers just as a building is composed of many bricks. As Jesus is the head of the Body, likewise He is the capstone of the building. There is one body and one head. There is one building and one cornerstone. This Body is guided by the teaching and example of its head. He believed the role of the church was to teach and practice unity.

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3 Charles Smith, “Ordination Service of Charlie Smith” VHS (sermon, South Lake Wales Church, Lake Wales, FL, box 1, tape 5, Miguel Pinell Library, January 8, 1990).
One of the earliest signs of unity among the churches in Honduras came following a trip Smith took in August of 1989. He writes in the Hand to the Plow Ministries newsletter of how deeply he was encouraged during the visit: "The one word that summarized our experiences during this important time was ENCOURAGEMENT! We were encouraged by the vision that God continues to reveal to us for Honduras, a vision that unifies our hearts in love."

On January 28, 1989 in the village of Palmital, a dozen pastors met for the first regional pastors' meeting with Smith and Pinell. The church at Palmital was centrally located among the various churches. It was truly a non-denominational meeting with pastors coming from ten villages representing churches such as Alpha and Omega, Central American, Prince of Peace, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Church of God, (Anderson, IN), Church of God Pentecostal, and the Evangelical Reformed. The villages of Las Delicias, El Aguaje, San Isidro, Montañuela, Meambar, La Cosona, Palmital, and San Bartolo were represented.

Following the meeting, Smith challenged the stateside churches: "We have seen as we have visited churches in the past two days and with a dozen pastors from the entire region attending that they are dedicated to work for the Kingdom. We want to help them in their mission to reach the lost in Honduras. We are committed to do that in a nondenominational way for the Kingdom. Our hope and prayer is that the North American church will help them to win the lost in this area."

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5 First meeting of area pastors at Palmital, VHS, box 1, tape 6, Miguel Pinell Library, January 28, 1989.
While in Antigua, Guatemala in August 1994, Smith visited several ministry staff and their families attending the Christian Spanish Academy language school and treated them to an evening meal. He wrote to the stateside office and shared his joy not only of the food and fellowship but of the immense joy of seeing unity in the group, “We are having a good time with the Harringtons and Dikes. Last night we had a meal together....How sweet it is to feel one in the Spirit with everyone.”

Smith had always been taught the truth that there was only one church and that Jesus was the head of that church, His Body, but often he was disappointed in the discord, backbiting and infighting in the church. Yet, nothing thrilled his heart more than to witness true unity emerging in the village churches of Honduras. He writes of this newfound joy: “I had never experienced that Truth until I began to see the denominational walls crumbling, and the church uniting in Christ in Honduras. By encouraging and enabling the village churches, the Honduran believers are now reaching out in love to their own people who are in need, regardless of denominational affiliation. That’s God’s way to reconcile His creation back to Himself, and that’s exciting....”

This unity was noted nine months later as Smith writes: “God is performing a marvelous work through us all in the country of Honduras....The bottom line is that today 27 village churches in Honduras have set aside their denominational differences and have unified for the cause of the Kingdom of God.”

One method Smith used to teach and encourage unity in the village churches was to utilize the spiritual gifts of Pinell’s wife Nilsa to form a women’s group. Smith

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6 Charles Smith, fax to Candy and Dave Pischel, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, August 25, 1994.
7 Heart to Honduras ministry brochure, first draft, folder 815, Miguel Pinell Library, October 1, 1991.
named this organization “The Women of the Church United”. This ministry proved to be very productive and the spirit of unity was a key in its effectiveness. Smith wrote: “Under Nilsa’s leadership, the Women of the Church United have been proving themselves more effective in evangelism than many of the pastors. In one series of meetings in the village of El Encanto (The Enchanted), near San Antonio de Cortes, thirty-five people made decisions to follow Christ.”

Smith believed that discord and disunity were great tools in the hands of the enemy. He believed unity had to be taught and lived out as a Christian witness. It had to be manifested in the life of the believer so the world would know the Truth. This unity had to be expressed through love for one another. For Smith, there could be no love without unity and no unity without love. It was crucial for the believer to live out Jesus’ Words, “In this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you have love one for another.” This was bottom line Christianity for Smith. Without this kind of lifestyle of love and unity, the church was only encouraging the enemy.

At the very outset of the ministry of Heart to Honduras, the major theme was unity. Pinell recalls the importance Smith placed on unity before the first Americans ever arrived in Honduras under the auspices of Heart to Honduras:

Teaching was his great strength. He would go on and on and on teaching about the church. His last week here there were about 25 pastors and he taught about unity of the church and how important it was for over forty-five minutes. This was his last message to them. Be unified. His first sermon in 1989 in January to the first pastors meeting was on unity and his last sermon in 1997 was on unity. Be unified. Just like Jesus taught in John 17. Charlie had one message down here. It was unity. He taught it over and over and over again and again. And the people and the pastors sucked all of this teaching in. They heard and they listened and they obeyed his teaching.

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10 John 13:35 (KJV).
11 Miguel Pinell, interview.
The standard by which Smith measured and called forth unity was always the Word of God. He believed that all Christians could rally around the Word. The Word was Jesus and his teaching. He believed unity was possible or else Jesus would never have prayed: “Father, I pray that they might be one even as we are one.”\(^{12}\) Thinking of the term “Reminder”, the name his father used for his own church newsletter and the one Smith adopted for the early Heart to Honduras newsletters, Smith wrote of this standard for unity, “Reminders are not meant to be easy to understand or easy to accept. You may or may not agree with their message. Test it against the Scriptures – the Word of God we have been given. If it is consistent, you may want to consider making it a part of your mind, heart, soul and spirit – your inner being that determines what you do.”\(^{13}\)

Smith was suspect of the direction the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), was taking. It seemed to him that she was entrenching herself more and more into a bureaucratic quagmire. He felt the label “First Church of God” was no different than “First Baptist Church”. He felt a spirit of competition was prevalent in the movement and with ever increasing institutional structures at her international headquarters she was beginning to take on the traditional characteristics of a denomination.

This became more evident to him as he sought to involve the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), in the ministry of Heart to Honduras. At each overture he made, they were polite but not positive. He wanted partnership and a unified front with them in Honduras but it never materialized. In 1992, Heart to Honduras chairman Jerry Grubbs invited three executives to come and see the Heart to Honduras vision in Honduras but

\(^{12}\) John 17:11 (KJV).
\(^{13}\) Charles Smith, notes, folder 777, Miguel Pinell Library.
they refused the offer. Writing about this possibility and combining it with a visit to La
Ceiba to visit the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), work in Honduras, Smith wrote:

Jerry is thinking about asking the President of World Service, Jim Williams,
the President of the Missionary Board, Norm Patton, and the President of the
Women of the Church of God, Doris Dale to come for the first few days with
the Meadow Park Medical Team. Jon Kardatzke has already said that he
would pay their way. Norm might want to go and see Donnie Allen for a day
at the end of their trip. They would stay about four days, and we would take
them around to see the work. It could be a very positive experience for our
ministry. 14

Smith was hurt that this potential leadership team from Anderson turned down the
invitation to visit Honduras. He never understood why. Years later, after Smith passed
away, Heart to Honduras was told it was due to “protocol” that they refused to accept
Smith’s offer. 15 There were three small village churches near La Ceiba affiliated with
Church of God, (Anderson, IN), and “protocol” prevented them from accepting Smith’s
offer. Smith was never into “protocol” when it came to the church. Protocol for Smith
was following accepted norms or procedures to prevent offending another party. There
was only one church and one Kingdom for him. In this case, protocol was as divisive as
denominationalism for Smith.

Smith never turned his back on what he believed to be the spirit of truth taught,
believed and embraced by the Church of God, (Anderson, IN) on unity, but he rejected
what he believed was an exclusive spirit. This is why he refused to name the new
spiritual communities in the village churches of Honduras “Church of God”. A House
of Prayer (as the Hondurans referred to a new church building) facility was built in the
village of Chaguatillo by the Eastland Church of God in Lexington, Kentucky. The
Honduran pastor asked Smith if he could name it the Church of God, (Anderson, IN).

15 Robin Wood, interview by author, Los Cabos, Mexico, Miguel Pinell Library, October 6, 2005.
Smith replied, “No! It will ruin you!” Smith felt the name would begin a trend toward denominationalism and be divisive. He suggested the name be, “The church that is at Chaguatillo” in the same manner in which the Apostle Paul referred to “the church that is at Ephesus” or “the church that is at Philippi”. Smith believed the church needed to be unified in mission work by seeking ways to strengthen and extend the church universal rather than its denominational interest. Smith stated this position in a mission statement in an early ministry UPDATE, formerly called The Reminder: “Heart to Honduras is a non-profit voluntary organization of disciples of Jesus who are committed to strengthening and extending the Kingdom of God in Honduras regardless of denominational affiliation.”

Smith expressed his personal belief in this concept to the Board of Heart to Honduras in 1991:

When this vision for this ministry was being refined, it became clear that all of our efforts were to be directed through the local village churches which we believe, according to Scripture, is God’s means for reconciling all creation back to himself. This “fundamental assumption” is based on the Truth that there is only one Lord and one church, and that the New Testament church includes all true Believers. From the outset, therefore, we have paid no attention to denominational affiliations, but rather have preached and practiced the Truth of the one true church, the Body of Christ that transcends denominational lines and that is truly a fellowship of believers committed to following Jesus Christ.

According to Smith, Christian denominations began to emerge the moment Martin Luther pinned his ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Differences over “correct” theology created division. These differences

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16 Charles Smith, conversation with author, summer, 1994.
were so great in their minds that they could no longer stay in fellowship with one another. These doctrinal differences caused splinter groups to separate and start their own movements or denominations. This usually meant a new name would be attached to these splinter groups that would identify themselves and their theology such as Baptists, Methodists, Church of God, Pentecostal and the like. As these new groups separated they would build new buildings and start putting signs on the doors making the separation more distinct. Smith notes:

They give the building a name: First Baptist Church, Second Baptist Church, Willow Avenue Church of Christ, and the like. The effect here is that the name identifies the building, not the people who make up the church. So when people refer to the church as a building it is bad theology. All of this is the work of the human mind and has nothing to do with the Spirit of God that is unity. The result has been that the enemy has used this tactic to divide and virtually destroy the effectiveness of the true church. Divide and conquer is a common war strategy. Jesus prayed that we would “…be one so that the world may know...” Is it any wonder that the world does not know?  

Deep in Smith’s heart there was a longing for the world to know this agape love and co-inherent Trinitarian unity, especially in Honduras and the surroundings nations. On Tuesday, October 14, 1997, Smith contemplated his final words to a group of twenty-five pastors who pastored in the Canchias, Meambar, Comayagua region and beyond. They were awaiting his arrival as he had been holed up for days in the Martha House due to his terminal illness. The pastors had gathered in the Assembly Hall below. Late in the afternoon, a group of farmer-pastors arrived at the Martha House and lifted Smith into a makeshift litter and transported him down the mountain trail. Smith was taken to the completed deck overlooking the Canchias River, given a tour of the recently finished Cocina de Charlie (Charlie’s kitchen), shown the newly installed forty-foot Ambassador

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flag pole and finally carried into the huge dining hall that would accommodate four hundred Hondurans where the pastors, their wives and other friends were waiting.

Smith sat in his shorts on the litter now positioned on the floor. A white towel lay over his lap. He wore brown house slippers with white tube socks. A short sleeved khaki tee-shirt with the words “I am an Ambassador for Jesus” fit loosely over his shoulders. A plastic tube fit snugly in his nose, providing life-sustaining oxygen. Smith was very weak physically; he only had seven more days to live. His breathing barely pumped essential blood through his heart. His lungs were hardening from the fatal fibrosis. He spoke in a whisper, resting his lungs as Miguel translated his English. There was weeping among the many Hondurans as they clung to every word Smith uttered. This would be Smith’s final words to them. They were in the Upper Room and he sensed the finality of the situation. Smith spoke extemporaneously. His words echoed the final themes spoken by His Lord to the disciples:

It is a great joy and pleasure to be with you tonight. I have looked forward to this meeting for a long time. When I left Honduras in April [Smith actually left May 2, 1997], it was in my mind and my spirit to come back to Honduras. I wept because I did not think I would make it back but Miguel said, “You will make it back.” This was a prophecy by Hermano Miguel.

It is hard to believe that eight years ago we had the first pastors’ meeting in Palmital. We invited a few pastors to put aside their little differences for the Kingdom of God and work together. And this is largely what we have done – to unite – for there is only one church. There is only one Lord, one Spirit, and one Father over all, in all and through all. Just one Lord and He loves us. He gave us His Son who died on the cross for our sins. God no longer holds our sins against us. Isn’t this good news? Just think where you would be if God had not forgiven you of your sins! Families beat each other. Husbands beat their wives. Wives beat their husbands. People get drunk. They go crazy. But God in His great mercy has forgiven and accepted us. He puts His arms around us and wants us to be reconciled.

I asked God last night, “Why this disease?” I don’t understand it but I do not have to understand. I just have to be obedient. David said, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of death I will fear no evil.” I do not know what the outcome of this will be. He may raise me from the dead. He has the power to do it. He
made us and He knows everything about us. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. I think it would be a great thing if He raised me from the dead because I think a lot of people would put their faith in God and trust in God. Some would say this is a selfish prayer. But I would rather stay around for awhile and advance the Kingdom of God.

I would like to do this for three reasons. Keep these reasons in mind. Do not ever let them leave you. The first thing I want to share from the Word is: go make disciples. Jesus said, “All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go and make disciples of all nations teaching them to do all the things that I have commanded you.” Jesus said to put into practice all the things I have commanded you. Now it would be a useless command if we taught this but did not put them into practice.

The second thing I want to share is: In order to do this you must be sent by the Father into all the world, not just Honduras but the entire world, and that is God’s call upon our lives. You know the story of the wise man who built his house upon the rock. The rains and storms came but the house stood because it was built on a rock. The other man heard the Word but did not put it into practice. You have to put it into practice.

The third thing I want to share is: Jesus will always be with you. I want you to know that the Father said: “I will be with you always even to the end of the world.” And He is with us tonight.

What a special place the Lord has given to us. Who would have dreamed of this ten years ago? Oh, the Lord has done a great work among us. But we know this is not the church. The building is not the church. The building is a place where the church comes to meet and eat and fellowship and that is what we do. It is a place where we learn and go forth.

It has been wonderful being with you tonight. I did not think I was going to make it down. But with God’s power and your help I made it.

Does any one have any questions?

A Honduran pastor asked: “Yes, how did you become a Christian?”

I was so blessed to be born in a loving Christian family. What a great blessing that is to be nurtured in the Kingdom by parents who show their love. As a young boy I accepted Christ into my life as the center of my life. Many times I failed God like you. I was up and down. That is the way I was. But when I was, I guess about nineteen years old, I met Karen and through Karen the Lord planted a seed in my heart and it has been my joy to follow Him all the days of my life though all these years. I have not been perfect.

A Honduran pastor shared: “Hermano Charlie, our greatest joy is to be sitting with you here in this room.”

The greatest joy, the greatest joy, the greatest joy by far that any of us can think or imagine is the joy of the unity of the brothers and sisters and with all el mundo
[the world]. The Scriptures tell us that by unity the world will know that Jesus is Lord and this is the cry of the church, every day “Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!”

With these words, Smith clinched his hands together, leaned back on his pillow, closed his eyes and paused for a moment. He then painfully but joyfully moaned, “Oh!” as if to express deep gratitude to God. He paused for a few seconds with mouth open to ease his breathing and said, “Heaven!”

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Chapter Seven

Partnerships

Smith may have been a Lone Ranger in his visions but when it came to implementing visions, he was like a hunter-gatherer — to use an anthropological term Smith would appreciate. Hunter-gatherers were nomadic people who went out into the bush seeking resources and diversity of game such as warthogs, rabbits and wild turkey. Hunter-gatherer societies also tend to have egalitarian social structures. Hunter-gatherers will often share their meat with others with no obvious benefit. Philosophically, Smith’s world view was much like the hunter-gatherer. He encouraged diversity. Position, gender or color was irrelevant. Smith sought equality in relationships and believed the needs and voice of “the least of these” should be given the same priority as “the most of these”. He believed in the exchange of ideas with other ministries.

In other words, Smith was a strong believer in sharing with other churches and organizations new ideas, mistake recoveries, facilities and personnel. There was only one Kingdom and one church and the members needed to be unified. Partnerships were a way to bring this about.

Hosting the international flow of students in his home for meals, functioning as Director of a Community Action program in Ruston, Louisiana, birthing Father’s Place restaurant specializing in international cuisine, starting the H.E.A.R.T. program in Lake Wales, serving in the Peace Corps for two years, traveling to over thirty countries and the non-denominational structure of Heart to Honduras left a legacy of working with others that influenced the ensuing Heart to Honduras leadership. Some years after his death, the Heart to Honduras staff, encouraged by Smith’s desire to break down denominational
walls, formulated a new mission statement emphasizing this partnering spirit of Smith, “Heart to Honduras is a holistic ministry centered in Jesus Christ, resourced by passionate partners.”

He surrounded himself with people of different denominational backgrounds and divergent streams of thought. He partnered with others regardless of church affiliation. He was inclusive. He invited people of different social strata into his home. He embraced people with different gifts and was always networking with different ministries.

Smith thought outside the box and reached inside other “boxes” to explore, to inquire, to evaluate, to question and to examine, to see if connection and integration might be possible. He was not ethnocentric. He never thought his world was the most important or superior. His world-view was inclusive of other people groups due to his Peace Corps experience in Malaysia and six years of post-graduate work in the field of anthropology. As an applied anthropologist his mind was trained to analyze and examine, compare different cultures, work ground level with people, study behavior and seek truth. It gave him the courage to face new ideas, embrace new people and risk working in tandem with new ministries. Though Smith had an ongoing struggle with the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), he would be the first to admit that he owed much to this movement’s mantra: “We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood washed one.”

Following his teaching assignment with Warner Southern College, he joined his wife and attended the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales, Florida. His wife Karen never felt the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), recognized her husband for his giftedness, creative genius and powerful visions. She also realized her husband was counter-culture

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1 Heart to Honduras staff retreat minutes, Yellow Creek Lake, Beaver Dam, IN, April 27-29, 2003.
and did not especially ingratiate himself to the Church of God, (Anderson, IN). In a sermon preached at the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales, Smith states, “We are working with eight different denominations. We are not interested in establishing Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian or Church of God, (Anderson, IN), congregations. That’s probably the reason we do not have denominational support for this work. We could have twenty congregations affiliated with Anderson by this time but we are not interested in a name; we are interested in the church, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.”

On an old piece of notebook paper filed away in the ministry’s cabinet was a handwritten chart diagramming Smith’s early vision for Heart to Honduras. He writes out names of potential Board members: Pischel, Warman, Smith, Kardatzke, Grubbs, Pinell, Usher. Under the Board he draws a line and connects it to Spiritual Life. Under Spiritual Life he lists the various departments: Graphics, Communications, Food Service, Architecture, Construction and Church Development. But it was at the top of the chart, above the word “Board”, that Smith wrote the words Heart to the World. Smith not only wanted to connect with the world, he wanted to partner with it. This was Smith’s original name conceived for his vision for Honduras. However, it was overruled by the Board because they felt the ministry should initially stay focused in one country.

In the fall of 1993, Smith wrote seven fundamentals of the faith that he wanted the Honduran pastors to adopt. The seventh fundamental reveals his desire to include all believing Christians and churches. He writes, “Members of this group believe the church to be the Body of Christ, made up of all Christians, and that all Christians are one in

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2 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
3 Charles Smith, notes, folder 20, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
Christ. This oneness in Christ is based on spiritual experience and not on creedal agreements. The local congregation could be referred to as: *Evangelical church of God*, *Evangelical church of Christ* or *The Family of Believers that meet in ...(name of village).* These potential names indicated Smith was deliberately seeking an all inclusive name that would satisfy all partners or denominations.

Smith’s vision for H.E.A.R.T. to become an all-inclusive ministry that would eventually work with hundreds of churches, schools, mission agencies and denominations, is his crown jewel of what it means to partner with others. Smith would bring an inclusive spirit to all his visions. On March 3, 1982, Smith writes to his parents: “This letter is the very first to be written with the new letterhead designed for H.E.A.R.T. I cannot help but believe that this is the beginning of a ministry that eventually will be a blessing and a help to thousands of people throughout the world. Your continued prayers are cherished.”

In 1980, Smith, along with Dr. Robert Clark, began to raise funds for the H.E.A.R.T. program. They made contact with Dr. Dean Flora, development worker with *Food for the Hungry*. This organization began to underwrite the ministry of H.E.A.R.T. In 1982 while a professor at Warner Southern, Smith, serving as the first Director of H.E.A.R.T., began partnering with other like-minded organizations such as *Save the Refugees Fund* which was part of *Mercy Corps*. Later *Project Global Village*, under the leadership of Ells Culver, would spin off from *Mercy Corps* and begin a work in Honduras. In 1983 Smith began working part-time with *Project Global Village*. In 1988,

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following a four year stint with Project Global Village, Smith began working with Hand to the Plow. Two years later he would formally and legally launch Heart to Honduras. Smith associated himself or worked with all six of these Christian/development organizations and this experience eventually enabled him to launch his vision in Honduras.

As of June of 2008, H.E.A.R.T. had trained 764 missionaries and worked with sixty-five mission or development agencies. Over forty-five denominations had partnered with H.E.A.R.T. Former graduates and personnel had served in eighty-six countries. International students had come from twenty-six countries. These statistics reveal the magnitude of Smith’s visions in terms of partnerships. Smith made room in his Heart to Honduras vision for this same partnership spirit to continue. His model of working with many other agencies lives on and when the vision is right the potential for future partnerships is unlimited. For a list of Heart to Honduras partners see Appendix D.

Smith believed that missions needed a new vision. He was particularly concerned about the colonialistic residue still prevalent in the West. He referred to this residue as the “Old Vision” for missions. This vision encouraged missionaries to go to the Third World countries and take control. Smith dreamed of a “New Vision” in which the “Two-thirds” world would go as partners willing to learn from the Third World community while working together. They would be “co-workers – not case workers.” This would be done with a united front of churches partnering together. “The church needs to be

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unified in mission work”, writes Smith, “seeking always to strengthen and extend the church universal rather than its denominational interests.”

Smith’s goal was to see the non-western church become indigenous, self-sustaining, equipped and empowered. Partnerships require openness. It is a willingness by one partner to bring the other partners into his circle. Over and over again, Smith would share with both Hondurans and North Americans one of his most cherished quotes, “He drew a circle that left me out, heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win, I drew a circle that took him in.”

An example of Smith’s openness is found in the way he recruited staff people with opposing beliefs. Rick Dike and his family of five spent three years in Honduras. He returned home and spent a total of thirteen years on staff with Heart to Honduras leading ministry teams and serving as Logistics Coordinator out of his house in Urbana, Ohio. He mentions how two things impressed him about Charlie accepting him as a partner in ministry. “I was not Church of God, (Anderson, IN). I was from a charismatic tradition. Yet, Charlie took a chance on me and my family and he hardly knew me. This made a deep impression on me.”

Steve Coder, President of *Hand to the Plow*, visited Honduras with Smith in August of 1989 when HTH was still under the legal umbrella of *Hand to the Plow*. Speaking to a group of pastors, Coder sensed the openness of the church in Honduras and how unity was one of the great keys to their future partnership: “God is doing a great work in Honduras. He is breaking down denominational walls. He is bringing about

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10 Rick Dike, interview by author, Urbana, OH, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, June 26, 2008.
unity in the church. He does this when we humble ourselves before Him. That is the secret of unity. Unity is corporate humility and when we humble ourselves Jesus will have His way. I have not seen God move the way He is moving among the pastors of Honduras. Our emphasis is not on denominations but the Kingdom."

Smith, speaking to the second pastors’ association in the poor village of Montañuela, challenges them to not only work together but to be unified:

I believe in my heart and spirit God has brought us together to do a work for His Kingdom. I want to thank you for your faithfulness over the last eight months. I wondered why God had not brought me here sooner. It seems as if things were running slow but God is always on time and never late. It is when we are one that God is pleased. When we all get to heaven they are not going to ask if we are Prince of Peace, Reformed or Alpha and Omega. We are going to be one in Christ. I pray God will bring us together as His body. I pray that he will melt us and make us as one so that His will will be done.

Smith’s studies in anthropology gave him a cultural understanding of the needs of people. As he studied these needs he made no distinction of ethnic origins, color of skin, religious affiliation, culture, behavior, gender or political preference. If Smith ever made a distinction it would have been in singling out “the weakest of these”. These anthropological insights enabled Smith to see the Aborigines as no different than the Albanians; the Chinese as no different than the Caucasian. As he writes:

The church exists to take the good news of reconciliation and the patterns for behavior that address the most basic needs of the weakest family to household members. Scripture is clear. We will be judged individually by what we have done with our lives in response to divine/Scriptural mandates. We will share the knowledge, beliefs, values and norms – the culture of the New Testament Church – that transforms cultural and spiritual organisms that makes us one in Christ Jesus our Lord. I want to know Christ – the transcultural, universal manifestation of God – that links me to that eternal Body.

11 Steve Coder, “Unity of the Church” VHS (sermon, Heart to Honduras Pastors’ Fellowship, Montañuela, Honduras, box 2, tape 2, Miguel Pinell Library, August, 1989).
12 Charles Smith, “Oneness in Christ” VHS (sermon, Heart to Honduras Pastors’ Fellowship, Montañuela, Honduras, box 2, tape 2, Miguel Pinell Library, August, 1989).
Smith was raised in an Arminian tradition believing that the atonement of Jesus was for all mankind. Therefore if the Gospel is for all, then all should be free to receive the Gospel and not just an elect few. This is inclusion. For Smith, the belief of inclusion automatically spilled over into the practice of inclusion. Partnerships denote inclusion. Inclusion denotes unity. “We now understand that the Gospel,” wrote Smith contemplating central biblical themes, “is for whosoever will. God does not show favoritism but accepts people of all nations.”

Smith believed the elect inside Jesus’ circle included Jews and Gentiles. Jesus showed no favoritism. He praised the Roman Centurion for his faith, affirmed the Canaanite woman for her faith, refused to by-pass the Samaritan village, considered the Good Samaritan his neighbor and noted that one leper out of ten that returned to give thanks was a Samaritan. Contemplating Jesus including these Gentiles, Smith wrote, “Jesus is the Messiah for all people. If you don’t understand this, you cannot possibly understand what God is doing in history.”

Smith’s phrase “fellowship of believers” was an inclusive fellowship – call it believers, partnerships, denominations, agencies, NGO’s, or synods – that encompassed the whole spectrum of humanity. His priorities were unity, singleness of purpose, holistic ministry and an abiding love for the poor with the Church at the center. If these priorities were embraced, Smith would partner with anyone.

Theologically, Smith saw the need for partnerships in the covenant God gave to Abraham. He saw God partnering with the nation of Israel to spread His glory to the entire world. He would not only invite Abraham to partner with Him, but through the seed of Abraham, God wanted partnership with the Gentiles. Smith believed that God

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15 Ibid.
wanted the Jews and Gentiles to partner. On this basis, he wanted the Body of Christ to be one by partnering together and breaking down denominational walls.

An effective example of Smith’s willingness to partner occurred in April of 1997. Smith invited eleven architects, including an atheist, from several states and Canada to the rural village of Canchias, Honduras. This would be Smith’s final team to direct prior to his untimely physical death. Dr. William DeJong, CEO of DeJONG, Inc., was the visionary for this Education Team. Smith strongly encouraged them to meet with community leaders, educators, teachers and government leaders. After making thorough assessments of the dilapidated school facilities in a dozen villages, the team met in Canchias with about thirty teachers and administrators as well as about a half dozen educators from the Department of Education in San Pedro Sula.

One year later this partnership bore fruit when the Education Team returned to Honduras and built a magnificent proto-type school in Canchias with a price tag of $50,000. This school caught the eye of the Honduran Department of Education. They were so impressed that they assigned an additional teacher to this isolated village.

Dr. DeJong and his team of architects eventually began their own NGO, calling it Schools for the Children of the World. Later the government requested this team to design and build four hundred schools throughout Honduras, a proposal they declined, instead agreeing to partner with the government to improve the schools. DeJong writes:

SCW has built six new schools and renovated over 50 schools in Honduras, a new school in Nicaragua, and one in Belize. SCW became an official 501(c)(3) organization in the United States in 2003 and was contracted by the Honduras Ministry of Education to develop a National School Facility Master Plan. The school facility master plan was a huge step forward for SCW and has contributed to the founding of a Honduran sister organization, SCW-Honduras and SCW-
Canada. In 2006-2007 SCW has ventured into East Africa and has begun the development of projects in Kenya and Tanzania.16

This is a powerful example of what happens when partnerships come together and share their expertise, skills and passion in a spirit of unity. The Education Team had their vision. They were experts in building school facilities in the States. Smith had his vision. He had the cultural key and the needed contacts to open the door for the Education Team. Each partner had an essential ingredient. This is the value of partnerships. One has what the other needs. King Solomon advanced this principle years ago when he wrote, “It's better to have a partner than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps…”17

But it was not only Smith’s vision and willingness to partner, it was his life and character that impressed this team. Unified partnerships must have respected leaders of integrity and moral character as well as credible visions to make partnerships work.

The Education Team was a mix of non-believers, religious people, church members, Protestants, Catholics, an atheist and committed followers of Jesus Christ. It was an international team, culturally diverse and loaded with creativity. They wanted to partner with Heart to Honduras. For that purpose they came. It was Smith’s life as much as Smith’s vision that cemented the partnership. For it was on the Martha House porch that Smith taught this team God’s Word and led them in singing the great hymns of the church while his lungs labored to breathe from a plastic tube attached to a machine.

17 Ecclesiastes 4:9 (Message).
Chapter Eight

Compassion

Bleeding occurs when the skin breaks. Emotional bleeding occurs when the heart breaks. Compassion is emotional bleeding. Over a span of fourteen years, Charles Smith shed a lot of emotional blood walking the mountain trails of Honduras. Unjust weights and scales, ubiquitous poverty and widespread ignorance stirred him to righteous anger and resolution. This unholy trinity stiffened Smith’s resolve to find the proper social and economic tourniquet to stop this bleeding.

As an adolescent growing up, Smith rarely went a week without observing one of his parents performing a compassionate deed. Either his father was visiting the poor on Saturday inviting little children to church on Sunday or his mother was cooking for some needy student attending Louisiana Tech. This kindness left an indelible impression on Smith’s tender conscience and would serve as a moral compass for the rest of his life.

Myrtle, Smith’s mother, transferred the spirit of compassion into his life by her love for the children, the lonely Tech students, and the poor blacks in Ruston. She opened Smith’s eyes and heart not to see color of skin, class or gender. Her influence was huge on his life and greatly influenced his decision to major in sociology and eventually become an applied anthropologist. Author Mary Beth Brown writes of Nellie Reagan’s influence upon her son Ronald, “The time, investment, and strong faith that she poured into his life are what produced one of America’s greatest presidents.”¹ In the same manner, Myrtle’s time and devotion to her son produced a brilliant applied

anthropologist and a compassionate missionary in Charles Smith.

Smith’s uncle, Sam Hicks, remembered Myrtle’s influence upon her son’s life: “I recall that one time when I was in Ruston, Charles and a group of boys were getting ready to go on some kind of outdoor hike or bicycle ride. When Charles came in to talk to his mother about this in the kitchen, I remember Myrtle had all the boys come in and they had a brief prayer before these boys went out on their little field trip. Charles grew up in that kind of structured situation.”

As Smith witnessed more and more marginalized living by the outcasts of society, seeds of tenderness begin to sprout in the crevices of his rebellious heart. These seeds would come to fruition in the latter stages of Smith’s life.

Smith’s sister Lorna wrote a very moving short story entitled Room for One More. It reveals how Smith’s parents taught and modeled compassion before their children. The story begins during the Christmas season in Louisiana. The family, including a dozen or more cousins and in-laws were gathered anticipating the traditional Christmas meal of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and pecan pie. Aromas from the kitchen mingled with freshly cut evergreens. It was storming outside and rain pelted the windows.

Then, according to Lorna, a strange thing happened. As the thunder boomed and lightning lit the sky, Frellsen donned his hat and said, “Myrtle and I need to get out of the house for a while.”

This was unusual behavior for parents so old to be entering into the night. They grabbed their winter wraps and car keys and headed for the front door. After an hour,

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2 Sam Hicks, interview by author, Baton Rouge, LA, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, May 19, 2006.
3 Lorna Kardatzke, “Room for One More”, folder 374, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
4 Ibid.
the children began to have concerns for their parents as they were getting old and their eyesight was failing. About that time, a car door slammed and all eyes turned to the front door. There stood Frellsen and Myrtle a bit damp but in good spirits.

The children were grateful to see their parents as Lorna continues the story:

As Daddy held the door for the stranger, Mother chimed in, “We have found a new friend. He was standing in the rain in front of Country Market with no place to go.” A slender man stood in the doorway – dark, wet hair, plastered to his head, rain drops dripping from this nose and ears, his almond shaped black eyes wide with uncertainty. A hush enveloped the noisy room. “This is Fon Wu. He is an engineering student at Tech. He looked lonely and sad, so we invited him to come home with us.” The lively conversations were silenced only briefly. The guest had been studied and quickly accepted. Subdued sounds increased to a happy roar, with Fon Wu contributing to the chatter. He relayed his story: After many years of isolation, the students of his country experienced the freedom to study in the western world. Leaving family and friends, he seized the opportunity to study at Louisiana Tech University, arriving there in September. As he talked, Mother supplied an extra plate, and in no time at all Fon Wu, apparently comfortable with his surroundings, joined in sharing the holiday feast, cautiously sampling the traditional southern foods which were foreign to him.3

Lorna’s compassionate story of her parents bringing Fon Wu home for Christmas was a memory etched in the mind of Smith and all the family that Christmas. She states that performing simple acts of kindness was the norm for her parents at any time of the year. Regardless of the fact that the house was already crowded with family, cousins and in-laws from four different states, even strangers who were lonely and hungry were welcomed and seated at the family table with a plate full of food. There was room for one more.6

This parental influence of compassion spilt over into all the children and caused them to enter careers of compassion. His older sister Anita was a pastor of children’s ministries. His twin sister Marie encouraged her brother with dozens of letters while he was in the Peace Corps, used her musical talent as organist in the church and presently

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3 Lorna Kardatzke, “Room for One More”, folder 374, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
6 Ibid.
serves on the Ruston city council. His sister Lorna married a compassionate doctor, taught Sunday School and together they provided the seed money to launch Heart to Honduras. His brother Alvin is director of a shelter for abused teenagers.

Piper states that compassion is "...a high and beautiful motive for missionary labor. Without it we lose the sweet humility of sharing a treasure we have freely received." Piper sees Christ-like compassion as being like an emotional ice breaker that breaks loose retarded emotions of empathy and justice so that the truth of this “treasure we have freely received” can reach out with the touch of love and minister to the pain of others. True compassion does more than feel, it acts. It seeks solutions. It targets pain and is never satisfied until the healing process begins.

Richard Foster writes of the Hebrew word *hesed* and how it communicates the compassion of God through His loving kindness:

*Hesed* holds before us the great theme of compassion. It is a word so laden with meaning that translators struggle to find an English equivalent, often rendering it “loving kindness” or “steadfast love.” It is a word most frequently used in reference to God’s unwavering compassion for this people....But the great challenge for us is that this covenant love, this durable mercy that is so central to the character of God, is to be reflected in us well.  

Smith reflected this compassion in his life by seeking out the loser, the boxed in, the destitute and disenfranchised. It was not that he did not care for the wealthy; he cared for all people. But he had a natural inclination of love and compassion for the poor. In turn, the rich and powerful were attracted to him because of the power of his visions, his caring spirit, his intelligence, humor, value system and compassion for the poor. But he was never awed by the opulent life style of the rich and famous, their snazzy clothes, or ritzy neighborhoods. His compassion led him downward not upward.

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Daughter Anne-Marie recalls several experiences observing her dad ministering compassion to the downtrodden. One was a vagrant that seemed to wander aimlessly with a sack of cat food under his arm in the local grocery store. She recalls:

There was this man called Snicks. He was real thin. We would see him at Publix grocery store. He was always buying cat food and I believed he ate it because he bought so much. He would ride his bike around town and on the Highway. I remember one day when Dad and I were driving down highway 60 and Dad saw him. Dad just made a U-turn and turned right back around and gave him twenty bucks. And there was the little Mexican man who sat out front of the post office with a sandwich board with Scriptures. Dad would always stop and talk with him. Dad would talk with anybody, especially anybody that people ignored. There was Richard. He was the guy who had a learning disability who would walk around the grocery store and say, “Hello! Nice day isn’t it? Think it might rain?” Dad would patiently listen to Richard as he would say the same things over and over. Dad would call his name and treat him as a person. Richard would look at Dad and Dad would hug him. Dad would shake his hand like he valued and respected Richard. Others would avoid him like the priest and the Levite did in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan. But Dad valued him.\(^9\)

Smith would also refuse to buy certain vegetables and fruits at Publix grocery store because on the return trip to his house on Highway 27 was a poor black man with a fruit stand. Smith would stop and purchase watermelons, tomatoes and cantalopes from him regardless of the price.

Smith not only felt grocery shoppers passed by the poor but the church did as well. Smith felt like the church was full of super righteous priests and Levites but short on good Samaritans. He wanted to bridge the gap. Recalling an incident when the church refused to be the Good Samaritan, Anne-Marie shares:

There is another instance that I will never forget, when the hierarchy of the church talked it but they did not live it. This was when Dad was on the staff at the South Lake Wales Church of God in Lake Wales. A Mexican family drove to the church needing some repairs on their car which had broken down or they ran out of gas. They came into the back of the church. A church service was going on and they needed help and I believe Dad was taking the offering. He took a love offering for them. And that to me is what Christ would do. And it is what the church should do. It was not like a repeat family that you knew they were

\(^9\) Dezelan, interview.
scamming you. And Dad just got ridiculed for it like "How could you do that?"
He was ridiculed by the leadership of the church. That was where he was being
seen as such a rebel when that to me is just what you do. This is what Jesus
would do.\textsuperscript{10}

Few things can compare to the influence his wife Karen had on his calling to care
for the poor. Smith believed the summer he visited Northwestern University in
Natchitoches, Louisiana was providential. The impact it made upon his life was huge.
He wrote about it with tears the day after visiting his mother for the last time in a nursing
home in Ruston. It was an emotional time because of how vivid the memory and how
pivotal the decision was the day he met Karen:

I wept some when Mother told me about when I went to Northwestern that
fateful or providential summer, because I knew in my heart what a difference that
decision made in my life. Karen’s influence on my life cannot be calculated or
computed. It was total and complete and changed my life forever. I know in my
heart that I wouldn’t be working in Honduras today had it not been for that
seeming little decision at the time that brought Karen into my life as one that at a
young age had felt a call from God to go to the oppressed in foreign lands. That
feeling, that impression that touched Karen’s heart at such a tender age also was
the factor that changed my life forever\textsuperscript{11}.

Karen’s and Charlie’s personalities were as different as a lamb and a lion. Karen
was focused internally. She had the ability to bring out the best in others. She had a rich
inner world. She loved to listen to classical music, was not very talkative but was a good
listener. She had a flower garden full of her favorite roses. She valued security and
respected tradition. She loved to give gifts and often wrote notes to family and friends.
These were not thank you notes but “thinking about you” notes. She did not often
express her inner feelings but when the occasion presented itself, she could be a strong
nurturer. She was warm and generous and was able to keep things running smoothly
when Charlie was coming and going. In addition to all of these traits, she was beautiful.

\textsuperscript{10} Dezelan, interview.
\textsuperscript{11} Charles Smith, “My Medical Condition” folder 2, 17.
This was the girl, the woman, the wife that changed Smith’s life and caused compassion to be at the center of all of his visions. Karen taught Charlie compassion by her life, her words and her call to the mission field. She was the lamb that tamed the lion and instilled in her husband compassion that changed his world and the world of others.

Wiley Hilburn, Charlie’s best high school friend, recalls the impact Karen had on Smith’s life when they first met at Northwestern: “She brought him in and they just had a mystical bond. It was like a divine intervention. So then his whole attitude changed. His interest suddenly spiraled in academics. All of a sudden he became a reader.”

When asked if Karen had power over Charlie, Wilburn replied, “Oh, I have never seen anything like it. When he met Karen, she was the boss, yet, he now had meaning and purpose in his life. He was all of a sudden a leader.” Karen influenced him to seriously consider joining the Peace Corps. He now talked about politics as much as sports. He got all of that from Karen. And just being around her was like being in some magnetic force.”

Smith acquiesced under Karen’s influence and both joined the Peace Corps. This two year stint in Malaysia added to the growing spirit of compassion Smith was acquiring. Culturally, Perlis, Malaysia (Smith’s home as a Peace Corps Volunteer during 1964-1965), was as different from Ruston, Louisiana as curry is from Tabasco sauce. When Charlie left his sheltered southern environment in Ruston and embarked on this trek around the world, his heart would be broken many times as he witnessed extreme suffering and abject poverty in many of these countries.

He exchanged those back roads of Louisiana for mountain trails in Malaysia, and

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12 Hilburn, interview.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
the sugar cane fields of Winn Parish for the rice paddies of Kuala Lumpur. This clash of
cultures would be the future tension that would give birth to his visions on behalf of the
poor. As Smith wrote his twin sister: “Marie, we won’t be the same people that we were
before we left Ruston.”  

He used to pity missionaries but his Peace Corps experience flip-flopped his
sheltered southern Louisiana world view and now he began to see from their perspective:

Yes, we do get homesick once in a while, especially when we are sick and are
glad to know that you think of us and, like you said, worry about us. We don’t,
however, want you to feel sorry for us. I used to feel sorry for missionaries, but
now I know that they wouldn’t want to be anywhere else in the world except
where they are because they feel that they are where God wants them to be.
They are happy doing the work they are doing and probably would be miserable
if they had to return home.  

Toni Lawrie, fellow Peace Corps volunteer with the Smiths, also shares about
how changed and expanded world views impacted the group as they were about to return
home, “I am not sure that I saw Charlie as a visionary, but I think those two years
changed everyone in our group – made us all much more introspective.”

Speaking at Karen’s memorial service, Charlie remembered: “We had served for
2 years in the Peace Corps half-way around the earth in a small Malaysian village where
we lived in a thatch-roofed stilt house....We had few of this world’s possessions, but we
were supremely happy....There we learned that happiness is not dependent on
possessions but rather on the purpose for which you are living and the quality of
relationships.”

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16 Ibid.
17 Toni Laurie, telephone interview by author, Xenia, OH, August 2007.
18 Charles Smith, “Memorial Service for Karen Smith” VHS (sermon, Associate Reformed
Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, box 6, tape 6, Miguel Pinell Library, July 11, 1993).
Compassion is more often caught than taught. Smith caught lessons of compassion from his parents, from his wife Karen, in the Peace Corps and from the underdogs of society. His compassionate life lived out in front of thousands of people is now being caught by thousands to make the world a more beautiful place in which to live. Wiley Hilburn describes Smith’s life-style of compassion in an article he wrote for the *Ruston Times* upon Smith’s death:

Smitty and Karen joined the Peace Corps and spent two years digging water mains and planting row-crops in Malaysia. Such missions were actually frowned upon in Lincoln Parish; the Peace Corps was regarded as a liberal plot by the then hated John F. Kennedy. Smitty finally came back home to friendly hoots and howls. He took it all in typical good spirits and promptly founded *Head Start* in Ruston and headed the first integrated office in Lincoln Parish on the second floor of the Old Cupp’s Drug. Karen, beautiful Karen, was his inspiration and partner. That only started it for Smitty and Karen. He was later to found Heart to Honduras in that struggling Central American nation where, as in Malaysia, he dug and built and planted alongside the Hondurans – and preached the Gospel to the rural Honduran poor. Just days before he died, Smitty – using a laptop computer, communicated to a mutual friend Jimmy Love of Ruston, “Karen re-directed my thoughts and behaviors....Rather than staying in Ruston, we went on the move. We are here to heal other poorest of the poor and raise their standard of living...and to teach them everything Jesus commanded us to teach. In August I returned to my mountain cabin to wait on the Lord and see what is planned for my life. I am ready to live. I am ready to die. These decisions aren’t in my hands.”

Hilburn sums up Smith’s compassionate heart with four words: dug, built, planted and preached. Smith dug wells for the poor. Smith built houses for the poor. Smith planted corn for the poor. And he preached the Gospel to the lost. What better way is there to define compassion?

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19 Willy Hilburn, “Smitty: He Made a difference for Poorest of the Poor”, *The Ruston Times*, December 5, 1997.
Chapter Nine

Giving/Money

Smith was a fighter for the poor. With hard faces from the hot sun, bent backs from hoeing corn, tired and exhausted from unjust punches from oppressive systems, he was at ring side in their corner defending them. He defended them not only at ringside but at graveside. Contemplating his own burial ceremony at the Martha House, he shared with a friend, “When I die, I want to be buried in my shorts.” When his friend asked him why, Smith replied, “Because I can give my pants to the poor.”

When Smith was a small boy, he was a giver. He shared his marbles and train with his sister Lorna. She wrote about this in a letter of love to her brother Charlie, which she referred to as Fifty-eight Reasons I Love You, Charlie. She penned her second and fifth reasons, “I love you because you taught me how to play marbles under the big oak tree in our back yard. I love you because you let me operate your Lionel train.” (For the complete list see Appendix F.)

Lorna describes further the little seeds of giving being planted in Charlie through this Lionel train experience: “It was a beautiful little train. You could put a little pill in the stack and it would puff smoke. And it had a whistle. And that year I got a little doll. I called it Tiny Tiny and I would place it there by the little train. I put it by the controls where you make the train come and go. And mother would push back the furniture and let us put the toys out so we could play. The train would be a very expensive item today but mother put it in a garage sale one day. Charlie let me play with his train. It had a big

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1 Charles Smith, conversation with author, Martha House, September, 1997.
black engine, a coal car, a log car and I remember the red caboose. Charlie was about seven or eight years old then. He let me play with his train. It was a big deal not so much because I was a girl but because it was his. Charlie was always a giver.”

Few people acquired a more intimate, up close knowledge of Smith’s demeanor toward giving than Dave and Candy Pischel. They moved from Oregon in 1993 to Lake Wales, Florida to assist Charlie at a time when the ministry of Heart to Honduras was rapidly growing. Candy recalls, “Charlie personally gave to us a lot during our four years with him in Lake Wales. I came away from the relationship knowing that Charlie loved us as individuals. He gave to Dave and me and was always trying to increase our income as we had many medical bills. I came to Lake Wales and had my fourth miscarriage. He helped us to ‘trust the process’. He knew it was going to work out and it did.”

Smith not only gave to others but the remarkable thing about his giving was that he gave to those who could not return the favor. Candy Pischel notes this in her comment about Smith’s unconditional giving: “Charlie was people oriented and if there was a need, especially a person challenged mentally or physically in some way, he was there for them. He was like Jesus who taught that you should not just help the rich who can pay you back but help those who cannot. He was not about payback. He just gave.”

Dave Pischel recalls the number of times he went into Smith’s large downstairs bedroom which doubled as his office and interrupted him. Smith, according to Dave, always had time for him: “I never remember going into his office when he did not put his work aside, roll back his chair, look at me and be receptive to me. I always felt

3 Kardatzke, interview.
4 Candy Pischel, interview.
5 Ibid.
welcomed. Never did he say, 'Well, Dave, I have a lot of work today and I need to get back to it.' He was very relational."

In observing Smith closely, Candy was impressed by how all that Smith did was always about others. While other people wanted to give God a part and hold back a little to make sure they were covered – not Charlie. He was about others and his only mindset was that if his basic needs could be met, they could have his excess. She states, "Charlie lived simply. He did not dress elaborately but he was not a tight wad. He would take us to fine restaurants. He was not concerned about himself. And all of this comes out of his giving. If Charlie had it, he would give it. That was the bottom line."  

When Smith realized his wife only had a few months to live, the family began exploring ways to spend what little time they had left with Karen. Two significant gifts came out of this family discussion. They would purchase for Professor Daryl Johnson, their next door neighbor and close friend, a wheelchair lift so that he could get up and down from his second floor apartment. He had been wounded during WWII and walked with great difficulty.

Smith also asked Miguel to find the poorest family in the Yure River Basin and give them the finest house he could either build or find. Miguel located the largest and finest house in the village of Canchias and gave it to the ministry’s night watchman, Manuel, who was legally blind and had eight children. The house was called “The House of Abraham” because Abraham means “the father of many”. Fifteen years later, Manuel and his family still lives with many of their eight children in their free house given to them by Charlie and his family. Manuel became the ministry’s Mephebosheth who

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6 Dave Pischel, interview.
7 Candy Pischel, interview.
continues to eat at the King’s table with his family. When Miguel Pinell was asked if this home would be available for Manuel and his family forever, he replied, “Forever!” Smith’s giving spirit continues to live on long following his death.

Often when one thinks of giving, money comes to mind. Smith did give money and it was a huge amount in ratio to his income but small compared to others. One day he came to a staff member and showed him a list of approximately one hundred individual givers. He was thrilled to be able to share that he and his wife Karen were in the top five percent of those who gave. He did this with a humble spirit and was joyful that he had it to give and his wife supported him in it. This was a great sacrifice for Smith and his family because they both chose service oriented vocations – teaching and nursing professions that rank low on salary scales.

Smith’s investment philosophy was short on future considerations and long on immediate disbursements. His philosophy was threefold: ask for all you can, spend all you can and give all you can. He rejected appeals to establish endowments. He detested certificates of deposits. He frowned upon savings accounts. The purpose of money was to facilitate visions, not prop up financial institutions. Its value to Heart to Honduras was to be sent south to Honduras as soon as possible. Time was short. The needs were great. Life was fragile. And south it went, much like a cleaning lady at Motel Six, dropping her wet towels down a laundry chute – the entire basket, quickly and south.

The root of Smith’s attitude towards money stems back to his childhood days. It seems that his father failed to teach his son about money and refused on many occasions to rein Smith in when he was beginning to sow his wild oats. A case in point regarding

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8 Miguel Pinell, interview.
money can be illustrated by his twin sister Marie: “Charles had a paper route. He needed money and so Daddy got him this paper route to deliver the papers but Charles did not collect the money. So Daddy hired Lorna and me to collect the money. We received a dime for every collection we made.” Marie adds that after they had collected the money, they would give it to their dad and he would give it to Charlie. By not holding his son accountable or teaching the need for accountability, a life long pattern of fiscal irresponsibility would carry over into all of Smith’s family and ministry relationships.

Though Smith instilled in his daughters the keys to true riches and meaning in life, he passed much of this living in the moment on to his daughter Anne-Marie as she recalls: “I mean Dad, he was a shopper. He had big ideas. Living for the day was huge for Dad. I got a lot of this from Dad. If he wanted to do something, he would go and do it. When he found a fancy hotel, look out man, he could spend some bucks there. He would go into debt. That was not really smart. Money management was his weakness.” Anne-Marie’s statement poses probing ministry questions. Did Smith utilize these same fiscal mannerisms as Overseer of Heart to Honduras and pass them down to his staff and to the leadership of Honduras? Did he realize the consequences of the ministry operating in the red? Candy Pischel gives insight into the impact Smith’s attitude toward money had on the ministry and his personal life. She worked closely with Smith from 1993 to 1997 as his personal accountant and also as bookkeeper for Heart to Honduras. She differs somewhat with the family regarding his ability to keep books but agrees that his approach to money was frustrating and his excessive spending

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11 Dezelan, interview.
continually hurt the ministry’s balance sheet that was often in the red and urgently needed correcting. She writes:

Charlie did not deal with his finances. He handed them over to me and said, “Pay my debts”. He could do books. He handled all of that before I came to the ministry. What happened to Charlie was that he had too much on his plate to oversee it all. There were too many fires going. He was overseer of the ministry. He was the bookkeeper. The present bookkeeper was leaving. His wife was dying. Ministry finances were a deep concern for him. As a bookkeeper he had many issues. After I came on board, he took care of his girls. He paid for their phone bills and other needs that they had. Money meant nothing to him. It was about people who had needs. It was not that he did not want money or a car or a house. It was just different. It is hard to explain but it all comes out of his giving. If Charlie had it, he would give it. This was the bottom line. He lived a life of faith. We went around and around. I would tell Charlie, “Charlie we do not have money for this need or project.” He would say, “Trust the process.” He would get all these credit cards in the mail and he would go and apply for them. I would say, “Charlie, you have got to stop doing that. I want your mail before you get it. You have got to quit applying for these cards.” It was not that Charlie was maxing out on all these cards. They were just available resources. We did not always agree and I admit this did frustrate me. He did quit applying for the credit cards but that was Charlie.12

Two years later, in February of 1997, Smith wrote, “Heart to Honduras is in a serious money crunch that we must get out of. There is not sufficient money to keep the work moving here in Canchias and certainly not enough to make payroll this month. We must come up with a plan to insure that the work moves forward unimpeded.” 13 In March, one month later, Smith wrote another letter to Pinell, “Heart to Honduras is out of money – we cannot make payroll this month in the States.”14 Two months later, Smith wrote to bookkeeper Candy Pischel: “Money-Payroll-What are we going to do?...The vision is here and people give to vision. Why not now? We need money now, not in 98.”15 Bookkeeper Candy Pischel wrote of her frustrations paying ministry bills: “We currently have maxed out our credit cards and are having to put charges on our personal

12 Candy Pischel, interview.
15 Charlie Smith, fax to Dave and Candy Pischel, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, April 29, 1997.
credit cards in order to buy the requested items to bring with us or send on the container....Please keep in mind that we are now $19,000 in the hole. When I sent you the fax yesterday we were $16,000 in the hole. There were more charges on the credit card than I realized."

Even though this financial roller coaster existed throughout Smith’s lifetime, including his personal and ministry accounts, God used him greatly in getting Heart to Honduras launched. To his credit, people were attracted to Smith not only because of his visionary gifts but for his character as a person. Though he dispensed funds like a doctor dispenses free samples of medicine to the sick, Smith’s compassion was right and God honored the motive of his heart. Smith’s track record in helping lift up the underdog and disenfranchised made potential donors give to his visions as a honeybee gives accumulated nectar to the hive.

Smith gave away two things that were far more valuable than money. He gave himself and his ideas. He was an idea person. Some of his ideas were so powerful that they lifted up the income, confidence and hope of all people connected to the ministry. His vision of ministering to the total person in a holistic way attracted thousands of dollars. But more than dollars, he gave away encouragement, his listening ear, a touch, a song on his harmonica and his humor. Giving for Smith flowed as naturally from his heart as the aroma from his beans that wafted throughout his kitchen.

\footnote{Candy Pischel, fax to Charlie Smith, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 17, 1997.}
Chapter Ten

Righteousness/Justice

On a steep bank just off Oxcart Road in Canchias, Honduras, Trino, a small muscular man with curly hair and buck teeth, lived with his toothless wife and six children. Atypical, socially aggressive, hospitable and comfortable around North Americans, Trino lived about fifty yards from Smith’s mountain bungalow and often visited Smith hoping for a warm pot of beans. The two connected immediately because both enjoyed playing the harmonica and both had a need for friendship. Trino needed Smith to lift him out of his poverty. Smith needed Trino to fulfill a call of God upon his life – to do the works of righteousness.

Smith took the Words of Jesus seriously: “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things (clothes, food, and shelter) will be added unto you.”¹ Throughout Smith’s life, especially following his dramatic, inner spiritual change that occurred when he fell in love with Karen, he always had a goal of doing right things and doing things right. He was not perfect and occasionally strayed from the righteous path David wrote about in Psalms Twenty-three: “…those righteousness paths for His name’s sake.”² But the truth and concept of justice, which in the mind of Smith would be the fair distribution of wealth, power and respect to the oppressed, needed to be a core principle of the Kingdom of God that would bring about the righteousness of God. This fair distribution of wealth for Smith would include: just weights and scales, equitable distribution of adequate and sustaining life essentials such as food, clothing, housing,

¹ Mathew 6:33 (KJV).
² Psalms 23:3 (KJV).
medical care and education, respect for “the least of these” and unconditional love of others. This was the bottom line for Smith’s holistic vision. In his own words, Smith gives an example of righteousness in action through the ministry of Heart to Honduras:

Trino, his wife and six children live in a 16 x 20 adobe house with a thatch roof. The floor is hard-packed dirt. He made the house because his old one leaked during the rainy season – 200 inches a year. He and his sons took four months to build the house. Until recently, his wife carried water from the river for their family, washed clothes and bathed in the river. Trino farms a small piece of ground with only a hoe and a machete – land that doesn’t produce enough corn and beans to feed his family throughout the year. He grinds his corn with a hand grinder and cooks the corn and beans over an open fire. Sticks of pine kindling provide light at night inside the house. Seven years ago God led us to Trino and opened the door for us to help him.3

Smith directed the staff of Heart to Honduras to replace Trino’s grass roof with tin, cover the hard-packed dirt floor with concrete, run a water line to his house, build a pila (toilet and bathing facility) outside his house, give him access to the medical clinic and provide a job for him. This is righteousness defined not by words but by deeds.

Eight passionate verses out of Paul’s writing in II Corinthians 5:15-21 so influenced Smith’s thinking on the subject of justice and righteousness, that it might be said they are the pillars upon which the Heart to Honduras ministry stands even today. The Words of Jesus, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” are the theme verse the Heart to Honduras Board selected in 1991 that gave Heart to Honduras its name. But Paul’s words in II Corinthians gave the ministry passion. Smith, referring to these words writes: “Paul speaks directly as to who we are and how we are to live in these verses. This is the essence of passion, the fountain flowing deep and wide that motivates us into action…. Contained in these eight verses is the secret to a life filled with

3 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
passion for being the righteousness of God to all we meet.... I urge you to put these verses to memory and let them transform your life.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Smith preached two powerful sermons at the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales, Florida at their annual mission conference in 1995 and 1996. His message in 1995 encapsulated the essence of Smith’s theology for executing justice more through righteous acts than any other. It revealed the maturity of Smith’s deepening understanding of the theology of righteousness. The message was biblical, Pauline and Kingdom based. Smith infused great wisdom, direction and righteousness into the ministry of Heart to Honduras by building his vision on these monumental words of Paul.

Dissecting this message, one discovers Smith’s theology. He believed we all live a life patterned after worldly values. But now Jesus, who was without sin, became sin for us. He did this so that we could be reconciled to God through Christ. The word reconciliation for Smith meant “to be put into a right relationship with God.” This was his first and primary goal in Honduras – to bring people into relational alignment with God’s purpose and plan for their lives. This was the starting point. There was little value

4 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
5 II Corinthians 5:15-22 (NLB).
in teaching the poor how to grow better corn and beans if they remained ignorant of God and His ways. Smith did not leave the development organization *Project Global Village* to continue building grain silos for the poor in the name of US AID, but in the name of Christ. The right method of planting corn would be used as a means of a “Judeo-Christian love hook” to teach them righteous living before God and man.

Once reconciliation to God – the great miracle – occurred and the old man was defeated, a new man emerged and became the Ambassador of God. And the life of reconciliation no longer sees another person from a worldly point of view. “Because of being reconciled”, proclaimed Smith, “I am the righteousness of God in the midst of a world of wrong.”

Thus reconciliation to God led to our being made right with God, making us righteous Ambassadors (representatives of Christ) in the world. Teaching and training righteous Ambassadors (disciples) was the primary goal of Smith in Honduras. The term *Ambassador* was central to his theology of righteousness. Ambassador Mountain is where he is buried. He originally was going to call this mountain “*The Ones Who Have Gone Before*” but saw the missional value – missional meaning a community of God’s people that defines itself, and organizes its life, around its real purpose of being an agent of God’s mission to the world – in the term *Ambassador*.

Heart to Honduras produced an Ambassador tee-shirt with the words “I Am an Ambassador for Jesus – Whose Ambassador Are You?” The donkey became the “spiritual mascot” of the ministry for Smith. It was the beast of burden, the poor man’s

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6 Charles Smith, “The Righteousness of God” (sermon, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, January 16, 1995).
animal, a servant of the poor, humble and lowly. Its name was in the center of the word AMBASSADOR reminding the reconciled they were now the righteous of God or an A.S.S for Jesus – Ambassador Serving the Savior.⁸

Smith said it this way: “Ambassador – that is who we are. And right in the middle of the word Ambassador is the word ASS, the symbol of humility, of servant-hood, on which Jesus rode in triumph into Jerusalem at the culmination of his earthly ministry, as prophesied by Zechariah. He did not come riding on a horse – the symbol of power, pomp, and circumstance. He came riding on an ass, the symbol of humility and servanthood.”⁹

Reconciliation makes us right with God. Now that we are the righteousness of God, how do we live out this righteousness of God in an unrighteous world? Smith sought to answer this question in another message he delivered at the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The theme of this message communicated the freedom the righteous life brings to the believer and how he views others now through the mind of Christ. The bottom line is that in Christ there is no condemnation. The righteous believer appreciates the individuality of others and attends to the needs of “the least of these” to bring healing and comfort regardless of rank, power, wealth, ancestry or education. Smith is contrasting the freedom that comes in being made right with God through Christ reconciling us to Him and the spirit of legalism that seeks to take this freedom and tie it up in rigid laws:

⁹ Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
There is no time to be concerned about what another wears, eats, drinks, smokes or drives. No time to be concerned about whether one is black, white, fat or small, gay or straight, pretty or ugly, right or wrong, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim - all attention focused on these concerns is wasted. What matters is the heart’s commitment to the righteousness of God - whosoever will, may come. Come to the freedom in Christ - knowing that God no longer holds your sins against you. Be reconciled to God, commissioned and sent as an Ambassador of Christ with the message and ministry of reconciliation. Let those who sit in judgment with the law be damned. What matters? There is no righteousness in our adherence to the law.  

Smith believed the righteousness of God reigned in the spiritual dimension and had little to do with the physical world. As the Kingdom of God, according to Jesus, is peace, joy and righteousness in the Holy Spirit, so the righteous person lives in the world but is not of the world. The righteousness of God in the believer is power and weaponry for Smith. It is the believer’s certification that God is with him as he lives out the righteous life. It is God’s favor, as in the life of Abraham, whose faith was counted unto him as righteousness. Righteousness precedes justice for Smith because one can do justice and not be righteous, but one cannot be righteous and fail to do justice.

Smith and members of his family made a visit to Spain over the Christmas holidays in December of 1996. While in Spain, Smith visited the world’s third largest Gothic cathedral in Seville, Spain. During this visit he became more convinced than ever that the righteousness of God had nothing to do with the material world.

Smith witnessed monuments of architecture, depositories of relics and museums. He complained about a $5.00 fee he had to pay to see inside the building. He likened this to paying money to enter a church to worship. It was a grand sight to behold as he milled about with hundreds of others who were gazing, lighting candles, admiring the massive structures such as the Great High Altar and the Virgin of Pomegranate. He was repelled

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10 Charles Smith, notes, folder S315, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
by the way tourists were worshipping museum objects while others were trying to worship their God in this edifice whose building goal was to build the largest cathedral in the world. It was a form of religious syncretism as tourists stood in awe of paintings and frescoes while worshippers knelt in prayer beneath halos in a cathedral built by man for the glory of man with canned music in the background. Smith felt there was nothing sacred about anything material, that justice, mercy and righteousness were what the Lord wanted us to emphasize.

He believed the righteousness of God pervades the totality of a believer’s engagement with the world. Righteousness is a lifestyle. It is a constant. It is the counterpart to injustice. It complements mercy. It is the forerunner of justice. Smith believed that the parable of the sheep and the goats taught the truth that righteousness is a matter of deeds not just words. “Righteousness is not so much a thought as it is an action”, writes Smith, “an activity, a conversation, an act of kindness, of charity, a helping hand, a warm meal and a glass of cold water – to the loveable and not so loveable, even to our enemies and especially to the oppressed.”

Yet, according to Smith, there are certain things that are not right that need to be righted by the righteous. Smith spoke about those things that are not right:

It is not right that the rich in Honduras mistreat and abuse the poor, buying their corn and beans for a pittance – making all the profit for themselves, and treating the poor like dogs. I am the righteousness of God.

It is not right that men, women and children have no opportunity for medical, dental or eye care while we make choices to what specialist we will see for our problem. I am the righteousness of God.

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It is not right that poor village churches in the mountains of Honduras have no place to gather for public meetings while the church in North America sits in luxury in beautiful temperature controlled sanctuaries, spending an abundance on ourselves and giving crumbs to the poor. I am the righteousness of God.

It is not right that children in Honduras have no opportunity for an education while we have the finest schools and the best teachers. I am the righteousness of God.

It is not right that the people in the village of Montañauela do not have clean drinking water. We are the righteousness of God.

It is not right that believers who want to work cannot find work and have no skills for doing anything other than farm labor, and live in poverty and squalor. We are the righteousness of God.

It is not right when drought occurs, the crop is burned in the field and the people go farther in want of food. We are the righteousness of God.\(^\text{12}\)

Reconciliation for Smith was only the first step in becoming Christ’s Ambassador. The next righteous step is to do the acts of righteousness as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Smith believed that the only way a righteous person could walk the righteous path and do the righteous thing was to know the right Person. In his closing remarks to the Presbyterian church, he shared: “The greatest single need of the American Church is to know Jesus Christ, to live and breathe the words of the Apostle Paul, ‘All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his suffering.’"\(^\text{13}\) Smith believed righteousness was knowledge of the Righteous One. To know Christ is to know His heart. To know His heart is to hear the cries for the righteousness of God. Smith continues, “Everywhere we go we hear the cries of God’s children for righteousness…. Some cry for food, for water, for comfort, for clothes, for love. Some cry softly. Others cry loudly. Their cries are our marching orders. The alarm has sounded. We, the reconciled to God, messengers and ministers of

\(^{12}\) Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
reconciliation are to be righteousness to them."\textsuperscript{14}

Smith lived a righteous life before the poor believers of Honduras. In other words, he did the right thing in the right way. He did it in Christ and through the church. In turn, they were reconciled, became the righteousness of God and began to do the works of righteousness. This was Smith’s sole purpose for going to Honduras. He never tried to build a massive cathedral with a tall steeple but he did build a village church with righteous people.

\textsuperscript{14} Charles Smith, "Rekindling Your Passion for Missions" (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
Chapter Eleven

The Value of Simplicity/Solitude

Smith arrived in Lake Wales, Florida in 1976 as professor of sociology. With his winsome personality he quickly immersed himself into the civic affairs of the community, campus life and the life of the church. Smith dramatized his cry for simplicity in the life of students and community when he took the lead role as Stage Manager in the play “Our Town” by Thornton Wilder when it was presented by the Drama Department of Warner Southern College around 1979. Often the Smith family would refer back to the simple principles of “Our Town” when they experienced a crisis. Watching the movie Our Town and Christmas at Plum Lake from the Little House on the Prairie TV series were two of the items on the family’s list to do at the time of Karen’s impending death. Both had themes of simplicity.

The local newspaper writes of Smith’s performance as Stage Manager, “The part of the Stage Manager, the lead part, was played admirably by Prof. Charles Smith of the Sociology department...”. The most meaningful part of the play for Smith was when the ghost of Emily returns to Grover’s Corner, speaks about the simple things of life and then looks over to the Stage Manager played by Smith:

Emily: “I can’t. I can’t go on. It goes so fast. We do not have time to look at one another.” She breaks down sobbing. “I did not realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back – up the hill – to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-bye, Good-bye, world. Good-bye Grover’s Corner...Mama and Papa. Good-bye-to clocks ticking...and Mama’s sunflower. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths...and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you are too wonderful for anybody to realize you.”

She looks toward the stage manager and asks abruptly, through her tears: “Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? – every, every minute?”

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1 Charles Smith, notes, folder 191, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
Stage Manager: "No!" Pause. "The saints and poets, maybe – they do some."  

One of the ways Smith identified with Emily in "Our Town" and realized life, was expressed in his belief and practice of wearing simple clothing. His daughter Felicia appreciated the simple lifestyle her father lived. She states: "Daddy was a simple man by the clothes that he wore." Smith refused to wear a tie. It made no sense to him that a man would cut off the flow of oxygen by wrapping a noose around his neck just to satisfy some clothes designer’s fashion statement. He believed clothing should be simple, functional, and comfortable. He writes of how we lose our freedom when we seek to keep up with the latest fashion just to impress others:

Fashionable clothes are highly symbolic: material, cut, and ornament are dictated only to a slight degree by considerations of warmth, comfort, or practicability. The more we dress up in fine clothes, the more we restrict our freedom of action. But by means of delicate embroideries, easily soiled fabric, starched shirts, high heels, long and pointed fingernails, and other such sacrifices of comfort, the wealthy classes manage to symbolize, among other things, the fact that they do not have to work for a living.

Phil Murphy, a former student of Smith, matriculated in 1980 with the first class at the H.E.A.R.T. Institute on the Lake Wales campus. Subsequently, Murphy spent much of his life as a missionary in Haiti. He writes of the influence Smith had on his life in developing a theology of poverty and a life of simplicity. He writes to a friend:

Since those beginning days at H.E.A.R.T. and in Charlie’s classes at Warner Southern College, it has been quite obvious to me that the poor find favor in the sight of God. Many people mistake the simple and humble for the ignorant and weak. It is in the simple and humble that God finds depths of faith where He can live and flourish, especially the poor. They are giants of faith. Their lives are rooted in trusting God from day to day in order to just survive. When blessed with a bowl of porridge for the day, they celebrate God’s goodness and praise Him for his kindness. They live simply and simply live, trusting God for strength, health, courage and every blessing....They find encouragement from their giving and strength from their prayers. When they are kicked they may lose

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2 Charles Smith, notes, folder 191, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
3 SmithGraybeal, interview.
4 Charles Smith, "The Book" folder 3.
their leaves and flowers. One could even stomp out their branches but the roots remain and will grow again.\textsuperscript{5}

It was at ground level among the simple poor who lived from crop to crop in stick houses with dirt floors, who depended daily on God for their essential needs, that Smith experienced his life’s joy. He lived close to the people. He lived among the people. His clothes were not ostentatious or threatening to them. He wore a simple watch. Usually his attire was a tee-shirt, blue-jeans, tennis shoes and a cowboy hat. By living this simple lifestyle he was able to think like a poor man and empathize with their needs. He wrote: “Think ground level in life style. No family living in Honduras has a concrete floor. Do an assessment of housing patterns.”\textsuperscript{6}

Smith started an article entitled, “Our Plenty, Their Need” but he never finished it. His intent was to paint a picture of contrast between the two. His contrasts are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Plenty/Their Need</th>
<th>Their Plenty/Our Need</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material things</td>
<td>Trust in God/faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/know how</td>
<td>Church/community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching/Demonstration</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frantic lifestyles</td>
<td>Stillness/quietness/silence/solitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors/Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Dependence on God\textsuperscript{7}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a visionary Smith was not only able to “see” buildings and projects emerge on vacant lots and rural farmland but he could also “see” the esthetic side of a vision. Vision for Smith was more than bricks, rocks, planks and floors. It was beauty, relationships, plants and flowers arranged in a simple vase of humanity surrounded by God’s natural landscape living out His plan with meaning and purpose. He saw the village of Canchias

\textsuperscript{5} Phil Murphy, e-mail to Jim Usher, August 8, 1995.
\textsuperscript{6} Charles Smith, “The Book” folder 3.
\textsuperscript{7} Charles Smith, notes, folder 874, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
being transformed into a “beautiful little village, a bright and shining star in a dark and bleak countryside.” It would be simple. It would be practical. It would be modest. It would be the prototype to be replicated again and again. Once the last flower was planted and the last adobe block stuccoed, “people would come and see what can be done simply and inexpensively to help the poor.”

The “rat race” in North America exhausted him. The greed and competition angered him. The churches embarrassed him. The institutions restricted him. The noise disturbed him. But the poor inspired him. He saw in the midst of their abject poverty a God-thing. It was contentment, joy and peace on their faces and in their hearts. They possessed relational riches. They had reverence for God. They had each other. They had time. They lived simple lives.

Out of Smith’s simplicity came a desire to experience the text, “Be still and know that I am God.” This is what he loved about being in Honduras. He could “check out” of the fast lane that was so prevalent in the States and take moments of solitude, be still and reflect on the things of God. Smith loved to immerse himself in rare moments of aloneness during the cool, clear nights in Honduras on the Martha House porch. He would often gaze into the heavens and marvel at the stars that gave off a brilliance much greater than could be seen in the States. He noted that in the remote mountains of Honduras, far removed from the smog and electric lights of mammoth, “...the distance of space and the brilliance of the heavens would come alive.”

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8 Charlie Smith, fax to Felicia Graybeal and Anne-Marie Dezelan, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 1, 1997.
9 Ibid.
10 Psalms 42:10 (KJV).
Smith recoiled at the creeping technology making its way to Canchias. He was troubled that the light of the TV began to replace the glow of the campfire in nearby villages and that people had moved indoors, distancing themselves from their God who reveals Himself in the moon, the sun and stars above. He cringed at how artificial gadgets such as loud instruments made possible with electricity were supplanting simple worship songs on a string guitar. He believed in experiencing the outdoors and getting close to nature. Jesus lived outdoors as he walked from village to village, mingled with the multitudes and spent hours around the Sea of Galilee. Smith wrote: “Growing isolation from nature is the inevitable result of the universal condition. For now, modern man is an indoor creature, psychologically different from his outdoor heritage. We are distracted by the things we make and incorporate in our lives. Our houses and automobiles are replete with novel distractions.”

But like most Christians in a culture that glorifies the higher, the faster and the strongest, Smith found it difficult to steal away. Smith’s personality was so compelling and attractive that his home was constantly like Starbucks in downtown Manhattan during rush hour. His problem lay in the fact that he wanted to serve everybody a latte. And with his willingness to tolerate these interruptions, he became his own worst enemy regarding the need for privacy and margin in his life. He had to be creative in seeking out solitude and moments of aloneness with his Lord.

Casual knowledge of Smith could lead one to think he never sat still. But if one lingered for a period of time around him, they would soon realize his oneness with the Father through the Word – which was real and pure.

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13 Ibid.
How did Smith stay fresh with his spiritual insights? What was the source of his anointed visions? Where did his passion originate? Spinning so many plates, how did Smith keep from burnout? What was the secret of his ceaseless, around-the-clock energy? Was it a power drink? Was it Green Tea? Was it multi-vitamins with a scant portion of steroids? Or was it something else in the realm of the supernatural? It was primarily God’s Word and hours spent in it in the late hours of the night. The Word was his “Red Bull”.

He found solace and solitude playing his harmonica while driving from Lexington to Taylorsville, Kentucky to do research, on a horse in the rural mountains of Honduras and or sitting on the porch at night in his two-room retreat cabin listening quietly to the sounds of silence. Worship for Smith occurred when he was cooking Indian curry and listening to classical music with his wife Karen.

Some people feel called to solitude behind a closet door by being still before God; others, like Smith, found meaning and spiritual solace through being between two doors and moving at sixty miles an hour. He was so active he had to be careful to stay connected to God. The following experience Smith shared with a ministry team from Boca Raton, Florida helps us better examine how communion with God was like being between two moving doors:

When I was studying anthropology at UK, I nearly lost my mind. I studied six years of anthropology. I gave my life to it – six years of classes, writing, researching and exams. At exam time, you got your written exam that lasted five days – eight hours a day. Then there was a take home exam that was a twenty-five page paper. I was about to lose my mind. And then there was this privilege that anybody in the whole faculty could come and see if you could defend yourself. I mean I am a weak person, not too secure and I nearly lost my mind.

But my mother sent me five dollars so I could go and get something to eat. I mean I had sent my family to Louisiana to mother’s so I could study. Instead of getting something to eat, I bought myself a harmonica. And driving back and
forth from Lexington to Taylorsville, a sixty mile drive, I would put my elbow on the steering wheel in my little VW bug and start playing. And songs began to come out. What songs? They were songs of the church. That's how God got me back to trust in Him or else I think I would have lost my mind.14

This trinity of silence, solitude and simplicity was the goal Smith wanted all North Americans to experience. He agreed with his Honduran friend Ever who shared at a stateside church: “Americans have many watches but no time.”15 He had discovered the “wealth” of poor Hondurans and it was in this simple trinity, especially at night. Heaven on earth for Smith occurred when the moon reflected over the Canchias River, a gentle breeze blew through the green elephantine banana leaves and thousands of bush crickets harmonized in sync.

This kind of spiritual ecstasy in worship—soft and slow—was illustrated in a letter to his sister Marie following a Wednesday evening service at the South Lake Wales Church, “Last night I had seven brothers and sisters read Scripture which was interspersed with singing. My instructions to the readers: read with feeling, slowly. My instructions to music leaders: soft on the piano...very soft to no instrument. Do not wave your arms. Focus on the words, the music and the singing in the spirit. It was wonderful!”16

Smith usually traveled to Honduras every other month. Returning home after spending fourteen days in the Martha House without being responsible for a group, Smith writes in a letter about how it affected him spiritually: “It was wonderful having the rest, silence and solitude, as well as having time to read, write and meditate....”17

On rare occasions he was able to find some down time. The love of the

15 Ever Andino, Arab Worship Center, Arab, AL, 2001.
17 Charlie Smith, letter to Tony Ahern, folder 362, Miguel Pinell Library, September 26, 1996.
Hondurans for Smith made them anticipate his fellowship like they awaited the first ripe banana of the season. North American team members would constantly be in his presence. Occasionally on the weekends, Smith would be alone as the teams returned to the States and the hard working Hondurans took their siestas. Smith enjoyed the quiet in Canchias after the sun moved below the mountain. From the Martha House porch, he could see the little fires flickering in the stick houses. Smith relished these times of stillness and quietness and once he returned to the States these two moods of life would beckon him like the “call of the wild” in a Jack London novel.

Because Smith was in such demand and his schedule was so crowded when ministry teams from the States were present, he became intentional in seeking out solitude. The author writes of being with Smith in the Joshua House and how the two of them made a “solitude contract” in order to seek the mind of Christ:

Charlie and I continue to be overwhelmed by the solitude and quietness in Canchias without a group from the States. It is a time of quiet and peace. On a few occasions, needy Hondurans pass by to purchase eggs, ask for aspirins, but today the traffic has been slow. I can hear the chickens outside clucking as they lay eight eggs each day. We give them three cups of feed and they return the thanks by providing us with protein each day....Charlie and I have a “silent contract” with each of us not speaking to each other for three hours so that we will not interrupt each other’s thoughts. After the three hours of solitude, mediation, study and reflection, we regroup and bounce ideas off one another.\(^\text{18}\)

The simplicity and solitude of Canchias refreshed and invigorated Smith. It was slow-paced, simple and filled with innocent people who simply needed a helping hand. It was different from Florida. Rather than having an ocean beach, it had a river. Instead of frozen orange juice, it had fresh bananas. Instead of Mickey Mouse, it had the humble burro. Instead of interstate highways, it had mountain trails. Instead of John Deere tractors, it had wooden plows. Instead of a blast from jet engines, it had a fresh breeze

blowing through the valley. Instead of MTV blaring out heavy metal and punk rock, birds sang in the trees. Instead of people talking on cell phones, they talked to each other.

Six months before Smith passed away, a team from Lexington, Kentucky was saddened by the fact that Smith physically was unable to make the trip and serve as their leader. A request was made for him to send a greeting by way of a cassette recording. Smith, stretched out in his bed, spoke for about thirty minutes to the team. One of his key themes was walking slowly and quietly through the village with respect for the people:

Well, I just encourage you this week to practice the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. Be still and listen to the sounds of the beautiful valley of Canchias. Get alone. Get alone. Get away from the others. Get away from the noise. Hold down the talking - the loud noises. You are visitors in that country. You don't make loud noises. Keep your mouths shut. Listen! Listen! Open your minds. Open your hearts. There is nothing you can give in Honduras that needs to be done that can't be done by the Hondurans needing the work. God wants to teach you. See what God wants to do in your heart. What does he want you to know about the poor and the hungry? Heart to Honduras is helping them in the name of Jesus. Visit in these homes and touch the little children. Be a Jesus to them. Practice the presence of God. Don't plan it. Never plan it. You will kill it. It is not the work - the physical or material work - that you are going to do in Honduras that will make any great difference in the Kingdom but it is the work that God is going to do in your heart while you are there. And practice the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life day by day and try to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. Don't plan it. You know the minute you plan it you kill it. Allow the Spirit of God to move what happens down there - to move you individually and move the group. Allow the spirit to move. Don't get disappointed because you did not get to do what you wanted to do. Just look forward to whatever is going to happen and let God teach you through that situation. Be flexible and listen to God. Open up your heart. Be still and God will bless you. He will bless you. It will be the turning point in your life.”

Thirty years ago, Smith made a statement to the people of the South Lake Wales Church in a devotional that a simple man was a free man. He could have chosen great riches and a possible chair of anthropology at an Ivy League school but he understood the

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value of making simplicity and solitude core values of his life. This led him to the poor
of Honduras where not only was he a free man but a rich man as well.
Chapter Twelve

Leadership

Charlie Smith made leadership fun. It was not because he was a statesman like Winston Churchill but because he was like Charlie Smith – himself, real and down to earth. There are few leaders who create easiness about themselves, that make you feel comfortable in all situations. Being in his presence during fellowship gatherings and staff meetings was like being around a friendly dog that knew how to point. In other words, he made you feel comfortable but he also knew how to lead.

Smith had many styles of leadership. One of the most obvious was leadership through vision. Once his visions came in focus, he began to rally people around him. These visions were powerful and attractive. They challenged one’s value system. They were daunting in their scope. They engaged the senses, stimulated the mind, pierced the conscience and nudged the spirit. They were irresistible because they made sense and spoke to the basic needs of humanity: food for the hungry, clothing for the naked, houses for the homeless, healing for the hurting and hope for the hopeless.

Smith had the ability to see things that others could not see. He was like Elisha who could see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire all around when his servant could not. Initially, it was difficult for Smith to get a following because he was the only one “seeing” the material in the “invisible”. Monty Harrington remembers one of these Elisha moments of Smith while riding with him past a huge housing development in Florida. He states, “I recall riding with Charlie one day. They had just opened up Bypass 417. Charlie was on the passenger side looking to his right at this vast farmland being developed. I said to him, ‘You can see it can’t you?’ He replied, ‘Yes, I can see
Smith’s visions were exciting and they made you want to come on board. His excitement and passion kind of sucked you into his agenda like a tornado and you were on your way to Honduras before you knew what hit you. A former fireman in Lexington, Kentucky, Bernie Short, whose life was dramatically changed by meeting a little girl in the village of Chaguatillo, remembers Smith casting his Honduras vision: “I felt that Charlie was a leader by vision. He would lead by getting people excited and before you knew it, you were getting involved. It just seemed to be the natural thing to do. Vision! Charlie had a bus load of visions.”

Smith used a rare kind of leadership seldom written about in business magazines and books on leadership. He led through “Friendship-Leadership”. Jesus chose to launch His Kingdom though a small circle of friends called disciples. It is interesting to note that when Judas betrayed Jesus, the Lord said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” If Jesus can refer thus to Judas as a friend knowing his impending kiss of betrayal would ultimately lead to his death, why can’t Christian leaders remain friends with their staff when policy misunderstandings occur, a deadline is missed or a memo misplaced? And why can’t the staff reciprocate? Smith was always a friend to his staff. He did not always agree but he remained a friend. He rejected the opinions of many leadership specialists who claimed that the leader has to keep his distance from his co-workers.

Smith reminds one of Joe Torre, former manager of the New York Yankees. Most managers keep their distance from their players – not Joe Torre. Before becoming

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1 Monty Harrington, interview.
2 Bernie Short, e-mail to Jim Usher, April 8, 2008.
3 Matthew 26:50 (NKJV).
manager of the Yankees, Torre amassed more than 1,000 losses with the Mets, Braves and Cardinals. "The rap", states Neil Cavuto, "was always the same. He was too close to the men he managed, more inclined to baby them than to challenge them." Torre rejected this assessment by the press, became close to the players and in the process he led the Yankees to four World Series championships in eight playoffs. Smith also stayed close to his staff and was just as successful as Joe Torre except the playing fields were different.

Smith was aware of the risks involved. Friends invite you into their circle of dreams, knowledge, priorities, goals, interests and secrets. When this occurs connections are made, trust is established and partnerships are formed. Granted, friendships can be hazardous for one's vision and ministry. It is counter to the recognized styles of leadership: autocratic, bureaucratic, task-oriented and dictatorial. How does a friend reprimand another friend? What about accountability? What about objectivity in the decision making process? What if the leader's friend is doing irreparable harm to the organization or ministry? Which will the leader choose - the friendship or the integrity of the ministry?

Staffers Dave and Candy Pischel were very close to Smith; they were almost like family. Early in the ministry, they initiated an expensive construction project that Smith did not approve. It reveals Smith's friendship-leadership attitude:

We got the impression Charlie wanted us to put a bathroom in the downstairs office building next to his house. It was only a suggestion. We thought it was a given decision and we were to proceed. A few weeks later as carpenters were coming and going putting the new bathroom in, Charlie came over and asked "What's going on?" Dave and I replied, "You said you want a bathroom installed." Charlie did not pounce on us. He only said, "I am going to have to be more careful how I converse with you." There was no put down, nothing critical.

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He just had a great attitude. It was a learning experience more for him than for us. I do not say this because he has passed on.\(^5\)

Smith launched Heart to Honduras not by offering stock options or seeking funds from a venture capitalist but rather by gathering a handful of friends around him in the early nineties: Miguel, Jerry, Lorna, Jon, Dave, Candy, Gary, Monty, Kelly, Rick and Jim to name a few. All of these were close friends or family members to Smith. Yes, there was give and take, misunderstanding and mistake recoveries, but it worked because of who Smith was – a true friend – and because he had the trust and loyalty of his staff.

Smith’s style of leadership was *laissez-faire*. He was content to let things run their course and was always saying “trust the process”. He was fun to be with in most any setting. One looked forward to staff meetings, board meetings and committees because Smith’s leadership was relaxed and unrestrained. When difficulties arose, he would rarely go into a panic mode. He would allow events to take their own course.

This suited Smith’s personality well. It is what Smith preferred but it often got him in trouble. His visions were often radical, making his superiors uncomfortable. This caused them to interfere and restrain him. But it was Smith’s style and it worked well for him.

Another way in which Smith exhibited his leadership skills was through “Relationship-Leadership”. He was a relations-oriented person. In Honduras, he did this by living among the people. He ate with them. He slept in their homes. He played with their children.

On many occasions he would purposely cook a pot of beans for the poor Honduran men. He would feed them on their way to and from the fields. He took this

\(^5\) Candy Pischel, interview.
time to listen to their stories, feel their pain and pray for their needs. Smith related to people as if they were part of his family. He spoke at a village church one night and shared this relational theme, “O what a marvelous family the church is. My heart was full of joy when I walked in here tonight. You are my father and my mother, my sister and my brother. What a great family it is. I see Jesus Christ in your lives.” Smith led by establishing relationships and thereby creating a community of followers who became loyal to his dreams.

It was not beneath Smith to reach out and establish relationships with little children. He took time to play with them. A very poignant remark was made by a fourteen year old boy named Junior, the adopted son of staff member Markitos Vasquez. When asked what his favorite memory of Charlie was, he replied, “I remember when he bought me a Coke and put me on his shoulder and took me to the Martha House.” And then Junior paused and said, “He listened to me.” This is a huge statement by an illegitimate child in a culture where children are birthed to work – chop wood, wash clothes, feed chickens, crank the molina to grind the corn and keep their mouths shut.

Pastor Ed Shonkwiler comments on this listening quality of Smith which is so essential to effective leadership: “One thing I remember about Charlie’s leadership is that he would listen to you. He treated you as an individual regardless of your status, size of your church or contribution.”

Smith related well with the students both inside and outside the classroom. Remembering his leadership inside the classroom, Dr. Leslie Ratzlaff, former Dean of

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6 Charles Smith, addressing the church at Chaguatillo, VHS, box 4, tape 5, Miguel Pinell Library, April 21-28, 1992.
7 Junior Vasquez, interview by author, Canchias, Honduras, April, 2006.
8 Ed Shonkwiler, interview by author, Elizabethtown, KY, audio cassette, Miguel Pinell Library, August, 2008.
Warner Southern College noted: “Charlie was a people person unlike so many professors who just teach material.” Leslie Ratzlaff is saying that Smith’s leadership was person-centered not project-centered. This is why Smith was so successful gathering people around him. He had their best interests in mind. Relationship-leadership came naturally to Smith because life was more about others than himself, more about people than projects.

When asked about his opinion concerning Smith’s style of leadership, former staff member Rick Dike saw Smith leading by taking risks. Dike notes: “Charlie was a risk taker with people. I saw this over and over again. And when you made a mistake, he would not second guess you. He would not look the other way but he would never condemn. He never raised his voice. He was the same person as if you never made a mistake. He was the best visionary I have known – the best I have ever known.”

Heart to Honduras would never have come into existence if Smith had played it safe. His leadership was risky. He seemed to always be pushing the envelope. He took a risk when he joined the Peace Corps. He took a risk becoming the first Director of a Community Action Agency under the Lyndon Johnson Administration and his War on Poverty Program in Ruston, Louisiana as he worked with the first integrated staff in the area in 1966 and 1967. He took a risk when he took on the Army Corps of Engineers in Taylorsville, Kentucky when they sought to flood the Salt River, an action that would displace hundreds of rural poor. Along with Bob Clark and Dean Flora, he took a risk when he started H.E.A.R.T. And he took a risk when he chose to die among the poor in Honduras.

These risk taking decisions honed Smith’s faith to trust God for the impossible. It

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10 Dike, interview.
enhanced his leadership skill. It gave him the courage to do great exploits for God. It laid the ground work for his dearest vision – Heart to Honduras.

Smith was also a leader by influence. Dike shared an incident that reveals the kind of influence Smith had among the Hondurans: “When I walked with him through the village of Canchias, the people would call out Charlie’s name because they loved him. But when they called out other North American’s names, it was for what they could get.”

This was the kind of influence that enabled Smith to accomplish so much in such a short amount of time. He connected with the leaders of the village. They respected him because he respected them.

The life of FedEx driver Doug Durick was changed when he began taking teams to Honduras. He recalls, “My life changed forever since my first trip with Charlie and Heart to Honduras…He was a man that did not demand respect, but he earned his respect by his integrity. When we would visit a village, everyone wanted to be around the big man with the straw hat. Everyone loved and respected Charlie as a leader.”

After many years of this kind of love exhibited by Smith, it was returned when he died. Over thirty-five men in the village worked for thirty-six hours to dig a hole in solid rock on Ambassador Mountain to give their friend Charlie one of his last earthly requests, a poor man’s burial – underground. (Only the rich are buried above the ground.) This is influence. This is leadership.

The most effective style of leadership and one that came most naturally for Smith was the role he played as servant leader. No one ever referred to Smith as a boss. He, along with subsequent leaders of Heart to Honduras, would be appalled if their staff

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11 Dike, interview.
12 Doug Durick, e-mail to Jim Usher, July 1, 2008.
celebrated *National Boss's Day* elevating them to a position of superiority. It was not that Smith would mind a bit of rare recognition but he would recoil at being called “boss”. For Smith, the term “boss” elevates. Smith rejected stratification in roles as much as possible. He believed being a servant was the best way to lead because it was the way of meekness and humility. It was also the way of his Lord who said, “I have not come to be served but to serve....”\(^\text{13}\)

This servant-leadership style is also reflected when Smith decided to reject a secular name such as CEO, President or Executive Director. To be a servant leader, Smith believed that secular titles needed to be rejected. He studied the Bible for a Kingdom title and decided on the biblical term “Overseer”. This comes from the Greek word *episkopos* which means to “oversee” which can be translated bishop, overseer, superintendent, supervisor, the first, leader or foreman.\(^\text{14}\) Smith rejected the term “bishop” because it communicated position, hierarchy and power. Taking on the title of “Overseer” did not make Smith a better leader. But by rejecting the secular titles, it communicated that he believed in serving as a leader.

A former student of Smith, Terry Collier, now serving as a Christian counselor and present Board member of Heart to Honduras, gives a different insight into the make up of Smith’s personality and leadership that is worth noting. He believes Smith did not realize his highest potential because he failed to utilize the institution. He writes of Smith:

> It was his character and integrity. It was his genuineness. He marched to a different drummer. He was a very engaging man in conversation. He brought you into issues that you could not walk away from. He was a model of love and

\(^{13}\) Mark 10:45 (NIV).

grace. He did not intimidate. He was not negative nor did he induce guilt. He had a vision and saw things that we and others never saw. He had the ability to see the structure as well as the vision. He knew the steps to get there.

He did not give himself enough credit and I am not talking about egotistical credit. He really did become less significant than he could have been. Not that he missed some opportunities. He did not use the institution. It is because he wanted to keep the ministry pure. But you don’t have to relinquish the institution to get things done for your benefit. Nehemiah for example went to King Xerxes. He said, “Help me.” The King said, “How?” And the King gave him wood, soldiers, covering and supplies. Nehemiah wished to use this political power. Not many knew the depth of Charlie. But like so many great leaders, on the inside there is deep insecurity. He was a tremendously gifted leader who questioned himself. Yet, he was so transparent.

All leaders use different styles of leadership to confront issues, make decisions and move visions forward. Smith found himself in a variety of circumstances that called forth great courage and wisdom to lead. When an idea was needed, he visioned. When a
Chapter Thirteen

Charles Smith as Visionary

Visions and Charlie Smith go together like Ezekiel and his wheel; both moved forward and confronted the existing order of things. Smith was always thinking ahead. He glanced at the present but gazed into the future. Of all the behavioral traits of Smith, vision was the most definitive. As Joseph’s brothers looked toward Shechem and exclaimed, “Here comes the dreamer!”, Smith’s friends would say, “Here comes the visionary!”

Smith’s visions contained various prophetic elements that characterized his visions. From his own notes we read, “Vision – a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be.”¹ There was always a restlessness and discontentment within Smith. He recoiled at the status quo and it was this dissatisfaction with the existing order of things that motivated him to chip away at the block of complacency in hopes of creating a marble structure of hope. He believed vision begins “in certain instances with indignation over the status quo and grows into the earnest quest for an alternative.”²

One of his most powerful visions that continues today is the H.E.A.R.T Institute. The popular sociologist of Eastern University, Tony Campolo, visited H.E.A.R.T. and was deeply impressed by Smith’s vision. He stated in a letter to President Leroy Fulton of Warner Southern College: “No college in the country has anything to compare with H.E.A.R.T. There is no place where students get better training for living in primitive

¹ Charles Smith, notes, folder S219, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
² Ibid.

112
Third World conditions. We have worked hard at my college to set up training programs for overseas service, but we in no way measure up to the brilliant vision of this program. Blessings on you, and I want you to know that I mean every word of it.\textsuperscript{3}

Smith never took credit for his visions. He saw himself as a visionary but the visions that poured from his heart belonged to God. He had too many visions that turned sour to claim they were all from God. Because some visions were more powerful than others, Smith took a practical attitude toward them. He refused to discard a vision because it did not show immediate results. He would suspend it, let it brew and stew, and then give it another try. He encouraged people not to throw away a vision if it didn’t work at first, believing that patience and persistence were required and that the person with the vision had to be in a position to make things happen. Ownership of implementing the vision was important to Smith and this is one reason he did not stay long on staff with institutions when he felt superiors didn’t understand his vision.

Regarding the H.E.A.R.T. Institute, Smith never felt he owned the H.E.A.R.T. vision. There were several people who helped start the H.E.A.R.T. Institute but the catalyst was Smith. Leslie Ratzlaff, Dean of Warner Southern College, was asked who started H.E.A.R.T. He replied, “Charles Smith.”\textsuperscript{4} But Smith knew it belonged to Warner Southern College, its Board and President Fulton. This is why Smith had difficulty with President Leroy Fulton and the H.E.A.R.T. Board. It was either a clash of visions or a lack of vision.

In order for Smith to reach his highest potential, he would have to do what so many missionaries have done in the past; he would have to board that “ship” and cross

\textsuperscript{3} Tony Campolo, letter to President Leroy Fulton, folder 505, Miguel Pinell Library, November 29, 1982.

\textsuperscript{4} Ratzlaff, interview.
the vast ocean that lay before him alone. So many of his visions were “hatched” while working under institutional authorities. It was like an employee of General Electric who invents a product on company time that is worth millions and seeks to have it patented for himself. The company has all rights to the invention. Smith would come up with incredible visions and because he did not have resources, he would ask the institution he was working with to fund it. But nothing frustrated Smith more than to get a vision funded, launched and up and running and then watch it slowly become clogged in bureaucracy.

Smith was frustrated with the leadership of Project Global Village and Hand to the Plow for the same reasons. Smith was coming forth with great visions but he had no control over them. Because of losing control of his visions and believing he could do a much better job in executing them, Smith rarely stayed long with any organization. He was with H.E.A.R.T. for three years. He stayed under the umbrella of Hand to the Plow for two years. He was a fund raiser and consultant for Project Global Village for four years. But once he was able to implement his own vision with Heart to Honduras, he stayed in the Overseer’s saddle casting visions and “making things happen” for almost ten years until he passed away.

Smith would take one of God’s visions for every one hundred of his own because he realized the eternal element was necessary to make lasting change in oppressive structures and unjust weights against the poor. In giving God the credit for his visions, he writes, “And all of the glory goes to God who made these things possible.”5 His daughter Felicia agrees, believing her dad’s visions originated in the heart of God: “I think they

5 Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, 1997.
were visions from God, definitely. He would get very excited, very excited. There was a lot of energy there." Younger daughter Anne-Marie describes the energy and practical implications of her father’s visioning process:

It was his hands. I would always say it was like a cockroach – his hands in the air. He just had the ability to picture and see things that he thought made sense. He had a big mind. He saw big. He thought on a big scale. He was also practical in ideas that made sense, teaching people to be self-sustainable, not doing it for them, but teaching them. Once you give a man a fish for a day and then teach him how to fish – that sort of thing. You know, like the blacksmith shop, and the shoe repair.

Even at a young age, Smith had a penchant for inventing and creating things in Ruston, Louisiana. Smith showed early traits of vision when he was a teenager in Ruston, Louisiana. In the summer months in Louisiana, the temperature would hover around 100 degrees. He decided to rig up a homemade air conditioner. Pat Garrett, Ruston neighbor turned author, describes the contraption in this way, “Charlie took an attic fan and placed it in front of a bale of hay. He then placed a slow dripping water hose on top of the hay so that it would moisten the hay. As the fan blew wind through the hay, cool air would filter into the room….People from all over town came to see Charles’ homemade air conditioner. ”

Many visions would pop into Smith’s head spontaneously while walking through a village, teaching in a classroom or driving in his car. But whatever the vision, his intent was to filter them through the mind of Christ. Smith believed Jesus had purpose, goals and visions. Smith identified with the two key components of Jesus’ vision for the Kingdom, which were indignation at self-righteousness and compassion for the poor. Smith, like Jesus, saw both of these as aligned with the purposes of the Father.

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6 SmithGraybeal, interview.
7 Dezelan, interview.
8 Pat Garrett, Harps Upon The Willows (San Antonia, TX: Burke Publishing, 1995), 70.
Once while returning from the mission field after landing in Orlando, Florida, Smith was driving west on Interstate 4 just past Disney World. He looked over to his right and noticed a huge concrete telephone pole shaped at the top like the ears of Mickey Mouse. This scene always disturbed Smith. If Walt Disney could take a mouse and create such visions, why not the church? In January 1996 he wrote, "It seems that each year Santa Claus becomes greater and Jesus less. Among many circles Santa is more believable than Jesus. Santa and a fictitious 50 year old rat named Mickey have become our national heroes while Jesus, the Savior of the world, is relegated to a back seat on this day when we celebrate his birth... There is a better mouse trap."9

Visions for Smith were not something to dilly-dally around with, nor were they simply frivolous impressions or bursts of mental energy bouncing off the neurons of his brain. Visions were the stuff of life for Smith. He wrote, "Just any vision is not sufficient. Vision keeps us from perishing in this life. We need a vision of the purpose and power of God."10

Smith realized other people did not understand him. This is why his institutional superiors misjudged him. Smith would have been a tremendous asset to the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), or any other mission organization but because of his resistance to institutional norms and impatience with organizations top heavy with bureaucracy, his tenure would always be short. Some visionaries, like Smith, are best when they operate alone. These visionaries are needed to hold behemoth organizations accountable and vice versa. Smith was simply following in the pioneering tradition of David Brainerd, missionary to the Kaunaumeek Indians, Moravian George Schmidt among the natives of

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9 Charlie Smith, draft of article for *The Reminder*, folder 643, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
10 Charles Smith, notes, folder S238, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
South Africa, John Sung alongside the Chinese and Amy Carmichael in India, who each embarked alone with a pioneering spirit and accomplished great things with their anointed visions.

The prophet needs the institution for accountability and responsibility, and the institution needs the prophet for mobility, flexibility and maneuverability. Smith was a Lone Ranger and his own description of his non-conformity expresses it well, "I am always ministering in far away places, for God is continually giving me visions that blow me away. Dreamers and visionaries are considered impractical and remote from the harsh realities of life on earth. Call me crazy, ignorant or what you will, but God is giving me unique, simple, feasible answers and directions for responding to the suffering of hundreds of millions of oppressed people."

Five years before the seed for Heart to Honduras was planted by God in Smith's heart, this unique, feasible, simple vision to meet the needs of the oppressed was stirring in him. He shared with his parents: "I do believe in the not-too-distant future this vision will be realized, and that we will be able to shout out to the world: ‘Look at this! Here is how the poor can live and no longer be poor, but can work with their own hands to meet their own needs as members of families, hamlets and villages!’ There is no longer any excuse for anyone in this world to continue starving to death, if we but only use the abundance God has provided in the right ways!" Though this particular vision never came to fruition, it became the seed for the birth of Heart to Honduras. Standing in the midst of a grove of eight hundred orange trees in the village of San Isidro, a friend asked Smith why he was changing his mind and locating the Heart to Honduras vision to the

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11 Charles Smith, notes, folder S238, Miguel Pinell Library, n.d.
12 Charles Smith, letter to Frellsen and Myrtle Smith, folder S87, Miguel Pinell Library, November 27, 1984.
rural village of Canchias, a thirty minute drive away. With animation and great excitement, he stated to his friend that visions are never static but always fluid. They change as situations change and as circumstances require them to adjust.¹³ For Smith, visions were never written in concrete. They were fluid. They zigzagged. They shifted. They turned. They brewed. They swerved. They morphed.

All of this seemed to happen with Smith’s New Life Homes vision. This vision was to provide a clean house to about a dozen families who lived from day to day in the village of Casitas. This was a great vision but it was slow in being brought to fruition because of a lack of water and other cultural concerns. This was also a learning process for Smith. Later in the village of Casitas, Heart to Honduras built a New Life Home for Petrona, a very poor lady afflicted with epilepsy. She had lived in a stick house with a hard dirt floor with chickens inside and pigs at the front door. Some North Americans came down and built a new block house next door with a concrete floor. But once the house was built, it stayed unoccupied for months because the stick house was more familiar and felt more culturally secure for Petrona. The new block house made her stand out in the community and it proved the effects of the “image of the unlimited good” concept that when one member of the village gains the others suffer.

But Smith would not be discouraged. One reason he was such a good visionary was because he had so many visions and was willing to learn from the good and the bad. This New Life Home vision was good but the timing and place was wrong. But he did not give up as he wrote years later of the New Life Home vision: “New Life Homes - A Reasonable, Practical, Humane Alternative for Living. It is so simple, yet it is yet to be done for the poorest of the poor....One poor family living in abject poverty comes out of

the gutter into a decent way of living. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT! For if it can be
done for one family it can be done for two families and if it can be done for two it can be
done ad infinitum – to the glory of God.”

In 1997 Smith sent a one page fax to Miguel listing, explaining, and exploring his
vision in twenty-two different areas. Listing the subject, verb and direct object in some
of these areas clearly demonstrates not only the passion but the urgency in which he
visions: “You, Benny and Cristobal plan the deck”…, “We need burn barrels”…, “Can
you get the dozer….”, “Push the sale of the hacienda…”, “Clean the hillside…” “Terrace
behind the Tabitha House…”, “Complete the rock walkway…”, “Plant the flower
seeds…”, “Scrub/wash the asna and her colt, then comb…”, “Hold off replacing Elsa…”,
“Set up a new sound system…” Vision for Smith was more than dreaming and
conceptualizing. It was, as indicated above, a burning, getting, pushing, cleaning,
terracing, completing, rocking, planting, scrubbing, washing, combing, replacing and
setting. It was as much a verb as a noun.

Smith’s most impressive vision within his grand Heart to Honduras vision was the
village of Canchias. One month before Smith passed away, he reflected on the Canchias
Vision that was now entering its seventh year of development. The growth of the
impressive village improvements of Canchias found their impetus in Smith’s original
vision for Heart to Honduras which was to encourage and enable the church in Honduras
to better do the work of the Kingdom of God, and to inform the church in North America
about the needs of the churches in Honduras, and to provide opportunities for persons and
churches to become involved in this innovative caring ministry.

14 Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, August 8, 1997.
15 Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, 1997.
Canchias had been selected to be the model – the prototype vision that Smith hoped to replicate in thousands of other villages throughout the world. This vision was the culmination of all Smith’s knowledge he brought to the table from his vast reservoir of learning and experience as an applied anthropologist with a Christian world view. He writes:

The small village of Canchias is being transformed from a poverty-stricken rural village to a village with renewed hope for the future. All homes now have clean drinking water, places to wash clothes, showers, and sanitary toilets. Mud block houses have been stuccoed and concrete floors poured to replace the packed dirt filled homes. New roofs are being built for protection from the annual 200 inches of rain, and basic furniture is being made in our wood shop so each person will have a bed in which to sleep, places to wash their clothes, tables and chairs. Yards are being cleaned, fruit and flowering trees are being planted, and in so many ways the life of this village is truly being transformed. With this single positive example, we have demonstrated that helping the poor up and out of poverty is not an expensive proposition. Rather, it is a realistic, practical way to address the needs of the people from the ground up. The trickle down theory of economic development has never worked and never will. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been wasted on large public works projects that never touch the needs of the poor. They only fatten the pocket books of the already wealthy. We have been shown the key to addressing the needs of the needy members of the household first, whether it be a newborn infant or a dying elderly family member, and then from there addressing the needs of the other members of the family. Seeing the change in the lives of the people is one of the greatest joys of my life. The smiles on their faces, the pride in their new living environment and their hope for the future of their children cannot be measured in dollars and cents. We have been obedient, and the Lord has been faithful to lead us all the way.¹⁶

It is worth noting that Smith’s ultimate goal was to replicate the vision in Canchias in other villages. Though bits and pieces of the Canchias vision have been duplicated and have accomplished marvelous things, replication of the village of Canchias has not occurred. During a 2004 Board meeting in Xenia, Ohio, Pastor Steve Birch noted, “Charlie Smith’s goal was to replicate his vision for the village Canchias in other villages but this has not happened.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Charles Smith, fax to Dave and Candy Pischel, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 16, 1997.
¹⁷ Steve Birch, comment during Heart to Honduras Board Meeting, Xenia, OH, April 2004.
Though imperfect as some of his visions were, there is no denying that some of his visions had world wide impact and still continue to this day. Visions gave Smith incredible inner peace. His greatest joy was to conceptualize a vision, contemplate and refine it, share it with like-minded friends, solicit resources and execute it. He wrote from the Martha House in Canchias on September 16, 1997 just thirty days before he died, “I am where I am supposed to be, continuing writing the vision God has given us, and helping to see that the work progresses as much as possible, as quickly as possible. So much good is happening now that my life is characterized by pure joy.”18

Chapter Fourteen

Passion

The term passion can be defined as a play about the life of Christ performed in Branson, Missouri, an emotion, a purple fruit native to South America, a strong feeling, a movie by Mel Gibson, enthusiasm, a women’s professional football team, sexual desire, a university for holistic living, a flower used for medicinal purposes, the name of a trail bike, a Christian website for young adults or a defining personality trait of a person named Charlie Smith.

Although Smith loved quiet and simplicity, his passion for his visions manifested themselves in a type A personality, highly energized, very relational, living in the fast lane and always spinning several plates. Dave Pischel, staff member with Heart to Honduras, remembers planning worship services with Charlie at the last minute. “I recall how I would spend hours preparing worship for a service and Charlie would come unprepared to speak. Yet, because he was so saturated in the Word, when he spoke, I hung onto every word. He taught me how to minister on the fly.”¹ Because Smith was so passionate about life and often had too many irons in the fire, he was often late for an occasion, creating havoc for those waiting. Even for his wife’s funeral, in which he was the speaker, he was twenty minutes late due to waiting until the last minute to type his sixteen pages of sermon notes and then having them get stuck in the printer.

Smith was passionate about life and pretty much invested his time and effort in activities with eternal perspectives. Life was more precious to him than gold, people of

¹ Dave Pischel, interview.
greater value than rubies, his family treasured more than money and the disenfranchised of equal worth with those who owned the franchise.

His passion was not isolated to one segment of his personality or to any individual trait. Each plate that was spinning drew from the energy of his passion. It was like pouring syrup over a Belgian waffle filling in each tiny grid. His passion was endless; it permeated everything he did in life. Close friend Steve Birch likened Smith’s passion to “fire in the bones”. He writes, “I was thinking about your question regarding Charlie’s passion. I think passion is the other key ingredient. Passion for me is the ‘fire in the bones’. It is when our cognitive beliefs are incorporated into our actual living. Charlie had passion for the poor. It was the fire in his bones.”

In the best-selling allegory The Shack, Elousia, an Afro-American woman who is God (“Papa”) says, “Mack, I don’t want to be the first among a list of values; I want to be at the center of everything….Rather than a pyramid, I want to be the center of a mobile, where everything in your life – family, friends, occupation, thoughts, activities – is connected to me but moves with the wind, in and out and back and forth, in an incredible dance of being.” So it was with Smith, the Holy Spirit blew Smith’s passion through his mobile of dangling visions, touching every segment of his life.

He was so passionate about life that visions seemed to flash in and out of his mind. “One of the things that I remember about Charlie”, shares Carol Lynne Usher, “was his passion. His passion always preceded his visions.” And it was this passion that led Smith to the poor. Smith was passionate about most everything that related to

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2 Steve Birch, e-mail to Jim Usher, March 11, 2009.
4 Carol Lynne Usher, interview by author, Xenia, OH, July 7, 2008.
helping people. It was all about others. Out of the hundreds of visions he had, one would be hard-pressed to recall a single one that was for the benefit of Smith.

“Charlie did nothing without passion,” stated Kelly Harrington who knew Smith well as one of his staff. “If he was making a pot of chili, he made it with passion. If he was making dumplings, he made it with passion. If he was going to the post office, he made it the best trip ever. If all he was going to do was purchase a single stamp, he would do it with passion.”*5 Kelly’s husband Monty agrees, “Whatever Charlie did, it was all in the opportunity. Whatever he did, it was for God so that he could tell others about the Lord and especially Heart to Honduras. Everything he did was so large. It was larger than life. One of his visions was developing a cooking video and he wanted me to assist him. This was before cooking shows like Emeril and Rachel Ray. He was ahead of his time. And it would have worked.”*6 (For a script of Smith’s amateur cooking video see Appendix I.) Candy Pischel recalls Smith’s passion up to the last few days before he died. She remembers Smith at the Martha House in Canchias feebly trying to write his memoirs, “When he was dying he was still working. He asked me to put his laptop on his lap. But his fingers just quit working. His finger would get stuck on one letter and it would type across the whole page.”*7 Smith’s passion was so great – he forgot about himself and sought to leave the one thing that could not be taken away from him – ideas with an eternal perspective.

Smith saw his life like a solitary candle burning night and day. Very aware that he only had one life to live, he gladly burned the wick of time, leaving less and less of the wax of life. He was always urging Miguel and his wife Nilsa to be vigilant and on red

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*5 Kelly Harrington, interview.
*6 Monty Harrington, interview.
*7 Candy Pischel, interview.
alert to be about the Father’s business. Time was short. Life was fragile. There was
work to be done. “Do not grow weary in serving the Lord,” Smith wrote to Miguel, “but
be renewed in mind, soul, spirit and body, and be ready to burn your light out for Jesus
for we know not when we will be called home.”

Passionate people carve out a swath of life and feast on it like Roman generals
feasted on roasted duck after a victorious battle. Passionate people lap the mediocre in
the race of life, leaving them in their creative dust. Smith was always feasting on life
and creating life out of life. He relished life. After his final Board meeting in Lake
Wales, Florida, he was wheeled by his sister Lorna across the street to this house. He
was weeping. A Board member asked, “Charlie why are you weeping?” He replied,
“Because I love life so much.” He loved living because of its unlimited opportunities to
take a dream and play with it, process and observe its colors, mood, and shape and sense
its potential. Dreams and visions took him into the metaphysical dimension of life that
transcended the finite. He saw things others could not see. He seized life and found
pleasure in each season. He wanted, like Henry David Thoreau, “...to live deep and suck
out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was
not life.”

While a young boy playing at his grandparent’s farm, Smith was greatly impacted
by a quote that hung in their living room. In a letter to high school friend Jimmy Love,
Smith reminisced over the special times they had together in high school, recalling how
short the days were, ending with: “There was a saying on the wall of my grandfather’s

8 Charles Smith, fax to Miguel Pinell, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, August 12, 1992.
9 Jim Usher, conversation with Charles Smith, Lake Wales, FL, August, 1997.
WaldenPond.html (accessed February 8, 2009).
house in Vernon Parish (Simpson) that read, ‘Only one life, it will soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last; and when I am dying, how glad I shall be, if the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee.’”\textsuperscript{11} Smith lived by these words up to the very day he died.

Sam Hicks, Smith’s ninety year old uncle, who resides in Shreveport, saw Smith’s passion as somewhat of a paradox. It had a fun side to it but on the other hand it had a serious tone. Reminiscing thirty-five years in the past, Hicks recalls the jovial spirit of Smith’s zest for life as well as his serious demeanor, “Now Charlie was a very interesting person all his life. To me, he was a paradox in some respects. He had a terrific sense of humor on one side. He enjoyed fun, and on the other side, a more serious minded boy you could not find. Whatever he did, it was always full speed ahead.”\textsuperscript{12}

Smith spoke at a mission conference in early 1996 with the theme, \textit{Rekindling Your Passion for Missions}. In his message, he shared how essential it is to have passion and how it cries out to all men. He saw passion as an emotionally charged word. Its voice is ubiquitous calling to you from the tantalizing photographs on the magazines at the grocery store check out counter, yelling at you in the photographs and the tantalizing contents. Passion yells at you in the workplace, in relationships, in marriage. Passion is the energy that excites man to appreciate life. It brings ecstasy. It is the emotion that charges one’s motivation to life beyond the mundane.\textsuperscript{13}

He admired young people and students, especially those who participated in the H.E.A.R.T. program. They were passionate about changing their world and making a

\textsuperscript{11} Charles Smith, letter to Jimmy Love, folder 331, Miguel Pinell Library, October 7, 1997.
\textsuperscript{12} Sam Hicks, interview.
\textsuperscript{13} Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
difference in the lives of the poor. On the other hand, he saw dangers in unbridled passion in the young and danger in dwindling passion in the old: "When we are young we all want a passionate existence. Then it is natural. We have too much of it too fast – but as we grow older, how illusive this emotion called passion becomes. It comes and goes – mostly goes. Strict diets, vitamins, exercise, regular medical check-ups, plus countless other remedies satisfy our desire to restore passion in our lives. Eventually the battle is lost."

Smith proposes a question to his audience, "How in God’s name do you begin to rekindle the passion lost in this life? You don’t. This is the way of all flesh." Smith rejected the idea that the world and all it offers can rekindle lost passion. He believed passion was an inner decision or desire that comes from within. It cannot be revived through the lurid magazines at Kroger’s. Psychiatrists, marriage counselors, child psychologists or sex therapists cannot revive it. It was his conviction that passion had to do with who you perceived yourself to be and what you perceived as your purpose in life. Smith is saying it is who you are and whose you are in the light of God. It boils down to God’s plan and purpose for your life and how you will respond to it.

Smith saw two sources for passion: the world and the divine. The world will give money, power, prestige, jealousy, intrigue. It is self-serving. It seeks to satisfy what Smith referred to as "the great trio in the world" - me, myself and I. This kind of passion will fade away to be swept together in a large pile and burned. Smith writes, "If that is

14 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
where you are in your life, get ready for a rough landing. You are in for the ride of your life leading into extinction.”

Smith offers a better solution to rekindling one’s passion. It is the path of divinity. He presented the idea in his message that passion has everything to do with the heart. It comes from within. It has to do with what one believes and values. It will come only when one surrenders to the purposes of God on their life. It begins at reconciliation which leads to righteousness and makes one an Ambassador of Christ doing righteous deeds. He writes, “Passion in our lives will burn brighter and brighter as we yield more and more to the will of God. There is our treasure – there is our heart – full of compassion, desiring only to be the righteousness of God.”

In some personal notes on the theme of passion, Smith raised a second question, “What destroys or erodes passion in our lives?” He believed passion waned when that which is precious became familiar. Smith may have been thinking of his wife Karen at this point. Often he was gone on the mission field, and even when he was home, he was so caught up in his vision that sometimes he was like an absentee husband. Karen became familiar to the point of being invisible. She felt this and after a serious talk, Smith recognized his neglect. He made positive changes in behavior, attention and words. He began to set aside every Saturday just to be with her. Soon the old romantic fires that burned when they were first married in September of 1960 were rekindled and passion replaced the familiar.

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17 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Other destructive forces that dissolve passion according to Smith were: considering Christ from a worldly point of view, forgetting where we came from, valuing the approval of man over the approval of God, lack of a righteous purpose in life, people living unto themselves, and the Gospel becoming a piece of paper. Each of these “passion killers” lacked the eternal perspective. This was the bottom line for Smith. True passion must have the spark of divinity. Speaking to the students at a H.E.A.R.T. commissioning service, he said: “Seize the moment. Focus on the vision. I could care less about accreditation by man. Unless this college is anointed by God, then you might as well lock the door. Now is the time to get off the fence and no longer be lukewarm. Go – make disciples.”

The Christmas season was winding down and the year of 1995 made its appearance on everyone’s calendar. Christmas was exciting for the Smith family when the extended family gathered in Ruston, Louisiana, but on the other hand, Smith dreaded Christmas because it was so plastic with extravagant toys and impersonal greeting cards, so material with non-relational gifts and so secular with Santa Claus and Rudolph reaching parity with Jesus in seasonal meaning. He writes, “After Christmas and New Years it is difficult to impossible to have a passion for anything. If you are anything like me, I would like an absence of passion for a while where passion is concerned with the giving of heart and soul to a cause. And we are supposed to get excited – have a passion for mission? Give me a break!”

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22 Charles Smith, “Rekindling Your Passion for Missions” (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
With this in mind, Smith wrote a list of the Top 10 Ways to rekindle your passion for mission. They reveal Smith's own values, missionary zeal and priorities. They are as follows:

1. Become interested in and keep up with a particular mission program.
2. Support the program with your prayers, money, gifts, talents and abilities.
3. If the opportunity presents itself, take a short-term mission trip. Get involved.
4. Recognize who you are. Know who you are and God's plan for your life.
5. Realize that now is the time to do the work of the Kingdom.
6. Get rid of everything that contaminates the body. Start with potato chips.
7. Clean up your life. Know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
8. Don't throw away money on stupid things. We are God's stewards.
10. Know that this world is not your home. You are only passing through.

Smith's passion for life was rooted in his love for the Word of God. He fell in love with the Word (Jesus) by marinating himself in the Words of the Word. He feasted on the written Word. One staff member stated, "Charlie ate the Bible!" His love for the Word of God was greater than baked chicken with Indian Curry – and Smith loved food cooked with curry! It can be said of Smith what the Psalmist said of God's Word, "I love thy Word more than my necessary bread." There can be no other explanation for Smith's extraordinary passion for life. It came from above ignited by the Holy Spirit. He was like a piece of pine kindling with an unlimited supply of spiritual resin. His resin burned until he punched his last computer key and breathed his last breath.

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23 Charles Smith, "Rekindling Your Passion for Missions" (sermon, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, folder 642, Miguel Pinell Library, January 18, 1996).
24 Dave Pischel, interview.
25 Psalms 119:103 (KJV).
Chapter Fifteen

Conflict Resolution

The field of anthropology was well suited for Charles Smith as a vocation. Anthropologists study the behavior of apes, work with museums, research other's work, must be non-judgmental and often work alone. These activities have minimal relational engagement with face to face confrontation such as politicians, lawyers and CEO’s might encounter. Smith mixed socially with people like an eligible bachelor at the coming out of debutantes but when it came to confronting recalcitrant men and women on his staff he was uncomfortable. His friendship-leadership style made confrontation awkward so he sometimes allowed emotional fires to fester, resulting in misunderstandings and anger that sparked unnecessary fires elsewhere. But if called upon, he would confront. He could confront. He did confront. The ministry was too precious to him to allow an enemy to creep inside the camp and lay siege to his vision.

Early on in the ministry of Heart to Honduras, Miguel sent word that a woman representing the ministry was spreading rumors, displaying an immoral lifestyle and usurping his authority. Immediately, Smith flew to Honduras and dismissed her. But Smith would rather have missed his flight out of Miami than to engage in such relational exorcism.

As noted in the chapter on his leadership style, Smith was an easygoing person and made people feel comfortable in his presence. He was not ambitious. He did not seek positions of power. He did not rule from a competitive position. Thus, he tended to be more collaborative with his staff, more compromising in his proposals and more accommodating in his solutions. He spent many hours pondering personnel and staff
issues at stake before making a decision. Rarely did Smith react in outbursts of anger in relational conflicts. This rare anger was provoked in Hawaii in 1964 during training for his service in Malaysia with the Peace Corps. After three days of strenuous exercises, he became irritated with the training approach the Peace Corps was using toward prospective candidates. He compared it to his Navy days in boot camp when his First Class Petty Officer would look down upon his Seaman Apprentice position and scream at him, dishing out orders. However, his expression of his anger was only expressed in a letter home: “They yelled at us, tried to make us walk down the hill faster, and took us through waist high water and thick undergrowth. They pushed and pushed and pushed. At first I got mad. Now I think I can see the reason why....They wanted to see if we could take it....[L.]emons overseas can do much damage. However, I don’t agree with many of their approaches.”  

According to his staff, resolving conflicts through correspondence was both a strength and weakness of Smith. Monty Harrington saw Smith as being uncomfortable working out confrontation face-to-face with people, “Charlie’s letter writing to resolve interpersonal conflicts, was, in my opinion, an ineffective approach. One-on-one would have been better. He was such a loving person. His self-defensive nature was because Heart to Honduras meant so much to him. It was like a parent over a child. When it came to his child (Heart to Honduras), he was not necessarily afraid of confrontation – when you think of all the things he did at the college to buck the system.”  

“Charlie would not cause conflict,” according to Board member and former

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2 Monty Harrington, interview.
student Terry Collier. "His approach was to put all the options on the table." Candy Pischel agrees with Collier, "No one likes confrontation. Charlie was easy going. He did not have his own agenda. There were times when he could become defensive but I did not see this as necessarily wrong. I remember him agonizing as he wrote on a yellow pad using yellow page after yellow page trying to reconcile an issue. He would ask Dave or myself to make suggestions. We would and he would rewrite it again." There were very few times that Smith rose up against anyone in anger. He would work through the issues. "Never did I see him work out of anger or strong emotions," states Pischel, "He would wait and let things settle."

"There were times when Charlie would call on me to deal with some issues that he should have dealt with," commented Rick Dike. "Confrontation, or lack of it, could have been one of his weaknesses. If I failed to deal with an issue, it might fester. It would have been better for Charlie to address the issue."

One staff member recalls serving as a surrogate for Smith when he refused to lead certain teams that had issues with the ministry:

I remember in the early days when people had an issue with Miguel, Charlie or Heart to Honduras. They would call Charlie and he refused to follow up on the call. They had strong personalities and were leaders of teams going to Honduras. Their concerns were legitimate but Charlie would defer them to me. He would send me on their teams as the Heart to Honduras representative. He did not want to face them. He said, "Every morning I want you to lead the team in devotions." He did this thinking somehow a spiritual insight might turn things around. But they did not want to talk to me nor did they want to listen to me. They wanted to talk to the leader - Charlie Smith. I kind of felt like Chuck Colson, chief counsel to Richard Nixon, who served as his hatchet man. I was somewhat of a chief counsel to Smith but in this culture I felt like I was his machete man. And I told him, "Charlie, they want to talk to you not me."

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3 Collier, interview.
4 Candy Pischel, interview.
5 Ibid.
6 Dike, interview.
7 Jim Usher, journal, summer, 1995.
In early 1987, Smith was raising funds for his New Life Village Project in Honduras. He had been corresponding with World Service Executive Director David Lawson and Assistant Director James Williams of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN), to channel these funds through their World Hunger and Relief Committee. He felt this would give him legitimacy and enable him to solicit more partners. Also, the churches would receive World Service credit and donors would have a legal umbrella for tax purposes. All was going well until December twelfth when Smith sent Lawson a letter informing him that he had set a goal of raising $126,000. When Lawson received Smith’s letter, he responded and referred to this letter as “a letter of aggression”. Lawson writes:

It is my belief that if you choose to promote to congregations at this level of aggressiveness, it should clearly be without World Service credit and be chosen as a project other than World Service. I would plead with you not to so promote...Charles, I have felt on shaky grounds all along in this involvement because your personal support has been a factor in the amounts credited...Finally, Charles, I have no authority to agree to the alternatives you have offered...If you feel that you must independently promote Project Global Village support within our congregations I would suggest that we begin immediately to discontinue the present World Service credit agreements because there will be extreme confusion. Then no World Service “approval” will be implied and you will simply be acting as an individual in the same arena as Project Partner or Vacation Samaritans....Regretfully yours, David L. Lawson, Executive Director.  

As always, Smith would not give up. He would be resolute because he believed in his vision. He wrote a final letter to Chairman of the Board of Heart to Honduras, Jerry Grubbs, indicating his determination to carry on, “Dear Jerry, ...Please do what you can to help in this regard. You know, however, that I cannot cease my low-key fund-

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raising activities in the church, and if David insists that I back off entirely, then I will reluctantly go it alone.”

This is how Smith would solve many of his conflicts – not only through correspondence but by playing the role of an ancient Old Testament prophet and a contemporary Lone Ranger and go it alone! And go it alone he did. Within ten months of Lawson’s letter, Smith resigned from Project Global Village, came under the umbrella of Hand to the Plow (for tax exempt status), sent Miguel Pinell to the rural mountains of Honduras to bring together the pastors and informally launched his holistic vision in Honduras. His twin sister, Marie Smith Riggs, spoke prophetically, “When Charlie sets his mind to do something, nobody is going to stop him.”

Smith created one of his greatest conflicts in Honduras in 1988 when he separated from Project Global Village and angered the Director, Chet Thomas, by starting a new ministry to the same people and villages where Project Global Village was working. This decision gave credibility to a quote Smith would often cite: “Missionaries are often like a pile of manure, when you spread them out, they smell pretty good. But when they come together, they stink.” This act by Smith was like a wounded wildebeest wandering into a pack of starving wolves. Smith was the wildebeest who would feel the wounds of verbal abuse, gossip and misunderstanding for the ensuing ten years until he passed away.

Missionary spinoffs from the mother organization occur, often causing some of the most difficult pain on the mission field. Sometimes it is more difficult than spears thrown by savages in the rain forests of Brazil. The hurt comes from the ones we love.

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10 Riggs, interview.
11 Charlie Smith, conversation with author, Lake Wales, FL, n.d.
and need the most. The Psalmist affirms this hurt from a close friend when he stated: "If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend...."12

Yet, God has his own way of taking "missionary manure" and using it as spiritual fertilizer to bring back color and fragrance to a relationship. A few weeks before Smith died, a truck drove up Oxcart Road and through the Gates of Justice and into the Heart to Honduras compound. A tall thin man got out and began walking up the winding steps toward the Martha House where Smith was staying. Smith’s face lit up when he recognized Chet Thomas. It had been several years since they had connected. They talked about old times and reconciled with each other. This man who once accused Smith of trying “to bury him” now came to show his respect before Smith was buried.

Smith encountered several other staff issues over the years necessitating urgent actions. One couple felt pressure from Smith so strong that they called a meeting in Canchias with Smith and handed in their resignation. Another stateside staff member resigned during the North American Convention of the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana due to an unwise decision on his part. In both cases, Smith confronted these staff people personally. It is worth noting that Smith always left the door open for reconciliation. Dave Pischel noted Smith’s spirit of reconciliation to a former disgruntled friend who had served under Smith in another organization, “Charlie was a peacemaker not a barbarian. He would grieve when people left. Yet, if they ever wanted to come

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12 Psalms 55:12-13 (NIV)
back, he welcomed them with open arms. One guy left and was gone for four years. He came back and Charlie was thrilled."¹³

In 1993, Merrill and Benjie Esch joined the staff of Heart to Honduras. They were Mennonites and felt called to assist the poor in the village of Montañauela. Not long after their arrival in Honduras, their philosophy of ministry began to clash with Smith's vision. Smith was bit impatient with the Esches’ methodology of food production, solicitation of support from North Americans visiting in Honduras, and their desire to have their own vehicle. This created tension and it all came to a head when Smith had an almost fatal accident.

In 1994, about a year and a half after his wife died, Smith was in a terrible accident while driving about a mile outside of San Isidro. A gentle rain was falling and Smith did not see a washed-out place on the dirt road while passing a Pepsi truck at five miles per hour. The truck’s front wheel dropped into the hole and the pick up truck rolled over the side of the steep embankment two and a half times with seven people on the back. It was a miracle no one was killed. Later Merrill said to a friend, “Charlie should not have been driving the Dodge because he has been on tranquilizers."¹⁴ Charlie took this personally and told Merrill it could do damage to the ministry.¹⁵

Two major reasons for conflict on the mission field are the desire for power and the tongue. Even if the words spoken to Smith regarding this accident had been true, they were the final straw that broke the partnership with the Esches and Heart to Honduras.

¹³ Dave Pischel, interview.
¹⁴ Meeting minutes, Resignation of Merrill and Benjie Esch, Canchias, Honduras, folder 321, Miguel Pinell Library, December 9, 1994.
¹⁵ Ibid.
Finally, on December 9, 1994, Merrill and Benjie handed in their resignation. In their resignation statement, the Esches shared why they were resigning: "Our vision is to do small things in small ways." Benjie stated that the two visions seemed to be in conflict and it seemed best to go ahead and resign before further misunderstanding might occur. Merrill also recalled Charlie’s word to him that some missionaries worked better and felt more comfortable ministering independently.

But it is important to remember, as mentioned earlier, that God has a way of taking "missionary manure" and using it for good. Dry manure is often used on the mission field to build houses, or as fertilizer, or for fuel, or to keep insects out of the house. As the meeting came to a close, with a spirit of reconciliation modeled by the Apostle Paul and the impulsive disciple Peter, Merrill said to Charlie: "I probably used the wrong words. I know I should not have said what I did. I want you to know that I am sorry." Smith replied, "I forgive you....and I love you both and am glad that we have been able to work together for a season," demonstrating in a real situation on the mission field his Christ-like way of resolving conflicts.

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16 Meeting minutes, Resignation of Merrill and Benjie Esch, Canchias, Honduras, folder 321, Miguel Pinell Library, December 9, 1994.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
Chapter Sixteen

Death and Dying

It was March, 1993. Charlie Smith was desperate. His world was crumbling around him. The one he loved so much on his wedding day in the fall of 1960, that beautiful girl whose first impression caused him to say, "...the most gorgeous woman I ever laid my eyes on," whose love caused the years to pass like a short-lived hibiscus flower, his Karen, was dying. Diagnosed with Adenocarcinoma, the doctors gave her a few months to live.

In his desperation to find God in this situation, he did something bizarre, something not typical of an academician. He decided to play a game of biblical roulette with God. He wanted to know more precisely who was this God he was serving, what He was up to and why his beautiful wife was being cut down in the prime of her life. He took his leather covered Bible, worn and torn from loving use, and pushed God to the limit. "Lord, I want to know your will for my life regarding Karen. Please speak to me and give me your word." Like a blind man, he held the Bible in his hands. He flipped it open, asking God to speak to him from the first verse that made contact with his eyes. Out of the thirty-one thousand, one hundred and two verses in the Bible, Smith's eyes fell on the prophet Ezekiel's words:

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears. Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead. Keep your turban fastened and your sandals on your feet; do not cover the lower part of your face or eat the

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1 Charles Smith, "Memorial Service for Karen Smith" VHS (sermon, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, box 6, tape 6, Miguel Pinell Library, July 11, 1993).
2 Charles Smith, conversation with author, Lake Wales, FL, April 1993.
customary food of mourners." So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did as I had been commanded.  

Smith was a rational man. He did not resort to “throwing darts at maps” to resolve perplexing questions and difficult dilemmas. Out of desperation, Smith, desiring a sign from his God who for a season seemed withdrawn from him, had taken a slot machine approach. Though Smith used this approach only once, his longing to know God’s purpose in all that was happening to his wife continued for several months.

Death was no stranger to Smith. His father had passed away in 1992 and Smith, being the spiritual leader of his family, was the natural one to give the eulogy. He had dealt directly and sensitively with the question of death when Wolf, the family dog, died, as recorded in this note from daughter Anne-Marie to her dad:

We were in your blue [VW] bug and you drove me to H.E.A.R.T. You gently told me the process about life and death. We drove up to a mound of dirt where some students had placed a homemade cross. I was so sad and I remember we both cried. You took me to McDonald’s afterwards and I got a Happy Meal that had a sticker in it. I put the sticker above the windshield on the passenger’s side and it stayed there for years.  

However, the day his wife was diagnosed with cancer in February 1993 and given months, not years to live, Smith became more serious about the meaning and purpose of life. He always lived life with passion, but with this news his passion for life grew in proportion to his sorrow. When Wolf died, Smith cried for his daughter. He was sad. With his wife’s impending death, he cried for himself. He was broken. He was once overheard crying, “Why does it hurt so bad? Where is God?”

Out of this brokenness, Smith became more focused and determined. Life became more quality than quantity – it was not how long one lived but how well. At

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2 Ezekiel 24: 15-18 (NLB).
4 Anne-Marie Dezelan, fax to Charlie Smith, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 9, 1997.
5 Charles Smith, conversation with Jim Usher, Las Anonas, Honduras, April, 1993.
Karen’s request to “Let the party begin!” the family began to savor each moment of her remaining days. They set about re-viewing all the family slides and re-watching all their favorite movies. They took a family trip to Honduras and visited people and churches where their personal financial support had had an impact.

In seven months, she was gone. Smith writes, “At Karen’s request, we buried her in a simple but elegant handmade pine box. At her graveside we released purple balloons to symbolize her flight to her heavenly home. We sang. We heard words of hope. We prayed. And that night we celebrated her life and transition in a wonderful worship service and praise. Then we had another party in her honor.”

But Smith’s lessons in the classroom of death and dying were not over with the passing of his wife. A scant three years after Karen’s passing, doctors informed Smith that he had a rare disease known as idiopathic (of unknown origin) interstitial pulmonary fibrosis (a hardening of the lungs) and a new, even more personal journey through death’s valley began.

Smith writes a courageous, upbeat letter to Pastor John Martin and the members of the Ruston Church of God:

Thank you again for your prayers for me. The lung disease I have has no known cause and there is no cure. I know that God can heal me of this infirmity, for His Word tells me that He can. If for reasons known only to Him He chooses not to do so, my days with you will be cut short. Fifty percent of the people who contract this disease die within five years, and the doctors tell me I probably got it three or four years ago. I would like to live longer and continue serving our Lord where He has placed me. If that isn’t possible, I am ready to go to my heavenly home. Praise God I have no fear, but trust completely in Him who made and sustains me. What joy is ours to have the hope of life eternal with our loving heavenly Father!

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6 Charles Smith, “Memorial Service for Karen Smith” VHS (sermon, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, FL, box 6, tape 6, Miguel Pinell Library, July 11, 1993).
7 Charles Smith, letter to John Martin, folder 527, Miguel Pinell Library, September 18, 1997.
The dying process Smith endured taught him many lessons about the essential details of life that so many take for granted. It did not necessarily rearrange all of his priorities; rather, these priorities became more urgent. It did help him regarding his time management. Before her illness, Charlie and Karen would watch Dan Rather and the CBS evening news. This all stopped once news of her illness was made known. Family, friends, photos, memories, hugs, tears, prayer, relationship, and keeping “Karen’s party” going, replaced the evening news.

In June of 1996, Smith’s medical diagnosis further crystallized purpose and meaning in his life. Before his illness, the loss of Karen and her terminal disease motivated Smith. Now his life was dangling over death’s unknown chasm. He loved life. He wanted to live. He wrote: “I am truly a blessed man, and if this is the way and the time I am to return to my Father, I still am so very blessed. I would like another fifteen years, as King Hezekiah.” He wanted to continue to cast visions. He wanted to launch the School of Discipleship in Honduras before he died. Every minute counted. Each day was like a rare diamond to be handled with care.

One particular lesson Smith learned occurred at a fast food restaurant. While visiting his mother for the last time in May 1997, Smith stopped at a McDonald’s restaurant to use the restroom in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was weak and could barely walk. When he came out he was weeping. As he exited the restroom, tears were streaming down his face. He shared with his friend, “I am weeping because of the handicap railing somebody placed in the restroom. They were thinking of me.”

Another incident occurred one month before Smith died when he noticed a patch

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8 Charles Smith, fax to Dave and Candy Pischel, Felicia and Lyle Graybeal and Anne-Marie Dezelan, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, August 29, 1997.
of weeds outside his window at his cabin retreat in Canchias. He began to reflect on the vision God had given him in Honduras and how it had grown and matured. He always loved the three virtues of the ancient Greeks: the beautiful, the true and the good. Reminiscing over the eight years of ministry in the little village, he said, “I had the workers cut the weeds so I could see the beauty of the tree.”

On another occasion, Smith hungered for the Word of God and asked his friend to read him some Scriptures on the subject of heaven. Following the reading, he said, “I would give a million dollars if I could just walk out on the front porch and just rest and see the glory of God and Canchias and hear the birds sing.” And then he began to weep and said, “This is the culmination of my life.” How meaningful the subject of heaven becomes when we know we are dying; it brings so much hope in our final hours. How precious our legs are for walking. What a joy it is to hear the birds sing. How helpful is a handicapped handrail.

Over the years Smith owned, purchased or read thousands of books. But just as a professor narrows his reading list to a particular subject, prior to his final trip to the Martha House, Smith narrowed his books down to eight. He selected these special books as old friends to accompany him in the final days of his life. He placed them near his bed. He wanted them close for easy reference when needed. There were no romance novels, mysteries, science-fiction, westerns or even books on anthropology on his shelf. In addition to his Bible, all eight books were spiritual in nature.

These books on Smith’s shelf tell much about him in the final days of his life. God’s Order was given to Smith by his father. Though Smith in the rebellious stages of

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10 Charles Smith, conversation with author, Canchias, Honduras, October 1997.
11 Ibid.
his life gave his father much grief, he wanted his dad’s presence near him in his last days. *Halley’s Bible Handbook* by Henry Halley and George Buttrick’s *Christ and History* would fill Smith’s need for historical facts in his final writings about the church. Smith loved Church History and cherished the many copies of *Church History Magazine* that his dad gave him. *Unto the Last* by John Ruskin revealed Gandhi’s social and economic theories. From Ruskin’s ideas, Gandhi began paying the same salary to all men regardless of function, race or nationality. Smith had a bent toward this economic concept and believed the poorest of the poor should be treated as well as the richest of the rich. A special friend of Smith, David Crippen, introduced him to *The Inner Voice of Love* by Henri Nouwen. Nouwen was a priest in the Catholic Church who taught at Harvard and Yale. He spent his final days as a pastor at *L’Arche* (Daybreak) in Canada near Toronto working with adults with developmental disabilities. Nouwen explores the nature of holding, lifting and drinking the cup of life. Holding the cup is savoring its sorrows and joys. Lifting the cup is reflecting on one’s life, even as one offers it to others. Drinking the cup means intimacy and celebration, salvation and finally death — emptying the cup. This book brought Smith comfort as he was drinking from the cup of suffering. *Christ of the Indian Way* by E. Stanley Jones emphasizes deep spirituality stating that wherever we are, either in India or Honduras, we are to share Christ in a personal way. *The Cloud of the Unknowing* is by an anonymous English monk who seeks to teach a student that the way to God is not through knowledge but through love.

Smith, through his death, taught the church that the greatest family is the family of God. The Words of Jesus to a young man who inquired about the cost of following Jesus echoed in his mind. Before following Jesus, the young man wanted to go home and
bury his father to obtain his inheritance. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead!"¹²

When Smith realized that he only had a few weeks to live he made the decision to fly to Honduras while he still could. He wanted to spend his final days among the poor in Honduras. He wanted to be buried there where his vision had taken shape and was bearing fruit. Smith was a family man. He loved his daughters. But above his love for family was his love for God. He allowed no one or no thing to take priority over his devotion to God and the ministry. The poor in Honduras were his inheritance, his treasure and his love. This final separation from his daughters and siblings extracted a heavy toll from all of them. The price his family, including Smith, paid is seen in a fax his daughter sent to him a few days before his final departure:

I must admit I have suffered from depression since you left and also since I received the call that you are not doing as well as we hoped. Oh Dad, I do not understand and I am filled with sadness and anxiety at the thought of not being able to call on my friend. This past weekend was our first apart and I missed having BBQ and fruit of the vine. I feel emptiness and loneliness almost as if you have made your transition...I feel so overwhelmed and I feel I have lost motivation. Is there a letter that you could write me to assure me that no matter what, it will all be okay in the big picture? A letter that I could pull out throughout my life and be reminded of your love for me and the confidence you have in my life.”¹³

One response to this agonizing plea from his daughter was Smith’s final letter to his own siblings. (For a copy of this letter see Appendix G.) Asking his siblings to nurture his daughters after his passing, he then writes about this pain of separation, “We have enjoyed more quality time than most fathers and their children spend in a lifetime, but that still does not remove the pain of separation. In fact, it makes it even greater. As they have said so often to me, “Daddy, if we did not love you so much it would not be so

¹² Matthew 8:22 (KJV).
¹³ Anne Marie, fax to Charles Smith, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 2, 1997.
hard to say goodbye.”

The physical toll on Smith was great as well. As his life began to ebb away, he began to think about his “Home Going” and the best way to bring closure to his life. He seriously contemplated a fast unto death, especially when he could no longer take care of his bodily functions. He writes about this fast:

My breathing and strength have taken a definite downturn. It has become difficult to do the simplest things like walking and even move in bed. I know my time is getting closer for my Home Going - My Father is calling and unless He chooses to heal me, my days are definitely numbered. A while back I knew that when the time that I got to the place when I could not care for my own bodily functions, that I would begin a fast until the Lord takes me home. I had great difficulty in getting to the bathroom this afternoon. The increase in steroids has weakened my legs so that I can barely stand. Within a day or two I will likely begin the fast.

Smith was intentional about leaving a legacy of his life for others to ponder their own faith and finiteness. He did not want a statue, library or building erected in his memory. Whatever legacy it was to be, he wanted it to bring glory to God. He used graphic symbolism. His burial site, Ambassador Mountain, is located in the village of Canchias. He gave the mountain a biblical name. He had the foresight to plan his own ceremony within the cultural context of the Honduran people. The poor Honduran believers played a leading role in his memorial service and burial. He turned a funeral into a party. He incarnated himself among the Hondurans by living and dying among them. He rejected western technology in his time of grave illness. He took the ceremony out of the funeral home. In order to insure this would happen, he wrote with strong feelings about extravagant funerals, “We over compensate with our burials. Wasteful! We need to write a book: How to Die and be Buried Inexpensively. We need to establish a non-profit

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14 Charles Smith, letter to his siblings, Appendix 7, September 1, 1997.
15 Charles Smith, fax to Dave and Candy Pischel, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 5, 1997.
corporation and take the profit out of funerals and burials.” Smith felt money spent on funerals could be spent more wisely: “Don’t send me ‘cut flowers’ – they are a waste of money. Make sacrificial gifts to Heart to Honduras or something of the sort.” His death became a worship service, not a funeral dirge.

In addition, Smith wanted to do something huge to say “good-bye” to his Honduran family and leave a legacy for them to always remember the teachings of Christ he so faithfully taught them. The “goodbye” was a joyous fiesta held in the newly completed Assembly Hall for all the poor in the surrounding villages, and the memory was his funeral procession “…led by an ass followed by the casket borne by men, with a procession of the poor singing simple music without instruments. I want it simple.” Smith requested that his friend Ever make a simple pine box for the burial.

Charlie’s brother Alvin came to Honduras and kept a diary of the final days. He wrote the following account:

In the peaceful time that occurred today shortly after Charles died, Dave said, “There is a difference when a believer dies.”…[Doctor] Elsa came in…to prepare the body….In the middle of the afternoon, the quiet of the village was interrupted by the whining sound of the ministry truck….Miguel [and] about seven others…brought the casket from the woodworking shop in San Isidro….I watched from the Martha House as Miguel led the men, who were carrying the casket, up the winding path….They arrived at the front porch and placed the casket in front of the door to the house. [Ever] took out a cordless electric drill and removed the screws which held the top half of the casket to the bottom. With only two screws left, his drill battery ran out of power. He calmly removed the large battery from the bottom of the drill, reached into his deep pocket and pulled out a freshly charged battery…installed it and then removed the remaining two screws. The men lifted the top half…and laid it to the side.

The men then followed Elsa into Charles’ room….She directed them to lift the body slightly so that they could remove the egg-crate-type mattress from under him. They brought this out to the casket and gently laid it in to form a soft base.

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16 Charles Smith, “My Daily Diary” folder 1, 47.
17 Charlie Smith, fax to Dave and Candy Pischel, folder 7, Miguel Pinell Library, September 9, 1997.
18 Charlie Smith, conversation with author, Martha House, October, 1997.
Then they brought out a sheet, embroidered at the top, and placed it over the soft base.

Six men returned to Charles’ room where a woman...was crying and praying. After she finished praying...the men lifted the body off the bed and gently brought it out of the house and laid it in the casket. A beautiful blanket from Guatemala, at Charles’ request, was brought out and laid over the lower half of his body...placed to clearly expose the entire Ambassador Logo on the front of Charles’...t-shirt.

Miguel then led the men down...to the Assembly Hall. ...As I watched...I heard the braying hee haw of [Charles’] burro which had been silent [until now]. Candy pointed out that...it was very special that Charles’ ass was acknowledging his departure with his tender crying bray.

Three sawhorses...were waiting for the casket....At Charles’ direction, his tattered and torn NIV New Testament was laid across his legs...opened to John 17, which is the scripture Charles taught from at his first meeting of ministers [to] begin Heart to Honduras ministry. On the side of the casket was placed a framed picture of Karen. Below the Bible was laid his hat, given to him by Anne-Marie. On that hat was laid one of his harmonicas. [Even] before the items were in place, several people had already arrived to pay respects. I ...wandered outside....The vision is here, and hundreds of lives have been touched. This is an incredible place.19

As the simple box rested on the three sawhorses, Ever gathered his tools, walked toward the entrance, turned and looked once again at his craftsmanship. He had worked feverishly all night on this gift, and was humbled that God had honored him with the task of making this simple pine box as the final resting place for the body of his dear friend, Charles Smith, who passed away at 8:55 a.m. on October 20, 1997 among the poor whom he loved. He had lived by the visions God gave him. He had demonstrated how to live and now he had demonstrated how to die.

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Chapter Seventeen

Lessons for Leaders of Mission Organizations

It is rare that a mission organization or any organization rises higher than its own leader’s ability to lead them. Based on this assumption, most all missionary organizations rise or fall on leadership. Church expert and statistician George Barna writes after fifteen years of research: “The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership.”\(^1\) If the church is dying in America and America is the leading missionary sending agent next to South Korea, then this impending death will have a major impact on home and foreign missions. How can weak leaders in American churches produce faithful and successful leaders for the future? Charlie Smith’s life is a bright contemporary beacon for other missionary organizations to follow and learn from his successes as well as his mistake recoveries.

- **Be a Servant Leader**

Smith was a servant leader. He fleshed out Jesus’ Words, “I am come not to be ministered unto but to minister.”\(^2\) He took the form of a servant in each Kingdom ministry he launched. He humbled himself and led by doing the degrading and lowly task. In the Peace Corps, he slept in a stilt house with a rat infested thatched roof to identify with the local people. At times he would wear indigenous clothes to blend in with the culture. As director of H.E.A.R.T. on the Warner Southern College campus in Florida, he gathered slop in plastic buckets from the college cafeteria and drove his Volkswagen to the compound to feed the pigs as a model before the students. In

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\(^2\) John 13:13 (KJV).
Honduras, he walked among the villagers and ate their beans and drank their coffee. He entered their neighborhood. He motivated his followers by the life he lived and the love he gave.

Rarely did Smith cast a vision or launch a project without stepping out by faith. He defined faith as “trusting the process”. It did not matter the size or cost of a project. Once his vision was confirmed and clarified, he never looked back. Purchasing five thousand dollars worth of plane tickets on credit, resigning a secure teaching position, leaving Project Global Village to start Heart to Honduras, planting nine acres of green peppers in Honduras or bringing a bulldozer to the village of Canchias in the middle of the rainy season to build the Assembly Hall were all risky. Some of these decisions succeeded while others did not. Author Robert Greenleaf states, “A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes risk of failure along with the chance of success. A leader says, ‘I will go; follow me!’ while knowing the path is uncertain, even dangerous.”

Because Smith personally undertook risky visions and pioneered trails rarely trodden, others were attracted to his courage and example.

- **Set Goals**

Ministry momentum by goal setting is another lesson Smith modeled. One of his most ambitious goals was to complete the huge Assembly Hall that would seat four-hundred people. It included a large commercial kitchen and a treated pine deck overlooking the Canchias River. His goal was to complete this building before he died. On October 14, seven days before Smith passed away, a spaghetti dinner was served to all the pastors in the completed Assembly Hall. Bringing closure to this goal not only gave momentum to the ministry, it inspired and gave motivation to the local believers.

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A lack of purpose and specific goals did great damage to the mission outreach of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman to the Nez Percé Indians. In 1836, several other missionary couples lived on Whitman’s Oregon mission compound. Petty infighting and bickering created low morale and discouragement. Missiologist Ruth Tucker writes of Whitman’s dilemma, “Lack of leadership was the single most pressing problem among the missionaries....No one individual rose up with leadership qualities to guide the mission work.”

As the Whitmans became more and more isolated from the other missionaries and without direction from a leader or board, Tucker quotes Julie Jeffery regarding the results: “Without any leaders to establish clear goals and direct the mission’s energies, competing interests and conflicting personalities caused ill will.” Without goals and a purpose, ministries stagnate, become ingrown and die. Smith’s goals and purpose motivated his team.

Smith did not come across as a demanding CEO or as a manipulative leader. Sims and Quatro describe Smith’s leadership style well when they contrasted positional and persuasive leadership models. Positional leadership intentionally influences people by demands, scare tactics, second guessing and guilt. But as Sydney Pollack, famous actor and director, stated, “You can make people follow you by scaring them, and you can make people follow by having them obligated. You can lead by creating a sense of guilt...but the problem is you are creating obedience with a residue of resentment.”

Smith wisely realized this might work in the secular world but not in a voluntary organization. Persuasive leadership brings forth followers who want to “give you their

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5 Ibid.
heart” 7 because the leader “walks his talk”. 8 Author Warren Bennis, in his writings on leadership as quoted by Sims and Quatro, defines this kind of leadership as “congruity” which occurs when conviction, action, and behavior come into alignment. 9 Smith’s character as a leader was as powerful as his vision. Mission organizations will do well to see that persuasive leadership permeates their staff from top to bottom. If so, chances for healthy and productive fruit for this missionary organization are as good as the promises of God.

- Maintain Integrity

Smith’s life modeled biblical integrity necessary for any successful mission venture. He had the qualities of a leader which Ronald Sims and Scott Quatro recommend in their leadership book, “...one who leads with humility and professional will blended with a quiet modest nature that is reserved...gracious and mild mannered.” 10 British missionary, George Grenfell, sailed for the Congo in 1876. He demonstrated for all mission organizations the sad results of mission leadership void of integrity. Tucker records in her book, “Grenfell hated the natives, and they hated him. They had even threatened him with murder....Was this what it meant to be a missionary? Hiding in your fancy house, terrified that the people you’d pledged to help might shoot you in the head?” 11 Grenfell’s heart and action did not align themselves with the teachings and spirit of Jesus. Biblical integrity was missing.

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8 Ibid., 137.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ruth Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, 164.
• **Model an Incarnational Lifestyle**

Smith saw the world through the lens of a Christian world-view that was relational, incarnational and contextual. Understanding the culture of the people was important to Smith. He was a model of this inclusive approach to the Gospel in a way similar to that of Matthew Ricci who shaved his head and took on the garb of a Buddhist monk, Robert de Nobili, Jesuit missionary, who wore the clothes of the Brahmin caste, and Hudson Taylor who dyed his hair and grew a pigtail to reach the Chinese. Other missionaries can learn from Smith and these men by contextualizing the Gospel without syncretizing the Truth.

Smith did not grow a pigtail but he immersed himself with the people to become one with them. He did something few missionaries seemed to be doing. He dressed down. He ate down. He lived down. In other words, he left his western life style in the States and lived simply. He wore what the people wore: tee-shirts, blue jeans, a straw hat, sandals and his flip flops (the shoe of the poor in Honduras). He ate beans and rice with the common people. He built a modest one bedroom house in the village of Canchias to live. He hoped this house would be a proto-type for the poor throughout Honduras.

Smith understood culture as an applied anthropologist. He knew the importance of customs and habits, rituals and rites. Unlike Western missionaries who rejected drums, dances and certain burial rites as taboo and sinful, Smith was sensitive to traditional patterns and joined in with the cultural traditions of local people when it did not conflict with the essence of biblical revelation.
**Live Close to the People**

Missionaries are most effective when they live close to the people they serve. If missionaries distance themselves too far from the people, how can they lead? The missionary should be like a quarterback calling signals in the huddle, not like a General Manager sitting in a million dollar booth watching the game at a distance. This is why Smith never wanted a missionary compound in Canchias. When the first few acres were purchased for five hundred dollars, it became public domain with a road and path freely accessed between Canchias and the village of Las Delicias. For security purposes Heart to Honduras now has a compound and is somewhat a gated community. But Smith wisely stayed connected to the people; almost daily he would walk through the village mixing with the people. He shared “his” electricity and water with the people by running electrical lines and PVC pipe to the village. He built a medical clinic, school, *tienda* (store) and *molina* (corn grinder) in the heart of the village. He always walked among them and his home was always open to them. He would recommend that missionaries live as close to the people as possible to avoid what Griffiths refers to as the “expatriate ghetto”:

Fortunately in many parts of the world missionary compounds are things of the past; but some survive as almost literal fortresses. I saw a missionary compound in Korea surrounded by high walls with barbed wire, with a gatekeeper, a guard patrolling with a dog....My advice to societies and to individual missionaries is to stay out of expatriate ghettos (compounds), the products of unconscious xenophobia and a great hindrance to our effectiveness in Christian service....You will fail to achieve your goals if you get sucked into the expatriate community, however kind and welcoming it may be.\(^\text{12}\)

Griffiths believes any long term effective missionary leadership will be measured by how the missionary moves into the neighborhood. The central office or headquarters

does not have to be in the middle of the town square but the people must feel a sense of connection and belonging.

To what extent missionaries should live above the economic level of the local people has always been a difficult and delicate issue. Not all missionaries are called to be a Saint Francis of Assisi who rejected a lavish life style and lived a life of voluntary poverty. Nor are all missionaries expected to ride a horse when demands of the ministry require modern transportation. In matters as these, wisdom is needed. Smith wanted his staff to live close to the people. Pinell has chosen to live in one of the largest houses in town with a gated fence and fortress-like wall. His wife drives a 2007 Santa Fe while the poor walk or ride horses.

On the other hand, Pinell feels comfortable with this kind of life style. When asked, “Miguel, you drive a nice car and live in a large house. Charlie always encouraged us to live close to the people. Do you live close to the people?” Pinell responded confidently, “Yes, when the people call me from the villages, I come right there to be with them.”

“Are you saying this life style does not hinder the effectiveness of your ministry?”

Pinell replied, “Yes.”

Addressing this issue, Smith wrote in 1989 his musings as he grappled with this economic disparity between the missionary and the targeted people:

Miguel is at the center of the village and lives above the rest of the people. That is obvious. He makes more money in one month than most of the people make in one year...consider the need for Miguel to maintain a low-profile in San Isidro... Discuss with Miguel about being the concept of the “image of the limited good,” especially as it relates to village life. Be careful about conspicuous consumption.

13 Miguel Pinell, interview.
What is this about a Datsun for his wife? Really now! That's taking it a little far if you want to live in the village. Most people have no car and he wants two? Live close to the people, not above them.\textsuperscript{14}

Smith was asking the Honduran staff from top to bottom to live simply and be sensitive to the potential social and relational gap that can emerge through unbridled spending created by the influx of the American dollar. In the early days Miguel started out simple by riding a donkey into the mountains to organize the local pastors. Smith is saying there needs to be a balance between the donkey and the 2007 Santa Fe that even some Americans cannot afford.

Heart to Honduras Board Chairman, Jerry Grubbs, affirms Smith’s desire for a balanced lifestyle on the mission field: “Living close to the people is absolutely a must to be effective. They are not expected to live on the exact level as the people because they do not have the internal constitution to live as they do. On the other hand, they need to live simply in dress, housing, transportation and be modest in all that they do. This does not mean they have to go barefooted, not possess a flush toilet or refrigeration.”\textsuperscript{15}

It is a tough issue. Why should a missionary live in a poor adobe house with all of the responsibility, position, resources and pressing crowd of people knocking at his door? Does he not need sleep? Does he not need time alone for meditation and family? Can a missionary who lives in the biggest house in the village relate effectively to the people he is serving? Current ministry head Gordon Garrett believes the simple life style that Smith lived before the people was a wise and effective way of being incarnational. He believes a missionary should live in relative simplicity before the people. Perception is reality to some people and even though Pinell lives in a house that might qualify just below the


\textsuperscript{15} Jerry Grubbs, telephone interview by author, March 9, 2009.
poverty level for a house in the States, his standard of living as a missionary would most likely be considered upper, upper class in the village of Canchias and upper class in San Isidro. Garrett speaks of this potential gap in missionary housing: “Certainly Miguel lives in the nicest house in San Isidro. There are some bigger houses in nearby Santa Cruz. On the other hand, I think there is, and this may sound like a cop out, the idea of showing people what can happen. But I think the bottom line is a person serving among the people, pastor or missionary, should not live too high above the people.”

- **Know Your Limitations**

Smith was limited in his leadership. He was a visionary, not a manager. His ability to vision a ministry was greater than his ability to administer that vision. He was in his element when he was dreaming, conceptualizing, visioning and juggling ideas. He could be the life of the party at social gatherings. But as the Heart to Honduras ministry grew and other visionaries, strong-willed personalities, passionate professionals and independent minded believers were attracted to his vision, they wanted to give input, have some ownership and a piece of the action. This caused Smith to slow down but not shut down. He became more cautious but maintained an exclusive board composed of family and friends.

Leadership specialist Andrew Ward states that in evolving organizations you have the Creator, the Accelerator and the Sustainer. The role of the Creator is to create the organization from scratch. He/she breathes life into the organization, sets the heroic mission, instills a sense of urgency and maintains focus. The Accelerator translates the heroic mission set by the Creator into systems and routines to enable the organization to grow without bursting at the seams. The Sustainer is somewhat like the

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Accelerator but more so. He leads the ministry into a steadier state of maturity.¹⁷

Regarding these leadership cycles, Ward states, “Indeed, many organizations have a very difficult time moving from the Creator entrepreneur, or the driving Accelerator, to finding the right leadership for a more mature stage, and we consequently see organizations go into rapid decline due to a failure to make this transition successfully.”¹⁸

- **Ask the Hard Questions**

Therefore mission organizations need to be wise and courageous about leadership cycles. Questions that need to be asked are, “Has the Creator of the vision peaked in his ability to lead the organization?” “Does the Accelerator still have his/her original passion?” “Is it time to bring on a Sustainer?” These are difficult questions a missionary board needs to ask. Even more difficult is removing leaders when their season of leadership has come to an end. Asking these questions and removing, replacing or rearranging leaders is not easy but it is good stewardship and the Kingdom thing to do.

- **Encourage and Provide Financial Planning for the Future**

More thought needs to be given by mission boards to the upcoming retirement needs of their staff and leaders before they reach the “inept” stage. In some cases, retirement funds should be automatically deducted from salaries. Many missionaries, as in Smith’s case, not knowing how to handle money, live day to day and often receive minimal salaries. Smith was wise to hand over his finances to his staff accountant. On the other hand, missionary boards are often composed of wise counselors and experienced business managers. They need to come alongside their staff and steer them into sound financial judgment and planning.

¹⁸ Ibid.
For example, a woman worked for thirty years as secretary to the Alabama State Coordinator for the Church of God, (Anderson, IN). In many ways she was like a missionary as she received a minimal salary all those years. Today she is seventy-nine years old and cleans five bathrooms at her church to make ends meet. Responsible planning by missionary boards can prevent this kind of tragedy from happening to their personnel.

On the other hand, it is important for missionaries not to allow financial seminars, retirement plans and anxiety over the future to undermine the power of an “abandoned unto God” faith walk. Many people looked askance at Smith’s “trusting the process”, giving away his last dollar, maxing out his credit cards on behalf of the poor, and dying in his little cabin retreat with a handful of clothes, a few books, his spectacles, his computer, toiletries and harmonica. Did not Francis of Assisi abandon all to follow literally the Words of Jesus? Did not C.T. Studd’s wife give back the last three thousand dollars her husband gave her to plan their wedding after he gave away a fortune? Did not William Borden turn his back on a million dollar family inheritance and leave it all behind and board a ship to Egypt in 1921 only to die within a year of a fatal disease? Smith followed in this tradition and he taught all believers by his life to “take the plunge” and trust Kingdom promises more than 401ks.

- **Prepare Leaders for Future Transition**

Though Smith did a great job of passing the baton to Miguel in Honduras, he and the Board failed to prepare strong leadership for the stateside operation. The moment Smith discovered he had a terminal disease, it would have been helpful for him to work with the Board to select a successor. Maxwell writes, “There is no success without a

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successor.\textsuperscript{20} Instead, planning alone, Smith decided to go with a leadership team of three current staff members with one of them as the leader. Eventually, this team leader, Dave Pischel, became the President. Dave was a graphic artist. He was a very close friend of Smith. He spent the last seven weeks of Charlie’s life at his bedside. He had a pure heart and deep love for God but he was not an upfront person. It would have been helpful if Smith had consulted with the Board about the strengths and weakness of Pischel, as well as the implications of a leadership team. And the Board should have gently and lovingly confronted Smith and assisted him more vigorously in selecting a successor. However, the Board opted to go with the will of Charlie rather than the will of Christ. There comes a time when mission organizations must honor their beloved leader but go ahead and close the casket on his/her season of leadership.

The right leadership is crucial. Peter Wagner writes of the need for qualified leaders and successors: “A mission organization is only as good as those that it recruits.”\textsuperscript{21} Not only was Charlie remiss in this lack of planning for his succession, but the Board was as well. Two Board members (Jerry Grubbs and Gordon Garrett) expressed their concern about Charlie’s decision with the author. But in these final moments of Smith’s life, it was difficult to cause him greater pain by rejecting the plan Smith recommended to the Board. Maxwell writes, “Handing off the baton is never easy. A leader has to find the right leaders. He has to take them through an effective development process. He needs the buy-in of the people. He needs the favor of God. And then he has to let go and get out of the way.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Peter Wagner, \textit{Church/Mission Tensions Today} (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 279.
Grubbs suggests a key to the succession of leadership:

The key to succession is mentoring by bringing a person in and mentoring them as they step up in case of an emergency as we had with Charlie or in case of a planned retirement of the present leader. The key to succession is mentoring by bringing in a person under your administrative wing and allowing them to learn everything about the organization from how it functions, how decisions are made and how you work with people.23

Steve Birch, Heart to Honduras Board member, agrees with Grubbs about leadership succession by citing the example of Paul who brought Timothy, Silas and John Mark under his administrative wing. He writes: “I think the example of Paul of having someone come alongside both to learn the vision and to identify what needs to happen to carry out the vision is the key to leadership succession.”24

Gordon Garrett, speaking from his current position as President of Heart to Honduras, sees succession as a delicate balance between knowing when to begin the process because a personal resignation, physically incapacitation or an accidental death are unknown variables. He states:

I have given a lot of thought to this. It depends on the structure of your organization. Charlie felt less constrained by the organization because it was small. Today the ministry has grown. I have talked with Jerry Grubbs about this issue. Prior to my planned departure, the Board needs to identify the person who will follow me and then work under me for a year. In Honduras it is different. Succession is more of a family thing. Miguel would tend to pass it off to his son Charlie, who is named after Charlie Smith. But who knows better what the needs might be but myself or Miguel? But for me, it should be my recommendation but the Board’s final decision. For Miguel, I believe he needs to begin releasing responsibilities off to leaders in Honduras which he is doing more and more the older he gets and the wiser. He needs to start unpacking and release other people to assume greater and greater responsibilities. We need someone who is bilingual. We need to look at the students in the School of Discipleship and people like José Reyes, our new administrator. We do not need to replicate Miguel but I will say if something happened to Miguel today we would be in big trouble. So we need to begin thinking about this seriously.25

23 Grubbs, interview.
24 Steve Birch, e-mail to Jim Usher, March 11, 2009.
25 Garrett, interview.
Smith, at the age of fifty-nine, was in the prime of his life when he died. God had given him this great vision that was beginning to attract thousands of people. Lives were being changed. Heart to Honduras was like a healthy baby with so much potential. How difficult it is for a leader to let go of something he/she conceived, especially when it is just beginning to walk. Yet, God in His mercy not only had plans for Smith but for the ministry. Today Heart to Honduras has reached adulthood and in spite of certain blemishes and bruises along the way, God has supplanted Smith’s leadership with new leaders and his original vision is now being taken to a new level. God will do this for any mission organization that has the courage to see that leaders are like leaves on a tree. They have their seasons.
Chapter Eighteen
Lessons for the Church as an Agent of Change

In early 1988, Smith resigned from Project Global Village, a development organization under the auspices of Mercy Corps International, for four reasons: 1) personal conflict with National Director Chet Thomas, 2) missiological differences with how Project Global Village executed development, 3) the fact that his leadership style is best described as a “Lone Ranger”, and 4) a missing philosophical element. The missing element, in Smith’s opinion, was that Project Global Village’s philosophy as an organization was to prioritize social transformation as its modus operandi working through the elders of the community. On the other hand, Smith’s philosophy was to prioritize spiritual regeneration as his modus operandi working through the elders of the church.

During the summer of 1988 Smith came under the legal umbrella of Hand to the Plow, a mission organization to Haiti started by former students of Smith. In October of 1988, Smith teamed up with Miguel Pinell and sent him into the mountains of Honduras to call forth rural pastors into a non-denominational ministry. On January 25, 1989, a dozen pastors met with Smith and Pinell in the village of Palmital and agreed to unite and allow God to use their local village churches as the agent of change through holistic transformational development. On that day, the Kingdom of God in this venue began advancing through this humble band of pastors in the rural mountains of Honduras.

• Create an Indigenous Ministry

North American missionaries desiring to begin a ministry in a foreign land, whether in Mozambique or around the misery-belts of Tegucigalpa, should do three
things. First, for the initial leg work, use local leadership as Smith used Nicaraguan Miguel Pinell – someone who knows the culture and understands the people. Secondly, win the confidence of the people, especially the church elders or *patronata* (community leaders), before launching their vision. Thirdly, once the churches have matured, release them to do indigenous ministry in a self-governing way. For nine years Smith partnered with Pinell to implement these three principles. Smith was the “face” of Heart to Honduras for those nine years, but if it had not been for Pinell pioneering in those steep, rugged mountains of Honduras, there would have never been a Heart to Honduras as we know it today.

These three indigenous principles that Smith and Pinell sought to implement are supported by two great mission theoreticians and strategists of the nineteenth century: British Henry Venn and American Rufus Anderson. Both men arrived independently at the same basic principles of a mission strategy that greatly influenced Protestant missions from the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of World War II. The goal of this strategy was to plant and foster the development of churches which would be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.¹ Smith did keep a watchful eye over the young churches that were being birthed but like Venn and Anderson, he wanted all churches to become strong, independent, indigenous, integrated and self-governing.

- **Make the Church the Primary Agent for Both Spiritual and Social Change**

Smith made sure that all things went through the church and the pastoral leadership. Joy was in the camp. A revival swept across the village of San Isidro, especially among the youth. Close to one hundred people came to the Lord. This was

unprecedented, especially considering it was in an area where Catholics made up 94% of
the religious community. More and more pastors and churches wanted to link up with
Corazón Para Honduras until about seventy churches in three different zones were
included. As a result of this “success”, Smith’s decision to go through the church was
validated.

But this joy was short-lived. Size and numbers rarely determine success on the
mission field. Smith would say two things determine missionary success: unity in Christ
and faithfulness with strategy. Sadly, in less than two years, this organization of seventy
central churches dissolved. What are some steps that could have prevented this unfortunate
demise of the Pastors’ Association of Santa Cruz?

• Bring Denominational Leaders into the Planning

Smith and Pinell were providing excellent leadership among the poor churches in
the rural mountains of Honduras. But once denominational leaders began to see new
church buildings, feeding centers, co-ops, a state of the art medical clinic, public school
construction and pastoral support, either because of jealousy, being threatened or
misunderstanding, they restricted participation of their pastors and churches with Heart to
Honduras. Looking back, it would have been wise for Smith and Pinell to have called
together these denominational leaders early on and explained the non-denominational
nature of the ministry before beginning Corazón Para Honduras.

• Guard against Charity becoming Dependency

Many of the pastors were coming on board in order to receive the $25 per month
support being paid by Heart to Honduras. When this happens, sometimes a valid call of
God deteriorates into a career, and money rather than faith, becomes “the substance of
things hoped for".² Giving money to poor believers and pastors and risking creating dependency is one of the most problematic issues of missionary work.

Glenn Schwartz, author of *When Charity Destroys Dignity* strongly discourages this kind of support. He has written on this subject for over twenty years and is a voice that needs to be heard. The path that mission organizations take on this issue will determine the health and maturity of churches they seek to encourage for years to come. On the other hand, Schwartz does not seem to be against North American pastors being paid or student missionaries from agencies like Campus Crusade or even Heart to Honduras being supported by donations. It should also be noted that most of Schwartz’s experience was in Africa and not Central America. But the fact that emotions run high on either side of the issue indicates that the subject should not be taken lightly by missionaries and mission agencies.

Grubbs, early on in the ministry of Heart to Honduras, sought to guard against dependency. He states, “Early on we said we did not want to create a welfare state in Honduras. And the moment the issue becomes money and resources instead of missions and ministry that is when you know you have gone too far. Or when you start controlling the ministry by the resources, you know you have gone too far. We certainly do not want to create an attitude that if we left everything would die. We must keep in mind that our primary resource is people and not money.”³

Garrett sees dependency as unhealthy when a spirit of laziness and a hand-out mentality is evident among a lackluster group of people void of joy and proactive ministry. He shares: “If the national church is sitting on her hands waiting for North

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² Hebrews 12:1 (KJV).
³ Grubbs, interview.
American churches to send money then you have created enormous problems. If you see churches that carry on and are pro-active and thrilled to see North Americans coming but don’t sit back and let them do all the work but work in an integrated way, you have a healthy situation. It should be interdependent not dependent, co-dependent or independent."

Smith had a big heart, an innocent heart, a pure heart and a giving heart. But a weakness in these admirable attributes was that he rarely paused to consider the dependency issue. He was not like a Shriner clown riding in a parade on his little motorcycle throwing candy to the children. He even strongly encouraged North Americans not to give things away while in Honduras. God used Smith and the money he was given to improve the living standards and change the hearts of hundreds of needy people both physically and spiritually. But he also at times approved the expenditure of money without carefully evaluating the pros and cons of such an investment. Helpful questions that should have been considered are: Will this gift create dependency? Will the believers continue to trust God or will they wait for the next truck load of North Americans to come and rescue them? Will it leave someone out? Will it stir up jealousy? What if recession comes to the States and donations dry up? What if Heart to Honduras ceases to exist? Should we invest in people or projects, facilities or faculties, pastors or property?

What happens to the dignity of pastors and their churches when they are given loans that they cannot or will not repay? In 1994, a total of 300,000 limperas ($42,857 US) was borrowed from the ministry by twenty-five different churches. Only 149,000

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4 Garrett, interview.
limperas ($21,285) was paid back. In the Corazón Para Honduras account book, on some of the pages Miguel has written the words “Paid by Grace”. (For a sample copy see Appendix E.) When these unsecured loans went into default by churches, ill-will began to surface between the pastors and the ministry.

Several churches left the pastors’ fellowship because of either being unwilling or unable to pay off these loans. One village church in Chaguatillo was ousted from the fellowship for not paying their loan of $900. Ten years later the pastor and an elder visited San Isidro and gave Miguel $600 and asked to be forgiven of the rest of the loan. Pinell graciously forgave the loan but one can imagine the guilt suffered by pastor and church over those ten years.

- Be Intentional in Providing Employment to the Local People

One of the areas where Heart to Honduras created dependency under Smith’s leadership was in their construction projects. The North Americans and paid Honduran staff (often the family members of the National Director) did almost one hundred percent of the work. Rarely did church members help, nor was employment provided for the locals. This employment of only a few locals in construction projects continues today. Why not make it a requirement that half of the workers will be paid Hondurans, with a special emphasis on hiring believers? What a great way to give dignity and circulate currency in the village. There is much unemployment in Honduras and it seems to be a waste not to make seeking out these poor unemployed people a top priority. It would

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5 German Pinell, Financial statement, Estados de Cuenta de Préstamos Otorgados por la Asociación de Pastores del Sur de Santa Cruz de Yojoh, Cortez, Honduras [State of Loan Accounts for the Pastors of South Santa Cruz of Yojoh, Cortez, Honduras], Corazón Para Honduras office, San Isidro, Honduras, folder S270, Miguel Pinell Library.
6 Miguel Pinell, interview.
give dignity and a sense of ownership to the people. Schwartz recalls a missionary
sharing in a missionary conference:

Some years ago I took a group of 36 people from North America to South
America to build a church building for the local believers. We stayed there
several weeks, finished the building, gave it to the local people and then went
home. Two years later we got a letter from the people at that church: “Dear
friends, the roof on your church building is leaking. Please come and repair
it....” 7

- **Have a Listening Ear and an Open Mind to Other Resources**

Recently, a Heart to Honduras staff member purchased two hundred copies of
Schwartz’ book *When Charity Destroys Dignity*. When some of the North American
pastors who received the book visited Honduras, they began to dialogue with Miguel and
ask questions about dependency. Miguel called the staff member and requested that he
no longer send out the book. When asked why, Miguel replied, “It is confusing them!” 8
Approximately eighty of Schwartz’s books now sit on the shelf in the *Miguel Pinell
Library* at the Smith House in Xenia, Ohio to prevent confusion.

In the meantime, approximately $2000 per month is being sent to Honduras for
pastor’s support through the Sister Church program. More than banning the book, the
“confusion” needs to be clarified. Why not require that all parties involved read the book
or one similar to it and seek a solution via a conference call or a national Sister Church
seminar? Glen Schwartz and other mission leaders who differ with him on the
dependency issue could serve as consultants. Or mission committees of each church
could write up their position. The Sister Church executive committee could evaluate
these positions and work with the *junta* in Honduras and write up a unified statement.

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7 Glen Schwartz, “Dependency,” in *Perspectives*, 3rd ed. eds. Steven Hawthorne and Ralph Winter
One must admire Schwartz for his passion to communicate to the church the various red flags of dependency. With so much “foreign aid” pouring into developing countries, mission sentinels in the field of fiscal responsibility like Schwartz are needed.

On the other hand, Schwartz seems to neglect emphasizing the universal principle that infants, animal offspring, the mentally challenged, young churches and even garden seeds need the right environment, protection and care to mature. Schwartz seems to overshadow this truth by passionately emphasizing the evils of dependency while at the same time overlooking the truth that dependency can be healthy in its season of nurture and encouragement.

Schwartz has many dependency articles in Spanish on the internet that can be downloaded. To simply ban the book is like approaching an intersection with a red light and going no further. Why not study the issue as if you are approaching a yellow blinking light? Rather than stopping, you study the issue with caution and then proceed. Down the road, both red and green lights (pros and cons) will be evident and safe passage through the intersection of dependency and dignity will be possible. This needs to be done for the words of Glenn Schwartz are prophetic, “It might be helpful to remind your well-meaning friends that dependency is easier to avoid from the beginning than to try to overcome later on.”

- **Watch out for missionary burnout**

*Corazón Para Honduras* at one time was opening the door to so many churches, she became understaffed. At that time, a Honduran overseer of a group of churches would be impressed with what the ministry was doing and ask to join forces, bringing in a dozen churches with him. This was like putting too many Hondurans on the back of a

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9 Glen Schwartz, e-mail to Jim Usher, May 14, 2007.
pick-up truck. Eventually someone will fall off or the truck will overturn. It would have been best to screen or limit the number of churches for a season of time until the ministry reached organizational maturity and possessed effective administrative skills to discern the needs of the churches and the motives of the pastors wishing to come on board.

Heart to Honduras had tremendous growth numerically (for a graphic of this growth in short term visitors to Honduras see Appendix A), financially and spiritually in the early years and continues to expand in other countries. This can be good but it can be difficult for staff. Growth should never be at the expense of an overworked staff. While riding into the village of Canchias a Honduran staff member looked out of the truck and said to a fellow passenger, “You see Naldo standing over there? He is a dead man.” When asked why, he replied, “He is over worked.”

Rick Dike, a former staff member who spent thirteen years with Heart to Honduras, speaks of this issue:

I became overwhelmed when the ministry started doing forty teams, then sixty teams and possibly eighty teams a year. I could not do it any more. I felt like I was losing my ability to make right decisions. If there was a number for Charlie, he would be content to do twelve teams a year. The max I felt I could do was forty-five teams a year as Ministry Team Coordinator. Charlie did not care about numbers. He cared about quality and what the team experienced. This has nothing to do with right or wrong. It is just a difference in styles of leadership. I was just burnt out and did not know I was burnt out. Little things became bigger to me and I would become angry. I was tired and this blurred my decisions. The joy of the Lord was not there. I went to Miguel and I told him I needed some time to pray. He looked at me and said, “Rick, it will take three men to replace you. You are tired, aren’t you?” I replied “Yes”.

It is helpful to note that Rick Dike saw how different styles of leadership take ministries in different directions. It was not a personal issue with him but methodology and style. What can be learned from this? Missionary staff can learn the importance of taking time off to rest and pray to seek further guidance from the Lord. This is what Rick

\[10\] David Rivera, conversation with author, San Isidro, Honduras, 1996.

\[11\] Dike, interview.
did and he decided to resign. Mission leaders can learn the need to take a closer look at staff who look tired not only in the case of stateside personnel like Rick but also Honduran staff like Naldo. Gordon Garrett, current President of Heart to Honduras, was very gracious to Rick by allowing him to maintain office hours in his home because he was gone so much to Honduras.

Perhaps not only the need for rest, but the heavy loads of responsibilities missionaries carry, needs more scrutiny as well. Staff sessions held at least quarterly, where members share their inner pain, struggles and frustrations, surrounded by a community of love, could be cathartic. Staff members are missionaries just as much as Hudson Taylor or Jim Elliot were. What they do may not be on the front lines but the enemy attacks the support personnel as well. He knows they are essential to the battle waged in missionary work as they keep communications lines open, ship containers, schedule flights, write checks, organize volunteers, edit and write newsletters and accept a host of other responsibilities that strengthen the front lines.

Garrett holds a private annual review for each staff member which gives them an opportunity to share their heart. Also, weekly staff prayer meetings are held that enable personal needs of the staff to be shared in a loving community. These are helpful examples that mission organizations might consider. Sharing honestly and lovingly fosters good relationships and is a sound biblical principal which brings the team together. As the apostle Paul wrote: “Speak the truth in love and thus edify the body.”

Myers quotes authors Daniel and Rogers in the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* regarding this lack of staff understanding of others’ needs:

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12 Ephesians 4:15 (KJV).
A more difficult problem may exist for missionaries: the denial of the existence of stress. In a study of missionaries, Daniel and Rogers reported that members of the same staff, or what we would call “team members”, are unaware that their colleagues are experiencing emotional exhaustion and physical symptoms of burnout. They believe denial of the existence of stress may be greater among ministers than other helping professionals.¹

This lack of communication and denial of stress regarding missionary burnout concerns Grubbs as he shares: “The first and obvious thing is that we have got to communicate with each other. Of course you need a very solid prayer life where you empty yourself to God but then you must have human flesh and friends. You need that human touch. You need to communicate with your supervisor and he with you. Take time off, be honest and open and take care of your family. All of these are needed.”²

Garrett admits burnout is a serious issue with staff both stateside and on the field. Often staff burnout is an “unseen pain” because there is so much to do in a growing ministry like Heart to Honduras. Even though Garrett feels he did everything possible in Rick Dike’s case to prevent burnout, he did admit that had he not been traveling so much for the ministry with the immense responsibilities on his plate, he might have detected some red flags of burnout in Rick and possibly other staff.³ Steve Birch believes burnout can be prevented by taking “…time away for reflection and retreat and opportunities to serve in other environments to keep a servant’s heart.”⁴

- **Provide a Sense of Ownership**

Heart to Honduras has an exciting ministry called the Sister Church program whereby stateside churches and national churches partner in an integrated relationship. Often this partnership is begun by the North American church building a facility for their

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¹ Richard Myers, “Conflict Management Style and Burnout of Missionaries” (PhD diss., George Fox College, 1943), 40.  
² Grubbs, interview.  
³ Garrett, interview.  
⁴ Steve Birch, e-mail to Jim Usher, March 11, 2009.
Sister Church. These properties and buildings then become legally owned by Corazón Para Honduras and Heart to Honduras. In the early years this was not the case but due to accountability issues this is now the practice.

Heart to Honduras has launched the Sister Church program two times. The first time the program ran from 1988 to 1990 when Smith worked under the legal umbrella of Hand to the Plow, a mission organization founded by former students of Smith focused in the country of Haiti. In September 1989, Smith writes of Honduran churches benefiting from the Sister Church program, “Soon after our return to the States, Miguel sent me a fax to inform me that the Executive Committee of the Association of Pastors has made the first distribution of loans to the Honduran churches.” Churches benefitting from the loans were: Las Delicias, El Buen, Canchias, Palmital, Rio Chiquito and La Casona. During this early launching of the Sister Church program, Heart to Honduras was very trusting and did not see the need to secure titles of property. This was an oversight that caused some churches to become irresponsible and unaccountable for resources given to them and they eventually left the Association of Pastors.

The second launching of the Sister Church program was a few years following the demise of the first Sister Church program under the leadership of Gordon Garrett in late 1999 as he and Miguel brainstormed at a staff retreat. It was during this Sister Church ministry phase that Garrett and Pinell learned the value of legal protection. The lesson learned was for the ministry to be proactive in securing ownership of the property and church buildings for the sake of legal protection and accountability.

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17 Charles Smith, “Honduran Churches Benefit from Sister Church Program”, Hand to the Plow Fieldnotes, Fall/Winter, 1989, folder 999, Miguel Pinell Library.
18 Garrett, e-mail to Jim Usher, March 1, 2009.
Heart to Honduras built two churches in the villages of Comayagua and San Antonio for $20,000 and $35,000 respectively. Six months later the two pastors decided to take their churches and go independent. When this happened, the ministry realized it was time to act. The ministry decided to continue assisting churches on the condition they released ownership of both the building and land to Heart to Honduras.

This sounds like colonial aggression and western domination but for the present moment it is working. There is joy in the camp. Pastors do not come and go. Ecclesiastical mutiny has subsided. Stateside churches feel better about their support. The ministry now has about twenty-five stable Sister Church partnerships that bring hope, meaning and purpose to both partners.

It is worth noting that Brazos Abiertos (Open Arms), the Honduran association of churches, is totally indigenous in administering the day to day operations of the churches associated with Corazón Para Honduras. The pastors have a junta (council) that holds all of the pastors accountable. They oversee the encuentros and hold bi-monthly meetings, break bread together, fellowship, pray and study the Word. Here is a possible mission model wherein a western/North American mission organization can provide resources and at the same time the receiving mission can be indigenous in their church government, propagation of the Gospel, accountability, worship and fellowship. It is not a perfect model because the American church holds the purse strings and still owns the land. The perfect model would be that one day in the future the Corazón Para Honduras churches be weaned from Heart to Honduras financially and own their own property and facilities. This should be the ultimate goal of any mission organization.
Steve Birch sees land ownership as a sensitive issue. He writes: “Owning the property keeps control, but I am not sure if it really thwarts development. If the organization does not have strong prohibitions on how the property is developed I see little danger in maintaining ownership. In the case of Heart to Honduras we give the local pastors lots of freedom in the use of property. The ownership does offer some protections to takeovers and loss of valuable resources that could not be easily replaced.”

On the other hand, Grubbs disagrees with the position of turning ownership over to the nationals. The best model in his opinion would be to hold on to the property and buildings. He shares, “I am not only in favor of legal rights to mission property but believe the property should always stay in the hands of the organization. It is a legal issue. It is not about control. We need legal rights to prevent individuals or independent evangelists from taking over. If this happens, by having legal rights, contested property will always go back to the organization.”

Garrett agrees with Grubbs’s opinion about land ownership but sees this as a tough question and the decision of returning ownership to mature churches as still on the table. He reflects:

This is a question still open for discussion. I see a distinction between Heart to Honduras owning property and Corazón Para Honduras owning property. For example, if a pastor is given $75,000 over a course of ten years and the project cost $100,000, and those funds are from North America, to me there are some stewardship and accountability factors in keeping that land tied to the ministry. If the pastor got full of himself and falls off the wagon and he would want to take that building and run, it is one thing if he and that congregation has raised those funds. On the other hand, when you ask others to come in and make a major, major investment into a Honduras church facility or property we must guard against that because God calls us to be good stewards. I think there could be some discussion as to how long that should be titled to Corazón Para Honduras.

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19 Steve Birch, email to author, March 11, 2009
20 Grubbs, interview.
But if I guessed right now I don’t think the pastors themselves have a problem with it being titled to *Corazón Para Honduras.*

- **Encourage the Big Sister to Release the Little Sister**

  Initially, most of these Sister Churches are like newborn infants in need of an older sister’s care. During this stage, micro-management and a bit of control can be a good thing. But *Corazón Para Honduras* must remember that sisters grow up and need freedom to mature. For growth and maturity to take place, once these pastors and churches have proven that they can be trusted, *Corazón Para Honduras* needs to unsaddle, hang up her gentle spurs and turn the reins over to them. Too much control stunts growth. Eventually the big sisters need to let the little sisters go and allow them to find nourishment in Christ, create their own “family” and become interdependent.

  The jury is still out as to whether or not ownership by the resourcing agent is the most effective solution. How would a North American pastor feel if a para-mission organization in Honduras held the title to the building and property of his church? It is interesting to note that John Wesley had to deal with this issue of property control in the late eighteenth century when evangelist George Whitefield encouraged him to take control of a church building he had personally financed:

  I presently received letters from my friends in London, Mr. Whitefield in particular, backed with a message...that neither he nor they would have anything to do with the building...unless I would instantly discharge all officers, and do everything in my own name. Many reasons they gave for this: but one was enough, ‘that such officers always would have it in their power to control me; and if I preached not as they like, to turn me out of the room I had built.’ I accordingly yielded to their advice, and calling all the officers together, cancelled the instrument made before, and took the whole management into my own hands.

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21 Garrett, interview.
• **Let Passion Be the Precursor of Compassion**

Another key lesson that must be learned in this harvest of souls is that passion is the precursor of compassion. Project Global Village failed to bring in a harvest due to being strong in compassion but weak in a passionate love for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not to say their leadership did not love the Lord. It means that in their development on the field they neglected what Smith prioritized – the teachings of Jesus to make disciples. No mission organization should ever launch a ministry without passion for Christ being the greatest priority. John Piper, pastor and author of *Desiring God*, writes,

> Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak... Compassion for the lost is a high and beautiful motive for missionary labor. Without it we lose the sweet humility of sharing a treasure we have freely received. But we have seen that compassion for people must not be detached from passion for the glory of God.... Missions is not God’s ultimate goal, worship is. And when this sinks into a person’s heart, everything changes.

Smith never discounted social transformation. He knew a hungry child needed the protein of a bean as well as the proclamation of the Bible, clean water as well as the Water of Life, a physical house as well as spiritual hope, and a full stomach as well as the “full armor of God.” This is why the first four core values of Smith’s vision for Heart to Honduras were: food for the hungry, clothing for the naked, housing for the homeless and healing for the hurting.

On the other hand, for too long his involvement in community development, the Peace Corps, anthropological studies and development organizations left his soul lean and empty. He knew his life, as well as the lives of others, was empty and void of inner peace and power without Christ. Just as a pot of beans without the agent of salt was tasteless,

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24 Ibid., 51.
25 Ibid., 50.
26 Ephesians 6:11 (KJV).
Smith knew social programs would be powerless without the transformational agent of the church. And it was this compassion that emerged out of Smith’s passion for the Lord that made North Americans and Hondurans gravitate to Him and made them want to partner with him and become involved with his vision for the poor. Gordon Garrett relates a memory of how one particular act of compassion by Smith made a deep impression upon him:

It was in Santa Cruz at the filling station where the ministry always stopped to gas up the vehicles. Everybody was talking and I wondered where Charlie was. And he was off to the side where this deformed, mentally challenged person was and he was engaging him and befriending him. That has always made an impression on me. We always talk about the disenfranchised, but Charlie did it. Most people would feel uncomfortable with this but Charlie talked it and engaged with the least of these. Charlie just moved in and engaged them, the poorest of the poor and made them feel that they were important to him.27

This was Smith at his best and one might say at the locus of his passion. He was, as Garrett wisely observed, engaging and befriending this marginalized, deformed, societal outcast. Smith was “doing church” not “going to church” and making a difference in the life of this one individual who lived on the borderline of his culture. Smith was God’s agent of change because He was a part of the Body of Christ – the church – out in the market place not only in the life of this poor man but in the life of Garrett himself.

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27 Garrett, interview.
Chapter Nineteen
Lessons for Living a Lifestyle of Simplicity

One way to define Smith is by defining the term “simplicity”. In the following definitions we see the man and why he was used by God as he lived out these definitions. Richard Foster writes, “Simplicity is freedom”.¹ Charles Wagner believes it is a state of the mind.² Vernard Ellen sees it as life.³ Sue Bender experienced simplicity as celebrating the ordinary.⁴ George Fox believed the source and testimony of simplicity was the Light as he wrote, “The Light is one and we are all guided by it.”⁵ Adam Finnerty in No More Plastic Jesus said it was “…[T]he ability to detach ourselves from material possessions and even the desire for them.”⁶ Brother Lawrence, in the midst of practicing the presence of God, described simplicity as being “the hearty renunciation of everything which does not lead us to God in order that we may accustom ourselves to a continual conversation with Him.”⁷ For St. Francis of Assisi it was looking at everything through the prism of poverty.⁸

- **Adopt a Simple Lifestyle**

As expounded in chapter eleven, Smith made a choice to go simple. Three factors influenced this decision: the simple lifestyle of his parents, the life and teachings of Jesus, and identifying with the disenfranchised on the fringes of society. In June of 1991, he

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⁷ Brother Lawrence, *His letters and Conversations* (Cincinnati, OH: Forward Movement, 1941), 15.
embraced the Heart to Honduras Board’s decision to make the poor their treasure with their theme verse being, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”³ This theme verse kept Smith focused on his mission to the poor. Not only is it helpful for mission agencies to have a vision and a mission statement, but also a theme verse to constantly be reminded of God’s focus.

Missionaries need to realize that when they are sent, they are sent not only to proclaim the gospel but to go in the name and lifestyle of Jesus. This latter part is often neglected by western missionaries. It does not mean they have to go in a robe and sandals, but they need to make sure their attire and mannerisms do not intimidate those they seek to serve. Smith would encourage North Americans on short-term mission trips to leave their gold bracelets and necklaces at home, to wear a tee-shirt and leave their Polo in the closet, to bring tennis shoes rather than Florsheims.

Smith’s simple lifestyle was like experiencing an amusement park filled with freedom, spontaneity and joy. Like a child going from seesaw to jungle gym, sandbox to merry-go-round, Smith lived life with a passion in an unsophisticated way. His life was uncluttered. He was constant. Smith’s wardrobe in America was not much different from what he wore in Honduras. Smith was neat in appearance. His clothes were ironed and clean. But what Smith wore in the presence of those who owned thoroughbred race horses was the same that he wore in the presence of those who rode little burros.

In the Peace Corps he lived in a simple house on stilts. In his home in Lake Wales he lived in a simple modular house built on steel poles. In Honduras he lived in a small house with two small rooms.

Missionaries need to be careful of the content, size and number of “barrels” they bring on board the ship. While living in Florida Smith was not encumbered with multiple consumer products. He would often take a backpack with him to Honduras. In his backpack were documents and cash for Miguel, devotional books, his camera, his Bible, guitar strings, seeds, personal photographs for villagers and believers, gifts for widows, an extra pair of blue jeans, some tee-shirts, a harmonica to harmonize with his friend Trino who lived in a stick house, special medicine for epileptics and his under garments. Sometimes he would purchase *Time* magazine at the Miami airport. Beti, the village prostitute in La Hoya, requested Smith to purchase her some hair dye and bring it to her. On his next trip to Honduras this hair dye found its way into his backpack. This act of kindness by Smith caused Beti to surrender her life to Christ during the evening service on the day Smith gave the dye to her. (See photo in Appendix C.)

Smith packed simply. His backpack contents were prioritized. They were people centered, not self-centered. It is interesting to compare contemporary short-term missionary backpacks today: John Grisham novels, hairdryers, iPods, M&M’s, licorice, goggles, playing cards, suntan lotion, cell phones, extra cash for souvenirs, video games and fishing rods.

In the early days of Heart to Honduras, Smith rejected the use of electricity and lived by kerosene lantern and candles to identify with the poor in the village who had no electricity. Pressure from North Americans caused Smith to concede, and he allowed the installation of electricity. Until the hydroelectric system was installed, Smith’s food was prepared over hot coals in an adobe *hornilla* (stove).
Mission agencies have difficult decisions to make as to how far western technology will separate the “west from the south” or the North American missionaries from the Hondurans. They can learn from the wisdom of Smith as he had electricity installed in the village of Canchias for the medical clinic, church, school, molina (corn grinder) and tienda (store). Though he did not run electricity to the homes of the people since it would overload the system, the electricity became a shared product that seemed to satisfy everyone. Everyone in the village benefited from the electricity: the children used computers in the school, x-rays were available at the clinic, the molina ground their corn and a cold pop could be purchased at the tienda.

Smith was simple in the food he cooked, shared and ate with the poor. He was often in their homes or they were in his home sharing a cup of coffee, some tortillas, a bowl of beans or rice. He could have had juicy steaks or pork most anytime but he stayed on the level with the people and shared with them. Missionaries need to be hospitable like Smith and when invited over for a meal be gracious, even though unsanitary conditions call for trusting God for strong intestines.

Smith refused to own a car in Honduras. This would set him apart from the people. Not only do missionaries need to consider indigenous clothing but local transportation. Most of Smith’s transportation was in the ministry pickup truck but he also rode horses and walked many miles.

- **Adopt a Wartime Lifestyle**

Smith lived close to what Ralph Winter refers to as a “Wartime Time Lifestyle”. Winter shares that during peace time, the *Queen Mary* hosted 3,000 wealthy patrons who sat beneath chandeliers while they dined on steaks served on fine china. But during
wartime, the ship slept fifteen thousand soldiers in eight tier bunks who ate K-rations on metal trays.\(^\text{10}\)

American is affluent even in the midst of a subprime loan debacle. In this affluence, foreign missionaries and local missionary boards can learn from Smith’s life and Winter’s wartime lifestyle. Winter writes that such a lifestyle commitment will take nothing less than serious biblical reconsecration:

Affluent America has virtually invented a whole new set of diseases: obesity, atherosclerosis, heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, venereal disease, cirrhosis of the liver, drug addiction, alcoholism, divorce, battered children, suicide, murder....\(^\text{11}\) Missionary families need help in staying within their income limitations, but ironically, no more so than people with twice their income....We have Weight Watcher Clinics all over the country. We have Total Women Clinics. Why not mission-focused Family Lifestyle Clinics? How much more significant these clinics will be with ends as noble as the Great Commission. To reconsecrate ourselves to wartime lifestyle will involve a mammoth upheaval for a significant minority.\(^\text{12}\)

- Be Still

Simplicity denotes stillness if one believes Brother Lawrence’s definition that it is the hearty renunciation of anything that does not lead one to God. One has to be still to renounce earthly possessions. Though Smith rarely had a free moment to himself, he could be still. When huge decisions loomed, Smith would slip away to his study and read the Word. Sometimes he would get alone in his car and sift through his thoughts. At other times, he would bounce ideas off his family and friends. In 1988 Smith spent two weeks alone with God to seek the mind of Christ before launching Heart to Honduras. His sister Lorna writes of the experience:

The call of God was so strong on his life that he knew he must do more than talk and pray. He asked Miguel to leave him at an isolated, abandoned house near


\(^{11}\) Ibid., 706.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 707.
Canchias, with only the bare necessities in hand. There he fasted, read his Bible, and prayed for two weeks. When he saw Miguel drive away, he felt in the depths of despair, alone and frightened, until he turned to the Scriptures asking God’s direction for his future work in Honduras. During those two weeks, Charlie surrendered to God’s spirit, purposing to give up whatever would hinder God’s work. When Miguel returned for him, Charlie shared his vision that they must continue on teaching God’s love and grace to the poorest of the poor in Honduras as they showed them better ways to live.13

- **Think Small While Executing Appropriate Technology**

Smallness, along with simplicity and stillness, completed Smith’s trinity of classical values that enabled him to identify with the poor. Smith desired to minister to the little man (the poor) in small ways and not inundate him with sophisticated tools and high powered American technology. In other words, rather than bringing in a tractor that would displace a dozen men, he preferred to distribute a dozen machetes and provide work for a dozen men. Rather than building a dam with two bulldozers, he preferred to give one hundred men a hundred shovels to build the dam even if it might lose money. For Smith a little money for many men was better than a lot of money for two men. Tractors and bulldozers had their place but not at the expense of displacing a poor man’s dignity and right to work. This was justice for Smith because it was doing the right thing (righteousness). Sometimes on the mission field the right thing is not so much the financially profitable thing but it is the moral thing.

Smith had two manuals that guided his Heart to Honduras vision: the Bible, especially the teachings of Jesus, and British economist, E. F. Schumacher’s classic *Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*. Smith quoted Schumacher more than any other secular author. When asked what shaped her father’s vision, his daughter Felicia

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remarked, “If you desire to know more of Dad’s vision, I would recommend that you read *Small is Beautiful* by E.F. Schumacher.”¹⁴

Peace Corps workers, missionaries and short-term workers will find this book prophetic in many areas: the environment, proper use of land, rural assistance, use of non-renewable sources, appropriate technology, ownership, development, alternative fuels and the question of size. Schumacher’s prophetic wisdom written thirty-five years ago is seen in his recommendation to prolong the life-span of oil so that alternative sources of fuel can be developed to prevent the very crisis the world finds itself in today:

> Oil is a “wasting asset,” and the faster it is allowed to waste the shorter is the time available to development of a new basis of economic existence. The conclusions are obvious: it is in the real longer-term interest of both the oil exporting and the oil importing counties that the “life-span” of oil should be prolonged as much as possible. The former need time to develop alternative sources of livelihood and the latter need time to adjust their oil-dependent economies to a situation – which is absolutely certain to arise within the life time of most people living today – when oil will be scarce and very dear.¹⁵

Schumacher’s book was like a mentor to Smith while he was working on his doctorate at the University of Kentucky. Just as his wisdom is seen in the need to prolong the life span of oil, this wisdom is applied to many other areas of interest to the missionary. Schumacher’s book was a prime motivator for Smith’s desire to minister to the poor in the rural mountains of Honduras. He highly recommended the book to many people while he was Overseer of Heart to Honduras from 1988 to 1997.

Smith believed in grand visions but he also understood the importance of small things: that a rural farmer in the mountains was as precious in God’s sight as the CEO of a sweat factory in San Pedro Sula, the potential of empowering a little man, the

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¹⁴ SmithGraybeal, interview.
significance of a village elder in supporting his cause, the gift of an egg from a widow or
the gift of a nylon string for a poor Honduran with a homemade guitar.

Schumacher taught Smith the value of reaching out to the rural villages by
illustrating what happened to the city of Lima, Peru and the consequences of neglecting the
rural hinterland. These lessons learned by Smith from Schumacher can be helpful to other
mission organizations contemplating rural ministries to solve the problem of human
misery-belts that surround large metropolitan cities. Schumacher writes:

The once beautiful Spanish city is now infested by slums, surrounded by misery-
belts that are crawling up the Andes. But this is not all. People are arriving from
the rural areas at the rate of a thousand a day – and nobody knows what to do
with them....16 The city has become the universal magnet, while rural life has lost
its savour....17 There is no answer to the evils of mass unemployment and mass
migration into cities, unless the whole level of rural life can be raised.18

Smith sought to employ the unemployed not only to elevate them above subsistence
living but to give them a sense of dignity. Because of market conditions, isolation,
distribution, logistical handicaps and a lack of local currency, Smith’s small cottage-like
industries rarely succeeded. But he did succeed in establishing a relational bond with the
village poor and instilled into their thinking that they were as good as the North
Americans.

Smith established small appropriate technological projects like blacksmith shops,
hydroelectric water systems, solar panels, steel plows, treadle sewing machines and mini-
grain silos. This is what “small is beautiful” means and it joined with simplicity and
stillness/solitude to become Smith’s contemplative values that guided him down the dirt
path alongside the simple people of Honduras. Smith’s example challenges all
missionaries in developing countries to live simply, be still and think small.

16 Schumacher, 75.
17 Ibid., 215.
18 Ibid., 216.
Chapter Twenty

Lessons for a Transformational Development Vision

In the past twenty years, over seven thousand people have visited Honduras through the auspices of Heart to Honduras. This raises the question “Why?” The answer would be the integrity of the vision. Integrity means wholeness in body, soul and spirit through the ministry established by Smith. Astute and reflective people full of compassion find deep meaning knowing that their gifts, resources, knowledge and skills minister to the physical and spiritual needs of humankind with long term solutions.

The Heart to Honduras vision Smith cast January 25, 1989 teaches other mission organizations that more than just an ordinary vision is needed. The kind of vision cast is crucial. By this portion of his life, Smith understood the power of the right vision, in the right place at the right time. Prior to casting a vision, Smith would mull it over in his mind, root it in the Scriptures, refine it with his experience and knowledge of the social sciences and then discuss it with family and friends. Once the vision was refined, he began to seek resources, write to potential partners, develop a team and further refine his vision. Burt Nanus in his book *Visionary Leadership* states “There is not a more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.”¹

- **Pursue a Holistic Vision**

  The powerful engine that gave meaning and momentum to Smith’s Heart to Honduras vision was holistic integrity. If a mission organization will put in place the right vision with the right leadership making holistic integrity a priority, they have a

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bright future. Reflecting on Smith’s vision, Grubbs believes the holistic nature of Smith’s vision had two key elements that attracted people from various walks of life. It was compelling and it was biblical. And because of these two elements, rarely did a person visit Honduras only one time. They were compelled by the holistic nature of the vision and encouraged by its biblical foundation.²

Healing of the whole man was Smith’s goal in Honduras. He did this by feeding the hungry (agricultural assistance, feeding centers in local churches and co-ops), clothing the naked (providing sewing machines, sewing clinics and selling clothes at affordable discounts), building homes for the homeless (building and remodeling), providing medical services for the physical needs of the sick (medical clinic, surgeries, ministry doctor and medical brigades) and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom (tent crusades, pastors’ support, sister churches, School of Discipleship and showing of the Jesus movie).

These five socio-evangelistic tools reveal the heart of Smith and indicate that transformational development was at the core of his vision for Heart to Honduras. Thousands of people have been lifted up, healed, empowered and encouraged by this dynamic vision because it ministered to the whole man. It impacted one doctor so deeply he returned to the United States and reported: “Heart to Honduras is the perfect ministry.”³

Bryant Myers, a World Vision development specialist, defines transformational development as seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually. It is an endless adventure having as its purpose the reclamation of

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² Grubbs, interview.
³ Jim Nelson, oral comment to Heart to Honduras staff, Lake Wales, FL, 1993.
humankind's true identity as human beings, created in the image of God. It is accomplished through the proclamation of the Gospel by life, word, deed and sign. He writes of the first three:

By *life* I refer to the fact that Christians are the message. We are the sixty-seventh book of the Bible. People read our lives, our actions and our words and believe they know what being a Christian means. By *word* I refer to the need to say what the gospel story says and to invite others to make it their story. By *deed* I refer to the fact that the Christian faith, at its best, is an active faith, engaged with the world and seeking to make it more for life and for the enjoyment of life.4

- **Embrace the Middle Tier with Wisdom**

Smith carried out his holistic vision most effectively by his life. The Word of God was as central to his theology as his heart was to his body. The list of kind deeds Smith did for the poor would fill hundreds of Excel spread sheets. But regarding signs, wonders, and miracles, there was a “flaw in the middle” in Smith’s understanding of transformational spiritual change that prohibited him from ministering with what Charles Kraft refers to as “power encounters”.5 A power encounter happens when a healing or deliverance occurs that contradicts or overpowers a local pagan deity, a shaman’s technique of healing or any manifestation of demonic activity, and causes a person or a group of people to turn to Christ.6 Early on, all missionary organizations need to be intentional about understanding spiritual warfare within the context of believers in the developing world who know more about demons than they know about doctors.

Bryant Myers writes of signs and miracles and how effective they are in the developing countries to announce the coming of the Kingdom of God:

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6 Ibid.
We should also note the inadequate way the modern worldview deals with signs. Because there is no place for the appearance of the supernatural in the physical world, there is no home for signs and miracles. For most animists, the existential question has little to do with truth; it has to do with power. Therefore, in dealing with the gospel message, we cannot separate word, deed, and sign without truncating our message. Words clarify the meaning of deeds. Deeds verify the meaning of words. Most critically, signs announce the presence and power of One who is radically other and who is both the true source of all good deeds and the author of the only words that bring life in its fullest.

Missionaries who believe in "power encounters" see the world of spiritual warfare as three-tiered: the higher tier, the middle tier and the lower tier. The lower tier concerns itself with the flesh, matter, materialism, scientific method of proof and the certitude of sense experience. The higher tier deals with religion, faith, heaven, miracles and the exceptions to the natural order, but these decrease as scientific knowledge increase. Paul Hiebert describes the middle tier as dealing with ghosts, ancestors, demons, evil spirits and dead saints. The middle tier is where power encounters take place. This tier also includes local gods, witches, magic and astrology and belief in animism in which animals, rocks and trees have spirits and personalities.

Smith lived and worshiped out of a western, two-tiered view of reality. He was a student of the social sciences. His theology of healing was almost totally through medical teams, surgeries and clinics. He believed in miracles and often stated God could heal him but rarely, if ever, did he enter into this middle tier. His grandfather, Dr. Charles Robert Smith, was one of the first, if not the first, medical doctor in the Church of God, (Anderson, IN). Two of his brothers-in-law were doctors and his wife was a nurse. Often reliance upon doctors, nurses and prescription drugs lessens faith both in the

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8 Ibid., 410.
10 Ibid.
west and east. Because of this lack of a middle tier, Lesslie Newbigin states, “Western Christian missions have been one of the greatest secularizing forces in history.” Missionaries need to heed this thought by Newbigin and ask the question, “Is my theology of healing that I am taking to the mission field a secularizing force that diminishes faith or is it a biblical force that increases faith?”

On the other hand, no one should allow Newbigin’s thought to discount the powerful medical ministry of Heart to Honduras. Many lives have been saved through hundreds of surgeries at the Karen Hope Medical Clinic in the village of Canchias. Thousands of teeth have been extracted, easing the pain for hundreds of poor Hondurans. But North Americans who visit Honduras through the auspices of Heart to Honduras rarely witness signs and wonders that take place in the middle tier because they usually take place during weekend encuentros to which only Hondurans are invited.

In one sense, this “hidden ministry” is positive because it meets a cultural need, is indigenous and miracles take place. One can learn through this that when two different ethic groups worship the same God from two different cultural perspectives, different ways of responding to that same God will surface. Questions that mission organizations need to ask regarding this issue are: Are these encuentros biblical? If so, why are they hidden from North Americans? Do these encuentros fit into the ministry’s vision? What are the pros and cons of learning and experiencing the middle tier?

- **Be Open to a Culture’s Felt Needs**

  Over the years, visitors to worship services in Honduras have had glimpses of this belief in the middle tier. In August of 1989, Smith and a few of his staff visited the village of Palmital. During the service, men were spitting on the floor and coughing from

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11 Paul Hiebert, “The Flaw in the Middle”, 418.
the smoke of kerosene lanterns that permeated the room. In addition to these cultural differences of social behavior, the stateside visitors noted that the windows were shuttered on that sultry evening in the belief this would keep the evil spirits away.

Once during a worship service with students at the School of Discipleship Center, a young girl looked like a log as she rolled back and forth across the room, arms against her sides, knocking aside chairs and tables in her path. When asked about this, Miguel Pinell replied, "She has a demon."¹²

Another glimpse of the middle tier came during a service in the village of Ocotal, Nicaragua, when a young lady screamed for thirty minutes and was taken out of the service. Thirty minutes later she returned to the service rejoicing as she had found freedom from the trauma of having been leased as a sex slave by her mother to a man for forty dollars. The pastor’s daughter-in-law, Lineth Moreno, shared with the Americans visiting, “You Americans preach nice sermons but you do not know how to minister to us in power.”¹³

Grubbs has a different perspective of what it means to minister to people and the need for the middle tier by stating:

I do not support the middle tier viewpoint as it is not something that I have been led of the Lord to get involved in but I have no major problem with Miguel doing this as we are a very diverse organization. We don’t have a spiritual structure that we squeeze everybody into. It is not an official position that I would take in the ministry. We don’t own their style of worship. Where I would have problems with this is if Miguel would promote this as the official Corazón Para Honduras position and refused to let anyone in that did not follow that. That is where I would have a problem because we have never been legalistic to that point. Charlie was not a legalistic person. And our Board, in that it was composed of Church of God, (Anderson, IN) members, made us strong in this area because we hold to the view that we should “...reach our hands in fellowship to every blood washed one”. This means we are also open to diverse forms of worship. As to American ministers preaching nice sermons but not

¹³ Lineth Moreno, conversation with author, Ocotal, Nicaragua, February, 2005.
being able to minister, I am not called to minister to someone. I am called to minister with someone. When this happens you create dependency. But when you minister with people you create a collaborative ministry. So I am not there to minister to people. I am there to call them to their own ministry and let us do ministry together.\textsuperscript{14}

Birch agrees that Lineth Moreno is correct in stating that so many North American pastors cannot minister to the Honduran believers due to cultural differences but that this does not mean North Americans are not effective in other ways. He writes, “I think Lineth Moreno is stating a truth. It is almost impossible to know the culture with a few visits. This does not negate what North American pastors do, but it does limit their effectiveness.”\textsuperscript{15}

It should be noted that since Smith has passed on, Miguel has taken Corázon Para Honduras into the middle tier. He understands the middle tier and the expressed needs of the Honduran believers in their context to experience this middle tier. Miguel not only allows warfare in the middle tier to take place in services but encourages it on a regular basis.

When asked the following question, “Miguel, Charlie would not agree with the many encuentros you are holding. If he were alive today, would he allow them?” Miguel replied, “I believe Charlie would “walk by” what we are doing and listen and allow what we do here because he understands the culture. He was an anthropologist and he would understand. He would let us do encuentro because it is part of our culture.”\textsuperscript{16} This says worlds about Smith’s understanding of culture and the need for visions to be flexible, his openness to others’ felt needs and his unwillingness to stand in the way of

\textsuperscript{14} Grubbs, interview.
\textsuperscript{15} Steve Birch, e-mail.
\textsuperscript{16} Miguel Pinell, interview.
transformational development within the context of a culture, even though it contradicted his own theology and beliefs.

Garrett also feels Heart to Honduras needs to allow Corazón Para Honduras to be free to worship God openly, freely and expressively as this is the biblical thing to do but he, like Grubbs and Smith, is not personally comfortable with it. Even though the way worship is expressed in another culture such as the encuentros can be biblical, it does not mean one outside that culture should be expected to feel comfortable with it. Garrett reflects on this issue:

Well, I think if you look at the ministry of Jesus, it would be hard to not believe that this was a part of Jesus’ ministry. So yes, I think especially in those cultures that the demonstration and power of God is very important. The other side is that it can be contrived. We need to make sure God is doing it. There are power encounters in Africa and other cultures. There is slaying in the spirit but I cannot relate to that. I cannot be a part of that. I do not judge them for it but for them it is probably a very important spiritual component. It is as much cultural as it is spiritual. I love the passion and the intensity. But the slaying I would say is mostly emotionalism and they get themselves worked up into frenzy. Anybody could do that. If you twirl around long enough you will go down. I think they want us to come up and pray loud but it would be contrived.17

- **Remember that a Small Vision Limits a Big God**

Smith cast creative and grand visions, for his God had unlimited resources. Few of Smith’s visions were small because he believed God was as good as His promises. Smith believed that the right vision would attract the right people. He believed big visions would attract big men. If missionaries are called to the mission field, their harvest and impact for what God wants to do will be as big as their vision. Hence, Smith would challenge them to cast big visions and consider the words a high ranking French official once said to Winston Churchill, “If you are doing big things, you attract big men.

17 Garrett, interview.
If you are doing little things, you attract little men. Little men usually cause trouble."\(^{18}\)

Smith’s Heart to Honduras vision has attracted some of the finest engineers, doctors, nurses, educators, blue collar workers, students and young people around the country. These passionate partners saw a big vision with purpose, direction and meaning and wanted to make a personal investment in it.

- **Challenge Destructive Mindsets for the Common Good**

Smith’s visions were crafted to lift up the self-esteem of poor believers and empower them through improving agricultural skills, training in appropriate technology, enhancing educational facilities and instructing them in the plan and purpose of God for their lives. His work with the elders of the community to fulfill the Great Commission was designed to give the Hondurans a sense of confidence and new self-respect. For too long they had been beaten down by corrupt officials, the rich and the powerful, and the colonial west. He wanted to elevate their self-esteem and redirect in a positive way their way of thinking for the common good. This mind-set is illustrated by the fictional story, which for the purposes of this paper, is about a crab merchant in the country of Honduras:

A crab merchant stored his crabs in two containers. One container had the lid open and the other was shut. A customer asked him why one container was shut and the other open. “Well, you see,” replied the crab seller, “the one that is open is full of Honduran crabs and the one covered is full of American crabs. The American crabs, when one starts to escape, the others make a platform and help him up, and then he turns back and helps the others. If I do not have a lid over the American container they will all escape by helping each other.” “And the Honduran crabs? What do they do?” “I don’t have to worry about them at all, so I leave them uncovered. When one starts to climb out, the others reach up and pull him back.”\(^{19}\)


\(^{19}\) Frank Bournois, Brooklyn Derr and Sylvia Roussillon, eds., *Cross-Cultural Approaches To Leadership Development* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 35.
The point of the story is that the poor Hispanics in Central America are reluctant to provide support for each other and do not like to see others succeed. This lack of support and ensuing competitive spirit became visible in the women's sewing ministry set up in the village of Canchias. About forty-five village ladies were taught to sew with treadle sewing machines. They also learned to embroider beautiful place mats and decorative tablecloths that could have given them income from Americans visiting their village. Yet, when they were asked to form a sewing co-operative to organize the sales of the material so that no one person or family would earn most or all the money and create a spirit of fairness, they refused because of jealousy and unwillingness to be supportive of each other.\(^\text{20}\) Smith wanted to change this destructive way of thinking. In other words, Smith would teach them to become "Christian crabs" in the light of the Apostle Paul's words to the women at Philippi, "And now I want to plead with those two women, Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. Let everyone see that you are considerate in all that you do…"\(^\text{21}\)

- **Beware of Dangers of Micro-management**

Smith, in one sense, had two visions for Heart to Honduras. The first was to implement the Heart to Honduras vision locally. The second was to replicate it outside of Honduras, especially throughout Central and South America and possibly the world. When asked why this has not occurred, Miguel Pinell replied, "It takes twenty years for our students to mature. So development will not happen over night. I think it is a stage. It might not happen in my lifetime – maybe after my death. The model is getting in place

\(^{20}\) Carol Lynne Usher, interview.

\(^{21}\) Philippians 4:2, 5 (NIV).
for it to happen. It is a matter of timing."

On the other hand, other mission agencies like Samaritan’s Purse are replicating their visions. Whereas Heart to Honduras has been unable to replicate their agricultural vision consisting of tilapia, chickens, pigs or cattle after twenty years of experimentation, Samaritan’s Purse has replicated over 500 agricultural projects of cattle, goats, chickens and fish to families throughout Honduras in just a few years. In some ways, the village of Canchias is a show case for the North Americans. It is impressive. It is good in that it shows what can be accomplished in one village and the dramatic change that occurs in so many North Americans when they experience it. But it falls short of the intent of Smith’s original visions. Why is this?

Micro-management is a major problem. When practically all decisions have to go through the National Director it creates a bottleneck. Micro-management worked in the early years when Heart to Honduras was smaller. In many ways micro-management in the beginning stages of a ministry is necessary for control, authority and decision making. But after twenty years of a holistic ministry, the small village of Canchias has received most of the benefits of what Heart to Honduras has done in the field of agriculture. The cattle barns, chicken house, tilapia ponds and pigsty are all located there. Other villages have yet to be blessed with this tremendous assistance in terms of the intent of Smith’s vision to replicate the Canchias vision. What can other mission organizations do to prevent ministry bottleneck?

This issue makes Board member Steve Birch a bit nervous as he states: “It makes me nervous that we are so dependent on Miguel. If one person must have

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22 Miguel Pinell, interview.
everything flow through them we limit the size of the ministry to what that person can actually control and handle. I deeply appreciate what Miguel does and I think he is beginning to release some things, but it is difficult to take hands off of something you have birthed.”

Missionary George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilization, learned through experience that micro-managing a mission organization can be frustrating and time consuming when he personally interviewed 2,500 volunteers for short-term missions before finally recognizing that he had to delegate! Coach Bear Bryant, who led the University of Alabama to six national championships, had the uncanny ability to release his players to do their job. Mission leaders can learn from his wisdom: “If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, we did it. If anything goes really good, then you did it. That's all it takes to get people to win football games for you.” In many ways this is all it takes to have a winning team on the mission field.

Garrett believes that micro-management has been a problem in the past in Honduras. On the other hand, he sees a maturing process in Miguel’s leadership that will allow macro-management to emerge. He states: “At the present moment, I do not believe the bottleneck is wide enough. But in my ten years with the ministry, I can see incredible progress with Miguel. It is not where we want it to be but it is sure not where it used to be. And a part of that is that Miguel is getting older, he sees this need and is less threatened.”

- Be More Concerned about God’s Revelation than Man’s Replication

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24 Steve Birch, e-mail.
25 Michael Griffiths, Lambs Dancing With Wolves, 276.
27 Garrett, interview.
On the other hand, because replication of Smith’s vision is not taking place does not mean weakness or failure. It might be a good thing. What is good for Honduras might not be the best option for Costa Rica. Whereas Honduras might need extensive medical care due to a lack of doctors, Haiti might need food assistance due to her great need of having to import fifty percent of her food. Just because Smith wanted his vision replicated, does not mean it should be or can be. New leaders come on board with different gifts, visions and agendas. Effective ministry can take place without replication.

Also, replication is taking place but in a different form from how Smith envisioned it. For example, Smith was deeply concerned about the housing problems in Honduras. He wanted to use the Martha House as a proto-type for building new homes as well as remodeling and improving existing houses. But the current housing project for Corázon Para Honduras is that of building houses for widows and families that have been relocated due to widening of the Pan American highway running through the heart of Honduras. This is a form of replication but not as Smith envisioned. This probably would have been fine with Smith as in his own words he defined vision as “something that is not static but fluid.”

Rather than being concerned about replication of Smith’s vision, Heart to Honduras and all mission organizations need to concern themselves with three things and let replication take care of itself. These three things are found in the words of Joshua:

I am an old man now. You have seen everything the Lord has done for you in my lifetime....So be strong! Be very careful to follow all the instructions written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Do not deviate from them in any way. Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or worship them. But be faithful to the Lord your God as you have done until now.

29 Joshua 23:2, 3, 6-8 (NIV).
Mission organizations should take the following points of Joshua into account, especially those leaders who were not the original visionaries: 1) be careful to obey all of God's word, 2) worship God and Him only, and 3) be faithful. If mission organizations will be careful to adhere to these three biblical principles, replication or any other God-ordained principle contained in the original vision that is in alignment with God's desire, will unfold naturally.

Transformation can take many forms. A caterpillar changes into a butterfly by way of metamorphosis. An understanding of truth occurs by a change in one's perspective. Reconciliation between two rivals comes though a spirit of forgiveness. The way we feel toward a person can be changed by a simple word. In similar ways God used both Smith and Pinell to bring about positive change in the lives of the poor. Smith did it through his life, word and deeds. Pinell has added a fourth dimension — signs. This is the way missions should work. During their partnership, Smith had the authority to clamp down on Pinell. Pinell had the freedom to reject Smith's opinions. Instead, Smith could "walk on by" what Pinell was doing because he understood the culture. If all missionaries would work in such a spirit of harmony and openness as Smith and Pinell did, the missionaries' lives, words, deeds and signs would provide tremendous wholeness to the ministry and be as great a "power encounter" as overcoming a shaman's idol in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.
Chapter Twenty-One

Learning Lessons for Conflict Resolution

Any man who can alter and determine the destiny of western civilization on three missionary trips within a span of about thirty-six years, would conceivably be considered the most influential missionary who ever lived outside of Jesus Christ. Yet, that great man, the Apostle Paul, encountered conflict inside and outside the church on almost every page in the New Testament from the ninth chapter of Acts to the book of Philemon. Paul wrote, “When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to the face, because he was in the wrong.” Luke wrote about Paul refusing Barnabas’ request to take John Mark with them when he deserted them in Pamphylia, “Their disagreement was so sharp that they (Paul and Barnabas) separated ways.” Michael Griffiths, former missionary to Japan, remarks about the various tensions between Paul and Barnabas:

These conflicts were important. In all three cases principles were at stake. And they illustrate how missionaries may have difficulties in personal adjustment with one another. This is not necessarily sinful, but just part of being human.... We say that it is perfectly biblical for missionaries to disagree.... We are emphasizing that it is normal and human for conflicts to arise between men and women of principle, which need to be resolved... and a deliberate choice has to be made to display the “fruit of the Spirit”.

This should speak volumes to missionary organizations and missionaries engaged in serious missionary work. Two of the most crucial needs in missionary work are leadership and the ability to engage in healthy conflict resolutions. For the eight years Smith was Overseer of Heart to Honduras, leadership training and the resolving of conflicts were not high on his agenda. It might have been due to pioneering the ministry.

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1 Galatians 2:11 (KJV).
2 Acts 15:36 (NLB).
3 Griffiths, 130.
4 Ibid., 131.
Perhaps this is excusable for a season, but when the mahogany trees have been cut, the land cleared, the facilities built, the curriculum written and the compound is ready, then leaders need to be trained and missionaries need to understand the role conflict plays on the mission field. As in Paul’s case, people will oppose you, disagree sharply with you, falsely accuse you and desert you. The key is understanding the underlying causes, acquiring coping skills, learning lessons, responding in love and wisdom, and seeking both resolution and reconciliation. This must have been what Paul and Peter realized, for later Peter wrote of Paul, “This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him....”

• **Teach the Importance of Flexibility and the Chain of Command**

While Smith was Overseer, there were two ways the ministry sought to keep conflict at a minimum – being flexible and coming under authority. Heart to Honduras under Smith’s leadership did a reasonably effective job in stressing the importance of these two relational tools in pre-orientation dialogue with the influx of short-term North Americans. But the ministry was weak in preparing long term missionaries. Most of the long term missionaries left under duress.

Garrett believes the key to minimizing conflict is understanding the chain of command and being willing to submit to leadership:

Most of the conflict that I have known on our particular mission field comes from North Americans. I would say it is about ninety percent. Rick Dike was an exception. Monty and Kelly were an exception but they did have issues. They were able to fit in because they understood flexibility and the principle of submission to their superiors. And this is the key to making it on the mission field. Conflict, from my pastoral experience at Burns Ave. Church in Lake Wales, occurred when the vision was not the same. This happens on the mission

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5 1 Peter 5:13 (NLB).
field as well. I would say a lot of it comes back to relationships, finances, transportation, lack of communication and personal agendas.  

The spirit of missionary Robert de Nobili, a Jesuit priest, would save missionaries many heartaches on the mission field. He was doing an outstanding job while working with the Brahmans in Mathurai in southeast India, but when he was ordered to move to Jaffna, Sri Lanka, even though he was seventy years old, he obeyed.  

Paul exhorted the Ephesians to "...submit to one another out of love." This raises the question, "Did Smith create a lot of conflict with his superiors in various organizations such as the South Lake Wales Church of God, Warner Southern College, the leaders of the H.E.A.R.T. program and Project Global Village by questioning or refusing to submit to their agenda?" In each departure there was tension and conflict. Griffiths has an interesting take on conflict caused by individuals on the mission field:

Personally I believe that a proper doctrine of the church...requires us to work together rather than being independent, self-promoting mavericks determined to run our own show and be answerable to nobody. A high doctrine of the church should be the death of individualism....Objectively, however, we have to accept that individualists find submitting to a fellowship an irksome discipline, and that the Lord in his mercy is still pleased to use them. Many missionary societies were started by exactly such kinds of people...."

Griffiths is right. Smith was an individualist and God greatly used him. He was a maverick and he irked, and was irked by, his superiors. But he was not self-promoting, nor did he want to run his own show. He wanted to make sure the vision God gave him was run by God. When he left Project Global Village, he believed his vision for Honduras would be more effective in advancing the Kingdom. He had two options: stay and seek change within the organizations he worked for, or leave. If he stayed, conflict

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6 Garrett, interview.  
7 Griffiths, 270.  
8 Ephesians 5:21 (NLB).  
9 Griffiths, 277.
would continue to seethe. He left and this was the right thing to do. God uses mavericks
to do mission. Paul said, “Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as
possible…”

- **Empower Field Staff Through Macro-Management**

  From the beginning Heart to Honduras made a decision that its Board would not
become involved in the day to day operational decisions made on the field in Honduras.
The Board set policy and procedures and allowed the staff to recruit personnel, execute
projects and carry out programs. This meant that relational conflicts were solved by the
Overseer and the National Director in Honduras and if needed, the Board would be called
in for counsel. This makes practical sense, for who would expect the Board Chairman of
GM to resolve an argument between two mechanics on the assembly line? According to
Griffiths, Hudson Taylor’s early experience working for the Chinese Evangelization
Society, waiting for months for funds to arrive, and frustrated by the time taken for letters
to be answered, convinced him that strong local leadership on the field in China was the
answer.¹¹

  But who is going to oversee Taylor when conflicts arise between missionaries
under his care? What is their recourse? To whom can they appeal? Who will hear their
cries? Who will see their tears? If possible, the Board might come in and play a role not
in policy or procedures, but in the personnel’s felt needs. Mission leaders have a divine
mandate within their calling to care for their “lambs”. This means being aware of the felt
needs of their field missionaries and staff who sacrifice their lives daily to advance the
cause. As mentioned before, often these needs are never known and the lambs suffer

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¹⁰ Romans 12:18 (NLB).
¹¹ Griffiths, 271.
alone.\textsuperscript{12}

The attrition rate of North American staff serving in Honduras was high during Smith’s leadership. This was usually a result of failure to submit to the chain of command in Honduras under Miguel Pinell’s leadership. Smith wisely supported the National Director in all decisions. Providing the leader on the mission field, as well as the missionary staff, with seminars, books and counsel on conflict management/resolution might have prevented some of this attrition.

Stateside mission boards might consider exit interviews with departing staff. Staff member Rick Dike expressed his desire to have been able to have an exit interview with the Heart to Honduras Board prior to his leaving after serving thirteen years with the ministry.\textsuperscript{13} However, it is interesting to note that Rich Myers, in a Ph.D. dissertation on burnout of 150 missionaries, states, “Mission agencies report little success using exit interviews to determine what experiences missionaries encounter in the field that contribute to their leaving missionary service.”\textsuperscript{14}

- **Understand that not All Missionary Conflict is Negative**

Missionary conflict can be messy, ugly and painful. Mickey and Wilson compare conflict in the church to making a snowman. The beautiful, soft snow is disrupted. Footprints and a gapping trench appear as snow is gathered. The silk serenity disappears. Finally, Mr. Snowman appears with top hat, carrot nose, a pipe and scarf, but his creators had to live with the chaos they produced and conflict they felt about disrupting the

\textsuperscript{12}Richard Myers, “Conflict Management Style and Burnout of Missionaries”, 40.
\textsuperscript{13}Dike, interview.
\textsuperscript{14}Richard Myers, 84.
landscape.\textsuperscript{15}

Missionaries need to understand that conflict on the mission field is inevitable; sometimes it is daily, but it is part of the adventure. Their goal should be to not let it keep the missionary snowman from being built in spite of a few dirty snowballs being tossed at each other by the missionaries.

Missionaries have an inner restlessness that catapults them out of comfort zones. They are abandoned unto God and God alone and live with a risky faith. They take chances and recoil at the status quo. They are a peculiar lot and often misunderstood. Griffiths believes missionaries are independent-minded and often do not agree with their leaders or with the majority. He writes:

The very first party of LMS missionaries on the ship \textit{Duff} actually excommunicated two of their party because they had doubts about limited atonement....Maria Newell, missionary to Malacca in 1827, married against the wishes of the LMS and they stopped recruiting single missionaries for thirty years....Many missionaries under Hudson Taylor were restive because of his demand that they dress like Chinese....C. T. Studd parted company with his home board after a famous confrontation in Africa, resulting in the formation of the World Evangelistic Crusade....Some countries were so vast and communication so difficult that individuals could usually manage to do their own thing with a minimum of interference. George Scott, missionary in Urumchi in Xinjiang had such difficulty with his superiors that he placed the Gobi Desert between himself and the CIM directors in Shanghai. During the long sea voyage to India, Adoniram and Ann Judson spent many hours in Bible study. It convinced them of the truth of believers' baptism and they separated from the Congregationalists.\textsuperscript{16} Tucker writes, "...there was an uproar among the Congregationalists. How could their star missionary desert them when they had invested in him?"\textsuperscript{17}

- \textit{Educate Staff On the Positive Benefits of Missionary Tension}

Considering all these "defections", missionary organizations need to see that not all conflict is negative. Sometimes God will use it to advance his Kingdom. A little bit of


\textsuperscript{16} Griffiths, 272.

\textsuperscript{17} Ruth Tucker, \textit{From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya}, 132.
tension is good. When mission conflict is resolved in an amiable way, it can be seen as a positive thing. Dudley Weeks, a conflict resolution specialist who has used conflict resolution principles in over sixty countries, writes about the value of conflict:

Many conflicts can serve as opportunities for mutual growth if we develop and utilize positive, constructive conflict resolution skills. The first perception in need of transformation is that conflict is always a disruption of order, a negative experience or an error or mistake in a relationship. However, we need to understand that conflict is actually an outgrowth of diversity that can be utilized to clarify a relationship, provide additional ways of thinking and options for action that you may not have considered.¹⁸

Alan Filley, professor at the University of Wisconsin in the field of management, believes conflict can be beneficial because clarification of facts can emerge. Conflicts can stimulate the search for new methods to solve the conflict. It can reduce tension once the problem is solved. It can create cohesion and performance.¹⁹ If missionaries are aware of these positive benefits on the field, conflict can be embraced as a friend, not an enemy. Paradoxical as it may sound, conflict can be God’s tool to bring about harmony between two parties.

Richard Myers quotes L. B. Hart, who identifies in his handbook on conflict the destructive and constructive outcomes of conflict:

Conflict is destructive when it: diverts energy from more important activities and issues, destroys the morale of people or reinforces poor self-concepts, polarizes groups so they increase internal cohesiveness and reduces intergroup cooperation, deepens differences in value and produces irresponsible and regrettable behavior such as name-calling and fighting. Conflict is constructive when it: opens up issues of importance, resulting in their clarification, results in solutions of problems, increases the involvement of individuals in issues of importance to them, causes authentic communications to occur, serves as release to pent up emotions, anxiety and stress, helps build cohesiveness among people by healing the conflict, celebrating in its settlement and learning more about each other, and helps individuals grow personally and apply what they learned to future situations.²⁰

¹⁹ Alan Filley, Interpersonal Conflict Resolution (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1975), 5.
²⁰ Richard Myers, 28.
Missionaries' successes depend on their ability to get along with each other. The effectiveness of a missionary's relationship with the unreached soul will be determined by the harmony they have with their fellow missionaries. Myers believes for a missionary to have an effective ministry, conflict management and resolution methods are essential.21

He also believes the biggest danger facing missionaries is covert conflict: "For any family/mission to function effectively, it must maintain communication channels in all directions. Messages must be clearly understood. Opportunity for feedback exists in the form of seeking or giving clarification, expressing favorable reactions or disagreements, making suggestions, and offering alternatives."22

Sometimes the tension on the mission field, in the home office, in the compound or out in the bush can be so intense it reminds one of watching sumo wrestlers. Christian writer Phillip Yancey illustrates this point in a conflict with his wife, "I learned an important lesson – that not communicating is worse than fighting. In a wrestling match, at least both parties stay engaged."23 This is very important for missionaries to remember – stay engaged in communication. It is God's Kingdom. It is God's church. It is God's mission.

Smith tended to avoid conflict according to Grubbs. He writes:

Charlie tended to spiritualize conflict. I spent time with people that Charlie could not or would not work with. You almost have to ask the question why didn't Charlie make it with Warner Southern College in a healthy way? Why didn't Charlie make it with Mercy Corps in a healthy way? Why did he have to leave and neither one of those were in a voluntary way? He was being put under some restraints making it impossible for him to do what he wanted to do as a teacher

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21 Richard Myers, 28.
22 Ibid., 29.
and a worker. I think that is a character flaw of Charlie that he couldn’t work under supervision. And the only time he was able to really stick was when he was the lead person. Part of the reason was he could not handle conflict. When people had conflict with him over the H.E.A.R.T. program he would bristle and they would tell him what direction to go and he would do what he wanted to and they would call him down and he would have to account to the powers that be at Warner Southern. And he was always having run ins at Warner Southern because he would not toe the academic line and be a faculty member like everybody else. And then he would not accept the supervision of Ells Culver and Chet Thomas of Project Global Village in Honduras. So he could not handle conflict with people like that. So how did he handle conflict? He just walked away and did his own thing. Can you imagine? He just walked away from the H.E.A.R.T. program and that was his creation. That was his baby. But rather than deal with the conflict he had with the administration and at least follow some of their guidelines in programs and finances and getting approval before you do things, instead of solving those conflicts, he just walked away from them. Charlie had to be in the saddle and that was good for us and good for Heart to Honduras. Charlie worked best independently and that is why he did not want a larger Board.24

On the other hand, Steve Birch sees a side of Smith that indicates he did not always avoid conflict: “Charlie did not always avoid conflict. He called me on the carpet on more than one occasion as being a selfish American church. That was his prophetic voice. However, he never allowed his disagreement with you to be a point of ceasing to fellowship and love you. That I believe is the secret. Read the New Testament. It is filled with conflict and many of those conflicts are cultural in nature. The key is remembering the greatest of these must be love.”25 He continues:

I have so many great memories of Charlie. One was a letter he wrote to me that was pretty harsh about supporting the ministry. I took it personally since I had led the churches I served to be strong financial supporters. Charlie was looking at it from his side of the vision. The need was so great. When I replied and shared my concern, he responded in typical Charlie way, with love and support and a humble spirit.26

Researchers have discovered that burnout on the mission field is caused not by personality quirks but by daily pressure on the job. In a survey of missionaries, it was

24 Grubbs, interview.
25 Steve Birch, e-mail.
26 Ibid.
discovered that ill-will did not exist among missionaries because of poor housing, poor conditions, struggling financial support or language barriers. Instead, the difficulty in adjustment came as a result of relational disharmony with staff, peers and mission leaders. The research concluded: Sixty-seven percent of 152 missionaries had struggles with their self-esteem as these conflicts continued. Eventually, seventy-three percent of the missionaries experienced a "stalling out" within the first two years of cross-cultural transition. Stalling out referred to a less than satisfactory level of performance and/or relationships due to stress on the job.\footnote{Richard Myers, 30.}

Conflict resolution on the mission field is needed not only to enhance self-esteem of the missionary and to prevent low level performance but to safeguard the health of innocent and deeply committed Christians who feel an honest tug from God to go forth and fulfill the Great Commission. Thus, mission organizations as well as churches need to make conflict resolution as high a priority as raising funds. What good does it do to raise a million dollars and have a staff of missionaries with an average blood pressure score of 145/120? Myers quotes in his dissertation on missionary burnout, "...[T]he Southern Baptist Convention reported in 1990 that, after maternity benefits, the largest portion of the $64.2 million paid to pastors in medical claims during 1989 was for stress-related illness.\footnote{Ibid., 31.} The Southern Baptist convention reported that in an 18-month period ending in 1989, some 21,000 pastors were fired – a 31 percent increase since 1984."\footnote{Richard Myers, 32.} This statistic should be a red flag for the need for more conflict management tools and training, for as Myers observed, "Missionaries may face even higher stress in that in many cases they face the same demands as clergy in the United States while living in a
host culture that they do not fully understand.”

What is missionary conflict? According to Ting-Toomey, Professor of speech communications at California State University, conflict is “... a mixed up and incomplete jigsaw puzzle, with both parties needing something from each other to complete the entire picture.”

An example would be the time Heart to Honduras hired a North American dentist to oversee a dental clinic in Canchias. Heart to Honduras needed him to provide dental services for the poor. The dentist needed Heart to Honduras to fulfill his calling. However the dentist did not see himself as staff, which in his mind, freed him to live out his own agenda. Heart to Honduras saw him as staff and expected him to follow certain guidelines. This mix up prevented completion of the puzzle and resulted in his leaving the mission.

Myers in his research on missionary burnout writes that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. It also exists when two people try to occupy the same place at the same time. The primary definition he used in his research was, “situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible.”

Filley believes conflict was either competitive or disruptive. These two types of conflict permeate the relational landscape of missions. Competitive conflict is like an athletic contest wherein the emphasis is upon winning the contest rather than defeating or reducing the opponent. Once the game is over, the competition terminates. However, disruptive conflict is more like Absalom standing outside the palace gate seeking to win the favor of the people to dethrone his father David. Filley writes of this kind of conflict:

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30 Richard Myers, 12.
32 Richard Myers, 12.
In disruptive conflict...the parties do not follow a mutually acceptable set of rules and are not primarily concerned with winning. Instead, they are intent on reducing, defeating and harming, or driving away the opponent. The means used are expedient, and the atmosphere is one of stress, anger, and fear. In extreme cases, the parties in disruptive conflict will abandon rational behavior and behave in any manner necessary to bring about the desired outcome, the goal of defeat.\(^{33}\)

- **On Initial Missionary Assignments Listen, Learn and Keep a Low Profile**

  Freshman missionaries can prevent a lot of disruptive conflict if they will simply make their initial visits to a country somewhat as a guest. Griffiths states:

  > My advice is to keep a low posture in your first term. After all, the people there before you may not be entirely stupid and will certainly have learned a great deal by experience, which they will share with you when asked or even if you do not ask. When a newcomer raises an issue at a field conference in all innocence, there is an almost audible groan because it has been discussed before."\(^{34}\)

- **Do Not Cling to Privileges of Power and Position**

  Missionaries, according to Peter Wagner, should not cling too tightly to the privileges of their position. If they do, they will lose more than they gain. He believes that missionaries should remember that their principal calling is not administrative, but to plant and strengthen churches. He writes, “It is my conviction that the two things which cause the most tension are the handling of money and holding too tightly to administrative authority."\(^{35}\) While Smith was Overseer of Heart to Honduras, the areas that caused him the greatest anxiety were: internal staff bickering (which was rare), disloyalty, disunity in the Honduran church, false rumors against Miguel, lack of resources and administrative duties.

  Kelly Harrington, staff member who lived in Canchias for one year with her husband Monty, felt this tight hand of administrative control due to the National Director

\(^{33}\) Filley, 2.  
\(^{34}\) Griffiths, 280.  
\(^{35}\) Peter Wagner, 190.
being unwilling to allow a vehicle to be parked overnight in the village of Canchias. They and other staff had requested a vehicle overnight for emergencies because the village of Canchias was so isolated. One day her husband Monty became very sick. Kelly was desperate and had to walk an hour and a half over a steep mountain range to obtain medical help for her husband. She states, “I was desperate and since there was no doctor or clinic in Canchias, I had no choice but to walk to San Isidro.” Pinell may have had personal and cultural reasons for not allowing vehicles overnight in Canchias, but somewhere a relational kink occurred in communication or in the relationship that could have prevented this conflict. Eventually, vehicles were allowed to stay overnight in Canchias supporting the argument that missional tension can have positive outcomes.

Missionaries need to know how to work under authority. They need to know how to be flexible. They need to internalize the Apostle Paul’s words, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” They need a clear assignment from God regarding their work. It needs to be with a clear cut conviction that they are living and ministering in the revealed will of God. They must have the maturity to release and embrace all misunderstandings, insults, rejections, hurts and persecutions that come from their superiors, another staff member or ministry partner. They need to take this relational suffering to God and allow the Holy Spirit to use this pain to conform them to the image of Christ. They need to be clothed with a spirit of humility.

- **Seek to Bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit**

But the most important need for a missionary in the area of conflict resolution is a

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36 Kelly Harrington, interview.
37 Colossians 3:17 (KJV).
personal acquaintance with the Holy Spirit. Once the missionary is empowered by the Holy Spirit, immediately the nine fruits of the Spirit begin to bear fruit in his/her life—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Missionaries who make these nine spiritual fruits their priority rarely cause problems on the mission field. Even if they respond with only one or two of these fruits, the misunderstanding is usually resolved quickly.

So many missionaries have rejected these fruits given to them by God to see them through the most violent of relationships and circumstances. This was evident when Hudson Taylor took his band of missionaries to China:

Never before had such a large mission party set sail with the mission’s founder and director on board, and the impact on the ship’s crew was noticeable. By the time they had rounded the Cape, card playing and cursing had given way to Bible reading and hymn singing. But there were problems as well. The “germs” of ill feeling and division had crept in among them, and the once-harmonious band was sounding dissonant chords before it reached its destination. Lewis Nicol, a blacksmith by trade, was the ringleader of the dissenters. He and two other missionaries began comparing notes and came to the conclusion that they had received less substantial outfits than were usually received by Presbyterians and other missionaries. With that complaint came others: “The feeling among us appears to have been worse than I could have formed a conception of,” wrote Taylor, “One was jealous because another had too many new dresses, another because someone else had more attention. Some were wounded because of unkind controversial discussions, and so on.”

After the resurrection, Jesus was having a meal with his disciples. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit in order to receive an extraordinary power to preach the Gospel. The purpose of this power was to preach, but there was another purpose—love power. What good is it for the missionary to go to the mission field with great skills to translate a verb in Mandarin, or eat grub worms with African pygmies, or be speared by savages, or clean out the digestive tract of a poor Honduran child full of worms

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38 Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV).
39 Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, 193.
if he does not have the nine fruits of the Spirit which God has provided as spiritual tools to resolve any conflict? Charles Smith was a good example of a missionary who utilized these various spiritual fruits to resolve conflict on the mission filed. His recommendation to the missionary packing for an upcoming assignment would be to make sure the Holy Spirit is a living reality within and then proceed to pack their missionary “barrel” with syringes, wrenches, medicine, dictionaries, reading glasses, garden seeds and dried fruit.
Conclusion

This dissertation has described in narrative form a story of the life of Charles Smith – a simple man who loved the poor and gave his life for them. And just as an anthropologist studies and researches cultures, this dissertation has studied the origins of Smith’s beliefs, researched the patterns of his behavior and examined the role his values have played out among different religious groups, institutions, social enclaves and villages.

This project did not set Smith up as a saint to be worshipped but as a learning model for missionaries and mission organizations to be studied in developing a transformational holistic ministry. Its purpose was to motivate the church of the urgent need to be missional in nature, to admonish the believer to live life with passion, to inspire young believers to consider missions as their life’s ambition and to challenge the church to live radical life styles by rejecting worldly value systems and exchanging them for Kingdom principles.

This dissertation has thirty-six missionary recommendations and has described how they can be applied in contemporary society. They are not exhaustive but can serve as lessons and tools for further research in the field of missiology and the lives of other missionaries.

This dissertation has illustrated by way of a biographical format that all Christians live out their own biography that in turn becomes missiology (the way they do mission). It has revealed how God used a common man to accomplish the uncommon in hopes that others on the front lines of missionary work will be encouraged to stay the course, cast
their own vision and write their own biography, as did Charles Smith, by the life he lived through the power of his dear Friend in whom he referred to as “The Word” (Jesus).

I. Preliminary Observations on the Possible Helpfulness of this study for the on going work of Heart to Honduras and other missionary organizations

- This study provides a historical context for interested parties seeking to know more about how the ministry of Heart to Honduras came into existence. It shows how Charles Smith and Miguel Pinell launched this dynamic vision from the first pastor’s meeting in Palmital, Honduras in 1989 to Charles’ death in Canchias, Honduras in 1997.

- This study reveals a missionary belief and value system upon which Heart to Honduras was built and is sustained. Careful study of these beliefs and values can be a check and balance frame of reference to not only keep Heart to Honduras on track but other missionary organizations as well.

- This study offers for a variety of recommendations for evaluation and study within a missiological context when two different cultures interact. These recommendations can be helpful in understanding, analyzing and ministering among a ministry’s targeted people.

II. Recommendations for Further Research

- The reader may want to consider the extensive media material in the Heart to Honduras archives stored in the Miguel Pinell library in Xenia, Ohio. This rich source of approximately one hundred VHS and 8 mm video tapes gives a detailed account of the ministry of Heart to Honduras from 1989 to 1997. Also, approximately forty mini-cassette recordings are included detailing the interviews for this paper.

- Another helpful source includes over 1500 files of Charles Smith’s personal notes, Heart to Honduras newsletters, letters and faxes from his eight years as Overseer of Heart to Honduras. These files include an excel spread sheet enabling the reader easy access to topics on these files which are also stored in Xenia, Ohio in the Miguel Pinell library.

- Another excellent source is Charles Smith’s one hundred and sixty-eight page diary written during the last two years of his life. This document, also housed in the Miguel Pinell library, includes his personal philosophy of life, his Honduras vision, lessons learned during his eighteen month illness and his personal diary.
## APPENDIX A

### Five years of rapid growth of Heart to Honduras – 1989 to 1994

The following people have visited Honduras with Heart to Honduras from the beginning of the first pastors' association through September, 1994:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>People Visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Ed Joyner • Charles Smith • August 1: Steve Cooke • Charles Smith • Jim Leher • August 1: Back Brazil • Mary Jean Daniels • Phil Germany • Walt Williams • November 1: Bobo Bauer • Rose Lang • Mark Martin • Evelyn Schumea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Dan Brown • Broadway Christian • Junior Iden • Leroy Rapp • Larry Williamson • D. Woods • March 1: Keith Williams • June 16: Doug Warnam • July 1: Larry Carter • Harold Cooner • John August 15: Marilyn denim • Steve Collins • Lodi Herret • November 1: Marylin Ameen • Robin Bauer • December 22: Earl Wapsh • November 18: Steve Bych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Larry Williamson • Doug Warnam • April 1: Lorna Karstadte • Doug Peake • Kim Leher • Rhoda Bowman • Jerry Girand • Jerry Grubbs • Larry Lilly • Tara Shawna Barlow • Brian Breer • Jerry Breuer (Ruth) • Larry Carter • Moity Lundstrom • Mike Mawery • Chris McClellen • Michelle Preston • Anne-Marie Smith • September 18: Harold Cooner • October 19: Joe He.Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1992 | Ron Knight • Paula Nake • Ray Reser • Melissa Atkinson • Steve Birch • Todd Brecher • William Kurt • Kyle Lee • Houston McIvor • Lovey Rice • Danny Bowman • Dona Dodge • Dave Holoway • Rick • Dami Shick • Mary Lilly • Tara Lilly • Lane McLane • Michelle McCreary • Chris McClellen • Linda Penhorwood • June 11: Mary Ann Aleman • Steve Collins • •
| 1993 | May 25: Marilyn Ameen • Steve Collins • Lodi Herret • November 1: Marylin Ameen • Robin Bauer • December 22: Earl Wapsh • November 18: Steve Bych |
| 1994 | The following people have visited Honduras with Heart to Honduras from the beginning of the first pastors' association through September, 1994: |
APPENDIX B

Charles Smith's grease stained recipe for Chicken Curry

Chicken Curry

Chop - 4 onions (medium) - 1 tsp garlic
Brown in 2-4 Tbsp oil
Mix raisins and:
Brown:
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp caraway
2 tsp curry powder
1 tsp ginger
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp crushed red pepper
Brown @ 2 min - add
Add chicken pieces - stir
Pieces are completely covered
and hot.
Add tomatoes chopped (chopped)
Add 1 cup cream / 1/2 cup milk
Add 2 tsp salt
Cover pieces with chicken broth
Sprinkle top with cumin
Condiment
Cook over low heat till meat tender
Add juice of 1/2 lemon -stir in
Serve over rice
APPENDIX C

Beti, the La Hoya prostitute introduced to Christ by Charles Smith
APPENDIX D
The many partners who had networked with Heart to Honduras through 2005

Heart to Honduras Partners

CHURCHES

168 Churches, 13 Denominations, 21 States, 5 Countries, 5 Universities, 17 Organizations (10 secular, 7 Christian), >4000 on mailing list, 175 Prayer Partners, 2 Sister Churches, 25 School of Discipleship sponsors (individuals and churches)

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<tr>
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<td>Agape Baptist, Chicago, IL</td>
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<th>Brazos Abiertos (Open Arms)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>2 congregations</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Christian, Newton Falls, OH</td>
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<td>So. Hlights Reformed, Kalamazoo, MI</td>
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<td>Scottsdale, Phoenix, (Min. Park, Crosspoint, Nueva Amanecer)</td>
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<td>CO:</td>
<td>Arvada, Colorado Springs, Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>FL:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>LA:</td>
<td>Clarkston, Farmington, St. Jo</td>
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<td>MS:</td>
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<td>Fayetteville, Kingsport</td>
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<td>VA:</td>
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<td>WV:</td>
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<td>Christ Community, Winter Haven, FL</td>
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<td>Warner Southern, Lake Wales, FL</td>
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APPENDIX E

Ledger Page from the “Status of Loan Accounts for the Pastors’ Association of Santa Cruz” showing one of several Honduran churches which defaulted on loans made by North American churches and which were marked “Paid by Grace”.

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*Paid by Grace*
APPENDIX F

Fifty-eight Reasons I Love You, Charlie,
With love, from your sister Lorna
(Written between July 1995 - July 1996)

1. Although we don’t remember it, we shared the same bottle as we toddled around – the last to be weaned. Our mother said if we lost or broke it that would be it. No more baby bottles. We were surely bound by that special relationship.
2. You taught me how to play marbles under the big oak tree in our back yard.
3. We shared play town times with “Round Man” Edwards as the mayor.
4. You earned my admiration when you climbed to the top of the big oak tree in the back yard. Mother kept her cool and said, “If you are man enough to climb up, you are man enough to climb down.”
5. You let me operate your Lionel train.
6. We shared bed time story hour together with Anita and Marie in that big back room on Thornton Street. Usually Daddy was the one who sat in the rocking chair in the close (to make use of the light) and read stories from Egimeier’s Bible Story book.
7. We played at the little creek (really Tech sewage drain) down the little dirt road.
8. You were so brave when you cut yourself with a meat saw. You did not cry. You just said, “I hurt myself, I hurt myself.”
9. You teased me unmercifully. One time the teasing almost went too far when you, with our cousin Dudley, chased Sammie and me with the cows that had come to Pa’s lane from the pasture. I thought I was a goner. I climbed that big wooden gate faster than you could blink an eye.
10. We built “rooms” with hay bales in the loft in Pa Carver’s barn.
11. You were so brave to see why that big red fire carjacker did not explode. Unfortunately, when you looked at it, it blew up in your face and burned your eyes. You looked so pitiful with both eyes bandaged. I helped to lead you around until your could take the bandages off.
12. You were the best Cub Scout I ever knew. When your den built the club house in our back yard, you let me – your “little” Sis play in it.
13. You shared your “chunky pins” (Chinquapins) with me that you found at Pews Pond.
14. You gave me a bracelet for Christmas. When the “pearls” fell out, I glued them back with pink nail polish. I still have the bracelet!
15. We lived in a wonderful neighborhood with lots of playmates. Remember playing “kick the can” and “red rover?”
16. We had fun playing outside with all the neighbor kids at night and sometimes telling spooky stories under the streetlight as the corner of Mayfield and Nelson.
17. Movies in the attic were a special treat for us. Daddy set up quite a theater. Few other kids enjoyed cultural experiences like that.
18. We played HORSE with the basketball in Garrett’s driveway. You always won. I always lost.
19. When the family traveled to Colorado those two summers, you lay across Marie and me in the back seat and hung your feet out the car window.

20. That was the summer you teased me so much and I’d say “quit it!” To keep me going, you would mock me. What a bratty little sister I was. What an obnoxious brother you were!

21. That last summer in Colorado you liked a girl named Norma Jean Van Houser. Mother did not like that and told you she was probably a “snake in the grass.”

22. On our way home from Colorado we went by way of Kansas – Camp Fellowship. You went swimming in the pool there and bumped your head on the bottom of the swimming pool that night. We were worried about you but you were OK. Or were you?

23. I remember when you bought that classic Model A car (1934 Ford). What a neat car it was. I am so sorry Marie and I wrecked it. We did not even ask for permission to drive it. You did forgive us in time. (Didn’t you?).

24. Remember the (semi-final) championship game at Covington. The Pippettes went all the way down there to cheer you on. It was exciting!

25. As a teenager you always obediently went to all the church services but as soon as the last “Amen” was said, you’d race out the door and jump into the car with all your buddies for an evening out with the boys.

26. When you were 16 you drove for Bro. Tackett to Anderson Camp Meeting. I remember when you called home one night saying you had renewed your commitment to the Lord. It was welcome news to our parents who never could quite understand your “rebelliousness.” (You met Lois Hand that summer.)

27. I loved hearing you sing solos at church. One I remember particularly – “Wonderful Peace”. You dedicated it to Granny Smith – “Peace, peace, wonderful peace, coming down from the Father above. Sweep over my Spirit forever I pray, in fathomless billows of love.” You are such a beautiful example of that peace.

28. The day you left for the Navy, you walked through the house singing “Standing on the Corner Watching All the Girls Go By.”

29. We all took you to the bus station to say goodbye to you. I could not believe that you were leaving and going so far away from home. I knew I would miss you.

30. I remember the excitement we all felt anticipating your trips back home for visits. It is scary now to think that you hitchhiked nearly 2,000 miles.

31. You mailed a big white family Bible home from California. Mother gave it to me last month. I will always treasure it.

32. After you returned from the Navy, you went with Ronnie Braham to Northwestern. You began dating the most beautiful girl- Karen Stone.

33. I remember the first time you brought her to our house. I thought she was breathtakingly beautiful. She was wearing a lavender dress with a matching lavender head band.

34. I slipped into your room one day when you were gone and read a letter Karen had written to you. After she signed it, she wrote Philippians 1:3. I looked it up and discovered it was “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” I was so impressed with her. I am sorry for prying into your private letters. Forgive me? I was just a curious little sister.
35. After you and Karen married, you took a huge step and went all the way to Malaysia in the Peace Corps. I was impressed and so proud of you.
36. I admired your pursuit of higher learning. Your quest for knowledge was and is impressive.
37. You taught yourself how to play the harmonica – reviving some of the old songs of the church.
38. You value people and relationships over "things" and money.
39. You dared to speak out about injustices in the black/white community.
40. You were bold enough not to play the typical "game" in the academic setting even though it cost you friends and positions.
41. You were and are bold to speak out against inconsistencies and pettiness in the church even though it is not the popular things to do.
42. You always kept in close touch with Daddy sharing your thoughts and ideas. You showed great respect for him by your choices in life.
43. You love and respect Mother even when she is/was a bit critical of your choice of dress or hair style.
44. You have said more than once that in no way could you fault our parents for any of our upbringing. You followed the admonition of the commandment to Honor your Father and Mother.
45. You felt and followed a desire and commitment to help the poorest of the poor to better their lives.
46. You preach the good news of Christ by the way that you live.
47. You are creative and highly intelligent and continue to explore new ideas.
48. H.E.A.R.T. was your brain child. Although you were not allowed to see it through, many students received instruction and guidance through that program which gained national recognition.
49. You gave Mercy Corps your best shot. It is not easy working with people who lack vision, but you stayed with them as long as you could.
50. I was honored to be the one with you the time you decided to have your unconventional beard trimmed. After you returned home to Florida, Karen wrote to me and asked if I had ever considered running for President of the U. S. She gave me credit for you getting it trimmed, but you decided on your own.
51. You have a heart as big as all outdoors – loving people –physical as well as spiritual food – treating everyone as your brother and sister in Christ.
52. Your ideas for Father’s Place were outstanding! It was an adventure well worth the effort, time and money put into it.
53. You birthed another baby – a BIG ONE – when you created Heart to Honduras. What an outlet and means for God’s love to share and to encourage others to share.
54. You are the best cook – carrying on Mother’s tradition of chicken and dumplings and corn bread dressings as well as your own recipes. You, like Mother, could feed 30 people from a ham bone. (Remember saying that Mother could make ham and dumplings and feed the family using a ham bone she had given to your German shepherd “Yank”?)
55. What a tower of strength you were to the family at Daddy’s death and funeral. No one else could have spoken for the family at his service the way you did.
56. Through all your pain and suffering with Karen’s illness and death, you again were a power of strength leading the way for the celebration of her Home Going. You must have experienced hours of agony in your alone times. You put your faith into action for all to see.

57. You fathered two of the finest daughters in all the world. They are not only physically beautiful (you say that is unimportant) but they are beautiful on the inside showing love, understanding and compassion and will continue to reflect the values you and Karen stood and stand for. You did and are doing great, Dad.

58. You continue to look to the future with optimism as your press on to the goal following the leading of the Lord in every area of your life. I love you, your Sis, Lorna.
APPENDIX G

Charles Smith's last letter to his siblings

A personal letter to my dear sisters and brother: Anita, Marie, Lorna and Alvin

I know there is no need to say this to you, but I just want to be assured that the needs of Felicia and Anne-Marie will be met when they are fatherless and motherless. It would comfort me greatly just to hear from you what I already know you will say.

What an incredible thing it is to write such a thought. Who would have ever thought or believed that our daughters would be left without living parents, parents to be there for them during all of life's joys and pains. This has by far been the greatest grief I have experienced through this travail. I have cried more tears over this one thing than anything else. Since Karen made her transition, both girls have become my dearest and closest friends. I have been so blessed to have spent over one year with Felicia and two years with Anne-Marie. We have enjoyed more quality time than most fathers and their children spend in a lifetime, but that still does not remove the pain of separation. In fact, it makes it even greater. As they have said so often to me, "Daddy, if we didn't love you so much it would not be so hard to say goodbye."

I continue to believe that the God who raised our grandfather from his deathbed can do the same for me, but in case that is not in His plan, and our Father calls me home, I am ready, but reluctant because of having to leave you who I love so very much. You are so dear to me.

Mother is right when she says that we have been a blessed family. I don't believe even Billy Graham has been blessed as much as we have been blessed. Karen's transition and the prospect of my own death was not in that plan, but it is not all bad. All things do work together for the good to those who love God and who have been called according to His purpose. We might not be able to understand it all now, but we will as God, through time, heals the hurts and binds the bruises. My prayer is that you, your beautiful families and our daughters will be drawn even closer together in the years to come and that you will continue following Jesus through the remainder of your lives.

Words cannot express my love for you. You all have been so good and kind to us through the years. And I know that you will continue to give forth that love to Felicia and Anne-Marie for as long as you live. Know that your brother loves you now and forever.

It would delight me greatly if each one of you would write to me soon. I would cherish your letters. Please give my love to Joe, Dave, Jon, Kathy, and your children.

I am an ass for Jesus, your brother in the flesh and in the faith,

Charlie
September 1, 1997

P.S. The best way to write me would be to send a fax to: 011-504-67-81-67. I hope that tomorrow the satellite phone and fax will be set at my bedside so we can talk as we want.
APPENDIX H

TIME LINE FOR CHARLIE SMITH

1908  Father Frellsen Smith born
1934  Parents Frellsen Smith and Myrtle Carver married
1937  Sister Anita born
1938  July 26 - Charlie and twin sister Marie born in Monroe, Louisiana
1939  Sister Lorna born
1950  Brother Alvin born
1955  Charlie meets Karen Stone at Northwestern College in Natchitoches, Louisiana.
1957  Charlie plays in the State High School Basketball Championship
1957  Charlie graduates from High School
1958  Encouraged by his dad, Charlie joins the Navy and spends two years in San Francisco.
1959  Charlie returns to Ruston after his two year stint in the Navy.
1956  Charlie attends summer school with friend Ronnie Braham and reunites with Karen Stone
1959  Charlie attends Louisiana Tech to prepare for a career in Physical Education
1959  Karen graduates with nursing degree from Northwestern
1960  Karen works as nurse in Ruston, Louisiana while living with Charlie’s grandmother
1960  September 1 –Charlie Smith and Karen are married at Life Tabernacle in Shreveport, Louisiana
1963  Charlie graduates from Louisiana Tech
1964  Charlie receives his Master’s degree in Physical Education from Louisiana Tech
1964  Charlie and Karen join the Peace Corps and serve in Malaysia teaching English and health care.
1966  Charlie and Karen spend six months exploring twenty-five countries on return from Peace Corps
1967  Charlie directs the first racially integrated community action program in Ruston, Louisiana
1967  May 30 – first daughter, Felicia, born
1968  Charlie starts six year academic program University of Kentucky in field of Applied Anthropology
1969  Jim and Carol Lynne Usher first meet Charles and Karen Smith Lexington, Kentucky
1970  Charlie fights the Army Corps of Engineers displacement of rural poor in Taylorsville, Kentucky
1970  Charlie earns Master’s Degree in anthropology at University of Kentucky
1971  June 23 – second daughter, Anne-Marie, born
1976  Charlie and family leave Kentucky and relocate to Lake Wales, Florida
1976  Charlie begins teaching sociology and anthropology at Warner Southern College
1980  Charlie shares H.E.A.R.T. Vision with WSC and implements the HEART program
1980  Charlie teaches Miguel Pinell of Nicaragua in one of his classes at WSC
1984  Charlie resigns from teaching position at Warner Southern College
1984  Charlie works as anthropology advisor for Mercy Corps and Project Global Village
1984  Charlie begins student ministry at Old Lake Wales Church of God
1984  Charlie starts Father’s Place restaurant with Greg and Valerie Moak
1988  Charlie resigns from Project Global Village
1988  Charlie commissions Miguel Pinell to go into the rural mountains of Honduras in October
1988  Miguel meets with seven pastors in Palmital
1988  Miguel marries Nilsa Andino in San Isidro, Honduras on December 17
1991  Charlie Smith ordained January 8 at South Lake Wales Church. Jim Usher speaker
1991  Heart to Honduras formally organized June 18, 1991 Anderson, Ind. in Jerry Grubbs’ office
1992  Charlie teaches “Cross Cultural Communications and Development” at H.E.A.R.T. for 8 weeks
1993  February – Karen is diagnosed with terminal illness – Adenocarcinoma
1993  June – Family and friends travel to Honduras as part of “Karen’s Party” celebration of life
1993  June – Maria, widow Karen supported in Honduras, sends healing cloth to Karen
1993  June – Karen’s cancer surgery in Denver
1993  July 8 – Karen Smith dies
1993  July - Memorial service for Karen at First Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales, Fla.
1996  July – Nurse Judy Rentner hears Charlie’s labored breathing in Honduras; encourages doctor visit
1996  August – Charlie is diagnosed with interstitial pulmonary fibrosis and given a year to live
1997  May  – Charlie asks Jim Usher to drive him to visit his mother for the last time
1997  July  – Charlie meets with the Board for the last time
1997  August – Charlie leaves for Honduras to die among the poor Hondurans
1997  October – Lorna, Felicia, Anne-Marie, family and friends visit Charlie for last time
1997  October – Alvin arrives in Honduras the day before Charlie dies
1997  October 20 – Charlie makes heavenly transition
1997  October 22 – Memorial Service in Honduras for Charlie; burial on Ambassador Mountain
1997  November – Memorial Service for Charlie at First Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales, FL

TIME LINE FOR HEART TO HONDURAS

1976  Charlie moves family to Florida to teach at Warner Southern College
1983  Charlie begin work with Project Global Village in San Isidro, Honduras
1984  Jerry Grubbs leads Mercy Corps/PGV team of 15 Anderson College students
1984  Gordon Garrett leads Mercy/PGV team to Honduras
1987  Miguel leaves Costa Rica to work with Charlie and Project Global Village as bookkeeper
1988  Charlie and Miguel leave Project Global Village
1988  In February HTH purchase first property of 20 acres outside of San Isidro
1988  October Miguel rides burro into rural mountains to organize pastors
1988  Miguel marries Nilsa Andino December 17, 1988
1989  INFORMAL BEGINNING OF HTH: Charlie and Miguel meet 12 pastors in Palmital January 28
1989  Charlie announces in January the formation of an area wide non-denominational pastors association
1989  August - Steve Coder, Pres., Hand to the Plow & Jim Usher first visit to Honduras with Charlie
1989  September 18-25 – First Ministry Team to visit Honduras with Charlie
1989  Second Pastors meeting in August in Montanuela with seventeen pastor/laymen attending
1989  Charlie announces the first deposit of $2000 in the Association Bank for churches
1989  First Sister Church loan of $50 given to Montanuela for concrete floor
1989  Tent crusade in San Isidro with Jorge Rodriguez, evangelist. 600 attend, 55 saved 17 baptized
1989  Jesus Movie shown in La Victoria for first time
1989  Ministry produces first ministry video – nine minutes
1990  February – Dan Warman surveys 20 acre San Isidro property purchased by HTH for SOD site
1990  February - First TLC (Tender Little Children) feeding program in San Isidro – Nilsa is director
1990  February - Charlie laments his failed vision in Casitas for New Village Project under Mercy Corps
1990  Miguel and Nilsa celebrate birth of first born in Columbus, Ohio, name him after Charlie
1990  March - Charlie announces “First grand concentration of interdenominational churches.”
1990  December – Second HTH ministry team in Honduras – Parkview Church of God, Meridian, Miss
1991  Lorna Kardatzke’s first trip; Central Community Church of Wichita, Kansas
1991  May – First Regional Pastor’s Meeting in Chaguatillo
1991  May - First medical/surgical team; Drs. Lilly & Gerard; Jerry Grubbs, team leader. Columbus, OH
1991  May - First surgery performed in dining room of San Isidro office; hernia repair for Bartolo man
1991  Property of two acres for church in La Victoria purchased for $50
1991  FORMAL BEGINNING OF HTH: June 18 – Jerry, Jim and Charlie in Jerry’s office, Anderson, IN
1991  First Board of Directors: Jerry Grubbs, chair; Lorna Kardatzke, Charlie Smith, Jim Usher
1991  June “For where your treasure is there is your heart also” selected as ministry theme verse
1991  June – Decision by Board to focus only on the nation of Honduras
1991  July - Heart to Honduras Incorporated by the state of Florida; leaves umbrella of Hand to the Plow
1991  Women of the Church United organizes under the direction of Nilsa
1991  October – Heart to Honduras receives tax exempt status from the state of Florida
1991  October 13, First Board meeting in Wichita begins with each member kneeling in prayer
1991  Charlie proposes that each staff have "Position Descriptions" not "Job Descriptions"
1991  July 15th, Articles of Incorporation of Heart to Honduras, Inc. approved by state of Florida
1991  Heart to Honduras purchases office at 350 N. Ave, Lake Wales, Florida from Hand to the Plow
November – Charlie has first HTH The Reminder newsletter printed. Named in honor of his father
Three groups went to Honduras this year
January – Miguel Pinell ordained by the state of Florida
Miguel Pinell joins the Board of HTH
Elizabeth Ray, student at Warner Southern College serves as Bookkeeper
Heart to Honduras receives first $100,000 matching grant from Jon and Lorna Kardatzke
April – Gary and Melissa Mitkowski arrive in Honduras, serve one year as medical missionaries
May – nurse Cindy Penhorwood makes first trip to Honduras
Jim and Janie Nelson meet German again selling pineapples in Santa Cruz and fund his schooling
Tony Ahern surveys Canchias River for installation of hydroelectric system
August – First electronic CB base installed in San Isidro
August – German officially adopted by Miguel and Nilsa
Monty Harrington joins Heart to Honduras staff in Florida/Makes “The Church Revived” video
Church Farmers Association established in Montañuela with 26 acres and 9 pastors
Six groups went to Honduras this year.
Blacksmith shop built in Bartolo with five forges. Van Elkins of Louisiana is visionary
April – Hydroelectric system with 5.6 generator installed on the Canchias River
July – Karen Smith dies
October - Dave and Candy Pischel join the Florida staff
Rick Dike family moves to Honduras where they serve for more than three years
Twelve groups went to Honduras this year.
Monty and Kelly Harrington move to Honduras for one year, do sociological survey of Canchias
Charlie declares 'Discipleship" as theme for Heart to Honduras for year 1994
Nine groups went to Honduras this year
Charlie declares "Education" as theme for Heart to Honduras for year 1995
January – Karen’s Hope opens as a home for disabled children
January – First dental team under the leadership of Dr. Craig Carter
January – Government assigns 12 villages surrounding Canchias to HTH to provide medical care
April – General Store opens in Canchias
April – Molina (corn grinder) installed in Canchias village
April – Second and larger water tank installed in Canchias
July - First Christian Education Conference held in San Isidro, Carol Lynne Usher, leader
Dean Flora brought on as Fund Raiser for Heart to Honduras
Ministry newsletter The Reminder now being printed and mailed quarterly to partners
Board decision to take 10% from all designated projects for general fund
Miguel reports that six hundred souls entered the Kingdom via village churches in this year
September – Pila (home toilet, shower, laundry facility) Project begins
Thirteen groups and five individuals made trips to Honduras this year.
Bridge built over the Yure River between San Isidro and Canchias
HTH Board expands: Jayne Crews, Gordon Garrett, Jim Nelson and Dean Flora
Rick Dike serves as Logistics Coordinator out of his Urbana, Ohio home
Jim Usher serves part time as Team Coordinator out of his North Alabama home
Seven groups went to Honduras this year
Bill DeJong receives vision for schools for Honduras
April – Charlie leads his last team - the Education Team, which plans prototype school in Canchias
October 18 – First Fiesta meal for 280 in just-completed Assembly Hall – Charlie’s vision realized
October 20– Charlie Smith dies in Canchias/buried October 22 on Ambassador Mountain
October – Leadership team in place to oversee ministry with Dave Pischel, Executive Director
April – New school built in Canchias
Scott Kardatzke joins the HTH Board
Hydroelectricity run to the store, church and school in Canchias
October 26 – 31 Hurricane Mitch devastates Honduras
Karen Smith Clinic opens in Canchias
First School of Discipleship opens with 35 students seeking training for ministry
June – Gordon Garrett becomes president of Heart to Honduras, working out of his Colorado home
Corazón Para Honduras is legally incorporated under Heart to Honduras
2000  Steve Birch and Larry Lilly join the HTH Board
2000  First SOD class graduates 29 students with ceremonies held in Santa Cruz
2000  Dentist Dave and his wife Marty Sperow arrive in Honduras, serve 16 months is Canchias Clinic
2000  Thirty-one groups went to Honduras this year
2001  August – Board decides to move HTH office from Lake Wales, FL to Xenia, OH
2001  Jennifer White, Robin Wood and Paul Keeler join HTH Board
2001  September 30 – Garrett family moves to Ohio
2001  Pam Cook becomes bookkeeper, working out of her home in Laura, OH
2001  Thirty-three groups went to Honduras this year
2002  March – Tresia Johnson joins staff as Office Manager, working out of her home in Xenia
2002  April – Ushers move to Ohio, Jim continues as Team Coordinator; Carol Lynne as Prayer Coor.
2002  April 21- Smith House – office space in the process of being remodeled -dedicated with 400 attend
2002  First Quest summer program for college age North Americans in Canchias
2002  June – HTH begins partnership with Jose Reyes selling Burro coffee
2002  July – Four large tilapia ponds constructed in Canchias led by Mike Buchanan of Salem Church
2002  December 9 – Smith House passes inspection and receives official approval for occupancy
2002  Florida office property sold
2002  Staff of Gordon, Rick, Jim, Carol Lynne, Pam, and Tresia occupy Smith House
2002  Twenty-four groups went to Honduras this year
2003  Education Team, with help of Honduran government and militia, survey of 15,000 schools
2003  Thirty-seven groups went to Honduras this year
2004  Cindy Penhorwood joins Ohio staff as Health Care Coordinator
2004  Allison Kast works from Phoenix, Arizona as Quest Coordinator
2004  German Pinell begins serving as second-in-command to his adopted father in the San Isidro office
2004  Thirty-four groups went to Honduras this year
2005  Rachel Williams moves to Canchias to serve as counselor and teacher for the SOD for 2 years
2005  Spring – Costa Rica and Nicaragua officially join Brazos Abiertos Honduran church association
2005  Heart to Honduras purchases Lake Yure Property for youth proposed youth camp
2005  Ron Wende of Bolivia begins economic development work for micro-businesses out of Xenia
2006  September 28-30 – 300 partners come to Xenia for HTH Mission and Vision Conference
2006  Fifty-two groups went to Honduras this year
2007  April – Terry Collier and Barry James elected to HTH Board
2007  May - First Annual Stateside Sister Church Seminar held in Xenia
2007  September – First International Extreme Camp held at Lake Yure
2007  Rick Dike resigns as Logistics Coordinator of HTH after 14 years of service
2007  Steve DeLisle joins staff as Sister Church and Ministry Team Coordinator
2007  December -1000 at First International Convention of Brazos Abiertos in Siguatepeque, Honduras
2007  Forty-seven groups went to Honduras this year
2008  First Sister Church Ingathering in Honduras, 175 come from U.S., Costa Rica, Nicaragua, & HN
2008  Hanna Minges (receptionist), Sue Longland (Gordon’s assistant), and Matt Garrett (development) join staff
2008  Sixty-four groups went to Honduras this year
2009  HTH begins a year of celebrations in honor of twenty years of ministry in Honduras
APPENDIX I

Charlie's Cooking Video Sharing His Theology of Food

(The filming of this video took place in the old San Isidro kitchen when the Eastland Church from Lexington, Kentucky was visiting the ministry. Charlie uses two twelve gallon stock pots to cook enough beans to feed one hundred people. He was interviewed by the author in 1993.)

Charlie: “To make a good pot of beans you need several ingredients: olive oil, chopped garlic, bay leaves, bacon drippings, onions, salt, pepper, vinegar, green peppers and red or black beans. Just as the body of Christ has an identity, so does a pot of beans. Each individual ingredient has its own identity that you put into the pot. You blend them together so that they might become one as Jesus prayed, “Father I pray that they might become one even as we are one.”

Now you will notice that as we put the individual parts into the pot, they all lose their identity and become a part of the whole. It is like a gestalt, you know, when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is those parts that are blended together in a unique way that make the difference. That is what happens when you cook and when you pray together.

You will notice that each part is separate but when the parts are separate they do not taste very well. Alone they are not worth very much. But when blended together, it becomes something that is tasty and delectable. Now we are putting some more parts into the whole – bell peppers and spices. But to taste bell pepper alone, it would not taste very good. All the parts need to come together to make a tasty whole. As we stir these spices, they add more flavor. Some in the church add more flavor to the body than others.

Note as I take my knife I am cutting up the parts into smaller pieces so that the flavor can be more radiant, if you will. The lesson here is that to become a part of the body sometimes you have to be pruned or cut. This is how we become disciples. Sometimes it is hard but there in no way to escape becoming a disciple except through discipline.

Now you need to cook the pot of beans real good. Note as I stir the parts, the flavor continues to blend. If I could find them in Honduras, I would use three ham hocks and put them into the pot. Now we will let all these ingredients in the pot cook and blend for a while.

Jim: “If the parts represent the body in stock pot number one, are the beans in pot number two the head as Christ is head of the Church?”

Charlie: “No, I would not use that analogy. The beans are the greater part but they are not the head. Jesus is the head. Now this is going to be a good pot of beans. We are about done. It is so simple to cook. Food is so important not only for our bodies for sustenance but also for the Body of Christ and fellowship. You know we break bread
together. There is something very sacred about thinking about bread and breaking it together and I think it would be very beneficial for the church to think more about breaking bread together, cooking meals and serving food and having fellowship. I think this is important. They did this in the early church and enjoyed fellowship.

As Charlie stirs the beans, he says, “Let’s see how this looks now. It is coming together. Now we are blending real well. It will take about an hour to cook it together. You see God takes out the impurities.

In our meal tonight we got to take time to be together and not just eat and run. The beans are looking great. Now we have to add the salt. If you do not add salt, it will be flat. Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth but if the salt has lost its savor, it is good for nothing...” Just as the beans would be flat without the salt, the world would be flat, dark and evil without the Christian.

Now we add the rest of the juice to the pot of beans and bring the two pots into one pot as they are blend together. Now we will add the rice. They say that rice is the broom of the intestines, especially brown rice. It is looking good. We will let it cook for about thirty more minutes and then let it sit.

Finally, as we come to the end, we need to add some vinegar. It does not take a lot just as it does not take a lot of love to make a difference.

Jim: “Could the vinegar be the Holy Spirit?”

Charlie: “Yes, the vinegar could be the Holy Spirit, the salt could be love, the individual parts could be the believers and the pot of beans could be the church.”
APPENDIX J

Fourteen Reasons When You Know the Church is in Trouble
By Charlie Smith

1. When the name on the building identifies the people of God and not the people who make up the church.

2. When during morning worship the physical appetites of the people cause them to think more of an upcoming restaurant than the righteousness of God being preached.

3. When people think of the church as bricks and mortar, pews and carpet rather than the body of Christ.

4. When the Church seeks political and legal solutions to spiritual problems.

5. When the people make the preacher and his sermon more important than the Word and relationships.

6. When glitz, gold and showmanship replace God, grace and the Savior.

7. When it is difficult if not impossible to tell whether some of the music is sacred or secular.

8. When success is measured by what you have rather than who you are.

9. Where there is more and more preaching with fewer and fewer results.

10. When expensive church buildings are erected and the poor are neglected.

11. When pews, performance and platforms (form) are more important than prayer, people and praise.

12. When grace and love are replaced by rules and law.

13. When Christians spend so lavishly on themselves and care so little about the poor.

14. When the Beauty Queen says, “I thank God for what He has done for me.”
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