



PCCR

PLAIN COMPASSION CRISIS RESPONSE



LOUISIANA, USA

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020

A Season For Everything

*To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

The years we have spent serving with Plain Compassion have truly been the best years of our lives. Yes, some of the hardest years as we struggled through the birth pains of the vision and yet the best years as we learned to serve together as a family and as an organization. We have been tremendously blessed by the times of fellowship with like-minded believers all across the United States, Canada, and other countries. In six years I have had the opportunity to travel overseas multiple times and see firsthand the needs in other countries and the work God is doing there. I have also been blessed by being able to facilitate multiple responses right here in the United States and to see the great need and what God is doing to draw people to Himself even here.

By far the biggest blessing of all has been to work with other believers, both the hundreds of volunteers that gave selflessly of their time, talents, and treasure to go and serve and the thousands who have given and given in order to make this work possible. I have been extremely challenged myself as volunteers have lined up to serve

in some of the most undesirable and dangerous places open to us as Americans and as thousands of supporters have given time and time again in order to make these responses possible.

In the last six years we have moved four times, lived in four different houses and an RV in two different states, and have traveled more than 70,000 miles in an RV! We have traveled extensively to share about the work and have had the pleasure of meeting thousands of wonderful people, some of whom will be friends for life. In all of this, it has been the people we have met that have meant the most to us. People that have served with us in the field and those that have walked with us as encouragers and supporters. Thank you and God bless you!

Now, as this season is being brought to an end, we are excited for what God has in store for us in the future as we continue to seek His will and direction for our lives. Our hope and prayer is that you will also seek God and serve Him with your whole heart and that the vision of Plain Compassion can continue.

Thank you for all you have done for us!
- Mike & Esther Stoltzfus and family

*A man's heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.
Proverbs 16:9*



'Tin Lizzy' our faithful RV that has hauled us up hill and down, from North to South, East coast to West coast, for many, many miles these last six years :)



Humanitarian Aid Report

For the past few months I've had the privilege of working in Rwanaduz and the surrounding villages near the Iran/Iraq border.

During this time I've been able to share the love of Jesus Christ to more than 100 families. Most have been widows and orphans. We have been able to supply each family with enough food for a month, much needed medication for some families and clothes and shoes also. With the winter months approaching we hope to be able to provide some blankets and jackets (the mountain villages can get extremely cold in the winter months)

Also, we will start Sewing classes for the widows in November and hope to start English classes along with a wood shop class for the boys. Our plan is to provide these needy people with some basic skills so they will be able to earn an income.

Your prayers and financial support will make it possible for us to continue sharing the love of Jesus Christ to those in most need. - Phil, program manager



Community Center Report

Things are going well at the community center training program in Zakho. Zakho is located in Northwestern Iraq in the shadows of the mountains of East Turkey. Because of the danger that comes with its close proximity to Turkey this region has been largely ignored by other aid organizations.

Currently we have two English teachers there. Each teacher has three classes per day with fifteen students per class. Classes run Monday through Thursday each week.

We also have two locals volunteering in the center. Both of them are also students and are doing different things around the center; cooking for staff, cleaning, checking temperatures (a COVID safety measure), and visiting with students and parents in their homes. - Tahseen, program manager





Louisiana Report

Hurricane Laura made landfall on Aug. 27 in Cameron Parish, south of Lake Charles, as a Category 4 storm with 150-mile-per-hour winds. More than two dozen people died in its aftermath. Trees were shredded and houses cracked open like eggs. Entire blocks of homes sustained so much damage they will almost certainly have to be razed.

Then, six weeks later, Hurricane Delta hit the coast as a category 2 storm not even 20 miles from where Laura made landfall, unleashing floods that besieged neighborhoods and heavy rainfall that swamped homes with already damaged roofs. It was virtually impossible to discern where the destruction from one storm ended and that of the other began.

Many residents' homes were uninsured, and some said they had deductibles over \$20,000, a sum so unaffordable their insurance policies were rendered useless. (news sources)

Butch & Jackie Leeds, DeQuincy, Louisiana

The awesome works of our almighty God are truly humanly incomprehensible. Here I will attempt to relate one of the most recent appointments God set up for me. It all began September 3 2020. I began the day by traveling around meeting people and making connections for the following weeks of work. Late morning, I decided to head north up



LA-27 toward DeQuincy LA. We had heard reports that the people in DeQuincy weren't getting any help since the news was all focused on Lake Charles.

I arrived in DeQuincy and turned down what I thought was a random street (God had other plans). I drove past a side street and noticed a woman in a skirt standing talking to some guys, I decided maybe she was from a local church mission that could help us find people who desperately needed us... I turned around and headed back, she was gone! God obviously had other plans! I stopped and asked the two men if they knew anyone that needed help with tree removal and didn't have insurance. One of them, Butch, said; "Yes, I have a big one on my house" I pulled up into his yard and got out to look at the tree. It was humongous! I told him I would like to remove it but couldn't promise because the teams had not arrived yet. He began sharing his story about how the hurricane came through the area, pointing to two nice cars of his completely crushed by debris. I asked him If I could pray for him and he said yes, so here I was, on a "random" street in a "random" town walking out part of Gods plan for my life. Why am I so quick to think "random"? I prayed for God to reach down in a special way and touch Butch. I prayed that God would show Butch how much he still cared about him personally. After finishing praying, I got his contact and location and headed on down the road.

The next day I went back with Mike and Noah to remove the tree. No equipment, no crane, only chainsaws and ratchet straps. Mike and Noah set right into removing the tree from the caved-in roof. Branch by branch we lessened the amount of weight resting on the house. I was extremely tense during this process and was worried the tree would shift and make the house worse. At one point when we were really close to dropping it off the house, we stopped to pray. Mike prayed "Lord, please help this tree not to go crazy". God heard our prayer that moment and a minute later, we were able to drop the tree away from the house.

After removing the tree, we put tarps on the roof and got ready to leave. Butch's wife Jackie (who had spent most of the three hours watching from a nearby pavilion), said, "I have no words, and y'all are angels". While I don't claim to be an angel, it was humbling to be able to be used by God to touch a soul so deeply.

Fast-forward to October 12th and I'm back in Louisiana again after hurricane Delta, working in the same area. I said to Mike "Where are we"?

He said "DeQuincy",

I was like, "We should stop and see Butch". We didn't make it over to Butch's house until the next day, but when we arrived, he was so glad to see us.

He exclaimed, "I looked all over town for y'all and couldn't find you!" His tarp had blown off during the second hurricane and I offered to nail it back on for him. Just about that time his wife came out of the house and almost shouted, "Elijah!

Can I give you a hug?" She hugged me quite vigorously and continued to exclaim how happy she was we had come. We then re-tarped the part that had blown off and spent some time talking with Butch. He told us how before we had come the first time he had cried out to God for help and God had shown him in a dream, three fingers of His hand removing the tree from the house. 3 of us were on the team that day. He also told us how his wife had called him and said, "There are some guys here to remove the tree, but I don't see a crane or any equipment". She also said to him, "Are they bonded?" He assured her that yes, "They are bonded by Jesus". He told her to relax and let us do our job! Also, during this conversation, he shared about his growing relationship with God. We prayed with him again before leaving and he promised to bring us some Etouffee (a local Cajun dish). Boy was that incredible! And the next day he brought us gumbo! I am almost brought to tears seeing the work God did for Butch through us. This is what life is all about! - Elijah



Butch shared his testimony with us after we had re-tarped the house roof. He was a brawler and had a reputation for fighting, in fact, he would even fight for money, until God got ahold of him. Today he is a changed man! He has been praying for his wife for years, that she would also be able to trust in God. This incidence, when they were at their wits end with no way forward, was an answer to his prayer. When they had no other option, God came through. Yes, he used feeble men to do it but we all knew that this was a part of God's story, drawing her to Himself by showing her that He cares and that He will take care of us if we will only let Him. Thank you for making this possible! Each one of you, our financial supporters, are just as responsible for this amazing story as we are! God bless you for your support.



Removing the tree, piece by piece.

You can help by giving financially!

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PO Box 356
Honey Brook PA 19344**

Please put 'First Response' in the memo line. Any funds raised above what is used in Louisiana will be set aside to prepare for the next catastrophe. Thank you and God bless you for your support!

You can also visit our website to give online.
www.plaincompassion.org



“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-29

Ahhhh rest! It's the most gracious invitation ever given to mankind. To the sinner laboring under the weight of his sin. Also to the child of God pouring out to the world around him.... rest!

In September we took a week off from our duties here in Arauca and took a three hour road trip to Tame for a much needed retreat. The climate in Tame is cooler, the beautiful Andean mountains reach up to the clouds, the rivers are clearer, and best of all, we were able to get away from the constant requests that fill every day. Compassion fatigue is a very real threat for a team such as ours. We are very grateful for the givers who made that trip possible!

Our time of rest also allowed us to take a hard look at what



we are doing and what adjustments are necessary. Up until the end of August we were doing as much distribution as our team could handle. The need is so great and helping those in crisis is our purpose for being here. It is so hard to hold back when need is staring us in the face. Constant giving requires constant refilling and it was obvious our team was wearing thin from the constant strain! We knew we needed a change of pace. The answer came to us in the form of a phone call. Mike advised me that our funding has been drying up and it has become important to cut back on expenses. My first impulse was to question why. I believe that God will provide for the work he has called us to do. Then it became clear! We have been given the opportunity to shift our focus from distribution to ministry. The team has developed many connections that we have been too busy and too tired to utilize. God has given us the perfect opportunity to shift our focus.

We have begun giving food parcels to specific families who are in need. Along with requests for food come requests for rents. We are only providing for a few of the worst cases we encounter. It is so hard to say no to fellow believers and to hear that they are living in the street because they could not pay.

Medical needs are another constant request which we are helping with. The hospital is open to all, but medicine is not always provided. It is common to hear yet another story of some unfortunate person languishing in the hospital until the medicine can be purchased.

Since returning, we have seen a resurgence of walkers. We are shifting our focus to feeding them. Many of them find their way to our gate and on certain days we take food and water and find them out on the road. Recently Colombian Immigration has begun patrolling the roads and returning the walkers who do not have the proper paperwork. We are told that those who are returned to Venezuela are forcibly detained in camps where the conditions are deplorable! Their only way out is to bribe the guards.

Arauca is a giant revolving door. Beside the desperate leaving Venezuela are the despairing returning to a situation that is worse than when they left! Many Venezuelans continue to live on the border, hoping to receive aid and return to help struggling families back home.

The Gospel message is one of Hope and every day we have many opportunities to hold out the answer to those who are searching. The gospel literature we distribute is eagerly received! We have held worship services in homes in answer to the many requests we have to come and pray for a family member. The Jesus film ministry is possible again, and church attendance is now permissible as long as regulations are followed.

As we move into new fields of ministry we will need to purchase a few more motorcycles and possibly a vehicle. We are also needing a bigger sound system for outdoor events such as showing the Jesus film.

Thank you to all who are sharing financially with the work here! May the Lord reward you and bless you with abundance! Please continue to pray with us as we seek His guidance! He alone knows the duration of our time here and the scope of the ministry he has called us into.

- Conrad, Country Director



Rain clouds gather as we prepare to hand out prepared food (hallacas) to a group of 250 Venezuelans heading back to their home country. These people are coming from all over, many riding hours on buses only to spend a day and a half sleeping in this outdoor arena until Venezuelan authorities give the go ahead to allow them to enter. From what we understand they may be sent to mandatory quarantine for two weeks in terrible conditions before being allowed to return to their homes... The situation in Venezuela has not improved at all, but the severe hardships wherever they fled to have driven them to desperate measures....



A family of Venezuelans in the beginning days of what could be a several month journey on foot... This morning we talked for a bit, and I was able to pray with them that their journey would be successful... It is hard to see these families with so little setting out to find a new life somewhere out there; but to be able to pray with them, and bless them with a little food and water, and see the tears of gratitude... It makes my day easier... -Merle



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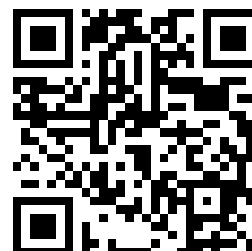
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