

ABSTRACT

Delegates of Love: A Historical Narrative of Mission Waco and Portraits of Humanity

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Cicero deems friendship the greatest gift afforded to humankind; Jewish philosopher Martin Buber claims relationships are fundamental to the essence of living; Jesus presents the Golden Rule, to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, as the greatest commandment. Each of these shares the common characteristic of transformative ministry, a characteristic fundamental to the work of Mission Waco. Through in-depth interviews with Mission Waco leadership, workers, and participants, I seek to uncover the purpose, motives, and legacy of Mission Waco. This thesis then analyzes and presents these findings through an array of different angles, including an in-depth exposé of Mission Waco and a series of profiles of program participants. I conclude that as an avenue of Christian love, Mission Waco may be distinguished not only for its practical and effective approach to fighting poverty and social injustices, but also for its commitment to transformative Christian relation.

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DELEGATES OF LOVE: A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF MISSION WACO AND
PORTRAITS OF HUMANITY

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Great and numerous as are the blessings of friendship, this certainly is the sovereign one, that it gives us bright hopes for the future and forbids weakness and despair. In the face of a true friend, a man sees as it were a second self. So that where his friend is he is; if his friend is rich, he is not poor; though he be weak, his friend’s strength is his; and in his friend’s life he enjoys a second life after his own is finished.”¹

In his discourse *On Friendship*, Cicero speaks high praise for the topic. Friendship is a subject, he claims, which seems worthy of investigation. Gaius Laelius, the primary speaker in the book, regards friendship “as the greatest thing in the world”² and a gift from the gods which cannot be surpassed. Laelius values friendship so highly that he does not consider life to be worth living without the “mutual good-will of a friend.”³ In fact, society itself, he claims, could not survive without the ties of friendships.

Few would disagree with Laelius about the pleasures that accompany friendship. However, he goes on to assert a principle that may not draw such strong agreement: “*friendship can only exist between good men.*”⁴ Laelius maintains what he believes to be a loose definition for the term good: “*those whose actions and lives leave no questions as*

¹ Cicero, *On Friendship*, 7

² Cicero, 5

³ Cicero, 6

⁴ Cicero, 5

to their honor, purity, equity, and liberality; who are free from greed, lust, and violence; and who have the courage of their convictions.”⁵ This definition leaves many unaccounted for, like drug addicts and ex-convicts, those societal blemishes who communities would likely prefer to ignore or brush aside to someone else. Unfortunately, Laelius’ definition also eliminates from the possibility of friendships those of us who are yet free from greed or lust, and those for whom questions of honor or purity remain.

Where then does this great gift of friendship exist in society? Is, as Laelius claims, friendship reserved strictly for the most virtuous, or might Laelius have erred in his assertion? Can friendship exist among those of us who do not fit Laelius’ “loose” definition of a good human, and if so, what does such a friendship look like?

In the heart of Waco, Texas, Jimmy Dorrell and his wife live in the middle of one of the city’s “rough” neighborhoods. Not far from Dorrell, a renovated shopping center houses the offices of a local outreach ministry, Mission Waco, of which Dorrell is both founder and director. In fact, most of the organization’s facilities reside in the city’s rougher areas, just as a number of Mission Waco volunteers and staff members maintain residences in these neighborhoods. The organization, its leader, and its workers do not only intentionally live among a population who would almost certainly fail to meet Laelius’ standards for good humans; Mission Waco and its members actively seek to establish relationships with these people. Furthermore, it would appear that, contrary to Laelius’ assertion, those involved in Mission Waco are successfully building and maintaining true friendships, ripe with the very same blessings noted by Laelius.

It is a wonder that Laelius so easily dismisses an array of relationships that Mission Waco so deeply pursues, especially considering Laelius’ brief discussion of the

⁵ Cicero, 5

etymology of the word, “friendship.” “The Latin word for friendship—*amicitia*—is derived from that for love—*amor*, and love is certainly the prime mover in contracting mutual affection.”⁶ Familiarity with the operations of Mission Waco, as will be discussed in the chapters that follow, reveals that love is indeed the prime mover in the relationships formed among those involved with Mission Waco. How does Mission Waco derive from love friendships that Laelius deems impossible? With this question in mind, we move to explore Mission Waco.

Models

At the core of the program lies a distinct belief by which Mission Waco and its entire staff operate: the hard to love—the poor, the addicts, the disabled, and the criminals—are not projects to be fixed. Rather, Mission Waco recognizes the people with whom it interacts as distinct and individual members of humanity, with distinct stories, values, beliefs, and ways of life. And yet, despite those things that distinguish each person from the rest, there remains some piece of human connection tying us all together. The recognition of this simultaneous individuality and connectedness of humankind runs as a common thread among all my models.

I and Thou

Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, in his book *I and Thou*, explores the ways in which humans relate to and interact with the world. He first distinguishes between two primary words, I-Thou and I-It, each of which denotes certain kinds of relationships between man and the world. The I-It relationship involves experiences as they are perceived, felt, and thought about. Experience takes place within a man and within a

⁶ Cicero, 8

context of space and time. I-Thou, on the other hand, is a transformational encounter in which a man takes a stand in mutual relation with nature, other man, or intelligible forms. Buber proceeds to concentrate the majority of the remainder of his book on the I-Thou relationships among men.

I-Thou relationships: defining love. Buber's exploration of the I-Thou relation reveals that relationships are a mutual act of "being chosen and choosing"⁷ and that they are entered into only with the whole being. I-Thou encounters are also fully present in that they exist only in the presentness of the actual meeting; as soon as an encounter ends and a person begins to think about it, the Thou necessarily passes to an It, an experience had. Buber will go on to suggest that this inevitable passage of present encounters to past experiences leaves man with an unfulfilled desire which eventually turns him to God.

Because of the nature of an I-Thou encounter, in which both parties choose to enter with their whole being, these encounters always affect both parties involved. All relation is mutual; direct relation is transformational. We can learn something even through encounters with the "bad" man.⁸ The nature of these relationships also does not allow for hatred, which is by nature blind. Buber argues that "only part of a being can be hated"⁹ and because I-Thou relations involve an encounter with a *whole* being, there is room only for love.

Buber moves on to distinguish between feelings and love. Feelings are entertained for a time, can accompany but not constitute love, dwell in man, and are fleeting and

⁷ Buber, 11

⁸ Buber, 16

⁹ Ibid.

changeable. Love, on the other hand, comes to pass permanently, exists between an I and his Thou, and man dwells in love rather than love in him. Furthermore, love frees people to become their own unique realities. “In the eyes of him who takes his stand in love, and gazes out of it, men are cut free from their entanglement in bustling activity. Good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly, become successively real to him; that is, set free, they step forth in their singleness.”¹⁰ Buber also defines love as the responsibility of an I for its Thou.

While clearly as big a proponent of relationships as Laelius, Buber ends the first section of his book with an assertion that moves past Laelius’ grand praise of friendship. According to Buber, man by nature cannot live solely in the present of I-Thou relations; therefore, he cannot live without It—that is to say he cannot live without experiences. But, Buber warns, “he who lives with It alone is not a man.”¹¹ To Buber, relationships make up the very essence of humanity.

Detriments of experience. In the second portion of his book, Buber explains that society is steadily moving towards a world of experiencing. As the extent of this It world grows, so must man’s ability to experience. Unfortunately, cultivating our It functions results in a decreased ability to enter into relation. While the development of the It world is a natural progression, it will ultimately leave man unfulfilled and, unless we are cautious, unable to enter into the relationships which bring fulfillment to life.

Buber eventually moves on to an analysis of the two different poles of humanity encompassed in every man: the I of I-It and the I of I-Thou, respectively referred to as a

¹⁰ Buber, 15

¹¹ Buber, 24

man's individuality and his person. The I of I-It possesses a defined consciousness of self as a subject of experience and differentiates himself from others through defining his own distinct experiences.

Contrary to individuality, which aims at differentiating itself from other individualities, the person—the I of the I-Thou—“makes his appearance by entering into relation with other persons.”¹² This I exists for the purpose of being in relation with others, and is made real by virtue of its sharing in the reality of relation. The person is conscious of itself merely as being; it does not need to define its existence in relation to any thing or experience. In a twofold manner, every man is composed of both individuality and person; but the more a man is mastered by his individuality, the less he shares in reality.

Encountering the eternal Thou. Buber asserts that every relation into which man enters is a glimpse of his relationship with the eternal Thou; each time we address a Thou, we also address the eternal Thou. As was mentioned before, the fleeting nature of encounters stirs in man a desire for a lasting encounter, and ultimately points us toward God. Upon encountering God, man's view of the world is altered, “for to step into pure relation is...to see everything in the Thou, not to renounce the world but to establish it on its true basis.”¹³ Man sees nothing outside of God, and everything in Him.

In the transformative nature that accompanies all direct relation, man is also transformed by his encounter with God. His encounter has drawn him closer to the world

¹² Buber, 62

¹³ Buber, 79

which, “lit by eternity, becomes fully present to him”¹⁴. The encounter ignites in man a genuine love for his fellow humans, and he is able to serve others out of desire rather than a sense of duty or obligation. However, he is not free from responsibility; in fact, his responsibility now consists of love for the entire world, aided by the abolishment of moral judgments. No longer may he shy from those who are difficult to love, because now even “the ‘evil’ man is simply one who is commended to him for greater responsibility, one more needy of love.”¹⁵

Lastly, Buber explains that an encounter with God provides us with an inexpressible confirmation of meaning and purpose in *this* life and in *this* world. Buber does not believe that man’s purpose is to concern himself only with God; this, he argues, will undoubtedly restrict our relation to God to the It world. Instead, in order to maintain a present relationship with God, Buber urges fellow man to go forth into the world, and “he who goes on a mission has always God before him”.¹⁶

Because our relation with the eternal Thou oscillates between an I-It and an I-Thou relation, humans desire a continuous possession of God in space and time. The only way to accomplish this is to involve divine encounters in every day life as well as through the formation of a community in which all are connected by a common relation with the eternal Thou. Here Buber paints a picture in which lines of relation extend from every human towards the center of a circle, whereupon the lines meet in the eternal Thou.

Using Buber’s treatment of relationships as a lens, I plan to carefully examine Mission Waco as well as its emphasis on the development of relationships.

¹⁴ Buber, 108

¹⁵ Buber, 109

¹⁶ Buber, 116

Love Does

Lawyer and author Bob Goff presents a similar portrait of relationships in a modern setting, treating love not as a philosophical discussion but rather as an action to be implemented. In his book, *Love Does*, Goff himself recognizes his lack of professional qualifications when it comes to writing or philosophizing. His only claim to being an expert in this field comes from his experiences gained as a result of living out his beliefs. Through this book, Goff shares a series of stories that all reflect the lesson perfectly summarized by the book's title: love does. The testimonies included in the book all attest to the power of active love.

Goff, like Buber, distinguishes love as more than just a feeling; love, rooted in God, takes action. God calls each person, as broken and flawed as they may be, to be a delivery vehicle for relentless, unflinching love. The best way to share God is to love others, and Goff argues this is done most effectively not when we view people as projects in need of fixing up, but instead when we join them and walk beside them as friends.¹⁷ Loving well means being present and taking action when we see a need.

Laelius' offers an arguably pessimistic view of relationships that fails to allow for the existence of friendships between anyone except the most virtuous. Modern society tends to emphasize an overly romanticized picture of love that includes soul mates and happily-ever-afters. Contrary to both these views, Buber and Goff offer complimentary understandings of relationships and love that challenge both modern and ancient views. Through an in-depth investigation and analysis of the organization, I argue that Mission

¹⁷ Goff, Bob. *Love Does* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 7.

Waco will reflect both the formative relationships found in Buber's ideology as well as Goff's consideration and implementation of active love.

Humans of New York

Photographer Brandon Stanton's *Humans of New York* (HONY) project lacks the philosophical or faith-based convictions of the previous two models. Yet this model approaches humanity and human interaction in much the same way as Buber and Goff.

In 2010, Stanton embarked on a tour of major cities around the United States in pursuit of a newly realized passion for photography. By his second city, he noticed a shift in the subjects of his photos. While he started out shooting everything that caught his eye, he more and more began to concentrate on portraits of the people he came across while exploring the cities. When Stanton arrived in New York City towards the end of summer 2010, he intended to stay no longer than a week. Within months, however, Stanton had returned home to pack up his belongings and move permanently to the city.¹⁸ Stanton now resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Originally, Stanton had no intention of starting a blog. After deciding to bunker down in New York, he planned to create a photographic census of the city, titled *Humans of New York*, by plotting thousands of portraits on an interactive map of New York's boroughs. Aided by the power and influence of social media, HONY over time developed into an online collection of portraits of thousands of New Yorkers.

Accompanying each portrait is a caption. In the blog's early days, the captions often consisted of one or two lines of commentary from Stanton himself, or a brief exchange between the photographer and his subject. Over time, the subject's own words

¹⁸ Stanton, Brandon, *Humans of New York* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), "Introduction."

began to accompany each portrait, often in the form of responses to questions asked by Stanton. Most recently, captions have expanded from several sentences to entire paragraphs or longer, and sometimes have been so lengthy as to be split up over a series of portraits of the person.

In order to consistently produce the vast quantity of work now expected of him by his myriad fans, Stanton spends most days wandering around the city, stopping six or seven people a day at random to photograph and interview¹⁹ In an email, Stanton's editor, Brian DeFiore, confirmed Stanton's use of complete random selection.²⁰ A quick scroll through the hundreds of portraits featured on the blog reveals a diverse representation of humanity—Stanton concentrates neither on the most outrageously dressed, nor the best looking, nor the least interesting people he comes across. Instead, his project includes all of the above and every age, demographic and style in between.

Often, Stanton gets strangers to open up about personal aspects of their lives; creating a safe, intimate atmosphere is the first step to accomplishing such honesty. After thousands of interactions with strangers, Stanton has reached the conclusion that the most important aspect of making people feel comfortable has nothing to do with the way he asks his questions, but rather the energy with which he approaches. If strangers sense nervousness on his part, they are more likely to clam up because they respond to his apprehension with their own.

When asking questions, Stanton starts broad and then circles around emotions in order to find an interesting story. He often starts with open-ended questions like, "What is your greatest struggle right now?" or "What one piece of advice would you give to

¹⁹ "Brandon Stanton: The Good Story" YouTube video

²⁰ Brian DeFiore, email to publisher, October 15, 2015

someone?” If an individual provides a vague answer, Stanton then asks them to talk about an experience specifically related to their response.²¹ For example, if someone offers the advice, “take more risks,” Stanton might counter with, “When was a time you regret not taking a risk?” Stanton then includes pieces of these stories alongside the portraits he posts on social media. According to DeFiore, Stanton takes notes on his iPhone in order to remember the details of each interaction.²²

What initially drew my interest to HONY was the project’s tremendous reach and the popularity it gained in such a relatively short time. Stanton’s HONY Facebook page received half a million fans in just over a year of existence.²³ Today, the page has over 17.4 million likes, with every individual post receiving hundreds of thousands of likes and shares. Stanton credits social media, specifically Facebook and Tumblr, as major players in HONY’s success.²⁴ However, humans are the driving force behind social media. What exactly set HONY apart from countless other similar photo projects that exist on social media? Why did HONY see success that few other grass-roots projects can rival?

Perhaps what attracts such a large following is the randomness and candidness of the HONY portraits and stories. While the news typically depicts the most extreme—the most heart-wrenching, the most violent, the most sexualized—stories in our world, Stanton takes a far different approach to story-telling. The HONY portraits touch on stories that resonate deeply with the human race. Some of the stories featured in HONY

²¹ “On How I Approach Strangers in the Street” YouTube video

²² email to the publisher, October 13, 2015

²³ Stanton, “Introduction”

²⁴ Ibid.

still do reflect those found in newspapers, but many others include humorous, inspirational, or just “average” stories. Behind every portrait lies what makes each story so relatable: a human being. A young sister with her arms around her baby brother brings a smile to any face; every heart mourns for the newly widowed woman sitting alone on a park bench; and comments of encouragement follow a picture of an elderly gentleman determined to finally earn his college degree.

Stanton recognizes in each human he photographs something that elevates them above merely another portrait; through HONY, he gives voice to the unique stories of his subjects. The combination of portraits and their accompanying captions tug at the ties connecting all humanity. Stanton’s approach to story telling and his method for creating candid and relaxed atmospheres will serve as a model off which I intend to base the latter half of this thesis.

What I Keep

In a photographic project that shares many similarities with Stanton’s *Humans of New York*, Susan Mullally’s *What I Keep* challenges a materialistic society to reevaluate the concept of value. Mullally photographed dozens of Waco’s Church Under the Bridge attendees holding a single item to which they ascribed much value. In the printed book that resulted from the project, Mullally arranges a portrait accompanied by the subject’s explanation of their valued object. In most cases, few besides the photograph’s subject would consider the object-in-hand significant, like a locket with a picture or a high school diploma. However, to the subjects of the portraits, often individuals with little else to their name, these objects hold immeasurable value. The simplicity of this project, both in

subject and presentation, produces a touching and lasting impression, one which, like Stanton's HONY, tugs on the strings of human connection.

Above all, this book caused me to consider Mission Waco as the subject of my project. Similar to the array of people portrayed by *What I Keep*, Mission Waco encompasses a community of people who come from a variety of different, and often difficult, backgrounds. This diversity offers a perfect platform for the exploration of relationship building that stretches past Laelius' limited views.

Purpose

Just as Martin Buber and Bob Goff believe that love surpasses human feeling and moves one to action, Jesus also commands love as an action.²⁵ In fact, he declares "love" as the greatest commandment and calls us to love all, friends and enemies alike. Such a charge is indeed worthy of investigation. The purpose of this thesis is to explore what this sort of love looks like and how might we live in obedience to this command.

The original intent of this project was to produce a photo-journal that closely resembled *Humans of New York*, but limited to Mission Waco participants rather than an entire city. However, as my understanding of the organization developed, this seemed an insufficient method of portraying Mission Waco and its impact on individual lives. Instead, the project has developed into an analytical and expositional representation of the program.

My primary goal is to examine Mission Waco from a number of different vantage points in order to determine the underlying motives of the program. By the end of the project, I hope to have gained a deep understanding of the organization and how and why

²⁵ Mt. 22:36-40

it operates in the way it does. This understanding will allow me to then convey my findings in a manner that is effective and accurate.

Through this investigation, I intend also to explore my own thoughts about God, particularly in light of my relationship to Him and my relationship to those around me. I hope that the examination of Mission Waco will challenge me to figure out my own contributions to the members of society in whom I am not at present deeply invested.

In order to accomplish these goals, I endeavor to create a two-fold project that explores the motives of Mission Waco through various vantage points. The first part will comprise a detailed history and present profile of Mission Waco as the program is seen and understood by its own workers. In the second portion of the project, a series of first-person profiles of Mission Waco participants will provide various other camera angles through which to view Mission Waco.

With these goals in mind, I propose that love rooted in God opens doors for the development of transformational relationships; furthermore, I propose that, as an avenue of Christian love, Mission Waco may be distinguished not only for its practical and effective approach to fighting poverty and social injustices, but also for its commitment to Christian relation.

The purpose of the project is not to be a pat on the back for the organization's success throughout Waco. Instead, I hope to shed light on the grand impact that accompanies the intentional development of relationships. Through the inclusion of profiles, I also hope, like my models, to draw on ties that bond all humans and in doing so help close the seemingly daunting gap that separates the impoverished from the rest of society. Lastly, this project will offer Mission Waco a tangible compilation of their

meaningful impact on the lives of so many. As stated before, the project is not designed with the intention of being self-congratulatory to Mission Waco; however, the program has undoubtedly impacted the lives of many, and this project will be a concrete testimony to its efforts.

Methodology

The Mission Waco website currently provides a detailed history of the program's development, including the inception and transformation of each affiliate program. However, this history, while nonetheless an important account of Mission Waco, almost entirely focuses on the development of Mission Waco's various programs. Through a series of interviews conducted with key Mission Waco associates, I intend to create an historic narrative comprised of a comprehensive account of the founding principles and intentions of Mission Waco, a detailed explanation of how those guiding principles are put into practice, and a series of profiles that introduces in an intimate manner some of the people whom Mission Waco has impacted.

Written Narrative

The first portion of this project will include the first two aforementioned components of the narrative. I will interview Mission Waco's founder, Jimmy Dorrell, alongside several other key members of the program who have witnessed the program since its inception or who have invested a large amount of time towards its implementation. Others to be interviewed include Kathy Wise, associate director of Mission Waco; Carlton Willis, program director; McKenzie Miller, director of the Children's Program; and Tricia Mankin, a long-time program volunteer. By interviewing

people involved with various aspects of the organization, I intend to draw a reliable and accurate presentation of Mission Waco.

Each interview was conducted in person and recorded and transcribed with the permission of the interviewee. Questions related to the founding of Mission Waco, the mission of the program, and its current operations.²⁶ The purpose of these questions was to provide a deeper understanding of underlying motives and what—resources, values, attitudes, etc.—goes into running Mission Waco. Face-to-face interviews allow for follow-up and clarifying questions when necessary, as well as more candidness than is possible through other forms of interviews, like email or phone interviews.

First-Person Profiles

The profiles included in the second portion will serve two purposes. As a whole, the collection of profiles will encompass a testimony of Mission Waco's impact upon its participants. More than that, though, each story is composed with the intent of introducing the reader to a small sample of the diverse population with whom Mission Waco interacts.

Each first-person profile was written based on personal interviews conducted with each participant. Unlike how interviews for the previous section were conducted, I approached these interviews with only two or three broad questions in mind. Interviews began with the request for a brief description of the participant's background and how they ended up with Mission Waco. Depending on the information provided, I proceeded to ask a broad, emotion-related question like those asked by Stanton. The next question was typically either, "If you could relieve one day of your life, which would you

²⁶ See Appendix G for a list of interview questions

choose?” or “What is the greatest lesson you’ve learned?” From there, follow-up questions were asked as I saw fit to provide clarification or more in-depth details, depending on where there was potential for a story.

I relied on the recommendations of Mission Waco’s leadership for specific participants to interview or places where I might approach participants in a more random manner. The randomness involved in HONY is a component which makes it obvious that everyone has a story to tell. While I would have liked to maintain a similar approach to my interviews, I also recognized that the Mission Waco programs have certain rules. In order to respect the organization and its participants, interviews were not conducted in the same completely random nature as HONY.

I have chosen first-person profiles as my method for relaying these conversations in order to provide intimate, accurate profiles of the subjects. I hope that by reading each story in the first person, the reader will feel a closer connection to the narrator. This method does not allow for the provision of background information or clarification other than what is directly provided by the interviewee. However, this actually allows the reader to gain a better understanding of the subject; what a person says or doesn’t say, and the way in which they say something can speak a lot about them.

In considering the various methods, I have decided to leave each story anonymous. Any names mentioned during interviews have been changed in the stories and the profiles provide no information regarding each person except for what they say of themselves. This decision of anonymity was made for a couple of reasons, the first of which is the protection of the identities of those in the profiles. Many of the profiles deal with drugs, crimes, and other sensitive topics, and I in no way wish any judgment or

retribution to fall on those who were willing to come forth and share their often difficult stories. Anonymity also serves a secondary purpose of leveling the playing field. The goal is that each profile will resonate with all humans. By maintaining anonymity, I hope to eliminate any presuppositions and prejudices.

Through the research and interviews involved in this project, I have compiled an accurate, multifaceted and complete profile of Mission Waco that reveals the program's motives, purposes, and legacy.

CHAPTER TWO

The History of Mission Waco

Growing up in the 1960's meant growing up in a divided and racially charged era. For this reason, when young youth director Jimmy Dorrell accepted an invitation to visit the church of an African American pastor in an area of Waco known as “No Man’s Land”—an incredibly impoverished sliver of town that neither Waco nor Bellmead wanted to claim as its own—he took a big step outside his social comfort zone. What he witnessed during that short visit, “the ugly side of poverty,”²⁷ planted in Dorrell’s heart a seed that would eventually grow into what is today a non-profit organization with around 60 full-time and part-time staff members, 19,000 volunteer hours in 2014,²⁸ and more than 30 different programs, all aimed at empowering the poor and marginalized through shelters, job-training, youth groups, and other social services.

Jimmy Dorrell became a youth director at the age of 19 while he was a student at Baylor University, and it was at this age that he encountered the devastating poverty of No Man’s Land. He recalls visiting one blind man who lived in a house crawling with rats and roaches, a tree growing straight through his front porch. In the next few years, Dorrell received a position at the state home, where he worked daily “with broken kids from all kinds of abuse and neglect.”²⁹ This experience and the lingering memory of the overwhelming poverty he encountered at 19 began to reshape Dorrell’s sense of purpose.

²⁷ Appendix A, I

²⁸ History of Mission Waco, online.

²⁹ Appendix A, I

After graduating from seminary in 1978, Dorrell and his wife Janet purchased a home in a poverty-stricken North Waco neighborhood, where they began to realize their sense of calling by living among the poor and sharing the Word of God in the relationships they developed with those around them. After a few years, the Dorrells left Waco to work in Houston, during which time they participated in an exposure trip around the world. This trip brought to their attention the deep pain of the world's poverty and broke their hearts for the poor. Upon their return, Jimmy and Janet asked themselves a question, the answer to which would ultimately lead them to Mission Waco: "What are we going to do with our lives?" With the need they had previously found in Waco's poverty and the connections they had made during their earlier years in the city, the Dorrells decided, "it was just right to come back [to Waco] and at that point, we dove into it."³⁰

Initially, the Dorrells established an informal ministry in their community, ministering to their neighbors by building relationships and opening up their house to those in need; starting an after-school kids' club and later a teen club; and initiating a Bible study under an Interstate-35 bridge. They also began to lead poverty simulations and out-of-country exposure trips, with the hope that these experiences would allow local students to better understand and have a heart for the poor.

In 1992, founders of Christian Mission Concerns elected to fund a start-up program called "Mission Waco" and handpicked Jimmy and Janet as the program's leaders. Rather than operate Mission Waco by means of a strategic plan, to this day, the Dorrells and the program's Board of Directors approach the ministry from what Dorrell calls a "bottom-up" approach. They look to the surrounding neighborhood and

³⁰ Ibid.

community to guide the program; where they see a need, they ask how they can meet it. Through this manner of operation, Mission Waco has developed over time to become the entity it is today, with over 30 different programs, events, and services aimed at serving the poor and marginalized, adults, teens, and children alike.

What started in 1992 as a Mission Waco Bible study for five homeless men who spent their nights under the Interstate 35 bridge quickly expanded into a fully functioning church, which to this day continues to meet weekly under the same bridge. Although Church Under the Bridge eventually separated from the non-profit to become its own institution, Mission Waco still hosts Friday Morning Breakfast for the homeless portion of the congregation. They have continued this tradition since 1993.

In 1994, Mission Waco acquired an old bar and abandoned shopping center that was gutted, renovated, and developed into Jubilee Center. Upon completion, the facilities housed a variety of empowerment programs for the community (including a computer lab, job training, and G.E.D. classes), a theater, and a climbing wall and eventually, Mission Waco's main offices. Around the same time, they renovated an adjacent building into a center for children's and youth programs. A generous donation in 2002 allowed Mission Waco's children's program to move into its own building, called The ROCK.

Mission Waco established Manna House in 1995 as an alcohol and drug recovery home for low-income persons who could not afford other treatment programs. Soon after, they completed The Lighthouse, a transition house for graduates of the recovery program. A local Christian foundation donated an 18-unit apartment complex to Mission Waco in 1997, which Mission Waco turned into the ARK Apartments, a program-based living

center that offers spiritual mentoring to Christians of mixed income. In 2004, Mission Waco decided to establish a chronic homeless shelter, My Brother's Keeper.

The next year, Mission Waco opened the Meyer Center for Urban Ministries, which provides assistance and social services as well as showers, laundry facilities, and clothing and shelter vouchers to the community's poor and marginalized. Meyer Center also now houses the M-Powerment program that offers a number of job-readiness and job search classes. Also during 2005, the Mission Waco Health Clinic began operating out of the same building two nights a week. Doctors, nurses, dentists, and other medical professionals volunteer their time to serve the poor by providing quality healthcare care. Mental health services were added to the Meyer Center in 2011.

In 2006, the World Cup Café opened at the end of the Jubilee Center. Restaurant visitors can also purchase gift items at the attached Fair Trade Market. Around the same time, Mission Waco restructured its youth programs as high-risk youth and at-risk youth programs and remodeled the youth center to include games, computers, a library, weights and even a recording studio.

Over the past ten years, Mission Waco has constantly revised and improved various buildings and programs, including their School Supply Store and Christmas Store, the youth job-training program, and the ARK Apartments. With 2015 came the purchases of a food truck and an old Safeway grocery building. Urban Edibles, the renovated food truck, is open almost daily for lunch and also operates as part of the youth job-training program. Mission Waco is currently in the process of remodeling the grocery building with plans to open up Jubilee Food Market as a store that will provide fresh food and affordable groceries to the neighborhood.

Still more expansive than everything described above, Mission Waco over the years has grown to also include annual fundraisers in the form of races, banquets, and tournaments; the establishment of a number of memorial funds, scholarships, and other non-profit organizations; and world-wide outreach, reflected by the ministry's official name change in 2012 to Mission Waco, Mission World, Inc.³¹ Despite its tremendous growth, at the heart of each program lies Mission Waco's commitment to certain values that will be discussed below.

A Living Ministry

As with any organization, the business side of Mission Waco is critical to its operations. While their “bottom up” approach to program management means they derive their action plan specifically from the needs of the community around them, Mission Waco does recognize the necessity of a formal business-like structure. They have a 20-person board of directors, clear guidelines and byelaws, and financial requirements, all of which have allowed the program to mature since its inception. Being a Christian organization, Dorrell feels especially committed to financial integrity and transparency about the program's identity and mission—past tax forms and audit reports are available on its website. Needless to say, Mission Waco does well on the business side. While the bottom up mindset dictates the direction of the programs, the “macro things” like budgets and byelaws build, mature, and sustain them.³²

Numbers can provide significant insight about Mission Waco's reach and impact: how many volunteers and volunteer hours the program sees each year, the success rates

³¹ All of the information regarding the history of specific Mission Waco programs was drawn for the ministry's website.

³² Appendix A, 5

of those who've passed through Brother's Keeper, the number of people who have attended poverty simulations, or job placement success rates, to name a few. With that said, Travis Cheatham, executive assistant, admits the tension often encountered when reviewing figures, particularly as they relate to number of participants. On one hand, the organization rejoices at serving so many people; on the other, significant numbers only point to an even more significant number of locals living in heartbreaking poverty. For this reason, though a thorough numerical report *can* certainly speak to Mission Waco's story and success, the ministry is not necessarily one that *should* be quantified.

Seen as the fundamental heart of the operation, Mission Waco's three-pronged mission statement provides perhaps the most effective manner by which to profile the organization. Mission Waco seeks to: "provide Christian-based, holistic, relationship-based programs that empower the poor and marginalized; mobilize middle-class Americans to become more compassionately involved among the poor, and; seek ways to overcome the systemic issues of social injustice which oppress the poor and marginalized." These goals and their implementations within the various programs provide a far more telling and compelling portrait of the organization than do figures and statistical facts.

Christian-based

Fundamental to the development and sustenance of Mission Waco is Christianity. For nearly all, if not all, aspects of the organization, Jimmy looks to models found in the Bible, in which God makes his concern for the poor evident. Jimmy adopts God's view of the poor—that they are both worthy of dignity and excellent teachers. He

specifically draws from the passage in Luke 21 in which Jesus points to the sacrifice of a poor woman giving her last mite to God as an example of generosity.³³ Mission Waco also takes as an example the way Jesus related to people. Christ was often in the company of society's outcasts, "stopping at the water well for the woman with five husbands, eating with tax collectors, touching the lepers."³⁴ In much the same way, members of Mission Waco delight in opportunities to live among, befriend, and support Waco's blemishes; they are eager to take in those whom no one else wishes to claim as their own.

Church Under the Bridge is perhaps Dorrell's most well-known example of his commitment to living out God's word. Though legally now a separate entity entirely, Church Under the Bridge (CUB) sprouted from an outreach Bible study initiated by Mission Waco in the early 90s. Today, the church holds a service every Sunday, rain or shine, under an I-35 overpass. At first, the congregation seems entirely unfit to be attending a traditional church service. Most of the congregation dresses in dirty t-shirts; men and women lining the perimeters swap cigarettes; children run around while Dorrell gives his sermon, two of which decide to sprawl out on the stage. It is a congregation that, in the confines of any other church building, would likely receive countless disapproving looks, if they were permitted to stay at all. And yet, these are the very people to whom, the New Testament reveals, Christ reaches out so often. This church is rich in members not at all dissimilar to those with whom Christ himself lived and served and, indeed, spent much of his time.

The minute Dorrell steps out of his car at CUB, children swarm him from all directions, throwing arms around him and catching him up on their week—a scene of

³³ Appendix A, 3

³⁴ Appendix A, 4

pure Christian love from all involved. When Dorrell does finally untangle himself from the swarm of adoring children, he makes his rounds, greeting everyone by name and with a hug. Dorrell's interactions send one message loud and clear: all are welcomed here. This is the attitude embodied by Mission Waco.

This authenticity of faith displayed by Mission Waco's leaders very often draws volunteers and employees to the organization. Travis Cheatham first encountered CUB during his time at Baylor. He now serves as the executive assistant of Mission Waco, attracted by the avenue provided by the organization and the church to live out his faith practically³⁵ and be directly involved with the homeless community. Similarly, former volunteer and board member Tricia Mankin saw Mission Waco as an opportunity to act out God's commands to love and serve others.

"We don't go in to fix people"

Mission Waco's Christian identity is relevant in the ministry's commitment to empowerment. The empowerment model separates Mission Waco from other similar relief organizations; most people involved with the ministry identify empowerment not only as one of the program's distinguishing factors, but more importantly as one of the primary purposes of the organization. It follows that in order to better understand the operations of Mission Waco, it is necessary to understand how the organization defines empowerment. Naturally, the definition varied person to person, but underlying every answer laid a semblance of this: to empower is to recognize, value, and cultivate the

³⁵ Appendix D, 2

individual core of humanity that exists in each person.³⁶ When implemented, this idea takes a couple forms.

By empowering the poor and marginalized, Mission Waco intends to equip its participants with the necessary tools that will allow them to more fully function as members of society. The goal, according to Tricia Mankin, “is not just to hand out to people...but to come along side people in a relationship and encourage and help them in ways that are long-lasting, not just for the moment.”³⁷ Empowerment does not focus exclusively on meeting the immediate need: giving food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, clothes to the needy—that’s charity.

More than just addressing the immediate need (though that does play a role), empowerment asks, “What do you need and *how do we get you there?*” Since the inception of the Mission Waco, Dorrell approaches situations with the attitude of: “Let’s look at the root causes, let’s get to know you, and then if you’re *here* and you want to be *there*, what are the things in your life that need to happen to get you there?”³⁸ What does it take to help a homeless prostitute get off the streets and into a stable life? How might the man with a criminal record but no birth certificate find a job? People come to Mission Waco hungry and homeless because they are not able to support themselves. Unlike many relief organizations and soup kitchens, Mission Waco does not stop at, “Here’s some food”; instead, it says, “Now that you’re fed, let’s figure out how we can get you

³⁶ This definition is drawn from the various interviews conducted. However, Zippay’s article provides a definition of empowerment which would support the one found here.

³⁷ Appendix C, 8

³⁸ Appendix A, 10

back on your feet.” After they address the immediate need, they look to empower by helping the participant determine and then take the next step.

Dorrell pushes the idea of empowerment past the practical aspects, the societal skills.³⁹ He believes empowerment is not just “a matter of going to help those poor people and get them to follow Jesus. It’s about, how do we get her to be all that God created her to be?”⁴⁰ In this manner, Mission Waco recognizes that God created each human with special gifts; the ministry helps participants first to uncover their unique gift. In order to celebrate these gifts, members of the organization then help participants learn how to use them.

The role of their empowerment model is clearly valued by all involved in the organization. In practice, Mission Waco offers a number of empowerment-based services: job training, job coaching, job placement, counseling opportunities, money management, leadership skills development...the list goes on. However, these resources are not merely helpful, optional services available to those interested. In most cases, Mission Waco actually requires participation in at least one these services.

Take My Brother’s Keeper, Mission Waco’s chronic homeless shelter. Jimmy Dorrell and Carlton Willis, Mission Waco’s program director, thought carefully about how to operate the shelter in a way that held true to their mission. Brother’s Keeper opened as a free shelter, but Willis soon realized this conflicted with the organization’s empowerment model. After learning that other shelters charged their residents “big money”—20 to 30 dollars a night—Willis and Dorrell agreed on a more constructive

³⁹ Dorrell’s approach exceeds even an attitudinal change, cited by Zippay as a common aim of empowerment.

⁴⁰ Appendix A, 6

plan, “as to not only give them integrity but also give them an opportunity to be able to get their own place.”⁴¹ The establishment now operates in the following manner:

“[Participants] get [their first] three nights free. The next 30 days would be \$2 a night for 30 days, and beyond that, the next 30 days would go up to \$5 a night. So that’s a total of 63 days, which we felt was a comfortable amount of time for them to be able to save money, get on their feet, and be able to move into their own place.

“To take it a step further, we implemented it into our empowerment model where...if you’re going to stay at the shelter, you have to be a part of a program at Mission Waco that’s [going to] help you get back on your feet.”⁴²

The staff of Brother’s Keeper never forces anyone to participate in Mission Waco’s programs, but they view anyone refusing the stipulations to be denying their need to stay at the shelter. Though this seemingly harsh method turns away some who have nowhere to go, it correlates directly with Mission Waco’s overarching goals. The purpose of the shelter is not merely to address an immediate need; the staff strives to promote long-term impacts.

Within Brother’s Keeper, Mission Waco has created the supportive housing program (SHP), a transitional housing program that allows participants a place in the shelter for up to six months. Like the emergency side of the shelter, participants must agree to work with Mission Waco to save funds and complete the steps outlined for them by Mission Waco’s social worker. “The goal upon completion is they’re able to move directly into their own place and be self-sufficient and maintain and sustain that.”⁴³

Every program operated by Mission Waco incorporates empowerment in some form, even in the children’s and youth programs, and the after-school program in

⁴¹ Appendix E, 12

⁴² Appendix E, 11-12

⁴³ Appendix E, 15

particular. Mondays through Thursdays, Mission Waco workers pick up the program participants, typically between 30 and 40 children, from five schools in the area. During the after school gatherings, the kids receive homework help and individualized tutoring. They may also sign up to take extracurricular classes, which vary depending on what volunteers have offered to teach in a given semester. Since many lower-income schools like the ones these children attend cannot afford art, theater, and other similar programs, the after-school classes usually introduce the kids to new experiences and activities.⁴⁴ Providing kids an opportunity to discover their talents and passions, says Children's Director McKenzie Miller, allows each child to understand what they're good at and where they belong.⁴⁵ One former participant realized his love for theater when he participated in the program's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Now, he is involved in the theater program at his middle school. The goal of these programs is to plant seeds and then to encourage their growth.

The after-school program also focuses on reading comprehension, which relates to both empowerment and one of Mission Waco's other goals, fighting systemic issues. A teacher formerly on staff with Mission Waco now volunteers her time to pre- and post-test the kids' reading levels so that staff members can determine how to best help improve reading comprehension and encourage reading outside of the classroom.⁴⁶ Having a grade-appropriate reading level is crucial for the education of children. Students not on reading level will likely struggle in all other areas of school—science, history, not

⁴⁴ Appendix F, 5

⁴⁵ Appendix F, 6

⁴⁶ Appendix F, 8

to mention the obvious, English—which all involve reading in some form. “Even kids in third grade, they’ll have issues with word problems because their reading levels aren’t there. It’s just so important to get them on level...for the future of their education”⁴⁷ and ultimately, the future of their life.

In these ways, Mission Waco’s children’s programs offer a sort of preventative empowerment. The children’s and youth programs are geared towards “equipping the kids with the education things they need, the character development they need, the leadership skills they need to get them to be successful... It’s [about] providing those materials for them to get there.”⁴⁸ Of course, there’s no way to know how the children’s lives may have run different, detrimental courses if not for their involvement in Mission Waco programs. Yet it is certainly not a stretch to think that, by empowering at a young age, Mission Waco is impacting the lives of these youth for the better.

At times, Mission Waco may appear unnecessarily harsh, as with the conditions for obtaining a bed in Brother’s Keeper. Other programs, like the after-school club, are less likely to face controversy or criticism. Empowerment is so heavily embedded in the organization’s operations that it is necessary to ask why Dorrell and other workers so strictly abide by this method. Mission Waco’s manner of operation makes clear at least one piece of their answer: “the people with the problem need to be part of the solution.”⁴⁹ Mission Waco offers myriad services that help empower the participants, yet empowerment on its own cannot simply be handed to someone. It requires effort on the

⁴⁷ Appendix F, 19

⁴⁸ Appendix F, 30

⁴⁹ Appendix D, 14

part of the person being empowered, a concept inherent to the very definition of the word, which refers to increasing the degree of one's autonomy.⁵⁰ Mission Waco believes handouts are not sufficient to solve problems. They openly expect an investment from their participants.

Furthermore, enforcing this method of empowerment ultimately leads to greater freedom. As has already been examined, Dorrell defines empowerment as both the improvement of societal skills and the recognition and cultivation of God's creation. This piece of empowerment, at least in the opinion of Assistant Director Kathy Wise, directly relates to the freedom from oppression promised by Christ. Kathy believes the goal of a missionary should be to help participants uncover their particular God-given gifts.⁵¹ And the practical side of empowerment goes hand in hand with the spiritual side. In order to help the participants live most fully in the joy of their gifts, Mission Waco helps provide some basics in life, "because if you don't have the survival things, then that's what's taking every bit of your energy,"⁵² with none leftover to relish in and cultivate the talents.

"Touching is our model, not case management"

Needless to say, Mission Waco's commitment to empowering the poor and marginalized is commendable and impactful. However, it is difficult to imagine success to such an extent had they not also committed to a second goal. The relationship-based aspect of Mission Waco's model is fundamental to the program's impact. Rather than

⁵⁰ This definition is supported by Zippay in "The Politics of Empowerment."

⁵¹ Appendix B, 15

⁵² Appendix B, 14

approaching participants from a holier-than-thou attitude, Dorrell views all with whom he interacts as equals. “When you feel like you’re told how bad you are because you’re doing something wrong...it just beats you down.”⁵³ Change begins with authentic respect and encouragement. “The majority of people that we’re around feel like they’re important to us...out of that respect, they begin to grow and listen and hear us.”⁵⁴

Not only do these relationships foster empowerment among the poor, they actually play a major role in mobilizing the middle class. Mission Waco excels at building relationships that reach across various racial and socio-economic statuses. Prior to receiving her position as assistant director, Kathy Wise was drawn to the Mission Waco primarily for its effective cultivation of diverse relationships. When she moved to Waco, Kathy hoped to initiate these sorts of relationships through her intentional choice to live in a lower income neighborhood. Several home invasions and some honest reflection led Kathy to the realization that, after living in the neighborhood for over two years, she had only traded contact information and regularly communicated with other white, middle-class, educated ladies in the area. Acknowledging her naivety with forming diverse relationships, she decided to turn to Mission Waco.⁵⁵

As an organization, Mission Waco aims to develop empowering relationships based on an understanding of mutuality, an idea formerly raised in Martin Buber’s own discussion of relationships.⁵⁶ In other words, the focus of these relationships is not what one person can get from the other—whether that be money, food, or job

⁵³ Appendix A, 7

⁵⁴ Appendix A, 7

⁵⁵ Appendix B, 6

⁵⁶ For more on this discussion refer to Chapter One: Models, or part 1 of Buber’s *I and Thou*.

recommendations, or just a coin in the “Good Deed” jar. Particularly for the fact that they are most often formed between people with vastly different backgrounds, these relationships easily and regularly turn into opportunities for transformational growth and learning, a fact Kathy has fully embraced.

The 14-year-long friendship between Kathy and program participant Libby provides just one example of a relationship ripe with learning experiences. Tension developed in the early stages of the friendship, when Kathy kept trying to solve Libby’s problems, and Libby pushed back. Still today, Kathy must constantly make a conscious effort to let go of what she considers her “privileged” power. Over time, though, Kathy has learned to let Libby learn. “I can coach, I can support, I can be there with her,”⁵⁷ but she also takes care to pass certain responsibilities to Libby, to let her take the lead and make decisions for herself. In this way, Kathy learns, and Libby is empowered. Most any relationship formed in connection with Mission Waco is likely to have witnessed experiences similar to that of Kathy and Libby. This learning process is valuable and formative.⁵⁸

Ultimately, Dorrell looks to Jesus as the primary model for building relationships. Dorrell, and consequently Mission Waco, display two characteristics of Christ-based relationships particularly well: holistic and present. To Dorrell, holistic means, “I’m going to meet you where you are and I’m going to listen to you.”⁵⁹ Jesus did not spend his time allowing only healthy, holy, and accepted members of society to come to him.

⁵⁷ Appendix B, 21

⁵⁸ Recall that Buber viewed these types of mutual relationships as necessarily transformation and something by which the participants are molded (see Buber, part 1)

⁵⁹ Appendix A, 9

He went out and met people where they were in life, whether that happened to be covered in leprosy, already dead, or simply shunned by society. In the same way, Mission Waco encourages authenticity and honesty from its participants as well as from its volunteers. Participants have no need to hide in shame for their dark pasts or current struggles; instead, they are encouraged to present themselves as they are and valued for working through their baggage.⁶⁰

Dorrell also reflects the intentional presence Jesus invested in his own relationships. “Touching is our model, not case management,” says Dorrell, looking to a biblical example seen in three Gospels in which, though on his way to meet with the leader of the synagogue, Jesus stops to for a woman with a longtime blood issue. In the story, a single touch brings healing.⁶¹ This form of personal, intimate interaction is fundamental to the way in which Dorrell teaches relationship formation. Tricia Mankin adds that often times, the relationships formed are not even about buying or doing anything—it’s just about being present.⁶² This being present in relationships—the simple act of spending time with participants—makes up a large body of Mission Waco’s work. Through presence, they show authentic love.

Not only do the relationships fostered by Mission Waco look to Christ as a model, but in the opinion of Kathy Wise, they are authentic to how God views humans: “that we are part of the whole of humanity but we are also created by Him and so there’s

⁶⁰ Appendix B, 8; In fact, Buber argues that only when this whole self is presented does one truly encounter a relation. From this meeting with the whole of another, one is then able to love their Thou.

⁶¹ Appendix A, 4

⁶² Appendix C, 13; This sentiment echoes Buber who believes relationships are *only* encountered in the present and by being present.

something special about [each of] us.”⁶³ She understands relationships as “the Spirit of God created in me connecting with the Spirit of God created in you.”⁶⁴ In reaching across racial and social boundaries to love the poor and the outcasts, the workers of Mission Waco perceive man in the same manner that God himself does.

Mission Waco is just as committed to their relational approach as they are to their empowerment model, which again begs the question, why? Aside from looking to biblical examples, why does Mission Waco consider authentic relationships essential to their work? For one, “it’s hard to be effective without a relationship.”⁶⁵ How can you help someone back on their feet without understanding where they’re coming from? Among other things, without established relationships empowerment (as defined by Mission Waco⁶⁶) cannot exist, because empowerment requires familiarity with an individual. Such familiarity is not easily found outside the context of a relationship.

More than that, Dorrell has found participants to be much more responsive when they sense they are being approached out of love. Without the establishment of committed, authentic relationships, workers run the risk of developing a Savior complex. Plus, as Dorrell points out, “Poor people are not dumb people...they know if you’re seeing them as a project.”⁶⁷ Privileged people tend to swoop in with inflated egos, better

⁶³ Appendix B, 26

⁶⁴ Appendix B, 15

⁶⁵ Appendix D, 3

⁶⁶ Other models do not necessarily recognize the initial necessity of relationships to empowerment, though in some cases relationships are viewed as an aim or result of empowerment initiatives.

⁶⁷ Appendix A, 7

educations, and plentiful resources, ready to help⁶⁸; a “ready to help” attitude is not far removed from a desire to save. Drawing on her favorite author Henri Nouwen, Kathy warns against the desire to save as a motivation to serve, because “if we are trying to be the savior to someone...it takes away the power of God in that person’s life.”⁶⁹ Relationships developed on models of empowerment and mutuality leave room for God to move in the lives of both involved.

In the same way the ministry’s emphasis on empowerment does, its focus on relationship-building, pays tribute to the other prongs of Mission Waco’s mission statement. McKenzie Miller studied social justice at Baylor University and felt called to fight social injustices. Now, as the children’s director of Mission Waco, McKenzie has formed deep and authentic relationships with numerous families and children. Because she is so invested in these relationships, the social injustices Miller learned about at university have grown much more personal to her. Now, these issues “affect these kids I care about and love... You’re kind of fighting for people who are like your family.”⁷⁰ By encouraging the development of diverse relationships, Mission Waco puts the middle class in much closer contact with the social injustices of the present.

Through developing authentic relationships, members of Mission Waco have a lasting impact on individual participants as well as the community as a whole. In many ways, the organization acts as one big family. On any given day, servers at Mission Waco’s restaurant, World Cup Café, will be able to greet by name a handful of guests, regular visitors to the restaurant. Many of these customers are associated in some way

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Appendix B, 16

⁷⁰ Appendix F, 27

with Mission Waco. Should Dorrell swing by for lunch, everyone in the establishment recognizes him and he stops often to give hugs and share conversation. Such an atmosphere of genuine encounters and interactions seems to permeate all aspects of the organization. According to Miller, the children's program has a remarkably low turnover rate because, thanks to the familial environment fostered by the workers, kids *want* to stay in the program, and families feel comfortable letting them do so.⁷¹ Miller attributes the overwhelming approval of the program to the relational mindset it maintains, which lies at the base of Mission Waco's ministry and which has resulted in a deep, meaningful community.

And this community does not end once the participants have outgrown the children's and youth groups or successfully made it out of Brother's Keeper or a substance abuse program. Carlton Willis has hired multiple past-Brother's Keeper-residents who longed to find a way to repay the community that helped them back on their feet.

The President and the Pauper

Dignity is not a word explicitly mentioned in Mission Waco's mission statement. With that said, dignity is undeniably inherent to the organization's relationship model, as well as an apparent buzzword among the Mission Waco community. In the context of the social interaction, dignity may be defined as acknowledging and respecting the intrinsic worth of all humans, recognizing the distinct personal identity of each, and sustaining an

⁷¹ Appendix F, 13

equality of power among all.⁷² Jimmy Dorrell is very intentional about discrediting any form of favoritism among his programs. Contrary to popular opinion, Dorrell believes that “the nobody in culture’s eyes is just as important as the rich guy.”⁷³ He insists that if the president of the United States were to show up at CUB, he would be treated no differently than any other member of the congregation. Similarly, though the title might well be viewed as rightfully his, Dorrell refuses to allow his congregation to call him “Reverend.” “I’m not any more important than the poorest woman there,”⁷⁴ he says.

Whereas society tends to correlate social status with worth, dignity does not allow external circumstances to dictate a person’s value. Instead, much like empowerment, dignity looks to the core identity of man⁷⁵ at which level, as creations of God,⁷⁶ we all become equal. As Kathy puts it, “we are all at the base of the cross together, kneeling in need of a savior.”⁷⁷ Circumstances do not diminish one’s humanity or identity as a creation of God.

Mission Waco’s team may toss around the term “dignity,” and tell participants that yes, they are important and valued and worthy of respect. But more importantly, the members of the organization move the affirmation from words to action. CUB attendees are well familiar with Patrick, who every week stands front and center during worship, strumming his air guitar and singing every word of every song. “Patrick is a nonverbal

⁷² Schachter similarly argues that substantial equality among humans is a necessary condition of respect for dignity

⁷³ Appendix A, 6

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ As defined by Schachter, dignity recognizes man’s intrinsic worth.

⁷⁶ Appendix B, 25

⁷⁷ Appendix B, 16

statement of how we value people.”⁷⁸ Sometimes Patrick performs from the ground; other days, he climbs up on stage to grab a microphone. “He can’t play, he can’t sing, but he is important.”⁷⁹ It does not seem far-fetched to assume that should Patrick miss a service, his absence would be noted by all. He is not valued for any impressive contribution to the worship music, and he is not valued for his submission to societal norms that say only band members should be on stage during performances. Patrick is dignified for his intrinsic value. He receives dignity merely because he, like everyone else in attendance, is a human.

Another example that illustrates this idea is the toy sale Mission Waco hosts annually during Christmas season. Churches and other individuals collect and donate new toys. Mission Waco then opens up a store to participants, offering the toys at an 80% discounted price. Parents come to purchase these new toys as gifts for their children. For the parents who are now able to provide for their kids on Christmas, there is dignity in the transaction.⁸⁰

And, as Kathy points out, there’s also dignity in people having choices. Homeless seeking refuge at Brother’s Keeper have the choice of either participating in Mission Waco’s services or returning to the streets; whichever they choose, their decision is respected. It was years before Kathy’s friend Libby decided she was ready to get off the

⁷⁸ Appendix A, 11

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Schachter says: “few will dispute that a person in abject condition, deprived of adequate means of subsistence, or denied the opportunity to work, suffers a profound affront to his sense of dignity and intrinsic worth.” In the case of these parents, they may feel a loss of dignity due to inadequate means; the opportunity provided by this transaction helps return that lost sense of dignity.

streets. Kathy would have loved for Libby to make that decision sooner, but allowing Libby the choice gives worth to her opinion and validates her as a human.

Though at first the word “dignity” may bring to mind grand actions, when it comes down to it, an act as simple and seemingly small as allowing someone to make a choice dignifies them.⁸¹ Mission Waco makes impacts in big ways, but the organization also understands the powerful impressions left by the simple actions of affirming someone’s self-worth. At the end of the day, Mission Waco is not looking to be a savior. They are looking to be a support system.

And so, by providing participants with copious resources and the accountability of a close-knit, authentic community of friendships, Mission Waco stands out among similar organizations, through its continuous contribution to the betterment of its participants brought about by effectively fostering an environment of social and spiritual empowerment.

⁸¹ According to Schachter, dignity gives a high priority to choices in matters of beliefs, ways of lives, attitudes, etc.

CHAPTER THREE

Profiles of Humanity

“Relationships are the beginning of the work of God.” Standing in front of the Church Under the Bridge congregation, Dorrell opens his February 21, 2016 sermon with a statement that speaks to one of the core models of Mission Waco: *relationship-based* empowerment.⁸²

To be human is to exist in relation to other humans.⁸³ Each of my models is based off of the recognition of fellow man as just that, human beings. At the core of Mission Waco lies the same belief. The extent of someone’s poverty or addiction, their past actions or present circumstances, none of these neither determine nor diminish someone’s humanity. Accompanying every human is a story, and often one involving more than just its narrator. Living among other humans means each story is necessarily influenced in some manner by more than one’s self. Religion aside, relationships are transformational. Each of the following profiles is strung along a common thread that reveals, for better or for worse, the power of relationships, among fellow humans.

In an effort to protect the identities of those present in each story, the following profiles are presented in a manner that preserves anonymity; any names that appear have been changed. Furthermore, it is hoped that the anonymous nature of the stories will eliminate any prejudices and preconceived notions a reader may carry into the story, even if unintentionally. Because of the anonymous presentations of these profiles, transitions

⁸² Dorrell’s model can be verified through Zippay’s study on empowerment as an approach to poverty reduction.

⁸³ Buber’s assertion of this truth appears at the end of part 1 of *I and Thou*.

between profiles are indicated only by titles that in some way reflect a central aspect of the story to which it belongs.

Soul Food

A lot of people in Waco don't know about us. We do get a lot of regulars, but a lot of the people who come in here are not from Waco. Fifteen percent are from Waco, the others are from out of town—families from Baylor or families coming in to visit. People look up where to go in Waco and they always end up here. It's awesome though. Today I met this lady that was from North Carolina and just traveling. We get to meet people from all over, and that's exciting.

One year, they decided to try to open on Sundays. We went from being open six days a week to seven days a week, so we never close, unless it's for a holiday or something. Nobody wanted to work Sundays, everybody wanted to go to church. And I wanted to go to church too, but I needed money. I had four kids, I was going to school, I had two jobs already and this became my third. I had volunteered here for a while first, and then they were like, "Would you like to work on Sundays?" I said, yeah, I'll do it. It went from working on Sundays to working almost every day.

Becky has been here for ten years, so she's been here since it started. When I first started working here, Becky told me, "You'll love it. You'll have that one percent that makes you wanna scream, but you'll be okay." She didn't lie. From the almost four years that I've been here, there's always that one percent that makes you wanna be like, Really? Don't you see me running around here by myself and you want me to sit here and just pay attention to *you*?

But this is an awesome place. The people here are awesome, I mean *awesome* people, and that's why I'm still here. My boss is always telling me, "You have a certificate to do computer maintenance, why are you still here?" Because I love the people. They are a light.

Not last year, but the year before that, I got a \$1000 tip on Christmas day. It was something. I thought the guy was joking. I told him, "You put your decimal in the wrong spot." He was like, "No, no, no, it's okay." I said, "Wait, hold on Mister," and his significant other was like, "No, it's right." They had been coming in at least twice a week and I think they were moving out of town, and that was his goodbye gift.

I have six new mommies and daddies that come here. Three were from out of town that moved to Waco and they made this their spot. And we had three that lived in Waco that come here every Saturday morning. I know what they want, I know what they drink, I know their order by heart. Sometimes they sit down and I'll just put their order on the table because I already know what they want.

I have Jeff and Julia, and then Larry and Tina. They pray for me—when we get new people, I'll lose hours and I won't be able to make as much money as I can. But they pray, and they say, "God put you here for a reason, you need to stay here. You're the reason why most of the customers come back." And they love my kids. They all love my kids.

Jeff and Julia hadn't been here in a while because now they volunteer. They wanted to volunteer here, but we were full with volunteers, so they do Meals on Wheels and they do games and stuff for vets at the V.A. So they don't come in as much, but they still come by and say hi and eat so I can catch up on how their life is.

And then there's Roger. He's a hairdresser, he's been here since we opened, and he still comes in. Sweetest guy, sweetest guy. We have a lot of people that we've gained relationships with that they have become family. We know *their* life stories, *their* struggles, just like they know ours.

And it's not just my customers. Our volunteers, like our board members, they're our bosses but they actually work with us. It's awesome to work with the people that decide if you get holiday pay this year, stuff like that. They do some incredible things. I took my kids to Disney World, the year I got the thousand-dollar tip. Ms. Dana said, "We know you don't have a lot of money right now, so we're going to give you \$200 to help buy something for the kids to bring back as a souvenir." I mean, just awesome people.

It's like family here. It's not just me coming to work, it's coming to hang out with family. The life of a waitress is stressful, hard, like all jobs, but exciting and fun. Some of my customers say, "Every time I see you, you're smiling, you're happy." I say, yeah, this is a place to smile about.

Blue Bonnets for Grandma

I'm from Lorena, graduated from Conley High school, but I got in a bunch of trouble when I was 21 and took off to North Carolina where my dad lived. I got married, had a couple kids, and stayed there for 16 years. Grandma got sick a couple years ago. I'd already separated from my wife, so I quit my job and came back here on a bus.

My grandma was an arts and crafts woman. They owned Patty's Gift Shop and Frank's Upholstery in downtown Lorena for 25 years. I would get to go in there as a boy and do arts and crafts, build birdhouses, stuff like that. But one of my favorite memories with her was probably being in the blue bonnets on our farm, all those blue bonnets and

Indian paintbrushes. We've had our farm probably 46, 47 years, a bunch of property out in Lorena. We'd always go out there and take pictures with her, like around Easter time. Just good family times.

She died December 7, this past year. My mother's been taking care of them for the past six years. They're not doing real good with the loss of my Grandma, you know how that is. My grandpa's taking it real bad. She was 93 years old. She lived a good life. Died of natural causes, she didn't die from drinking or smoking or nothing.

She was a very Catholic woman, and man, she was a hard-nose. "Don't cuss, why did I do this, why did I do that," more of my mother than my mother was, really. When I first got back, I got a mountain bike and I didn't have a headlight on it. I got pulled over for it, no headlight, by Waco P.D. and they gave me a ticket. I didn't pay it and my grandma pitched a fit. She wouldn't let me come to the house 'cause she was harboring a fugitive. I'm serious!

So you can imagine how she was like. 'Bout 4-foot-9, and I'm not real tall either so that's probably where I got it. But she was a tough little lady, oh yeah, even till the day she died. I went and saw her three weeks before she passed away—we knew it was close, she just couldn't even get out of bed and stuff—but she was a spitfire still. "You better take care of those tickets!" That was her last thing to me, and I said, "I will, I will," and you can be damn sure I did. Every bit of 'em.

I was locked up when she passed away in December. I moved back to be around her and I got locked up right when she died, so I didn't make her funeral or nothing. My family's not real happy with me. I got out yesterday. I lost everything, I had a hotel room but that all got wipe out so I'm starting back at square one today. Birth certificate,

driver's license, clothes, everything. Needless to say, it's been a bad couple months for me. It's unfortunate, but at least she's in a better place now.

Breaking the Cycle

In a small town, there's nothing to do. It started more with trying to fit in in high school. We're from Singapore, and me being Asian, it was hard for me to fit in. I was living in a small, small little town 20 miles south of the Oklahoma border, Valley View, Texas, and the majority there were white. So I hung out with the people that accepted me, the people who drank and smoked and did drugs. It started with cigarettes, then marijuana. Then my addiction progressed, it got worse and worse and worse, from a user to a dealer and then broke. I went downhill really fast.

In 2005, I was arrested for drugs and my substance abuse. The court mandated that I go through a treatment program. Someone I knew in Waco recommended Manna House so I moved to Waco, did the screening and was accepted and entered the program in January 2006. At first, I just didn't want to go to jail, so that's why I went.

When I first got clean, I didn't even see a new way of living. I was just stuck in that cycle, just going back to the drugs, going back to the drugs. But my mind was opened at the Manna House and the truth hit me that the drugs weren't working, the drugs weren't a solution for anything. Being in the Manna House with the 10 other guys there, there were times where I had fun and I was like, if I can have fun without drugs, why do I need them anyway?

I was a Muslim when I entered the program. 40 days after I stopped using, I got saved. The day I got saved, I was reading the Bible. I believe it was John 14 or 15. I was reading the part where Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe in me also." And it's not

that I'm reading it and it's auditory and I hear his voice or anything. But he said, "I'm the true vine, no one comes to the Father except through me. I'm the way, the truth, and the life." That moment, I just felt the Holy Spirit upon me. I wish I could relive that. I always relive it in my mind, I always remember that moment.

Before, I was addicted to drugs, I was homeless, broke, jobless, I kept stealing money, my car got repo-ed. I had nothing. I had to live with my mom or my sister. My parents were divorced, and after the divorce, I was abandoned by my father so my mom took care of us. We had a good family, but I was always looking for that father figure, someone to look up to. I was always looking to fill that void. So that abandonment issue was kind of filled by the drugs and the people that accepted me.

Now, I don't have to do any of that. I'm clean, I've been clean for 10 years. I work and keep a stable job, I'm able to pay my bills. It's a new way of life for me. Through Mission Waco and the Manna House, I was able to see there's more to life than drugs. I started to look forward to all these other things in life.

Because of the community through Mission Waco and the relationships that I've built and my recovery network here, I decided to live here. Now I'm overseeing a men's housing program, which is for men who can't find a place to stay. We do Bible studies and such. I'm a cook for the Meyer Center and also I run the Urban Edibles food truck. I actually met my wife through Mission Waco, she was an intern. We started hanging out and after she finished her internship, we got into a relationship and I proposed one year after we met.

I look up to people now, I do talk to people like those who were participants in Manna House and graduated and also became part of the staff. I still keep in touch with

my counselor from the Manna House, and I have other accountability partners that I talk to. Everyone's friendly in Mission Waco, and as a staff, we are more like family. But mainly God is the one to fill the void in me now. If I've learned one lesson, it's that all things are possible with God.

Heart of Light

When I was younger, we lived with a foster family, me and my sister, because my momma had ran away when we were real little, just got up and left. We was in Michigan, so me and my sister got on a plane and we came to Waco and we got in foster care. I don't regret my dad for doing that. We was poor, we didn't have a whole lot. He done the best he could for me and my sister, and I love him so much for that.

My daddy knew the people we lived with really well, he used to work for them. I didn't have a good relationship with my foster family because that wasn't my momma and daddy. That was nobody to me. They were trying to raise me the best they could, but that was not my momma and daddy. I couldn't live like that, I wanted *my* momma, I wanted *my* daddy.

I stayed there till I was like 16, then they put me in the Methodist home. I stayed there not even a year. I didn't want to be there, so I ran away and I went home to Georgia. My mom didn't want me there, but I stayed with her for a couple years.

When I came back to Waco, I got stuck on crack cocaine. I was in my 20s. I met a friend, well I thought she was a friend, and she was at the old Plaza Hotel. I went up to her room one day and she was smoking something. I didn't know nothing about crack cocaine. I knew alcohol, because I was an alcoholic. The only thing I knew was alcohol. But I didn't know nothing about crack cocaine. She started smoking out of a can, and she

said, you ever done it? I said no, I'd never done it a day in my life. So I took a hit of crack. And I got stuck.

I was on that for like 27 years, on the streets. I was doing what I could do to get what I wanted. And I was doing things I didn't want to do to get what I wanted.

Somebody off the street had told me about Church Under the Bridge, said let's go to church. I was like, God don't care. God don't care about nobody but Him. But I went to church. I was way in the back, just sitting in the back. Just me, leave me alone. I went the first time, and then like two or three months later I went and I'd go again, kind of off and on. I wouldn't let nobody touch me, I was afraid that somebody'd touch me and hurt me. I wouldn't let people get involved in my life. My life was my life. I didn't think God cared. I didn't think nobody cared. It was just me on the street.

I don't know what happened, I really don't. My whole life is completely changed. It was like a light came on and will not go off. I don't want it to go off, I want it to stay on. Bright me up! Just light me up!

I decided life is more important than being on the street. In two years now I've not had any crack cocaine. Now, I have a roof over my head, I've got a husband, I've got babies—my dogs are my babies. So now I have a home. It's not a fancy, fancy home, but it's *my* home.

When I first got my apartment, I had my key in hand, and I was shaking, like this can't be, this is a dream or something. I turned the key and opened the door, and *that was my home*. I was no longer on the streets. I was no longer homeless. That was five years ago. I don't want to go back to that.

I still think about the people I hung out with, and I still go back to the places I hung out, because I'll never forget where I came from, never forget. Sometimes I'll go invite the homeless to my home. I'll barbecue for them, let them take a shower, let 'em watch TV. The Bible says, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" and I believe in that one hundred percent. I treat people the way I want to be treated. And I treat people the way they want to be treated.

I'll tell people, it's okay. It's okay, don't hate people for what they do. Love people for who they are. You know, it's not your fault, it's not my fault. It's the person, that's the decision they wanted to make. People are stuck in their own ways.

And I go to the Meyer Center and hang out with the people and let them know, hey it's okay, I've been where you're at, I've done it (I was at the shelter for about a year, off and on). And there is life out there, you can change. I'm living proof, I did it.

My purpose in life right now is my testimony to other people to say you'll be okay, just believe. Don't give up. People love you, no matter where you are or what you do, people love you. I didn't realize that, I didn't know that people did care about other people until I went to that church. I wouldn't trade that for nothing.

If it wasn't for that church, I don't think I'd be here right now, I really don't. I thank God every day for that. Life is good. I wouldn't change nothing right now. I wouldn't change a thing.

Waiting for a Second Chance

I'm better off now than I was a year ago.

When I was in California, me and my mom were getting into it. She'd call the cops on me and I'd get arrested. I was steadily getting kicked out, so I just figured, I might as well go.

I came to Texas to stay with my sister. While I was here, I got into some trouble, and did some years in penitentiary. I met some friends in there, one told me to come to Waco and he'd help me out. It didn't turn out like that, so I had to hit the streets and try to get on my feet. I went to Salvation Army, and you can only stay there for 5 days. Other than that you can't come back for six months or something like that. So I had to go somewhere and I didn't feel like staying on the streets. Someone told me about the Meyer Center and BK, so I went over there.

My goal was to get a job, save as much money as I could, and get out of there. There's too many problems, too many people on drugs and drunks, and that was not the place for me, so I wanted to get back on my feet.

The people at Meyer Center, they really help you if they see that you actually want to do something and not just sit there. They give you all the necessities you need, like computers, they show you how to make a resume, they give you all the tools. You gotta put the effort in, but if you don't, it's on you. They give you everything that you need.

I was in the Meyer Center about six months. I saved up some money and then I went to go stay with my girlfriend and her family, but that didn't work out so I had to come back. I lost my job, I lost my car, everything, so I had to start back over. My first job was construction, and then I lost that because I didn't have a vehicle to go to West, where the job was. I started working at Golden Corral for like six months, I saved up, and

then I went to go apply at Cargo for overnight sanitation, because they get paid good money. So I've been working there for six more months, and then I found me an apartment and moved in, bought all my furniture and everything. I've been living there for almost a year, it might be a year, still working at Cargo and making good money. Got me a truck, it's almost paid off.

At first I didn't like Waco, 'cause of my situation, but it's kind of grown on me. I've met good people that really motivated me and looked out for me, but if I could redo a day, it'd probably be the day that I ran away. That was pretty stupid. I didn't have a plan, I just wanted to get away. I wish I would have talked to her, I guess, try to work it out or something.

I'm still in touch with my mom. For the longest time there was bad blood, but things are better now. Not having someone here to run to, like my girlfriend does, played a big part in that. I haven't seen my mom recently, I want to go out there to California to see her, but it's pretty expensive. Waco's grown on me, but not having family here, that sucks.

Loving Jesus

Both my parents are addicts. I guess that led me to working in places like this. My dad left when I was 6 and came back when I was 9, so he was always in and out but never really consistent. I knew who he was, but I definitely resented him for a while.

When I was 13, I had reached this place of being really suicidal and I had started experiencing PTSD from having been sexually assaulted as a child, and it had just gotten to this place where I couldn't function anymore. I went to go stay with my grandparents for a weekend, but it turned in to me never going home. I ended up being hospitalized in

a mental institution for a couple weeks. Finally my social worker that I'd had got fired. I got a new social worker who placed me with my grandparents three hours away in Memphis.

Senior year, the Lord just wrecked my life. I didn't know where I was going, I was in a relationship and thought I was going to get married, and everything fell apart. Then my dad started texting me, and I was like why? Why are you talking to me? I didn't like it. Then the Lord was like, "What are you doing? This is a person. This is your dad."

When I came to Baylor, I hated it at first, it was a really hard transition. I didn't want to tell my guardians, I didn't want them to be disappointed, so I started talking to my dad about it and slowly began building a relationship there. Now we're pretty close. It's kind of weird, more of like a friendship than a parent, but I see him about twice a year now, when I go home.

My dad has been in recovery a couple times but he always goes back to it. He sells drugs where I'm from, so in order for him to actually be in recovery he's going to have to leave home. One day. He's young, he's only 36, so he's got time.

Building a relationship with him through that has been really influential, going from really hating this person to seeing the value he has as a person and seeing the ways that the Lord is very obviously pursuing him.

We had this guy that worked here for while and he reminded me so much of my dad. He was an addict, he was in recovery, staying in the Manna House and working here, and so seeing that gives me hope.

I really love this place, I want to own a place like this one day, or maybe just stay here forever, I don't know. It's a really good place. The job, maybe not the best, you don't get paid very much. But the people here make it worth it.

Our boss, she's not the friendliest person coming out of it. She's from Bosnia, she came here with her husband after the war, so she's a really hard person but just getting to know her has been one of the closest relationships I've built here.

And then learning from Jimmy, he'll come in and start busing tables. That's leadership you know? You wouldn't know that he was the director of all this, 'cause he wears sweatpants and t-shirts all the time, and he's just this really humble guy that will just come in and help us. You can be really rich or really poor and he'll treat you all the same. He's the best.

It's very humbling to work here. Me and my coworkers are all so different, we come from different ways of life. We hire people from MBK, people that are coming up out of drug addiction, so getting to know them and just meeting people from this part of town has been really good.

We had this one guy come in, and he was very obviously homeless, really shaggy and he was just hungry. He was willing to buy something but he didn't have enough money to even get a cup of coffee. It was a really overwhelming moment. Everything was going wrong and I was like, "I hate my job," and then that dude came in. That person's Jesus to us.

It's a lot different coming from Baylor and trying to get involved in Waco. I feel like in the Baylor bubble you kind of forget sometimes that this part of town's not a bad

part of town, it's a great place. The way someone looks doesn't define who they are, you know? People are people.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evaluating Mission Waco

People are people—the previous analysis, exposition, and stories reveal that Mission Waco adopts this mindset in the fullest sense. The ideas and sentiments portrayed by the previous two chapters are all drawn from people who have been positively impacted by their interactions within Mission Waco. In order to provide a fair final assessment of the organization, it is now necessary to step back and review the program through exterior lenses.

Review of I and Thou

The first chapter of this thesis introduced Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's dialogue on the distinctions between I-Thou and I-It relationships in his book, *I and Thou*. The book begins with an introduction of these two relationships, in which Buber defines the I-It relations as experiences—perceived, sensed, felt—in the context of space and time, with a specific thing as the object. Buber argues that man currently lives in a world that develops and focuses on experience and neglects to cultivate that which actually gives us life: the I-Thou relations, transformational, relational encounters with others. Though the tendency to develop the experiential world is natural, Buber says it leaves man unfulfilled and ultimately void of life.

I-Thou encounters, on the other hand, entail wholeness, mutuality, and transformation. The respective parties who enter into an encounter, enter with their whole beings, leaving no room for hate of each other. Both enter mutually vulnerable, and both are able to learn from the other in some form; even the “bad” people we encounter can

teach us something, says Buber. Furthermore, these encounters produce a lasting love in us for others, born by knowing others fully. These encounters set people free to become their own unique realities. They stir in man a desire and a responsibility to love his Thou's. Ultimately, each of these relationships is what makes man human, and each encounter is a reflection of the eternal Thou, God.

Buber goes on to explain that while each fulfilling I-Thou encounter takes place in the pure present, the Thou slips into an It as soon as man begins to reflect on the encounter. This transition leaves man constantly hungering for more, constantly desiring to be fulfilled, which, Buber says, is what turns us to encounters with God. More than all other I-Thou encounters, the encounter with the eternal Thou transforms the way man relates to the world. After encountering God, man sees the entire world through God. Because of this, man will seek to serve the world no longer out of duty or obligation, but out of a true desire to aid his Thou's. Furthermore, man takes on a responsibility to love, not in the sense of fleeting feelings, but in a way that is permanent and indiscriminating.

Because of the way man is designed, Buber says man will not be content with the oscillating manner in which he encounters God, and will desire a way to draw the encounter into a more permanent presence. This can be done through the development of communities in which God is at the center; all within the community are connected through their common relation with the eternal Thou. Buber concludes with the assertion that ultimately, man's purpose in life is not to reflect on and seek God solely; instead, his purpose lies in his relationships with the world, formed out of the desire stirred in his heart by his encounter with God. Buber says that God will be present in constant conversation with the man who goes out and loves others.

Buber's philosophical approach to relationships shares a common characteristic with the Christian notion of the Golden Rule—Jesus' command to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. In both of these ideals is found the trait of transformative ministry—transformative both for the person helping and the person being helped. Some view the Golden Rule as idealistic, while others see it as the very bread of life; Mission Waco tends toward the latter.

In order to evaluate Mission Waco with this in mind, we will begin by first offering several modern theories to approaching poverty.

Approaches to Poverty Reduction

Various lines of thought exist in regards to how society should view and respond to poverty. It is useful to situate Mission Waco among other approaches in order to evaluate its effectiveness as an empowerment model and outreach ministry.

The approaches described below blur the lines between political, economic, and social theories. Such methods and theories are expansive enough to warrant discussions and evaluations that extend beyond the scope of this project. For the sake of simplicity, each approach will be assigned the names of the economic theories to which they most closely relate. However, it is necessary to keep in mind the definitions outlined within this thesis rather than the entire bodies of thought that can be attributed to each approach.

The Progressive Point of View: Entitlement

One approach to poverty reduction appears in what could be loosely referred to as social justice. This method aims at reducing poverty through the redistribution of

wealth equally among citizens.⁸⁴ Economically and politically, this method typically draws on heavy government intervention as a means for the equal distribution to wealth. According to an article in *Social Forces*, “every major industrialized nation has a set of programs that transfer between 10% and 30% of the country’s gross domestic product among the populace, a key goal of which is to improve the well-being of those at or near the bottom of the income distribution.”⁸⁵ In more general terms, this approach can be broadened to include any sort of system in which those in need are freely provided with that which they need, an idea that is perhaps better explored in examples.

One example of a program that adopts this sort of mentality is the Emergency Food Relief System in the United States. This system includes food pantries and soup kitchens. Food pantries offer free food and groceries to those who have homes but are in need. Soup kitchens provide prepared meals for individuals and families. Such organizations often rely on volunteer workers, government aid and the donations of citizens in order to provide freely to the poor and needy.⁸⁶

President Lyndon B. Johnson’s declaration of a “War of Poverty” included myriad programs that lean towards the socialist approach to poverty reduction. His strategies aimed “to relieve and prevent poverty” through the implementation of programs like housing vouchers and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Housing vouchers are a government run program with a goal of putting very low-income, elderly, and disabled members of society into safe and healthy housing through

⁸⁴ See Kentworthy for a further evaluation of social welfare in America.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See Biggerstaff, Morris, and Nichols-Casebolt for a study related to food assistance services.

provisions of a rent subsidy so long as the house meets the program's health and safety standards.⁸⁷ TANF funds are allocated to states by the national government; each state has broad discretion for determining eligibility, benefits, and services of TANF funds. Typically though, TANF programs provide some sort of cash assistance to families who meet specific nonfinancial criteria and specific monthly income guidelines.⁸⁸

Programs like these, though they seem benevolent, raise a number of concerns. One common argument against this approach is that they create a system of dependency and entitlement. For example, the EFR system initially began as a means of temporary assistance during times of economic downturn. When the economy recovered, food banks and soup kitchens would close. However, the programs have become integral to communities. Soup kitchens and food pantries now have permanent residencies, and are an expectation rather than a temporary aid. In regards to welfare, those in opposition argue that citizens receiving welfare benefits have little incentive to move out of their present low-income position because often times, the opportunity costs of returning to work is greater than the financial return they would receive. Instead, they become dependent on welfare checks as a means to support themselves, and have little incentive to work for themselves.

Besides creating a system of dependency, these programs rarely result in long-term effectiveness, because they rarely address the root problems of poverty. They (often) provide free handouts without asking the receivers to provide anything in return. These systems are aimed at reducing poverty rather than at developing independence; they

⁸⁷ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides an extensive overview of the housing voucher program in their *Housing Choice Voucher Fact Sheet*.

⁸⁸ Information drawn from *Policy Basics: An Introduction to TANF*, published by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

allow receivers to become dependent rather than helping them on their feet. Ultimately, they seem ineffective when it comes to raising the impoverished out of poverty.

Those in favor of the progressive approach respond to criticism by arguing that present socially minded efforts are only ineffective because they are not generous enough. In an article evaluating the effectiveness of social welfare as a means for poverty reduction, Lane Kentworthy claims that Americans are actually too stingy when it comes to providing welfare benefits.⁸⁹ Socialist methods, then, should be highly generous in what they offer. Socialist program advocates blame the stinginess of the rich on the fact that members of upper classes are not affected by the same debilitating conditions—like public schools or health policies—with which populations in-need must deal. In this line of thought, it seems ignorance of the upper classes is a propagator of poverty.⁹⁰

Right Wing Politics: “God helps those who help themselves”

On the other side of the spectrum sits an approach that loosely fits under the title of “Free Market Fairness.” Fairness, as opposed to equality, is a key component of this approach. In this mindset, often maintained by conservatives, there is a heavy emphasis on self-ownership and natural rights, and a strong move towards the elimination of government intervention, especially at a federal level. This means that money people make is their own property, earned by their own efforts, and therefore it is an infringement upon a natural right when the government taxes income in order to

⁸⁹ In his article, “Do Social-Welfare Policies Reduce Poverty?” Kentworthy draws a comparison between the U.S. and Canada, a country with which we share similar many economic similarities.

⁹⁰ Smeeding reaches this conclusion after an analysis of trends in economic inequality, the content of which can be found in “Public Policy, Economic Equality, and Poverty.”

“redistribute” wealth. Proponents of this theory suggest that a free market will distribute wealth fairly, though not necessarily evenly.

Perhaps one of the more extreme examples of this type of approach is found in Benjamin Powell’s *Out of Poverty: Sweatshops in the Global Economy*. Powell, a grandchild of sweatshop workers, endorses the maintenance of sweatshops in third world countries, because, he argues, they are in the best interest of the workers there. He acknowledges the “atrocious” conditions are far from ideal. However, under the assumption that this is voluntary labor (though the term “voluntary” seems questionable in situations of life and death), he claims that the conditions are better than the alternatives: prostitution, scavenging, working 7 days a week. He claims society’s aversion to sweatshops primarily evolves from moral guilt, but people fail to realize that by eliminating sweatshops, we put people into worse conditions. Participation in sweatshop labor both allows for the survival of the worker and hopes for the betterment of the worker’s kin.⁹¹

While sweatshop labor provides an extreme example of the free market mindset, it nonetheless highlights the line of thought of this view towards poverty: let those in need work themselves up out of need on their own and *earn* their own money and benefits rather than be handed it. Unfortunately, like the socialist approach discussed above, this approach does not address the core needs of the lower class which, without skills and other things, cannot escape the poverty circle. This approach also provides no safety net in times of tragedy, either economic or personal. For example, a family relying solely on the income of one parent has nowhere to turn should that parent lose his or her job or become incapable of working.

⁹¹ See Powell, especially chapter 1, for a general oversight of the arguments for sweatshop labor.

This excessively conservative approach often hides behind the veneer of meritocracy, a system where the most skilled or intelligent move up while others remain behind. In this system, skilled, driven, and intelligent workers are able to climb fiscal ranks, while uneducated, unskilled citizens are often incapable of maintaining more than a minimum-wage job. The obvious problem with such an approach is the fact that one must assume that the playing field is level, when in fact it is not. In an ideal world, everyone would be equally equipped and prepared to operate in the world. On that assumption, if someone wants money, he or she can work for it and earn it for himself or herself. Unfortunately, the real world rarely equips members of society equally, and any number of reasons can inhibit someone's ability to provide for himself or herself—poor education, disability, criminal pasts, abuse, or neglect to name a few.

Free-market proponents typically vie against government intervention, but often leave the door open for churches and individuals to step in and bring aid to those in need.

Mission Waco's Empowerment Model

The evaluation of Mission Waco in Chapter 2 provided insight regarding the way Dorrell views and implements an empowerment-model. However, Mission Waco is just one empowerment-model being used. This type of model has gained popularity in recent years as an approach to poverty reduction. Therefore, it is useful to define empowerment from a societal view, understand its objectives and subsequently evaluate Mission Waco against such models to determine whether or not it can truly be considered an empowerment model. Then I will compare this to previously discussed approaches to poverty reduction. Finally, I will consider any other components of the organization that make the program particularly effective.

Empowerment. A primary goal of empowerment is to help segments of the population who are in-need develop the capacities and skills they need to solve a problem; in this case, the problem is often related to poverty. In order to accomplish this goal, empowerment models may: provide technical assistance as a means for the individual growth, both as a leader and as a functioning member of society; give members of the population the authority to make personal and societal decisions; and assist in the development of knowledge and the resources necessary to exercise aforementioned choices. Each of these issues focuses on developing capacities of the individual.

However, many empowerment models also incorporate an effort that reaches out to communities as well as individuals. Models look to bridge gaps and enhance bonds among members of various socio-economic classes. Doing so hopes to result in the development of more responsible and thoughtful local leadership.

Lastly, rather than allowing for attitudes of entitlement and dependence, empowerment models strive to stimulate a change in attitude towards self-determination, which in turn decreases dependence, both individual and collective, on external resources (like government aid).⁹²

Considering this definition of an empowerment model, Mission Waco meets all the criteria with flying colors. Not only does its very mission statement reflect the typical of objectives of empowerment models, but the organization also operates in a manner that also reflects these objectives.

⁹² See Zippay for a full definition and evaluation of modern empowerment models.

Previous Models Considered. When compared to other empowerment models, Mission Waco measures up. Next, it is necessary to compare the empowerment model to the two other models discussed previously in this chapter in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the empowerment model, specifically as it takes form in Mission Waco.

One thing that separates Mission Waco, and other empowerment models, from socialist and free market theories is the end goal of long-term effectiveness. Unlike socialist-aligned programs, which tend to provide handouts for the immediate needs (i.e. soup kitchens and food pantries for the immediate need of hunger), Mission Waco specifically addresses an immediate need but ultimately operates for the long term empowerment and betterment of its participants.

Advocates of socialism maintain that the ignorance and lack of compassion of upper classes plays a major role in sustaining the impoverished conditions of the lower-class. Mission Waco addresses this concern head on; the second prong of the organization's mission statement names the mobilization of the middle class as a primary goal of the program. The organization largely depends on the volunteer efforts and contribution of the middle-class for its sustenance. By recruiting the middle-class, Mission Waco ensures that these members of society *do* have to witness the injustices facing the population in-need; by encouraging the development of relationships, Mission Waco fosters in its volunteers a personal connection with and feeling of responsibility towards the poor. In its efforts, Mission Waco helps bridge gaps between various social, economic, and racial barriers and lends members of the upper-class a heart for those in-need.

Another manner in which Mission Waco stands out among some of the more socialist approaches is its requirement of the use of empowerment tools as opposed to empowerment as an optional available resource. Like free-market theories, Mission Waco operates under the belief that the people with problem need to be part of the solution. By requiring participants to partake in available empowerment resources, Mission Waco ensures that its participants are in fact contributing to their own uplifting, deters complete dependence on its aid and ultimately enables self-autonomy.

Contrary to free-market approaches which depend on the market to properly distribute wealth or expect members of society to work themselves out of their unfortunate situations, Mission Waco's method does not perpetuate or ignore the problem, or expect the problem to eventually resolve itself. Instead, members of Mission Waco take an active roll in addressing issues at the heart of poverty, like lack of skills, lack of resources, and social injustices. Additionally, Mission Waco's programs prepare and equip participants for their own personal betterment, contrary to the attitude found in Powell's method which primarily hopes for the betterment of future generations at the expense of the sweatshop worker.

Finally, Mission Waco stands out among other similar programs because it embodies a personal, mutual, relational aspect that dignifies humans. As Buber predicted, the formation of these relationships results in a recognition of responsibility of members of the middle class for members of the lower class. With that said, the emphasis on relationship development also ensures that participants do not become objects of the wills of better-off members of society. It prevents volunteers and workers from viewing participants as a means to assuage feelings of guilt and from viewing themselves as any

sort of savior. Instead, Mission Waco's approach to relationships result in an equality of power that allows for mutual teaching and learning between parties.

As an empowerment-based program, Mission Waco meets goals of both socialist and free-market approaches and provides further benefits of which the other approaches are not capable.

Mission Waco as a Practical Solution. In its 25 years of existence, Mission Waco has experienced continual and evident growth. What began as the informal neighborhood ministry of a couple responding to God's call, today stands as an organization of more than 30 programs aimed at serving an ever-growing population, an organization that has without doubt bettered the lives of countless individuals.

The stories portrayed in Chapter 3 operate as testimonies of Mission Waco's success; however, these seven stories are only a sliver of the myriad "success" stories that have come as a result of the noble efforts of Mission Waco and its participants. The portraits all proclaim that Mission Waco as an organization is an effective means for combatting social injustices, and that the empowering relationships formed between the workers and participants of Mission Waco are indeed transformational. Thanks to the efforts of Mission Waco, drug addicts recover from addictions; formerly homeless people are able to sustain themselves; in spiritual terms, lives are turned toward Christ, addictions and bad habits of various kinds lain at the foot of the cross; in practical terms, lives gone awry are turned around.

Through the analysis of Mission Waco found in Chapter 2, the various portrayals of the organization provided by the portraits in Chapter 3, and the evaluation of Mission Waco against other poverty-reduction approaches as presented in this chapter, it can

confidently be concluded that, as a model aimed at aiding a population in-need, Mission Waco is both practical and effective.

Compassion. Mission Waco should not, however, only be evaluated based on the approaches and goals of other models. The organization is fundamentally and unabashedly Christian-based; such an identity provides Mission Waco with an avenue for serving which is not necessarily embraced, at least not in the same manner, by government or secular programs and models. This unique avenue offered to Mission Waco is that of Christian compassion.

Most modern dictionaries define “compassion” as somewhere along the lines of a feeling of sympathy for the misfortunes of others.⁹³ These definitions, however, do not convey the entire significance of the word at its roots. “Compassion” is derived from Latin roots “cum” and “patior.” “Cum” is a preposition meaning “together with; on the side of; in company with (as opposed to being alone); simultaneously with.”⁹⁴ “Patior,” a verb, translates as “to experience (an emotion); to suffer, undergo”⁹⁵ or “to bear, support, undergo, suffer, endure.”⁹⁶ In light of these translations, “compassion” transforms from a mere feeling of sympathy for others to an experiential act of coming alongside and joining in the sufferings of others. a definition embodied by the ideals of Christianity.⁹⁷

⁹³ The Oxford Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, and Dictionary.com provide similar definitions of the word.

⁹⁴ An extensive translation of the word may be found in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ As defined in *A Latin Dictionary*.

⁹⁷ This definition can be found reflected in numerous verses throughout the Bible, but is most evident in the following: “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part rejoices, every part rejoices with it” (*1 Cor. 12:26*); “Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep” (*Rom. 12:15*); and “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (*Gal. 6:2*).

Mission Waco is not a model that allows suffering because it is a type of suffering superior to the alternatives. Similarly, Mission Waco does not act in response to feelings of sympathy towards those who suffer. Instead, the organization meets people in their places of suffering, comes together with them, and walks beside them as they endure hardships and trials. Furthermore, in coming together with those who are suffering, the members and volunteers of Mission Waco intentionally enter into relationships in such a way that opens their own hearts to experience such suffering alongside and simultaneously with the participants. Together, all involved in Mission Waco experience, support, endure, bear, and suffer not alone but in the company of others.

Above all, Mission Waco commits to living and experiencing life in the company of friends. The organization's commitment to Christian ideals necessitates that compassion lies at the core of Mission Waco's operations. Those involved in Mission Waco walk together in community through both the highs and lows of life. And, as Laelius proclaims, is there no better gift given to man than such friendships? "Is not prosperity robbed of half its value if you have no one to share your joy? On the other hand, misfortunes would be hard to bear if there were not someone to feel them even more acutely than yourself."⁹⁸

Such is the inevitable outcome of invested relationships formed out of the desire sparked by an encounter with God. Moreover, relationships pursued in this manner are surrounded by a powerful abundance of love, out of which flows dignity, empowerment, and compelling transformations of life. Although Mission Waco does not specifically define itself as a compassion-based model, it is impossible to deny that Mission Waco is anything but. With compassion saturating its entire existence, Mission Waco stands today

⁹⁸ Refer to Cicero's *On Friendship*, 6.

as a unified community in which each and every relationship formed points back to God, whose very presence dwells in his rightful place at the center.

Final Reflection

To be human is to encounter other humans and relate to them in some way. He who lives without relationships does not live as a human. Upon entering relationships, man is naturally inclined to feel moved by the sufferings of those with whom he relates; often, he is moved by the mere knowledge of the sufferings of others, whether or not he knows them intimately.

While people argue endlessly about its causes and offer myriad means of addressing it, poverty is a vast and undeniable presence both locally and globally. Just as few would argue against the assertion of poverty as an issue which should be addressed in some manner or another, “few will dispute that a person in abject condition, deprived of adequate means of subsistence, or denied the opportunity to work, suffers a profound affront to his sense of dignity and intrinsic worth.”⁹⁹ Most humans, whether or not they have experienced abject circumstances to such an extent, will sympathize with the sufferings of others, or at the very least acknowledge their struggles. To what degree and in what manner humans are convicted by and act upon these feelings of sympathy varies greatly.

Whether sprung from moral, social, or religious obligations, the human feeling of responsibility for others, particularly those in less fortunate circumstances, is by no means singular to Christianity, nor even to religion as a whole. In the same way, feelings of compassion exist in far greater a number than those who call themselves Christians.

⁹⁹ Find Schachter’s full discussion of dignity in *Human Dignity as a Normative Concept*.

However, as evidenced by Mission Waco, compassion is perhaps made most poignant when it dovetails with the Christian experience.

One last turn to Buber allows for a final reminder that knowledge of and relation with God grants love of mankind. An encounter with God transforms the way one views the world, allowing each to consider all as existing in God, and nothing existing apart from God. Seeing humankind in this manner allows us to borrow from God's view of man, a view that considers each person as a whole and unique creation desperately yearning for love. It is then out of pure desire, rather than any form of obligation, that the person who has encountered God responds with love. Relationships are then formed between people who embrace the entirety of others and place themselves in a position of vulnerability by allowing others to do the same of them.

Knowledge of a whole person entails knowledge of their suffering. And Christianity, when done right, embraces suffering, rather than flees from it. Mission Waco, mirroring the direction of its founder and director, nobly embraces the suffering of all who it encounters. In doing so, Mission Waco does Christianity honorably and ultimately results in a community centered on God, with its members continuously encountering the eternal.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview with Jimmy Dorrell, Director of Mission Waco, October 22, 2015

Prior to starting MW, what need did you see in Waco that needed to be addressed?

1 While I was at Baylor, I became a youth director when I was 19 and I grew up in the 60s—a very divided and racial culture—and while I was a youth director, I was called by an African American pastor to come over to his church in a little area of town called No Man's Land. No Man's Land was this incredibly poor area that neither Waco nor Bellmead wanted and, because I had grown up in a very racialized culture, it was a very big step for me to go over there and meet the pastor... The poverty there was overwhelming. I saw this man living in this house that had a tree going through the front porch, and he was blind, rats and roaches in his house. It was just the ugly side of poverty. So that was at 19. And then I stuck around town and after I youth directed for 5 years, I got to work at the state home, with broken kids from all kinds of abuse and neglect. So that was my background. The community basically reshaped my sense of call.

After that I went on to graduate school, I went to Houston to work, Jan and I got married and had a baby, and we ended up going on a world trip and that world trip was when we saw the pain of the world's poverty. At the end of the trip we said, "what are we going to do with our lives?", and with Waco's poverty and our connections here we decided this was the best place, it was just right to come back and at that point we dove into it.

What did you initially intend for the program to be? What vision did you have?

2 Well, we work more out of principles than vision. We are not the kind of people in philosophy of ministry that work from what I would call a "strategic plan." We work from what's called "bottom up." Most people, especially corporate models go in and say, "Here's what we're gonna do to help them out." Our deal is we listen to the people themselves. So it was bottom up where, as we hung out with the children and the teens and the parents, they would say, "we really need jobs," or "my husband is struggling with drugs or alcohol" or "we don't have food." The community, the neighborhood that we lived in—and are still living in—became the guide by which we chose the programs. And that's still true today, 23 years later.

We just bought the building across the street that was a Safeway in 1930. Our neighbors have to walk two-and-a-half miles to go to the grocery store, so we bought the building, invited the neighborhood to come, said "what do y'all want it to be?", and they said a grocery store. So we're looking at that right now, trying to see if we can pull it off, but that's the way we think and operate. Everything's kind of organic, that's the word we would use a lot.

You mentioned you're more principle-based...

3 Ya... we prefer to develop leadership and let the community...we think it's a little bit disrespectful to come in and tell people what they need to do and that we're here to help them out, so leadership development, um, the dignity I think is the big deal. I have to categorize a little bit because this is North Waco and our area which is so poor historically, not so poor now, but we have the homeless all over town, we have the Church Under the Bridge, which is separate from Mission Waco but it's a different kind of group. The model that we work, and it's the same model we use in Haiti—we do water wells, we do micro credit loans, we do fair trade—but it's the same thing. We don't go in to fix the people, we go in to listen to them, engage them with us. We're about to put in solar panels in this one village in Haiti that they each had to do 65 hours of volunteerism before we would do that because they need to do something, there needs to be engagement.

So we're not a relief agency, we're an empowerment-based model so these principles drive whatever we do, wherever we go.

What biblical principles would you say are your founding guides?

4 God's concern for the poor is huge, there are more verses in the Bible about wealth and poverty than there are about heaven and hell, it's a major theme in the Scriptures. So there's all those. There are isolated stories I could talk out of that but basically the dignity of the poor, that God sees them not only as vulnerable but also even as the teachers. Jesus talks about the woman that gave her last mite and said, this is the way you give, generosity is the sacrifice of this one poor widow, not the Pharisee banging on the deal and saying "look what I gave."

So it's the thematic stuff of how Jesus relates to people, it's the stopping to help the woman with the issue of blood on the way to this big meeting with the leader of the synagogue and he feels the touch of this broken and bleeding woman in the middle of the market place and the disciples are pretty frustrated because he's not going on to this other meeting. It's the principles of who he was, stopping at the water well for the woman with the five husbands, eating with the tax collectors, touching the lepers, those are the models. Touching is our model, not case management. We're still gonna do case management sometimes but it's more about this... as we understand God through Christ, how did he deal with people?

And I guess that's where you see a lot of the not having an agenda, just stopping where you see the need.

5 Right, and there is this tension between both of those because we're not wandering around looking for things to do, we do have plans, we do have a board of directors, we do have a budget. We do have the macro things that have matured our organization—we have a 20-person board of directors and very clear guidelines and byelaws and financial requirements. So there's that side where we do very well. We're really committed to financial integrity and transparency about who we are, those are big deals to us because we think, especially for a Christian organization, we should be

beyond reproach in everything we do. So there is a sense of guiding, we do have a bottom up mindset that says, "how do we do what we do next", but then we sustain the programs we have, we build them, we mature them, all that.

You mentioned how you're not looking to fix these people but empower them, and that's been a theme through all the models I'm looking at, the whole idea that people aren't projects, they're people, human beings. Even in your mission statement, you have "relationship-based empowerment", How do you guys work to establish those relationships?

6 It's individual, there's a corporate expectation that we set the bar around, train around that, do staff retreats, but we tell the stories of respect, anecdotally we'll talk about some of the things that have happened that affirm...to tell one story, there's a girl who prostituted herself for years named Libby, she was on these streets for years and years. Now she's not only a Christian but she attends mission trips with us, she's been to Haiti with us, she came to the conference we had last week in Austin, she's just one of us.

So it's not a matter of going to help those poor people and get them to follow Jesus, it's about, how do we get her to be all that God created her to be? And so people...it's obvious it's what we do. You see us hang out with people, and we try to give...the nobody in the culture's eyes is just as important as the rich guy. We're very big on no favoritism. We say if the president shows up to Church Under the Bridge, he's not gonna get any more, um, not any better seat than the guy in the back row. We think there's some biblical principles that I—and church is separate from Mission Waco, those are two separate organizations, but sometimes church shows those principles better—but I don't let anyone call me Reverend, I'm not any more important than the poorest woman there, and so there are certain things you have to fight because people wanna make you a hero or make you special and give you a parking place, and it's like, no, I'm just Jimmy. So it's our culture, especially in our religious culture we're still doing the pre-reformation clergy-lady split thing and we don't buy that. I think the principles help the staff get it, so when they see the value we give people, they know it's not just telling, they see it visually.

And why do you think that whole concept is so important to helping empower them?

7 Well poor people are not dumb people. There's this sense where it's almost like we have this inflated ego that somehow we know we're really helpful and we've got better education and more resources and so the very way, when you meet with a poor person, they know if you're seeing them as the project. They can see in your eyes if you're listening to their conversation or if you're coming over to take their picture so you can put it on the refrigerator. So it's, um, we do have to...There are certain people, especially early in it who don't get it and we have to say, you know, you probably better but your camera away... But when the poor know that they're respected, it hits the streets, but they can tell. And there's always gonna be a handful of people who are manipulative, using everybody, their framework is so warped, they're always gonna blame the system, blame the salvation army or Mission Waco, you know, "oh they're making big money over there," you'll always have that handful of people just because

their hearts are so hard and twisted, but the majority of people that we're around feel like they're important to us because they see us and out of that respect they begin to grow and listen and hear us when we do a Bible study or talk about something.

And we ask their opinions, like the grocery story over here, we brought them together and said here's a list of 12-15 things we've heard about, tell us what you think is most important and what do you value and we'll start there and that's what we've done. When you feel respected and encouraged, you grow, when you feel like you're told how bad you are because you're doing something wrong or you can't, it just beats you down even more and they hear so many negative things anyway.

In general, do you go out and seek people or do they tend to come to you?

8 The environment dictates that. There are times, like we're about to do a new job training program for this area, specifically targeting 16-24 year olds for this area. So we will go door to door and invite them, if they're looking for a job to come. So in that sense, we go out, but we're not...we've got a lot of programs that people know, if you need to get clean and sober you can come try to get in our alcohol rehab program. There's a lot of...I guess the programs dictate in many cases. But then there are times, and we think, and I think I have this idea because I've been doing it so many years, that people should know who we are, but sometimes they don't, or they know one piece about us but not the other. So there is a sense where we recruit, I say recruit, but we remind people that we do job training, and they'll say, "oh I didn't know y'all did that I thought you just did Church Under the Bridge." It is a sense of educating and doing some PR just to make sure people have accurate information.

And when you do go out and approach them, it's not in a preachy sense, it's more of, we're here to help you, this is who we are?

9 Right, right, our model is very, we use the word "holistic" a lot, and I have a whole talk on that with the background of the world, it really means, "I'm going to meet you where you are and I'm going to listen to you" and in relationships, the conversation's going to come up about your faith or your lack of faith or you're gonna ask us questions before we ask you. So it's all out of these relationships that it becomes more natural. We don't do evangelistic trips. But we do embrace... evangelism and social action are all tied together, that's the whole gist of it.

You've already kind of touched on it, but what do you think separates MW from other relief organizations?

10 Well it's the empowerment piece for sure. I mean we're not the only empowerment group, but when we started MW most everything that was helpful was food pantries, clothes closets, they were meeting immediate needs. Our deal was, let's look at the root causes if we can, let's get to know you and then if you're here and you wanna be there, what are the things in your life that need to happen to help you get there?

So with the empowerment—when people come to the Myers Center, our main center where people in need come first, many of them are told falsely, go over there,

they'll turn your lights back on. Well we don't do that, but if they do come over for the right reasons, we have a social worker who will sit down and say ok, tell us your story, what's going on in your situation right now, what do you need? "I need shelter, I need to get clean and sober," whatever it is. So there's this listening to the story, social worker model that embraces them. And I mean you can't fix someone who doesn't want to be clean and sober so we don't let everyone into the alcohol and drug rehab program, but if we know they're ready and we have room for them, we let them in.

So it's individualized but it's also corporate in the sense that people in the community by and large now know...another example that's illustrative of our model, in just a few weeks we'll have churches, we have a biker toy run and they'll go to 20 churches. The churches will have been collecting new unwrapped toys, we'll pick up thousands of toys, or other individuals and college students will give us toys. We turn the children's center into a toy store and for four different days, the poor can come shop. You give me a \$10 toy, we're gonna sell it to them for \$2, so it's an 80% discount, gives them dignity. That way the mom and dad get to buy it for their own kid and put it under their own tree, so that's got dignity written in it.

So the very model of how we do things builds that, that word gets out, but it's always slow so there's still people out there that think, well I'm gonna go to MW and get some food, and that's not what we're about.

So establishing our deal, because so many people think if you're working with the poor, you're giving stuff away and that's not our framework.

In *Love Does*, Bob Goff talks about how broken people, broken things he believes can be used more effectively. Would you agree with that, and have you seen it occur in MW?

11 Absolutely, yes. I mean again, to give you another example, have you been to CUB before? Have you seen Patrick the black guy who plays like he's playing the guitar? Patrick is a nonverbal statement of how we value people. He can't play, he can't sing, but he is important. So I think the broken, what's the word.... "wounded healer" mindset that says, you know what, the best teacher about how to get over divorce is not me with a doctorate of marriage and family over here, counseling you, it's the person who went through the divorce and successfully over time got through the pain and has a light still.

So the wounded healer model is very...the Libbys I talked about, the people who are broken, they're the ones that motivate our people particularly. They'll listen to me, and they respect me, and I'll do a lot of teaching around certain things, but there's also the anecdotal things where they think, ok if she can do it, I can do it.

What do you think the legacy of MW is? as far as the city, have you seen a change in the city? You talk about wanting to get the middle class involved in this, have you seen that happen?

12 I've definitely seen the middle class, that's one of our strengths, because our second goal is mobilize the middle class. We counted up the other day, we've been doing the poverty simulation almost 30 years, and 15 times a year, so that's like 15, 000 people. And this isn't just Waco people, this is obviously out of city people too. But the impact of that, the other side of Waco tours, the Friday morning breakfasts, the come to the shelter

and do devotionals... Mobilizing is that piece where here they are, this is where I want them to be. They're not going to change overnight but what are these steps that they need to have. So it's not just residual, it's very intentional.

And in our minds some of them are more broken than the poor people we work with. We don't look at the rich as having it all together, sometimes they're more hardened and warped and influences hurt them as much and sometimes more than the poor.

Because of the number of years we've been doing this—I sat at a meeting yesterday at the bank and I was the only nonprofit sitting with the news media and the bankers—we've earned, not earned, we've been blessed with an invitation to sit among the community and talk about the elephant in the room which is the poverty in Waco. And so we have voice and we have friends that we can call on. I've got the mayor on speed dial, I can call on people and so that's the fun of being old and doing this a long time, there is mutual respect. And we can't cure poverty alone, in a little isolated silo, you've got to have the power and the players and the jobs. (21:58)

APPENDIX B

Interview with Kathy Wise, Assistant Director, October 29, 15

Before we start, could you explain briefly your history with the program and how you ended up getting involved with it?

1 Sure, I was with a group in Gatesville, which is a small town about 45 minutes from here. I went to Baylor and I was a business major, graduated in 1981. Then I went to Alexander, Virginia, right outside of D.C. and I worked in business there for about 10 years and then I was on a church staff for 5 years.

During the church staff time, one of my jobs was helping the church get involved out in the community. So we had all sorts of things going, English as a second language, department ministries, that kind of stuff. And I found that's where I was happiest, the things that were involved with the community and getting our church—it was a typical city church in the sense that a lot of middle class and upper class people and mainly white, and the world around us very diverse, a lot of refugees all over the place from other cultures and everything, but our church was just not that. At the time, I remember every day we would go out to the apartments and I would go out to meet the bus when the kids got off, and then our volunteers we would go back later that night. And, like I said, I just found that that's where I would be happy and I thought, this is really something. I remember thinking, what if I lived here? What if I just moved over here? But then I thought, oh everybody would think I'm absolutely crazy. I couldn't think of one person that would move with me.

2 And so, I was beginning at that point to think about seminary and had a lot of people encouraging me that way. So I thought maybe when I leave to seminary I'd wanna go ahead and relocate to a diverse neighborhood. So I ended up, I was looking at seminaries around the country and every one that I would go to I would say, "tell me some place around town that you would recommend I go to if I wanted to get involved somewhere." So one of my visits was Truett, and they actually told me about Mission Waco. I remember I came down to what was then the main office and met with them. Interestingly though, I didn't get involved with them when I first came, I ended up, I just forgot about it or something, I'm not sure.

But I ended up coming back to Truett, that was in 1996, and I got involved with Highland Baptist, because at that time Antioch was not yet formed, and Antioch was part of Highland so everyone involved with Antioch was over there. Jimmy Sibert was the college minister then, they had birthed Antioch Ministries which was starting some church plants, but just a few, they didn't have all the ones they have now. So then, in 1999...but it was the only church I could find at that time that was active out in the community. They had a thing called Last Hour Sunday School, they would have regular hour Sunday school first and then for second hour we would run the buses and bring the

kids in and it was kind of an outreach Sunday school. So I drove the buses and went and visited kids and stuff with that.

3 And so, in 1998, the house next door to me, the neighbors had been graduate students and they graduated and they sold the building and a landlord made it Section 8 housing. So these two African American families moved in next door. I was so excited. Even the other neighbors around, I was getting to know some people a little bit. But almost from—I guess they moved in in January so in April and twice in August and once in December my home was burglarized by people from that house. So, I jokingly call it the “neighborhood watch program.” You know how they have official neighborhood watch programs and most of the time it’s you looking out for your neighbors? Well in our neighborhood they look to see when you’re gone and then they break in. So they’re watching you, it’s just a different kind of watching.

But it freaked me out, I’d never had that happen before and I remember I was crying and you know, I was gone one afternoon and I came home and the bedroom window had been broken out, the bedroom had been ransacked. The second time they broke in, or the third time I guess it was, they just totally tore up my bedroom looking for whatever they could find, you know. And, uh, so you know, I was mad, I was hurt, I was, you know ‘cause I had tried to get to know the families and you know, it was just, I was scared a little bit and I’m not usually a scared person.

4 So I was just wrestling with all that, but then as I reflected on it, I mean I was really praying a lot and my friends and family that were from Virginia, my family particularly, they were like, “do you need to be living there, should you move?” But I knew that God had sent me to that house, I really felt like he had, I remember as I was finding that house. So I thought, no, I think I’m supposed to stay here but I need to keep working through this, praying through this, and so when I ended up getting...as I was talking with people and praying about it, I thought the Lord was really leading me to, number one, living with other people, I didn’t need to be living by myself, I needed to find other people that were committed to this idea of neighboring and intentional...you know, being a neighbor in that way. And then also, I needed to find a group of people too that were moving toward these diverse relationships and could maybe help me navigate that.

5 And I had heard Jimmy speak, Truett had a table at the Mission Waco banquet that they invited students to come sit at the table, so I’d gone to that and heard Jimmy. And then there was a Women in Ministry group that met at Truett and they had invited Janet to come speak one night, and she kept telling story after story of all these friendships that she had. She would stop at the end of each one and say, “If you don’t have a relationship with an inner city kid, you’re missing out on a blessing,” and then she would tell a story, “if you don’t have a relationship with an elderly person in a nursing home that’s low income, you’re missing out on a blessing,” “if you don’t have a relationship with a global, you know whatever, you’re missing out on a blessing.” So she was just hitting me right where I am, ‘cause I was wanting these diverse, intentional friendships.

And the other thing, back to when I was praying and reflecting on all this, I realized it wasn’t just about this one family next to me that I was having trouble with, that just in general, in two years of living there in that house, the only people I had exchanged phone numbers with were the only other white middle-class educated women in the neighborhood. There were only three, but I had found them and exchanged phone

numbers with them. But I hadn't exchanged phone numbers with anybody else. So even though, when I'm living up in northern Virginia and I'm thinking, oh if I live in the middle of this it will be easy to have these diverse friendships. But here I'm living in the middle of it, and I'm still not doing it. So it was just kind of like, oh gosh I'm really a mess, I need help with this.

6 So that led me to Mission Waco and I came over to volunteer. We had a computer lab up here at the time where the Urban Arts thing is, and so I came one night a week and I would work with whoever showed up. Matter of fact it was one lady, I think her name was Dorris, and she was this...some role she had at her church was to print the bulletin each week for her church, and she didn't know how to do it on the Mac. We had the old Macs back when they very first, you know the ones with the little screens, and I had a little bit of desktop publishing background. So I would sit with her and we would do her Sunday bulletin.

And then Jimmy was starting what they called the Urban Institute at the time, which was one year or nine months, basically like an Antioch training school for urban ministry. And so that was coinciding with the time I was finishing up seminary. So I thought, you know, this is important, and I was thinking if I was gonna go work in a church I'd probably be a missions pastor 'cause I'd be interested in that, and I thought, I can't go do that, I don't know how to build relationships. And I'm thinking, this is important, if I'm gonna go do this, I would just be such a hypocrite to go to some church and be there to lead them in mission if I can't even build relationships across diverse cultures in Waco. So I was like, I need to do something about that. So I thought, let me just stay here for a year or two, kind of, you know, just really see what I can soak in. And then, after I got here, I realized how much I still didn't know, so I thought, I think I need to stay a few more years, and then I've been here since.

So, and I ended up coming on, they had a job open up right as I was finishing in 2000, I was finishing up the Urban Institute, and I had told Jimmy a couple months before, "you know, I really feel like I need to stay for another year or two, if you have a job that you think would be a good fit for me, I'll be looking for a job, if you don't I'll just get a neighborhood job doing something." I really thought what I'd do is go work at the 17th and Waco Drive Mexican restaurant, see if they would hire me so I could learn Spanish (9:40), I didn't care if I'm dish-washing or something. I live pretty simply and I don't have many bills so I thought maybe that would work. But anyway, Jimmy ended up hiring me. They had a, he was working on a dissertation and so the board had approved of hiring him an assistant, a full-time assistant for six months while he worked on his dissertation. So it was basically a six-month job that turned into 15 years.

Funny how that happens, huh?

7 Ya. So that's how I got here, it's a long story, I'm sorry but it's kind of interesting in the sense of, I tell people that all the time...

<server comes to talk to Kathy>

8 So ya, that's kind of the, I always tell people that are here, it's like I came out of my own need. Cause I think we all kind of, we're asking these questions. And I guess one

thing that's important for why I stayed, too, is that before I came to seminary, I had kind of a crisis of belief in my own life, and I had just realized that I'd really been blind to some things that I needed to deal with in terms of integrity in my life and getting some counseling and help for some areas and wounds that I had not dealt with. I think that prepared me to be wanting a place like this, and that's one of the reasons I've stayed too. And Church Under the Bridge too, is that having a place that you can be yourself and be accepted for yourself, and that it's also valued that you work through your junk, I appreciate that, and so that's an important part of why I stay, is because I need to be here. This is a safe place for me in that sense. I myself spent too many years just playing Christian and lying basically to save face or to make things look right or to try to make everything good. So, anyway.

That's really cool to hear that, because that's one thing you'd expect to hear from all the people that they reach out to. So it's cool to hear it from the working side of things, that the program can still have that impact.

9 Uh-huh, ya, oh and I tell the guys at the Manna House all the time, it's our recovery house, you know 'cause there are always new guys coming through—even yesterday I was with a few of them going to do some service projects, and um, two of them that I hadn't met before, and you know, I said, "Listen, we admire you guys for what you're doing," and I said, "it's always a reality check for us when we're not wanting to deal with our own issues that come up, that here you guys are living it, every day," and it's like, that's hypocritical for us to be sitting over here going, ya I'm fine, and then they're having to do this really soul-searching work and all that kind of thing.

Alright, I'll dig into the questions now. So, from your understanding, on what biblical principles or examples is the program founded?

10 Right, um....

Or even just ideas.

11 Well I like, um, I like the Luke, you know when Jesus is—

<someone searching for Kathy>

12 Anyway, I love where Jesus introduces himself and his ministry, saying that, so we have it straight from his mouth, of what he's saying is important. What he's coming to do is to bring freedom to those that are oppressed and to bring good news to those that are poor. So what does that look like? And you know, certainly, do we really even know about oppression? You know, do we have any, especially those of us who are middle- and upper- class, we can say—

<server comes>

13 So uh, just thinking about, why is this good news and then how do we, what's happening in our daily lives that we're part of the good news? And so when you're—have y'all done poverty simulation?

No, not yet.

14 Ok you need to do it, if you want to understand Mission Waco, you can't do that without poverty simulation. You've gotta do it to get your thesis done, 'cause you can't if you don't. There's just no way to be authentic, 'cause that's just, that will help you much more than talking to me will. Everybody in America should do it. Even people that have grown up in poverty.

You know I grew up in a, certainly compared to the world I'm wealthy, and certainly compared to probably most Americans I'm wealthy, because just family, you know, more than anything I did, I just happened to be born into a family that had access to jobs and education and that kind of stuff. And so with, um with, so what do we know about oppression and what sounds like good news to us? You know, I think learning how to—I love the fact that we build the empowerment into our programs and to me, that's part of the freedom, you know, that's part of the freedom from oppression, that you have the ability, you've been given gifts by God and they're, you know, um, how do we help you live in the joy of those and how do we help you have some of the basics in your life so that your brain is free to give those too? Because if you don't have the survival things, then that's what's taking every bit of your energy, and so there's some gift I think of letting people have a place and space to learn that their gifts are accepted.

15 Henri Nouwen, one of my favorite authors, and I consider his writing to be a mentor to me over the years, two books that I love that I would recommend that you read, one's called In the Name of Jesus. It's very short, I read it every year with our summer interns and every time I read it I think, this is one of the most succinct ways to think about "what's the core of my life, what are my submotives that are sabotaging me from being free," you know? Anyway, I love that book.

And then there's also another book he wrote called Gracias that's his diary of when he was considering whether or not he was to live his life among the poor in South America. He ended up going to live in Canada with mentally ill people but, which there's a little story in In the Name of Jesus that's really sweet about that, but the Gracias one, one of his core—the book is called Gracias and it's basically, he, there's an entry on Oct. 31, I always remember that's what the date was on it, and it said, he said that the problem with mission work for most Christians is that gratitude is missing and that we see it as us bringing the good news to the poor ignorant people. And he said that attitude, there's not much space for gratitude, and he said instead, if we can look at it as the Spirit of God created in me connecting with the Spirit of God created in you and that my goal as a missionary or as someone that's doing mission work is to help uncover your hidden gifts as a source of celebration in the community. You see that?

16 So that's empowerment, right? That's also good news for the poor because they're loved, they're accepted, they're part of this body of Christ and part of the church. And so, he has lots of other good things, it's one of those books that's hard to get through because you stop every five pages going, ok I need to think about that for a while. I think it took me like two years to read it, seriously, because I decided I wasn't just gonna stop,

I wasn't gonna keep going if there was something I needed to think through, and so I would just stop, and I would go back to it again a little bit, and you know I finally made it all the way through once. Probably should reread it, I pretty much got some of it memorized, but anyway.

He has a couple of other good things in there that talk about the two most dangerous motivations for serving, and one of those is, or the two of them are, a desire to save, so if we are trying to be the savior to someone, how dangerous that is because it takes away the power of God in that person's life. And then the other one is guilt, that if we're serving out of motivation to assuage our own guilt over what's happened in our own lives, either what we've done or haven't done, we have too much money or we have too many things and so we just serve trying to help or hope maybe we'll feel better if we help somebody else, you know, that that takes away the power of God in our life to deal with those issues. And so he said that if we're, so the other two, so the two he says are most healthy, or the things that we need as a basis of our serving are gratitude, thankfulness, and also humility that we are at, we are all at the base of the cross together, kneeling in need of a savior. And so that, there's that this is, you know, I'm here to help because I've been in need before and that's one of the hardest things, that's why poverty sim is so good because it helps you recognize what it feels like to be in need a little bit, because that's also what we tend to not know.

So would you say those attitudes are reflected by MW?

17 I hope so, ya, I mean I hope that's the case. You know, I mean....ya I hope so. So I kind of got off on Nouwen instead of the Bible but it kind of ties in with that—

<server comes again>

18 So the agenda of MW, well you've seen our mission statement so, empowering the poor through relationship-based programs or Christian-based, relationship-based programs and um, then mobilizing the middle class to, and others, to respond to poverty with compassion and in a not judging attitude, so that's also part of it.

Since you're talking about the mission statement, do you want to go down to the question, you have that MW is a relationship-based program. How do y'all work to establish those relationships?

19 Sure, ya, uh, well you know with the, it depends on the program of course, but I would say that authentic relationship is that it, we're trying to not make it based on—if it's an empowering relationship then it's also not based on what we are giving and they are getting, it's based on some mutuality. So, trying to figure out what, is there ways that the participants can give back in the program. So like at the shelter, they get three nights free and then they're paying \$2 a night for 30 days and then \$5 a night for the next 30 days. And if they can't come up with the money then they need to do a little volunteer work or something, something to get in their mindset that, I need to give something back here, you know. And, but that adds a sense of mutuality to it where it's not just all on the giving side.

And I would say, just my whole goal of being here was just to try to figure out how to have these kind of relationships and again, coming from education and wealth and having a job my whole life, or my whole adult life, you know, car, transportation, place to live, you know all that kind of stuff, stability, it's easy for me—I don't want the relationships to be out of what I have to give to them. I want it, it's a constant, I think sort of a letting go of what do I have power over to see is there a way, um...and one of the main relationships that's been a real teaching to me has been with a lady named Libby McCollum. Have you met her?

No, I haven't met her yet.

20 Ok, ya, she is, when we first got to be friends she was homeless and that was in 2002 and she didn't get in to an apartment until 2011. So for the first 9 years that we were friends, she was homeless and I had a place to live and so, um, you know how do you build a friendship through that? And so I think in my hope was that we would someday be able to have a mutual friendship and you know there's, if I'm just absolutely honest, there's times that it feels that it is, but most of the time I still have to kind of really use care not to be dominant in the friendship.

Even yesterday, she has a dog that someone left at her house a year or two ago, and they've been taking care of it, and she really just doesn't have the money, and she finally decided, I'd been telling her I thought she ought to get rid of it, give the dog up, but she finally decided to, so we went to the animal shelter yesterday to see if she could drop the dog off. And she doesn't have the money right now to pay but I told her that I would pay it and then she could pay me back, 'cause she gets a little bit of a disability check each month, and her husband just started a new job. But again, I could just say I'm gonna pay for that, but I know the better thing is to, because she needs to own that, you know what I mean? Instead of just me taking care of it for her. But we're down at the shelter and the attendant there, 'cause it turns out they can't take the dog because you have to have an appointment. Well I had looked online, and I said, "I'm sorry I didn't see anything about that," and they're like, no you're gonna need to come back next week. And I was thinking, ok here we're taking an hour out of work to go pick her up, drive down there, and in my mind I'm thinking that's been a wasted hour, you know. And so Libby kept looking at me, needing me to, because she doesn't have a car and also just anytime she's doing something like this is kinda new, she likes me to be there with her because I know how to do it and she doesn't know how to do it. But I'm also trying to let her loose. So I'm stepping back, literally, physically, so that she's the one dealing with the lady. But when the lady's asking her questions, then Libby's looking over at me, so then the lady's looking at me and I don't mind, you know, but at the same time I'm conscious of, this needs to be Libby's thing, so even when we're doing the appointment card, the lady tried to hand me the appointment card, even though she had been talking to Libby the whole time. So I was like, no you can give it to her, you know.

21 So it's just little things like that that you're constantly having to think about so that you can give the power away so that she's responsible for that. And you know, I can coach, I can support, I can be there with her with it, you know. I think she looks at me as a big sister I would say—at times I probably try, in the early days I really was trying to

solve her problems. And it, and she didn't like that and it was difficult for us. So we've been through a lot of ups and downs in her life.

22 One of the things, just a small thing, but every year when it's her birthday, the month before she has reminded me its gonna be her birthday because I always take her and a couple of her friends to dinner. She loves to go to Summer Palace Chinese restaurant, so we go to dinner there. So we've been doing that for probably 10 years now, I guess. Because I think about, she has had so few things to celebrate in her life, and there was a time even when she didn't want to live, so the fact that she's willing to go, you know, "let's remind you that you're alive today." And so two years ago, she said, at the party, "you know what I want to do for my 50th birthday? I wanna have a sock hop, a 50s party" and like poodle skirts and that stuff. And I said, that's fun, and the whole group of us was there and I said, "Libby, can I just say that I love hearing you say that because there were years in the past that you didn't even want to be alive," I said, "do you realize what you just did? You were planning for the future." So anytime I can affirm that kind of stuff and just model, just speak, 'cause she doesn't know that language, she doesn't know that's what she just did. But if I can tell her that's what you just did, that's a sign of maturity, you know, that's a, and the fact that she's even taking this dog to the shelter, and she said, "I prayed about it," and the fact that she still wanted to do it, she told me Friday and that she still wanted to do it Monday and she told me again, and then we went and did it Wednesday and now we're gonna have to wait another week, and she still wants to do it then. That's a big deal because in the past it would have been, no, I can't let that dog go, it would be all this drama about it. And now she's like, no it needs to happen.

23 So I mean, little things like that, we high five all the time for whatever we high five for, but I'm also trying to learn, when things don't go well is to not dog her about it and just say, does that make you sad? And just letting her feel, and I think that's one of the key things even in our early friendship that we learned was helping her learn, that it's okay for us to be disappointed with each other and that's part of friendship and close relationships, that we don't have to just burn the bridge if it didn't go well, but we can regroup and we can try again and say we're sorry and tell what we thought about it. So that kind of stuff. So that gets into the, for me that's how we establish the programs, I mean that's more personal than program based, but—

But it still reflects on how that works.

24 Ya exactly.

I'll make this my last question, it kind of veers off of that one, but most of my models have this whole idea of people being human beings and not just projects, not just people to throw money at or projects to be fixed and that's definitely, I've seen that in MW as well. So why do you think having that view of people is so important? Why is the relationship aspect so important to the empowerment and why does that make a difference versus just, "here's money, here's a food pantry"?

25 Ya, ya, ya. Well. I wanna say it feels right. Uh, I mean to me it goes back again to the question of, who are they created by God to be, because if we're trying to get back

to that core identity, you know. And if we also know that the world just isn't fair, you know, so it's like the—why did I get born into the family I got born into and Libby got born into hers? It's like, I'm no different than...I mean in my particular family my dad his grandmother committed suicide, and his dad was an alcoholic and my dad actually lived in this neighborhood we found out later, and was an 8th grade dropout where West Adam Elementary School, that was West Avenue Junior High.

<server brings food>

26 So but then my dad became a believer after the war when he was at Baylor. And he met my mother three months later and she'd come from this very stable family, long line of Christians and stuff. But, you know, we could, my dad could have become an alcoholic, I mean who knows all the things that could have happened there for it to be a different story for me. So um, I kind of feel like I'm getting off track but I think, I guess basically that, um....I feel like it's authentic for maybe how God sees us, that we are part of the whole of humanity but we are also created by Him and so there's something special about us. And so it's just kind of acknowledging that in a way that doesn't make us, and I guess it goes back to that Henry Nouwen thing too, are we giving, why are we helping? Are we helping because we are wanting to solve peoples problems or are we wanting to work with the person for it to be their—I mean I can't tell you, I would have loved for Libby to decide that she wanted to get off the streets back right after I met her. And she even, there was a time she lived with me, two different times, but she didn't want to stay either time, she'd gotten out of recovery two different times and came for like a month or so. But both times she wanted to get out on her own really quickly and eventually within months was back out on the street again. But that was her journey, that's what began to teach me, you know this is her life, it's not me deciding for her what her life is.

27 So I think there's dignity in that, of people having the choice. But if they don't have the resources and they don't have the friendships, and they don't have the social network and the accountability, then how will they? But there's, and what can I learn from her, what can she, the simplicity of it, that she is very, very content with the amount of how much money she's, you know she makes less than I do each month and I'm sure she would like more but, you know, at the same time, you know, CUB is so humbling, when you have so many people there that they have a lot of joy, they share. We have one lady there, I mean she doesn't make hardly anything, we were talking with her about it one day because we were trying to figure out why she kept coming back for benevolence help, but we got to talking with her, we were all just blown away by how much she helps other situations. And we know her heart, we know it's not to try to control anybody, she's just very generous and you're like, ok, well maybe we need to help you more. <laughs> So, you know what I mean? I don't know if that answers your question but there you go.

APPENDIX C

Interview with Tricia Mankin, Former Volunteer, November 3, 2015

Before we start, could you tell me how you ended up finding Mission Waco and getting involved with it?

1 Sure, my bottom line answer would be that God directed me to MW. But I had a friend who had started volunteering with MW and she told me about what they had then called, Women's Group, and invited me to go visit and I did, and from that day on, I've been in love with what MW does.

And you're a volunteer right now?

2 I don't truly volunteer very much right now. I was on the board for 13 years and then served as a volunteer in different capacities during those years, but I'm more just enjoying right now.

And what was it that drew you to the program? Why did you fall in love with it?

3 Um, the opportunity to meet different people than people that I knew. I felt like it would enlarge my thinking, and it has. And it was an adventure.

From your understanding, and being on the board, what would you say is the major need that MW addresses? What's the main purpose of the program?

4 Well, I believe the purpose of the program is to empower people, and it also brings together people of different socio-economic statuses, and different areas of town together, it's uniting. And I believe that MW acts out the commands of God to love and serve others and, for me personally, I felt like it was an easy, unthreatening way to connect me with the poor of my city.

So overall then, what's the main message MW tries to share with these people? And how does that relate to Jesus' message?

5 Hope. And love. And empowerment.

What would you say are some of the ways they share those messages?

6 By offering job training, job coaching, job placement. Offering a lot of counseling opportunities. And for people, the middle class, offering a lot of opportunities

to volunteer and to live out the gospel by helping and loving other people in different ways using your gifts.

So bouncing of the middle-class part, that's one side of it that I haven't dug so much into yet. What did you say they do—get them to live out the gospel. Have you any examples of MW powerfully affecting middle-class lives? I'm sure, there's obviously stories of the lower class in poverty that have been really affected by it, but what are some ways that you've seen it impact the middle class?

7 I've definitely seen a lot of my friends and associates be affected positively by volunteering with MW and, um, actually having the opportunity to get to know people who are different than themselves. Just an avenue of serving, and ya, lots of examples.

Ok. Part of the mission statement says that it's a relationship-based program, and you've talked a lot about getting to know these people and getting involved with them. Why is that relationship aspect important? Because that's something that I feel like distinguishes MW from a lot of other relief agencies. So why is that so important, and why does that make such an impact in these lives?

8 Well, I think it's important to the mission statement of MW number one because the thought, the goal is not just to hand out to people, or to give them what they need, but to come along side of people in a relationship and encourage and help in ways that are long-lasting, not just for the moment or the immediate need. And in doing that, I believe that the person who considers themselves to be the helper or the one who is giving ends up seeing their own heart receiving much more than you give. And having a new friend, and you learn so much from people of different cultures and statuses, whatever that might be. You learn and grow.

What are some of the things that you've learned in doing this?

9 Well the number one thing I've learned, and I think I really already knew it, but that I was experiencing is that God has given me a heart to love people who I would consider to be less fortunate than myself in many ways. Um, I just enjoy so much meeting new people and learning about their lives. So it's a gift that I feel like God's given me and now I need to incorporate in my life on a daily basis. Um, I guess you see, or I feel like I've seen so much of the selfishness that I have and it feels like an opportunity to step out of that part of me and grow closer to God. And, I'm a Bible study leader and have been for many, many years, so it's also given me the opportunity to share my love for the new friends that I have and it's helped to break down barriers of fear in other people to see that, um, there's nothing to be afraid of to go in the parts of town that you consider not to be comfortable or safe, and to go to prisons and do things that some people might think are threatening. So I believe it's been <inaudible> in my church, um, and then the Bible studies that I lead and just in my friendships, to have relationships with other people and to be able to talk about them and express what a wonderful thing it has been for me.

You said sometimes going into prisons, is that something that Mission Waco does specifically or is that something you do on your own?

10 I do that on my own.

That's really cool.

11 It's really fun.

My uncle did a little bit of that for a while.

12 Ya? I really like it. In fact we had a young person writing her thesis from Baylor and she came and visited the women I meet with and she loved it too.

Alright, so then that Bob Goff question, how have you seen God using these broken people in ways either to impact the lives of the not-broken or the middle class who don't see themselves as broken or just in general?

13 Ya, and I would say that the people who I've become really close friends, and there have not been all that many through MW but there have been some long-time friendships, but I won't say that they see themselves as broken, and I don't see them as broken either. Especially one friend I have who really has mental issues and you just can't help but fall in love with her because she's so real, I mean that's just who she is, but um, I guess more than anything for me, what I might consider their brokenness or their differences helps me to learn to think deeper about people and how to relate and how to really be a help. You go through all those things, you learn about not enabling but helping and what the lines are. I don't know, just being with people. I mean you don't even have to buy or do, I mean just being with them is what's important. And it's a great gift from God to have that opportunity.

Alright, and then last question. Overall, what do you see the legacy of Mission Waco as, as far as it's impact on Waco and the people of Waco?

14 Well, do you want a dream or reality? <laughs>

<laughs> Both.

15 Uh, well reality is this café was a dream that I was on the board for a lot of years and very few people on the board had the dream of this becoming a neighborhood gathering place. And to see it as a reality now and to see the people who come here and enjoy it and just hang out, you know. You meet new people, it's just a happy, happy thing, and I think it does serve the purpose of what Mission Waco is about, just bringing people of other cultures and other walks of life together. So that has been a real reality.

And of course the relationships that are formed, the interactions that happen. But I guess the dream would just be that it would continue to happen more and more. And that the people who have the ability to help someone find a job or give someone a job,

would do it, and that we would become more of a whole community instead of a segregated community. And seeing the things that have happened in this part of time, I believe that MW has been very instrumental through other ministries too, that MW has served a purpose and I believe it will continue, it's happening more and more every day. Bringing life back down here.

Just out of curiosity, how does the board work?

16 How does what?

How does that board work? Are you all elected, are you chosen by someone, how does it work?

17 I can't say for certain how it is now, but the way it has been was there would be a requirement that you would have volunteered in some capacity with MW before, they don't invite people to be on the board who haven't done that and shown that they have a heart for the mission MW has. Other than that I believe the board, the existing board, comes up with names of people who fit that criteria and then they ask if they're interested and then they do vote on these people. It's not a very professional kind of vote, but mostly it's if the person's willing and thinks they do have a heart for such things.

And what is their role in MW, do they just help decide what to do, like with the new building?

18 It's a very active board, which I liked. There are different committees that you sign up to be on other than just the big board. Like I'm sure there's a committee for the new building and, uh, for the different things that we do like Manna House or the thrift store or all the different things. And a lot of times, board members will be the people who spearhead things like the Christmas store and we have employees who work with them, but they actually get to get in there and learn what it's all about. And I did almost everything that was available to do during those years and learned all the different aspects of what MW does.

APPENDIX D

Interview with Travis Cheatham, Executive Assistant, December 7, 2015

Can you tell me a little bit about your background and how you ended up finding Mission Waco?

1 For me it's very varied, it's gonna definitely vary for everybody. I went to Baylor from 2003 to 2006 and went to CUB during that time, so there's various times that I volunteered. I'd always thought about coming back. After 2006 I left did all sorts of different things and then moved back in 2013. And I started in June of 2014. So it hasn't been very long.

What was it about CUB and MW that attracted you?

2 For me I guess it was a matter of practically living out my faith. You know most the times you're in church services it almost sounds theoretical but it feels far more hands on when you're going to CUB and actually directly intermixed with a lot of homeless in the community and a lot of other things.

So in their mission statement, one of the things is they try to have relationship-based empowerment. Why do you think having that relationship aspect is important?

3 It's hard to be effective without a relationship. You know you can't do much without a relationship, you can't--you really have to earn trust. Like sometimes, I think one of the hardest things for just about anybody to realize is, um, I'm trying to think how to phrase this. Um, you know a lot of times you feel like somebody who's in need should just be happy with what they get or you know, it's ok if they have to jump through hoops or whatever...and it's not that we don't expect a lot out of the people we work with, but there is that respect level of they have other needs to that needs too that need to be met, and so that level of trust and that relationship is really important. There's plenty of people who have a level of distrust because of life experiences and things.

And how have you seen or personally done—how have you built those relationships or how have you seen MW build those relationships?

4 Ya, I mean every program has their own degree of that, it just kind of varies on the direction from children through youth through all the adult programs. It just kind of varies by area. A lot of my job is more so like admin related so it's harder because it's a lot of the behind-the-scenes stuff, less interpersonal. And so I've gotten to see it more with, I do Kids Café, I cook. It's a program through Feed You America and the Capillary Food Bank...so I get to interact with the kids more and getting to see some of those

relationships and see some of the difficulties they've already encountered in life. And we're developing trust, we're developing habits things like that, how that comes but also the main interaction I have is I help teach a culinary class through MW and that is definitely far more hands on, all of the students have my cell phone number and I interact with them on a more regular bases. I try to pull them aside here and there to ask them how they're doing personally versus just in the class. And so it's a short period but its definitely more hands on as far as a relationship. It's getting to know them more than just, hey, you're here for the class.

Ok, that seems to be something that separates MW from a lot of other relief orgs, that effort to really get involved and invest in the person.

5 Mhm, ya, and you know it's tricky because I mean, having good retention rates and all that is still hard. I don't know if you've already talked to Jerrod Clark, he's our case manager.

6 So he has one of the most difficult jobs because he meets with every single person who needs services through Meyers Center. We start a case file, all of that, and so getting people to stick to their work and show up to appointments their supposed to have and things like that, it's a difficult job.

What do you think is the major need in Waco that MW is aimed at addressing?

7 Like the major need for Waco?

Ya, and I asked the same question to Jimmy when he was setting it up, what need did he need to address, and I'm just trying to see if it's still the same standard, or what everyone thinks MW's purpose is.

8 Mm, gotcha. I mean I generally just reflect back to our mission statement, which is that 3-prong approach you probably mentioned which is powering the poor and marginalized, mobilizing the middle class, and then addressing systemic injustices. And that really does shape mw but its hard when you look at it, we have 60 people on staff or something, 20 different programs here, to pair that down to one thing.

Well then what need would you say BK addresses?

9 Um, so that is, you know, just...the greater focus there is especially our supportive housing program. That's sort of the heart and soul of that, is that what we want ultimately for everyone is to get them into transitional housing, is to get them on a path out of homelessness. The emergency side, yes it needs to be there, um, we definitely don't deny that by any means, but our goal for everybody that goes there is to make it to transitional.

Is it—as far as you know are there other houses, like supportive houses around the country or is this unique?

10 No there's.. so that's still partially funded through <inaudible>

In the short time that you've been working here, what ways have you seen BK be effective?

11 Well I mean we have had plenty of graduates through the supportive housing program, that's about a 6-month process, we do have people that, you know, it is truly a limited term, where it's like they stay for a couple days and then they're able to get out, just emergency situations. It's just, you know, one of those things that there's unfortunately just always gonna be a need, there will always be poor among you. So Jimmy always talks about this conflict we have, you know, it's like "yay, we have good numbers!" But wait--we don't really want good numbers. But, you know, we're glad we're serving people and that they're coming to us instead of just doing nothing and sleeping on the streets, you know, things of that nature. But, um, ya, I mean I feel like there's a lot of good that comes out of My Brother's Keeper.

Have you seen any instances where it's made an impact on the lives of the workers there? Even your life personally?

12 Ya, I mean there's so many people that have worked there so long and been connected so long, that's obviously a positive sign. Um, our youth program director actually used to do that, used to be one of the monitors and he transferred over to this so obviously he's wanting to keep going with MW and be more involved, so that's a definite positive sign.

Ok cool.

13 And I mean with the chapel services and everything, we have so many groups that come on a regular basis, and you wouldn't see that if they didn't feel like it was a meaningful experience to keep on doing that.

Alright, and then, we've kind of already touched on this a little bit, but just from your opinion, what is it that makes MW so successful and so different from other relief programs?

14 I mean, I think the biggest thing honestly is we don't necessarily consider ourselves a relief program. Our focus on empowerment is really at the heart of MW, again this is probably something you've already heard from Jimmy but one of our other sort of slogans is "the people with the problem need to be part of the solution." And so we expect a lot of the people that go through our programs. So for example our toy store that we have going on, we don't give away toys for free, they pay 20%. So they're still investing it's not like we're just throwing things at the problem, but we're requiring things from them. So they pay 20% and they're also required to attend an information session in advance, and they can't come unless they've done that. So it's things like that, where we require an investment on their part that I think separates MW.

APPENDIX E

Interview with Carlton Willis, Program Director, December 7, 2015

Before we did into the other questions, can you tell me how you got involved with MW?

1 Yes, so actually I'm not even from here. I was working in college administration in Tennessee, at Carson Newman U. before coming here. I was looking at grad school at Baylor and knew I needed to have a job if I was gonna come this way. My best friend was at Truett Seminary and he actually took on a job here at MW, they had received a grant from the Work Force Solutions. He contacted me, he goes, hey, they're looking for a director. I applied, and so, 15 years later, here I am.

And you were working at My Brother's Keeper that whole time?

2 My Brother's Keeper had not opened at that time. Actually we were just over here, this was our only location. I was over the job training/computer training, working with the tenant recipients. We called it the Empowerment Program, so I was overseeing the empowerment program.

3 Once the shelter and the Myers Center opened, I was kind of over the Myers Center but under another person, so I did mostly the empowerment component of it. Once the person left, they asked me to step in as interim director for the Myers Center and the shelter, which included the empowerment.

4 So a couple months after that, Jimmy was like, you know what, we want to go ahead and make you the Myer Center director. So I became the Myer Center director, which, again, incorporated the clinic, the empowerment program, social services, and the shelter. And then, about a year and a half, two years after that, he asked me to move up to Program Director. So now I oversee all programs and grants, I've always oversaw all the grants.

So the Myer Center is the overhead, and then Brother's Keeper is underneath?

5 Ya, mhm.

Ok. For as much as you know about it, can you tell me the history of Brother's Keeper, and why they initially started it, what they were trying to do?

6 Well, I don't know how much you know about McClennan County, but there really wasn't anywhere for mainly men to go shelter-wise here in McClennan County. There were family abuse centers for women, and Compassion Ministries was there for women and children and families, Salvation Army, they took them but back then you could only stay 3 nights every 30 days, something like that, so there really wasn't a

shelter. And so, most of the guys, especially during the cold seasons, would find abandoned buildings and abandoned houses to live in.

7 One year, there were two guys that were in an abandoned house, had created a fire to keep warm. They fell asleep during that and the house caught fire and they burned up in there. So, Jimmy pretty much said, we need to have a shelter, so he advocated for that, and we finally got the shelter. Again, it was geared toward being able to house men, but we do not exclude women. The majority of our beds are for men, but we do have a number of beds that serve for women as well. So that's how the shelter began.

I know a little bit of it, but how exactly does it work as far as they have to pay a couple dollars per night or volunteer, right?

8 Ya, so when the shelter first opened, we'd just let people stay there. When I became director, one of the confusing, well not confusing, but one of the conflicting thoughts that I had was that here we are supposed to be an empowerment organization helping people get on their feet, but on the other hand we're allowing these folks to stay in the shelter for a period of time. Jimmy was like, do the research, see what that looks like, and so I did.

9 Basically, it was ironic, but I had one of my staff members, I said, I need you to run a check on the data to see how many are staying in the shelter that have income. By the time that got done, we had about, there were several people where the total amount of income was between \$60,000 and \$180,000 of folks that were staying in the shelter, who should have their own place. So Jimmy was like, what?! Wow! And I was like, yeah.

10 I said, so we can look at this one of two ways. So we started doing further research and asking about other shelters in other places and come to find out, they were charging, and they were charging like, big money, you know \$20-30, stuff like that. So we met and said, you know, we want people to get on their feet, we don't want to take everything they have.

11 So we agreed, let's do it a little more constructive as to not only give them integrity but also give them an opportunity to be able to get their own place. So what we said was, let's implement a rule. They get three nights free, the first three nights are free, the next 30 days would be \$2 a night for 30 days, and beyond that, the next 30 days it would go up to \$5 a night. So that's a total of 63 days, which we felt was a comfortable amount of time for them to be able to save money, get on their feet, and be able to move into their own place.

12 To take it a step further, we implemented it into our empowerment model, where we're saying, ok, if you're going to stay at the shelter, you have to be a part of a program at MW that's gonna help you get back on your feet.

13 Now, they can refuse that, but, by refusing that, they're refusing that they need to stay at the shelter. We'll say, ok, well in order for you to stay at the shelter, I need you to this. If you're not willing to do this, I can't have you stay at the shelter. Now, that sounds like we're telling people, "No you can't stay at the shelter." They still get their first 3 nights, and if they decide, after they're out, "ok, I really need to do this", then they come back. We say, ok, let's sit down and come back, and let's figure it out. We'll put you back in the shelter, as long as you're doing A, B, C and D.

14 They're supposed to meet with the case manager, our social worker Jerrod, at least once every two to three weeks so Jerrod can make sure they're making progress with the plan that he set in place with them while they're in the shelter, whether that be going to job training, whether that be working on getting their benefits, whether that be helping them be able to save up their money as they in employment and needing to save up their money because they're not making enough right away to get situated. So that's kind of how we switched and did the shelter that way.

Ok, and then Travis mentioned it's a supportive shelter.

15 Ok, so within the shelter there's a supportive housing program called SHP, the supportive housing program, it's a transitional housing program. The goal is to move people from the emergency side of the shelter into the SHP if they qualify or if they haven't been able to get their own place. With that program, they're allowed to be in the shelter up to six months, as we save their funds, all of their stuff is taken care of. It kind of becomes their living quarters for up to six months. The goal upon completion is they're able to move directly into their own place and be self-sufficient and maintain and sustain that.

Alright, gotcha. So, do a lot of people approach you, or do you go seek people out?

16 Both. We have outreach, and we also do referrals, we have folks that make referrals, and of course, with us being the largest nonprofit organization that works with the homeless, we're gonna see them regardless. They'll come to us before they go to Salvation Army or some of those other places.

17 Basically, the process as soon as they walk in the door for a service, especially if that service is shelter, that's when we immediately, there's a program called Coordinated Access that they have to do, it's like an application process. They go through that process to determine which agency and program best fits their needs. Of course, if they're staying in the shelter, again they have to meet with Jerrod to determine why they're there, what their need is there, and how long they're needing to be there. That's where we beginning setting up the goals and the plans for them to be able to get out of the shelter in a timely manner.

You've kind of touched on this a little bit, but how does Brother's Keeper incorporate the goal of relationship-based empowerment?

18 We have monitors there. Through our chapel services, we have folks that come in, churches, individuals and groups that come in and do chapel services. And then we have folks who will come in and provide meals in the evening times or on weekends just to kind of fellowship with the folks. The shelter is really designed to be a place of rest, so it's not open during the day unless you're in the SHP. We do things such as life skills, teaching, budgeting, we even have recreation down there now, we have a basketball goal for the folks that are in the SHP. Dillon, who is the coordinator of that, has it every Friday morning, they go running or walking. So, kind of a healthy way of doing things included with the being able to save money. It's kind of relational in the sense that folks

come in from the outside to share and be a part of them at the shelter. But they get the majority of it at the Myer Center. Tim does Bible study on Saturday morning, stuff like that.

Ok, so the rest of these questions are moving away from Brother's Keeper specifically and more generally about MW. Overall, what message would you say MW is trying to share?

19 Well the three components that MW focuses on is marginalization, mobilization, and social justice. I think with the unique thing about the way MW operates is that anyone that's in any of the programs, we build on families, so they have access to the other portions of the agency.

20 For example, if we have a child that's in the children's program or the youth program, and they have a parent who hasn't been able to get work or keep work, they're going to be referred to our job training. Same with counseling. So that's the marginalization piece of that, just getting them up to where, again, self-sufficiency and sustainability is the key for that.

21 The mobilization is what we do with the fundraising mostly, but with the community development that we do where Jimmy goes around and speaks to educate others about the homeless and the poor.

22 And then social justice, we advocate for the folks that we serve. We have a lot of issues with landlords that people have gone through, so we deal with that, a lot of legal issues that they didn't know about or didn't have control over, we try and deal with that as well.

Obviously this program has a lot of impact on the participants, but in what ways have you seen it impact the volunteers or the workers of MW?

23 I think the impact comes again from the relationships that we build. In fact, I was just telling an interviewee that I just met with, one of the things where the folks become successful with us is that they see that we actually care about them. There is no, ok, I'm up here, down here telling you what to do. We walk through their situation with them, we try to identify with their situation and work with them through their problems, at the same time, equipping them with the tools they need to get back on their feet. An example would be, if this person is struggling with something where they've gotten a new job and they're struggling with it, or they have situation at home that they need to deal with, they can call me and talk to me about it. They can call Jerrod and say, hey, what do I need to do about this? We can set them up with counseling.

24 Even once they've completed our programs and been successful, they can always come back. The good news is, especially where volunteers are concerned, a lot of those folks have come back to volunteer, come back to donate money, they come back to hire, I think I've hired probably four, five, maybe more, of the folks who've actually gone through our programs. What we do is we say, you move on, and go and work or volunteer over here for three months. Be consistent in that, and come back, and we'll look and see what we can do with that. We also do that with our ARK, the community living that we have, we have a housing program for men, and we do the same with all of those. All of it

is about community, all of it is about relationships, I think having that relationship building, that relationship is probably the most important key to all of the things that we do.

25 So like you say, when the volunteers, and that's where the mobilization piece comes in, when the volunteers see, wait a minute, this is how Mission Waco did that. We give speeches on that, Jimmy speaks on that, I speak on that, anyone that's wanting to learn, we give the Other Side of Waco tour, all of that stuff is to educate on how to deal with and how to operate in a community or an environment such as this.

Are any of those people you've hired through the program still working here?

26 Umm, yes.

Do you know if any of them would be willing to meet with me? I'd love to hear their stories.

27 I'm trying to think, actually yes. In fact, I would have to get with Vince, but we have several monitors for the treatment program that have gone through the program, and I've hired a couple of them to work at the shelter as well. So I can get some names and stuff and get back to you with that.

Even if you want to just pass them my email and have them contact me if they're interested, but I'd love to hear stories from them. Well that's about all I have, unless you have anything else you'd like to toss in about the program.

28 I think we've covered it all. We're doing good, getting ready, we just got funds to do job training for the 16-24 year old age group. I don't know if you know, but they did a Upjohn report, a research company came in and did research on McClennan county, the community, because we've been ranked in the top 10 for the past several years for poverty, and trying to figure out why. So this Upjohn report revealed that 64% of our kids between the age of 16 to 24 are uneducated, unemployed, and unemployable, and unskilled. So it's like, this is the future of McClennan county that they're saying this about, so trying to turn that around. SO that's what we've been challenged with doing. I've been racking my brains for the past, because I haven't been able to hire anyone to do it, so I'm trying to do the job training, the job development, the interviews, the applications, da da da, and so that's on top of running the Myer Center, the shelter, overseeing the children and youth programs. Jimmy was like, no no, I can't have you doing all that. You've gotta hire somebody. So I'm trying to get some folks hired.

Gotcha, well good luck with that. That's cool though, Jimmy had told me about how one of his goals is to respond directly to needs. Several things of what you've said kind of reveal that, how you see a need in the community, and that's what they build the next step around.

29 Yep, yep, yep. Well good, alright, I hope that was helpful.

APPENDIX F

Interview with McKenzie Miller, Children's Director, December 10, 2015

Before I ask any specific questions, can you tell me a little bit about how you got involved with MW?

1 Ok, so I went to Baylor and I graduated in 2008. I transferred into Baylor my sophomore year. When I was a freshman, I took a sociology class that talked a lot about people in poverty and the systemic issues that go with that, so I learned about that and got interested in the field of working in a nonprofit. When I came to Baylor, my sophomore year, I took Jimmy's class, poverty of Waco, and that's how I learned about MW. I volunteered a little bit and I ended up doing, they have a summer internship where you can come and volunteer with the programs and learn more about the Waco community and the issues that face the people that we serve here. I did that and then I came on staff part time and then full time as a children's director. I've been here 8 years.

Was there something specific that attracted you?

2 Well we have a ton of nonprofits in the area, but what I liked specifically about MW is I just like how everything is very relationship-based. You're building your community when you're working here, and you're a part of the community, and that's kind of at the base of what they do. I like that aspect of it.

Ok cool. So you're the director of Children's Ministries—what all does that encompass? I know you've got some after school programs, some summer camps and stuff.

3 So there's technically seven different programs. The main one that the majority of my energy goes to is the after-school program. Those kids are usually the same kids that participate in our summer day camp.

Is that the King's Club?

4 No, that's something different.

5 The after school program meets Monday through Thursday. We pick them up from school, we pick up from five different schools and we bring them over to the Center. We do homework help, tutoring help, and then they also get to sign up for classes. Those classes just depend on the resources that are available for this semester. This semester we have a Baylor student that does the ballet class, and that's every Monday.

So they're kind of like elective classes?

6 Yeah, to give them just, what we're all about is giving the kids new experiences. A lot of times, like art programs, theater programs, things like that, are not necessarily the funding's not there like it should be in the schools, so we want to be able to provide that for the kids, just to help them figure out what their talents are. Right now there's ballet, theater, art. We have an "engineering for kids" class that is taught, it's all different engineering projects, it's kind of more of the STEM technology type of stuff. We have a lady that comes in and runs that. We have a running class that is actually pretty popular. We've done cooking classes, we've had people come in and teach a gardening class, we've done history fairs, it's just different. Even different volunteers will come and be like, I wanna offer this, and so it will become part of what we do.

So it's primarily volunteer-based?

7 Mhm, pretty much. We have this one kid that came in when the theater program just started and we put on a production of the Wizard of Oz with the kids, and from there he realized he loved theater, and he's now in middle school and he's really involved in the theater program over at his middle school. The goal is to kind of plant that seed for their kids. Everybody needs to figure out where they belong, and what they're good at, so that's what we want to do for the kids.

8 So we have that, we have a reading program, we have a teacher that used to be on staff with us very part time, and now she's teaching but she'll still come back and volunteer and she'll pre- and post-test kids on their reading levels. It's a very rough estimate but it gives us a good idea of knowing what their comprehension level is, if they're on grade level, and how fast they're able to read on grade level. So it helps us. The majority of our kids are pretty decent on their reading levels, they just need to read more at home and we need them to want to read is the main battle we try to fight with that.

9 Let's see what else. This year we were able to start music classes with them. We had a memorial fund that was set up through this guy that, he passed away and he was somehow affiliated with Jimmy and, Jimmy could tell you this story, there's probably more with it. But his passion was for kids to learn to play music, and so we have three kids that are playing the violin, we have three kids that are learning to play the cello that are part of the youth program, and then we have five kids learning to play guitar. They have lessons once a week and then they practice every day at the program.

10 So those are the classes, I think I've named all of them. And then, like I said, we have kids that are pulled for reading tutoring during that time. We even have a lady, she goes to CUB, and her cat and dog are certified pet therapists, so they come and they actually can read to the dog or the cat, and the kids love it. Which all goes back to creating an enjoyable environment for the kids to read, because a lot of times in school, especially with all the standardized testing and you're doing STAR packets, that's not enjoyable. So we want to create something that's fun for the kids where they'll go want to read.

11 We also feed them a meal. We have a grant through Capillary Food Bank. Through Kids Café we're able to feed them a meal for dinner during the school year and lunch during the summer. And we do pick up and take home.

12 So that's pretty much the after school program. We have about 30 to 35 kids and we've been as high as 40 in the past, but we don't have a ton of openings. Typically as long as the kids don't move out of district, the parents love the program once they get in, the kids love the program, and they typically stay through graduating out of 5th grade, and then we ideally would love for them to go to the youth program.

13 Since I've been here, our set of 5th graders that was two years ago, there was 10 of them that graduated out, and over half of them had been with us since kindergarten. We don't have a very high turnover, and that's kind of back to the relationship thing, at the base of what we do, we think it's really important almost to create a family environment for these kids, where we're kind of their second family that they have. The parents feel very comfortable with us, coming and talking with us, and just having that environment for the kids where they really enjoy being there. A home away from home type thing.

Is there an application process to get in?

14 There is an application process for it. It's pretty much, they hear through word of mouth, they hear through family members, and when we have a couple spots open, and every once in a while we'll do special cases with referrals through the school where there might be a specific case that comes up where, a lot of times mom doesn't get off work until 4 and they're having a hard time getting them from school so they need something, and every once in a while we can take in those cases too. But ya, just the application process, and then the parent comes up and meets with us, we tell them about program. It's free, it doesn't cost anything either.

15 So that's after school, and then those same kids are in the summer. That does cost, just because it's a lot more field trips and things like that. It costs a lot more to run for just the short amount of time. So it's a six-week program and they have swimming on Monday, they do field trips on Thursday, and we usually do four out-of-town field trips with them. Again, the field trips, it's all about helping with their reading levels, because a lot of times if kids haven't had the experience of something then they can't picture what that looks like when they're reading it in a book. A lot of our kids have been to the zoo, because Waco has a great zoo, but just as an example, if you've never been to the zoo and you're reading a passage about a zoo, it's hard to relate to it. So we want to give them a lot of field trips, get them out, let them see different places. We do museums up in Dallas and Ft. Worth, we went to the state capital this past summer, or take them to plays, different things like that. And we'll do a couple that will be in town every Thursday.

So swimming on Mondays, and then Tuesdays and Wednesdays are just different activities at the children's center.

How long have these programs been going on?

16 Different programs have started, but for the most part, 20 years. So those are the after school, day camp, and then there's King's Club and Street Camp which are pretty similar. Kings Club is where there are different groups from the area that can adopt a housing site, and they'll commit to go on a weekly basis. At Baylor we have

AMPSAM, MAPS, and different sororities and fraternities that go out to the complex, build relationships with those kids there, and do kind of like a backyard Bible club with them. Street Camp happens in the summer, which is through our work groups which, have you talked to Kathy Wise yet?

Yes.

17 So that's her deal, she'll do the work group stuff, and they'll come and do a three-day camp with the kids.

Ok, you've mentioned a lot about the reading levels. How does that relate to MW's overall goals? I feel like that would tie into empowerment a little bit, but how would you say that relates?

18 So it ties into empowerment, and then also part of our goal is to fight systemic issues for them. A lot of time we're very big on being an advocate for the parents in the schools, helping the parents to understand, for example that they can request their kids to be tested for certain things. So letting the parents just be informed of what their options are. It's no secret that these low income schools, the teachers and the staff and everybody's doing the best they can but they don't necessarily have the same resources as other schools in a higher income area, and so helping to supplement those. They have an adopt-a-school program, I don't know if you've heard of this, that's for all of Waco ISD, that's where different businesses and organizations can adopt a school and they can come in and help provide different things to help. A lot of it's like mentoring programs, that's where I was, we're partnered with West Avenue, so we go down there and we paint their backdrop and things like that.

19 Reading's just so important for a kid. If they're not on reading level even when they get into middle school, they're not gonna...if you can't read you can't do your math, you can't do history, you can't do any of that. Even kids in third grade, they'll have issues with word problems because their reading levels aren't there. It's just so important to get them on level for everything, for the future of their education.

So to the relationship-based aspect of it, do you find it difficult to build relationships with these kids?

20 No, they're typically pretty open, it's pretty easy.

Ok. And then, you also build relationships with the parents as well?

Mhm.

Is that hard?

21 No, it's actually pretty easy. For the most part the parents love the program and are just open to us coming in and being another support system for them, is what we want.

Are the parents usually involved in other programs through MW or are their children usually the only connection?

22 Typically for what we have now, their kids are the only connection through either Children or Youth. For the set that we have right now, they'll come and they'll help and volunteer, but as far as taking advantage of job training services or legal services or things like that, they know they're available if they need them, but most of our parents I would say are more working-class and most of them have steady jobs, steady housing, things like that.

Gotcha. Ok, so in what ways have you seen the children's program be impactful? Are there any particular stories that stand out that express the success of the program?

23 I just think that, we always say this, it's one of those things that because it's so relationship-based, that you would never know if it wasn't there, other than the quantitative data that you can get from the reading program, things like that. But you never know what those relationships could have impacted and how it would have changed if it had never been there and seeing what it would be now. So I think overall, being able to build those relationships, and even those relationships with them, I mean it's Biblical, it changes us too, being able to have those relationships with the kids, getting to know them, and it's all just part of being in community with them.

Overall, this one parent that, if you wanted to talk to a parent, she would be happy to talk with you, she actually works down at World Cup Café, her kids have been in program with us for like six, seven years. Her oldest daughter's in 8th grade, and she actually was in the youth program back in the day.

The mom was or the daughter?

24 The mom was in the youth program back in the day and now her kids are part of the program with us. She could probably, it might be good getting something like that from the parent's perspective of how it's helped. But from my side, I think it's been very helpful for the parent, having something consistent. A lot of them will work nights, or their schedules, they don't have a set schedule for a lot of their jobs, their schedule varies throughout the week. Having one person that comes in and makes sure that their kid's getting their homework down, or it's supportive and helpful for the parent, things like that.

She was telling me a couple days ago when I was here about the ripple effect, so its kind of that ripple effect, but in a positive way, the program is.

25Mhm. And I just think that overall, like I said, the kids enjoy the program, we enjoy having them be there, we've built good relationships with the kids, and I think that overall, that...you know, I'd love for their reading level to change, I'd love all that to change. But overall, if it's just a positive relationship that they're able to have, I think that's great.

Is there a lot of, I mean they do Bible studies with King's Club and stuff, do they do that during the afterschool program as well?

26 We had a lady that used to be a teacher that would come in and do it, but now it's Baylor Urban Missions that comes in, and they do it for children's and youth.

We have a lot of Baylor volunteers, I'd recommend if you can get ahold of some of them, talking to some of the volunteers, because that's a whole 'nother side of it that's part of MW's mission statement. I know that there's even been some volunteers that have come in and they want to do social work now, or it's just how those relationships have changed. I even have somebody that graduated in 2011 and she still keeps up with the kids that she mentored, and she's a lawyer up in Dallas. But it completely changed almost her world view, just from being able to build relationships with the kids.

27 I always tell people, when I first started out I took a sociology class. Some of the things that you hear about, like how it's just not fair, and it upsets you, but for me now, I have relationships with these kids in the schools or relationships with the families, and I was like, these issues make me mad, but they make me mad because they affect these kids that I care about and love and these families that we care about. You're kind of fighting for people who are like your family.

It's more personal.

24 Yeah.

Yeah, that's cool. I thought of a question but now I can't remember, hopefully it will come back to me. So these next ones are more general MW questions. Overall, what message do you think MW is trying to share with its participants?

28 I think just, the love of Jesus. And through relationships, I think at the end of the day that's what we want people to see.

Ok, and I remembered my other question. I was reading through one of the fliers they have, and it talked about how you guys don't have kids confess because they're too young, I don't remember exactly how it was stated.

29 We don't do, for like street camp, we always tell group not to do alter call type scenarios, so maybe that's what you saw from it. We always tell the groups if you come in and if a kid is asking you questions, we want you to tell them about Jesus, we want them, if they feel like they're being led to accept Christ, that's the overall goal, we want that to happen, but what we want to avoid are these alter call scenarios where kids are raising their hands, things like that because we want to make sure, we want them to understand what's happening. These groups, we don't want to come in, then this happens. The parent is a part of a kid's life, and we don't want to do something that takes away from that interaction. So we want to make sure everything's communicated with parents. These kids, they're connected with churches, a lot of them already go to church, so we want to

make sure that the community that they already have is a part of those decisions. And if a kid's just raising his hand and a part of the crowd, then that doesn't happen.

Ok, thanks, that makes sense. Ok, back to the MW questions. What need would you say MW addresses as a whole, and what need specifically does the children's ministry address?

30 Well I would just say, as a whole MW, like you said, they're about empowerment, so they're about things that can help take them to the next step. Children's program, youth program, all those things are about creating, equipping the kids with the education things they need, the character development they need, the leadership skills they need to get them to be successful in their job, in their careers, college, whatever that looks like for them. It's just providing those materials for them to get there. We're not a charity, we always say that, even the stuff they do at the Myer Center when they do benevolence type stuff, they will do some emergency type things, but for the most part what the bulk of our stuff goes to is stuff to help people get jobs, whether that's birth certificates, IDs, stuff they need that are barriers to help them get to that.

Why do you think MW has been so successful?

31 I think it's just with Jimmy being in the neighborhood, and then a lot of, I live in the neighborhood, our social worker does, and a lot of people live on this side of town, and treat the people in there as a community, and that we're a part of this and it's not that people are coming in from out of town telling y'all what y'all need to do. Jimmy's kind of the face of it, everybody knows Jimmy around here and a lot of the participants and everybody really respect Jimmy and I think it's just because his hearts very genuine with what he does. People know that he cares about them. And I think Jimmy's very careful, and we're all very careful to make sure that everybody's treated with dignity. Even with our kids, I don't want anything that's, I'm always careful with newspaper articles or things like that to where it looks like we're coming in and saving these kids, that's not what we're about. We're about being a part of the support systems that they already have, and being one more thing, you know they say it takes a village to raise a kid, so just being one more thing that's helpful to this kid and helpful to the parent. We don't ever want to discount anything about where they come from, if that makes sense.

Which is cool to hear because in the book that Bob Goff wrote, another part of his thing is that people are humans and not projects to be fixed, and I've definitely seen that when talking to Jimmy and a lot of other people. It's not like, "here we are to be the savior and fix all your problems" it's, "we're going to walk beside you" and I think that's really cool.

32 Mhm, yeah.

And again that ties in to the authentic relationship, not a dominant kind of thing.

Yeah, exactly.

Ok last question. What separates MW from other programs similar to it?

33 Jimmy or Carlton or somebody like that might be able to answer that better, but I think there's a new wave of doing that, but I think just having that empowerment model has become popular over the last several years, but not necessarily every church has been able to take on. And I think it goes back to the overall mission of the relationships, giving dignity and not treating people like projects, I think people can respect that side of it. Even donors I think respect that. You're not just giving somebody a hand out, you're providing them with the tools they need to get where they need to be.

So do you think that makes people more willing to support MW with donations?

34 Mhm, I think so. Even my friends and family in Dallas, when I go home and tell them about it, they always think it's very cool when I tell them we do things to help people get jobs, our goal is to do things to help kids get to college. But the kids, the youth, everybody that we work with, they're a part of the process, no one's doing things for them. Even with the shelter they charge after a certain number of days. Everybody takes ownership in it.

Which is cool. Alright, well that should do it, unless there's anything else you want to add.

Not that I can think of. I hope that helps.

APPENDIX G

Interview Questions for Written Narrative

List of sample questions to be asked to Mission Waco leadership

*Prior to the beginning of Mission Waco, what need did you see in Waco that needed to be addressed?

*How did you initially come up with the idea for Mission Waco? What did you originally intend for the program to be?

What has God inspired uniquely in you that qualified you to run/participate in this program?

*What biblical principles guided you through the establishment of MW?

*What impact did you hope to have through your efforts?

What is the agenda of Mission Waco?

What message are you trying to share with others? How does this relate to Jesus' message for the world? How do you share this message?

What do you feel separates Mission Waco from similar local relief organizations?

How does MW work to establish relationships? Why is this important?

What does it mean to you to "do love"? To be present in relationships?

Bob Goff claims broken things/people get used more. Do you agree with this claim? How have you witnessed this through MW?

How do you approach people, or do they come to you?

What impossible prayers have you seen answered?

*Questions to be asked only to Jimmy

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