

## Compassion

The following story was written by Austin Sheeley. Austin is a senior in high school and grew up as a missionary kid in Singapore. He and his family moved back to the States in 2004, and his dad, Rich Sheeley, is now Good News Productions, International's Executive Director. These are some of his observations after going to the Philippines and helping with the filming of *All Things New*.

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As I exited the Mindanao airport and stepped out into the city, I was greeted by a blaring sun, a small army of security guards, and a gaggle of street kids begging for, well I don't actually speak Tagalog, but I'm assuming money. This was to be the second film set I'd been on, the first where I was able to play an active role in production, and one of the most unforgettable summers of my life. I was the volunteer Continuity PA, assistant to the Continuity Director, Noodles. (I'm still not sure as to whether that's her Christian name or sir name.) In other words, I was the bloke that held up the "clapper thing" before every shot, which means I got a lot of time on camera, but unfortunately, the majority was edited out of the final cut.

It was an amazing trip, full of experiences. I got to experience riding through the country atop jeepneys, a form of public transportation covered in the most vibrant display of pop art man has ever seen. Think of it as a cross between a taxi, a bus, and an Andy Warhol picture. Where else can you see a painting of a Gundam warrior next to the Virgin Mary?

I also got to experience being guarded by what had to be every single police officer on the entire island (the chap in charge of security was a tad enthusiastic), including the world's coolest church elder, who was more heavily armed than Rambo himself. He probably could have killed every last one of us before I had time to blink.

He didn't.

And most memorable, I got to experience baloot, a "local delicacy". It was duck fetus, but all the cool kids were doing it, so I had to try some. I almost threw up. Never eat anything described to you as a "local delicacy."

Nonetheless, I had a lot of fun. And I got to see God at work (which almost makes up for the baloot). Part of the movie was filmed at Christians' Haven, the street kids

ministry which inspired the film. I got to meet the real Nardo, the real Ken Oosting, and the real Angelica. And, I got to meet an entire world of kids, who had at one time been no better off than the young beggars who welcomed me to the island. They'd been living on the streets, eating stolen scraps, and sniffing glue to try and make the hunger go away. But now they were learning, growing, praising the Lord.

When I first met street kids I felt pity for them, but did nothing. I didn't think I could do anything. But now, I have seen compassion, real God-given compassion, at work. And it has changed lives. It has changed the world for these kids. Compassion is a powerful thing.

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### **Search the Scriptures:**

Read Matthew 25:31-46

### **For Discussion:**

1. You've probably read this passage before, but in light of this movie, how do you see this differently, more vividly?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. Where can you show this kind of compassion here in the States?
4. What can you do to show this kind of compassion around the world?
5. Austin saw compassion and discipleship firsthand when he visited the Philippines for the filming of *All Things New*. It's amazing when we see people (like the Oostings and other missionaries) who don't just feel "bad" or "sad" for people, but also take action. They not only help individuals physically but also spiritually. This shows us that we can do the same thing! Brainstorm some ideas of how you can go beyond just feeling emotions for people and actually do something to help them. Remember, you don't have to do this alone, work together as a youth group or with your family.

### **Here are some ideas:**

- Organize a prayer meeting or prayer night for the ministry/ministries you have a heart for.
- Volunteer at a local shelter for the homeless, serving food.
- Coordinate a clothing or food drive for the less fortunate in your community. There are also ways to have clothing shipped to other countries to be dispersed among people who are in need.
- Pick a country that you don't know much about and research it on the Web. This will give you ideas on how you can pray for the country and its people. *Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone, Jason Mandryk, and Robyn Johnstone is an excellent resource for this. Your research could develop a heart within you for a particular country or group of people and lead you to work among them.
- In order to free up money for you to give to the needs of the world, you could give up buying pop, coffee drinks, snacks, or going out to eat, and give the money to a ministry or missionary working to help people physically and spiritually.
- You could have a "movie night" at the church or in a home where everyone who came donated five or more dollars to a ministry or missionary working with people in an area you would like to help.
- You could do the above with a game night as well, which would also allow for a good time of fellowship for everyone who came.

### **In Conclusion:**

We will all be held accountable for our actions here on earth. God calls us to be compassionate and to take action based on that compassion. According to the passage we read for this study (Matthew 25:31-46), the consequence for not being a person of compassion could be an eternity separated from God. It's not saying such "works" save anyone, but those who really know Jesus will minister to people's needs. It says that the righteous will give food, drink, and clothes to those who need them. When Jesus lived on earth He showed so much compassion that He healed people as He took the Gospel to them. We may not be able to heal physically, but we can help people to be healed spiritually. We are also called to provide for their physical needs. As James 2:26 says, ***"As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."*** (New International Version)