Beyond the Band-Aid: Legal Aid Ministry that Makes a Difference

Band-Aid:
‘bandād/ noun NORTH AMERICAN trademark
1. an adhesive bandage with a gauze pad in the center, used to cover minor wounds.
2. a makeshift or temporary solution: “A band-aid solution to a much deeper problem”

A Band-Aid covers a wound…and really not much else. It may make the scratch feel better, but the soft, thin gauze won’t protect it from a bump, bruise, or bully; nor would it protect the wound from a bacterial infection from within. Without the help of antibiotic ointment, a Band-Aid would only absorb the bleeding; it would not treat, cure, or prevent the wound from bleeding—nor was it meant to.

This very same principle applies to Band-Aid solutions. Aptly-named, these solutions are insufficient covers to the real wounds that lie beneath. Problems covered up by Band-Aid solutions aren’t protected from bruises (obstacles) or bullies (opposition) or even “bacterial infections from within” (inefficiencies). Without using other resources to help treat or cure the problem, temporary solutions remain temporary. Band-Aid solutions only cover up the real issue; although they may make the problem appear fixed by absorbing its initial symptoms, they do not protect or prevent the wound in the first place—nor were they meant to.

So where does that leave us when the wounds we deal with impact people’s daily lives? What do we do when Band-Aid
solutions just aren’t working anymore?

LUCHA (an acronym for a Spanish ministry whose name means “Latinos United Through Christ in Solidarity and Support” in English) wants to offer more than Band-Aid solutions to the variety of issues surrounding immigration, not the least of which is legal affairs. At a recent weekend conference hosted by the BGAV, LUCHA founders Greg and Sue Smith explained why providing legal aid is more than a Band-Aid approach to ministry. “We were really moved by this [concept]” stated Sue Smith, “Legal aid is a practical, tangible, immediate way to show the love of Jesus Christ to our immigrant neighbors.”

To the 12 attendees at LUCHA’s breakout session at the BGAV’s Mission Matters Conference, it was evident that the Smiths are really passionate about getting this information out to as many people as possible. If you are interested in legal aid ministry, or just basic immigration law and practice, LUCHA will be hosting a 40-hour Basic Immigration Law and Procedure Training seminar in partnership with World Relief Immigration Legal Services on October 10-14 this year at Manassas Baptist Church in Manassas, VA. For more information, visit www.bgav.org/events.

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