

Doug Stringer Celebrates 30 Years of Ministry

“Somebody Cares, call 24 hours a day.” That one line on a simple business card launched a ministry that is now 30 years old—and international.

Doug Stringer and his friends once distributed business cards on the streets of Houston as they ministered to the lost. He got the idea, an epiphany as he calls it, after a prayer that sounded something like this: “God, if you can do anything with someone like me that has broken your heart and brought shame to your name, I’ll make myself available to you.”

God heard. God answered. And God started to do a work in Stringer’s heart that would turn his world upside down and serve as the humble beginnings of a network of chapters that reaches across the U.S. and around the world. The Somebody Cares Mission is to let people know that somebody cares. The organization mobilizes Christians to evangelism, thereby transforming communities.

“I started off with 17 kids off the streets living in my apartment,” Stringer recalls. “Then a businessman gave me an apartment where I could teach an exercise class and a Bible study once a week. Then some other business people gave me a three-bedroom house in the suburbs. I kept putting up more kids. That’s how we got started.”

Stringer’s story is one of simple obedience that has continued one step at a time for more than three decades. He’s quick to point out that the first time worship is mentioned in Scripture it is not in the context of instruments and singing—but of obedience. As he sees it, obedience is the highest form of worship.

“Dr. Robert Clinton from Fuller Theological Seminary wrote

that 70 percent of all Christian leaders do not finish the race well. So when Campbell McAlpine was asked at age 90 how he did it, he said, 'It's a nine-letter English word: obedience. The fourth, fifth and sixth letters spell die. The middle of obedience is to learn to die to self every day,'" Stringer says. "I thought that was awesome and that's how I try to live my life—available every day and learning to walk in simple obedience every day and God has been able to do some incredible things."

With Somebody Cares, Stringer introduced the concept of leaders laboring together to "co-pastor the city," and churches come together for strategic prayer initiatives, drama presentations, distribution of New Testaments, inner city youth camps, food distribution and more.

Somebody Cares has perhaps shined the brightest in the wake of natural disasters. The organization was a key player in the relief efforts of Hurricane Katrina, facilitating the distribution of about \$30 million of in-kind gifts and donations, as well as the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

So what's next for Stringer and Somebody Cares? As he sees it, the first 30 years was a preparation for where he's going with the Lord next.

"We are going to take all of our disaster relief programs up a notch by formulating what is called the Global Compassion Response Network," Stringer says. "With the escalation of human crises and natural disasters around the world, the Church needs to be strategic and an ark of refuge in times of need."