

Why the Holy Spirit Wants to Disrupt the Comfortable Church With Compassion

You may be familiar with disruptive technology. Those are the technological breakthroughs that shake everything up so that nothing is ever the same—just think of the internet! But in our day, we need something more impactful than technology. We need disruptive compassion.

Convoy of Hope CEO Hal Donaldson recently wrote a book about this important topic called *Disruptive Compassion: Becoming the Revolutionary You Were Born to Be*. On my “Strang Report” podcast, Donaldson shares about how his book stemmed from the difficulties he went through as a young boy. When he was only 12 years old, his father was hit by a drunk driver and died. His mother was also in the car and was seriously injured. Neither Donaldson’s parents nor the driver who hit them had insurance.

“So throughout my teen years, our family really struggled,” he says. “We went to school without a lunch. There were days that we went to school with holes in our shoes and holes in our jeans. And that was before it was cool to have holes in your jeans.

“But during that time, you’re asking God a lot of hard questions: ‘God, why did this happen? Why did you take my father away from me?’ It was during that time that I also saw the power of kindness.”

But Donaldson didn’t really feel a burden to help the poor until a God-ordained encounter with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India. As a young man with degrees in journalism and Bible, he began writing books. At one point, he had the opportunity to do a 30-minute interview with Mother Teresa.

"She said, 'Young man, what are you doing to help the poor and the suffering?'" he says. "And I figured it was probably not a good idea to lie to her. So I told her the truth. I said, 'Well, I'm not really doing much of anything.' And she replied by saying, 'Everyone can do something.' And all I can say is that those words were haunting.

Donaldson returned to the U.S. after that interview and loaded up a pickup truck with \$300 worth of groceries. He took his pickup to a needy area and began passing out those groceries to working poor families and telling them that Jesus loved them.

"God took that one simple act of compassion, and He blew it up," he says. "And about 25 years later, we now have been able to serve and share Jesus with 115 million people as well as mobilize hundreds of thousands of volunteers, distributed more than a \$1 billion in donated food and supplies. It was something only God could do."

Donaldson says Convoy of Hope would never have grown so big or impacted so many people unless he disrupted his life all those years ago. And that's something every one of us needs to do—disrupt our comfort zones and take radical steps of obedience.

For Donaldson, that started with him reading the Gospels every day. He read one chapter a day from the Gospels for well over a year. Soon, he began to see how his life did not measure up to Jesus'.

"I wasn't truly emulating Him," Donaldson says. "I then began to do reconnaissance. I got myself out of my recliner and went out and began to see needs around the world. And God used those two things to really help me find my mission."

He began praying a simple prayer every day: "God, use me where You need me most." And he meant it. Soon, miracles began happening. As Donaldson traveled around the world, he saw God

do incredible things and change lives in big ways.

Seeing how radical obedience bore supernatural fruit is what inspired Donaldson to write his latest book. He says that *Disruptive Compassion* is really just a playbook for people who desire to jump out of the norm and start following the call God has on their life to make a difference.

Donaldson has been encouraged by the number of young people and churches who have purchased his book and taken it to heart. He cautions parents that the book isn't G-rated. He doesn't candy-coat the truth of what he's been through or seen others go through. But maybe that's why teenagers are so drawn to his book—they see in it a vulnerability that compels them to, in turn, open up to God.

"I'm excited about this next generation," Donaldson tells me. "But I do have a concern. And it's a concern that we would raise up a generation of do-gooders, great humanitarians who do great things, but they do it apart from the gospel and they do it apart from the church. And I think that's one of the things this book talks about—how important the church is to long-term impact in the way of compassion ministry."

I think Donaldson makes a compelling distinction. There are plenty of secular humanitarian organizations that are doing great things to help the poor and needy. But if Christians start trying to serve the world apart from the life-changing power of the gospel, the fruit won't last.

I'm grateful for people like Donaldson who see that truth and are willing to speak out about it. I hope you read *Disruptive Compassion* and, even more so, that you take his words to heart. To hear more about how you can step out into God's call to compassion, listen to my full interview with Donaldson!