

PRAISE FOR *HEROES WANTED*

“We need heroes! The kind who flash powers of courage, humility, and service. The kind willing to sacrifice for the greater good. In *Heroes Wanted*, Rodney gives us the playbook for this new perspective of leadership. Ambitious and inspiring, Rodney’s insight helps us see that just when things seem to be spinning out of control, heroes rise to the occasion. A leader for such a time as this!”

Dan T. Cathy, Chairman and CEO, Chick-fil-A, Inc.

“In his book *Heroes Wanted*, Rodney Bullard touches our heart and awakens the hero that is within each of us. With God at the center, he discusses the seven *C* principles that inspire our heart to do good, helping by word and deed those who are far away or maybe only ‘three feet in front of us.’ *Heroes Wanted* has a long shelf life, for at the end of the book there are questions, mostly faith-based, that challenge us individually or as a group to contemplate the inspiring material that is before us. Thanks, Rodney—you did real good!”

Coach Vince Dooley

Former football coach University of Georgia (1964–1988),
athletic director (1979–2004)

“*Heroes Wanted* is an amazing book and a well-crafted reminder that we can be heroes if we only dare to serve. Rod Bullard lives this mantra every day and we are blessed that he’s challenged us to do the same.”

Brigadier General Stacey Hawkins, USAF

“Have you ever considered answering an ad that says, *Hero Wanted*? That’s exactly what Rodney Bullard is calling each of us to do! If you want more satisfaction, fulfillment, and impact, this book will provide the nudge you need. You don’t have to relocate; your current skills are sufficient. You can be sure the long-term benefits will exceed any pension plan you’ve ever seen. . . a hero’s legacy extends for generations! And the best part? You can start today!”

Mark Miller

Chick-fil-A, Vice President, High Performance Leadership
Coauthor, bestselling books *The Secret: What Great Leaders Know and Do*; *Chess Not Checkers: Elevate Your Leadership Game*

“This book is filled with heroic stories that build a compelling formula for instilling a guiding light of hope in others—written by a hero who constantly inspires me.”

Steve Reinemund

Retired Chairman and CEO, PepsiCo
Former Dean of Business, Wake Forest University

“Rodney Bullard is the rare one—a highly regarded corporate leader who ushers us toward inner awakening and the transforming power of faith. His *Heroes Wanted* gets to the heart of the dilemma we all face at times: how to break through the life-limiting barriers of doubt, fear, and conformity, and extend ourselves with confidence in every area of our life. His strategies and stories demonstrate how positive beliefs propel us toward our goals and can make us a powerful force for social good. *Heroes Wanted* inspires that can-do spirit, the courage and conviction needed to succeed in life and know that we are human and divine, the sacred link between heaven and earth.”

Susan L. Taylor, Founder and CEO,

National CARES Mentoring Movement @CARES Mentoring
Editor-in-chief emerita, *Essence* magazine

“Rodney’s message in *Heroes Wanted* is that every single person has value and every single person needs help. I’ve made it from the trailer parks in Georgia to the red carpets of Hollywood because of the heroes who have invested in my life. Now my passion is to do the same for others. They say that ‘helped people...help people’—and that’s what *Heroes Wanted* is all about!”

Rachel McCord, celebrity model; author of
*Slay the Fame Game: How to Break into Hollywood &
Social Media Without It Breaking You*

HEROES WANTED

RODNEY D. BULLARD



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HEROES WANTED

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*To everyone who makes the choice to ignore division
and differences to help another human being in need.*

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FOREWORD

There are a lot of people who keep Atlanta standing. Pillars of the community, so to speak. And Rodney Bullard is absolutely one of those important pillars in our community. He has impacted the city beyond measure, but even broader than that, he's impacting our world. He's impacting our society through his efforts, through his wisdom, through his leadership. It's been an honor, a privilege to be able to know him, to build and connect with him, to glean from his wisdom, and to contribute to any of his many efforts since I've known him. I'm very grateful for his work and am inspired to see what he will continue to do.

—Lecrae

THE HEART OF A HERO

*Whatever is at the center of our life will be the source of
our security, guidance, wisdom, and power.*

STEPHEN COVEY

*The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward
appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.*

EZEKIEL 19:11 ESV

*Heroism doesn't always happen in a burst of glory.
Sometimes small triumphs and large hearts
change the course of history.*

MARY ROACH

The world needs heroes.

Do you believe the world needs *you*?

If you are comparing the image of a superior being soaring through the galaxy at Mach-speed to the one of yourself sitting at mock-speed on the couch, stop. Because the hero wanted, the hero you are created to become, is not like the iconic version most of us imagine.

The world needs *real* heroes. Those who, complete with their flaws and areas of weakness, are made to walk forward in the way prepared by God. I believe there are heroes all around us. I believe there is a hero *in* each of us. We may not yet realize how we can change a life, or two, or twenty, or twenty thousand, but the heart of heroism is inside of us, unexpected and maybe even unrequited. It awaits our awakening.

There are no mythological beings in spandex suits who are saving the day. There is the better alternative: people like you and me inspired by our God-given heart to contribute to the well-being of

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others through acts that can alter a path, ease a journey, protect a life, or perpetuate a dream.

THE SIMPLICITY OF EXTRAORDINARY

It's fascinating to read about the psychology of heroism. I won't delve deeply into that aspect; however, one insight I've encountered is extremely helpful for our pursuit. There is a distinction made by psychologist Frank Farley between "big H" heroism and "small h" heroism. Using this concept, Kendra Cherry explains:

Big H heroism "involves significant risk, which could include death, injury, imprisonment, or other serious or significant consequences," [Farley] explains. Small h heroism, on the other hand, "is everyday heroism, helping others, doing good deeds, showing kindness, etc., where serious harm or major consequences are not usually a result."¹

One of the infamous singsong Sesame Street inquiries is this: "Big H, little h, what begins with h?" For the transforming journey that we are embarking on, the answers are *hero* and *heart*. The hero's heart is transformed and open and willing. So, whether we're encountering big H or little h experiences, a true heroic moment begins in the heart. This belief gives us inspiration and motivation to learn from examples of everyday heroes in action and uncover ways we are made to be heroic. We can keep returning to the state of our heart to see how we are doing and to see what God is calling us to do.

But how do we embrace the role of hero?

START WITH A SMALL LEAP

If you're like me, you want to do good in the world. You want to be the person God shaped you to become, but schedules and pressures have started to dictate your priorities. They may have even given you a false fatalistic perspective: *I'm in the fast flow of life. How can I figure out what I need, let alone figure out how to meet the needs of others?*

That's an excellent question to ask. Take comfort in knowing you

don't have to see the big picture to begin this adventure. If you focus on getting to know yourself, how you're designed, and what your natural abilities and gifts are, then the doorways to heroic service will open. Make an initial small leap by investing time to explore and consider the invitations being presented in daily life. By doing this, your heart, mind, and spirit will be prepared and emboldened for the heroic journey.

Together we will walk the way of the hero, and at each stop, we'll glean strength and insight from stories. We'll take moments to pause and notice how we are given countless opportunities to express *our* heroic heart through...

Calling

Commitment

Compassion

Connection

Conviction

Community

Courage

Charity

Confidence

You have far more to offer to others than you've ever dreamed possible. You aren't powerless; you possess an immense wealth of love and strength to invest in others and in the fulfillment of your purpose. You aren't stuck, unable, too late to the game, or any other version of a disclaimer your mind might be constructing as an obstacle.

You are made for this.

THE INTERCONNECTION OF OUR JOURNEYS

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that "all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."² I

experienced the impact of this mutuality at an early age. My mother, an educator, and my father, a minister, were faithfully intent on ensuring I received a transformative academic education and also an education on the plight of everyday people. These two tracks have allowed me to travel the world from South America to Asia and back, and choose careers spanning government, law, and philanthropy. Over the years I have served as an officer in the US Air Force, as a federal prosecutor, a White House fellow at NASA, and later in corporate philanthropy with the Chick-fil-A Foundation.

You have far more to offer others
than you've ever dreamed possible.

While these varied experiences seem lives apart, they have revealed to me that interconnectedness Dr. King spoke of. I have met and been changed by those who live out their heroic purpose: the airmen, soldiers, and sailors dedicated to defending our nation; the brightest minds in law and law enforcement dedicated to defending our physical and financial well-being; scientists eager to learn more about this planet and others in pursuit of a better tomorrow; people of faith living out compassion in remarkable ways; and a corporation I am proud to serve because it is full of men and women genuinely motivated to be a positive influence on everyone they meet.

My experiences, my relationships, and my challenges have taught me that “as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). When we go through this adventure of life together, we help one another become our most purposeful selves and, in turn, strengthen the powerful gift of our connectedness.

This journey that begins today will connect us to one another as

“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.”

ARTHUR ASHE

we discover our personal strengths and callings and are inspired by others who walk the way of the hero. I will share stories of everyday people who have made and are making a difference. We're going to look at a few stories of "big H" heroism, yet the main focus will be on the "small h" kind. When I refer to a hero, in most cases I have in mind Arthur Ashe's definition that emphasizes service rather than spectacle. But make no mistake—when we respond to even the smallest "Heroes Wanted" cry from our families, neighbors, communities, or world, there is a seismic shift that takes place within us and within the atmosphere of our culture.

This is how change happens. This is how lives and hopes are renewed.

The aim of our journey together is to change the world—not by a movement, not by revolution, but by a radically small rethinking of who we are, our power, our need for relationship, and our ability to provide transformative support for one another.

As you awaken to and acknowledge the leadings within you to respond to the needs you encounter, may you be intentional, dream big dreams, and craft real plans. Whether you are called to be a hero to those who are three feet in front of you or to those who are thousands of miles away, let your hero's heart lead, and then let your words and actions follow. The dreams and ideals are great, but without the effort of action and commitment to follow-through, they remain lofty and vague.

Coming alongside those who are living out their heroism inspires us to envision ourselves doing the same. We become aware of our personal qualifications that make us the perfect imperfect candidate to take action wherever and whenever heroes are wanted.

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At the end of the book is your Way of a Hero Reflection and Action Guide. This invites you to deepen the journey with a group or on your own. This resource of refining questions and action steps will encourage you as you answer the call to be a hero in the way God is prompting you. He has designed you to rise above the typical and reach for the remarkable. The heart to do this is already inside of you.

CALLING

A Heart of Purpose

*The place God calls you to is the place where
your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.*

FREDERICK BUECHNER

*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

EPHESIANS 2:10 NASB

*God breathes through us so completely...
so gently we hardly feel it...yet, it is our everything.*

JOHN COLTRANE

What do I need to do to save the world?”
One day, young Gregory Ellison asked his Aunt Dottie this question. Even as a child he perceived the weight of the difficulties experienced by his neighbors and community. He saw young men and women dropping out of school; he witnessed the devastation of homelessness and the random ravages of crime.

Her response was so simple and profound that it guided this boy's hero heart toward purpose. That day, Aunt Dottie turned to her sensitive nephew and said, “I don't know how you can change the world. All I know is how to change what is three feet around me.”

That compelling answer transformed into a calling.

Ellison earned a PhD from Princeton, became a professor at Emory University, and created the powerful grassroots initiative Fearless Dialogues. This unique organization creates safe spaces and invitations for individuals and groups from all walks of life to genuinely engage

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

EPHESIANS 4:1-3

with others and view each person, each encounter as significant. One way this becomes real and influential is through the 3-Foot Challenge inspired by that heartfelt answer years before.

In just over 3 years, over 10,000 people around the globe have taken the 3-Foot Challenge. The premise is simple, for three days take a few minutes to SEE the gifts of three people who pass within three feet of you. HEAR their story as central to your own. Reflect on how this experience can CHANGE your life and the people around you. The 3-Foot Challenge is designed to move individuals and communities beyond the belief that social

problems are too big to be changed by a committed few. Quite the opposite, in the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."¹

To this day, that challenge, that calling passed from Aunt Dottie to her young, curious, and sensitive nephew, is having a huge impact on lives throughout the world. Consider what needs are within three feet of you this week. There is no need to look further for a way to make and *be* the difference.

WILL YOU ANSWER THE CALL?

The world needs heroes who believe they are meant for significance and influence. In every corner of our communities and around the world, people are desperate for someone to speak up and make a difference. The good news: There is no shortage of heroes. There is only a short supply of belief that we are each called to be a hero.

When a hurting person's "heroes wanted" plea is spoken or unspoken, scribed in print or on their broken spirit, they rarely ask for a resumé and a list of references from the one who responds. If we listen

beyond the clamor of our self-doubt, we will hear the call to be our courageous, authentic selves and be encouraged to show up for others.

We all have gifts and we all have a calling to use them for the betterment of others. While we have different backgrounds and goals, we are united by our experience of struggles, pain, joy, and dreams. We are not that different even though we choose to live our lives differently. In fact, what binds us is “choice.” God gave us choice, and our choices are reflected daily. We choose to smile or not. We choose whether to step outside of our comfort zones to connect with others. And, we choose whether we will be someone’s lifeline, helping hand, or whether we cross the street to avoid involvement in the plight of another.

The good news: There is no shortage of heroes. There is only a short supply of belief that we are each called to be a hero.

Now I invite you to choose to believe that you are made for heroic acts of generosity and love in a very real, brave way. Let’s reimagine, relearn what a hero is and does so that we can embrace the role with conviction and excitement—and even anticipation—so that we will look for those opportunities to walk in our good purpose.

WHAT MAKES A HERO?

If you asked someone to describe a hero, you might get descriptions of those involved in very specific vocations. Sports heroes may be the most common, but every vocation has its heroes: music, art, education, science, technology, engineering, business...the list is endless.

Since the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001, many citizens have developed a greater appreciation and respect for the heroes who are first responders—police, firefighters, and EMTs. Depending on your own experience, the hero who comes to your mind may be someone in the military or a doctor or a nurse or a foster parent.

These are all heroes. Without a doubt. And before they donned the uniform or signed the dotted line to have a job that is also heroic,

they had a pull, a beckoning that they responded to with a yes. God gives each of us a well and wealth of talents, inclinations, experiences, and cultivated gifts. To respond to a need, we don't have to meet a divine standard in specialness; we are all special. We don't need an engraved invitation, because the invitation is already written on our hearts. We just have to draw from our God-given gifts and use them as He intended for us to. So, whether we go to a job that demands daily heroism or we sit at a desk and make the world better from our laptops and a 9-to-5 or caring for our kids, we all are given countless chances to rise up with a resounding "Yes!"

Those of us exploring the way of a hero can be encouraged by the apostle Paul's words written to the Christians in Rome. He invited them to embrace and commit their unique gifts to the good of others and the health and wholeness of the body of the church. "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully" (Romans 12:6-8). Even as Paul struggled with discouragement during his challenges, he followed his call to lead others toward heroic living—embracing their unique spiritual gifts and using them for the whole of mankind and in service to God.

How do you know when you are living heroically? I could probably make this more eloquent, but the simple truth works: As a hero, your call is to give your all—for someone else. This is your measure; this is your mission.

THE INFLUENCE OF A CALLING FULFILLED

One of my first heroes appeared in my life in such an unassuming way that I had no inkling to expect greatness. Her abilities weren't immediately perceptible. She was not larger than life. In fact, Mrs. Adams and I stood eye-to-eye—and I was in first grade.

What I couldn't see and know then was that I was about to

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SOMEONE ELSE.

THIS IS YOUR
MEASURE; THIS IS
YOUR MISSION.

experience the powerful influence of a hero who was following her calling.

The path that had brought me to this first-grade teacher was one of seeming failure. I grew up in Decatur, Georgia, the son of an educator and a minister who were faithfully intent on ensuring I received a transformative education. In the first grade, they sacrificed to send me to a prestigious private school. My parents, like all parents, had grand hopes for their child.

Unfortunately, midway through that year my mother received a call from a school administrator informing her that I had been the topic of ongoing conversation among the staff. And not in a good way. The administrator told my mother that I wasn't reading at grade level. I had not gone to kindergarten, so this didn't surprise my mother. What the administrator said next, however, was alarming: "We don't think he will ever read at grade level. Mrs. Bullard, we believe Rodney is developmentally slower than the other children."

My parents faced a big decision: Should they keep me in the same school and allow my challenges to direct me toward a special education program? Or should they send me to a new school system and hope for the best? My mom—who has always been my hero—trusted her instincts and enrolled me in a relatively unknown private school, Rainbow Christian Church School, in south DeKalb County close to our home.

On my first day to attend, I cried the entire way there. Even though I didn't understand all the reasons for the change, I did feel like I had failed in some way. We got out of the car and slowly walked into the gray cinder-blocked walls of the school. I clung to my mother in the hallway, refusing to enter the room where class was already underway. As I held onto the life raft of my mother, my new teacher, Mrs. Janie Adams, came to coax me to join the others. Despite her kid-friendly size, I was terrified. Terrified to leave the safety of my mother. Terrified of a new school. Terrified Mrs. Adams would find out I couldn't read and give up on me like others had.

After what seemed like hours, I reluctantly took Mrs. Adams's hand and we walked into the classroom. The other kids were considerate;

several of them came over to welcome me. However, these and future gestures of friendship weren't enough to calm my racing heart each and every day when it came time for our reading lesson. At the prior school, we weren't asked to read aloud, so my struggle had been evident only to me and my teachers. Here, we were asked to read aloud along with the rest of the class. It was my worst nightmare.

If I had thought to pray for a hero, these painful times of stumbling through syllables would've been the prime moments to beseech God's intervention for a caped rescuer who would whisk me away from embarrassing situations and my own weaknesses. I definitely would not have known to ask for the transformative "little h" heroics Mrs. Adams was about to usher into my life.

CONSISTENCY LETS THE LIGHT IN

Summer was approaching. My daydreams turned toward the activities that would fill my long days of freedom in the sun. That is, until my mother and Mrs. Adams presented me with Plan B. Apparently that was B for boredom. Mrs. Adams offered to tutor me in her home every day over the summer. She truly believed that with more attention, I could make more progress. I truly believed my summer was ruined.

Every Monday through Friday that summer, my mother dropped me off at Mrs. Adams's house. Patiently, my devoted teacher taught me to read phonetically until the words started to make sense. While it was unbearable to look out the window and see Mrs. Adams's son playing with his friends in the warmth of sun-drenched summer days, I was being enlightened in a different manner. I was never dyslexic. I was never unable. I was merely afraid. As Mrs. Adams showed faith in me, gradually the dark curtain that blinded me from understanding the words and how to speak them was lifted. Hallelujah! By the end of the summer, I was reading at a fourth- and fifth-grade level.

I often reflect on that season of change when one small yet visionary woman saw between the dark spaces of my broken confidence. It was her adamant faith in what I could accomplish that catapulted me into acceptance of what was possible.

If not for Mrs. Adams, I might have lost faith in myself and never realized the power of my ability to learn. The inability to read could have been my open wound and insecurity my permanent cape. By authentically living out her calling, Mrs. Adams altered the trajectory of my life. She was—and still is—my hero.

OUR MOST IMPORTANT OFFERING

A short and often overlooked biblical account sometimes referred to as “the widow’s offering” reminds us what is required of us individually. Jesus and His disciples were in the temple and happened to be sitting across from the offering box where people placed their financial gifts.

Like most church offerings today, the money might be used for a number of things: upkeep of the building, payment of the leaders and staff, helping the poor, missions work, and so forth. The disciples saw a lot of rich people come by and contribute impressive amounts. In stark contrast to those gifts of abundance, the widow’s offering was a mere two small copper coins. Jesus knew that the woman was extremely poor and that those two coins were all she had in the world. In His estimation, “The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the others put together. All the others gave what they’ll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn’t afford—she gave her all” (Mark 12:41-44 MSG).

This widow’s contribution was a heroic act of faithfulness. She gave what she had. She didn’t look at the very considerable needs in her community and decide that her small offering was not enough to save everyone or resolve the woes of the world. Instead of following those negative trails of doubt, she focused on the invitation to give her best. Her calling was to make a difference with what she had. And that woman heroically responded with an absolute yes.

Surely not many people in the community were in greater need than she was. Widows had few options for making a living in that society, so her generosity was indeed outstanding. Yet she clearly wasn’t giving her gift to impress anyone. She was quietly, willingly making the

most sacrificial gift possible—according to Jesus, *more than all the others put together*. He noticed that she responded with all that she had.

While each of us would count it a good day if we saved the damsel, the planet, or the population of a small village, these very visible invitations to heroism are unlikely to arise during our daily commute. However, when we tune in to life around us, we realize that our circumstances and situations present other ways for us to make a difference. The great news: There is no shortage of opportunities for you to be a hero.

It might not be copper coins that we sacrifice to faithfully walk in our calling; rather, it might be *time* to listen to someone who has a story or experience to process, *commitment* to a cause that needs the aid of faithful volunteers, *mental effort* to solve a problem that has caused havoc in a community, *patience* with someone God has asked us to accompany through a trial. You might find that today your most heroic response will be to *see* and connect with an individual on the street who typically goes unnoticed by the masses.

The great news: There is no shortage
of opportunities for you to be a hero.

On and on. Are your ears burning? You and what you have to offer are being asked for again and again.

SOARING BEYOND YOUR CIRCLE

The exploration of our capacity for love and transformation starts in our closest circle: family and friends. That's our training ground, and it is often the most difficult because those people have seen us at our worst and some of them won't let us forget our past mistakes. As we start looking more closely at our families, many of us realize how we could invest a lifetime of "small h" acts to serve only that group, right?

The sensitivity we develop to those needs that are nearest to us can and will prepare us to reach out to the wider circles of relationships in our schools, businesses, and churches, then to our communities, and even to other parts of the world.

When Justin Miller was a sophomore at Vanderbilt University, he heard Bono, the lead singer for U2, challenge people not to be content with having a successful life, but instead to do something that really counts, something that makes a dent in the massive problems of the world.

Justin's heart was prepared by that challenge and his own compassionate faith. On a trip to Kenya, he came face-to-face with a pervasive problem that was devastating individuals and families: HIV/AIDS. Justin explains his heart response to the mass problems he witnessed. When he returned to college he began CARE for AIDS.

I initially felt compelled to go to Kenya because I believed the American church wasn't living up to its calling to care for the vulnerable and marginalized globally. HIV positive parents couldn't access the basic services they needed to live with HIV/AIDS, they were dying very quickly and leaving behind thousands of orphans. We started to work through local churches to provide job training, counseling, nutrition, and spiritual care for people living with HIV/AIDS. Our clients experience physical, emotional, social, economic, and spiritual transformation and can live for another 25 years to raise and educate their children.²

So far, this organization has established an incredible 48 centers which have empowered 9,000 graduates—men and women with HIV who have completed the training program. Because of Justin's faithfulness to his calling and the commitment of those who have joined him, CARE for AIDS has prevented more than 29,000 children from being orphaned. And because of this young man's heart of compassion, 2,500 people have found more than physical support; they have found and professed personal faith and hope in Jesus.

These statistics represent real people. One father describes the impact this program has had on his life and family:

Before the program, our life was in total darkness. I was seeing the cloud of death. I had no future, even for the

family. [I wondered] who was going to care for our children, because for me and my wife, I knew we shall be dying very soon. CARE for AIDS brought me from one valley to another. The first valley means there was death, and the second valley means there is life, and there is a future and there is hope. . . . We will live to see our children grow up, working and having their own families.³

Heroes look at the harshest difficulties and are compelled by the deepest love to act. They shift their focus from problems that appear insurmountable to solutions that are personal. And the best of heroes invite others to join them to make a difference. Justin explains, “When our friends in the U.S. support our work by going to Kenya or giving to our work, they become educated about this issue, see the redemptive potential the church possesses, and begin to empathize with and care for the marginalized here at home.”⁴

The solution for poverty in other countries or even in poor neighborhoods in America is not an infusion of dollars. Money in itself is not enough, but love, vision, creativity, and partnerships can multiply the impact of a few resources to make a difference in the lives of many people.

Heroes shift their focus from problems that appear insurmountable to solutions that are personal.

ANSWERING THE URGENT CALL

There is a time when we are called beyond what we deem to be our ordinary existence to do what some would call extraordinary. These actions are often termed heroic because they can change a situation, circumstance, even a life in a matter of seconds. A police officer who responds quickly to an emergency call and stops a robber, a firefighter who battles a blazing inferno to rescue a family, and a mother who finds the strength to lift a car that trapped her child are all heroes. Any action

done in a moment of despair that helps to protect and restore a person's sense of safety and peace can be called an act of heroism.

Sometimes a lifetime of sober, mundane, “small h” heroic service can erupt into a single moment of intense, dramatic, exemplary heroism. In 2006, an F3 tornado was leaving a trail of destruction through the middle of Tennessee. One of the homes directly in its path was completely leveled. Inside was Amy Hawkins with her two sons, ages three and six. As the full force of the tornado hit the house, Amy did all she could to shield her children, protecting them with her own body as she was pummeled with bricks and other debris. Amy's spinal cord was severed during all the havoc, and she now requires the use of a wheelchair. However, her sons are healthy. Amy's story captured the attention of national media and talk shows. The world takes notice when an everyday person embraces heroic sacrifice.

Reflecting on that experience, Amy said, “You don't really think about it until the time comes. You know that you'd put your life on the line for the kids. You do what needs to be done.”⁵

Few of us will ever be put in a position like Amy's, where one moment of danger immediately engages us in a publicly acclaimed “big H” heroic act. But all of us who have the desire to do so can be somebody's hero in terms of service and sacrifice. When we pay attention to the unfolding of life and needs around us and we have a heart that is sensitive and open, we are better able to act in the moment and to do what needs to be done.

The question is, Will we walk the hero's way? Will we let down our personal guard and build up the lives of others in response to our divine call to purpose and love?

Make the leap, be vulnerable enough to love even those who annoy you, and take the risk of caring for people who can't give you anything in return. Start experiencing what a difference you can make when you become what the world needs—you.