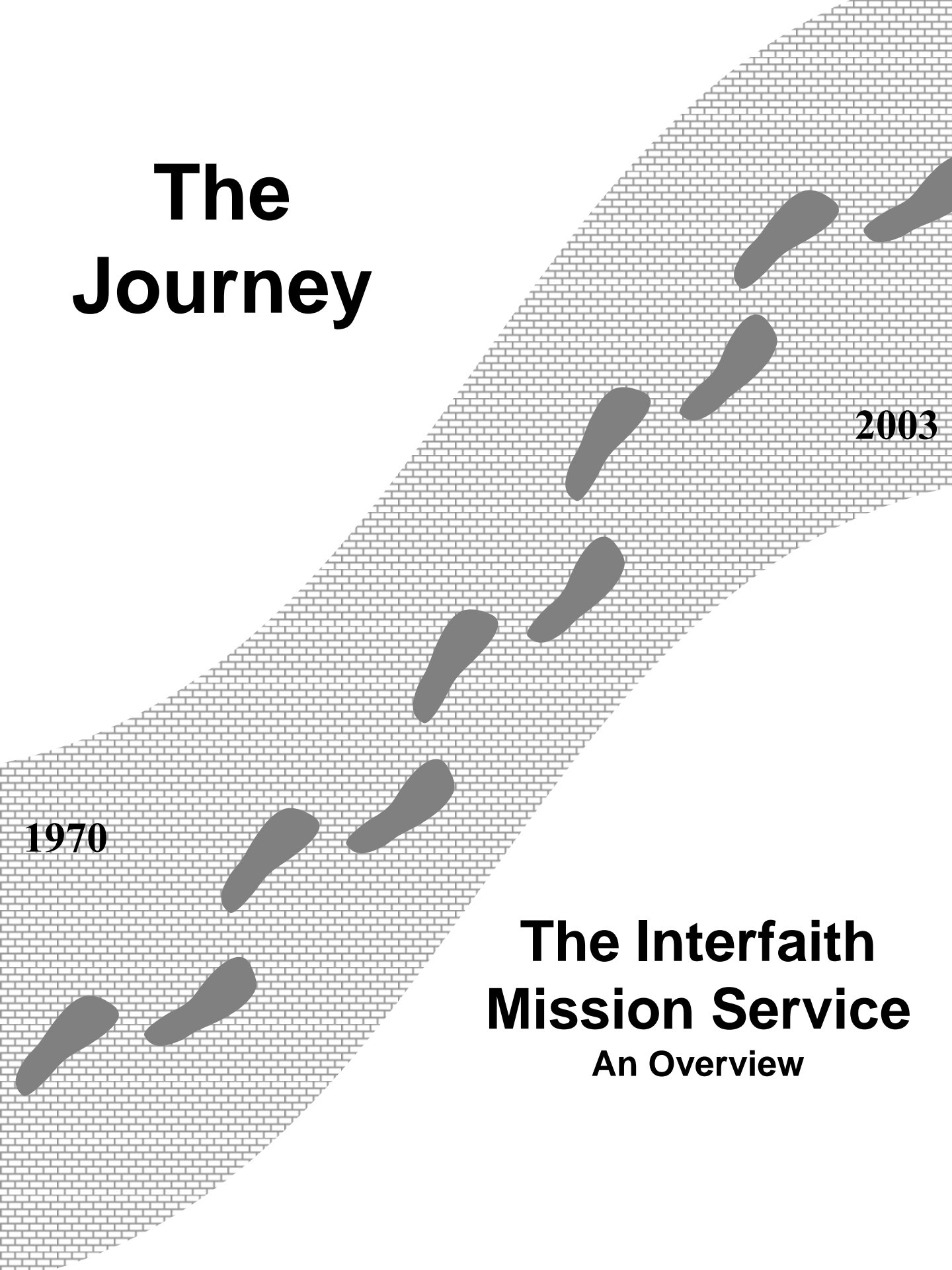


# The Journey

1970

2003

**The Interfaith  
Mission Service**  
An Overview





## **Message from the President, IMS Board of Directors**

April 24, 2003

Our Annual Report this year includes the story of the Interfaith Mission Service. We call it “The Journey.” It is a journey begun by people representing seven congregations. They had a vision of ministry that extended beyond the capability of any one of their congregations, and they wanted it to be an interfaith partnership.

During its formation, 1969-1970, I was director of the Community Action Agency (CAA) and in 1970 I benefited from their efforts when IMS helped expand and operate Project Discovery, one of our projects.

After leaving CAA I kept track of IMS, but only from a distance and by reputation in the community. Upon joining the Board of Directors, persuaded by that reputation, I am profoundly impressed by what has been accomplished, is being accomplished and the future vision. It testifies that when people and their institutions believe that diversity is an asset, and leverage that asset, the quality of life in their community is enhanced.

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors and staff, I say “thank you” to the partner congregations, individual supporters and volunteers. Please, review our report and I hope you will become involved.

Sincerely,

Charles Ray

## **Message from the Executive Director**

April 24, 2003

As I reflect back over the past year, many images cross my mind. I reflect on how many of you came by the office to bring meal packs and hygiene kits for those who have no home. And I can tell you the impact it makes on a daily basis. They go to people who are living in the field, and who look forward not only to the food it provides, but to also know that someone cares about them. It also makes a difference to the client who has an appointment and will miss lunch, or to the person who has just gotten a job and doesn't have enough money to buy lunch that day. I remember, from the Art Auction/Cultural Fair, the beautiful clothing and displays from the families in Huntsville who represent many cultures, and I'm thankful for the beauty they add to our community. I think about those of you who have invested time in the One Huntsville efforts to promote harmony and unity in our community. On a daily basis, I hear the Foodline volunteers answer the phone and talk with people who are hungry and need assistance, and I hear from the church pantries who meet those needs. I think about the impact of having First Stop open, so that homeless clients have a place during the day to shower, do laundry, be sheltered from the weather, and work with case managers so that they are able to move into housing. And I remember the excitement as people move into their own home – with your assistance of household goods, utility money, and food.

As partners in Interfaith Mission Service, you have continued to play a vital role in our community this year, as it has done for thirty years. You are really making a difference in people's lives – thank you.

Sincerely,

Linda Beatty  
Executive Director, Interfaith Mission Service



# The Journey

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# Why IMS?

The Interfaith Mission Service is a partnership among congregations that pool their resources-- staff, facilities, volunteers, and funding-- to implement the mission of the partnership. The congregations govern the partnership with their Board of Directors representatives.

IMS employs a full time Executive Director and Administrative Assistant. The partnership's ministries are in two areas; 1) Promoting religious, racial, and cultural harmony and 2) Responding to human needs. The Community Relations Group and Human Needs Group are responsible for creating ministry projects/activities in these areas, respectively.

Another key area is the Support Services Group that provides infrastructure support (funding, policies/plans, communication/publicity, financial management, etc.) to the these ministry areas.

Traditionally, the partnership has responded to human needs in a three step process:

1. Assess the needs of the community in cooperation with other segments of the community (city/county government, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, social service agencies).
2. Develop an organization to respond to the priority community needs and nurture (incubate) the organization to maturity.
3. Evaluate and transform the organization to a self-sustaining status if deemed appropriate.

Promoting religious, racial, and cultural harmony takes place within the partnership and the wider community. All of the faith traditions advocate peace and address human suffering. IMS develops projects that enable their members to gain an understanding of each other.

Compiling information about community resources/needs and sharing that information along with the activities of each of the partners is another vital element of the operational concept.

**Why IMS? The answer is simple. It lays in the answers to two more questions: What single congregation, in a 500 mile radius, could have sewn seeds of which you are about to reap? What one congregation could reap so much good working alone?**

# The Start of the Journey

From the pages of “Susan Smith’s Review of Our History,” our journey began in 1969 with a small group of Christians and Jews. They decided to create the Interfaith Mission Service “to be a facilitating agency and help churches do what they feel they should do.”

In 1971 this concept was again iterated: “With a variety of organizations and causes asking for support from IMS, the March Board minutes reflect the decision that ‘IMS should act as an agent of reconciliation and avoid actions which polarize the community or represent IMS as identifying with a particular political point of view.’” It was stressed that IMS was to help churches carry out their ministries, not just get the churches’ help with IMS ministries. It was further noted that “the role of reconciler is not passive”. The records from that year attest to the fact that IMS was anything but passive.

From its inception IMS has worked with other organizations in the community to validate community needs and develop solutions to those needs. In the beginning, IMS worked with the Model Cities research to compile and validate the needs. From that information, IMS developed HELPLine, and a volunteer transportation service (Huntsville Interfaith Volunteer Transportation Service, HIVTS) among other services. HELPLine has since merged with HOPE Place, another IMS initiative, to become the North Alabama Crisis Intervention Center. HIVTS became the forerunner of HandiRide.

Later IMS worked with the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) to establish Care Assurance Support for the Aging (CASA) units in the 5 county TARCOG region.

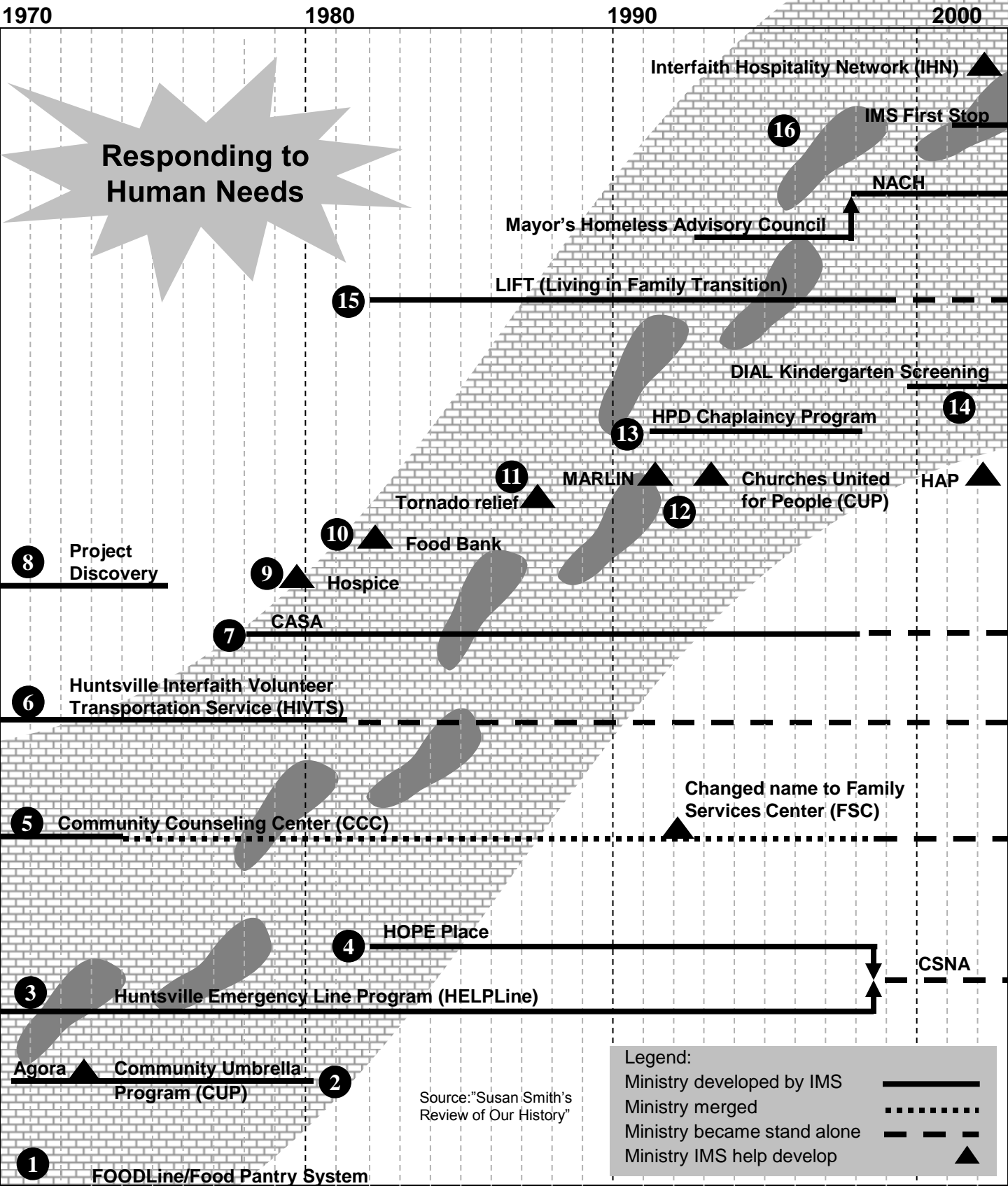
Similarly, IMS developed First Stop, a ministry to homeless persons. First Stop was opened in February 2002 as a result of the Continuum of Care assessment performed by the organizations making up the North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (NACH)

Again from the 1971 history: “There was significant racial unrest in Huntsville during 1971, especially during a strike by sanitation workers over pay and working conditions, and members of their union were invited to address the IMS Council in April. IMS also joined with the Huntsville Civic Coalition in encouraging the City Council to appoint the first Black person to the City School Board. IMS was also vocal in its support of the police and firemen’s union’s efforts to improve their retirement benefits.”

This initial focus upon acceptance and promotion of religious, racial and cultural harmony remains a major segment of Interfaith Mission Service’s current efforts and future plans.

# The Journey - at - a - Glance

## Three Decades of Ministry to the Community





# The Journey - at - a - Glance

## Responding to Human Needs

- 16 **IMS First Stop**, formed in 2001, provides services to homeless persons. The story started in 1989 when IMS was instrumental in establishing the Mayor's Homeless Advisory Council; IMS Executive Director was the first Chair of the council. This council was a forerunner to the North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (NACH). NACH produced a Continuum of Care that provided the basis for IMS First Stop and the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). IMS is supporting New Futures, Inc., to develop IHN.
- 15 **Living in Family Transition (LIFT)** started in 1982 to provide low cost housing for homeless persons until they can transition to more permanent housing.
- 14 **DIAL Kindergarten Screening** started in 1998 to provide better information to Huntsville teachers about the school readiness of children entering the elementary system.
- 13 **Huntsville Police Department Chaplaincy Program** formed in 1989 with nineteen members of the clergy providing chaplaincy services for the Huntsville Police Department.
- 12 **Madison Area Resource Line (MARLIN), Churches United for People (CUP), Huntsville Assistance Program (HAP)** provide emergency funds. These are operated by clusters of IMS partners.
- 11 **Tornado Relief:** In 1989 a fund was established to receive and distribute funds to tornado victims and develop the memorial at the corner of Whitesburg Drive and Airport Road.
- 10 **Food Bank:** IMS provided initial seed money along with United Way to start the Food Bank in 1984.
- 9 **Hospice:** In 1980 IMS provided its 501(c)(3) status of collection and distribution of funds to start Hospice and funding to train the initial corps of volunteers.
- 8 **Project Discovery:** IMS assumed operation of Project Discovery, a program providing week-end enrichment experiences for disadvantaged youth. The program was organized by the Community Action Agency.
- 7 **Care Assurance System for the Aging (CASA)** formed in 1978 under contract with Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG). The task was to develop stand-alone CASA agencies in the five county TARCOG region. Currently viable agencies are operating in each county.
- 6 **Huntsville Interfaith Volunteer Transportation Service (HIVTS)** formed in 1970. Volunteers provided transportation to medical and other appointments. HIVTS later merged with the Senior Center. Demonstration of the need for transportation services helped initiate the HandiRide service now operating.
- 5 **Community Counseling Center (CCC)** formed in 1970. Pastors within the community donated their counseling services. As a result of a city-wide study of counseling services conducted in 1973, CCC merged with the Family Counseling Agency to form the Counseling and Growth Center. Later the name was changed to the current Family Services Center.
- 4 **HOPE Place** became a part of IMS in 1982. It provides shelter and services for spouse abuse victims. After becoming a stand-alone agency HOPE Place merged with HELPLine to become Crisis Services of North Alabama.
- 3 **Huntsville Emergency Line Project (HELPLine)** organized in 1970 and started operation in 1971 to provide telephone counseling and information and referral services. It became a stand-alone agency in 1998.
- 2 **Agora** began as a coffeehouse for young adults in 1970. Later it expanded as Community Umbrella Program (CUP) to address drug abuse and eventually operated a Youth Emergency Services (YES) clinic for drug users.
- 1 **FOODLine/Food Pantry System** formed in 1970 with nine congregations. Currently, 17 pantries are operating with many more congregations being "feeders" to these pantries. Volunteers operating telephones at the IMS office perform the clearinghouse functions.

# The Journey - at - a - Glance

## Three Decades of Ministry to the Community

1970

1980

1990

2000

Promoting Religious,  
Racial, and Cultural  
Harmony

**3** Annual Dinner

**2** Special topic forums and workshops

**1** IMS Bridge

**6** Conducted Candidates Forums

▲ Conducted Candidates Forums

**5** Alabama IMPACT

**4** Citizens for open Government (COG)

**4** Huntsville Civic Coalition

**7** Ecumenical Dialogue

Interfaith Dialogue

**8** One Huntsville

One Huntsville

**9** Week of Christian Unity

Festival for  
Christian Unity

**10** Interfaith  
Celebrations

**11** Interfaith Youth Rallies

Source: "Susan Smith's Review of Our History"

# The Journey - at - a - Glance

## Promoting Religious, Racial and Cultural Harmony

- 11 **Interfaith Youth Rallies** are designed to bring youth from different traditions together for study and fellowship.
- 10 **Interfaith Celebration and Remembrance** began as a result of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack. The first remembrance was held four days after the attack at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. Over 1300 people attended, representing numerous faith traditions among the leaders and participants.
- 9 **Week of Christian Unity** started in 1992. Worship services were held in different churches each evening of the week. This event led to the Festival of Christian Unity that is held each January.
- 8 **One Huntsville Diversity Dinners** began in 1992, and recently re-initiated in 2000. The dinners provide an opportunity to meet for food, fellowship and networking among the diverse population of the community.
- 7 **Ecumenical Dialogue - Interfaith Dialogue** began in 1986 as a forum to explore commonalities and differences among Christian denominations. As the community became more diverse they evolved to an interfaith dialogue forum.
- 6 **Candidate Forums** were organized in 1974 and 1978 to provide political candidates an opportunity to discuss topics of concern to the Huntsville faith community.
- 5 **Alabama IMPACT** was a statewide coalition of religious denominations formed to track and advocate for legislation promoting welfare reform and social justice. IMS staff and volunteers did research and mailings. Alabama IMPACT later merged with Alabama Arise.
- 4 **Huntsville Civic Coalition/Citizens for Open Government** performed studies of the racial and gender composition of boards and agencies staffed by city government. Advocacy measures were taken to improve the representation.
- 3 **Annual Dinners** began in 1971 and have been an event every year that brings the partner congregations and general public together as a celebration of the year's accomplishments.
- 2 **Special topic forums and workshops** have been and continue to be conducted to provide the partner congregations with information and opportunities for discussion since the beginning of IMS.
- 1 **IMS Bridge** began publication in 1971. For a time other publications, e.g. IMS Journal, have been employed to provide more in depth treatment of major topics.

# Responding to Human Needs

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are needed to see this picture.

Walking to feed the hungry

QuickTime™ and a  
Photo-IMP-Decoder  
are needed to see this picture.

Coming in from the cold at IMS First Stop

## Human needs?

Admittedly “human needs” is a broad term. The Interfaith Mission Service focuses on that segment of human needs that requires delivery of a direct service, e.g., counseling (crisis intervention, individual and family, etc.), information and referral, transportation, housing, food, etc.

## How are the needs determined?

Primarily, the needs have been determined and validated by working with organizations within the community that have the responsibility for conducting comprehensive needs assessments, e.g., United Way, city/county government. For example, prior to organizing HELPLine the needs assessment hearings conducted by the Model Cities personnel were monitored. The original HELPLine formation team was brought together in conjunction with United Way. CASA was formed in conjunction with the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG).

## How does the partnership respond?

Several methods have been used during the 30 + years of the IMS journey. These methods can be described as the following.

- **Incubator/spin-off Model** - whereby the project was defined, a board of directors was established, resources were provided, and the projects were spun-off when they were mature.
- **Internal Management Model** - which entailed defining, organizing, funding, and managing the project internally. This is the model being used to develop IMS First Stop for the current time.
- **Task Team Model** - entails establishing a task team to initiate a project and/or conduct special ad-hoc endeavors.



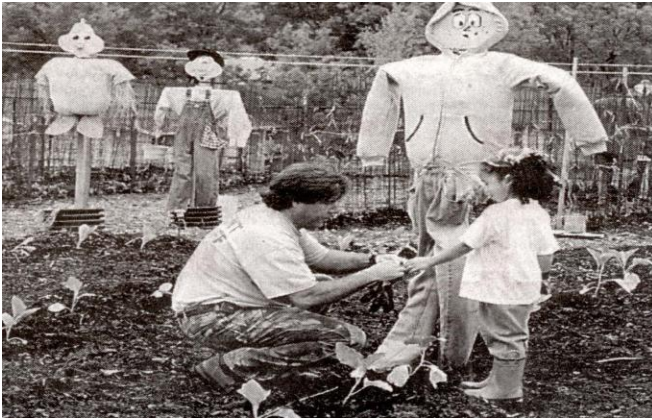
Harvest time at the CASA garden



Determining school readiness skills

# The Historical Journey of Responding to Human Needs

## CASA (Care Assurance System for the Aging and Homebound)



Spring planting at the CASA garden



CASA volunteers painting a new ramp

**When organized:** Oct 1, 1978; The Interfaith Mission Service contracted with TARCOG (Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments) to set up a CASA unit in each of the five counties in the TARCOG region. That goal was fulfilled in 1982.

**Mission:** To provide volunteer services to assist with the unmet needs of aging and homebound individuals.

**Services:** CASA has evolved into a signature agency in the community. In the last fiscal year, CASA volunteers built or repaired 107 ramps, provided 4115 trips to medical appointments, delivered 22,304 lbs. of vegetables from the CASA garden, installed 83 handrails, weatherized 204 homes and 175 people provided emergency weather service (a/c units, fans, heaters and firewood). Summed, these volunteers contributed 53,929 hours of service in 2002 alone.

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## CCC (Community Counseling Center) to Family

**When organized:** Organized in 1970 by the Interfaith Mission Service. A part-time secretary was hired to coordinate the schedule of volunteer pastor counselors.

**Mission:** To provide individual and family counseling services.

**Evolution:** In 1973, a city wide assessment of the counseling service agencies was performed. That effort resulted in a new agency: the Counseling and Growth Center, which was a merger of CCC and the **Family Counseling Agency (FCA)**. Later the name was changed to the current Family Service Center (FSC).

**Services:** During the past fiscal year FSC has provided over one million dollars of service and has helped an estimated 15,000 people through its Counseling and Employee Assistance, Both Parents, Kids on the Block Puppet, Anger Management, Ways to Work Car Loans, Caring Cars and other programs.

# The Historical Journey of Responding to Human Needs, cont.



## HELPLine (Huntsville Emergency Line Program)

**Organized:** The first exploratory meetings, organized by IMS and the Community Council (A United Way agency), took place in February 1970. A steering committee was formed in April and a Board of Directors was established in December.

**Mission:** To provide telephone crisis intervention and information and referral services.

**Project Evolution:** HELPLine merged with HOPE Place in 1999 to create **Crisis Services of North Alabama.**

Confidential reassurance and guidance

**Services:** HELPLine crisis line volunteers have answered nearly a million calls for help since the first call was taken in July of 1971, averaging 31,000 calls each year. Carefully screened and trained volunteers provide counseling to people in crisis - including suicide and rape crisis counseling - and information on the entire spectrum of social services available in Huntsville. On a typical month, the crisis line volunteers might respond to 4000 calls for help with utilities, 3000 calls for rent assistance and 6600 (22%) will be calls just to reach out and talk to someone.

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## HOPE Place (Huntsville Offers a Protective Environment)

**Organized:** In 1982 HELPLine was receiving a great number of calls from abused spouses and there were no suitable shelters. Legislation had recently passed that allowed counties to use \$5 of the marriage license fee for battered spouse support. IMS organized a board of directors with the IMS Executive Director as the first chairman.

**Mission:** To prevent domestic abuse by providing services for victims and education on domestic violence to the community.

**Project Evolution:** HOPE Place merged with HELPLine in 1999 to create **Crisis Services of North Alabama**

Starting over with HOPE

(Identity intentionally concealed)

**Services/People served:** HOPE Place has provided safe shelter to over 9,000 women, children, and men since 1982. HOPE Place also offers legal services, court advocacy, counseling and referrals to victims of family violence. It also provides community education and prevention programs.

# The Historical Journey of Responding to Human Needs, cont.

## LIFT (Living in Family Transition)

**When organized:** In 1985 IMS identified a severe shortage of transitional and low-income housing in Huntsville. Using the information from the study a board of directors was established to organize LIFT housing.

**Purpose:** To provide transitional housing for homeless persons until they can find permanent housing.

**Services:** Low income housing with utilities furnished, residence up to 18 months, provisions of household items (food and clothing as required), encouragement in further education, professional counseling referrals.

LIFT currently has three housing programs.

LIFT Transitional Housing: LIFT owns 12 units of housing for low-income families with a maximum tenancy of 18 months.

Extended Term Housing: LIFT owns 7 units of extended term housing. The families sign a year lease that can be renewed.

Project HUSH: In this project LIFT leases 12 two-bedroom units from an apartment complex owner. Clients can remain in the program for 18 months and must be certified as homeless based on Federal Guidelines.

**People Served:** In 2001 LIFT served 51 families in the three programs. Of the 25 people in the HUSH program 12 were continued in the program and 7 completed the program and moved into permanent housing. In the LIFT Transitional Housing program 17 families were served. Six completed the program and moved to permanent housing.

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are needed to see this picture.

Saying “Welcome” to a new resident.

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One of seven transitional homes

# The Current Journey of Responding to Human Needs

## FoodLine/Food Pantry System

**When organized:** This has been a project of the Interfaith Mission Service since the beginning in 1970.

**Purpose:** The purpose is to provide emergency food to families in need.

**Services:** Currently there are 17 congregations in the Foodline network that operate food pantries. Many more congregations supply food products to these pantries. The clearinghouse functions are performed by a group of volunteers at the IMS office.

**People served:** Approximately 11,000 people are served annually by the network of pantries.

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FoodLine Food Pantries provide  
emergency food supplies

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## DIAL Kindergarten Screening

**When organized:** The Dial Kindergarten Screening project has been operating since 1999.

**Purpose:** The purpose is to test children entering elementary school to determine school readiness skills.

**Services:** Approximately 100 volunteers are involved to organize the project and work with the children. The results are provided to the school teachers and used to aid them to relate to the students.

**People served:** Approximately 1200 children are involved in the project.

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Volunteers survey school readiness skills



# The Current Journey of Responding to Human Needs, cont.

## IMS First Stop



IMS First Stop Drop-in Center  
602 Stokes St.



Home before IMS First Stop

**When organized:** Opened for business in February 2002. Active case management service began in July 2002.

**Purpose:** To help chronically homeless individuals attain permanent housing.

**Services:** The drop in center provides showers, laundry, access to telephones, transportation to community agencies, lockers and a place to receive mail. Case management services are provided to help homeless persons develop a source of income and move into permanent housing. To meet that goal, case managers help people obtain identification documents, assess employment possibilities and assist with medication and transportation needs. They also help people connect with mainstream social services such as Food Stamps, Social Security, Employment Service, Mental Health Center, Veteran's Affairs, Community Free Clinic, and when appropriate, apply for disability payments through Social Security and/or Veteran's Affairs. Payee services are set up, as needed, through the Huntsville Rehabilitation Service or the Mental Health Center. As clients are ready to move into housing, they are assisted with utility and housing deposits and basic housekeeping setup.

**People Served:** Since the program first began, over 550 people have used the drop in center. Case management services are being provided to 300 people. Approximately 1/3 of the population (106 individuals) have income from employment or disability; approximately 2/3 need to obtain employment or apply for disability. Barriers to employment and housing include mental health problems, alcohol/drug problems, lack of education and skills, and physical or mental disability; case managers help the clients overcome these barriers. Since we began active case management in July, more than 45 individuals have been able to attain permanent housing. Volunteers from the community and from our clients provide a significant resource each month to keep the center running effectively.

# Promoting Religious, Racial, and Cultural Harmony

## Why is promoting harmony important?

The Interfaith Mission Service partners believe the following reasons are valid and sufficient.

- **Pursuit of truth:** Truth within one's own tradition is facilitated by understanding other traditions.
- **Problem solving:** The old adage "two heads are better than one" applies. Innovation in all arenas requires diverse approaches.
- **Good for business:** Huntsville and the surrounding area is already diverse and will become more so. Attraction of good businesses requires good community relations.

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Festival of Christian Unity, First Baptist Church

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Festivities at the Culture Fair, Trinity United Methodist Church

## How is this objective accomplished?

Social and study forums are used to build relationships that will facilitate the in-depth understanding necessary for the quality of life desired.

**Interfaith dialogue events** that include study forums, youth rallies and dinners are conducted for the general public and small groups within congregations.

**Christian Unity** services are held to bridge differences within the Christian community.

**Newsletters and electronic media** are used to share information and facilitate communication.



Interfaith Dialogue session in process

# The Current Journey of Promoting Religious, Racial and Cultural Harmony

## Interfaith Dialogue

**When organized:** 1992

**Purpose:** To provide our community with a structured program for developing our community assets via understanding our faith traditions and ethnic diversity.

**Evolution:** An Ecumenical Dialogue series began in 1987. As the community became more diverse the interfaith series was started.



Interfaith Dialogue Spring series at Compass Bank Community Room

Interfaith Dialogue “One-the-Road” session at Trinity United Methodist Church

**Services:** Each year a spring and fall series have been offered to the general public using the Compass Bank community room. This year a series is being offered to Sunday School classes in the partner congregations.

**People served:** Generally an average of 250 people per year have been involved in the general sessions. The first “on the road” three session series was tested at Trinity UMC with an average attendance of 100 per session.

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## Interfaith Youth Rallies

**When organized:** The first Interfaith Youth Rally was held in 1997

**Purpose:** The purpose is to build a network among the youth groups in the congregations. Using the network, events are organized to provide inter-religious, racial and cultural experiences.

**Project Evolution:** Starting in 1997 interfaith youth rallies, with some exceptions, have been held annually. The latest rally, held January 19, 2003 involved 165 youth from eight congregations representing a good cross section of the community. As a result of this event a Youth Unity project is being organized. The next Interfaith Youth Rally is planned for the Fall.

Approximately 650 youth have been involved in the youth rallies since its beginning.

# The Current Journey of Promoting Religious, Racial and Cultural Harmony, cont.

## Interfaith Celebration & Remembrance

**When organized:** The first event was held September 15, 2001, at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, in response to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

**Purpose:** To provide an opportunity for the community to come together for prayer and a demonstration of unity.

**Evolution:** The first event was so successful that those involved decided to establish an annual service. The second was held on September 10, 2002 at Trinity UMC.

**People served:** Over 1,300 people attended the first service and over 700 attended the second year.

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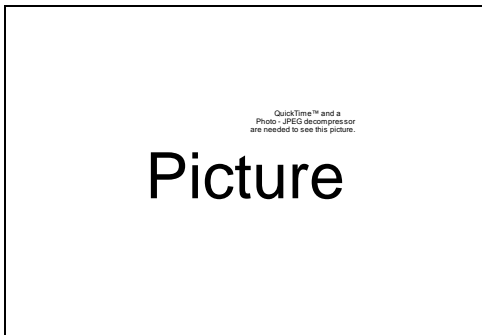
## One Huntsville Diversity Dinners

**When organized:** The diversity dinners now located at Ryan's restaurant on University Drive were started in 2000.

**Purpose:** To improve human relations by promoting the growth of relationships that cross the lines of race, faith, and culture. It entails networking...community problem solving...valuing diversity...finding common ground...shared projects...relevant programs...the fostering of friendships (new and renewed)...relevant information on community...a good meal.

**Evolution:** The first experience with diversity dinners occurred in 1990/91. They were started again in 2000 and are now in the third year.

**People served:** An average of 25-30 people attend the monthly events.



# The Current Journey of Promoting Religious, Racial and Cultural Harmony, cont.

## Festival for Christian Unity

**When organized:** The first Festival for Christian Unity was hosted by First Baptist Church in January 1999 and is held each year at that time.

**Purpose:** The purpose is to provide an ecumenical worship service for all denominations within the Christian tradition.

**Evolution:** For several years (1991 - 1997) ecumenical worship services were held in different churches during the week of prayer for Christian Unity. The Festival of Christian Unity is a follow on of that format.

**People served:** Choirs, speakers and congregants from several churches are involved. Attendance is around 1000 people.

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Children celebrating Christian unity

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## Bi-monthly Programs

**When organized:** Soon after the Interfaith Mission Service was created in 1970.

**Purpose:** The purpose is educational. The forums are publicized to the general community and address topics of civic, social and inter-religious interest.

**Evolution:** Education has been and continues to be a major objective of the Interfaith Mission Service. Several methodologies have been used to accomplish the objective; week-end workshops, developing research groups to develop white papers, developing information and presenting it to Sunday School Classes and other groups, panel discussions, etc. Currently, six panel style forums present and discuss civic and inter-religious topics of interest.

**People served:** Approximately 150 -200 people are involved in these discussions during the year.

# Our Vision

# The Future of the Journey

Peter Drucker has provided valuable guidance for non-profit organizations in his book “Managing the Non-Profit Organization.” The book is a compilation of “principles and practices” derived from interviews with leaders of hospitals, churches, health and community services, schools and universities, charitable and service groups and foundations. The Interfaith Mission Service leadership is taking advantage of the information provided by these non-profits.

**The Mission Comes First:** “...the mission is always long range. It needs short-range efforts and very often short-range results. -- So we start always with the long range, and then we feed back and say, What do we do *today*?”

A Partners Planning Conference was held in May, 2002, subtitled “Bridging Gaps,” to kick off a long range planning effort. Key community leaders from business development, county/city government, service providers and the education system presented their perspectives on how the faith community could be involved. The results were reported to the partners in October in the form of a Five Year Roadmap and the 2003 Annual Plan.

**From Mission to Performance:** “Strategy converts a non-profit institution’s mission and objectives into performance.”

- “Begins with knowing the market--who the customer is, who the customer should be, who the customer might be.”
- “Strategy to improve all the time and to innovate.”
- “Strategy to develop a donor constituency.”

Strategies are being developed in each of these vital areas.

**Managing for Performance:** “One needs to define performance for each of the non-profit’s key areas.”

Performance metrics have long been kept. The next step is to define the outcome results that are desired in each of the ministry areas and then measure to evaluate effectiveness.

**People and Relationships:** “The non-profit board also plays a very different role from the company board. It is more active and, at the same time, more of a resource....”

A concerted effort is being exerted to ensure that the directors are fully informed and are fully vested in the performance of our mission.

# Our Five Year Roadmap

Our roadmap of the future is built on our 30+ years experience working as an interfaith cooperative.

The brick structure, on the accompanying page is a good motif to represent the foundation for our future development. For over 30 years we have established organizations and projects to promote religious, racial and cultural harmony and respond to human needs within the community. Subsequently, a working partnership of congregations, representing seven faith traditions, is in place.

Our five-year roadmap is built on this structure. Reflection on the history of the partnership brings into view a vision of the future.

**Would it be possible to derive and describe some of the lessons learned from these accomplishments?**

**Would it be possible to network with other interfaith endeavors in the region to exchange experiences and visions?**

**Would it be possible to teach these lessons to others in the region that would like to develop similar partnerships?**

**Would it be possible to be a regional change agent?**

These thoughts have put before us a vision of being a “teaching center”.

As we proceed, the two ministry areas-- promoting religious, racial and cultural harmony and responding to human needs-- will continue. The new dimension is to be cognizant of the lessons being learned and to build a network with other interfaith enterprises in the region.

From the Partners Planning Conference, described on the previous page, four general themes were identified.

**Providing and Maintaining Affordable Housing:** Approximately 2035 homes occupied by low income (0-50% of the median income) families need repair.

**Supporting and Promoting Families:** Development of education and social assets need to improve school readiness and reduce family violence.

**Continued Development of Harmonious Human Relations:** Harmonious relations are necessary for business development, education of children and general “community quality of life.”

**Information Needs:** Partner congregations need information about services within the community and an exchange of information among the partners.

The responsive actions are being integrated into the existing Promoting Religious, Racial and Cultural Harmony and Responding to Human Needs ministries.



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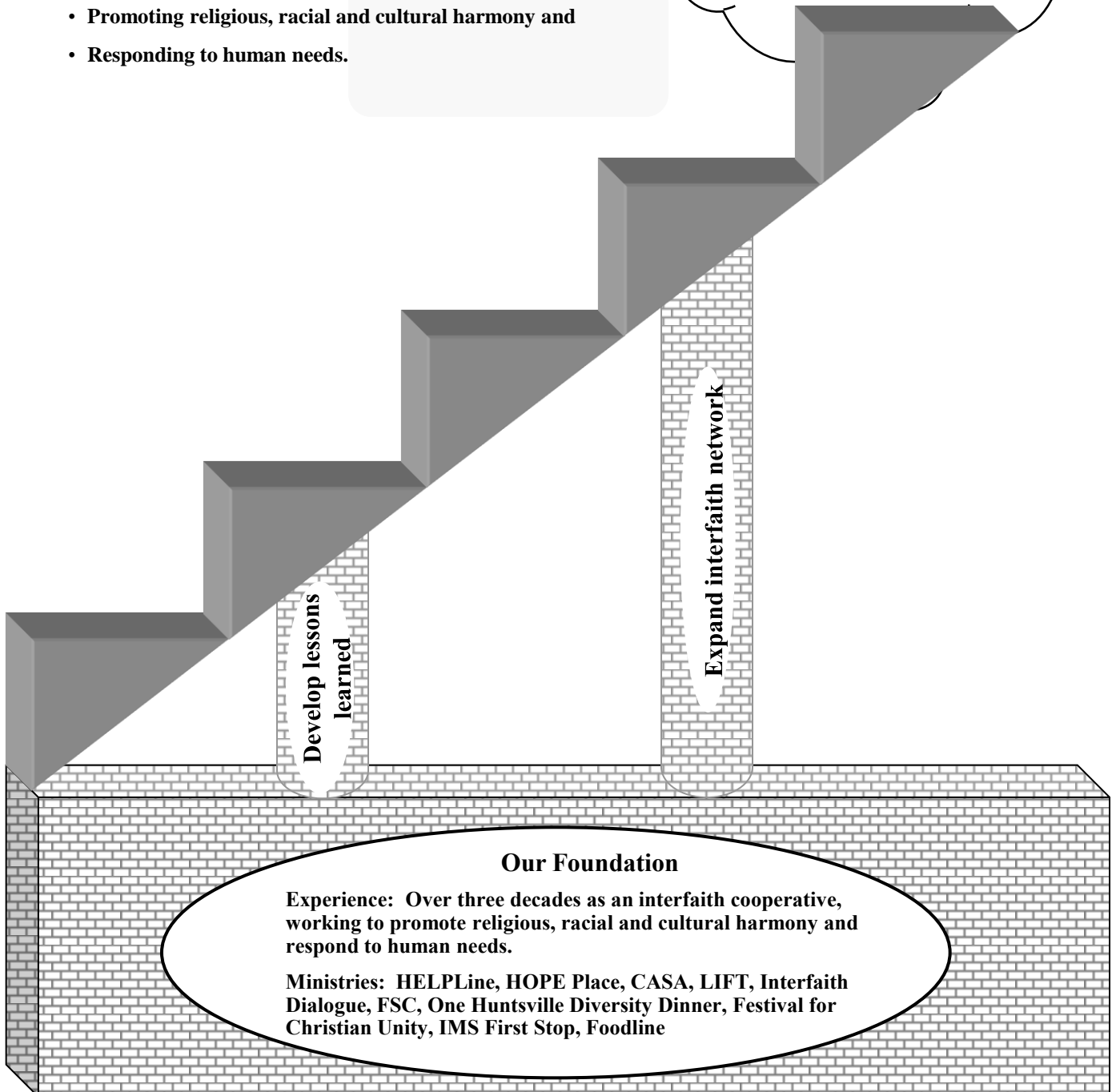
Derive lessons learned from three decades as an interfaith partnership.

Exchange experiences with other interfaith organizations in the region.

Continue to perform community needs assessments in cooperation with other community.

Factor our insight and understanding through our ministries of:

- Promoting religious, racial and cultural harmony and
- Responding to human needs.



# The Journey Summary

## The Journey Begins

Did they know what they were doing, those few people, back in 1968? No. But there was a common feeling that their congregations should be more engaged with their community. Racial tension was severe, unions were striking and urban renewal programs were just getting started.

In that mix there was plenty to work on and hope that something could be accomplished. By 1970 they decided to incorporate and nine congregations became the founding partners of the Interfaith Mission Service -- Covenant Presbyterian, First Christian, First United Methodist, Latham United Methodist, St. Mark's Lutheran, St. Paul United Methodist, Temple B'nai Shalom, Trinity Presbyterian and Trinity United Methodist. By the end of the year they had received commitments for \$4850.

Three plus decades later HELPLine, HOPE Place, LIFT, CASA, FSC are brand names in the community with several having million dollar budgets, much of that funding from public and private sources outside of the community.

Personal relationships have been built that bridge religious, racial, and cultural differences. These relationships form a network of experience and trust that empowers change and contributes greatly to the quality of life we enjoy.

## The Journey Continues

In 2002, the Interfaith Mission Service opened IMS First Stop at 602 Stokes Street. This event was the result of working with all segments of the community, beginning with helping to establish the Mayor's Homeless Advisory Council in 1989.

In May an IMS Partners Planning Conference was held to assess community needs and determine how the faith community, working in a cooperative manner, can best contribute to the life of the community. Four areas emerged that are now shaping our future planning.

1. Providing and maintaining affordable housing
2. Supporting and promoting families
3. Continuing development of harmonious human relations
4. Providing information/communication among the partners

## The Journey's Future

Is the future any more clear now than in 1970? Probably not, but there are some things that are evident.

1. Faith traditions need and can work together.
2. The faith community, working together and with other segments of the community, can make a difference.
3. Establishing networks within a diverse community and built on personal relationships is essential to a healthy community.

Thus, we see a roadmap with the same established routes and with a new road leading to a "teaching center." What that means is not crystal clear. However, it is based on three decades of learning and a conviction that change toward a more inclusive and caring condition makes Alabama and the Tennessee Valley a better place to live.

# Join the Journey



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