

## A Movement to Bring Peace to the World

We've grown familiar with the concept of an executive order, a directive issued by the president to manage the government. Over the years (and depending on which political camp the president is in), people will either applaud the bold actions of the president, or they see his executive orders as a way to run the government without working with Congress.

### **What would you think if the president issued an executive order for a whole new army?**

When John F. Kennedy was running for president, he campaigned on the idea of America sending out volunteers to assist in underdeveloped countries. So less than six weeks after he took office, on March 1, 1961, he issued the executive order to form this army of volunteers. He called it the Peace Corps. It was only a trial program, but he asked Congress to approve it and fund it. In his speech to Congress, Kennedy said:



"Throughout the world the people of the newly developing nations are struggling for economic and social progress which reflects their deepest desires. Our own freedom, and the future of freedom

around the world, depend, in a very real sense, on their ability to build growing and independent nations where men can live in dignity, liberated from the bonds of hunger, ignorance and poverty."

(source)

So here we are, 63 years later, and the Peace Corps is still going. Today, 1400+ people are working in 53 other countries as a part of the Peace Corps.

**Kennedy was not the first to challenge people to go and serve. He was not the first to send people on mission.**

Jesus was the first—and His challenge is a far greater one. Jesus calls us to do more than liberate people "from the bonds of hunger, ignorance and poverty." He calls us to liberate people from death.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Ed Stetzer has said, "The passion of the church and every follower of Christ should be that all peoples have an opportunity to hear, understand, and respond to the gospel."

Jesus Himself is our peace (Eph. 2:14), and (if I can hijack the phrase from Kennedy) we are the corps taking that message of peace to anyone and everyone we encounter.

**Hundreds of Christian ministries and agencies exist to support and help people engage in the mission of taking Christ to the world. Two regularly have my attention:**

- **International Mission Board**
- **North American Mission Board**

