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By George Henson

Staff Writer

DALLAS-Delores Kube remembers arriving in Dallas at an underground train station: "My first thought when I reached street-level was, 'This sure is a clean city,' and coming from a background of the East Coast and Washington, D.C., it really struck me that way. My second thought was, 'God, here I am; use me.'"

Her desire hasn't changed since her arrival in Dallas in 1960 as a North American Mission Board summer missionary, and God has answered that short sentence prayer over and over again.

Kube retires Aug. 31 as director of community ministries at Cornerstone Baptist Church, an inner-city congregation near Fair Park in Dallas.

Cornerstone Baptist Church is within a few blocks of where Kube's ministry began more than four decades ago-in one of Dallas' most impoverished neighborhoods. Some things have improved; drugs are a little less

prevalent, and investors have started trying to improve small pockets in the neighborhood. But the area has held on to many of its warts.

“The homelessness, the drugs, the prostitution, the poverty—all those things are still here, but I think there's a lot more hope in this neighborhood, and I think this church has a lot to do with that,” she said.

Kube is not one to take credit for the lives that have been redeemed in the neighborhood, although her eyes gleam when she talks of the teachers, missionaries, preachers and deacons who have grown up during her ministry.

“There were many others than myself who ministered to these people—there were pastors, Sunday school teachers, summer missionaries who came to help us and just a whole lot of people who God has brought here to minister—and they have all made a contribution to the lives of the people who live here,” she said.

She does admit, however, that staying in one community for so long has given her a special blessing.

“The Bible tells us of how some plant, some water and some harvest. When you do stay this long, you get to do all those things. I not only have gotten to plant the seeds, water those seeds, but in some cases be a part of the harvest as well, and that is really special.”

In some cases, with recent births, Kube has been able to minister to four generations. One of the deacons at Cornerstone was a boy she took to camp many years ago.

“I often hear, 'Miss Kube, do you know who I am?' Sometimes the answer is yes, but other times I have to be honest and say, 'Help me.' Some of those are lives that have turned out wonderfully, and sometimes not, but I love to see every one of them,” she said.

“They say that times when they were children involved in ministry were some of the best times of their lives.”

Kube describes her work during these 44 years as “part missions, part social work.” She has led ministries that helped families have enough to eat and clothes to wear, helped organize health clinics to meet the medical needs of the people living in the area, and provided literacy classes for adults and tutoring for children.

More recent ministries include a computer lab to help foster better job skills, a dental clinic and a myriad of other need-based outreaches. She also has led the Dallas Christian Women's Job Corps the last seven years.

Christian Women's Job Corps is a ministry of Woman's Missionary Union, designed to teach life skills to low-income women. Texas Baptists help to support the program through their gifts to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions.

Children have been a large part of the focus of Kube's ministry encompassing not only Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, but also numerous summer activities to keep them off the streets and in God's word.

While her love for the people of the community always has been evident, it also has been reciprocated, especially with the children.

The day in 1968 when an assassin's bullet felled Martin Luther King Jr. is a case in point. As one of the few white women serving in the community, she was unsure how families in the neighborhood would respond that day. A preschool girl stilled those fears—she walked up to her teacher, gave her a hug and said: “Miss Kube, I don't hate you. I love you.”

“It has been a journey where faith and trust have needed to be present, and God has been faithful through good times and bad. But as much as humanly possible, I have been able to know that this has been God's place for me,”

she said.

But now she is preparing for a move to rural Missouri.

“Leaving is difficult, but going is exciting. When you're a Christian, life is always a journey, and I am excited about where this part is leading. I'm sure when I reach Adrian, Mo., I'll say the same thing as I did when I came to Dallas-'God, here I am; use me.' And he will.”

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