



CELEBRATING

*10 Years of Partnership
in the Gospel*



Partnerships Bring God Glory

The partnership between Filter of Hope and Cru did not start with a bang. Instead of signing an official proclamation, it came through the side door. What began as a few mission trips just kept growing.

Bart Smelley, the Filter of Hope President, took a University of Alabama class on a mission trip and one of the students told Jeff Norris, the Alabama Cru TL. Jeff met with Bart Smelley and was impressed by the mission. Even though Jeff was leaving Cru, he passed along the information to other Cru team leaders. Word started to spread and teams like Auburn presented it at their weekly meetings with 100 students signing up. More Cru staff like Chip Scvicque and Eric Heistand heard about Filter of Hope. Information was circulating around Cru.

In 2016, Keith Back joined Gospel in Action (GIA) and contacted Filter of Hope about a partnership. Keith made a vision trip to Cuba with the Michigan State team. In the following months, Keith and Bart Smelley presented Filter of Hope to the Great Lakes region of Cru. Of the 28 teams present, 26 signed up for a trip. More leadership of Cru stepped in. Dan Allan, Executive Director of Mission Expansion, helped grow the partnership with Eric Heistand and the Gospel in Action team.

In 2018, Cru and Filter of Hope signed an official partnership agreement that has grown and developed over the last 8 years. More Cru ministries began participating. Cru City, Athletes in Action, Destino, FamilyLife, and others have joined in as well. Other than during Covid, the partnership has grown every year—more teams, more students, more locations, more filters, more gospel presentations, and many more new believers.

There are a variety of benefits to each of these different ministries, but the primary focus is still giving individuals an opportunity to share their faith with others. That's why the partnership works so well—personal evangelism is the lifeblood of both organizations. And along with it, mission teams get to share the incredibly valuable gift of clean water. It's greatly needed and opens the door wide for the gospel.

This booklet is a celebration of the 10-year partnership of Cru and Filter of Hope. On the following pages, you can read about 10 ways God has used this partnership to further his kingdom and help fulfill the Great Commission. Partnerships are powerful!

But this is just the start. God hasn't told us His plans, but He is glorified when His body becomes one in unity, purpose, and love.



Mission trips bringing clean water and the gospel are

RAPIDLY ▶▶▶▶
multiplying.

The outreach of the Cru/Filter of Hope partnership mushrooms each year. We have gone from 6 campus trips in 2017 to 70 campus trips in 2026. Even more amazing is seeing the number of participants grow from 115 in 2017 and 2,300 participants in 2026. Every Cru cohort was represented by at least one team.

In total with City, Family Life, and Cru's partnership with Christian Colleges, we are sending 83 total Cru trips in 2026.

Clean water and the gospel make sense. So does a partnership of Cru and Filter of Hope.





They Came All the Way From Mississippi

“Thank you for the filter, but I am not interested in knowing who God is or anything like that.”

Elgin and her group of Cru Ole Miss students were a little unsure of what to say next to this Cuban woman.

But Maria, the daughter who was about Elgin’s age and a new Christian, jumped in.

“These people have come all the way from Mississippi, miles and miles away. And God led them to our house to talk to you.”

The mother looked at María and said, “Okay, tell me again.”

As they talked for quite some time, Elgin saw a change in the mom.

“Finally, the mom said, ‘Okay, I think you all are right. I’m done living this life on my own. I’m tired. I want to give my life to God.’”

“Just since Covid, Filter of Hope has had to expand from 11 bases to 31. Even at this increased capacity, Cru campus teams are completely filling up available space. It’s amazing to see how many places we’re reaching together in Latin America.”

- Keith Back, COO FOH





Thousands of college students are being used **POWERFULLY** by God. ▶▶▶▶



Beginning with the Four Spiritual Laws, Cru has emphasized training in personal evangelism. Now many students are putting it into practice on Filter of Hope trips.

The impact is amazing. College students share Christ for an entire week. Their confidence to share Christ back on campus rises dramatically.

A large number of Latinos are putting their faith in Christ. The trip participants come to realize that God can work through them.

"God has used this experience to show me it's fully Him and the Holy Spirit's work. He can use anyone in His family to share the gospel with anyone anywhere."

- Cru campus team member



Saving the Best for Last

There was time for only one more house on the last day for Jess Walter and the University of Idaho team in Panama. But Eleazar came up with another plan.

Just after he received Christ, Eleazar rounded up seven families who met together in the street.

Two freshmen, C.J. and Nevena, explained the installation and the gospel.

“Everyone was staring intently at Nevena as she shared Christ. Every adult said they were ready to follow Jesus.”

“After they prayed, we asked them, ‘Where is Jesus now?’ We went around the circle and every person pointed to their heart.”





A vision for the campus and the world is expanding EXPONENTIALLY among students.



After his team's very first Filter of Hope trip in 2022, Cru staff member Jordan Eoff texted Filter of Hope: "In 21 years of ministry I have never seen God do so much in such a short time. The students are all talking and thinking about how they can help reach the campus or reach the world—or both."

There is an awareness of the need for world missions and a willingness to go. This also translates to a greater boldness and vision for the campus.

This has led to students going on summer missions, interning or going on STINT with Cru.

"Filter of Hope has given our students and staff opportunities to take the gospel to the world while giving vision and equipping for the Great Commission and great commandment back on campus!"

*- Steve and Megan Yen
Cru Team leader and Cru LMD
Washington State, Cohort 19*





Filter of Angels in Colombia

A mom was very excited when the Filter of Hope team from Cru Detroit gave her clean water.

But when they shared the gospel with the family, the mother teared up. “My mother-in-law says she prays. So last night, I knelt down to pray, but I felt no response.”

“But your visit is a sign from God. I believe that you were sent by God, like angels, to show me that He loves me and wants a relationship with me.”

She bowed and received Jesus.





Families are focusing

MISSIONALLY

on reaching others.



Many couples on FamilyLife's Love Like You Mean It Cruise are passing up the usual port excursions and choosing to do community outreach instead.

About 75 couples learned to share the gospel with a filter and were sent out into communities at two ports. People received Christ and couples experienced the joy of sharing Christ.

FamilyLife is also leading its own Filter of Hope mission trips for entire families. This helps to build mission-centered families who impact families all around them.

"The two teams set up filters in 92 homes and shared the gospel with 290 people. Eighty-three people accepted Christ and 70 indicated they already were believers. God is Good!"

- Chuck Roeper, Filter of Hope staff member who trained and led the cruise teams



Young and Bold

Jessica Etheridge, a staff member with FamilyLife, led a team of families to the Dominican Republic. "We took kids ranging from 7-17 on this trip."

She won't forget a 12-year-old named Sojo.

Sojo and her dad talked to someone who didn't want to accept Christ. Her Dad explained a parable of Jesus, but the man made a light-hearted comment about it. Sojo thought he misunderstood and she decided to clarify what was at stake.

"Jesus is actually talking about himself. Do you want to follow Jesus?"

Sojo's question caused this man to stop and think for a minute. Then he changed his mind and said, "Yes."

Then a young 12-year-old girl from America and a 50-year-old tough Dominican man bowed in prayer together.





**Local churches are
sharing Christ more
BOLDLY
in their communities.**



Both Cru and Filter of Hope are fully committed to making local church participation a priority. Local churches are integral to all we do before we arrive, during the mission trip, and following up all who respond.

The in-country churches are seeing more people coming to church. A church in Cuba needed to more than double the size of their church building. The mission teams' presence is encouraging the church to be bold and God is working through them.

"Hermano called me today and told me that they had 22 new people at their church yesterday. They came because of the teams that were in their community last week!"

*- Oscar Fuentes, In-Country
Trip Coordinator, Word of Life
Guatemala Director*





Returning to Jesus

After PJ Ochoa and his team from the Lynchburg Cru installed the water filter for Alejandra in the Dominican Republic, they began a spiritual conversation.

PJ says that Alejandra was fun and also very open. “She said she had never personally begun a relationship with Christ.”

Alejandra began to tear up. Through the translator, Julisa, she said, “I have been having dreams about demons and I can’t sleep at night.”

After praying, Alejandra said there was a change. “She said she felt free.”

We told her again there is freedom in Christ. We led her through a simple prayer that reflected her heart.”

On Sunday, they saw Alejandra in church and sat with her. Later, Alejandra sent one of the team members a text message they won’t soon forget.

“I am delighted to have met you since, through you, I have returned to the feet of Jesus.”



Special Cru partners are bonding

TIGHTLY

for vision and ministry.



Other Cru ministries are also building their teams and ministry with Filter of Hope. This has enabled Athletes in Action to participate in ministry in the villages of Ecuador and Jamaica. Large football players meet small villagers—and it works!

Destino, Lifelines, City, Faculty Commons, Cru Valor, and JesusFilm all have participated on trips as well.

Every group sees the same thing—many participants are sharing the gospel for the first time and families receive clean water and very often, Jesus, too.



The Midshipmen of Mercy

It wasn't an easy visit in Costa Rica for Kyle Sponaugle, a staff member with Cru Valor, and his team of Midshipmen.

Alejandra opened up about becoming pregnant, being kicked out of the house, and receiving a beating from a boyfriend.



Juan Ortiz-Perez, a Midshipmen from Puerto Rico, was translating.

"He didn't share all of the things that had happened to her. It was hard for him to bear the weight of it."

After hearing about Jesus, his death on the cross for her sins, and how she could personally put her faith in Christ for forgiveness and restoration, Alejandra received Christ.

Kyle said it was a special time for all of them. "It was also the first time Juan's team had seen someone receive Christ."



"The more I shared about my testimony, the more it seemed to pique the interest of the older son, causing him to turn and leave his table in order to listen more intently. I asked them if they would like to ask Christ to come into their lives, to forgive their sins and give them eternal life. All three responded, 'Yes.'"

- Dan Butkowski, Cru City/Arts and Culture





**The Great Commission
is being fulfilled**

INTENTIONALLY

by teamwork.



Bill Bright was well known for signing his letters with the words, “Yours for fulfilling the Great Commission in this generation.” This is the DNA of Cru.

Filter of Hope gives clean water to every home it visits, but it is much more an evangelistic ministry than a water organization. The mission trips are a training ground for future world missionaries. Finally, there is a deep awareness that those who need clean water most are often those who have heard the gospel least.

Together, this is a partnership ultimately focused on reaching the unreached.

“The Holy Spirit gave me such a heart for missions and I would love the opportunity to continue spreading the gospel to each nation, tribe, and tongue.”

- Student participant





God Captures a Convict in Cuba

A University of Michigan Cru team, a local church member, and Keith Back were sharing clean water and Christ with a woman in Cuba when a neighbor dropped in on the conversation.

“The woman wasn’t all that interested in what we were saying, but Roddy was.”

“But he didn’t think God could forgive him.” Roddy had just been released from prison a week earlier after serving a sentence for murder.

“Roddy told us he had received a Bible in prison, but he just couldn’t understand what it was saying.”

“Roddy asked, ‘Is all of this that you’re telling me from the Bible?’” We assured him it was. He responded, ‘If what you’re saying is from the Bible, it’s what I want.’”

After just a few minutes, Roddy received Christ with the team.

The best part? “The local church member asked to meet with Roddy to explain the Bible. They’ve been meeting regularly for two months.”

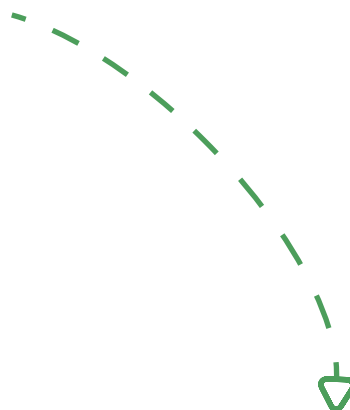




**The gospel is
being shared more
CLEARLY ▶▶▶▶
so more might believe.**

Cru has always been a ministry that is willing to try new things so that it might reach more with the gospel. In partnership with Filter of Hope, the ministry embraced explaining the gospel with a simple illustration of the filter and clean water, adapting the KGP booklet into our current version of gospel training.

Both ministries will never alter the gospel, but like Jesus, they love using parables and illustrations to make the spiritual truths of the gospel clear.



"Filter of Hope offers an excellent opportunity for students to learn how to share the gospel, gain a heart for the nations, experience community, and experience life change. The best part about these trips is that students who would not normally go on a mission trip will go and have their lives changed forever."

- Jay Bosley

Cru Team Leader, Georgia Southern

When a Missionary Leads Himself to Christ

Jackson Mudd was a junior at the University of Auburn when he heard about a Filter of Hope mission trip.

But his spiritual life was sketchy. “I had a foundational view of God, but I never considered how Christ really figured into my life.”

Jackson went on the trip and he was hooked. “I loved the connection of the story of Christ and the filter.”

“I started believing it more and more.”

“When it was my turn to share the gospel with a family, it woke something up in my heart. That’s the point where I truly believed and received Christ.”

Jackson was baptized and much has changed. “God gave me a purpose to love others and spread the gospel. Everything makes sense—the dots are connected.”





The ministry in Latin America is working
MIGHTILY ▶▶▶▶
through clean water.

LAC, Cru's Latin America ministry, has always led boldly in this initiative. Oliver Marin, now the VP of Latin America and the Caribbean, has asked Filter of Hope to be present on every single one of LAC's 41 campuses.

Oliver wants to grow this relationship. "Cru and Filter of Hope partnership is one of the most effective ways to continue to meet Cru LAC's strategic priorities and goals."

"These water filters are God's best tool for empowering the church to reach our communities with the gospel!"

- Pastor Cerbin Vargas, Panama





Water in the Desert



The teams from Detroit Metro Cru and Western Michigan Cru had never seen a place like this.

Sean Sutherland, the Filter of Hope trip leader, explains the history and the place. “For hundreds of years, the Wayuu people have lived in an arid, desert-like area of Colombia dotted with cacti, not far from the Caribbean Sea.”

The families gathered in the shade of pergolas made of branches—the Wayuu’s living room—to hear about clean water and the Living Water.

Pastor Jesualdo and his church were even more excited than the students about the outreach.

“Very often they would jump in when we were sharing the gospel to explain something to the family. They were passionate about their faith.”

Tiny Ebenezer Wayuu Christian Church was rejoicing.





Outreach in UPG countries is spreading **SWIFTLY** through ideal partners.



As Filter of Hope has launched its UPG ministry around the world, no ministry is more in tune with the opportunity than Cru GCM. Cru GCM understands not only the need for clean water, but also the many possibilities for church planting with Filter of Hope. Likewise, Filter of Hope sees Cru GCM checking all of the boxes for evangelism and church planting. Filters are accelerating their efforts.

In 2025, Filter of Hope Thailand targeted three provinces. We reached 55 villages with clean water and the gospel and 315 people accepted the faith. We are so excited that 7 new church plants have begun!

- Pai Wong, Cru Global Church Movements



A Four-Part Partnership for Hope

In Vietnam, the need for clean water is great, but the Christians saw much more. They saw an opportunity.

Filter of Hope visited Vietnam at the end of 2025 and ministry leaders from across the country gathered representing church planting movements, evangelism efforts, and local churches.

They were all asking the same question:

“How can we use this water filter to reach our communities?”

Today, that excitement is turning into action.

Pastors Dung and Phu, along with their church planting teams, are leading the way—preparing to launch pilot distributions in communities across Vietnam.

This is more than a project. It is a collaboration between Filter of Hope and three Vietnamese-led ministries—Cru Vietnam, Global Church Movements in Vietnam, and the Evangelical Church of Vietnam—working together to reach their own people.

And they are dreaming big. Pastor Bau Le shared his vision:

“I believe God will use this to bring 10 million Vietnamese people back to Him.”





Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 4:13-14



1400 JACK WARNER PARKWAY - TUSCALOOSA, AL 35404 - FILTEROFHOPE.ORG