

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
DEFENDING HUMAN DIGNITY
DRAFT SCRIPT
30 NOVEMBER 2017**

VOLUNTOURISM

Usually, when someone talks about tourism people start thinking about brochures that invite you to spend a week relaxing on a sandy beach in the Caribbean, or taking an ocean cruise in the Mediterranean, or eating your way through the great restaurants of Rome. Whatever the explicit vision, the central point is usually you caring for you.

However, during the past few years many people have begun spending part of their vacation time as an international volunteer for a humanitarian cause. It's becoming increasingly popular and is often described as *voluntourism*.

You contribute your time to help with activities that promote health, education and environmental conservation. It's actually been going on for over a hundred years.

In 1901, the British Red Cross set up the *Voluntary Aid Detachment* (VAD). VAD volunteers, as well as volunteers from many other national Red Cross organizations, worked in battlefields across Europe and the Middle East during World War I. They cared for soldiers and civilians regardless of the side they supported.

Recently, companies in the travel industry have been offering volunteering opportunities. Increasingly, younger people have been taking a gap year, which they spend as *voluntourists*. One of the most successful was the way volunteers addressed the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa.

**SHORT SEGMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THE
TEACHERS, BUILDERS AND TAXI DRIVERS WHO VOLUNTEERED
THEIR SUPPORT IN SIERRA LEONE.**

These days there are many opportunities to volunteer your time and skills in the interest of helping others who are less fortunate. The city with the longest history of helping others and defending human dignity is Geneva, Switzerland.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND DEFENDING HUMAN DIGNITY

Geneva, Switzerland is famous for its role in the Protestant Reformation, as an epicenter for watch making and as the home for many of the world's most important humanitarian organizations. Geneva is a host city for The United Nations, The International Red Cross and Red Crescent, The World Health Organization, CARE, Save The Children and Doctors Without Borders.

About 2500 years ago, a group of migrating tribes came over from Eastern Europe and settled on the high ground, which is now Geneva's Old City.

The hill was just above the junction of the Rhone and Arve Rivers, at a point where two small islands could be used to bridge the waters. It was the only spot for hundreds of miles where traders could cross the river on foot.

The ancient Romans, who had a great eye for commercial real estate, understood the strategic value of the location and turned it into one of their most prosperous colonies.

During the 400s, Rome began to lose its power and Geneva came under the control of the Dukes of Burgundy. The Dukes, one of the most dysfunctional families of the time, spent about 1000 years fighting amongst themselves. In 1536, the citizens of Geneva had had enough and declared themselves an independent republic under the protection of the Swiss States that were just to the Northeast.

The Swiss offered Geneva military protection, but it also offered them the opportunity to become Protestant and join the Reformation.

The fact that Geneva became a Protestant city was key to it's becoming a center for watchmaking.

Towards the end of the 1600,s, Madam de Maintenon, the wife of King Louis XIV of France, convinced the king that if he allowed Protestants to live in France, God would never allow him to enter heaven.

Apparently, Madam de Maintenon, had an early smart phone and was able to talk directly to God.

Louis freaked out and decided to kill all the Protestants in France. As soon as the word got out thousands of Protestants fled to Geneva. Geneva borders on France and its inhabitants spoke French. It was a logical move.

Many of the refugees were master craftsmen and great watchmakers. They made an immediate and valuable financial contribution to the city and what was France's loss became Geneva's gain.

Another key aspect of Swiss culture is its steadfast desire to avoid military conflicts. Hundreds of years ago, the Swiss realized that their traditional farming and cheese making tasks were primarily undertaken by the women of the family and there was relatively little work for the men.

So they started offering themselves as mercenaries. Now if your troops went to work fighting for one side, the other side might consider you an enemy and attack you at home.

So the Swiss declared themselves to be neutral and offered troops to any side that could pay the bill. If you had the money, the Swiss had the men. In fact, during the American Civil War, Swiss troops fought on the side of the north and the south.

Years ago, I lived in Geneva's Old City and slowly came to understand the traditions that formed Geneva's culture. If there is one element that stands behind almost every aspect of Geneva's past and present, it's the desire of its citizens to be free and independent and to exercise that freedom on behalf of those less fortunate.

INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORITY ABOUT GENEVA'S ROLL AS A CENTER FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES.

CRISES WATCH

The idea behind this program was very straightforward. I wanted to know how we could use our vacation time and money to help other people.

I talked to representatives of The Red Cross and Red Crescent, The World Health Organization, CARE, the International Medical Corps, Doctors Without Borders and Save The Children.

A major concern with everyone I spoke to was the situation in Yemen. It is a classic example of societies failure to defend human dignity.

For thousands of years, children have been pawns in war. You would think that in recent years warring factions would develop a more civilized approach and organize their activities to avoid bringing children into the conflict. But that has not been the case. In fact, just the opposite is going on.

Save the Children was founded during the First World War to protect children in Germany, Austria and Hungary who were starving as a result of an Allied blockade. The Allies included England and the United States.

A more recent example of an unmitigated humanitarian disaster is Yemen.

The issues are complex and the images are so painful that the events are constantly being pushed out of the media. By the time you see this program the situation may have been resolved, but the narrative and the lessons will be as relevant as ever.

AUTHORITY INTERVIEW
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YEMEN.
HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT
WHAT IS GOING ON NOW
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE
HOW CAN WE HELP

One of the most valuable sources for information about what is happening in Yemen was [YemenCrisesWatch.org](https://yemencriseswatch.org)

They point out that awareness is the first casualty in this type of conflict. If you are not aware of what is going on then it's easy for immoral forces to flourish. In today's world, with so many issues and traumatic events, it's normal to lose touch. Yemen Crises Watch was form to help keep the story of the children of Yemen in the news.

CARE

CARE is an international humanitarian agency that delivers emergency relief and develops long-term projects for areas in need.

C-A-R-E stands for Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere. It was founded in 1945 as a nonsectarian, impartial, non-governmental organization.

They are specialists in emergency response, food security, water and sanitation.

In 1946, CARE began delivering food packages to people in Europe. Americans paid \$10 to send a CARE Package of food to a loved one in Europe, often a family member.

President Truman bought the first CARE package. CARE guaranteed delivery, even if the intended recipient had left their last known address. A signed delivery receipt was passed on to the sender. At the time, European [postal services](#) were so unreliable that these signed receipts were sometimes the first confirmation that the recipient had survived the war.

Between the first deliveries of 1946 and the last European deliveries of 1956, over 100 million CARE Packages were distributed throughout Europe.

In 1948, CARE packages were delivered to Berlin in response to the Soviet blockade of Berlin.

Over the years, CARE began to provide trained medical personnel and medical supplies, as well as specialists for the development of clean water and better nutrition.

CARE AUTHORITY TALKS ABOUT THE MATERIAL ABOVE, RECENT
ACTIVITIES AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YEMEN.

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INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORP

The International Medical Corps, also known as IMC is a nonprofit organization established by doctors and nurses to offer disaster relief, health care, build clinics and train local health care workers in parts of the world that are in need of these services. Their work in training local workers so the area becomes self-reliant and self-sustaining in terms of medical services is particularly important.

They focus on the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases like malaria, dysentery and cholera. They also supply food for malnourished children, and clean water.

IMC was founded in 1984 by Dr. Robert Simon and a group of American volunteer physicians and nurses.

Today it is active in over 30 countries.

INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF IMC

THE RED CROSS & THE RED CRESCENT

On June 24th 1859, in the fields outside the Italian town of Solferino, the last battle of the Franco- Austrian War took place. It was the final conflict in the wars of Italian Independence. On one side were the Austrians who opposed Italian independence. On the other was the army of France who had joined with troops from the Italian region of Lombardy and favored Italian independence. The Austrians lost about 25,000 men and the French and Italians about 20,000.

On the evening of the same day that the battle took place, a Swiss businessman from Geneva, named Henry Dunant arrived in Solferino and saw 25,000 men, wounded and dying on the battle field, without support or relief of any kind.

Shocked by what he saw he took the initiative to organize the local civilian population to provide help to the injured. Dunant himself purchased the needed supplies and helped erect a number of makeshift hospitals.

He persuaded the local population to comfort the wounded without regard to their side in the conflict. Women of a nearby village coined the slogan "Tutti fratelli", we are all brothers and sisters.

When Dunant returned to Geneva he began developing an idea for a neutral organization that would provide care to the sick and wounded.

That concept became the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and Dunant became the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

These days, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. Their headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

**TOUR OF RED CROSS/ RED CRESCENT MUSEUM IN GENEVA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR ACTIVITIES IN
PREVENTING AND CURING DISEASE IN CONFLICT AREAS.**

EXAMPLES DRAWN FROM AFRICA, ASIA, THE PACIFIC, THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE AMERICAS.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM IN YEMEN AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HELP. WHAT DO WE DO NOW AND HOW CAN WE AVOID SITUATIONS LIKE THIS IN THE FUTURE.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Just down the street and also headquartered in Geneva is the World Health Organization, known as WHO, it is a special agency of the United Nations that works on issues related to international public health. And once again, it is a humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions.

In a world that is constantly in armed conflict over religious and ideological beliefs, organizations like the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and The World Health Organization are essential to the survival of humanity.

Since 1948, when it was originally established it has played a major part in eradicating communicable diseases like smallpox, Ebola, malaria, tuberculosis and cholera. It also works to reducing the effects of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cancer.

It was the first specialized agency of the United Nations to which every member subscribed and it formally began its activities on the 7th of April 1948, which was the first World Health Day.

INTERVIEW WITH WHO REPRESENTATIVE.

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SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save The Children is an international, non-governmental organization devoted to protecting the rights of children and providing relief and support for children in developing countries. They also provide emergency aid in natural disasters and military conflicts.

It was founded in 1919 in London by two sisters who wanted to help the starving children in Germany and Austria-Hungary. The famine was the result of the Allied blockade of Germany in World War I.

In 1920, The International Save the Children Union was founded in Geneva.

By August 1921, Save the Children had raised millions of dollars and conditions for children in Central Europe were improving.

However, the Russian famine of 1921 made the founders realize that Save the Children needed to be a permanent organization and that children's rights needed constant protection. Their mission was changed to "an international effort to preserve child life wherever it is menaced by conditions of economic hardship and distress".

At the end of World War II, images of malnourished and sick children ran throughout Europe. Save the Children staff were among the first into the liberated areas. They worked with refugee children and displaced persons in former occupied Europe, including survivors of Nazi concentration camps.

The 1950s they continued their work with the Korean War and the Hungarian Revolution. They also began working in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Save the Children was also active in the Vietnam War and the Biafra secession in Nigeria.

In 1990, in cooperation with Save The Children, the United Nations set into international law, the rights of children.

It address the basic human rights that all children are entitled to:
The four core principles of the convention were non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child.

Today, the Convention serves as the basis for all of Save the Children's work. It has been ratified in every country around the world, with the exception of the United States.

WE ARE LOOKING INTO WHY THE UNITED STATES DID NOT SIGN.

Tamer Kirolos, is the director for Save The Children in Yemen.
KIROLOS VOICE OVER FOOTAGE

“A cholera outbreak of this scale and speed results from the breakdown of a county’s healthcare and sanitation systems. In Yemen the situations is made worse because access to essential medical treatment is being blocked.

The fact that hundreds of thousands of children are starving and over half-a-million have been infected with cholera, appears to have little effect on the combatants.
Things got worse, when [sanitation workers](#) whose salaries had gone unpaid went on strike. Garbage was left in the streets, and then washed into the water supply. Almost 20 million people – more than two-thirds of the population – do not have access to clean water and sanitation.

In 2016, the government stopped funding the public health department. Many doctors and hospital staff have not been paid.

Healthcare has been provided mainly by international organizations, including the Red Crescent, WHO, CARE and Save The Children. However their work has been impeded by the war.

Both parties to the conflict are continuing with their obvious disregard for the well being of millions of children.”

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Doctors Without Borders is an international humanitarian organization. It operates independently to help people in war-torn parts of the world. It's also active in developing countries that are affected by diseases.

It was founded in 1971 by a small group of French doctors and journalists and originally known by its French name *Médecins Sans Frontières* or MSF for short.

It was formed in response to the Nigerian War of Independence. The objective was to be able to offer medical care across national boundaries without reference to race, religion, or political affiliation. It constantly works to maintain its independence without regard to political, economic or religious factors. It actually limits the amount of funding it receives from governments and government organizations.

During the Nigerian Civil War which ran from 1967 to 1970, the Nigerian military formed a blockade around the nation's newly independent south-eastern region of Biafra. At the time, France was the only major country supportive of the Biafrans (the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States sided with the Nigerian government). The conditions within the blockade were unknown to the world. A number of French doctors volunteered with the French Red Cross to work in hospitals and feeding centers in besieged Biafra.

After entering the country, the volunteers, in addition to Biafran health workers and hospitals, were subjected to attacks by the Nigerian army, and witnessed civilians being murdered and starved by the blockading forces. The doctors publicly criticized the Nigerian government for their seemingly complicit behavior. These doctors concluded that a new aid organization was needed --- an organization that would ignore political and religious boundaries and deal with the welfare of all victims.

These days, over 30,000 doctors, nurses and other medical professionals, water and sanitation engineers provide medical aid in over 70 countries

Most of those people are volunteers. It has an annual budget of about 2 billion dollars and ninety percent of that funding comes from private donors. The rest comes from corporate donations. That approach to funding keeps Doctors Without Borders virtually free of government influence.

In 1972, an earthquake in the Nicaraguan capita of Managua killed over 25,000 people and destroyed most of the city. Within days the Doctors Without Borders quick response team was on the ground.

In September of 1974, a hurricane caused major flooding in Honduras and killed thousands of people. Honduras was where MSF set up its first long-term medical relief mission.

During the Lebanese Civil War, MSF spent nine years (1976–1984) assisting surgeries in the hospitals of Lebanon. Lebanon was where MSF earned its reputation for neutrality and the willingness to work under fire. Throughout the war, MSF helped both Christian and Muslim alike. They attended whichever group required the most medical assistance at the moment.

While we were in Geneva, Doctors Without Borders was dealing with the crisis in Yemen.

The organization works eleven hospital and health centers in Yemen and provides support to another 18 hospitals or health centers. According to MSF, since October 2015, four of its hospitals and one ambulance have been destroyed by airstrikes.

In October 2015, an airstrike hit the Kunduz Trauma Centre during the Kunduz hospital airstrike. In August 2016, an airstrike on Abs hospital killed 19 people, including one MSF staff member, and wounded 24. According to MSF, the GPS coordinates of the hospital were repeatedly shared with all parties to the conflict. The hospitals location was well-known.

In 1999, Doctors Without Borders received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its members' continuing efforts to provide medical help in crises situations, as well as its ongoing efforts to raise international awareness of potential humanitarian disasters.

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Link to a video "HOW WE WORK"

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/our-work/how-we-work>

THE CHOLERA EPIDEMICS

During the 1800s, there was a dramatic increase in commercial trade and travel between Europe and the Middle and Far East. Diseases that had been rare in the Western World were soon causing major epidemics.

Cholera epidemics in 1830 and 1847, killed tens of thousands of Europeans. At the time, very little was known about what caused cholera. One response was the first International Sanitary Conference that took place in Paris in 1851. And as is often the case, as a result of the political differences nothing got done.

Nonetheless, it was a step in the right direction and at least raised the issue of international cooperation with the objective of preventing and controlling diseases.

It took another 40 years before the governments of Europe got around to organizing the International Sanitary Convention for the control of cholera.

So what do we know about cholera today?

First of all and most important, the worst outbreak of cholera in history began in Yemen.

It is the fastest-spreading cholera epidemic since records began and it will affect at least 1 million people, including at least 600,000 children. Each day, about 4,000 new cases are reported.

Cholera is an infection of the small intestine caused by a specific bacterium.

Symptoms can range from none, to mild, to severe. Within hours it can lead to life threatening dehydration.

It is spread mostly by unsafe water and unsafe food that has been contaminated. And strangely, it only affects humans and particularly children.

Each year, there are between 3 and 5 million cases of Cholera that cause up to 130,000 deaths.

We have written descriptions of Cholera in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit that date to the 5th century BC. In fact, one of the ways that the people of India have prevented the transmission of cholera is to take a sari, which is a traditional garment worn by women, fold it eight times and use it to filter water. In Bangladesh this practice was found to decrease rates of cholera by nearly half. Between uses the cloth is rinsed in clean water and dried in the sun to kill any bacteria on it

Clearly, cholera has been around for a long time. But we now know how to avoid it.

Although cholera can be life-threatening, prevention of the disease is normally straightforward if proper [sanitation](#) practices are followed.

Effective sanitation practices are usually sufficient to stop an epidemic.

If people with cholera are treated quickly and properly, the mortality rate is less than 1%; however, with untreated cholera, the mortality rate rises to 50–60%.



- [Drawing of Death](#) bringing cholera, in *Le Petit Journal* (1912).

The more research I did for this program, the more I was astonished by the dishonesty and incompetence of the government organizations that are responsible for the world's water supply. Flint, Michigan is only one of hundreds of examples.

South Africa's cholera outbreak was aggravated by the government's policy of privatizing water programs. The wealthy elite of the country were able to afford safe water while others had to use water from cholera-infected rivers.

BETTER TO GIVE

It's important to remember that you can actually influence what is happening on this planet. And when you make an effort to do something good for someone else you are doing something good for yourself.

A series of scientific studies indicate that donating your money and/or volunteering your time to a cause you respect can make you healthier and happier.

In the book *The Paradox of Generosity*, the authors reported on a series of experiments in which they studied 2,000 people over a five-year period. They discovered that kindness and charity stimulated the parts of the brain that are associated with happiness and well-being.

In another study relating giving to happiness, researchers at the University of Zurich gave a group of people about \$100 each and told them to spend it on themselves. A second group was given the same amount of money and asked to spend it on someone they knew or a cause they respected.

Then the brain activity of the participants was scanned in an MRI. Measurements were taken from the regions of the brain associated with social behavior ---- generosity, happiness and decision-making.

Those who had agreed to spend money on other people tended to be more generous throughout the experiment. They also had more interaction between the parts of the brain associated with altruism and happiness. They consistently reported higher levels of happiness.

Peter Tobler, the lead author of the report pointed out that the amount of money made no difference. Giving away a little appeared to have the same effect as giving away a lot.

He also found that being generous tended to improve overall good health and life expectancy, but you needed to make this a general habit.

Like exercise, proper diet and getting the right amount of sleep, generosity of spirit must be part of your regular regime.

CLOSE

Today we have the knowledge, technology and skills to help the world's most vulnerable people, especially children. And yet, we continually fail to achieve some of the most modest goals.

In this program we looked at the history of Geneva as a center for organizations that are defending human dignity. We visited with The Red Cross and the Red Crescent. We talked to authorities at The World Health Organizations, CARE, the International Medical Corps, Doctors Without Borders and Save The Children. We acquired a detailed understanding of Yemen as an example of failure.

However, there are at least two things we can do make a difference. Next time you are thinking about a vacation, consider the possibility of volunteering your time to one of these organizations or checking with your travel agent about Voluntourism.

The easiest is to remind our elected representatives of the situation. You might also suggest that the next time they pour themselves a glass of safe water they might consider insuring safe water for the thousands of children who are dying of cholera because they don't have access to safe water.

BURT TO CAMERA

I've spent over 50 years traveling around this planet and it seems clear that much of the moral underpinning for the majority of people in the world derives from the teachings of Moses, Christ, Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius. When you think about what went on in places like Yemen, you have to wonder --- is this what they had in mind?

If any of the above, sent us a report card, the comment line might read: "Can do better. Must concentrate more."

For Travels & Traditions, I'm Burt Wolf

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TOUR OF RED CROSS/ RED CRESCENT MUSEUM IN GENEVA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR ACTIVITIES IN PREVENTING AND CURING DISEASE IN CONFLICT AREAS.

RED CROSS

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RED CROSS

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INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS

HISTORY, PRESENT ACTIVITIES, WHAT IS GOING ON IN YEMEN