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In August 1962, I was with a group of six young Walther Leaguers who did volunteer work at the Lutheran mission in Antigua. It had been used previously as a clinic and there were bed frames and other equipment that we helped Dr. Behrhorst transport by truck one day to his own new clinic in Chimaltenango.

In all honesty, no single image or experience comes to mind except the general impression that the doctor made on me as a caring, dedicated, and committed man, giving his life, his time and his talents and training to make a difference in the world. I remember being struck in particular by his openness to the native healthcare traditions and his understanding that his work would benefit by accommodating them. Given the relatively recent development of "cultural competence" among US-trained healthcare workers today (e.g. in working with immigrant patients from Southeast Asia), you'd have to say the man was a couple of generations ahead of his time. I've never forgotten that about him.

At the time, his commitment was not so striking to me as it is now, when I consider that he might have remained in the States, living comfortably and making a good living for himself. As a college student, about to enter my senior year at Valparaiso University, I was an idealistic 20-year-old, expecting my own life to take a similar (though as yet undefined) direction. His example seemed a very natural one.

Over the years, as the political climate changed in Guatemala, I grew to admire him even more as someone apparently able to fearlessly persevere his mission in the face of threats and what must have been considerable discouragement at times.

Of course, it's impossible to say how a brief experience 45 years ago has had a significant effect except for the fact that among all the "worthy causes" in the world, I have continued to regard the doctor's work highly and I've tried to support it when I could, as well as similar enterprises, such as FEMAP, which serves the local Mexican population out of El Paso, Texas. I could add that one never fully appreciates the impact that a single individual can have on them, especially at an impressionable age. I've known and worked with other men and women who were in one way or another mentors to me, but I think it's fair to say that Dr. Behrhorst's influence was among the memorable ones.