

world vision

DECEMBER 1976



*Special
Children
in a
Special
Land*

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INSIDE OUR WORLD ...

Maureen's Story

Her delightful smile and the "just a touch" of British in her voice make her completely charming—this Maureen Lampard. And if you were to guess she came from London, you'd be right.

Maureen lives in Bonn, Germany now, serving as Childcare Coordinator for the Middle East in World Vision's European Liaison Office. She is one of the newest members of World Vision's overseas team and is the very important link between the home office and the schools and homes that care for World Vision's children in that part of the world.



Maureen and World Vision have been friends for some time. Dr. Ed Janss (who wrote "Latin America's Children of Darkness," *WV*, October 1976) first met her at the Mary Lovell Home for the Blind in Jerusalem. It was just after the 1967 war and things were pretty hectic. Actually, it seems that things have been that way for a long time, and show little prospect of improving.

Maureen has lived in the Bible lands for years and knows the Mediterranean area well. She speaks Arabic fluently, and all the kids—of every language—love her. So do we.

A couple of years ago when her father died, she moved back to London to be with her mother. But the pull of the Middle East was too great. So when World Vision asked her to join our team, she prayed about it for a few months. "I'll come," she said, "provided it'll be possible to get home to visit my mother fairly often."

We agreed, and so did she. You'll be hearing more from Maureen in the coming months. Remember her in your prayers.

Bob Owen

Special
Children in a
Special Land

by Maureen Lampard
Childcare Coordinator, Middle East



How would you feel if you were handicapped?

If you could never see the snow, a kitten, your mother? If you could never hear children playing, or the bells of Christmas? If you struggled just to learn to tie your shoelaces?

In too many countries around this world, these "special" children are taunted, rejected and even deserted by their own families. If you were a special child, you might be left by the side of the road to beg—or to die.

Life is hard for special children, particularly in the Middle East. Israel, Jordan, Cyprus: Each has known its share of conflicts in recent years. With those conflicts have come masses of refugees: families forced out of their homes, off their land, sometimes out of their country. And if your father is a

peasant farmer or laborer to begin with, being a refugee brings your family to the edge of nothingness.

Your parents take you to live in a refugee camp or in a poor section of one of the cities. More often than not, your father cannot find work. But even when he can, he must use what he earns just to put food on the table.

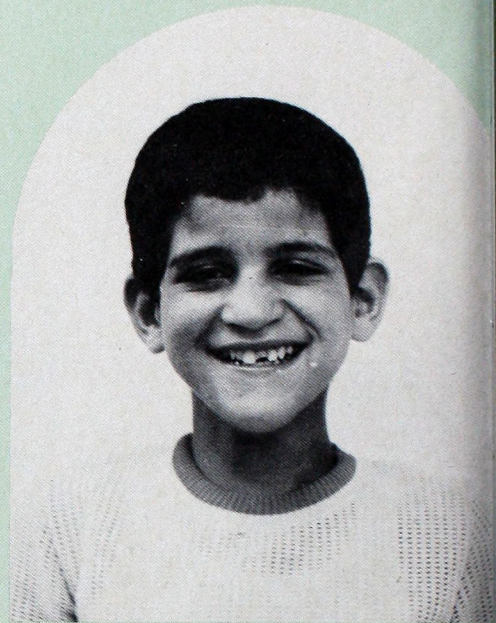
There is no money left to pay school fees. No money to buy pencils and notebooks. And since you are a special child, the training and therapy you so badly need are far beyond your family's reach.

And so you go through life. You are often left out of the family circle—ignored if you are deaf, not allowed to play in the village if you are crippled.

You simply sit. All day long. Doing nothing. Learning nothing. Becoming nothing.

How *does* it feel to be handicapped?

I'd like you to meet some children who are living the answer to this question. Come with me on a Christmas journey . . .



Ahmad comes from the Galilee region of Israel, where his father is an agricultural laborer. One of nine children, he was under extreme pressure at home to be "normal."

But Ahmad will never be "normal." He is severely mentally handicapped, and he finds it almost impossible to speak.

So Ahmad came to live at St. Margaret's Home in Nazareth. There he found teachers who are helping him learn to cope with himself and his situation so that he may one day return to his family. Ahmad will never excel in school, but he knows that he is loved. Because Ahmad has a sponsor.

When I visited St. Margaret's recently, I saw Ahmad. He is a big, good-looking boy of 12. He listens intently to his teachers and works hard at his "lessons."

When I went to his classroom, his teacher explained that I was from World Vision. Immediately Ahmad jumped up and stripped off his jacket.

With gestures and odd sounds, he indicated that he had a sponsor, who had sent him money to buy the yellow sweater and red socks he was wearing. The teacher said that Ahmad refused to be parted from the card his sponsor sent, and eventually wore a hole right through it from clutching it in bed at night. That sponsor family will never know quite how much pleasure they have given.

St. Margaret's is the only boarding school for mentally handicapped Arab children in all of Israel,



t) Ahmad . . . who knows he is loved.



providing places for about 25 boys and girls. Some of the children cannot talk, and only a few of them eventually learn to write simple words and do basic arithmetic. But they love to hear stories from the Bible, and they learn to say simple prayers and to celebrate Christmas. They can understand little, but truly come to Jesus with the trust of a little child.

Another project assisted by World Vision in this land where Christmas was born is the Four Homes of Mercy. Begun in 1920 as a home for the elderly indigent, the compound now houses a maternity home, a children's home and a home for crippled children as well.

The special children here are severely physically handicapped. Like Fatmeh. She suffers from cerebral palsy and is partially paralyzed on one side. She cannot sit up without support.

Fatmeh cannot walk, and she cannot understand too much. But a helper noticed that she liked the sound of soft music—particularly from another child's music box. When Fatmeh's sponsor learned of this, she quickly sent money for Fatmeh's own music box.

As we entered her ward to bring the gift, the nurse pointed out her bed to us. We told the nurse about the present, so she lifted Fatmeh up and they sat on the bed together.

Then I opened the box.

It was quite a little while before Fatmeh tried to focus on the "thing" I held toward her; then there came the faintest smile. We kept quite still, and soon she showed great pleasure and tried to hold the box and pull the cord. She was obviously very happy indeed, but her smile was the only way in which she could say "thank you."

For special children like Fatmeh, an education consists of teaching the child how to eat solid food, to play with a simple toy, to wave or respond to his name. Many of the children have been brought in from refugee families, and some have been deserted by their parents.

And then there is Muna, who lives in the Mary Lovell Home for the Blind in Jerusalem. About 30 blind and partially sighted girls live here and learn braille. The textbooks are put into braille characters by sighted helpers so that older children can go to school outside the home and learn right alongside children who can see.

While I was there one day, birthday money arrived for Muna. As is our custom with the children, we called her into the school office to ask what she would

like. Muna sat on a stool between her headmistress and me, and I said, "What would you like me to bring for you?"

She put her head down and smiled, but said nothing. Then the headmistress asked her in Arabic, adding, "Come along—tell us."

I then heard a little whisper. And Miss Lydia said, "Say it in English for us."

Muna cried, "A bell!"

"And what do you want a bell for?"

"I want to be able to play a game that our housemother plays with us."

"Tell me about it."

"We all stand in a circle with a ring of chairs in the middle," she began. "When the housemother rings the bell, we hold hands and run around. Then when the bell rings again, we each try to sit on a chair. And the ones who do not find chairs go out!"

"So now I want to have a bell to play that game alone with my friends."

We made a search for the bell, and Muna posed for her photograph with it, describing again how to play the game. What fun she and her friends will have with this precious gift.

Another country where World Vision works in the Middle East is Jordan. And the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, nestled among pine trees in Salt, was the first facility for deaf children in that country.

Each child brought to the school from a wide area of refugee camps is given a good opportunity to overcome his handicap. There is speech therapy, and efforts are made to use what little hearing the child might still have. But it is sad to realize that there are still hundreds of children with the disability who will never be brought in, for there are few Arabic-speaking teachers interested in training to teach the deaf.

It is strange to stay with deaf children who always bang doors and let their shoes drop from double-decker beds onto the tile floors. It was a surprise, too, to hear only the sound of spoons on plates in the dining room instead of childish chatter. But I grew to love these children with the bright and questioning eyes.

It is very hard to teach deaf children to produce sounds, particularly the guttural tones of the Arabic language—their mother tongue. I watched one teacher helping a child count up to five. The words for "one," "two," "three" and "four" are not too difficult. But "five" is *khamisa* and "kh" is very hard to learn.

The teacher took the child's hands and placed the back of them against her own throat and then on the child's throat for him to feel the same vibration. Not once, but many times.

And this goes on with classes of 12 or 20 children . . . *day after day*.

In another class, the boys were able to lip-read as well as understand the Arabic script of words on the board and in their reader. The teachers talk softly but carefully, and a look of recognition soon comes to the child's face.

One word in this exercise was *dalma*, and all the children could repeat it in the usual high-pitched voice one gets used to with deaf students. But what did the word mean?

The teacher gestured, turning his hands about and asking the question. One boy tried, and then another. But the third one stood up, shook his hands, looked a little afraid and closed his eyes.

That was it! The word meant "darkness!" Good . . . but how slow. How much time and patience is required.

Through the help of loving sponsors and trained teachers, many of these children go on to become useful members of their communities. Former students have become hairdressers, cobblers, carpenters, watch repairers or dry cleaning assistants. We must all feel glad that we can support this work and help as many children as possible to understand about themselves and the silent world in which they live. And that we can help them know the God who is Love . . . even to special children.

On the island of Cyprus, most parents of children at the deaf school were employed until the latest outbreak of fighting there made refugees of many families. They lost their homes, farmlands and jobs. And they were thrust into a precarious existence that made schooling for their special children quite impossible to afford.

Martha is one of these children. She was born deaf, and her intelligence is also limited. But Martha was able to come to the School for Deaf Children, the only one of its kind on the island for Greek-Cypriot youngsters.

The school used to have nice new buildings. But trouble came to the island again, and when the dividing line was drawn between the two sides, the school compound was just inside the area controlled by the Turkish forces.

So the work had to start over again. A great deal of valuable equipment for teaching the deaf was lost,



Martha . . .
smiling
in a
silent
world.

and the school had no buildings. They rented land and moved the children into tents. This was fun for them in spring and fall, but there was no escape from the heat of summer or the biting cold in winter. And when the rains came . . .

But the headmaster of the school was undaunted. Prefabricated buildings gradually went up, and the program is getting on its feet again. Martha will be warm and dry this winter—continuing to work so painstakingly to imitate the sounds the teacher makes.

These are the special children. Ahmad . . . Fatmeh . . . Muna . . . Martha. They will always be different from "normal" children—for reasons known only to God. Most of them will never go to college. Some will never get to high school. But because someone like you cared enough to help them, they will someday be able to rejoin their families and be at peace in their world.

There are more children who need your help. In Korea. In Kenya. In India. Children who badly need the training and therapy to help them become independent, productive members of their society.

They are helpless. And many of them are so very alone. Their families are poor and cannot afford to send them to the special school. But you can.

Somewhere in this world, a special child waits for you. Will you hold out your hand . . . and make a difference in someone's life?



I want to show my love by sponsoring a child (for at least a year if possible). Please select a _____ boy _____ girl for me. Enclosed is my \$14 for the first month. 4102 H6C-002

I want to sponsor a handicapped child.
 I can't sponsor a child at this time, but enclosed is my gift of \$_____ to make life better for needy children around the world. 4300 H6C-001

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Identification number
(see mailing label)

My 26 Beautiful Children

WORLD VISION: How did you first learn about World Vision?

Georgia Willis: Our son was stationed on a little island off the coast of Korea while he was in the Air Force. He told us about World Vision's ministry to suffering children in Korea.

WV: What did he say about World Vision?

Georgia: He said, "Mom and Dad, if you're going to give to anybody, give to World Vision. I have seen the work they do, and it's good."

WV: And you became involved right away?

Georgia: Yes. We sponsored a child that same year . . . completely on faith.

WV: When did you add other children?

Georgia: I really don't remember. I just know that it wasn't long before we were sponsoring four.

WV: Four? At one time?

Georgia: Yes.

WV: How did this happen? Hadn't it been difficult to sponsor just one?

Georgia: Yes. But I had a little money left to me unexpectedly, so the first thing I did was send \$500 to World Vision to care for several children for a full year at a time.

WV: You would make yourself responsible for a full year at a time?

Georgia: I always did that. But then when the year came to an end, I couldn't stop. So we just kept on giving for another year.

WV: Hasn't this constant giving caused you some hardship? It hasn't been easy, has it?

Georgia: It has never caused us hardship, but it has become easier as the years go by. We just plan to give, and God always gives back more.

WV: You say, "God always gives back more." Would you explain what you mean by that?



Mr. and Mrs. R. K. Willis of Hampton, Virginia have sponsored 26 children through World Vision across the years. We interviewed Georgia Willis to determine the impact of this ministry of love upon their lives.

Georgia: Well, God said He would bless us if we cared for the needy. And we decided to do that. Not to test Him, or prove Him, because He commands us to care for the hungry and the naked and the homeless. So we just did what we could do.

WV: What happened when your husband retired?

Georgia: When he retired from teaching, about 12 years ago, we had no idea what we would be able to do. You see, we didn't have a lot to live on. We had a little money saved to go along with social security and his teacher's pension.

WV: Didn't you also sell your home?

Georgia: Yes, because we knew we would have to economize, you know, get by a little cheaper.

WV: But you were still sponsoring children, even during this rather uncertain time?

Georgia: Oh, yes. We just kept on caring for the little children God had given to us.

WV: Before we go on, Georgia, let

me ask you this: Just why are you so generous with what you have?

Georgia: Well . . . well, just to glorify God. Because, if He hadn't given to us, we couldn't give.

WV: It's true, He is good to His children. Now, Georgia, I believe you said that something truly wonderful happened to you and your husband about this time. What was it?

Georgia: It really did. An aunt I hadn't seen for 30 years died and left me some money. It was like manna dropping down from the sky! We really needed it in our old age. And then my husband's sister died

and left him some money. We're just praising the Lord for His goodness.

WV: God really came through on His promise, didn't He?

Georgia: He certainly did. And the more He gives us, the more we are able to give.

WV: You are more able to give now than you used to be. But even when you didn't have much, you gave to the Lord's work. Isn't that right?

Georgia: Yes, like I said, when we sponsored that first child, it was strictly on faith. We really didn't know how we were going to do it. But we have learned that you just can't . . . you really can't outgive God! We have tried. And we haven't been able to.

WV: That's a truly exciting testimony.

Georgia: At first people thought it was a little bit strange for us to give so much. Because we gave when we really couldn't afford to give . . . when we didn't have anything. That's been a witness to so many people!

WV: What changes have come into your lives since the Lord has blessed you the way He has?

Georgia: We live just like we used to . . . exactly the same. We could have gotten a new car, a fine apartment, all that. But we're living just like before.

WV: How many children are you presently sponsoring?

Georgia: We have nine right now, in five different countries. We've got one boy that we've sponsored for



eight years. He wrote me recently and said, "Can you believe that you've had me for so long?"

WV: Do you keep all the letters and pictures your children send you?

Georgia: I do, and my scrapbook is such a blessing. I keep all their letters and pictures and Christmas cards in it. They send me pictures of the things they have bought for themselves and sometimes for their friends with the money I sent them. And across the years I can just see them grow, spiritually and physically. I love them all very much.

WV: It's made you very happy, hasn't it, Georgia, to be involved with these children?

Georgia: Oh, yes. It's been the joy of my life to have had a part in theirs.

WV: There's something else I'd like to ask you: What has this generous giving done to you, and for you? How has it increased your faith? How has it increased your thirst for the Word of God? And your thirst for more of God's presence in your life?

Georgia: Well, it's a little hard to explain. But giving *does* do something for you. And when I pick up His Word, I just feel like He's saying to me, "Thanks for doing this for me . . ." And I say, "Lord, I didn't do anything for You." Then He says, "When you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto Me." And that gives me a thrill.

WV: It is thrilling to feel God speaking to you . . . working in your life . . . reaching out to others through you.

Georgia: Yes, and especially now. All of our lives my husband and I have given. We have taken people

in. For 28 years my husband and I were never alone. We had others living with us . . . brothers, sisters, aunts, from my husband's family and mine, too. Even kids in trouble.

WV: And now you see God rewarding you?

Georgia: It seems that way. My health hasn't been too good for a long time. And many times I'm not able to get out and do for others like I used to. But now, just when we need God most, He is blessing us more than He ever has before. And we just praise God for all His goodness. For His blessings.

WV: Georgia, have you ever seen any of your children?

Georgia: No, I never have. I send them birthday cards. Sometimes I send them flat pieces of bubble gum in envelopes. One boy wrote back and said, "Oh, thank you for the gum. I shared it with all my friends." Another child wrote and asked me if I like flowers. I told him I love flowers. He wrote back and said, "I hope



I'll be like a flower in your yard." And that just thrilled me to death!

WV: I'm sure the Lord will show you those children . . . maybe not till you get to heaven. But you will see them all. And they will thank you.

Georgia: Oh, I would love to see them. They're all so beautiful. And I love them all so much. They have all been a very precious part of my life.



Kimiati must have known that the pain in her left ankle was caused by bone cancer. She must also have known that her parents refused to allow the doctors to amputate the leg.

"No one would marry our daughter unless she had both her feet," her father had said. "And it is better for a girl to be dead than not be able to get married."

But what Kimiati might not have known was that—without amputation—she could live just a few months, six at the most.

So, after spending two weeks in the Baptist hospital in Kediri, 20 miles to the north, she was returning to her home village of Jemekan. It must have been a rather strange, if not frightening experience for the beautiful 18-year-old girl.

Because she was now the only Christian in her strong Moslem community on Indonesia's Java Island.

At the hospital, Kimiati had accepted Christ as her Savior. She had entered into this new life when Suwarsi and Tjitjek, two young women evangelists, and missionary-evangelist James E. McAtee had told her about their Lord.

When I was in Indonesia in April 1975, Jim McAtee, Virginia Miles (a missionary nurse) and I set out one

morning to find Kimiati's village. The purpose: to meet the village's chief officials and to visit Kimiati, as part of the hospital's follow-up program. I was excited about the trip because it was to be my first opportunity to observe missionaries make initial contact in a village.

We found Jemekan to be a rather prosperous farm village of about 5500 people. The houses, scattered here and there among the dense trees and crops, were larger and better built than in any other village I had visited in Indonesia. There was quite a crop of children, well-endowed with the natural curiosity of kids everywhere.

In visiting a village for the first time, Jim's practice is to go first to the "town hall" and call on the local chief. In Jemekan the second highest official was available; after we had spent some time with him, he accompanied us to Kimiati's home.


Pak Sumarto, Kimiati's father, was the village irrigation official. The fact that he was an official of any kind in the community indicated that the family was staunchly Moslem.

We were graciously received at the Sumarto home. Kimiati was lying on a small bed in a tiny room which opened into the living room. From where I stood I could observe the sick girl. And as Jim exchanged greetings with the family, I noticed that Kimiati listened intently to what he said. Although her smooth olive skin was very pale, I thought she was one of the loveliest young women I have ever seen.

After a time, Pak Sumarto indicated that we could enter Kimiati's room. But he went in first and removed a tile from the corner of the roof to give us more light.

I detected the odor of death in the room, due no doubt to the fast-spreading cancer.

Kimiati talked quietly with Jim, and he translated part of the conversation. At one point he told me that



KIMIATI'S CALVARY

by **Ione Gray**

International Writer and Editor
Foreign Mission Board,
Southern Baptist Convention

she asked him to bring Suwarsi and Tjitjek to see her. One could sense the close relationship she felt with those who had led her to Jesus. I could also sense that Kimiati knew that her time in this world was coming to an end.

During this conversation, the girl's father had left the crowded room. But after a time, Jim left her bedside and went into the living room to ask Pak Sumarto if it would be all right to pray. He agreed, came back into her room, and we all stood around Kimiati's bed as Jim led us in prayer.

When we went back into the living room, the father tried to bargain with Jim "for as much of her leg as possible." (I had learned by now that Indonesia is a land of bargaining.)

Jim and I knew that Kimiati's condition was very serious. But Jim told

her father that since he and I were not doctors, we could not make any promises.

As Jim was translating the conversation, Pak Sumarto said, with apparent resignation, "It is better for a girl to be dead, than not be able to get married."

Virginia Miles and I exchanged glances. We both knew that this beautiful girl would never realize her father's wish for her. Nor would she be able to witness much longer for her new-found Lord. I longed for a rose or carnation or anything pretty to press into her hand—as a token of my concern and of the Christian bond we shared.

I never really got away from Kimiati.

She was much on my mind as I completed my journey. Weeks later I wrote to Jim, asking many questions. His answer came promptly:

Yes, Kimiati died shortly after I left. Yes, he had taken the two

young evangelists to see her. No, he had not attended the funeral, because he had not learned of her death in time.

Jim closed his letter: "Only eternity will reveal all the results of Kimiati's death. On our last visit, her two older sisters took the tracts and Gospels of John we gave them. They apparently devoured them and showed some interest in allowing me to return and begin a Bible study in their home.

"The father didn't reject the idea, which is sometimes a good sign.

"So I trust you will continue to pray . . . that Jemekan may be opened to hear God's Good News . . ."



Kimiati's witness lives on. Although Pak Sumarto and his family are not yet Christians, the author recently learned that missionaries still visit Jemekan and have been invited to hold services in the Sumarto home.

What you are saying to a hungry world

With the help of concerned Christians, World Vision is meeting the emergency needs of suffering people throughout the world and making it possible for them to build for future self-reliance.



Self-help Nutrition Training for the Philippines

There are 7100 islands that make up the Philippines. While many Westerners think of that country as a developed nation, it is largely underdeveloped. Thousands of Filipinos live in poverty—in shacks of cardboard, tarpaper and whatever materials they can scrounge.

In an effort to reduce the slums of Manila and help people get a new start, thousands of slum dwellers are now being relocated to new communities. Unfortunately, getting settled and becoming self-supporting in a new location can often be difficult. Sometimes life even gets worse before it gets better. Such is the case in the resettlement village of Sapang Palay, where hundreds of families are caught in the grip of illiteracy, inadequate education and shrinking opportunity.

Seventy-five percent of the children in Sapang Palay are malnourished, 10 percent severely so. Without

help, many of these children will suffer permanent brain damage. The parents of these children are themselves the victims of corrosive poverty; fathers can't find jobs, mothers have never learned simple principles of health care and nutrition.

To help the children and parents of Sapang Palay get the assistance they so urgently need, World Vision has initiated a nutrition and training program. Some 1500 children will benefit from a closely supervised pilot feeding project that may become the model for involvement by other agencies. Parents will also benefit: Fathers will be taught how to grow better food and cash crops; mothers will learn how to preserve fresh vegetables and prepare balanced, low-cost meals. Information regarding family planning, health and better child-care will also be included.

World Vision is carrying out this \$40,000 Sapang Palay project through the indigenous Full Gospel Church. This is just one of many projects totaling more than \$503,000 (excluding childcare) being sponsored by World Vision in the Philippines during the next 12 months. These hunger funds are coming from concerned individuals in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.







*Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb,
He is meek, and he is mild;
He became a little child.
~ William Blake*

An ancient Ethiopian proverb says,
"When spiders' webs unite,
they can tie up a lion."

SPIDER WEBS & LIONS

by Samuel T. Kamaleson

Vice President at Large,
World Vision International

Ethiopians are born with music in them. And when they sing translations of Western hymn tunes, they sing with a keen ear for music and a careful precision of harmony.

But oh, when they sing Ethiopian melodies . . .

The harmony is there, but there is an abandonment to the music which releases the inner spirit. The music reaches you and grabs you with its dynamic warmth. And when you have lived within its explosiveness for even five days, you will never be the same again!

I discovered this to be true in mid-September of this year when I went to Ethiopia for a Pastors' Conference. About a thousand of us met—church leaders, pastors, evangelists—in the beautiful city of Nazareth, about 100 kilometers from Addis Ababa.

We were from more than a dozen different denominations. All of us desired to be strengthened in our inner selves by the mighty power of the Lord. Our theme from the Living New Testament read, "Last of all I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you" (Eph. 6:10).

And as we gathered in that place, we were all well aware of the many threads of history that, even at that moment, were being woven together to form a new pattern.

The new Government had declared religious freedom. The Church of Jesus Christ was beginning to stir with a new understanding of denominational distinctives. The old rigid spirit of absolutizing denomi-



national structures was changing.

Church leaders in Ethiopia had never come together in this way. *This was a crucially important event.* And everyone knew it!

These leaders had come together to reassess the Christian certainties in terms of newly emerging secular philosophies. The youth needed to affirm the lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of man's existence within the emerging Ethiopia.

His Word—Our Message

The conference met in the Menonite Mission Boarding School at Nazareth. And on the evening of September 13, a keenly expectant crowd overflowed the school assembly room into the large tent erected outside, to hear Ato Tesfatsion Dellelew make introductory remarks and then introduce the speakers.

On behalf of the conference, Dellelew urged the speakers to bring messages from the Scriptures: At this crucial historic moment there was no time for the wisdom of mere man.

As each person arose to speak, a

sense of urgency and a keen awareness of destiny captured his mind and heart: messages were biblical, Christ-centered. But there was a "radicalness" in the Christ-centeredness. The messages were not merely academic, but action-based.

Evangelist Kedamo Mechato, a member of the Meserete Hiwot Church, spoke to us, as did *Ato Mesfin Tesfaye*. Tesfaye is a translator with the Bible Society and has pastored the Christ Chapel of the General Baptist Conference for the past seven years. Each of these men addressed the gathering with fervor, zeal and timely urgency.

Bishop Festo Kivengere of the Anglican Church in Uganda spoke, spicing his biblical, simple, Christ-centered messages with life-centered illustrations drawn from the great East African Revival.

The Lord beautifully assisted me as I shared the love of Jesus Christ.

With Christ as the center, Gospel accounts as the foundation and fire of the immediate environment and situation as the melting context, the messages constantly held the listeners against the challenge of the

need for radical obedience.

During this time together, the conference "family" realized that faith is a commitment to action. As a result, the community of disciples became a radically new community because of this commitment.

We began to see that faith within this community of disciples must hold the lordship of Jesus Christ contextually to our immediate situation. As this happens, the Holy Spirit then compels us to act—even on the basis of the "unprovable." And by so doing, we demonstrate the proof by our actions.

How we thrilled to the Message during those days!

His Spirit—Our Unity

As the days moved on—warmed by the dynamic explosiveness of Ethiopians singing, thrilled by every successive message from the Word—we sang more heartily and harmoniously.

And the Ethiopian salutation to royalty, which sounds like a shrill tremolo sung as an obligato over the regular harmonious, melodic structure, repeatedly affirmed the presence of the King of Kings in our midst.

It's an obvious truth that unity among believers can never be achieved by mere structural formulas. Structure is meant to facilitate the function of a community. And if that community is committed to a radical obedience in faith to its risen Lord, then structures have a constant need for restructuring.

Unfortunately, a rigid denominational adherence sometimes becomes part and parcel of an obsolete structure. If a community exists merely to maintain a structure, that community loses its radicalness of faith and obedience.

Early in the conference we ran into what seemed to be an impossible moment. Some of the brethren were very free, even emotional in their worship. Others were more reserved. There seemed to be an unresolvable conflict between the two, because each group's familiarity with its own pattern and structure of

worship was at odds with the other. And to each, the other's manner of worship was disturbing.

Some even decided to break camp because those who were different from themselves were unwilling to become more like them.

To the conference leaders it seemed clear that the Holy Spirit was calling us to unity in faith, obedience and service. I praise God for the way He brought glory to Himself.

We went to prayer. With intense soulful agony, Brothers Tesfatsion Dellelew, Kedamo Mechato, Mesfin Tesfaye, Mulatu Belachew and Getachew and others turned the matter over to our Father.

And how He did answer! He led the speakers into deep insights into Himself and His Word.

The service that night was beautiful. Bishop Festo Kivengere took time for personal witnessing. Following that I opened the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit spoke to all of us.

Then the One Who knows the hearts of men melted us all together. We became uniquely one as the spirit of unity descended upon us.

From that evening until the Saturday morning when we closed with Holy Communion, we witnessed scenes which do not occur frequently among ecclesiastical hierarchy. Tearful confessions and prayers in small groups—which transcended denominational boundaries—took place in very unstructured situations all over the school premises.

The result: a new spirit of brokenness, a renewed spirit of oneness.

His Might—Our Strength

When we first gathered, we were emphatic about our denominational diversities. When we prepared to leave, we had experienced the oneness that the emphasis on the risen Lord brings.

When we gathered, we were tense and rather apprehensive about the "How?" and the "Where?" and the "What for?" of the program. When we prepared to leave, everyone somehow felt as if he had done the

special part that made the achievement of the goals of the conference realizable.

When we gathered, we were under the restricted mandate to talk and share only spiritual matters. When we prepared to leave, the radicalness of the community of faith had become all-inclusive. We had learned together that the totality of man's existence is the inseparable preview of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When we gathered, we were enamored with the thought of the historic first Pastors' Conference of its kind in Ethiopia. When we prepared to leave, we had already sat down and talked about the "next step."


And we seemed to know that the next step would lead to the step after that . . . whatever that might be.

The memorable meeting of the heads of five different denominations concerned with the future was concrete evidence of this. When we gathered, we majored in the weakness which was our own—our deviousness. When we prepared to leave, we had participated in one "bread" and one "blood" and affirmed that we are one "body." And hence we had begun to feel the stirrings of His strength within us.

What about the Ethiopian proverb this article began with—"When spiders' webs unite, they can tie up a lion"?

From India to the southern tip of Africa, the lion is a symbol of authority and regal majesty. Both the Lion of Judah and the Black Lion of Africa are fabulous terms within the historic context of Ethiopia.

So as our huge plane lifted from the earth and flew over the green terrain of the brilliantly beautiful countryside of this ancient land of Ethiopia, I could not escape the significance of that proverb—"spiders' webs and lions."

To our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia, our prayer will always be: "May the Lord who so fulfilled Himself within the context of this historic conference remind you that *your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you.* Amen." 

One of the questions I hear most frequently has to do with overhead. It's a good question, one that deserves a fair, thoughtful answer. It's a question that I think everyone should ask of any and all organizations he supports. Incidentally, it's also one that World Vision is happy to answer—and does answer—annually, in detail.

In fact, by the time this issue of the magazine reaches you, the annual audit of World Vision International by the independent CPA firm of Ernst & Ernst will be completed. You will be receiving the highlights of that audit in the January or February issue, and copies of the report will be available to anyone upon request.

As we reported last year, our audit is carried out in accordance with accounting procedures established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. And, as before, the audit will identify for you the amount of funds World Vision has spent on administration, as well as on fund raising.

After more than 35 years in full-time Christian work, I am still amazed at the number of people who just do not realize that both churches and charitable organiza-

“ . . . it is the percentage of overhead that an agency requires—not the fact that overhead exists—that should determine whether we contribute or not. ”

tions have operating costs. I know this is the case because I am often asked, “Why can't you operate World Vision the way my church is run—without any overhead?”


That's probably the most exasperating question anyone could ask me. I know my friends in other Christian organizations cringe every time the question is directed to them.

You see, most churches use practically *all* their income on overhead-type expenditures—staff salaries and benefits, office supplies, printing, maintenance, utilities, Christian education materials and related expenses. Few churches devote more than 20 percent of their annual budgets to overseas missions or to local community outreach programs.

Of course, a church is a unique institution essentially serving its own membership—who help establish the budget and set priorities. Any other Christian charity that devoted 80 percent of its income to overhead and only 20 percent to outside ministries would be severely criticized—and rightly so.

So on the one hand the question bothers me, but on the other hand I am glad to hear it being asked. For too long now, numerous organizations—both the well-meaning and the unethical—have taken advantage of the abundant generosity of the American public.

Although that generosity has not declined, I have noticed a definite trend by the public, the media and



OVERHEAD: A Natural Part of Ministry



by **Ted W. Engstrom**

Executive Vice President, World Vision International

government during the past few years to hold charitable organizations more and more accountable for the funds they receive.

Any charity, whether it be World Vision, the Salvation Army, the YMCA or the mission arm of any denomination, must manage its “business” so that most of the gifts it receives actually go to whatever ministry for which the funds were solicited.

The agency that is maintaining a low 15 percent overhead rate is doing a remarkable job, but anywhere between 15 and 25 percent is most respectable. This holds true for secular charities as well. Early last year, a U.S. Senator investigating a number of charities labeled the 24 percent overhead of a national society that solicits funds for crippled children as “one of the best.” (The November 1976 issue of *Changing Times*

suggests that fund-raising and administrative costs should be less than 50 percent of total public contributions.)

Unfortunately, the American public all too often supports, without question, organizations whose overheads run as high as 60 and 80 percent.

After wrestling with overhead expenses at Youth for Christ International (1951 to 1963) and at World Vision (since 1963), I know there's no way a responsible organization can be run with 5 or 10 percent overhead (administration and fund-raising costs). And I know of no responsible agency that makes such a claim.

The word "responsible" is most important. Many organizations report their salaries, administration costs and fund-raising costs as one overhead figure. Some include administration and only some fund-raising costs in that total, while other fund-raising expenses are disguised as "literature," "public information" or "educational programs." Still others would rather take you off their mailing lists than divulge overhead costs.

Now, the most important overhead-related variable within any charitable organization—and, incidentally, within any secular corporation—is management. Some Christian organizations thrive and grow and maintain a low overhead cost because they are blessed with good leadership and good management. Some organizations enjoy dynamic leadership but have mediocre management; they, too, thrive and grow, but overhead costs are high. Still other Christian organizations have poor management; the commitment of their managers to our Lord Jesus Christ may be every bit as sincere as mine, yours or Billy Graham's, but their knowledge of business management leaves much to be desired.

It is the decisions of management that determine how efficiently an organization operates and how well its overhead is controlled. Is it, for instance, good stewardship to continue spending over \$10,000 every month in a dozen or more magazines in order to attract 100 persons willing to sponsor a needy child? Some agencies believe it's justified, but that's a cost-per-sponsor that World Vision believes is too high, so we restrict our magazine advertising to Christian publications only.

Would it be considered good stewardship to spend \$100,000 to raise the same amount? The answer, of course, is no—if you knew ahead of time that's all you would receive. It would hardly make good sense to initiate a fund-raising project simply to break even. No fund-raising program is designed to do that. But obviously, not every fund-raising program is going to be a success.

Another question: At what point do you stop hiring people to manually perform a job that a machine can do? These are important management decisions that charitable organizations continually deal with. And while some of the answers seem so clear, the potential results of a fund-raising program are not always so.

I am reminded of one of our own television specials

a few years ago called "Children of Zero." The initial response of the viewers was just enough to pay for production and TV time costs. That being the case, one might hastily conclude—and some did—that it was hardly worth the effort.

However, the special had not been produced for immediate funds, but to attract childcare sponsors. It did this very well. In the United States, the program produced 6700 sponsors. But it didn't stop there. It was turned over to World Vision of Australia and World Vision of Canada, where it produced some more cash gifts and 5500 sponsors. This brought the total number of sponsors to 12,200 worldwide!

From past experience we have learned that the average sponsor will continue sponsoring a child for at least four years. So, disregarding the cash gifts produced by the special, the \$900,000 investment in 1973 has been responsible for generating over \$6 million—and is still producing. Every dollar of the original investment produced about \$7, which by any standard is very cost-effective fund raising.

Naturally, not everything we try is successful. If it were, our fund-raising percentage would be down to zero. But we think that the 11 or 13 percent (I'm estimating) fund-raising cost we'll have in our 1976 audit indicates that our successes far outnumber our failures.

Most concerned Christians want to contribute funds to an agency that will use their money responsibly. But it's not easy to know who these groups are. Perhaps non-profit organizations will someday adopt standard accounting procedures for reporting their financial data that would make it possible for discerning Christians to research and judge the evidence before contributing. That's difficult, especially when one is confronted with an urgent emotional appeal. But as far as it is possible to do so, I still recommend it.

There are some guidelines for this. When you research a charity, you should be able to inquire—and receive without difficulty—information about the following: a charity's ministries and its areas of involvement; the names of its board of directors and whether they are paid or serve voluntarily; information about key management personnel; the number of people it employs; whether it employs an independent certified public accounting firm (how often its books are audited), and a copy of its most recent financial report which contains information concerning its sources of income and overhead, i.e., administration and fund-raising costs and ministry expenses.

An efficient charitable organization carrying out an effective ministry requires operating funds. However, it is the percentage of overhead that an agency requires—not the fact that overhead exists—that should determine whether we contribute or not.

So in your researching or giving to any charitable institution, don't be upset by the fact of overhead, because it's a fact of life: a natural part of ministry. Do be concerned if it's overly large. That's when you must proceed with caution, if at all.



Missionaries Are

FUNNY?!!

Yes, missionaries are funny people.

Your first question is probably, "Do you mean funny-strange—or funny-ha, ha?" After having spent four terms on the foreign field myself, I guess I would have to answer that they are a little of both: They must have a sense of humor to survive and be effective, and they certainly possess the indefinable "something" it takes to leave home, family and job to serve the Lord in some far-off land.

The scene was a general store on the backside of Africa's remote Tanzania. One of our zanier missionaries had put a lion's mane and skin over his head and had gone into the store amid a crowd of African and Indian shoppers.

"Ah-rah! Rawhr!" he roared.

At first everyone was startled. Then the crowd began laughing. Missionary Charlie had the attention of everyone present. "Yes, it's only me, everyone," he laughed. "But the Bible says that the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

Then Charlie turned his crazy prank into a chance to tell his audience about the coming to earth of Jesus Christ, and how men could escape the power of Satan through personally receiving the Savior into their lives.

Unorthodox? Certainly, and an approach many a missionary would not make. And yet that missionary turned the occasion into a witnessing meeting to an enthralled audience.

Of course, not all humor on the mission field is connected with

Hal Olsen and his wife have served as missionaries with Africa Inland Mission in Congo (now Zaire), the Comoro Islands and Kenya. They are currently on furlough in the United States.

direct evangelism. Some is merely a device for releasing tension and relieving tedium or for breaking the ice in meeting people.

Dave, one of our most humorous missionaries and also one of our shortest men in stature, is always joking with Africans. The Africans love to laugh, and they like missionaries who are joyous and funny.

My wife, Sally, has had a winning way with Belgians, Congolese, Kenyans and Comorians—all fields where we have served in our missionary work. She is always laughing; in fact, if I can't find her in a crowd, I usually listen for her almost-always-present laughter. The Congolese even gave her a name, *Mtu wa furaha*, "person of joy."

Speaking of Congo—formerly the Belgian Congo and now Zaire—we well remember when humor came at a time of despair and mortal danger among the missionaries during the dark days of the 1964 rebellion in that country.

The Unevangelized Fields Mission at Stanleyville had already been overrun by marauding, looting, murdering rebels. The U.F.M. had radioed to us missionaries in the Africa Inland Mission to evacuate at once to nearby Uganda, where there was at that time peace and safety.

After much discussion—and the report that missionaries had been killed in the interior of Congo—we formed a caravan of families and drove to the Congo-Uganda border exit of Aru. The rebels were just hours behind us. We prayed that



the Congolese would let us out of the country as quickly as possible.

For no apparent reason, the officials turned us back. Not knowing what else to do, we drove to one of our nearby A.I.M. stations for the night. We knew the insurgents couldn't be far behind us, and things looked pretty grim.

Suddenly a jeep pulled up in a cloud of dust and out jumped Peggy, one of our calmest and most jovial missionaries. With a grin she said, "Don't worry about getting across the border."

We all stared at her. And she just stood there with her cat-that-ate-the-canary expression, not saying a word.

"What's so funny?" one of the men asked.

"We'll get across all right . . . tomorrow." And she grinned all the more.

"Okay, out with it."

"Well, it's like this . . ." she said, and told us the story. It seemed that she'd been stopped at the bor-



der like the rest of us. As the guards went through her suitcase they found a large box of chocolate squares. "They grabbed it and got very excited about the stuff."

We must have looked mystified. "They started eating it. 'Candy . . . candy!' they kept saying. I told them, 'No. Not candy. It's medicine . . . like Epsom salts.' They just laughed at me . . . and waved me back to my jeep."

She chuckled. "And as I drove away they were eating it . . . the whole package!"

Peggy smiled. "Don't worry, we'll cross the border tomorrow. Just wait."

She was right. The next morning the border was manned by just one weakly subdued guard. And he seemed rather anxious to get us out of his country, which he did with a minimum of formalities.

The famous "Venture for Victory" basketball team of Overseas Crusades has also used humor to a good advantage. They quickly learned that the American "one-liner" and "play-on-words" humor didn't go over well in the Orient. They did find, however, that poking fun at themselves—their own big feet or noses—brought good response from the crowds.

Back to Dave again, our "joking-est" missionary. For deputation meetings in America, he has developed a special approach that never fails. His newspaper release reads, "Big Game Photographer to Appear in Local Church," followed by a photo of a "White Hunter" in a safari hat. The copy then describes a missionary who is famous for his African animal photography. The release is true, as Dave is a top-



notch photographer and has been published in a number of Christian magazines.

But his novel approach seldom fails to bring a crowd to his meetings.

One missionary insures that his prayer letters are read by using a somewhat different formula. Combining resourcefulness and honesty with his humor, he calls his communication "The Infrequent Informer."

It can be said that humor is most underscored or put into bold relief when it accompanies pathos, which is the very opposite of a funny situation. An example of this is the way God uses missionary nurses and doctors to cheer up the African children in our hospital.

Only a touch from God can enable one of these choice servants to bring a smile to a child who has just lost an arm or leg through amputation and will be a cripple for the rest of his life. But this God-given quality is given to those who are Spirit-controlled and motivated.

There's something about that kind of sensitivity that really reaches out to others. One of the Kenyan tribesmen indicated that to me one day. Though there was a government hospital near his home, he had walked more than 30 miles to come to us for treatment. I asked him why.

"Because this is a hospital of God," he said simply. "There's something in the way that these doctors and nurses carry themselves . . . the way they act and take an interest in us.

"Yes," he said, "this is a hospital of God."

My heart was thankful.

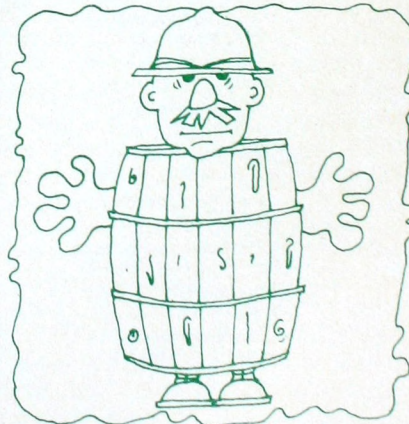
I guess the sophisticated word for what this humble man was describing is *bearing*. He didn't know exactly how to say it. And a sense of humor, wisely used, is part of that bearing—a winsomeness that brings people to the missionary to learn the message of Christ's love.

Missionary Paul spoke of this attribute in his "Epistle of Joy," Philippians. "I rejoice, I joy, and I rejoice with you," he says several times in this brief letter. And a modern-day missionary I know signs his prayer letters, "Always rejoicing."

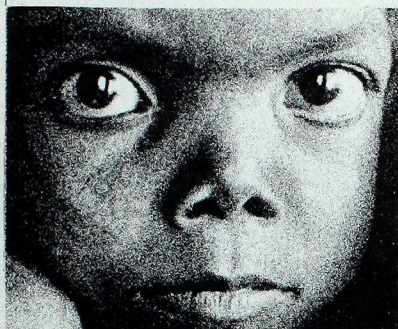
That's the way to live: rejoicing. And, of course, every Christian has much to be joyous about.

The Scriptures say that there shall be people "of every tribe, tongue and nation" (Rev. 5:9) in heaven. This must certainly be true because God uses all sorts of people as missionaries to win the nations of the world to Himself: doctors, teachers, builders, preachers, accountants, writers, pilots.

It's true, missionaries are real people. Sometimes even funny people. And that just might be one of the reasons they are able to be winners for His sake.



what will we say to a hungry world



A TELEVISION SPECIAL ON THE WORLD HUNGER CRISIS

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- Springfield, Missouri**
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December 28—Channel 2
- Austin, Texas**
December 29—Channel 36
- Saginaw, Michigan**
December 29—Channel 5
- Winston-Salem, North Carolina**
December 29—Channel 12
- Miami, Florida**
December 30—Channel 6
- Augusta, Georgia**
January 4—Channel 12
- Kansas City, Missouri**
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- Wilmington, North Carolina**
January 4—Channel 6
- Lexington, Kentucky**
January 6—Channel 62
- Tampa, Florida**
January 6—Channel 10
- Utica, New York**
January 7—Channel 20
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January 8—Channel 9
- Idaho Falls, Idaho**
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- Wheeling-Steubenville, Ohio**
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- Honolulu, Hawaii**
January 16—Channel 9

Please check your local television listing for verification of the date and time in your area.

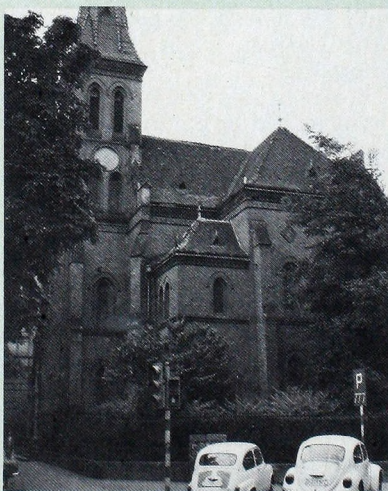
Sponsored by WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

Seminary Opens

History was made in October when the Matija Vlacic Ilirik Theological Seminary opened in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Named after that country's great Protestant Reformer, the seminary is the first of its kind in not only Yugoslavia but throughout the Balkan Peninsula.

Dr. Stan Mooneyham, President of World Vision, and Mr. William Newell, Executive Director of World Vision of Canada, attended the opening ceremonies. The seminary is being housed in existing Lutheran Church facilities, but a number of denominations have contributed to its formation.

"Many problems will have to be overcome," according to the Rev. Ralph Hamburger, Director of World Vision's European Liaison Office in Bonn, Germany. "They have an adequate building . . . a beginning teaching staff . . . an eager number of students . . . the first evi-



dences of financial partnership. They are going to run with that, warm in spirit, expecting God to lead."

Lebanese Refugee Assistance

"Most of the refugees of Nabaa left their homes without anything but their clothes," came the report from Mr. Felix Zeigler of the Insti-

tute for Armenian Blind and Deaf in Lebanon. "On August 7 it was all over, but Nabaa was in ruins, most of the houses damaged and plundered."

Food was scarce, sanitary conditions brought fears of an epidemic, and the refugees were crowded into churches and schools until transportation to a "secure" area could be arranged.

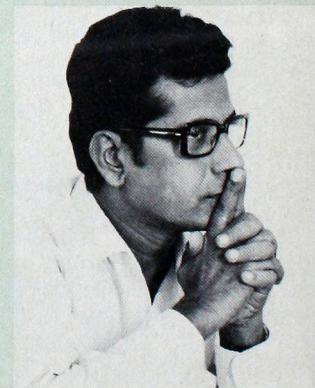
World Vision offered to help with the great need in this war-torn country by sending a grant to provide food, mattresses, medical care and assistance with the evacuation of the Tel Zaatar refugee camp, which was overrun in the fighting.

"Your money came just at the right time," concluded Mr. Zeigler's letter. "We were faced with a problem which we would have been unable to solve without World Vision's assistance. We thank everybody who contributed to World Vision's donation and thus enabled us to help people in need."

India Director Appointed

World Vision is pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Bhaskar Sojwal as Director of World Vision of India. His appointment will be effective April 1, 1977.

The Rev. Sojwal was formerly the pastor of St. Andrew's Church in



Calcutta. He has also held several positions with the Church of North India.

Special Girl—Special Day

When Lee In Soon was a little girl, she was chosen from a group of handicapped children in Korea to travel with the Korean Children's Choir (see "Hands That Sing," *WV*, June 1974). She later came to live with the family of Jim Franks, director of World Vision's Midwest Area Office, and was able to attend a special school program for the deaf.

There was another special event for In Soon when she became the bride of Mr. Wayne Redick on July 17. She is now working at the Mid-



west Area Office, and Wayne attends Jordan (Bible) College and pastors a church in Grand Haven, Michigan. Her mother writes, "In all your life, you've never seen a hap-

pier girl—In Soon simply glows."

Inner City Ministry Grant

In one area of World Vision's involvement with minority ministries here in the United States, a grant was recently given to World Impact for their new Los Angeles Teen Center.

"We sincerely praise God for the way that He chose to channel a great blessing . . . through World Vision International," said Dr. Keith Phillips, president of World Impact. The organization is involved in a unique ministry of spreading the Gospel in America's inner cities.

Burma Flood Relief

In June of this year, there were heavy rains in northwestern Burma which caused serious flooding in Arakan State and Magwe Division. Nearly 200,000 people lost their homes and saw their livestock swept away in the disaster. A poor transportation system is making relief efforts difficult.

World Vision is giving assistance in the form of food, blankets, clothing and medicine. These relief goods are being distributed through the Christian Service Committee of


the Burma Christian Council.

1977 Sponsor Tours

You can see missions in action! Come along on a "Tour with a Purpose" and visit baby homes, rooftop schools, children's homes and many more unique facets of World Vision's ministries. You will also have the special opportunity to meet the child that you sponsor.

In 1977 there will be two tours: One tour will include Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Haiti; the second will visit Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Hawaii. For more information, please write Mr. George Hahn, Tour Director, P.O. Box O, Pasadena, California 91109.

Missions Handbook

The newest edition of *The Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas* will be available about February 1, 1977. The book is a convenient reference on all North American Protestant overseas ministries or related agencies with overseas operations. It will be priced at \$22.50 and can be ordered directly from the MARC Division of World Vision. 

unreached peoples

It is a land where *two and a half million* Moslems are living side by side with *17 million* professed Christians. Yet there are almost no Moslems who have converted to Christianity.


To find this country you must go to Europe. It is Yugoslavia, the land with Eastern Europe's greatest ethnic and religious diversity. Nominally Christian peoples—Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Montenegrins—make up 82 percent of the population. The rest of

the nation is a mosaic of 13 peoples, three of which are heavily Moslem.

These Moslem Bosnians, Albanians and Turks are not being reached with the Gospel, because religious fanaticism and political interference act as formidable barriers. And some Christian groups are just awakening to the need of the hour.

The three Moslem peoples of Yugoslavia are symbolic of thousands of people groups around the world who are yet to hear and re-

spond to the Gospel. You can become part of reaching these people by learning more about them—and the hundreds of unreached peoples around the world.

In order that you may pray, love and understand the needs of unreached peoples like the Moslems of Yugoslavia, World Vision's MARC Division has prepared a brief prayer folder. This folder includes the data from the World Vision/MARC Unreached Peoples Program and is available to you for the asking. At the same time you will receive a list of 200 other unreached peoples about whom you may receive additional information. 

Moslems Surrounded by Christians

globe at a glance

NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN SCENE FOR YOUR
INFORMATION AND INTERCESSION

MISSIONARIES FACING MILITARY SERVICE

SALISBURY, Rhodesia—Many missionaries here are presently struggling with the decision of whether to leave this country or remain; some Swedish Lutheran missionaries have already left for fear their sons will be called up for military service with the Rhodesian Army to fight black nationalist guerrillas. The problem has been created by new laws which make it mandatory for all white males between the ages of 16 and 48 to register for military service. Every employer must also submit the names and ages of all white male employees. Missionaries and their sons have been told they must comply with the new laws or face the consequences.

Asia

MADRAS, India—In response to the recent long drought in the United Kingdom, the Relief and Development Committee of the Church of South India has sent a check for £1000. Commenting on the action, Bishop Sundar Clarke of Madras noted that, "We are beginning to realize . . . that our partnership should enable us to give, and the churches of the West must also be prepared to receive. We must share our resources and make our partnership a two-way traffic."

Latin America

GEORGETOWN, Guyana—The recent takeover of more than 600 nursery, primary and secondary private and religious schools here has brought the Government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham under strong criticism. While some compensation for this action was given to the secular institutions, the religious schools received nothing. The Government has stated that it cannot allow denominational schools to operate in a secular state. However, a number of church-related instructors are expected to continue working in schools because of a shortage of teachers.

North America

HUNTINGTON BEACH, California—By the end of this year, Wycliffe Bible Translators will be three countries poorer. After 12 years of service, WBT's Summer Institute of Linguistics was asked to leave Nigeria in June. About the same time in Nepal, where SIL has worked

for 10 years, the Government notified the agency its contract would not be renewed for another year. And in Peru, where Wycliffe has been working for 30 years, the agency has been given until January 1977 to leave. While the agency's critics in Peru charged that the translators fostered individualistic and capitalistic values in Indian communities, critics in Nepal accused them of proselytizing. The agency stoutly denies the charges. Wycliffe's primary purpose in Nigeria, Peru, Nepal and elsewhere around the world is reducing unwritten languages to writing and making Scriptures available in those languages.

NEW YORK, New York—As ordered by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church last May, 28 filled and 18 unfilled positions are now being cut to reduce the denomination's 1977 budget by \$3.5 million. The cut will reduce the UPC budget from \$31.8 million in 1976 to \$28.3 million. The chief reason for the reduction is a projected decline in congregational giving for both national and overseas projects. According to a UPC spokesman, these first-round cuts may be followed by additional layoffs and reductions or eliminations of a number of programs.

RICHMOND, Virginia—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board notes it has been asked to provide 1330 new missionaries next year for expanding and continuing work in 84 countries. The number totals 100 more than 1976 requests, of

which only 194 had actually been appointed by the end of September. For 1977, "general evangelists" is the largest of 45 job categories being sought.

Evangelist Leighton Ford has described Vancouver, British Columbia and Seattle, Washington as among the two most irreligious cities in North America.

The health of imprisoned Soviet Baptist clergyman Georgi Vins, who began serving a five-year sentence in 1973, is reportedly failing. Friends and family are hoping that political and public pressure from around the world will succeed in obtaining his early release.

The Rev. Armand Doll, a Church of the Nazarene missionary who was imprisoned without charges for more than a year in Mozambique, has returned to the United States.

The Rev. Clayton L. "Mike" Berg Jr., a veteran of 20 years of



LAM's new president

service with the Latin America Mission, has been named president of the organization.

In just one week recently, reports Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel International, more than 4600 letters were received from 21 states in India in response to Gospel messages in 14 languages placed in newspapers and magazines.

More than 260 men at a Korean Air Force training center near Taejon, Korea were recently baptized in a single service by a number of chaplains, missionaries, pastors and laymen.

From a world service officer of the United Bible Societies in London comes the report that more places "seem to be" closed to the Word of God now than at any time since World War II.

What's the Point of It All?

To miss the point of a pun or a frivolous joke may be embarrassing, but it can hardly be called a disaster. What is disastrous is to miss the point of a lesson to be learned, or an insight to be gained, or a value to be discovered, or an event to be understood.

It's more than a parson's solemn worry that this is precisely what millions of people are doing with Christmas. Somebody's parody of a familiar carol certainly has its point, and heaven pity us if we do not see it:

*Hark! the tinsel'd fairies sing,
Santa Claus will come to bring
Lighted trees with presents piled,
Rocket ships for every child;
Gleeful, all the space kids rise,
Join the sputniks in the skies,
With the missile men exclaim,
'Christmas sure is getting tame!'*

What is the point of it all—this massive, votive, festive, superlative celebration that the world calls Christmas and the Church calls Advent?

If we really want to know, there's a lot to be said for taking a fresh look at the opening of *The Gospel According to John*. Between verses 9 and 30 of this first chapter the word "come," in one form or another, occurs six times. And that, in the simple reality of its Latin derivation, is what "Advent" means: *to come*. Someone named Jesus, who was *before* history, made his appearance *in* history. As a consequence, history was never again to be the same.

If we ask why he came, John is ready with answers:

1. He came *to give God a new visibility*. "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (vs. 18). To Moses, God said, "I AM." No predicate! No descriptive adjectives! The "I amness" of eternal, independent, sovereign self-existence!

But when Jesus came, he gave the subject a predicate: "I am the good shepherd" . . . "I am the bread of life" . . . "I am the water of life" . . . "I am the door" . . . "I am the way, the truth, and the life." As Archbishop William Temple once put it, "The supreme revelation is given in the life and person of Jesus." In him the revealing "Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (vs. 14). In a space/time framework we are permitted to see what God is like.

2. Jesus came *to give people a new possibility*. "To all who received him," says John, "who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (vs. 12). Like it or not, we are all the *creatures* of God, for "without him was not anything made that was made" (vs. 3). But because we are spoiled, self-centered, rebel creatures, we need a new beginning, a new life, a new orientation toward God, the neighbor and ourselves. The rebel creature must become the obedient child.

Man the creature is convertible. What he is *not* is *self*-convertible. Self-improvable, yes. But that is not radical enough. He needs the gift of new life that goes to

the root of his egocentric death. Experiencing this, a million Charles Colsons can say *Born Again*.

3. Jesus came *to give grace a new immensity*. After declaring in verse 14 that our Lord was "full of grace," John adds, in verse 16, "And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace." "Grace," says Professor James Stewart, "means something completely and for ever undeserved." Stanley Jones said it well:

It is Love favoring us when we are not favorable, loving us when we are not lovable, accepting us when we are not acceptable, redeeming us when by all the rules of the book we are not redeemable.

Here, of course, is where Christmas points to Good Friday. The ground and guarantee of this vast and inexhaustible grace is the atoning event of the Cross, whereon Christ the sinless "was made sin for us" that "in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Cor. 5:21, RSV).

4. Jesus came *to give truth a new vitality*. Return to verse 14: "full of . . . truth." Truth is that which squares with reality, whether you can package it in a neat sentence or not. "People are bipeds" is a *fact*. Yet it falls absurdly short of the *truth* about people.

Our Lord did more than express truth; he embodied it. "I *am* the truth," he affirmed. With a perfection denied to us, he closed the gap between "is" and "ought," between hypocrisy and honesty, between deceit and straightforwardness. More than something to be believed, truth is something to be lived.

Think of the empty clichés, the smirking slurs, the cheap half-truths that we toss around with smug complacency when we are "paying our respects" (or lack of them) to groups or classes or races against which we are prejudiced. Christ, did we but know it, came to embody truth-at-all-costs in His own life and to enthrone it in the lives of his confessors.

5. He came *to give glory a new identity*. "We have beheld his glory," is John's way of saying it in verse 14.

The very human life of the divine Christ has a glory all its own:

The glory of the *commonplace*! A stable as well as a star! An infant's smile no less than an emperor's splendor! Thus, when seen through Christian eyes, "earth's crammed with heaven."

The glory of *compassion*! In which the real heroics belong not to priest or prelate but to the Good Samaritan; not to feuding apostles, arguing over "who is the greatest," but to the Man wearing the slave's apron, washing the feet of his imperceptible friends!

The glory of a *Cross*! The innocent taking guilt. Suffering love become redemptive. The undeserving offered pardon and peace. That's glory—in Christian definition.

Christmas people, near and far, whoever, wherever, *this*, just *this*, is the point of it all!

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world vision

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