

WORLD VISION®

June/July 1988

SPECIAL REPORT

Bob Seiple: Vietnam Revisited



The World's Most Dangerous Profession?



Rebecca Cheronu:

The Burden That Was a Gift



Muslim
women:
A Veil of
Myths



4 Vietnam Revisited

When Bob Seiple first flew over Vietnam's lush green landscape, it was as a Marine bomber/navigator during the Vietnam War. In April he went back on a different mission: to find ways to help alleviate some of the suffering among those whose country won the war, but is losing the peace.

7 The Burden That Was a Gift

If her father hadn't sent her to school with her brothers, chances are good that Rebecca Cheronno would not be director of World Vision Kenya today. But with her father's support and her own sense of direction, Rebecca has come a long way from her days as a barefoot village girl.

12 Motherhood—The World's Most Dangerous Profession?

When she learned she was pregnant, author Sheryl Watkins anticipated little difficulty with her child's development and birth. But her sister overseas, who became pregnant at about the same time, found maternity to be a nightmare.

20 A Veil of Myths

The veil shrouds more than their faces in mystery. Many Westerners assume Muslim women are docile, passive and uninvolved in society. Surprisingly, many are bankers, doctors, professors and television producers. And there are more of them than you might think. One in ten people on earth is a Muslim woman.

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Women contribute about two-thirds of the world's working hours; they receive about one-tenth of the world's total income. They provide between 40 and 75 percent of the agricultural work force in the Two-Thirds World. Women make up more than half the world's population. In this issue we present some voices from the "silent majority."

Terry Madison



WORLD VISION

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HOPE AND DIGNITY

I met the old woman at a feeding station in Ajibar in Ethiopia. She was dressed in rags and she tugged at the sleeve of my conscience. Someone had stolen the food she had received and, according to the system, she couldn't get more for another month.

Slowly, we learned the full, tragic story. She had gone into the last famine full of hope and promise with a husband and eight children. Then she watched her family, all but one child, slowly weaken and die.

As she told the story, her tears flowed freely. The memories were painful. But I believe she also cried for the future, because now she had a hungry stomach again. She could remember the feeling that once led to the loss of her family. Today, however, all her familiar support was gone. She was an old woman without help and without hope.

To me this woman represented what is happening in Ethiopia today. Because this famine comes so closely after the last one, the people aren't prepared. The last famine took away their cattle, their crops and most of their families. Now they're feeling the pangs of hunger again.

That morning my wife, Margaret Ann, cut through the bureaucracy and put the old woman at the head of the line and got her a new supply of

food. Before she left, I asked her what else we could do, and her answer echoes in my mind: "Please don't let the people of the world forget Ethiopia."

It was amazing to me that up in that mountain village, far from the media and most of civilization, there is a growing concern that this time the world will not respond. There is an intuition, as strong as the gnawing hunger in the stomach, that both the resources and the compassion of the world will fail.

I came home determined that the world would not forget Ethiopia, and immediately circulated the report of this incident among my colleagues. One of them observed: "Bob, that was a beautiful story, but you never told us her name."

This remark hit me squarely between the eyes. Was I there just to get a story, just to find the right metaphor, just to put together material for a heart-tugging appeal? Was she a real person, or just a vehicle to arouse support on the part of Americans? Did I unwittingly depersonalize her, take away the dignity she has as a child of God?

In the morning, we'd look at the people appearing on the horizon at Ajibar, making their way to the feeding station, people resembling dots on the landscape. Unfortunately, for many of us they remain just "dots on the horizon." They are faraway people, in faraway places, with faraway needs.

But they are God's children, and they are our neighbors, and they do have names.

The woman's name is Sintayehus. She is 56 years old and a recent widow. She lost four sons and three daughters in the last famine, and she is hungry again.

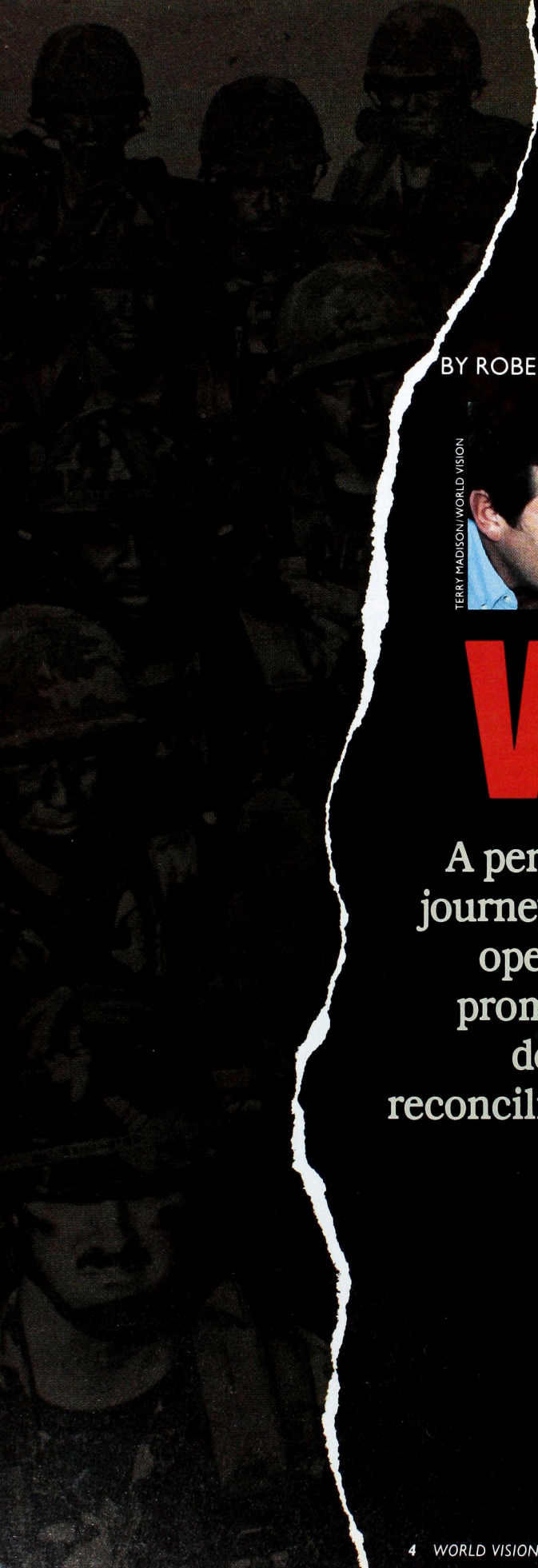
I promised Sintayehus that World Vision would not forget Ethiopia. I also promised myself that I would not forget Sintayehus because of another oppressed and forgotten people she represents: the women of the Two-Thirds World.

This issue of WORLD VISION magazine can do little more than recognize them, call a few of them by name. But I pray it will in some way help us to relieve their burden of oppression. We will *all* be the richer for it.

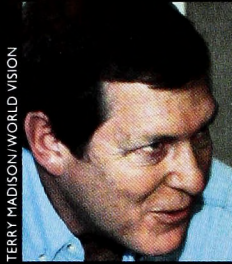
There is hope for Ethiopia, and there is hope for these women. In each case it will take time and perseverance on our part and on theirs. As we work to restore their hope, let us do everything possible to preserve their dignity. Let us remember their names. □

The Seiples
with Ethiopian
children.





BY ROBERT SEIPLE



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

Too many times to recall, I had steeled myself for this moment—a descent through the midday clouds to land at Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam. My “home” for 13 months in the late sixties as I served as a bomber/navigator in the Marine Corps, stationed in Da Nang. But today’s calendar said April 11, 1988, and twenty years of memories and conflicting emotions whirled as the landing gear on our Air France 747 locked in place.

I felt sadness at the loss of friends and colleagues, good young men snuffed out in their prime. There was also the sense of frustration over the POW/MIA issue and the continued reminder that many friends are still officially “missing.” Yet I felt a strong sense of antici-

VIETNAM

**A personal
journey that
opened a
promising
door to
reconciliation**

pation at the thought that this current mission was peaceful, a journey of Christian reconciliation.

From the air, the land looked green and fertile. But there were no industrial smokestacks, only little hamlets bisected by dirt roads as we made our approach. In 20 years, nothing appeared to have changed for the better in Vietnam.

The evidence of decline was visible at Tan Son Nhut, once a frantically busy airport. This day we were the only plane in sight, if you discount the rusting hulks of C-47s and C-130s littering the perimeter of the airfield. The revetments were empty save for a few burned-out helicopters.

My April trip to Vietnam came after former World Vision executives Hal Barber and Larry Ward, accompanied by other relief specialists, had visited the country last December. These men, who had given much of their lives to Vietnamese develop-



Bob and Margaret Ann Seiple visit a polio victim at the Center for Paralyzed Children, Ho Chi Minh City.

REVISITED

ment, had returned to discuss future aid plans with Vietnamese officials. These officials agreed that several aid agencies, including World Vision, could supply materials for the construction of artificial limbs for the thousands of Vietnamese disabled by the war.

World Vision had been heavily involved in Vietnam in past years, beginning with a pastors' conference in 1955. Sponsorship of children began in 1960, and eventually more than 20,000 children were assisted. The Street Boys program helped hundreds of abandoned boys, providing them a place to live. And emergency food, medicine and other items of assistance were supplied when needed. From 1965 to 1975, World Vision donors gave nearly \$10 million to Vietnamese relief and development.

The North Vietnamese took over

Vietnam may have won the war, but it is losing the peace.

Saigon in 1975. World Vision was forced to leave, but not before "Operation Babylift" evacuated 27 Vietnamese and 23 Cambodian orphans at the 11th Hour. After 1975, "Operation Seasweep" rescued Vietnamese boat people on the South China Sea. Grants were also made to help rebuild Vietnamese churches and provide typhoon relief supplies.

Our desire to increase assistance now is based on Vietnam's growing need. With an inflation rate of 1000 percent, Vietnam is a country clearly in need of massive assistance. Disease and decay are everywhere. Vietnam won the war, but it is losing the peace.

Nowhere is this fact more evident than on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City. Our first evening in the city, my wife, Margaret Ann, my son Jesse and I took a cyclo ride. Friendly Vietnamese approached us and smiled broadly once they saw we were Americans. Some asked if we had been to Vietnam "before 1975." Most pathetic were the Amerasians who followed us around hoping perhaps to see some semblance of their father as they greeted me.

"What's your name?" one young girl asked.

"Bob," I replied.

"That's my father's name too," she said wistfully.

Another young woman looked deep into my eyes, hoping to see the face of her long-lost father. She goes to the airport to meet every incoming international flight, half hoping to see him step off the plane. Like many offspring of Vietnamese mothers and American fathers, she is an ostracized street child reduced to begging.

The Amerasians are not the only victims of the war. This is a city full of victims. Following 1975, families were split up, parents sent away to re-education camps for years at a time. The once-visible church is mostly underground. For many, there has been no more closure of the war in Vietnam than there has been in the United States. The difference in Vietnam, however, is that there is so little hope.

On our way to a polio center the next morning, the erosion of life in Vietnam was omnipresent. No one is caring for the infrastructure. There is no new construction. Without massive help, this large and once beautiful French city could become one huge slum. At the polio center we learned that 10,000 cases of polio exist in Saigon alone. The hospital itself was poorly equipped. Most university athletic departments have better medical capa-

A young Amerasian woman looked deep into my eyes, hoping to see the face of her father.

bilities and equipment than I found in this and other Vietnamese hospitals.

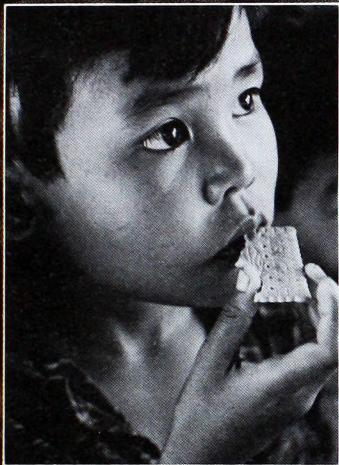
A trip to the countryside later that day confirmed that conditions outside Saigon are even worse. In rural areas there is an appalling lack of primary health understanding. Families are too busy working in the fields to take their children for immunizations. Mothers don't want to see their kids cry, and so they shield them from the needle. Sterilization and cold-chain storage are absent in most of the countryside, creating a real challenge to UNICEF officials hoping to implement immunization and child survival in Vietnam. Transportation is an ongoing problem. Electricity is almost nonexistent.

After two days in Saigon, we trav-



WORLD VISION PHOTO

1973: New Life Babies Home, Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City)



ERIC MOONETHAM/WORLD VISION

1975: Food assistance



JON KUBLY/WORLD VISION

1979: Operation Seasweep

eled to Hanoi to meet with government officials. The flight took us over Da Nang, and I could make out some parts of the city where I had been stationed for 13 months. It was from Da Nang that I had flown most of the 300 bombing missions over the north and south of the demilitarized zone. Every turn toward Hanoi reminded me of target headings, SAM batteries, and even particular bends in the river that were used to update our navigation. This time as we headed toward "Bullseye," there were no "Bandits" (North Vietnamese MIG fighters) to contend with. Instead, there was the empty feeling of loss looking down on the bridges outside Hanoi where one of my roommates had been shot down. All around were craters left by hundreds of bombs.

In Hanoi, we met with a variety of government officials to discuss the possibility of further World Vision involvement. We left with the invitation we had hoped for, a request to return and oversee development work, probably in the central area of Da Nang province. I committed World Vision to having a survey team on site within two months.

Throughout our trip, particularly in Hanoi, I was struck again with the perseverance of the Vietnamese people. Honed by 40 years of constant war, this perseverance seems to keep them from complaining about their nearly hopeless standard of living.

As we left Vietnam, my thoughts turned to the inevitable cynicism I knew I'd find when I began to talk

about helping the Vietnamese people.

There certainly are challenges:

—A slow bureaucracy and difficult infrastructure in Vietnam will require patience and tenacity as we start projects and check results.

—The American public, while now beginning to purge its memory through books, magazine articles, Vietnam war films and 20-years-after documentaries, still has not completed the healing process. Anger, bitterness, frustration and unresolved issues (like the MIAs) remain.

—Regional issues, such as Vietnam's occupation of neighboring Kampuchea, are complex. An agency

There is no better place for Christian reconciliation.

like World Vision needs to be wise and discerning about swirling political issues.

—Our Christian history in Vietnam must be preserved and our beliefs sensitively articulated so that we help, not hinder, the work of the Vietnamese church.

Yet if the problems are daunting, the opportunities facing us are just as large. There is no better place for Christian reconciliation to be carried out than in Vietnam. It is not without strong emotion that I consider reconciliation with Vietnam, or helping restore its people, given my past experiences in the country. Yet its people, like our American soldiers, were victims. Two million Vietnamese died in the decades of the fifties, sixties and seventies. Today's Vietnamese poor, like the poor in Ethiopia and Mozambique, had nothing to do with creating their poverty. They are among the poorest of the poor and need the touch of Christ's compassion.

A reconciliation process will have hurdles. There will be those in America—vets and Vietnamese now living here—who will be outraged and offended, feeling strongly that the timing is not right.

But who better than Christians to become agents of reconciliation? And what better time than when the government of Vietnam is willing to open the door? With wisdom, yet a sense of urgency, we must take the next step and allow God to do a new work of reconciliation in each of us. □

Resins for artificial limbs are badly needed. World Vision will supply 25 tons in the next year.



TERRY MADISON/WORLD VISION

BY TERRI OWENS



THE BURDEN THAT WAS A GIFT

Rebecca Cherono's father gave it to her. Now she gives it away.



TERRI OWENS

Out of Africa have come remarkable stories of European women who led bold, unconventional lives in Kenya's tightly knit community of colonizers. But Isak Dinesen's contemporaries, the women whose ancestors have always lived beneath the African sun, had little such freedom to deviate from thousands of years of cultural expectations.

By birth, Rebecca Cherono should have been tradition-bound into a life of virtual servitude, first to her father and brothers and later to her husband. Instead, hers is the story of a barefoot young village girl whose father was a friend to her.

Rebecca was raised in a house made of mat in Kapsowar, an obscure community in the Great Rift Valley some 300 miles northeast of booming Nairobi, capital of Kenya. Her earliest memories are of rolling hills fringed with forests, laced with rivers and blanketed with deep green kikuyu grass.

Most little girls in Kapsowar spent their days gathering firewood and grinding maize. Not Rebecca. Her father's

passion to see his daughter as well as his four sons educated meant that her most important task was completing the four grades offered at a mission station school nine miles away.

Her father had a few years of schooling, which in his time made him an educated man. Her parents were among the first Christians in their area.

"My father had what I would call a divine wisdom," says Rebecca. "For him, there was no boy or girl. He wanted each of his children to be all we could be, to have equal opportunity before God."

Rebecca's father made sure that she went to school and that her brothers shared in whatever work was to be done around the home. There were times her

mother was upset because Rebecca wasn't doing as the other village girls did; but her father protected her from being exploited as the family's only girl at the time.

Many times the freedom to grow seemed like a heavy burden instead of a gift, but Rebecca was determined to please her father. When at the age of 12 she became the youngest fifth grader at boarding school, her teenage classmates hounded her mercilessly. "Your mother does not love you," they taunted. "If she

did, she would never send you away from her while you are so young." It was for her father that Rebecca persevered despite their cruelty.

And he gave her far more than schooling. Every morning and evening he would gather the family to study the Bible and pray together. The day Rebecca first went away to boarding school, he sat her down and said, "My daughter, there is something I'd like you always to remember. Wherever you go, whatever you do, ask yourself this question: *This*

thing that I am about to do, will it honor God? How will God think about it? If it does honor him, do it; if it doesn't honor him, don't do it."

His advice is still with her. She has dedicated her life to working for God because of that message she had when she was 12 years old.

After completing grades five through eight at the boarding school, Rebecca took a two-year teacher training course, taught for two years and also took a one-year home economics course. Even when she left Kenya to study home economics in England, Rebecca held few aspirations other than to eventually marry and have children.

But at the age of 21 Rebecca had the good fortune to marry a man who was also growing beyond the village stereotype. The people in Bill Cherono's community had taken up a collection to enable him to go to school. When Rebecca and Bill met, he already had university degrees in political science and economics from India.

From their earliest days together, Rebecca's husband steadfastly encouraged her in the development of her abilities. Their five children also have been very supportive of her career. "I don't think I would have been able to do what I have done for God if it wasn't for their support," Rebecca says.

When the young couple returned to Kenya, Rebecca was hired by the Ministry of Health.

One day a field worker asked Rebecca to accompany her on a visit to

Rebecca had the good fortune to marry a man who also was growing beyond the village stereotype.

a village and told her on the way, "I want you to see this family, four little abandoned children. When their mother became mentally ill and had to go to the hospital, the father decided to walk away from all the problems. The oldest child, a 12-year-old girl, is supporting two brothers, 6 and 4, and a 3-month-old baby."

As the two women approached the home the younger boy came out to meet them. His sister was away working all day to earn two shillings, money she would spend buying flour to make porridge for them all. When Rebecca and her companion went inside and saw the baby's poor condition, they knew they had to do something quickly; they also knew they couldn't remove any of the children from the home without a court order.

They rushed back to town, but it was Friday afternoon and the local court closed before they could make the necessary arrangements. By the time they were able to return for the children Monday morning, the baby had died.

"I wasn't able to save that baby," says Rebecca, "but I say to my God, if there's anything I can do in this life, it is to try and save other babies so that they will not die like that one."

Like many a fresh graduate, Rebecca tackled her work with equal parts of zeal and naiveté.

"I came with theory. I thought I was going to fix things but soon discovered that I had much to learn from the needy people I was there to help."

Case in point: One day she was busily giving a nutrition lesson and cooking demonstration to mothers invited in from the surrounding community. At the end, a woman who had quietly listened to her presentation spoke up.

"Lady," she said, "I've heard all the things you've said and now I want to tell you something.

"I don't have a husband. I don't have a job. I don't have any land. All I have is my basket and six children to feed.

"I wake up very early each morning to go to the marketplace and buy vege-



STEVE REYNOLDS/WORLD VISION

Most little girls in Kapsowar spent their days gathering firewood and grinding maize. Not Rebecca.

tables. I put them in this basket and walk all over town to sell them. At the end of the day I put aside the money I need to buy vegetables tomorrow. If I have money left over, my children and I eat. If I don't have money left over, we don't eat.

"You say my children need eggs and meat? I have no money for eggs and meat. It's a fine thing for you to sit and talk to us, but what do you know? I'm telling you, you do not know what my world is like."

Her words deeply moved Rebecca; it was then that she realized that it didn't matter how good her schooling was or how well she prepared her talks. "Until I sat down with people or perhaps took a little walk with them so we could talk, until I knew what their problems were, I would not be able to help them."

It was a lesson she took to heart. Since that day Rebecca has put much of her energy into listening, into helping people analyze their own situations and

lead to new discoveries."

Rebecca has found that by spending three or four hours with community leaders, she can help open their eyes to overlooked resources right at their fingertips. Money is not always essential for accomplishing project goals, but people who have been poor all their lives have a hard time seeing potential in their environments.

For example, World Vision has been working with one village for about two years now, but very little money has been needed. "Its people came with a

*At the end,
Rebecca invited the
town drunk to
explain the picture
he had drawn.*

Eventually Rebecca was invited to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mali, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia to train other World Vision staff in her approach. During the Zimbabwe workshop, Rebecca teamed up with Max Chigwida, the office director, for the homework assignment.

They went to a project site together; but when they called a community meeting, the town drunk was the loudest one there.

His neighbors tried without success to hush him up and push him aside. Rebecca took a different approach.

To help open up spirited discussion, she often has participants act out dramas, sing songs and draw pictures of the way their community is and the way they would like it to be. These techniques are especially freeing to people with little formal education. When Max and Rebecca distributed marking pens and paper and had the villagers gather into groups to make their drawings, no group wanted anything to do with the drunk. Quickly Rebecca found an extra pen and paper and became his partner, staying at his side throughout the exercise.

When the villagers gathered again, one by one each of the groups held up their pictures and explained their views of the community. At the end, Rebecca invited the town drunk to explain what he had drawn.

As he spoke, a change came over the crowd. The man had some remarkable insights into the village. His neighbors began to see him as a source of wisdom.

If you know why Rebecca loves that story, you know what makes her tick.

Seeing potential where others overlook it.

Expecting growth and resourcefulness from the one others hush and push aside. It's a powerful gift, one that has shaped the way many of Rebecca Cheron's peers look at their work.

Where did she get it?

I can't say for sure, but it reminds me of a story about a father who had more in mind for his daughter than grinding maize and gathering wood. □

Terri Owens is a free-lance writer living in Sierra Madre, California.



STEVE REYNOLDS/WORLD VISION

Rebecca with Masai mother and child: "It is wise to listen and say very little."

discover what options they have.

The way she tells those two stories, it's obvious that they left an indelible impression on the way she does her job. And in the ten years since she joined World Vision Kenya, Rebecca's style and insight have left their own imprint on World Vision's work with Africa's poor.

"When working with needy communities, it is wise to listen and say very little," she advises. "If you say something, make it a question that will

need for clean water," Rebecca explains. "We persuaded everyone to sit down with us in a community meeting and talk about how that might be accomplished."

When they did, they discovered someone in the village had a pump and another person knew where they could get some free pipe. Then they realized they could build the tank themselves. Now they have the clean water they wanted, and without a single penny of outside help.



BY ROBERTA HESTENES

*Is the
Gospel*
**GOOD
NEWS
FOR WOMEN?**

She was a small, huddled figure at the side of the room. I didn't notice her at first. I was visiting a small Quichua Indian village perched high in the Andean mountains of Ecuador to learn more about the needs in this poor community.

The men of the village were doing all the talking, while the women maintained their distance from the visiting strangers. As I listened, I became aware of a woman sitting silently on the dirty floor against the wall, holding her baby who was tightly wrapped in a colorful blanket. Around her were four other young children, the boys dressed in the traditional woven red ponchos and the girls with brightly embroidered blouses and black felt skirts reaching to their bare dirty feet.

I found myself wondering about this Quichua woman. What would the gospel of Jesus Christ mean in her life? Would she hear it as good news? Or would the gospel only give her hope of heaven and leave her daily existence untouched?

I decided to interrupt the reports and asked if I could talk with the woman by the wall. The men's first response was, "What woman?"—as if there were no woman in the room.

I answered, "That one, right there."

"Oh, that one. Why would you want to talk to her? Well, if you must, all right."

They became very nervous as I interviewed her. Although schools were being built, she was illiterate, and no programs were designed for her. I discovered that the women in that community not only had the care of the home and children, but also worked the fields, often with babies on their backs, and had the care of any sheep, cows and pigs.

I saw no old women in that village. When I asked about it, I learned that very few survived into their 40s because their life was so hard and resources so few.

The Chinese quote a saying that "women hold up half the sky." Surely that was true in this village. Yet women had little share in decision making, few opportunities to learn and very limited possibilities for the future. While men went to school and to market, the women's world was limited to thatched huts and small fields.

I began to ask some difficult questions, not only about her life and culture, but about my own life and the lives of women in North American culture as well. Although the material circumstances of our lives are very different, both she and I have learned what is appropriate for women from



our own cultures. Like her, I have often felt invisible and unimportant, wondering why anyone would bother with me or take me seriously. From the moment of birth, whether carried on our mother's back or carefully laid in a silk-lined bassinet, the fact that we are female has enormous implications.

Expectations and assumptions from those around us powerfully shape our activities and attitudes. You know you are dealing with assumptions when people say, "This is the way we always do things." When asked why, there comes a look of astonishment or bewilderment, even anger if they suspect a veiled criticism.

"Because this is the way it should be." "Because we have always done it this way." "Because it works best this way." "Because God made it this way."

Part of the excitement of the Christian journey for me is the way I find my assumptions challenged as I seek to follow Christ. I grew up in a non-Christian family that assumed men would work outside the home, making and controlling the money, while women would stay at home, cajoling and spending the money grudgingly given to care for the family. I had early dreams of college and career that were tolerated in a bemused way but not really supported.

When I became a Christian during

my college years, I received mixed messages in my new Christian subculture. I was encouraged to share my faith actively while always granting to men the formal positions within our campus fellowship and church. I learned that men should be the visible, up-front leaders, while women quietly work behind the scenes, making it all possible.

I found myself eager to serve Christ, but gradually realized and accepted the assumptions of my Christian culture: that a woman can serve best by marrying a committed Christian man and supporting his ministry through homemaking and raising a family. So I married and tried to fulfill that understanding of my call.

It didn't work out that way. My husband went into science, and I went into full-time service in the church. God kept surprising me with new challenges and opportunities to get involved directly in ministry.

It was an astonishing thing to discover as the years went by that my call to follow Christ went beyond traditional expectations. It was a clear call, straight to me, to serve Christ and the church in visible and recognized ways as a teacher, pastor and leader. This did not diminish my love and commitment to my husband and children, but instead, my ministry opportunities helped to enrich our life together. Often, I was encouraged by friends and colleagues to move

from the shore into the mainstream of Christian service.

It can be frightening to move from invisibility to visibility. People don't scrutinize and criticize you when you stay in the shadows. I have needed courage and strength to respond to God's call when a few people around thought it wrong for me as a woman to answer yes. I have found that taking the risks is possible only because of the support of the Christian community and the

comfort and power given by the Holy Spirit.

As other women and I have tried new roles, we have experienced both encouragement and criticism. But the criticism fades sooner than you might think, and the support for women continues to grow. As people continue to experience women leading in worship

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OSSIE EMERY / WORLD VISION



and preaching or in other nontraditional roles, many fears and questions fade into relative insignificance.

Much of the church is a more welcoming place for women in ministry, whether lay or ordained, than it was even 10 years ago. The first time I taught an adult class at a Seattle Presbyterian church was probably a bigger challenge than anything I have done since. The love and encouragement of those class members launched me into all that has happened since.

The gospel is good news for Ecuadorian peasant women, North American women and everyone else. Christ calls, transforms and uses us, women and men, astonishing as that seems. Even though much remains to be done to enlarge the church's view of and response to women, I live in hope. The doors are swinging open. □

Dr. Roberta Hestenes, president of Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, serves on the board of World Vision U.S. and chairs the board of World Vision International.

BY SHERYL WATKINS



MOTHERHOOD—



THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS PROFESSION?



There was a time last year when friends wondered a little about my husband and me. On hot smoggy days, when all the news around us was grim, we walked around with ridiculous smiles on our faces. But we knew something they didn't know—a baby was growing inside me.

Naturally we had some concerns. How would the baby affect my work? Where would we put an infant in our already-overcrowded two-bedroom home? Would we be so fortunate as to have a third perfectly healthy child? What would our boys think of the newcomer?

But mainly we were excited. We half-dared to hope we would at last have our little girl. Pregnancy, for us,

Woike Ayano, a 25-year-old expectant mother, eagerly awaited her baby's birth. The day finally came, but with it untold agony: four days of labor, and finally, a stillbirth. The severe labor resulted in a ruptured bladder, known as a fistula.

Woike heard of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and made the 300-mile journey to seek treatment. She arrived exhausted, clothes soaked with urine, desperate for a cure.

Patients at the hospital have traveled from remote parts of Ethiopia, where distance and rugged terrain prevented them from receiv-

ing relief for difficult childbirth.

"These women have lost their babies, husbands, homes, self-respect and hope," explains Dr. Reginald Hamlin, who with his wife, Dr. Catherine Hamlin, oversees the hospital's operation. "Our reward is seeing their bodies, minds and hopes revived."

According to Dr. Catherine Hamlin, the hospital treats 800 of the estimated 1000 women afflicted by fistulas each year in Ethiopia. Twelve to 14 patients each week undergo an operation to close the fistula with stitches and muscle graft.

Women who complete treatment are advised to return to the hospital or to maternity homes to deliver their next babies. The hospital has counted about 2000 babies successfully born to mothers with repaired fistulas.

Female circumcision

While a small, narrow pelvis and the fetal position are major factors in fistula occurrence, female circumcision is also thought to be one of the causes of labor problems leading to fistulas.

The practice of female circumcision is prevalent in most, if not all, African countries today. A recent survey by the Ethiopian Ministry of Public Health revealed that 85 percent of the women surveyed had undergone some form of circumcision.

The most severe form, called infibulation, involves excision of the clitoris and removal of the labia majora. The raw sides of the vulva are stitched or pinned together, and the thighs are tied together during healing, leaving a pea-sized opening.

In some areas, circumcision is part of the ceremony marking the

FISTULAS AND FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

was nine months of joy and anticipation. And that's as it should be.

At about the same time, my sister became pregnant. I couldn't help comparing our pregnancies. I tried to imagine what it would be like to trade places.

Everything about her life was so different from mine. We didn't grow up in the same house. I grew up eating well, building all the strength and stamina I would eventually need for sustaining and delivering children. My sister grew up eating table scraps, whatever the men in the house left for her. She developed a flat pelvis from lack of vitamin D and is anemic almost all the time.

Being malnourished isn't all that stacks the odds against her. She has had ten children—although only six of them survive. And her youngest is only a year and a half old. She doesn't know it, but she's a classic example of maternal depletion syndrome: too many children, too close together. It can be fatal for mother and child.

Mothers and newborns are most at risk, I'm told, when the mothers are younger than 18 or over 35, when they have had four previous births and

I grew up eating well. My sister grew up eating table scraps.

when births are less than two years apart. Since I was due to deliver just after my 32nd birthday, and I'd had only two previous (and healthy) deliveries, my chances were pretty good. True, this birth would be three months short of the recommended two years' spacing; but after all, I thought, this is the United States, where maternal deaths occur among healthy, middle-class women mainly in fiction.

Besides, my prenatal checkups would surely detect any potential problems. That's another thing my sister doesn't have. Where she lives, there's a local midwife to take care of whatever comes up, from conception through delivery. The woman has a lot of valuable experience taking care of mothers and infants, and she has everyone's implicit trust, but even she admits there is little she can do for complicated cases without the right equipment and training. And you can imagine, with a whole town full of case histories like my sister's, the midwife sees plenty of complicated cases. She loses many of them.

As I said, I saw my doctor regularly: every three weeks at first, then even more often. We charted my vitals and measured the baby's heartbeat and growth. For the first seven months,

everything was fine.

But six weeks before my due date the doctor started looking worried. My weight and blood pressure, as well as the baby's heartbeat, shot up dramatically. I went to the hospital for tests. My doctor consulted specialists. Finally, fearing I might develop toxemia, he confined me to bed.

Again, I couldn't help but think of my sister. No doctors hovered over her progress. Anyway, it wouldn't have

MATERNAL DEATHS OVERSHADOW WAR CASUALTIES: An estimated half-million women die from pregnancy-related causes each year.



STAN SAKAI

initiation of both boys and girls into adulthood. In other cases the rite occurs relatively late, just before a girl's wedding.

The type practiced in one Ethi-



CHARLES MAINGI/WORLD VISION PHOTO

Binke Abena and Berhan Kassu, ready to leave the Fistula Hospital, bowed and kissed Dr. Catherine Hamlin's hand. Here, Margaret Ann Seiple adds her best wishes.

opian region scarcely amounts to circumcision: there is no incision, only blood-letting with a needle. This has earned the girls from that region the reputation of being loose and of experiencing sexual pleasure, two frowned-upon characteristics which circumcision is meant to prevent.

Socially and economically entrenched

Because of the stigma attached to the uncircumcised, few mothers seem willing to challenge the practice. Virginity was, and perhaps in rural and conservative areas still is, a girl's passport to wealth and respectability through marriage. Parents use circumcision to ensure their daughters' chastity and guarantee fidelity to the husband. It has been proven, however, that circumcision does not deter those who wish

to ignore behavioral norms.

Of the women surveyed in the capital city of Addis Ababa, supposedly the cosmopolitan group with most exposure to new ideas, two out of three affirmed that the practice should continue. Over 70 percent of the literate, albeit not well-educated, women stated that they would have their daughters circumcised.

This acceptance is in spite of the fact that most are aware of the severe complications caused by the practice: excessive bleeding, sometimes fatal; clitoral cysts; urinary infections; and deep scar tissue which tears easily during childbirth, causing permanent injury. The scar tissue's rigidity can also lead to fetal distress and even death.

Charles Maingi, World Vision Africa, and Amlesu Yoseph, World Vision Ethiopia.

mattered, because my sister couldn't skip work, not even for a few days. She doesn't have disability insurance like I do. Every day she misses work, her family misses meals. A week off could easily mean eviction.

During those final six weeks of my pregnancy, I worried about my baby. I was tired. I felt frustrated because I couldn't work or take care of my family. But my story had a happy ending: Caroline Janelle Watkins, 8 pounds, 7½ ounces. Mother, father, baby and awed older brothers are all doing very well.

I'm still thinking, though, about my sister. You may have guessed by now that she is not my sister by birth. She could be any one of the host of women in Africa, Asia and Latin America who will survive perilous pregnancies this year. Or any one of the half-million this year who will not survive.

They die because they were not born in a country where most little girls eat well and grow up healthy; where parents can plan the number and spacing of their children; where the great majority of people have access to good medical care.

None of those things will change overnight. Some of them, in some places, are changing somewhat.

When Caroline Janelle Watkins grows up, I hope that mothering will not cost so much for so many of her sisters. □

Sheryl J. Watkins is a World Vision journalist.

A 'DELICATE CONDITION'

■ Worldwide, one in four deaths among women ages 15-49 is related to pregnancy. And for every one who dies, at least a dozen more suffer crippling illness.

■ More women die in India of pregnancy-related causes in one week than in all of Europe during an entire year.

■ Between a quarter and half of maternal deaths are due to complications from abortion, legal or illegal. The rest happen at home or, rarely, in clinics or hospitals where mothers were taken too late to receive help for a difficult birth.

■ Leading medical causes of maternal death are related to unhygienic delivery conditions, excessive bleeding and high blood pressure.

■ An expectant mother in the U.S. has one chance in 10,000 of dying because of pregnancy. Six hundred miles off our coast, on the island of Haiti, the maternal mortality rate is 32 times higher while the average family income is one-fiftieth that of U.S. families.

■ Sixty to 80 percent of mothers in the developing world turn to traditional midwives for help with bear-

ing and caring for their children. Although often looked down upon by outsiders as "ignorant, superstitious practitioners of unscientific and unhygienic methods," these birth attendants generally welcome training in safer techniques.

■ It's not just a problem "over there." Thousands of poor women in the U.S. do not receive adequate prenatal care or nutrition. Child mortality rates have risen in some American cities.

■ In Bangladesh, where there is just one physician for every 11,000 people, the maternal mortality rate is 100 times higher than in developed countries. More than one in ten infants there die before their first birthday.



THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB...

BY TED W. ENGSTROM AND EDWARD R. DAYTON

With all the talk about "the Christian woman" and the attention that has been given to recognizing that men *and women* have been created in the image of God, surprisingly little has been said about what it means to be a Christian woman working in an executive position.

Deborah led the people of Israel. Priscilla and Lydia were Christian businesswomen. Euodia and Syntyche were noted by Paul because "they have worked hard with me to spread the gospel."

Women missionaries have been outstanding in their zeal and leadership. They have preached, planted churches, administered programs and done practically everything that their male counterparts have done.

Cultural or biblical?

It seems clear that although the Bible has always pointed to women as having a significant role in world affairs, we still find within Christian organizations a good deal of male chauvinism that is cultural rather than biblical.

Men traditionally have been cast in the mold of the protector, leader, hunter and sportsman. We have been trained from boyhood to be competitive, to *win* at sports, to fight for each rung on the ladder of success.

In contrast, our culture teaches women not to fight for what they want, to be passive rather than aggressive. Somehow, passive qualities have been associated with femininity. This passive role is reinforced by the media. Movies, television and reading materials have only recently begun to portray women moving competently toward well-set goals.

Women are struggling to overcome these images that have so long been a part of our cultural heritage. It's an uphill battle. Women who have been educated side by side with men for 12 to 18 years face a society that says a woman's natural future is to stay at home and raise a family.

The Christian organization and women

It is not difficult to trace why many Christian organizations are heavily weighted with women in low-paying clerical positions. First, routine repetitive work requires a minimum investment on the part of the organization. "Unskilled" housewives are natural candidates.

Second, many women take a job to help the family over a financial hardship while the husband is in school or just beginning his career. Too often they settle for jobs considerably below their level of education and ability.

Third, we are children of our culture.

Should we change?

We think change is in order, both for the good of the organization and in recognition of the contribution that women can make. Jesus acted toward women in ways that

often defied the culture of his day. It seems strange that his church should have to learn the lesson of woman's equality from the culture!

What you can do

Assuming that you want to take a hard look at the role of women in your organization, where can you start?

—Look at your current staff. Are there women who have the latent gifts and education that would move them toward more responsibility if they were men? What career paths might you imagine for them?

—What steps would you have to take to give them more responsibility and commensurate authority? What additional training would be necessary?

—Take a look at your written procedures, memos and policies. Are they heavy on sexist language?

—Write to the best Christian schools you know of. Ask them to recommend to you women who appear to have special abilities.

Problems

It is one thing to believe that women can and should be used more effectively in the leadership of Christian organizations; it is quite another to put them to work.

There is still a great deal of conscious, and even more subconscious, feeling on the part of most of us men about women leading.

We still find within Christian organizations a good deal of male chauvinism that is cultural rather than biblical.

Women and men *are* different! It is normal for both men and women to respond differently to someone of the opposite sex. This needs to be faced, honored and carefully handled.

Women's decisions about marriage and children can have a profound impact on their careers. On the other hand, this is often a smokescreen we put up. Take a look at the average time a male member of your staff stays with the organization.

Where now?

Women need the encouragement and acceptance of men and other women to become all that God would have them to be. Many of them would surprise themselves, as well as their colleagues, at how well they might carry out an executive position. □

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

PASS THE PENS, NOT THE PLATE

Along with children, women constitute the majority of the world's poorest people and are often key food producers and entrepreneurs—but are often bypassed by U.S. foreign aid.

You can do something about it, the same thing every self-respecting Christian group has been doing since our earliest days: take an offering.

No, not that kind of offering. It's an Offering of Letters, Bread for the World's yearly campaign to flood our elected representatives with support for important aid legislation. This year's offering is a push to channel more U.S. foreign aid directly to women.

For \$5.50, plus \$2 postage and

handling, you can get everything your church or group needs for an Offering of Letters: background info, organizing tips, publicity materials and more. Order from Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20018.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

PATIENT PARTNERS

When Kathie Robertson was diagnosed with cancer, she and her husband Al and their baby daughter were living in Little Rock with no family for a thousand miles. They were scared to death.

What would they have done without the help of their church family? Al doesn't know. He does know that many are without such support.

Partners of Patients, founded by Al, provides cancer patients and their families in the Little Rock area with trained Christian volunteers and a weekly support group called Let's Talk.

To find out more, contact Partners of Patients, 1300 West Park Dr., Suite 5B, Little Rock, AR 72204; (501) 666-9648.

Woody Webb surveys the spoils of the door-to-door campaign.



CAN CANVASS

Thirty students from Olivet Nazarene University (Kankakee, Ill.) recently went door to door begging for food.

No, it wasn't a case of undernourished undergrads. The students were collecting canned goods to restock the Kankakee Community Food Pantry.

The old college try netted \$1100 worth of food. About 100 families per week rely on the pantry to help put food on the table.

ON THE HOME FRONT

Habitat for Humanity is gearing up for a summer building blitz called Habitat House-Raising Week Worldwide, June 26 - July 2.

Former president Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter will lend a hand to volunteers building 20 homes in Atlanta; other Habitat volunteers will begin a 1200-mile walk from Maine to Georgia—house-raising, fund-raising and consciousness-raising as they go.

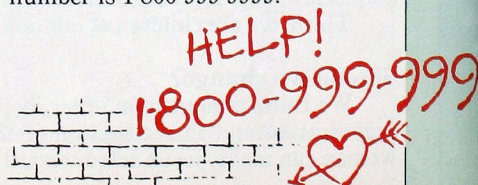
The Georgia-based Christian organization provides decent, interest-free housing to needy families using volunteer labor and donated materials and money.

Contact Habitat for Humanity at Habitat and Church Streets, Americus, GA 31709; (912) 924-6935.

HOT NEW NUMBER

From the next-best-thing-to-being-there department: Covenant House, long a haven for runaway teens adrift in New York, is now as close as the nearest phone anywhere in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Some 3000 callers a day tap into Covenant House's new toll-free hotline for help with drug abuse, suicide threats and other crises. The number is 1-800-999-9999.



Many believe profit-sharing and profit-taking go together.

When you decide that it's time to sell off some stock you have held long-term, please consider the profit-sharing plan.

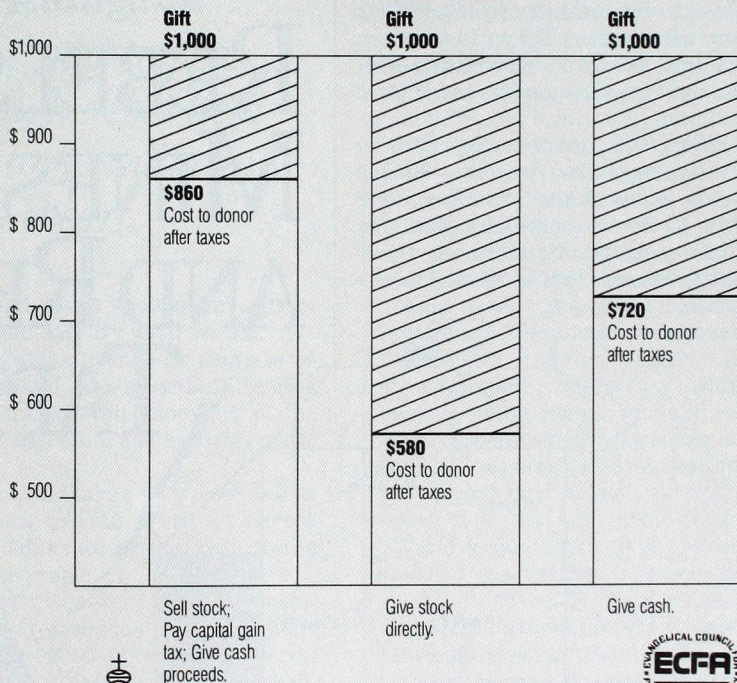
What is the plan? A wise way to give. Greater tax benefits are available to you when you give stock directly to **World Vision** rather than selling the stock and donating cash.

A Profit-Sharing Plan For Profit-Takers

How does the plan work? Let's say you're in the 28% tax bracket and you want to give \$1,000.

Here are three ways you can make your gift: give the cash from the sale of stock (original cost—\$500); give the stock; or give cash.

When you take advantage of the profit-sharing plan, you enjoy the lowest after-tax cost. You also render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's—and not a denarius more.



WORLD VISION 919 West Huntington Drive, Monrovia, California 91016



For more information, call the Financial Planning Division 1-800-462-5753 or, 1-818-457-8024, (inside California)

Please call me. Name _____

Telephone (_____) _____
area code (best time to call)

Please send me World Vision's stock brochure

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip code _____

FSM806

COMMON GROUND

When was the last time you talked to your neighbors? No hedging now—do you even know who lives on your block?

Establishing common ground with your neighbors now, say the people at Search Ministries, opens natural doors for sharing Christ when the time is right. You don't have to be the welcome wagon type. Just be, well, neighborly.

Helps for friendship evangelism appear monthly in *Common Ground*, a monthly bulletin insert from Search Ministries, P.O. Box 521, Lutherville, MD 21093; (301) 252-1246.

GOD'S WILL FOR WHOM?

It is easy enough to tell the poor to accept their poverty as God's will. . . . But if you want them to believe you—try to share some of their poverty and see if you can accept it as God's will yourself!" (Thomas Merton, from *The True Solitude*; Kansas City: Hallmark Cards, 1969.)

World Vision had more guts than brains to tackle the Wau project!"

That's what senior USAID official Dr. Anita Mackie told World Vision Africa Relief Director Russ Kerr after an extremely risky effort to transport grain to some 50,000 hungry, war-ravaged persons in southern Sudan came to an end.

"I guess our guts were saying, 'We're committed to the people who are hurting.'" said Kerr. "But our brains were saying we were asking for trouble by getting involved with a project so full of hurdles and hassles. Anita, along with most of us, never thought we would succeed."

But they did succeed. Despite mined roads, armed bandits, passage through rebel-held territory, washed-out bridges and miles of international red tape, World Vision delivered 2412 metric tons of grain over a 20-month period to desperately needy people in the isolated city of Wau. The bitter irony is that in February of this year, after most of the grain had been delivered, World Vision, along with three other relief agencies, was asked to leave the country.

Shortly before press time, WORLD VISION magazine Associate Editor Randy Miller talked with Russ Kerr about the daring expedition to Wau, the situation among the displacees there, and the reasons behind World Vision's expulsion from the country.

WV: Is it true that World Vision was the only organization that was able to get grain to the people in Wau from mid-1986 to early in 1988?

Kerr: Yes, it's true. Our first major effort started in May 1986, when we brought a food convoy out of Wad Medani, in the Central Region. (About 200 miles south of Khartoum.) We went due west for quite a ways, then south to Raga, and then east across open desert to Wau. All this was done to avoid rebel activity and bandits—the rebels being the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army), who control much of southern Sudan and who, for

years, have been fighting the Arab-controlled government based in the north.

We had to keep away from the main roads and railroads. We also repaired the Kosti Bridge two or three times. We managed to deliver 1403 tons in this way. Then along came the rainy season and completely washed out the bridge. Also, we were told that the route would no longer be safe, since we had attracted some attention, and people could be lying in wait.

We decided to try a southern route in 1987. After surveying the area, we discovered little more than a grass track where we hoped to move our truck convoys—only passable in the dry season. But with some bridge repair and work on the road itself, we managed.

We took a chance and we succeeded. We delivered 1009 tons before we had to shut the program down. And apart from about 50 to 100 tons of food commercially transported to Wau, ours was the only supply of food for the city.

WV: Where did the grain that was brought up from the south originate?

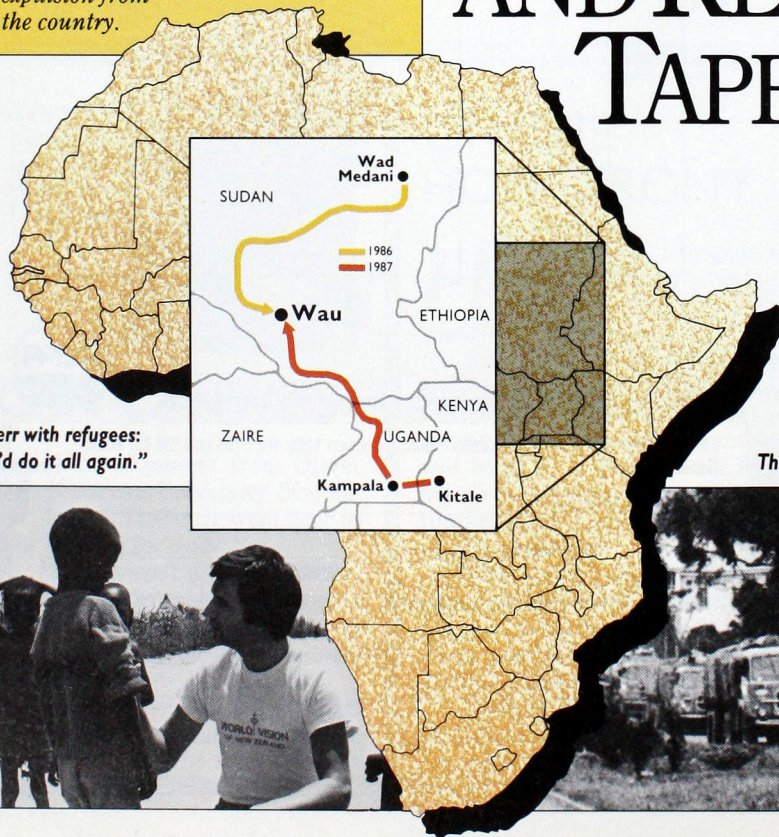
Kerr: The convoys began their journey in Kitale, Kenya, then traveled into Uganda. Uganda is a country that's had a lot of disruption, from Idi Amin to Milton Obote. Even now, with Yoweri Museveni in power, the government is not yet in control of the entire country. There are rebels fighting in country that we had to pass through to get from Kenya to Sudan. Often, trucks were detained. One truck was held up by bandits. All the food was taken. They left a message on the steering wheel of the truck, saying, "Thanks for the food." They left the driver at a village down the road. These are the kinds of things we had to put up with.

WV: What was it like once you got into Sudan?

Kerr: When you get into southern Sudan, you run into the tension that exists between the portions of the region that are under the control of the government and those held by the SPLA. Not to mention the armed bandits that

To get grain to 50,000 needy Sudanese, World Vision was up against . . .

REBELS, MINES AND RED TAPE



The Wau convoy rolls out of Kampala, Uganda.

Kerr with refugees: "I'd do it all again."



BRUCE BRANDER/WORLD VISION



CHARLES MAINGI/WORLD VISION

room freely around the countryside.

The SPLA controls about 70 miles of the road from the Uganda/Sudan border on up through the towns of Yambio, Tambura and up to Wau. We had to pass through this rebel-held territory under military escort.

Yet, with all these difficulties, given the same people and the same level of commitment from our donors, I would do it all again. Because 50,000 people were starving to death. They were coming in from the countryside because of the fighting, only to find very little law and order in Wau itself.

WV: Now, with World Vision out of the country, and the last convoy having arrived in January, what's ahead for these people in Wau?

Kerr: Starvation and death. Either death due to starvation, or from fighting in rural areas if they choose to flee Wau in search of food and safety. I have already heard of deaths there due to the fact that World Vision had to discontinue the supply of food.

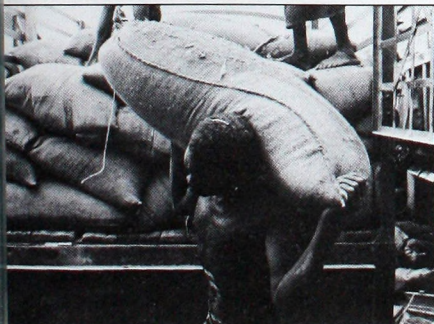
WV: Why was World Vision asked to leave the country?

Kerr: I personally believe the main reason we were asked to leave was because we were so openly Christian, caring and supportive of the Sudanese people. We did not hide our lamp under a bushel; we went into the country as a Christian organization wanting to serve the people regardless of their politics, religion or race.

Sudan is going through a great deal of change right now. Buying power at the local level is severely limited. Inflation is soaring. Last September the coalition party in the Sudan government collapsed, resulting in a great deal of confusion. Consequently, it became easy for any people who may have been jealous of our program to disrupt it—and in this case, to destroy it.

Still, I met many sympathetic Sudanese, one of whom said that when he found out that World Vision had been expelled, it was like telling a child that his father had died. They were

After 1000 treacherous miles, the first grain reaches Wau.



STEVE REYNOLDS/WORLD VISION

very sorry to see us leave the country.

The irony in all of this, for me, is that just a few days after we were expelled from the country, Sudan issued an international appeal for assistance. At this moment there are some 250,000 Sudanese refugees in four camps in southwest Ethiopia, with some 7000 new refugees arriving every month, due to increased fighting in Sudan. And Michael Priestly, the senior U.N. representative in Ethiopia, is saying they are in a "holocaust" condition, severely emaciated, the worst he's seen in more than 30 years of relief work worldwide. There's no question that the war has heated up. [Russ Kerr is now in East Africa addressing the refugee situation and World Vision's response to it. —Ed.]

WV: Who will get food into Wau now?

Kerr: Nobody that I know of will be able to provide food to Wau unless security improves. We were the only agency that was bringing food into that

We had to pass through rebel-held territory under military escort.

area, and I do not know of any agency that would dare try what we did.

WV: If Sudan opened its doors to us again, would you be willing to risk going back to Wau—knowing of the tensions there, but also knowing of the need?

Kerr: I would take a very close look at going back to Wau. I feel we have a strong, deliberate commitment to the Sudanese people.

Sudan is a very needy country. There is tremendous opportunity for the whole spectrum of our ministry, but it's not an easy country to work in.

Regarding the people in Wau: *there* is a group of people who certainly need assistance. Look at the risks we took and the lengths we went to minister to them. It was expensive, but it was worth it. We saved lives. And what's the value on a human life? I'd do it again, sure. It's frustrating, but I'd do it again.

I regret that we have been asked to leave. I hope it is a temporary condition. In the meantime, I will express very openly our commitment to the Sudanese people. And I look forward to the time—somehow, someday—when we can return. □

A LETTER FROM WAU

Dire conditions among displacees in Wau were described in a letter sent last year by Dick Steuart, commodities manager in Wau, and his wife Carol, a nurse and Wau office manager.

About 200 people in wretched condition arrive in Wau daily. To say they are hungry is a gross understatement. Many of them faint because of their weakened condition. Men and women alike wear nothing but rags. Completely naked people—men, pregnant women—are not an unusual sight upon their arrival.

The displacees often undergo plunder, rape and assault on their way into town. They have fled their villages in search of food and security. Unfortunately, Wau does not have much of either to offer, but we share what is available.

Wau is now a town of some 100,000 people, virtually isolated from the rest of southern Sudan, as well as from the north. Only military aircraft dare fly to Wau, and those flights come only rarely and under great security. The few roads into town are torn-up mud tracks and can only be traveled with a strong military escort.

Added to all this is the continual tribal conflict. Flare-ups usually begin with someone's house or courtyard being hand-grenaded or fired upon. And this is right in the town proper! I talked to a UNICEF doctor this morning who had just operated on a small girl whose stomach had been shattered by a grenade.

Relief food is badly needed in Wau. For the foreseeable future, World Vision seems to be the only agency in a position, however difficult, to deliver. With all its problems, the tortuous haul from Kenya, through Uganda, then into southern Sudan, appears to be Wau's only viable lifeline for now.

Sudanese displacees in Wau



DICK AND CAROL STEUART



Muslim women are passive, submissive, shadowy figures. Right?

A VEIL OF MYTHS

Muhammad and Faruq want me to sell my gold earrings, mother.”

“Why?” asked Umm Ahmad, an Egyptian peasant.

“So they can buy a cow,” her daughter Habiba answered. “As a shared investment between them.”

“Hmph!”

“Well, what do you think?” Habiba insisted. “After all, they’re my husband and my brother.”

“I wouldn’t advise it, my girl,” answered Umm Ahmad. “You’d be a fool to let that capital slip through your fingers.”

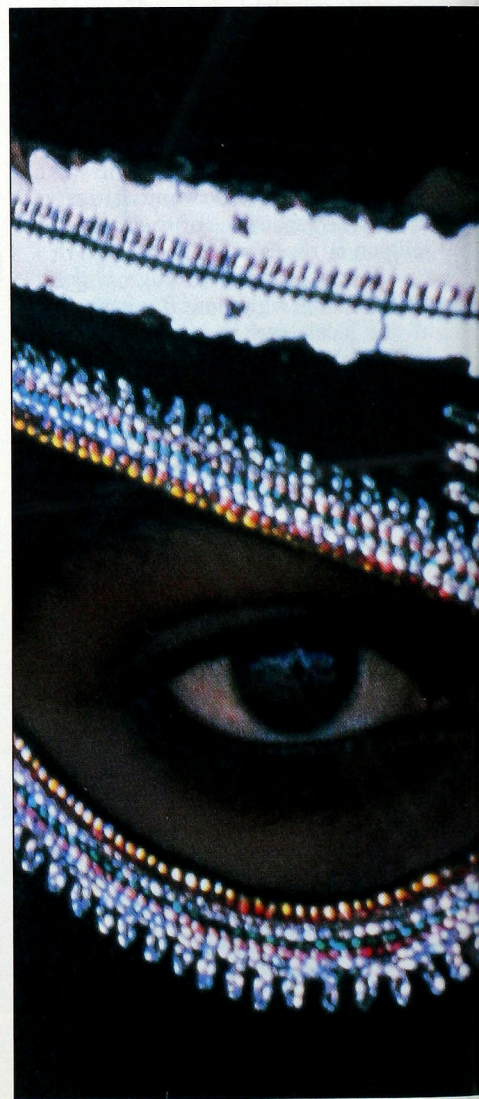
A few months later, Umm Ahmad took Habiba aside. “I have a suggestion. Why don’t you sell your gold earrings and buy a small calf, in partnership with Mohammad and Faruq?”

“Well. . .”

“Just make sure—” Umm Ahmad warned, “just make sure you get a signed receipt from Faruq. And buy yourself a small pair of earrings with whatever you have left.”

A widow, Umm Ahmad managed the house and field work, rotating it among her daughters and daughters-in-law. All her grown sons gave her their income. She bought their food and clothes and the family seed and fertilizer. For a time she even ran a small store.

Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak
by Lucie Wood Saunders; University of Texas Press, 1977.



That Muslim women are passive, that they rarely think for themselves or exert leadership, is a myth, one which conceals their faces from us as surely as any veil.

Almost one out of ten people on earth today is a Muslim woman. And they are as individual as they are numerous. Their numbers stretch from the 50 million Muslims in the Soviet Union to those in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world.

Some hold doctorates; many are illiterate. Arab townswomen may work as seamstresses, herbalists, bakers, musicians, religious consultants, feast supervisors, spinners and weavers, potters and field laborers.

West African women excel in forming strong credit cooperatives or traders' associations. These powerful organizations regulate trade and provide generous benefits upon the birth of a child, during illness, and after a death in the family.

In the richer Arab countries, women don't work to make ends meet. If they work at all, it is to serve their people, or because they want recognition or a creative outlet.

These women aim for the top. "But can she type?" is not an attitude they face. They are bankers, doctors, professors, television producers, real estate investors.

This is true even in restrictive nations like Saudi Arabia, where women may not drive cars or have direct business dealings with men who are not relatives. They manage by hiring chauffeurs and male relatives to interface with the public.

By far most working Muslim women, though, work because they need the money. They also have other needs. Many need family planning information; those who don't read need this communicated through songs, soap operas and videos. Many women need legal aid. Many want help with the health and education of their children.

Many rural African and Asian women need formal title to land, which they lost when modern developers drew up titles and put them in men's names only. As more and more land is taken over by cash crops, the women who grow the family's subsistence food in many countries find it harder to get access to enough land, titled or not—to get water.

Urban women need equal pay, maternity leave, childcare and the option of flexible and reduced work hours if they have children. Some Arab governments have set up structures to meet these needs.

A mixed bag

Modernization isn't always a blessing to Muslim women. Consider the Bedouins, many of whom are exchanging camels for trucks. This eases a woman's work, to be sure. But it also shrinks a woman's world. No longer is there camel's milk, from which to make

Islam teaches that women are ruled by passion, not reason.

butter and yogurt to sell, or camel's hair, from which to weave carpets to sell. No longer can the women collect plants for dyes, medicines and foods as the caravan meanders along its route. Nor do the women have the aesthetic outlet of designing, weaving and braiding decorative trappings as they once did for camels.

Caravans no longer cross paths regularly with kin, friends, buyers, vendors and medical, religious and literary specialists on a regular basis. Now the trucks zoom from point A to point Z. Women, children and baggage are dumped off. Men hop back into the trucks and roar off to visit, buy, sell, learn, consult and worship.

This isn't an isolated case. Modernization often means restriction for women. Education, however, can open new windows of opportunity.

Back to the veil

Today many Muslim women whose mothers wore Western fashions are returning to traditional garb. Why? Western clothes turn women into sex objects, they feel. And they cut Muslim women off from their roots. By contrast, "a veil . . . reasserts a woman's human dignity by forcing people to respond to her talents and personality rather than to her body."

AMERICAN STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

Among such fundamentalists, there is a growing conviction that Islam may be the world's last best hope.

"Look at the West," they say. "What do you see? Pornography. Beauty contests displaying thighs and breasts. Disrespect for parents. Growing illegitimacy. Abortion, venereal disease, drugs. . . ."

The Western model is no longer compelling for these fundamentalists. Nor is a Marxist social order, with its attending atheism, appealing.

What's left? The Islamic vision of moral order. In this, women play a key role. They are to combat their own tendency to sexual allure. This alone, it is said, will help society take a big step toward righteousness. Beyond that, while Muslim young men study business and technology, some of their sisters and wives are studying Islamics. They are preparing to give moral guidance in their homes and, in ripples, to communities and nations.

Pious women, in this view, can keep men from being shipwrecked on the temptations of excess money and freedom. Never mind if your husband shows off with a glass of wine in one hand and a ham sandwich in the other—both condemned by Islam. You pray regularly and lead your children to participate in the community fasts, feasts, prayers, creed recitations, Quranic readings and shrine visits. More exposed to the outside world, men will inevitably flirt with the forbidden. But women can remain the conservators of true religion.

A distant God

Yet God remains far away for these women. He is high and holy. He would never lower himself to take on human form, much less to die a shameful death.

Furthermore, while the Prophet Muhammad treated women well, Islam teaches that women are ruled by

passion, not reason. (Many Christian church fathers taught this too—and some still do!) So a woman's testimony in court is worth only half a man's. A daughter inherits only half as much as a son. The Muslim scripture allows men to beat their wives, and to have four wives at a time. Also, women are considered polluted by their reproductive cycles.

It is a myth that Muslim women are passive. Yet, given this theology, many do have a low self-image.

Muslim women like Umm Ahmad don't live by bread alone. They hunger for meaning. And questions burn: Will my husband be kind? Will he take another wife? Will my child live? How can I keep my hatred for my mother-in-law from eating me up? God won't listen to prayers when I'm menstruating; how then can I become righteous before God, when I fall further and further behind on required prayer each month?

Beyond stereotypes: West African Muslim women



In the Islamic vision of moral order, women play a key role. Yet God remains far away for these women, high and holy.

With God so distant, many turn to magical charms and spirit mediums for answers.

Others, in handfuls all around the world, are finding answers in Jesus Christ. He is bringing them into personal relationship with the God who was once so far away. Just as Jesus long ago touched a woman with a flow of blood, and didn't consider himself polluted, so today he is touching Muslim women.

Jesus is becoming their once-for-all sacrifice, foreshadowed each year in their sheep feasts. He is reconciling women to relatives whom they hated. He is empowering women with his Spirit. He is freeing them, not to condemn or to condone their circumstances, but to live creatively within them. □

Dr. Miriam Adeney is an educator, anthropologist and missiologist. Her most recent books are A Time for Risking and God's Foreign Policy.

ENCOUNTER WITH PRAYER

We're dealing with big problems in this issue of the magazine. Such things as girls in Two-Thirds World countries growing into womanhood trapped in a life of servitude and deprivation from which it is almost impossible to escape. The death rate for women in pregnancy is 100 times higher in some countries than in developed countries.

I heard Chuck Smith, the founder of Calvary Chapel ministries, speak about faith to a group of pastors. He said that in dealing with problems, most of us try through our prayers to direct God to work out our solutions. The proper way is to focus on God and await *God's* solutions. When we really learn to focus on God's greatness, compassion, capabilities and majesty, the battle is half won. If Abraham had had nothing but his own solutions, there would never have been a nation of Israel (Gen. 17). Dr. Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder, said it another way: "Learn to allow God-room."

With this issue we are offering a different prayer request for each day of the month. Since the magazine is bi-monthly, we have provided two boxes by each request: one for you to check when you pray for this request the first month, and one when you pray for it again the second time. Please keep this list near your Bible so you can refer to it during your daily prayer times. *Norval Hadley*
Director, Prayer Ministries

PRAY FOR:

- FCS Urban Ministries, Atlanta, Ga., providing jobs and small businesses in the inner city.
- Leadership '88 conference (June 27-July 1), a gathering for the new generation of Christian leaders, in Washington, DC.
- Colombia, South America, where ruthless drug traffickers hold great power.
- People who work on the "front lines" of poverty and need, at home and overseas.
- North American African World Mission Congress (July 13-17): Africans living in North America will meet to further the cause of Christ in Africa.
- The fight against pornography and its tragic influence.
- Afghan refugees, the largest group of displaced people in the world.
- Housing for 3 million U.S. homeless people; many are families with children.
- Progress in reducing maternal deaths in poor countries.
- Cuban immigrants: 90,000 live in Miami alone. Many need jobs and housing.
- Ivory Coast, Africa: the government is supportive of Christian missions and church growth is rapid.
- Justice, mercy and peace in the Middle East: ask God to help Christians stand together for real peace.
- The Fistula Clinic in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, offering hope to hundreds of women disabled by childbirth complications.
- The U.S. election process: ask for leaders with justice and integrity.
- Recovery of strong families: loyalty, commitment and Christ's love are needed.
- The church in China: thank God for, and pray for, its dynamic growth.
- Six Oakland, Calif., churches which will offer rehabilitation to people caught up in crime, violence and drugs.
- Racial reconciliation and peace in South Africa.
- Hostages who are being held in Lebanon.
- Diamond Street Community Center, North Philadelphia, Pa.,

providing health care for impoverished people.

- Ethiopia: already weakened from the last famine, facing another one.
- Inter-Varsity's president-elect, Dr. Stephen Hayner: He begins August 1, 1988.
- Soviet Christians: most remain faithful under pressure. Pray for protection.
- Christian teachers: that they may influence and affirm young people in public and private schools.
- Sweden: fewer than four percent of the population attend church. Pray for revival.
- New Christians in Hong Kong: some 27,650 decisions for Christ and 3600 rededications were made during evangelist Luis Palau's crusade.
- Vietnam: ask God to bless and multiply World Vision's new opportunities for ministry and reconciliation.



TERRY MADISON/WORLD VISION

- Gang leaders and members: ask God to free them from drugs and violence, through Christ.
- Sudan: civil strife adds to the hardship of famine.
- Dr. Billy Graham's visit to the Soviet Union this summer.
- Success of church-planting efforts among people who have no church.



You Can Put A Song Of Joy In A Child's Heart

I love to sing... the words of my favorite hymns express my joy when I'm happy, and they comfort me when I'm sad.

When my baby daughter, Anna, was critically ill, I needed that comfort desperately. How it hurt my husband and me to see her suffer!

During that time, I remember watching news reports of the Ethiopian famine. Seeing those gaunt, frail children with their pleading eyes...

I thought of Anna. She was critically ill, but getting the best of care. How would I feel if she were starving, dying, and there was no way I could help her?

I knew I had to find a way to help these suffering children. And I found it through World Vision. Last year alone, World Vision fed, clothed and cared for over 9,000,000 children around the world with help from friends like you.

Won't you join me today in helping to save needy children from hunger, disease and death?

Your gift of \$25, \$35, \$50 or more will help give one suffering child nutritious food, warm clothing, medical care and a chance to learn about God's love.

And in appreciation for your gift, I'd like you to receive a copy of my album "Hymns Just For You". I hope these beautiful songs will be a source of joy and inspiration for you.

Please join me today in helping needy children through World Vision. Together we can put a song in the heart of a hurting child.

Sandi Patti



YES, I want to help suffering children!

Enclosed is my generous gift of \$25 \$35 \$50 \$_____ to give a child things like food, clothing, medical care and love.

In appreciation for my gift, please send me a copy of the album "Hymns Just For You." I would prefer a:

record A68WVM/GG cassette A68WVM/26

Please make check payable to World Vision. Thank you.

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WORLD VISION®

June/July 1988

SPECIAL REPORT

Bob Seiple: Vietnam Revisited



The World's Most Dangerous Profession?



Rebecca Cheronu: The Burden That Was a Gift



Muslim women: A Veil of Myths



4 Vietnam Revisited

When Bob Seiple first flew over Vietnam's lush green landscape, it was as a Marine bomber/navigator during the Vietnam War. In April he went back on a different mission: to find ways to help alleviate some of the suffering among those whose country won the war, but is losing the peace.

7 The Burden That Was a Gift

If her father hadn't sent her to school with her brothers, chances are good that Rebecca Cheroni would not be director of World Vision Kenya today. But with her father's support and her own sense of direction, Rebecca has come a long way from her days as a barefoot village girl.

12 Motherhood—The World's Most Dangerous Profession?

When she learned she was pregnant, author Sheryl Watkins anticipated little difficulty with her child's development and birth. But her sister overseas, who became pregnant at about the same time, found maternity to be a nightmare.

20 A Veil of Myths

The veil shrouds more than their faces in mystery. Many Westerners assume Muslim women are docile, passive and uninvolved in society. Surprisingly, many are bankers, doctors, professors and television producers. And there are more of them than you might think. One in ten people on earth is a Muslim woman.

Hope and Dignity 3

Is the Gospel Good News for Women? 10

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Encounter with Prayer 23

Women contribute about two-thirds of the world's working hours; they receive about one-tenth of the world's total income. They provide between 40 and 75 percent of the agricultural work force in the Two-Thirds World.

Women make up more than half the world's population. In this issue we present some voices from the "silent majority."

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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HOPE AND DIGNITY

I met the old woman at a feeding station in Ajibar in Ethiopia. She was dressed in rags and she tugged at the sleeve of my conscience. Someone had stolen the food she had received and, according to the system, she couldn't get more for another month.

Slowly, we learned the full, tragic story. She had gone into the last famine full of hope and promise with a husband and eight children. Then she watched her family, all but one child, slowly weaken and die.

As she told the story, her tears flowed freely. The memories were painful. But I believe she also cried for the future, because now she had a hungry stomach again. She could remember the feeling that once led to the loss of her family. Today, however, all her familiar support was gone. She was an old woman without help and without hope.

To me this woman represented what is happening in Ethiopia today. Because this famine comes so closely after the last one, the people aren't prepared. The last famine took away their cattle, their crops and most of their families. Now they're feeling the pangs of hunger again.

That morning my wife, Margaret Ann, cut through the bureaucracy and put the old woman at the head of the line and got her a new supply of

food. Before she left, I asked her what else we could do, and her answer echoes in my mind: "Please don't let the people of the world forget Ethiopia."

It was amazing to me that up in that mountain village, far from the media and most of civilization, there is a growing concern that this time the world will not respond. There is an intuition, as strong as the gnawing hunger in the stomach, that both the resources and the compassion of the world will fail.

I came home determined that the world would not forget Ethiopia, and immediately circulated the report of this incident among my colleagues. One of them observed: "Bob, that was a beautiful story, but you never told us her name."

This remark hit me squarely between the eyes. Was I there just to get a story, just to find the right metaphor, just to put together material for a heart-tugging appeal? Was she a real person, or just a vehicle to arouse support on the part of Americans? Did I unwittingly depersonalize her, take away the dignity she has as a child of God?

In the morning, we'd look at the people appearing on the horizon at Ajibar, making their way to the feeding station, people resembling dots on the landscape. Unfortunately, for many of us they remain just "dots on the horizon." They are faraway people, in faraway places, with faraway needs.

But they are God's children, and they are our neighbors, and they do have names.

The woman's name is Sintayehus. She is 56 years old and a recent widow. She lost four sons and three daughters in the last famine, and she is hungry again.

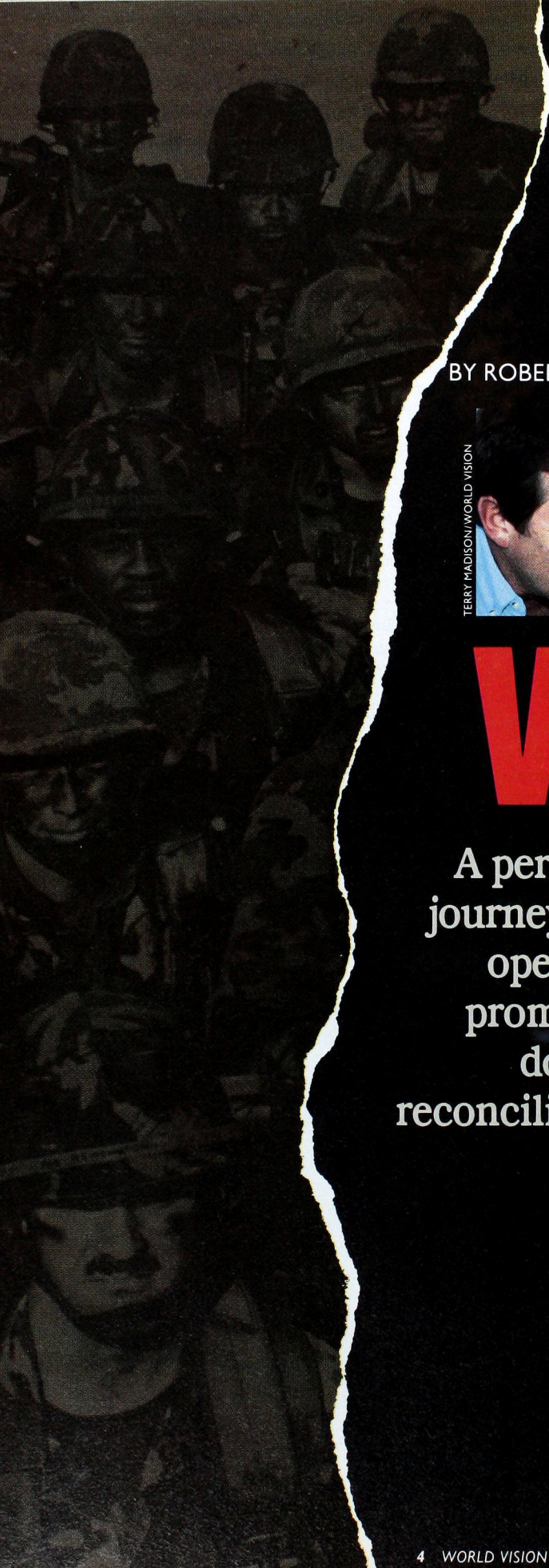
I promised Sintayehus that World Vision would not forget Ethiopia. I also promised myself that I would not forget Sintayehus because of another oppressed and forgotten people she represents: the women of the Two-Thirds World.

This issue of WORLD VISION magazine can do little more than recognize them, call a few of them by name. But I pray it will in some way help us to relieve their burden of oppression. We will *all* be the richer for it.

There is hope for Ethiopia, and there is hope for these women. In each case it will take time and perseverance on our part and on theirs. As we work to restore their hope, let us do everything possible to preserve their dignity. Let us remember their names. □

The Seiples
with Ethiopian
children.





BY ROBERT SEIPLE



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

Too many times to recall, I had steeled myself for this moment—a descent through the midday clouds to land at Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam. My “home” for 13 months in the late sixties as I served as a bomber/navigator in the Marine Corps, stationed in Da Nang. But today’s calendar said April 11, 1988, and twenty years of memories and conflicting emotions whirled as the landing gear on our Air France 747 locked in place.

I felt sadness at the loss of friends and colleagues, good young men snuffed out in their prime. There was also the sense of frustration over the POW/MIA issue and the continued reminder that many friends are still officially “missing.” Yet I felt a strong sense of antici-

VIETNAM

**A personal
journey that
opened a
promising
door to
reconciliation**

pation at the thought that this current mission was peaceful, a journey of Christian reconciliation.

From the air, the land looked green and fertile. But there were no industrial smokestacks, only little hamlets bisected by dirt roads as we made our approach. In 20 years, nothing appeared to have changed for the better in Vietnam.

The evidence of decline was visible at Tan Son Nhut, once a frantically busy airport. This day we were the only plane in sight, if you discount the rusting hulks of C-47s and C-130s littering the perimeter of the airfield. The revetments were empty save for a few burned-out helicopters.

My April trip to Vietnam came after former World Vision executives Hal Barber and Larry Ward, accompanied by other relief specialists, had visited the country last December. These men, who had given much of their lives to Vietnamese develop-



Bob and Margaret Ann Seiple visit a polio victim at the Center for Paralyzed Children, Ho Chi Minh City.

REVISITED

ment, had returned to discuss future aid plans with Vietnamese officials. These officials agreed that several aid agencies, including World Vision, could supply materials for the construction of artificial limbs for the thousands of Vietnamese disabled by the war.

World Vision had been heavily involved in Vietnam in past years, beginning with a pastors' conference in 1955. Sponsorship of children began in 1960, and eventually more than 20,000 children were assisted. The Street Boys program helped hundreds of abandoned boys, providing them a place to live. And emergency food, medicine and other items of assistance were supplied when needed. From 1965 to 1975, World Vision donors gave nearly \$10 million to Vietnamese relief and development.

The North Vietnamese took over

Vietnam may have won the war, but it is losing the peace.

Saigon in 1975. World Vision was forced to leave, but not before "Operation Babylift" evacuated 27 Vietnamese and 23 Cambodian orphans at the 11th Hour. After 1975, "Operation Seasweep" rescued Vietnamese boat people on the South China Sea. Grants were also made to help rebuild Vietnamese churches and provide typhoon relief supplies.

Our desire to increase assistance now is based on Vietnam's growing need. With an inflation rate of 1000 percent, Vietnam is a country clearly in need of massive assistance. Disease and decay are everywhere. Vietnam won the war, but it is losing the peace.

Nowhere is this fact more evident than on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City. Our first evening in the city, my wife, Margaret Ann, my son Jesse and I took a cyclo ride. Friendly Vietnamese approached us and smiled broadly once they saw we were Americans. Some asked if we had been to Vietnam "before 1975." Most pathetic were the Amerasians who followed us around hoping perhaps to see some semblance of their father as they greeted me.

"What's your name?" one young girl asked.

"Bob," I replied.

"That's my father's name too," she said wistfully.

Another young woman looked deep into my eyes, hoping to see the face of her long-lost father. She goes to the airport to meet every incoming international flight, half hoping to see him step off the plane. Like many offspring of Vietnamese mothers and American fathers, she is an ostracized street child reduced to begging.

The Amerasians are not the only victims of the war. This is a city full of victims. Following 1975, families were split up, parents sent away to re-education camps for years at a time. The once-visible church is mostly underground. For many, there has been no more closure of the war in Vietnam than there has been in the United States. The difference in Vietnam, however, is that there is so little hope.

On our way to a polio center the next morning, the erosion of life in Vietnam was omnipresent. There is no new construction. Without massive help, this large and once beautiful French city could become one huge slum. At the polio center we learned that 10,000 cases of polio exist in Saigon alone. The hospital itself was poorly equipped. Most university athletic departments have better medical capa-

A young Amerasian woman looked deep into my eyes, hoping to see the face of her father.

bilities and equipment than I found in this and other Vietnamese hospitals.

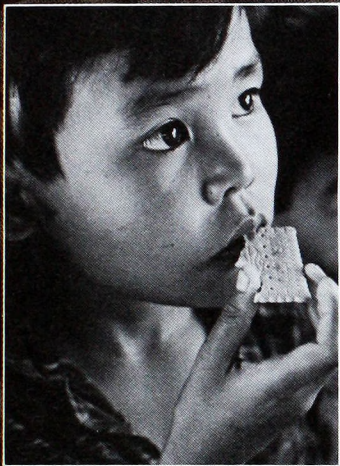
A trip to the countryside later that day confirmed that conditions outside Saigon are even worse. In rural areas there is an appalling lack of primary health understanding. Families are too busy working in the fields to take their children for immunizations. Mothers don't want to see their kids cry, and so they shield them from the needle. Sterilization and cold-chain storage are absent in most of the countryside, creating a real challenge to UNICEF officials hoping to implement immunization and child survival in Vietnam. Transportation is an ongoing problem. Electricity is almost nonexistent.

After two days in Saigon, we trav-



WORLD VISION PHOTO

1973: New Life Babies Home, Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City)



ERIC HOONETHAM/WORLD VISION

1975: Food assistance



JON KUBLY/WORLD VISION

1979: Operation Seasweep

eled to Hanoi to meet with government officials. The flight took us over Da Nang, and I could make out some parts of the city where I had been stationed for 13 months. It was from Da Nang that I had flown most of the 300 bombing missions over the north and south of the demilitarized zone. Every turn toward Hanoi reminded me of target headings, SAM batteries, and even particular bends in the river that were used to update our navigation. This time as we headed toward "Bullseye," there were no "Bandits" (North Vietnamese MIG fighters) to contend with. Instead, there was the empty feeling of loss looking down on the bridges outside Hanoi where one of my roommates had been shot down. All around were craters left by hundreds of bombs.

In Hanoi, we met with a variety of government officials to discuss the possibility of further World Vision involvement. We left with the invitation we had hoped for, a request to return and oversee development work, probably in the central area of Da Nang province. I committed World Vision to having a survey team on site within two months.

Throughout our trip, particularly in Hanoi, I was struck again with the perseverance of the Vietnamese people. Honed by 40 years of constant war, this perseverance seems to keep them from complaining about their nearly hopeless standard of living.

As we left Vietnam, my thoughts turned to the inevitable cynicism I knew I'd find when I began to talk

about helping the Vietnamese people.

There certainly are challenges:

—A slow bureaucracy and difficult infrastructure in Vietnam will require patience and tenacity as we start projects and check results.

—The American public, while now beginning to purge its memory through books, magazine articles, Vietnam war films and 20-years-after documentaries, still has not completed the healing process. Anger, bitterness, frustration and unresolved issues (like the MIAs) remain.

—Regional issues, such as Vietnam's occupation of neighboring Kampuchea, are complex. An agency

There is no better place for Christian reconciliation.

like World Vision needs to be wise and discerning about swirling political issues.

—Our Christian history in Vietnam must be preserved and our beliefs sensitively articulated so that we help, not hinder, the work of the Vietnamese church.

Yet if the problems are daunting, the opportunities facing us are just as large. There is no better place for Christian reconciliation to be carried out than in Vietnam. It is not without strong emotion that I consider reconciliation with Vietnam, or helping restore its people, given my past experiences in the country. Yet its people, like our American soldiers, were victims. Two million Vietnamese died in the decades of the fifties, sixties and seventies. Today's Vietnamese poor, like the poor in Ethiopia and Mozambique, had nothing to do with creating their poverty. They are among the poorest of the poor and need the touch of Christ's compassion.

A reconciliation process will have hurdles. There will be those in America—vets and Vietnamese now living here—who will be outraged and offended, feeling strongly that the timing is not right.

But who better than Christians to become agents of reconciliation? And what better time than when the government of Vietnam is willing to open the door? With wisdom, yet a sense of urgency, we must take the next step and allow God to do a new work of reconciliation in each of us. □

Resins for artificial limbs are badly needed. World Vision will supply 25 tons in the next year.



TERRY MADISON/WORLD VISION

BY TERRI OWENS



THE BURDEN THAT WAS A GIFT

Rebecca Cherono's father gave it to her. Now she gives it away.



TERRI OWENS

Out of Africa have come remarkable stories of European women who led bold, unconventional lives in Kenya's tightly knit community of colonizers. But Isak Dinesen's contemporaries, the women whose ancestors have always lived beneath the African sun, had little such freedom to deviate from thousands of years of cultural expectations.

By birth, Rebecca Cherono should have been tradition-bound into a life of virtual servitude, first to her father and brothers and later to her husband. Instead, hers is the story of a barefoot young village girl whose father was a friend to her.

Rebecca was raised in a house made of mat in Kapsowar, an obscure community in the Great Rift Valley some 300 miles northeast of booming Nairobi, capital of Kenya. Her earliest memories are of rolling hills fringed with forests, laced with rivers and blanketed with deep green kikuyu grass.

Most little girls in Kapsowar spent their days gathering firewood and grinding maize. Not Rebecca. Her father's

passion to see his daughter as well as his four sons educated meant that her most important task was completing the four grades offered at a mission station school nine miles away.

Her father had a few years of schooling, which in his time made him an educated man. Her parents were among the first Christians in their area.

"My father had what I would call a divine wisdom," says Rebecca. "For him, there was no boy or girl. He wanted each of his children to be all we could be, to have equal opportunity before God."

Rebecca's father made sure that she went to school and that her brothers shared in whatever work was to be done around the home. There were times her

mother was upset because Rebecca wasn't doing as the other village girls did; but her father protected her from being exploited as the family's only girl at the time.

Many times the freedom to grow seemed like a heavy burden instead of a gift, but Rebecca was determined to please her father. When at the age of 12 she became the youngest fifth grader at boarding school, her teenage classmates hounded her mercilessly. "Your mother does not love you," they taunted. "If she

did, she would never send you away from her while you are so young." It was for her father that Rebecca persevered despite their cruelty.

And he gave her far more than schooling. Every morning and evening he would gather the family to study the Bible and pray together. The day Rebecca first went away to boarding school, he sat her down and said, "My daughter, there is something I'd like you always to remember. Wherever you go, whatever you do, ask yourself this question: *This thing that I am about to do, will it honor God? How will God think about it?* If it does honor him, do it; if it doesn't honor him, don't do it."

His advice is still with her. She has dedicated her life to working for God because of that message she had when she was 12 years old.

After completing grades five through eight at the boarding school, Rebecca took a two-year teacher training course, taught for two years and also took a one-year home economics course. Even when she left Kenya to study home economics in England, Rebecca held few aspirations other than to eventually marry and have children.

But at the age of 21 Rebecca had the good fortune to marry a man who was also growing beyond the village stereotype. The people in Bill Cherono's community had taken up a collection to enable him to go to school. When Rebecca and Bill met, he already had university degrees in political science and economics from India.

From their earliest days together, Rebecca's husband steadfastly encouraged her in the development of her abilities. Their five children also have been very supportive of her career. "I don't think I would have been able to do what I have done for God if it wasn't for their support," Rebecca says.

When the young couple returned to Kenya, Rebecca was hired by the Ministry of Health.

One day a field worker asked Rebecca to accompany her on a visit to

Rebecca had the good fortune to marry a man who also was growing beyond the village stereotype.

a village and told her on the way, "I want you to see this family, four little abandoned children. When their mother became mentally ill and had to go to the hospital, the father decided to walk away from all the problems. The oldest child, a 12-year-old girl, is supporting two brothers, 6 and 4, and a 3-month-old baby."

As the two women approached the home the younger boy came out to meet them. His sister was away working all day to earn two shillings, money she would spend buying flour to make porridge for them all. When Rebecca and her companion went inside and saw the baby's poor condition, they knew they had to do something quickly; they also knew they couldn't remove any of the children from the home without a court order.

They rushed back to town, but it was Friday afternoon and the local court closed before they could make the necessary arrangements. By the time they were able to return for the children Monday morning, the baby had died.

"I wasn't able to save that baby," says Rebecca, "but I say to my God, if there's anything I can do in this life, it is to try and save other babies so that they will not die like that one."

Like many a fresh graduate, Rebecca tackled her work with equal parts of zeal and naiveté.

"I came with theory. I thought I was going to fix things but soon discovered that I had much to learn from the needy people I was there to help."

Case in point: One day she was busily giving a nutrition lesson and cooking demonstration to mothers invited in from the surrounding community. At the end, a woman who had quietly listened to her presentation spoke up.

"Lady," she said, "I've heard all the things you've said and now I want to tell you something.

"I don't have a husband. I don't have a job. I don't have any land. All I have is my basket and six children to feed.

"I wake up very early each morning to go to the marketplace and buy vege-



STEVE REYNOLDS/WORLD VISION

Most little girls in Kapsowar spent their days gathering firewood and grinding maize. Not Rebecca.

tables. I put them in this basket and walk all over town to sell them. At the end of the day I put aside the money I need to buy vegetables tomorrow. If I have money left over, my children and I eat. If I don't have money left over, we don't eat.

"You say my children need eggs and meat? I have no money for eggs and meat. It's a fine thing for you to sit and talk to us, but what do you know? I'm telling you, you do not know what my world is like."

Her words deeply moved Rebecca; it was then that she realized that it didn't matter how good her schooling was or how well she prepared her talks. "Until I sat down with people or perhaps took a little walk with them so we could talk, until I knew what their problems were, I would not be able to help them."

It was a lesson she took to heart. Since that day Rebecca has put much of her energy into listening, into helping people analyze their own situations and

lead to new discoveries."

Rebecca has found that by spending three or four hours with community leaders, she can help open their eyes to overlooked resources right at their fingertips. Money is not always essential for accomplishing project goals, but people who have been poor all their lives have a hard time seeing potential in their environments.

For example, World Vision has been working with one village for about two years now, but very little money has been needed. "Its people came with a

*At the end,
Rebecca invited the
town drunk to
explain the picture
he had drawn.*

Eventually Rebecca was invited to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mali, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia to train other World Vision staff in her approach. During the Zimbabwe workshop, Rebecca teamed up with Max Chigwida, the office director, for the homework assignment.

They went to a project site together; but when they called a community meeting, the town drunk was the loudest one there.

His neighbors tried without success to hush him up and push him aside. Rebecca took a different approach.

To help open up spirited discussion, she often has participants act out dramas, sing songs and draw pictures of the way their community is and the way they would like it to be. These techniques are especially freeing to people with little formal education. When Max and Rebecca distributed marking pens and paper and had the villagers gather into groups to make their drawings, no group wanted anything to do with the

drunk. Quickly Rebecca found an extra pen and paper and became his partner, staying at his side throughout the exercise.

When the villagers gathered again, one by one each of the groups held up their pictures and explained their views of the community. At the end, Rebecca invited the town drunk to explain what he had drawn.

As he spoke, a change came over the crowd. The man had some remarkable insights into the village. His neighbors began to see him as a source of wisdom.

If you know why Rebecca loves that story, you know what makes her tick.

Seeing potential where others overlook it.

Expecting growth and resourcefulness from the one others hush and push aside. It's a powerful gift, one that has shaped the way many of Rebecca Cheron's peers look at their work.

Where did she get it?

I can't say for sure, but it reminds me of a story about a father who had more in mind for his daughter than grinding maize and gathering wood. □

Terri Owens is a free-lance writer living in Sierra Madre, California.



Rebecca with Masai mother and child: "It is wise to listen and say very little."

discover what options they have.

The way she tells those two stories, it's obvious that they left an indelible impression on the way she does her job. And in the ten years since she joined World Vision Kenya, Rebecca's style and insight have left their own imprint on World Vision's work with Africa's poor.

"When working with needy communities, it is wise to listen and say very little," she advises. "If you say something, make it a question that will

need for clean water," Rebecca explains. "We persuaded everyone to sit down with us in a community meeting and talk about how that might be accomplished."

When they did, they discovered someone in the village had a pump and another person knew where they could get some free pipe. Then they realized they could build the tank themselves. Now they have the clean water they wanted, and without a single penny of outside help.



BY ROBERTA HESTENES

*Is the
Gospel*
**GOOD
NEWS
FOR WOMEN?**

She was a small, huddled figure at the side of the room. I didn't notice her at first. I was visiting a small Quichua Indian village perched high in the Andean mountains of Ecuador to learn more about the needs in this poor community.

The men of the village were doing all the talking, while the women maintained their distance from the visiting strangers. As I listened, I became aware of a woman sitting silently on the dirty floor against the wall, holding her baby who was tightly wrapped in a colorful blanket. Around her were four other young children, the boys dressed in the traditional woven red ponchos and the girls with brightly embroidered blouses and black felt skirts reaching to their bare dirty feet.

I found myself wondering about this Quichua woman. What would the gospel of Jesus Christ mean in her life? Would she hear it as good news? Or would the gospel only give her hope of heaven and leave her daily existence untouched?

I decided to interrupt the reports and asked if I could talk with the woman by the wall. The men's first response was, "What woman?" —as if there were no woman in the room.

I answered, "That one, right there."

"Oh, that one. Why would you want to talk to her? Well, if you must, all right."

They became very nervous as I interviewed her. Although schools were being built, she was illiterate, and no programs were designed for her. I discovered that the women in that community not only had the care of the home and children, but also worked the fields, often with babies on their backs, and had the care of any sheep, cows and pigs.

I saw no old women in that village. When I asked about it, I learned that very few survived into their 40s because their life was so hard and resources so few.

The Chinese quote a saying that "women hold up half the sky." Surely that was true in this village. Yet women had little share in decision making, few opportunities to learn and very limited possibilities for the future. While men went to school and to market, the women's world was limited to thatched huts and small fields.

I began to ask some difficult questions, not only about her life and culture, but about my own life and the lives of women in North American culture as well. Although the material circumstances of our lives are very different, both she and I have learned what is appropriate for women from



our own cultures. Like her, I have often felt invisible and unimportant, wondering why anyone would bother with me or take me seriously. From the moment of birth, whether carried on our mother's back or carefully laid in a silk-lined bassinet, the fact that we are female has enormous implications.

Expectations and assumptions from those around us powerfully shape our activities and attitudes. You know you are dealing with assumptions when people say, "This is the way we always do things." When asked why, there comes a look of astonishment or bewilderment, even anger if they suspect a veiled criticism.

"Because this is the way it should be." "Because we have always done it this way." "Because it works best this way." "Because God made it this way."

Part of the excitement of the Christian journey for me is the way I find my assumptions challenged as I seek to follow Christ. I grew up in a non-Christian family that assumed men would work outside the home, making and controlling the money, while women would stay at home, cajoling and spending the money grudgingly given to care for the family. I had early dreams of college and career that were tolerated in a bemused way but not really supported.

When I became a Christian during

my college years, I received mixed messages in my new Christian subculture. I was encouraged to share my faith actively while always granting to men the formal positions within our campus fellowship and church. I learned that men should be the visible, up-front leaders, while women quietly work behind the scenes, making it all possible.

I found myself eager to serve Christ, but gradually realized and accepted the assumptions of my Christian culture: that a woman can serve best by marrying a committed Christian man and supporting his ministry through homemaking and raising a family. So I married and tried to fulfill that understanding of my call.

It didn't work out that way. My husband went into science, and I went into full-time service in the church. God kept surprising me with new challenges and opportunities to get involved directly in ministry.

It was an astonishing thing to discover as the years went by that my call to follow Christ went beyond traditional expectations. It was a clear call, straight to me, to serve Christ and the church in visible and recognized ways as a teacher, pastor and leader. This did not diminish my love and commitment to my husband and children, but instead, my ministry opportunities helped to enrich our life together. Often, I was encouraged by friends and colleagues

to move from the shore into the mainstream of Christian service.

It can be frightening to move from invisibility to visibility. People don't scrutinize and criticize you when you stay in the shadows. I have needed courage and strength to respond to God's call when a few people around thought it wrong for me as a woman to answer yes. I have found that taking the risks is possible only because of the support of the Christian community and the

comfort and power given by the Holy Spirit.

As other women and I have tried new roles, we have experienced both encouragement and criticism. But the criticism fades sooner than you might think, and the support for women continues to grow. As people continue to experience women leading in worship

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OSSIE EMERY/WORLD VISION

and preaching or in other nontraditional roles, many fears and questions fade into relative insignificance.

Much of the church is a more welcoming place for women in ministry, whether lay or ordained, than it was even 10 years ago. The first time I taught an adult class at a Seattle Presbyterian church was probably a bigger challenge than anything I have done since. The love and encouragement of those class members launched me into all that has happened since.

The gospel is good news for Ecuadorean peasant women, North American women and everyone else. Christ calls, transforms and uses us, women and men, astonishing as that seems. Even though much remains to be done to enlarge the church's view of and response to women, I live in hope. The doors are swinging open. □

Dr. Roberta Hestenes, president of Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, serves on the board of World Vision U.S. and chairs the board of World Vision International.





BY SHERYL WATKINS

MOTHERHOOD—



THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS PROFESSION?



There was a time last year when friends wondered a little about my husband and me. On hot smoggy days, when all the news around us was grim, we walked around with ridiculous smiles on our faces. But we knew something they didn't know—a baby was growing inside me.

Naturally we had some concerns. How would the baby affect my work? Where would we put an infant in our already-overcrowded two-bedroom home? Would we be so fortunate as to have a third perfectly healthy child? What would our boys think of the newcomer?

But mainly we were excited. We half-dared to hope we would at last have our little girl. Pregnancy, for us,

Woike Ayano, a 25-year-old expectant mother, eagerly awaited her baby's birth. The day finally came, but with it untold agony: four days of labor, and finally, a stillbirth. The severe labor resulted in a ruptured bladder, known as a fistula.

Woike heard of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and made the 300-mile journey to seek treatment. She arrived exhausted, clothes soaked with urine, desperate for a cure.

Patients at the hospital have traveled from remote parts of Ethiopia, where distance and rugged terrain prevented them from receiving

relief for difficult childbirth.

"These women have lost their babies, husbands, homes, self-respect and hope," explains Dr. Reginald Hamlin, who with his wife, Dr. Catherine Hamlin, oversees the hospital's operation. "Our reward is seeing their bodies, minds and hopes revived."

According to Dr. Catherine Hamlin, the hospital treats 800 of the estimated 1000 women afflicted by fistulas each year in Ethiopia. Twelve to 14 patients each week undergo an operation to close the fistula with stitches and muscle graft.

Women who complete treatment are advised to return to the hospital or to maternity homes to deliver their next babies. The hospital has counted about 2000 babies successfully born to mothers with repaired fistulas.

Female circumcision

While a small, narrow pelvis and the fetal position are major factors in fistula occurrence, female circumcision is also thought to be one of the causes of labor problems leading to fistulas.

The practice of female circumcision is prevalent in most, if not all, African countries today. A recent survey by the Ethiopian Ministry of Public Health revealed that 85 percent of the women surveyed had undergone some form of circumcision.

The most severe form, called infibulation, involves excision of the clitoris and removal of the labia majora. The raw sides of the vulva are stitched or pinned together, and the thighs are tied together during healing, leaving a pea-sized opening.

In some areas, circumcision is part of the ceremony marking the

FISTULAS AND FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

was nine months of joy and anticipation. And that's as it should be.

At about the same time, my sister became pregnant. I couldn't help comparing our pregnancies. I tried to imagine what it would be like to trade places.

Everything about her life was so different from mine. We didn't grow up in the same house. I grew up eating well, building all the strength and stamina I would eventually need for sustaining and delivering children. My sister grew up eating table scraps, whatever the men in the house left for her. She developed a flat pelvis from lack of vitamin D and is anemic almost all the time.

Being malnourished isn't all that stacks the odds against her. She has had ten children—although only six of them survive. And her youngest is only a year and a half old. She doesn't know it, but she's a classic example of maternal depletion syndrome: too many children, too close together. It can be fatal for mother and child.

Mothers and newborns are most at risk, I'm told, when the mothers are younger than 18 or over 35, when they have had four previous births and

I grew up eating well. My sister grew up eating table scraps.

when births are less than two years apart. Since I was due to deliver just after my 32nd birthday, and I'd had only two previous (and healthy) deliveries, my chances were pretty good. True, this birth would be three months short of the recommended two years' spacing; but after all, I thought, this is the United States, where maternal deaths occur among healthy, middle-class women mainly in fiction.

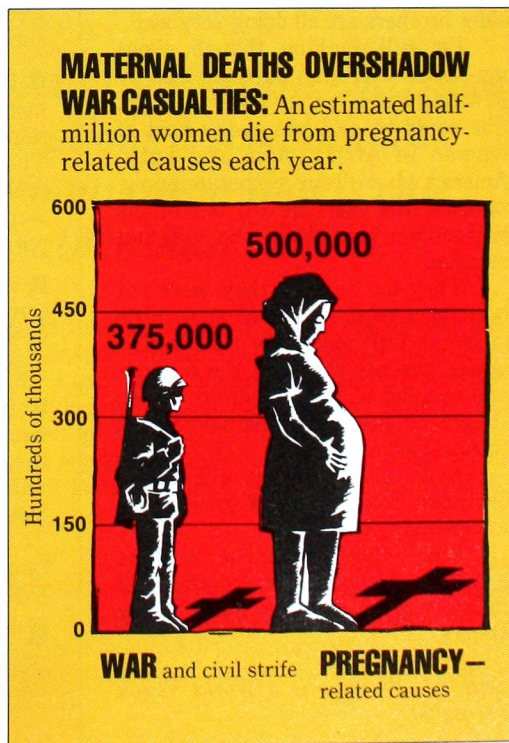
Besides, my prenatal checkups would surely detect any potential problems. That's another thing my sister doesn't have. Where she lives, there's a local midwife to take care of whatever comes up, from conception through delivery. The woman has a lot of valuable experience taking care of mothers and infants, and she has everyone's implicit trust, but even she admits there is little she can do for complicated cases without the right equipment and training. And you can imagine, with a whole town full of case histories like my sister's, the midwife sees plenty of complicated cases. She loses many of them.

As I said, I saw my doctor regularly: every three weeks at first, then even more often. We charted my vitals and measured the baby's heartbeat and growth. For the first seven months,

everything was fine.

But six weeks before my due date the doctor started looking worried. My weight and blood pressure, as well as the baby's heartbeat, shot up dramatically. I went to the hospital for tests. My doctor consulted specialists. Finally, fearing I might develop toxemia, he confined me to bed.

Again, I couldn't help but think of my sister. No doctors hovered over her progress. Anyway, it wouldn't have



initiation of both boys and girls into adulthood. In other cases the rite occurs relatively late, just before a girl's wedding.

The type practiced in one Ethi-



CHARLES MAINGI/WORLD VISION PHOTO

Binke Abena and Berhan Kassu, ready to leave the Fistula Hospital, bowed and kissed Dr. Catherine Hamlin's hand. Here, Margaret Ann Seiple adds her best wishes.

opian region scarcely amounts to circumcision: there is no incision, only blood-letting with a needle. This has earned the girls from that region the reputation of being loose and of experiencing sexual pleasure, two frowned-upon characteristics which circumcision is meant to prevent.

Socially and economically entrenched

Because of the stigma attached to the uncircumcised, few mothers seem willing to challenge the practice. Virginity was, and perhaps in rural and conservative areas still is, a girl's passport to wealth and respectability through marriage. Parents use circumcision to ensure their daughters' chastity and guarantee fidelity to the husband. It has been proven, however, that circumcision does not deter those who wish

to ignore behavioral norms.

Of the women surveyed in the capital city of Addis Ababa, supposedly the cosmopolitan group with most exposure to new ideas, two out of three affirmed that the practice should continue. Over 70 percent of the literate, albeit not well-educated, women stated that they would have their daughters circumcised.

This acceptance is in spite of the fact that most are aware of the severe complications caused by the practice: excessive bleeding, sometimes fatal; clitoral cysts; urinary infections; and deep scar tissue which tears easily during childbirth, causing permanent injury. The scar tissue's rigidity can also lead to fetal distress and even death.

Charles Maingi, World Vision Africa, and Amlesu Yoseph, World Vision Ethiopia.

mattered, because my sister couldn't skip work, not even for a few days. She doesn't have disability insurance like I do. Every day she misses work, her family misses meals. A week off could easily mean eviction.

During those final six weeks of my pregnancy, I worried about my baby. I was tired. I felt frustrated because I couldn't work or take care of my family. But my story had a happy ending: Caroline Janelle Watkins, 8 pounds, 7½ ounces. Mother, father, baby and awed older brothers are all doing very well.

I'm still thinking, though, about my sister. You may have guessed by now that she is not my sister by birth. She could be any one of the host of women in Africa, Asia and Latin America who will survive perilous pregnancies this year. Or any one of the half-million this year who will not survive.

They die because they were not born in a country where most little girls eat well and grow up healthy; where parents can plan the number and spacing of their children; where the great majority of people have access to good medical care.

None of those things will change overnight. Some of them, in some places, are changing somewhat.

When Caroline Janelle Watkins grows up, I hope that mothering will not cost so much for so many of her sisters. □

Sheryl J. Watkins is a World Vision journalist.

A 'DELICATE CONDITION'

■ Worldwide, one in four deaths among women ages 15-49 is related to pregnancy. And for every one who dies, at least a dozen more suffer crippling illness.

■ More women die in India of pregnancy-related causes in one week than in all of Europe during an entire year.

■ Between a quarter and half of maternal deaths are due to complications from abortion, legal or illegal. The rest happen at home or, rarely, in clinics or hospitals where mothers were taken too late to receive help for a difficult birth.

■ Leading medical causes of maternal death are related to unhygienic delivery conditions, excessive bleeding and high blood pressure.

■ An expectant mother in the U.S. has one chance in 10,000 of dying because of pregnancy. Six hundred miles off our coast, on the island of Haiti, the maternal mortality rate is 32 times higher while the average family income is one-fiftieth that of U.S. families.

■ Sixty to 80 percent of mothers in the developing world turn to traditional midwives for help with bear-

ing and caring for their children. Although often looked down upon by outsiders as "ignorant, superstitious practitioners of unscientific and unhygienic methods," these birth attendants generally welcome training in safer techniques.

■ It's not just a problem "over there." Thousands of poor women in the U.S. do not receive adequate prenatal care or nutrition. Child mortality rates have risen in some American cities.

■ In Bangladesh, where there is just one physician for every 11,000 people, the maternal mortality rate is 100 times higher than in developed countries. More than one in ten infants there die before their first birthday.



THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB...

BY TED W. ENGSTROM AND EDWARD R. DAYTON

With all the talk about "the Christian woman" and the attention that has been given to recognizing that men *and women* have been created in the image of God, surprisingly little has been said about what it means to be a Christian woman working in an executive position.

Deborah led the people of Israel. Priscilla and Lydia were Christian businesswomen. Euodia and Syntyche were noted by Paul because "they have worked hard with me to spread the gospel."

Women missionaries have been outstanding in their zeal and leadership. They have preached, planted churches, administered programs and done practically everything that their male counterparts have done.

Cultural or biblical?

It seems clear that although the Bible has always pointed to women as having a significant role in world affairs, we still find within Christian organizations a good deal of male chauvinism that is cultural rather than biblical.

Men traditionally have been cast in the mold of the protector, leader, hunter and sportsman. We have been trained from boyhood to be competitive, to *win* at sports, to fight for each rung on the ladder of success.

In contrast, our culture teaches women not to fight for what they want, to be passive rather than aggressive. Somehow, passive qualities have been associated with femininity. This passive role is reinforced by the media. Movies, television and reading materials have only recently begun to portray women moving competently toward well-set goals.

Women are struggling to overcome these images that have so long been a part of our cultural heritage. It's an uphill battle. Women who have been educated side by side with men for 12 to 18 years face a society that says a woman's natural future is to stay at home and raise a family.

The Christian organization and women

It is not difficult to trace why many Christian organizations are heavily weighted with women in low-paying clerical positions. First, routine repetitive work requires a minimum investment on the part of the organization. "Unskilled" housewives are natural candidates.

Second, many women take a job to help the family over a financial hardship while the husband is in school or just beginning his career. Too often they settle for jobs considerably below their level of education and ability.

Third, we are children of our culture.

Should we change?

We think change is in order, both for the good of the organization and in recognition of the contribution that women can make. Jesus acted toward women in ways that

often defied the culture of his day. It seems strange that his church should have to learn the lesson of woman's equality from the culture!

What you can do

Assuming that you want to take a hard look at the role of women in your organization, where can you start?

—Look at your current staff. Are there women who have the latent gifts and education that would move them toward more responsibility if they were men? What career paths might you imagine for them?

—What steps would you have to take to give them more responsibility and commensurate authority? What additional training would be necessary?

—Take a look at your written procedures, memos and policies. Are they heavy on sexist language?

—Write to the best Christian schools you know of. Ask them to recommend to you women who appear to have special abilities.

Problems

It is one thing to believe that women can and should be used more effectively in the leadership of Christian organizations; it is quite another to put them to work.

There is still a great deal of conscious, and even more subconscious, feeling on the part of most of us men about women leading.

We still find within Christian organizations a good deal of male chauvinism that is cultural rather than biblical.

Women and men *are* different! It is normal for both men and women to respond differently to someone of the opposite sex. This needs to be faced, honored and carefully handled.

Women's decisions about marriage and children can have a profound impact on their careers. On the other hand, this is often a smokescreen we put up. Take a look at the average time a male member of your staff stays with the organization.

Where now?

Women need the encouragement and acceptance of men and other women to become all that God would have them to be. Many of them would surprise themselves, as well as their colleagues, at how well they might carry out an executive position. □

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

PASS THE PENS, NOT THE PLATE

Along with children, women constitute the majority of the world's poorest people and are often key food producers and entrepreneurs—but are often bypassed by U.S. foreign aid.

You can do something about it, the same thing every self-respecting Christian group has been doing since our earliest days: take an offering.

No, not that kind of offering. It's an Offering of Letters, Bread for the World's yearly campaign to flood our elected representatives with support for important aid legislation. This year's offering is a push to channel more U.S. foreign aid directly to women.

For \$5.50, plus \$2 postage and

handling, you can get everything your church or group needs for an Offering of Letters: background info, organizing tips, publicity materials and more. Order from Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20018.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

PATIENT PARTNERS

When Kathie Robertson was diagnosed with cancer, she and her husband Al and their baby daughter were living in Little Rock with no family for a thousand miles. They were scared to death.

What would they have done without the help of their church family? Al doesn't know. He does know that many are without such support.

Partners of Patients, founded by Al, provides cancer patients and their families in the Little Rock area with trained Christian volunteers and a weekly support group called Let's Talk.

To find out more, contact Partners of Patients, 1300 West Park Dr., Suite 5B, Little Rock, AR 72204; (501) 666-9648.

Woody Webb surveys the spoils of the door-to-door campaign.



CAN CANVASS

Thirty students from Olivet Nazarene University (Kankakee, Ill.) recently went door to door begging for food.

No, it wasn't a case of undernourished undergrads. The students were collecting canned goods to restock the Kankakee Community Food Pantry.

The old college try netted \$1100 worth of food. About 100 families per week rely on the pantry to help put food on the table.

ON THE HOME FRONT

Habitat for Humanity is gearing up for a summer building blitz called Habitat House-Raising Week Worldwide, June 26 - July 2.

Former president Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter will lend a hand to volunteers building 20 homes in Atlanta; other Habitat volunteers will begin a 1200-mile walk from Maine to Georgia—house-raising, fund-raising and consciousness-raising as they go.

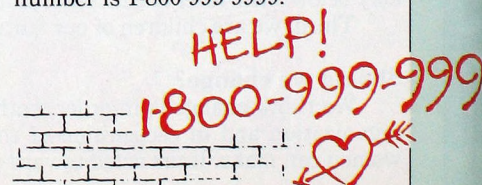
The Georgia-based Christian organization provides decent, interest-free housing to needy families using volunteer labor and donated materials and money.

Contact Habitat for Humanity at Habitat and Church Streets, Americus, GA 31709; (912) 924-6935.

HOT NEW NUMBER

From the next-best-thing-to-being-there department: Covenant House, long a haven for runaway teens adrift in New York, is now as close as the nearest phone anywhere in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Some 3000 callers a day tap into Covenant House's new toll-free hotline for help with drug abuse, suicide threats and other crises. The number is 1-800-999-9999.



Love Loaf

- Fortified: By the Word
- Enriched: From the Heart
- Necessary: To Save Lives

Thousands of churches across our nation have already received the blessings and growth that come from giving freely from the heart.

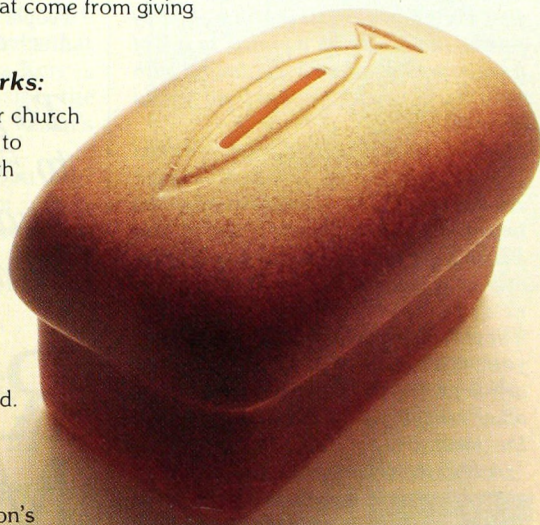
Here's how it works:

- Each family in your church receives a Love Loaf to take home and fill with loose change.
- Place it on the dinner table—the kids love it!
- A month later, everyone gathers to break the loaves and offer them to the Lord.

The funds will be used to alleviate physical and spiritual hunger in World Vision's ministries around the world. After the program, the families can stay involved by sponsoring a child through World Vision's sponsorship program.

We will provide the loaves, posters, and all materials at no cost to you—everything to help build enthusiasm for your Love Loaf program.

To order your Love Loaves, just fill out the coupon and send to World Vision today!



You can help save the life of a child for one month.

\$15/



\$30/



\$45/



COMMON GROUND

When was the last time you talked to your neighbors? No hedging now—do you even know who lives on your block?

Establishing common ground with your neighbors now, say the people at Search Ministries, opens natural doors for sharing Christ when the time is right. You don't have to be the welcome wagon type. Just be, well, neighborly.

Helps for friendship evangelism appear monthly in *Common Ground*, a monthly bulletin insert from Search Ministries, P.O. Box 521, Lutherville, MD 21093; (301) 252-1246.

GOD'S WILL FOR WHOM?

It is easy enough to tell the poor to accept their poverty as God's will. . . . But if you want them to believe you—try to share some of their poverty and see if you can accept it as God's will yourself!" (Thomas Merton, from *The True Solitude*; Kansas City: Hallmark Cards, 1969.)

Yes, we want to participate in the Love Loaf program.

Name _____

Position _____

Church/group _____

Street address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Office phone (_____) _____

Home phone (_____) _____

Please send us _____ loaves (one per household)

We plan to distribute the loaves on (date) _____ (Please allow four weeks Z62K04 for delivery of materials)

Please send us STEPS OF FAITH with Bob Wieland.

Date: Choice 1 _____ Choice 2 _____

Check one: 16mm film VHS videotape

I have a question. Please call me at: Home Work

We need more information before we can make a decision.


WORLD VISION Special Programs
919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016



World Vision had more guts than brains to tackle the Wau project!"

That's what senior USAID official Dr. Anita Mackie told World Vision Africa Relief Director Russ Kerr after an extremely risky effort to transport grain to some 50,000 hungry, war-ravaged persons in southern Sudan came to an end.

"I guess our guts were saying, 'We're committed to the people who are hurting.'" said Kerr. "But our brains were saying we were asking for trouble by getting involved with a project so full of hurdles and hassles. Anita, along with most of us, never thought we would succeed."

But they did succeed. Despite mined roads, armed bandits, passage through rebel-held territory, washed-out bridges and miles of international red tape, World Vision delivered 2412 metric tons of grain over a 20-month period to desperately needy people in the isolated city of Wau. The bitter irony is that in February of this year, after most of the grain had been delivered, World Vision, along with three other relief agencies, was asked to leave the country.

Shortly before press time, WORLD VISION magazine Associate Editor Randy Miller talked with Russ Kerr about the daring expedition to Wau, the situation among the displacees there, and the reasons behind World Vision's expulsion from the country.

WV: Is it true that World Vision was the only organization that was able to get grain to the people in Wau from mid-1986 to early in 1988?

Kerr: Yes, it's true. Our first major effort started in May 1986, when we brought a food convoy out of Wad Medani, in the Central Region. (About 200 miles south of Khartoum.) We went due west for quite a ways, then south to Raga, and then east across open desert to Wau. All this was done to avoid rebel activity and bandits—the rebels being the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army), who control much of southern Sudan and who, for

years, have been fighting the Arab-controlled government based in the north.

We had to keep away from the main roads and railroads. We also repaired the Kosti Bridge two or three times. We managed to deliver 1403 tons in this way. Then along came the rainy season and completely washed out the bridge. Also, we were told that the route would no longer be safe, since we had attracted some attention, and people could be lying in wait.

We decided to try a southern route in 1987. After surveying the area, we discovered little more than a grass track where we hoped to move our truck convoys—only passable in the dry season. But with some bridge repair and work on the road itself, we managed.

We took a chance and we succeeded. We delivered 1009 tons before we had to shut the program down. And apart from about 50 to 100 tons of food commercially transported to Wau, ours was the only supply of food for the city.

WV: Where did the grain that was brought up from the south originate?

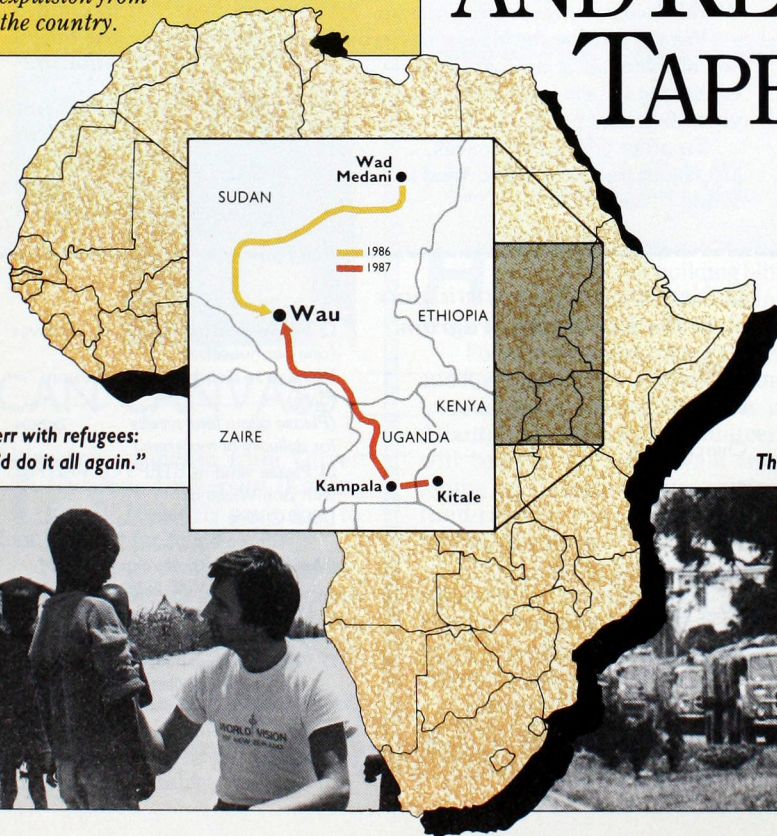
Kerr: The convoys began their journey in Kitale, Kenya, then traveled into Uganda. Uganda is a country that's had a lot of disruption, from Idi Amin to Milton Obote. Even now, with Yoweri Museveni in power, the government is not yet in control of the entire country. There are rebels fighting in country that we had to pass through to get from Kenya to Sudan. Often, trucks were detained. One truck was held up by bandits. All the food was taken. They left a message on the steering wheel of the truck, saying, "Thanks for the food." They left the driver at a village down the road. These are the kinds of things we had to put up with.

WV: What was it like once you got into Sudan?

Kerr: When you get into southern Sudan, you run into the tension that exists between the portions of the region that are under the control of the government and those held by the SPLA. Not to mention the armed bandits that

To get grain to 50,000 needy Sudanese, World Vision was up against . . .

REBELS, MINES AND RED TAPE



Kerr with refugees: "I'd do it all again."

The Wau convoy rolls out of Kampala, Uganda.

BRUCE BRANDER/WORLD VISION

CHARLES MAINGI/WORLD VISION

room freely around the countryside.

The SPLA controls about 70 miles of the road from the Uganda/Sudan border on up through the towns of Yambio, Tambura and up to Wau. We had to pass through this rebel-held territory under military escort.

Yet, with all these difficulties, given the same people and the same level of commitment from our donors, I would do it all again. Because 50,000 people were starving to death. They were coming in from the countryside because of the fighting, only to find very little law and order in Wau itself.

WV: Now, with World Vision out of the country, and the last convoy having arrived in January, what's ahead for these people in Wau?

Kerr: Starvation and death. Either death due to starvation, or from fighting in rural areas if they choose to flee Wau in search of food and safety. I have already heard of deaths there due to the fact that World Vision had to discontinue the supply of food.

WV: Why was World Vision asked to leave the country?

Kerr: I personally believe the main reason we were asked to leave was because we were so openly Christian, caring and supportive of the Sudanese people. We did not hide our lamp under a bushel; we went into the country as a Christian organization wanting to serve the people regardless of their politics, religion or race.

Sudan is going through a great deal of change right now. Buying power at the local level is severely limited. Inflation is soaring. Last September the coalition party in the Sudan government collapsed, resulting in a great deal of confusion. Consequently, it became easy for any people who may have been jealous of our program to disrupt it—and in this case, to destroy it.

Still, I met many sympathetic Sudanese, one of whom said that when he found out that World Vision had been expelled, it was like telling a child that his father had died. They were

After 1000 treacherous miles, the first grain reaches Wau.



STEVE RETNOLDS/WORLD VISION

very sorry to see us leave the country.

The irony in all of this, for me, is that just a few days after we were expelled from the country, Sudan issued an international appeal for assistance. At this moment there are some 250,000 Sudanese refugees in four camps in southwest Ethiopia, with some 7000 new refugees arriving every month, due to increased fighting in Sudan. And Michael Priestly, the senior U.N. representative in Ethiopia, is saying they are in a "holocaust" condition, severely emaciated, the worst he's seen in more than 30 years of relief work worldwide. There's no question that the war has heated up. [Russ Kerr is now in East Africa addressing the refugee situation and World Vision's response to it. —Ed.]

WV: Who will get food into Wau now?

Kerr: Nobody that I know of will be able to provide food to Wau unless security improves. We were the only agency that was bringing food into that

We had to pass through rebel-held territory under military escort.

area, and I do not know of any agency that would dare try what we did.

WV: If Sudan opened its doors to us again, would you be willing to risk going back to Wau—knowing of the tensions there, but also knowing of the need?

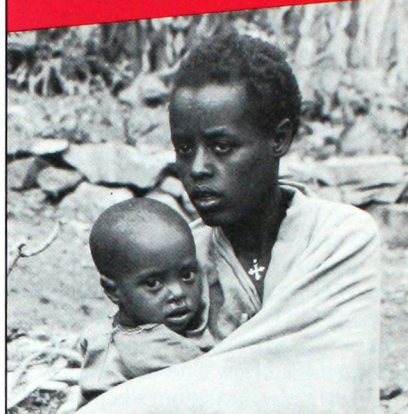
Kerr: I would take a very close look at going back to Wau. I feel we have a strong, deliberate commitment to the Sudanese people.

Sudan is a very needy country. There is tremendous opportunity for the whole spectrum of our ministry, but it's not an easy country to work in.

Regarding the people in Wau: *there* is a group of people who certainly need assistance. Look at the risks we took and the lengths we went to minister to them. It was expensive, but it was worth it. We saved lives. And what's the value on a human life? I'd do it again, sure. It's frustrating, but I'd do it again.

I regret that we have been asked to leave. I hope it is a temporary condition. In the meantime, I will express very openly our commitment to the Sudanese people. And I look forward to the time—somehow, someday—when we can return. □

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Muslim women are passive, submissive, shadowy figures. Right?

AVEIL OF MYTHS

Muhammad and Faruq want me to sell my gold earrings, mother.”

“Why?” asked Umm Ahmad, an Egyptian peasant.

“So they can buy a cow,” her daughter Habiba answered. “As a shared investment between them.”

“Hmph!”

“Well, what do you think?” Habiba insisted. “After all, they’re my husband and my brother.”

“I wouldn’t advise it, my girl,” answered Umm Ahmad. “You’d be a fool to let that capital slip through your fingers.”

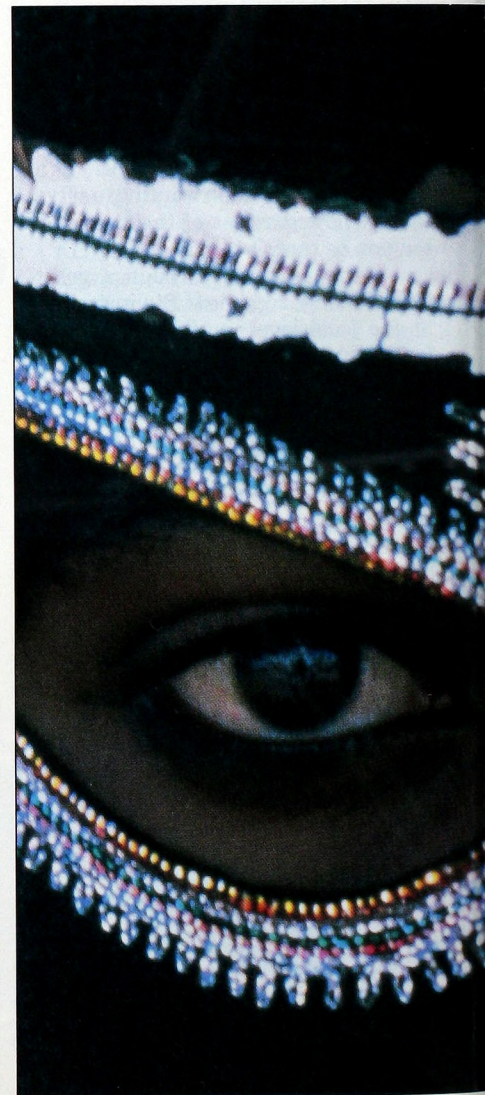
A few months later, Umm Ahmad took Habiba aside. “I have a suggestion. Why don’t you sell your gold earrings and buy a small calf, in partnership with Mohammad and Faruq?”

“Well. . .”

“Just make sure—” Umm Ahmad warned, “just make sure you get a signed receipt from Faruq. And buy yourself a small pair of earrings with whatever you have left.”

A widow, Umm Ahmad managed the house and field work, rotating it among her daughters and daughters-in-law. All her grown sons gave her their income. She bought their food and clothes and the family seed and fertilizer. For a time she even ran a small store.

Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak
by Lucie Wood Saunders; University of Texas Press, 1977.



That Muslim women are passive, that they rarely think for themselves or exert leadership, is a myth, one which conceals their faces from us as surely as any veil.

Almost one out of ten people on earth today is a Muslim woman. And they are as individual as they are numerous. Their numbers stretch from the 50 million Muslims in the Soviet Union to those in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world.

Some hold doctorates; many are illiterate. Arab townswomen may work as seamstresses, herbalists, bakers, musicians, religious consultants, feast supervisors, spinners and weavers, potters and field laborers.

West African women excel in forming strong credit cooperatives or traders' associations. These powerful organizations regulate trade and provide generous benefits upon the birth of a child, during illness, and after a death in the family.

In the richer Arab countries, women don't work to make ends meet. If they work at all, it is to serve their people, or because they want recognition or a creative outlet.

These women aim for the top. "But can she type?" is not an attitude they face. They are bankers, doctors, professors, television producers, real estate investors.

This is true even in restrictive nations like Saudi Arabia, where women may not drive cars or have direct business dealings with men who are not relatives. They manage by hiring chauffeurs and male relatives to interface with the public.

By far most working Muslim women, though, work because they need the money. They also have other needs. Many need family planning information; those who don't read need this communicated through songs, soap operas and videos. Many women need legal aid. Many want help with the health and education of their children.

Many rural African and Asian women need formal title to land, which they lost when modern developers drew up titles and put them in men's names only. As more and more land is taken over by cash crops, the women who grow the family's subsistence food in many countries find it harder to get access to enough land, titled or not—or to get water.

Urban women need equal pay, maternity leave, childcare and the option of flexible and reduced work hours if they have children. Some Arab governments have set up structures to meet these needs.

A mixed bag

Modernization isn't always a blessing to Muslim women. Consider the Bedouins, many of whom are exchanging camels for trucks. This eases a woman's work, to be sure. But it also shrinks a woman's world. No longer is there camel's milk, from which to make

Islam teaches that women are ruled by passion, not reason.

butter and yogurt to sell, or camel's hair, from which to weave carpets to sell. No longer can the women collect plants for dyes, medicines and foods as the caravan meanders along its route. Nor do the women have the aesthetic outlet of designing, weaving and braiding decorative trappings as they once did for camels.

Caravans no longer cross paths regularly with kin, friends, buyers, vendors and medical, religious and literary specialists on a regular basis. Now the trucks zoom from point A to point Z. Women, children and baggage are dumped off. Men hop back into the trucks and roar off to visit, buy, sell, learn, consult and worship.

This isn't an isolated case. Modernization often means restriction for women. Education, however, can open new windows of opportunity.

Back to the veil

Today many Muslim women whose mothers wore Western fashions are returning to traditional garb. Why? Western clothes turn women into sex objects, they feel. And they cut Muslim women off from their roots. By contrast, "a veil . . . reasserts a woman's human dignity by forcing people to respond to her talents and personality rather than to her body."

AMERICAN STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

Among such fundamentalists, there is a growing conviction that Islam may be the world's last best hope.

"Look at the West," they say. "What do you see? Pornography. Beauty contests displaying thighs and breasts. Disrespect for parents. Growing illegitimacy. Abortion, venereal disease, drugs. . . ."

The Western model is no longer compelling for these fundamentalists. Nor is a Marxist social order, with its attending atheism, appealing.

What's left? The Islamic vision of moral order. In this, women play a key role. They are to combat their own tendency to sexual allure. This alone, it is said, will help society take a big step toward righteousness. Beyond that, while Muslim young men study business and technology, some of their sisters and wives are studying Islamics. They are preparing to give moral guidance in their homes and, in ripples, to communities and nations.

Pious women, in this view, can keep men from being shipwrecked on the temptations of excess money and freedom. Never mind if your husband shows off with a glass of wine in one hand and a ham sandwich in the other—both condemned by Islam. You pray regularly and lead your children to participate in the community fasts, feasts, prayers, creed recitations, Quranic readings and shrine visits. More exposed to the outside world, men will inevitably flirt with the forbidden. But women can remain the conservators of true religion.

A distant God

Yet God remains far away for these women. He is high and holy. He would never lower himself to take on human form, much less to die a shameful death.

Furthermore, while the Prophet Muhammad treated women well, Islam teaches that women are ruled by

passion, not reason. (Many Christian church fathers taught this too—and some still do!) So a woman's testimony in court is worth only half a man's. A daughter inherits only half as much as a son. The Muslim scripture allows men to beat their wives, and to have four wives at a time. Also, women are considered polluted by their reproductive cycles.

It is a myth that Muslim women are passive. Yet, given this theology, many do have a low self-image.

Muslim women like Umm Ahmad don't live by bread alone. They hunger for meaning. And questions burn: Will my husband be kind? Will he take another wife? Will my child live? How can I keep my hatred for my mother-in-law from eating me up? God won't listen to prayers when I'm menstruating; how then can I become righteous before God, when I fall further and further behind on required prayer each month?

Beyond stereotypes: West African Muslim women



In the Islamic vision of moral order, women play a key role. Yet God remains far away for these women, high and holy.

With God so distant, many turn to magical charms and spirit mediums for answers.

Others, in handfuls all around the world, are finding answers in Jesus Christ. He is bringing them into personal relationship with the God who was once so far away. Just as Jesus long ago touched a woman with a flow of blood, and didn't consider himself polluted, so today he is touching Muslim women.

Jesus is becoming their once-for-all sacrifice, foreshadowed each year in their sheep feasts. He is reconciling women to relatives whom they hated. He is empowering women with his Spirit. He is freeing them, not to condemn or to condone their circumstances, but to live creatively within them. □

Dr. Miriam Adeney is an educator, anthropologist and missiologist. Her most recent books are A Time for Risking and God's Foreign Policy.

ENCOUNTER WITH PRAYER

We're dealing with big problems in this issue of the magazine. Such things as girls in Two-Thirds World countries growing into womanhood trapped in a life of servitude and deprivation from which it is almost impossible to escape. The death rate for women in pregnancy is 100 times higher in some countries than in developed countries.

I heard Chuck Smith, the founder of Calvary Chapel ministries, speak about faith to a group of pastors. He said that in dealing with problems, most of us try through our prayers to direct God to work out our solutions. The proper way is to focus on God and await *God's* solutions. When we really learn to focus on God's greatness, compassion, capabilities and majesty, the battle is half won. If Abraham had had nothing but his own solutions, there would never have been a nation of Israel (Gen. 17). Dr. Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder, said it another way: "Learn to allow God-room."

With this issue we are offering a different prayer request for each day of the month. Since the magazine is bi-monthly, we have provided two boxes by each request: one for you to check when you pray for this request the first month, and one when you pray for it again the second time. Please keep this list near your Bible so you can refer to it during your daily prayer times. *Norval Hadley*
Director, Prayer Ministries

PRAY FOR:

- FCS Urban Ministries, Atlanta, Ga., providing jobs and small businesses in the inner city.
- Leadership '88 conference (June 27-July 1), a gathering for the new generation of Christian leaders, in Washington, DC.
- Colombia, South America, where ruthless drug traffickers hold great power.
- People who work on the "front lines" of poverty and need, at home and overseas.
- North American African World Mission Congress (July 13-17): Africans living in North America will meet to further the cause of Christ in Africa.
- The fight against pornography and its tragic influence.
- Afghan refugees, the largest group of displaced people in the world.
- Housing for 3 million U.S. homeless people; many are families with children.
- Progress in reducing maternal deaths in poor countries.
- Cuban immigrants: 90,000 live in Miami alone. Many need jobs and housing.
- Ivory Coast, Africa: the government is supportive of Christian missions and church growth is rapid.
- Justice, mercy and peace in the Middle East: ask God to help Christians stand together for real peace.
- The Fistula Clinic in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, offering hope to hundreds of women disabled by childbirth complications.
- The U.S. election process: ask for leaders with justice and integrity.
- Recovery of strong families: loyalty, commitment and Christ's love are needed.
- The church in China: thank God for, and pray for, its dynamic growth.
- Six Oakland, Calif., churches which will offer rehabilitation to people caught up in crime, violence and drugs.
- Racial reconciliation and peace in South Africa.
- Hostages who are being held in Lebanon.
- Diamond Street Community Center, North Philadelphia, Pa.,

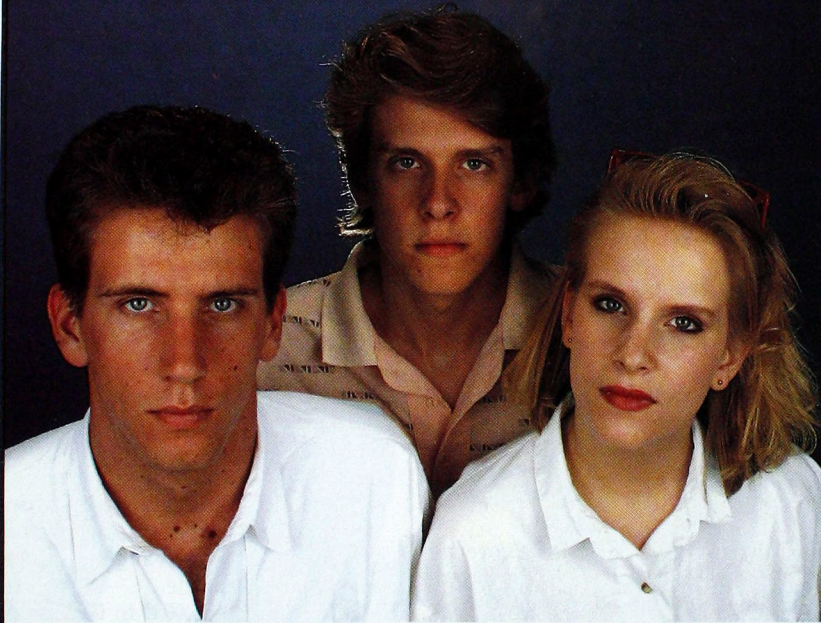
- providing health care for impoverished people.
- Ethiopia: already weakened from the last famine, facing another one.
- Inter-Varsity's president-elect, Dr. Stephen Hayner: He begins August 1, 1988.
- Soviet Christians: most remain faithful under pressure. Pray for protection.
- Christian teachers: that they may influence and affirm young people in public and private schools.
- Sweden: fewer than four percent of the population attend church. Pray for revival.
- New Christians in Hong Kong: some 27,650 decisions for Christ and 3600 rededications were made during evangelist Luis Palau's crusade.
- Vietnam: ask God to bless and multiply World Vision's new opportunities for ministry and reconciliation.



TERRY MADISON/WORLD VISION

- Gang leaders and members: ask God to free them from drugs and violence, through Christ.
- Sudan: civil strife adds to the hardship of famine.
- Dr. Billy Graham's visit to the Soviet Union this summer.
- Success of church-planting efforts among people who have no church.

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