

World Vision

# Today

Special Issue 1998

Special issue:  
Hurricane Mitch

Central America  
after the **storm**



# World Vision Today

Vol. 2, Number 3 Special Issue 1998

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## ON THE COVER

Hurricane Mitch survivor  
Angélica Elizabeth López, 3,  
a sponsored child.

Cover photo by Jon Warren

**World Vision Today**, a quarterly publication, shares the stories of children, their families, and communities as they experience the tangible hope of the Gospel in a world of suffering and injustice. In hope that our relationship and conversations will grow deeper and increasingly meaningful, **World Vision Today** aims to exceed the highest standards in accuracy, practicality, and stewardship, and is our gift to you for your commitment to modeling Jesus' life-giving compassion.

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## from the president



Reports of Hurricane Mitch's rampage through Central America have almost disappeared from the news, but the hard work of rebuilding is just beginning for families like that of Angélica Elizabeth López, the 3-year-old sponsored girl featured on our cover.

In La Barranca, Honduras, Angélica Elizabeth's parents seven siblings struggled through waist-deep water to safety neighbor's hilltop house minutes before their own home collapsed. They lost most of their belongings—clothes, shoes, furniture. Angélica Elizabeth salvaged her doll from the wreckage—one of a few remaining possessions.

It will be a long road to recovery for our fellow Central American Christians who are relying on their faith in the midst of this crisis. As Honduran President Carlos Flores Facussé explained, "We lost in 72 hours what we have taken more than 50 years to build, bit by bit. In Honduras, everything will be measured before and after Mitch."

World Vision has been serving in Latin America since the early 1960s, and will continue to help families in our project communities rebuild their homes, schools, roads, and bridges. Beyond your regular gifts, I invite you to consider joining our special campaign, "Twelve Months of Hope," to assist with the reconstruction effort. Program details are listed on the envelope in the center of this magazine.

As I think of the López family and the tens of thousands of others who suffered such devastating losses, the psalmist's words come to mind, "My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word" (Psalm 119:28). We ask for your continued prayers and support as we help build a brighter future for children like Angélica Elizabeth.

—Rich Stearns



# the mourning after

**The calamitous effects of Hurricane Mitch hit many slumbering villages in Honduras at dawn. People had mere moments to react—with life or death consequences. Two families share their stories, and how World Vision came to their aid.**

“I’ve had my soul torn out,” lamented Francisco Alvarado, grieving for his three children and pregnant daughter-in-law killed after mudslides destroyed his home in San Miguelito, a community of 5,000 in southern Honduras.

World Vision rushed to help Francisco and other families in its 251 project communities in Honduras, reaching about half with food and medicine less than two weeks after the disaster. Some 330,000 pounds of food were delivered to 11,000 families who lost homes or crops. Francisco and his wife, Bella Victoria, who lost everything, received special consideration.

The Alvarados and their surviving children Cania Mariela, 16,



**Comfort amid the calamity:** Alice Coritza Pastrana, a sponsored child, soothes her 75-year-old grandfather, Leocadio Motiño, after flooding from the Choluteca River destroyed their home in San Miguelito, Honduras.

Cindy Josalin, 6, and Jimmy Javier, 8, a World Vision sponsored child, are living temporarily at a local school. An avalanche of vegetation and mud destroyed their tile and adobe home on Oct. 31.

"We had no warning. There was no time to do anything," Francisco recalled.

Bella Victoria, who slept fitfully through the pounding rain the previous night, heard the crash. She leapt for the door. "I don't know how I got out," she said.

Francisco shot out of bed and found himself buried waist-deep in mud. After freeing himself, he desperately rooted through the debris for his children. Bella Victoria and neighbors joined in, tugging at boulders and tree limbs, scooping aside mounds of sodden earth. But they could not save Kaylen, 11, Sandra Patricia, 14, Juan Baptista, 20, and his pregnant wife, Leslie Rosebel, 17,



**Weeping with those who weep:** Francisco Alvarado and his wife, Bella Victoria (left) break the news to a relative that three of their six children and their pregnant daughter suffocated to death in a landslide that buried their home in San Miguelito, Honduras.

who suffocated to death.

The flooding and landslides left 100 people homeless and knocked out roads and bridges in San Miguelito. Supplies in the village grocery and pharmacy dwindled. Before World Vision's food shipment arrived, families subsisted on one meal a day.

In nearby Divisadero, 10-year-old sponsored child Alice Coritza Pastrana watched her home wash away when the

Choluteca river flooded, carrying an angry wall of mud into the community.

Alice's neighbor Elias Ruiz ran through the village, yelling an alarm to the sleeping residents. Alice, staying at her grandparents' house next door, awoke to waves of muddy water streaming into the adobe home. She grabbed her grandmother and pushed her out. Joining Alice's parents and little sister, they

## Responding in the wake of Mitch



Some 5,000 families affected in World Vision project communities.

### Honduras

**Human toll:** More than 7,000 people killed; 12,000 missing; at least 2 million homeless. Of 21,508 children sponsored through World Vision by Americans, five deaths confirmed by mid-November.

**Damage:** 70 percent of agriculture decimated, including banana and coffee export crops worth \$900 million and shrimp farms that employed thousands. Country rendered impassable by damage to 60 percent of the infrastructure. Repair costs could total \$2 billion.

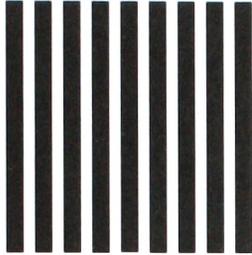
**World Vision's response:** 4,344 emergency packs of



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 But one thing is sure: her  
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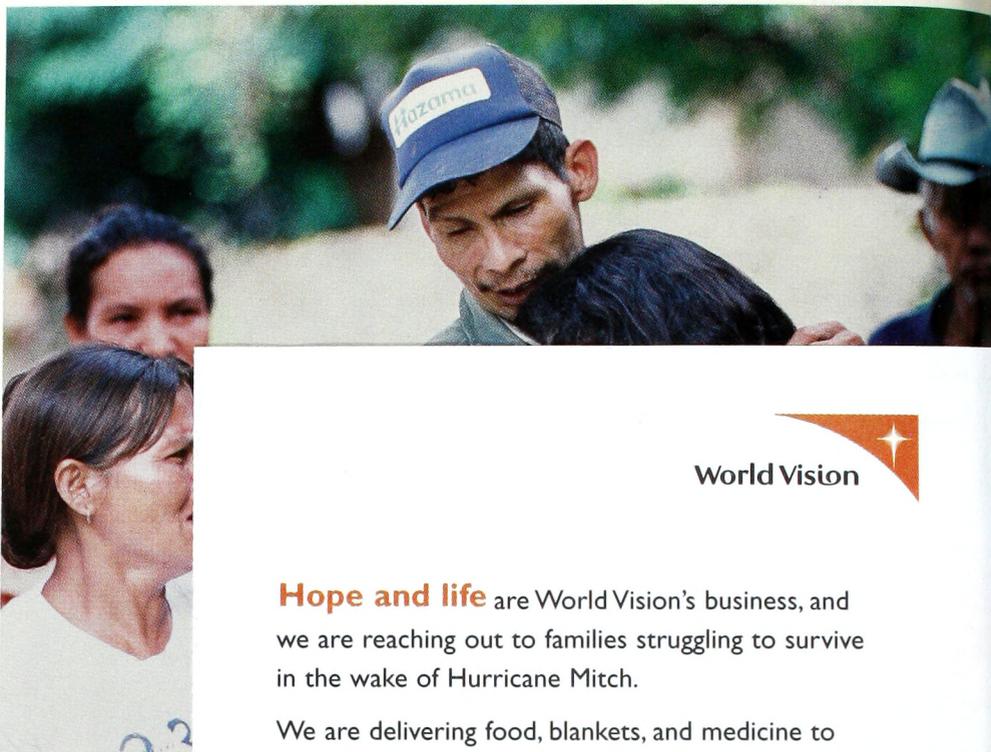


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World Vision

**Hope and life** are World Vision's business, and we are reaching out to families struggling to survive in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

We are delivering food, blankets, and medicine to victims. And in the months ahead, we will begin assisting sponsored children and their families to reconstruct their homes, and rebuild community infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, potable water systems, and schools.

The task is great, but *with the faithful support of friends like you, we can make a huge difference right now and in the months ahead.*

**Will you join with us in this ministry?**

We are seeking faithful partners who are willing to give a gift beyond their normal contributions to this special monthly program. We are calling it *Twelve Months of Hope*. Your gift of \$20, \$35, or even \$50 a month will help children and their families begin to rebuild their lives.

If you can be a part of this special ministry, just check the box on this envelope, and include your first monthly gift. Or, whatever you are able to give will be used to help more people get back on their feet.

God Bless You!



**Keyber Melisa Maximo, age 4, Honduras**

## Responding in the wake of Mit



### Honduras

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## Hurricane Mitch emergency response

I want to provide "Twelve Months  
 of help!" for families in Central America.

My first monthly pledge of  
 \$0  \$35  \$50  \$Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 8376/HCA N0M/86

Charge my pledge to my credit card  
 each month. I've provided card information

Send me my check payable to World  
 Vision for my first monthly pledge. World Vision  
 will send me regular reminders about my

I don't want to pledge right now, but here's a  
 gift for children and families in Central  
 America. \$\_\_\_\_\_ 8376/HCA N2M

Additional information:  
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Thank you for your generous response!  
 For more information, please visit our  
 website at [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)

through a food-for-work  
 program.

### Nicaragua

**Human toll:** Some  
 3,800 people killed; 20  
 percent of the population  
 left homeless. No fatali-  
 ties reported among the  
 9,710 children sponsored by Americans.

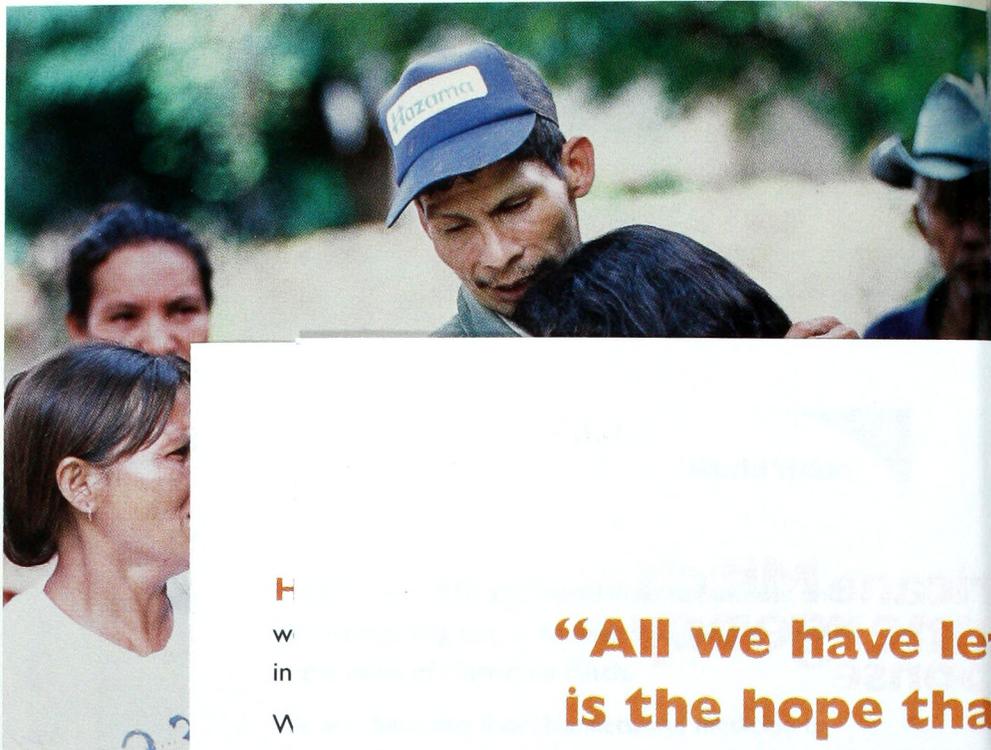


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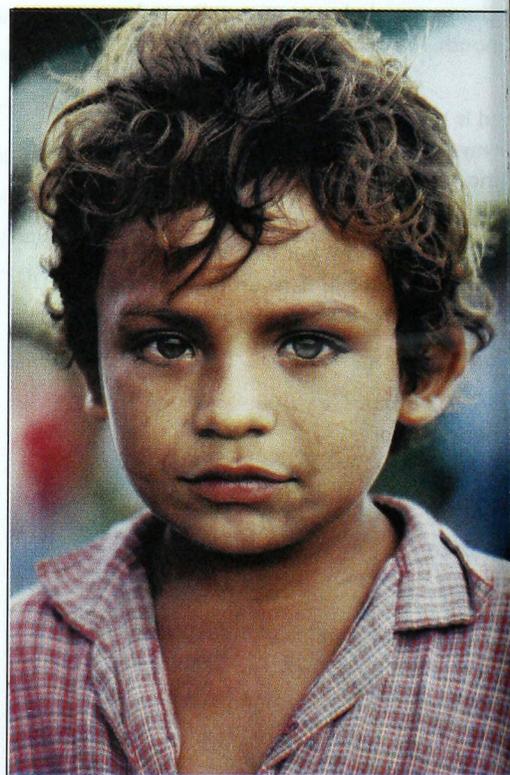


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**"All we have left is the hope that God never forsakes his children."**

—Carlos Flores Facus  
president of Honduras



Rudy Joel López, age 7, Honduras

## Responding in the wake of Mi



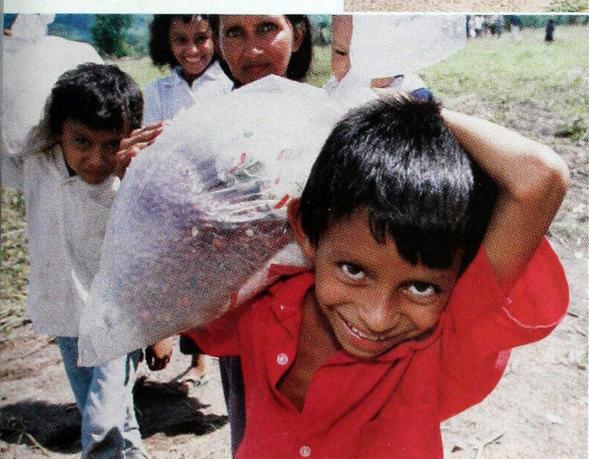
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 nder a mango tree  
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 e, they said they have  
 d their trust in God.  
 Lord is the only one,"  
 Bella Victoria, blinking  
 tears.

**y landing:** Flood victims in  
 iguelito were down to one  
 a day before World Vision  
 gency food arrived via  
 an Air Force helicopters.



food, blankets, and medicine air-  
 dropped to families in isolated areas  
 and 1,700 homeless families assisted  
 in the Tegucigalpa-Comayaguela area.  
 World Vision plans to distribute  
 tools and seeds to 3,000 farmers in  
 the next few months. Also will help  
 rebuild 50 bridges, 100 community  
 water systems, 40 schools and help repair 4,500  
 homes, providing employment for Hondurans

through a food-for-work  
 program.

**Nicaragua**

**Human toll:** Some  
 3,800 people killed; 20  
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# disaster doctors

**Risking raging rivers. Hitchhiking on military helicopters. Slogging up muddy mountain trails to reach stranded villagers. Treating the sick seven days a week in humid heat without pay. And loving it.**

Such is life for Honduran medical student Romualdo Rodriguez since Hurricane Mitch slammed into his country in late October. Romualdo, a former sponsored child, directs a 70-member university medical team assembled by World Vision to care for hurricane victims isolated in the most remote corners of Honduras.

"We will take the children first, by number, then the adults," announced Romualdo, organizing an impromptu clinic in a tin-roofed school. It is one of the few structures still standing in Chilamatada, a mud-choked town in southern Honduras. "If anyone is too sick to move from their beds, advise us, and we will visit them."

More than 100 patients lined up to see Romualdo and his colleagues: Children with bronchitis; infants suffering skin rashes and infections from being constantly wet; adults wounded when their clay-brick homes collapsed on them.

"This is how I want to live," says Romualdo, 31, who has volunteered with World Vision for 12 years on weekends and during school breaks. "I could make six times as much money in business, but my life is committed to this work."

Romualdo can well relate to his destitute patients. One of 13 children, Romualdo was born in a poor, mountain village four hours' walk from the nearest road. His mother was overburdened; his father a drunk. As a youngster, Romualdo did not want to go to school because he had no shoes.

**Say 'ah': Romualdo Rodriguez, a former sponsored child, heads a team of 70 medical students treating rural flood victims.**



Masaya, Granada, Carazo, and Rivas; also delivered 20 shipping containers of canned goods to help feed needy fami-

**Damage:** One-third of all crops destroyed. Reconstruction costs estimated at over \$1 billion—half the annual economic output.

**World Vision's response:** Distributed 20,000 pounds of medicine to health centers in

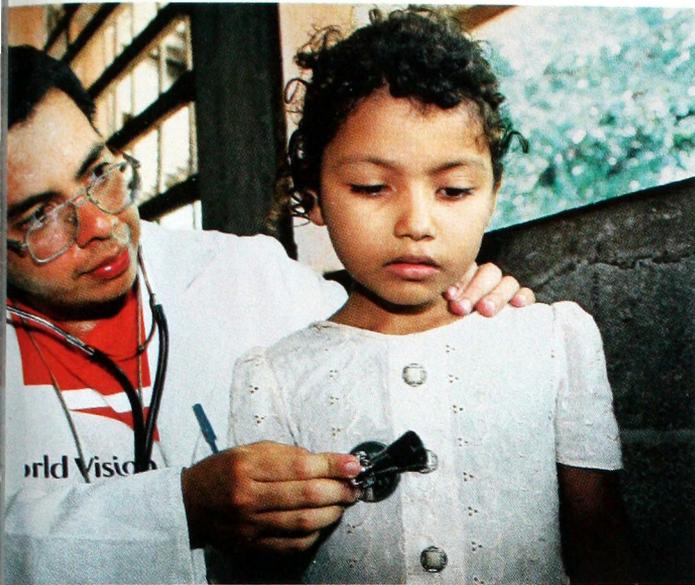
lies. Provided seeds for 300 families, with plans for further agricultural and reforestation efforts.

## **El Salvador**

**Human toll:** 249 people killed; 135 missing; more than 57,700 affected by storm. Only one of 21,504 children sponsored by Americans killed.

**World Vision's response:** Delivered food, bedding,





begin three years of pediatric training. He dreams of opening a children's clinic in his home village of El Piccacho. Too many children there die needlessly because there is no community medical care, says Romualdo.

In the meantime, Romualdo runs two small businesses between studying and volunteering with World Vision. Profits from his vegetable and clothing shops underwrite high school and university tuition fees for talented rural children. World Vision helped Romualdo. Now he wants to do the same for others.

**River of relief:** Wading through flood waters, this team of community volunteers, medical students, and World Vision staff were the first to reach villagers in isolated La Barranca.

**Big touch:** "There are people helping in the capital, but out here there's no one," says Jorge Flores, 29, a University of San Marcos medical student from Cuzco, Peru.

World Vision came to Romualdo's village offering help in the community's development. With sponsorship support, he stayed in Cuzco. He completed high school and attended university in the capital, Lima. Through World Vision, he received tuition assistance and part-time employment. By day he worked, and by night he studied.

Now Romualdo, newly graduated, is about to finish his final medical studies and



and medicine to 1,200 families. He coordinated a national network of medical volunteers working to prevent cholera, malaria, and typhoid fever epidemics. Plans to organize community counseling to help victims suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

**atemala**

**Human toll:** 258 people killed; more than 93,000 evacuated from

their homes. No fatalities reported among 18,629 sponsored children.

**Damage:** Banana, sugar cane, corn, bean, and rice crops will not be ready to replant for at least six months.

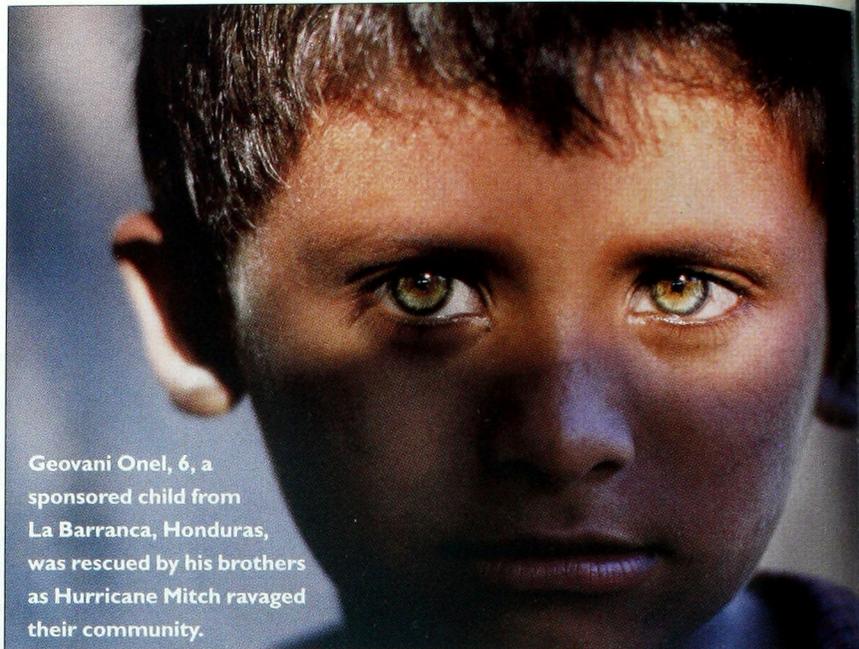
**World Vision's response:** Providing food, blankets, diapers, and medicine to 15,000 families.



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Geovani Onel, 6, a sponsored child from La Barranca, Honduras, was rescued by his brothers as Hurricane Mitch ravaged their community.

## how can you help

### **Give to World Vision's Hurricane Mitch disaster relief effort.**

World Vision is committed to raising \$7 million in cash and gifts-in-kind to assist disaster victims. Your donation will help us purchase items such as food, medicines, and tents. Our long-term rehabilitation efforts will help families rebuild their homes and enable farmers to replant their crops.

**Involve your church.** Share extra copies of this magazine and World Vision's Hurricane Mitch church bulletin insert with your congregation. Order these by calling toll-free: (800) 531-7777.

**Pray for Central America.** Pray for Jesus' comfort for families, the homeless, and the sick. Please remember World Vision staff in Central America who continue to work even though many have lost family members or have missing relatives.

**Visit World Vision's website.** Get the most recent information on World Vision's work in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala at [www.worldvision.org/worldvision/pr.nsf/stable/mitch\\_index](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/pr.nsf/stable/mitch_index)

**Be patient for further information.** If you have a sponsored child in one of the affected countries, you are no doubt worried about his or her safety. Staff are working tirelessly to assess loss and damage in project communities. As detailed information becomes available, we will issue updates. In the event of a sponsored child's death, World Vision will contact you by telephone.

**World Vision**