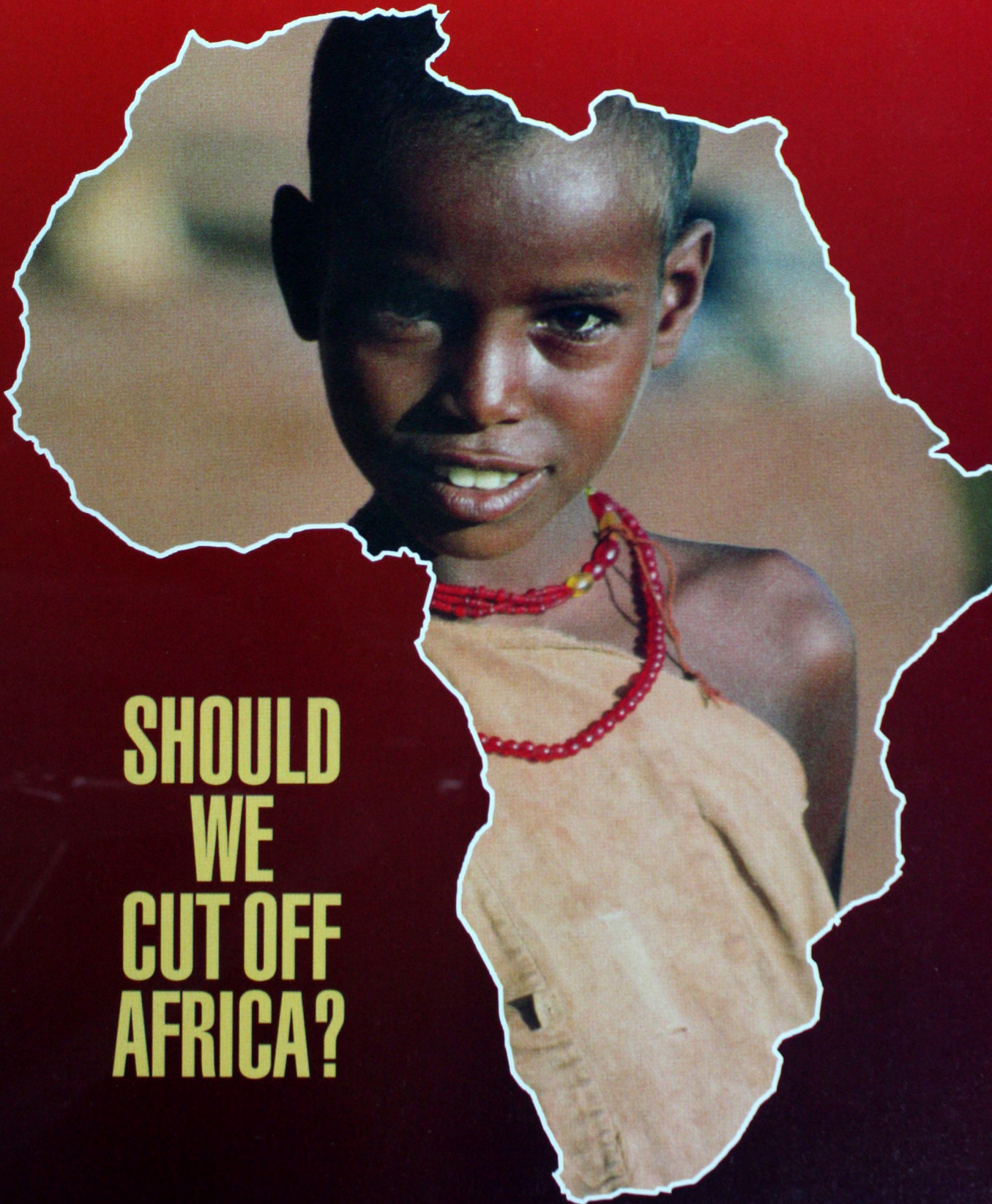


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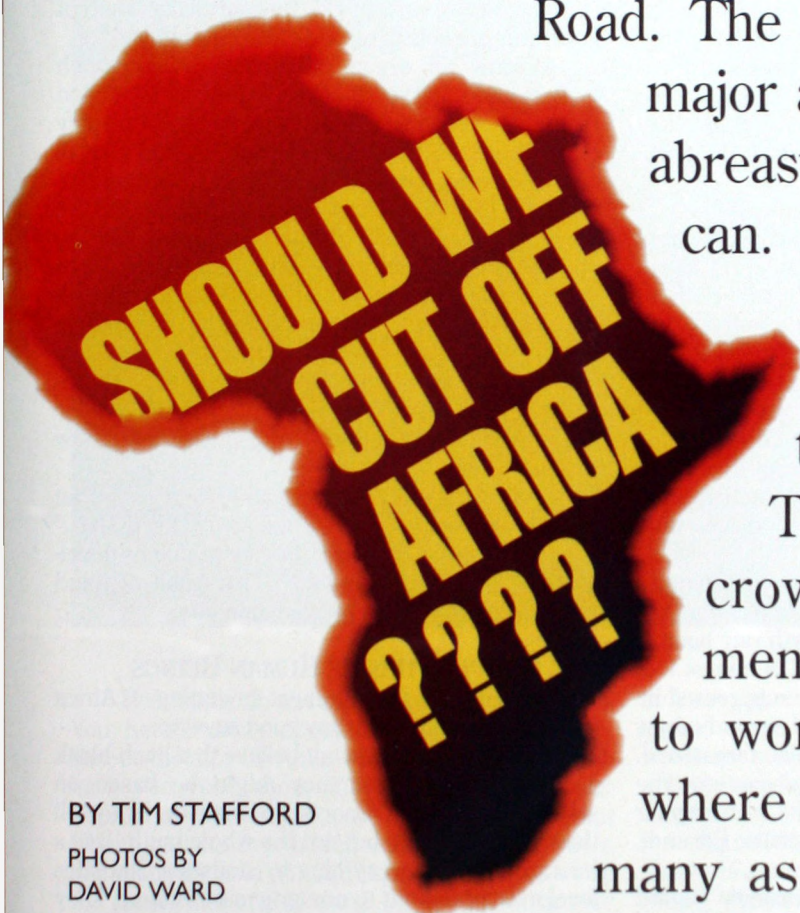


**SHOULD
WE
CUT OFF
AFRICA?**



THE QUESTION
PROBABLY
PREYS ON

THE MINDS OF
MANY OF US IN THE
PROSPEROUS
WESTERN WORLD,
EVEN IF WE DON'T
ASK IT OPENLY.



BY TIM STAFFORD
PHOTOS BY
DAVID WARD

In Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, where my family and I spent last summer, a fast-moving line of men in ragged clothes forms each dawn along Mbagathi Road. The line snakes for miles by major arteries, about four people abreast walking as fast as they can. From a distance, it looks like a crowd just out of a football stadium, spilling toward their cars.

This is no happy sports crowd, however. These are men, and some women, going to work. They leave the slum where they live—homes with as many as 10 people per room, no windows, no toilets—and throng to Nairobi's industrial area. They earn just enough to survive. They have no money for bus fare, so they walk, even in the rain.

S TATISTICS TELL THE TRUTH TO A POINT, BUT NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH. IT IS A MISTAKE TO JUDGE EVERYTHING BY STATISTICS.

The line passed near my home each day when I lived in Nairobi 15 years ago. It is there still. It has not diminished, and I cannot think that it will any time in the foreseeable future. For me that line is a symbol—and more than a symbol, the reality—of Kenya's lack of progress, indeed of all Africa's. The line stands for the hundreds of millions of Africans who struggle to make economic progress, and end up barely surviving.

Should we cut off Africa? The question probably preys on the minds of many of us in the prosperous Western world, even if we don't ask it openly. Such a possibility is quite real today, as aid funds once earmarked for Africa are diverted to other parts of the world, such as Eastern Europe. The prospect horrifies people like me who care about Africa. I have lived in Kenya, traveled in many other African countries, and I love Africa. But I must face the arguments for cutting off the continent.

The strongest argument is failure. Billions of dollars have been pumped into Africa over the past 30 years. The United Kingdom, the World Bank, the United States, European governments, hundreds of mission organizations and a host of non-profit charities such as World Vision have devoted resources—people, money, plans—to helping Africa. What do they have to show for it? If you look at international statistics, it would seem they have been throwing the money away. By almost any measure—economic, political, ecological, medical—the African continent is worse off now than when they began.

While the rest of the world grows far more food per capita than it used to, Africa alone grows less. Meanwhile, its population growth rate booms, with ever more mouths to feed. AIDS booms too. Malaria and sleeping sickness, once suppressed by modern medicine, are out of control again. Forests are being chopped down; species are threatened. Africa leads the world in refugees, famine, war. The continent supplies the world's media with regular horror stories: Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda. Where next?

Many Western countries increasingly regard Africa as both hopeless and irrelevant to their interests. What difference would it make if Africa one day simply dropped off the map of international concern? From a pragmatic perspective, some argue it would make little difference. We would miss certain resources—oil from Nigeria and Angola, copper from Zambia, diamonds from South Africa, and coffee and tea from Kenya. But our economies would adjust, and we would go on.

It's tempting to shrug, to say, "We tried to help, but it did no good. Our money is better spent elsewhere. Let's cut off Africa."

THE PROBLEM OF DEPENDENCY

Some informed people argue that foreign assistance has made matters worse. Aid can feed the tendency to dependency, to look to Europe or the United States for solutions instead of solving problems locally.

A high percentage of Africa's top political leaders have been dictators: brutal, incompetent, greedy, and corrupt. They are largely responsible for Africa's problems, because of their ruinous economic policies, personal kleptocracy, and murderous politics. How do such terrible leaders stay afloat? One answer is: They receive foreign aid. By controlling where it goes, they are able to maintain their power.

Private aid organizations can bypass such leaders and target specific communities and churches with their assistance. Yet dependency exists there too. I recall a program to build a small dam in an arid area of West Africa. The aid organization, a Christian charity, was careful to do the project right. Lengthy discussions were held to ensure that villagers wanted the changes the dam would bring, that they would contribute to its building, that they would feel responsible for its upkeep.

When the dam was completed, aid officials flew in for a handing-over ceremony. Village elders spoke proudly of their new dam. "We thank you for your help in realizing our dream," they said. "Now this is our dam."

A year later the aid organization received an urgent cablegram: "YOUR DAM IS LEAKING." When new, it was "our dam." When problems developed, it became "your dam." That habit of mind does great damage whenever it spreads.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF HUMAN BEINGS

In a nutshell, the argument for cutting off Africa is this: We are not doing any good anyway.

I do not agree. I do not believe that such bleak assessments, however they might be based on statistics and media reports, are realistic. They tell the truth to a point, but not the whole truth. It is a mistake to judge everything by statistics. Statistics level everything out to one gray assessment. They give the average, not the detailed variation that makes up the average.

The news media do not even report the average, only the disastrous. While the horrors of Rwanda went on last summer, I was in Nairobi, just a few hundred miles away. Watching CNN one had the feeling that Africa in general was in upheaval. But in Nairobi I felt no more impact than if I had been in London or Los Angeles. Horrible as it was, Rwanda's trouble was Rwanda's—not shared by the 51 other countries in Africa. The media do not give that perspective.



BRUCE BRANDER / WORLD VISION



The media do not often highlight good news. You heard plenty about Uganda when the barbarous dictator Idi Amin was there, but how much have you read about the country's spectacular improvement over the past decade? What about Ghana and its overhauled economy? What about the restoration of Mozambique and Eritrea since the recent end of civil wars? Do you know the role that international aid is playing in those reversals?

Even though I have lived in Africa, I sometimes get hooked by negative media reports. Flying into Nairobi with my family at the beginning of last summer, I felt misgivings. I'd read so much disheartening news. Would my children be safe, with all the violent crime I'd heard about? Would the bleakness of hunger and poverty overwhelm our senses?

Reality, however, was far more complex than what I had seen in the news. The moment we landed, my sense of Africa as a basket case began to fade and

to be replaced by a far subtler image of Africa as a place where many people have problems—and some are solving them. Perhaps I can best explain this by describing Kenyan friends who met me at the airport.

Haron Wachira and his wife, Margaret, were there. Haron at one time edited a Christian magazine I helped start. He was very active in Kenya's 1992 presidential election—the first multi-party vote in the nation's 30-year history.

According to him, the ruling party cheated its way to victory. Haron concluded that business, not politics, held the best prospects for transforming Kenya at this time. He has launched a company that is assembling computers and selling them throughout East Africa. Business is prospering, thanks to a program of economic liberalization pushed by the World Bank and insisted on by nations providing foreign aid.

For Haron and his family, life in Africa is a

Though growing populations and migration from the countryside continue to crowd city slums, "zones of opportunity" in African business build modern skylines, like the prosperous profile of Nairobi, Kenya.

SEVERE PROBLEMS WERE UNDENIABLE. BUT EQUALLY OBVIOUS WAS THE VIBRANT LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND CHURCHES.

mixed picture. He foresees no end to Kenya's troubles, because they are enmeshed with Kenya's political problems. At the same time, there are zones of opportunity where he can create jobs, subsidize ministry (he spends many of his weekends visiting high schools to talk about his faith), and show an alternative pattern of leadership.

Kimani and Wairimu Nyoike also were at the airport. Kimani, a lifelong politician, spent a year in solitary confinement for his political views, and nearly died in prison. But with the help of a son who studied at the University of Pennsylvania, he and Wairimu, who was once head of nursing for the central government hospital, are raising and selling tomatoes on a large scale. Kimani plans to get back

into politics for the 1997 elections. "We cannot stop hoping," he told me. And clearly, he had not stopped.

We saw similar signs of troubles and hopes during the entire six weeks we spent in Kenya. Severe problems were undeniable. But equally obvious was the vibrant life of individuals, families, and churches. The picture was not one of failure vs. success. It was as complex as human beings themselves.

Yes, the line of slum-dwellers still snakes through Nairobi each dawn, but aid is making a difference in the lives of individuals in that line. I talked to Paul Gachie, a friend who heads a small-loans program for a Christian relief and development agency. They are helping exactly the kind of poor urban slum

A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Famines in Ethiopia will never be over. In the past 250 years, drought and famine have struck somewhere in the mountainous East African country on an average of once every 11 years. Should we, then, cut off Ethiopia?

If we had severed the country from our concerns during the Great Famine of 1984-86, 10 million people might have died of starvation, instead of 1 million. If we had discarded Ethiopia and its people in 1990, another famine would have wiped away vast masses of people, instead of being prevented by prompt and well-directed aid.

Yet aid alone is not an answer to the country's historic cycle of hunger. Relief must be followed by rehabilitation—putting people back on their feet. After that comes development to reduce or eliminate the need for future aid.

A model of successful development is the Ansokia Valley, a remote stretch of land 200 miles north of the capital, Addis Ababa. When World Vision workers went there in October 1984, they found a dustbowl with hardly a tree in sight, where 60,000 people were starving.

Early aid supplies arrived on rented camel caravans. Meanwhile, local people strong enough to work carried soil in baskets and stamped it flat for an airstrip. Then they built an all-weather road, with a bridge, to the nearest highway.

Soon World Vision was distributing agricultural supplies: seeds, farm tools, oxen for plowing, livestock for new herds. From tree nurseries cultivating more than 60 varieties of seedlings, agency workers gave families young trees to be planted for fruit, fuel, timber, and soil-stabilization. On a demonstration farm, World Vision introduced peanuts, bananas, guava, tomatoes, beekeeping, poultry raising, fish farming.

Food-for-work projects terraced hillsides for new fields and piped clean water to village reservoirs. Health teams set up medical clinics. Trainers taught drought-resistant agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, weaving, knitting, basic literacy. World Vision helped maintain an elementary school and built a high school.

Today Ansokia Valley is green from end to end, with millions of trees and rich fields of corn, sorghum, and rice. Prosperous and self-sustaining, the people of the valley now export food to other regions of the country.

—Bruce Brander

A model of successful development in Africa, Ethiopia's Ansokia Valley was transformed in only a few years from a dust bowl full of starving people into a self-sustaining exporter of food.





dwellers I saw marching beside the road in the morning. Gachie told me they have made nearly a thousand small business loans, with not one default. The slum dwellers formed groups that meet weekly and guarantee the loans. If one person defaults, the whole group cannot get another loan. Therefore, they do not default. That is one case—and many others could be cited—where aid given with care and intelligence truly helps people.

IT'S HARD TO HELP PEOPLE

Should we cut off Africa? The question has parallels in U.S. society, too. Should we cut off drug rehabilitation? Its success rate is less than 50 percent. Or, to bring it even closer to home, should we stop trying to help families? The stability of family life in the United States, measured statistically, continues to go downhill. But when family life seminars are offered, many people are helped. Should we quit because many are not? Of course not! Mere statistics do not tell us all we need to know.

The complaint about dependency is, similarly, only half the truth. Dependency can be a problem wherever one person tries to help another. It is a problem in U.S. programs to house the homeless. It is a problem in farm subsidy programs.

Helping people—any people—always is hard. Help must be given thoughtfully and selectively—in Africa as everywhere else. Most aid organizations are aware of this, and they work hard to ensure their money is wisely spent. The small-business loans program is a good example. It doesn't breed dependence, but independence.

Should we cut off Africa? I would say just the opposite: we should give more, because there is so much more need than we can even begin to touch.

The help we give for disaster relief saves lives. That aid is extremely effective. When people are starving, we nurture them back to health. When Rwandan refugees are dying from cholera and other waterborne diseases, we provide water treatment facilities.

Certainly, this solves no long-term problems. The people we feed today must eat again tomorrow. But allowing them to starve solves no long-term problems either. In relief the issue is: Will they live? Relief says yes! I, for one, want to be a part of that.

When people survive, the next step is to help them escape poverty so they will not need repeated rescues. That brings us to development. Development aid raises more complex issues than relief. It is the difference between putting out a fire and rebuilding the damaged structure.

Is development aid effective? Yes and no. I see no evidence that aid by itself can reverse global



economic patterns, or transform cultures, or overcome political paralysis. It cannot save continents, or even countries. Aid can, however, help individual children to go school. It can help particular villages to get a clean water supply. It can provide slum-dwelling families with a small business loan that will enable them to escape poverty.

It is important to remember that we help one person, one village, one community at a time. No honest aid organization will claim it is saving everyone in need everywhere. But partial success is still success. The statistical Big Picture of the sagging African economy is not the only picture. Just as important are the family snapshots of people, villages, communities that are helped successfully.

We quite rightly study global statistics, and test the effectiveness of various approaches to development. It is important to have an accurate grasp of

A Mozambican mother and her child look forward to peace and development as a long civil war in their country ends and national growth begins.

THE FACT IS, WE CAN DO GOOD, AND A LOT OF IT. IN AFRICA, WE CAN FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE VICTIMIZED BY WAR AND FAMINE.



Citizens of the West African country of Ghana have seen their economy grow and thrive.

what works. Statistics and other scientific ways of measurement help us see clearly. For example, statistics have played a role in demolishing socialist economics, which have done so much harm in Africa.

But statistics also can be used demoniacally: to justify a shrug of indifference. They can tempt us not to love our neighbors, not to care about the poor. We can be tempted to give up on troubled people and withdraw into ourselves. We can use statistics to convince ourselves that we cannot do any good anyway, so why try.

The fact is, we can do good, and a lot of it. In Africa, we can feed hungry people victimized by war and famine. We can cure their ills. We can provide clean water. We can send children to school. We can teach farming techniques. We can provide vocational training for income generation. We can help protect God's animal and plant creation.

Finally, and this is the bottom-line reason for me, God offers us no alternative to giving. I read in Scripture that God's people are to be generous and fair. I do not read that our generosity is contingent on full and constant success.

"The poor you will always have with you," Jesus said (Matt. 26:11). He did not add, "So forget them." On the contrary, he commanded his disciples to "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it

back. Do to others as you would have them do to you," (Luke 6:30-31).

When I lived in Kenya, I was often confronted by people who told stories of deprivation and need. It was difficult to know which of the stories were true. If I gave, I undoubtedly would be cheated at times. What to do? I tried to give carefully and discerningly, but I kept to this motto: "I would rather be cheated a hundred times than develop a heart of stone."

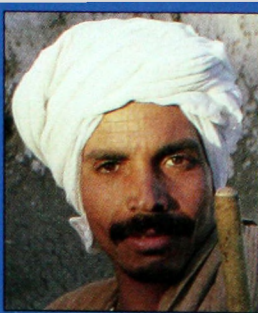
I suspect that God is more concerned about my generosity than about the impact of my generosity. God can and does provide for needy people in other ways. He can get at my stony heart in only one way, however: by convincing me to not hold back from other's needs.

If Americans generally decide that the African basket case can be dropped—that it is hopeless and irrelevant to their lives—the perverse decision will come back to haunt us in the hardening of our national character. We need to be people who care about the world. We need to be people who care about people other than ourselves.

In keeping Africa on the map of our concerns, we may not reverse all of the continent's fortunes, but we can provide much real help for many real people. In doing so, we become real people ourselves. ☉

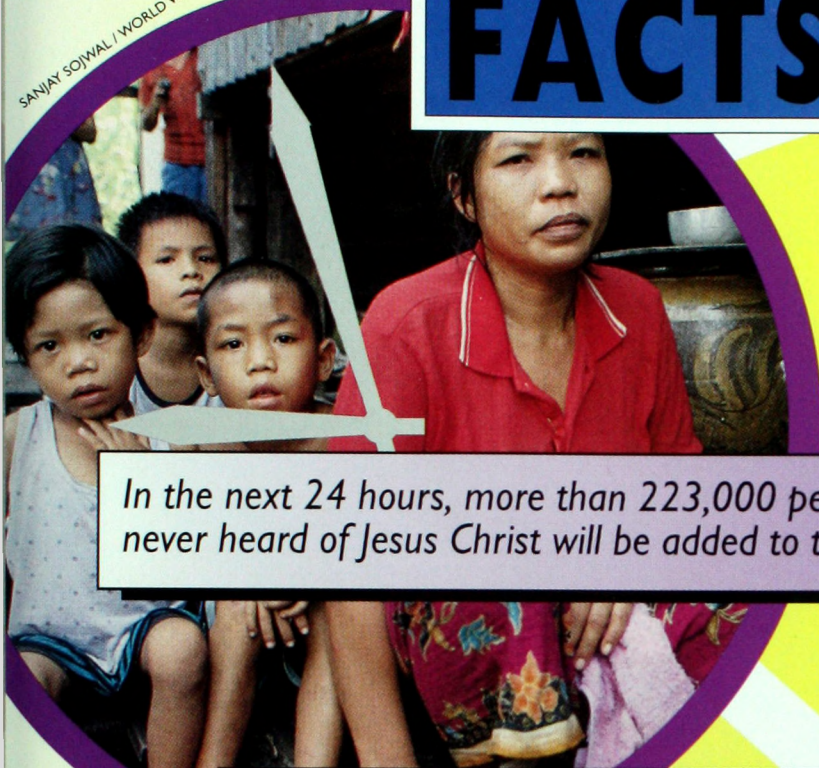
Tim Stafford is a free-lance writer in Santa Rosa, Calif.

FACING THE FACTS



DAVID DOBSON / WORLD VISION

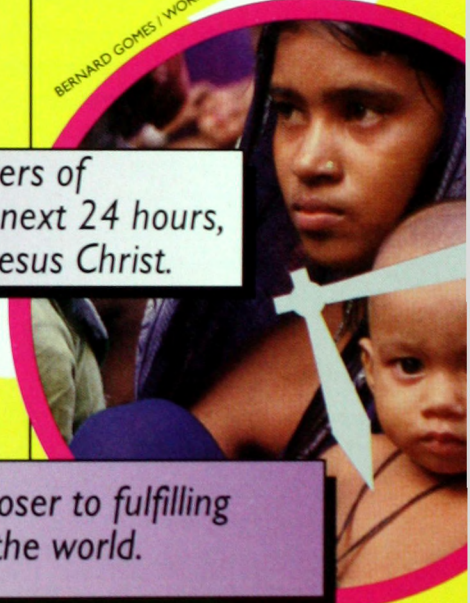
SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



In the next 24 hours, more than 223,000 people who have never heard of Jesus Christ will be added to the world.

BARELY KEEPING UP
Poverty in the developing world—the least evangelized parts of the world—has led to high birth rates.

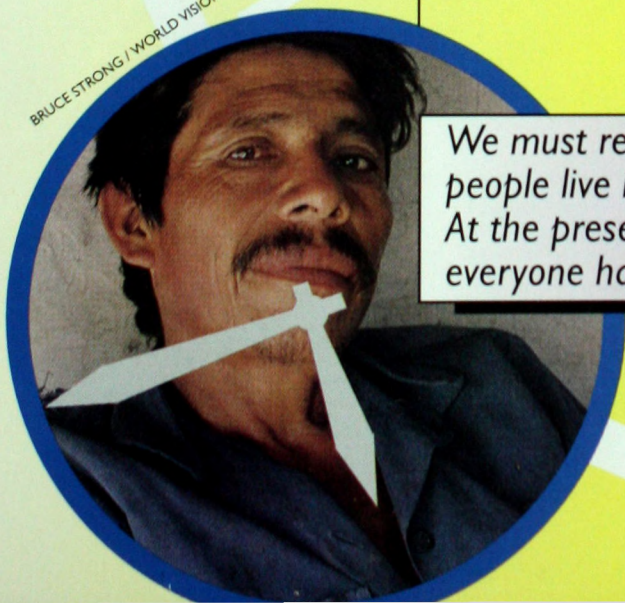
BERNARD COMES / WORLD VISION



While populations explode, unprecedented numbers of missionaries are reaching out to the world. In the next 24 hours, more than 235,000 will hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

That means we will be 13,000 people closer to fulfilling the goal of evangelizing every person in the world.

BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



We must remember, however, that more than 1.3 billion people live in the least evangelized parts of the world. At the present rate, it will take more than 300 years before everyone has heard the Good News!

Source: AD2000 Global Monitor, November 1991
The information on this page can also be found in *The Changing Shape of World Mission*, published by Mission Advanced Research and Communications, a division of World Vision. For information about obtaining a copy of this booklet and other MARC publications, call 800-777-7752.

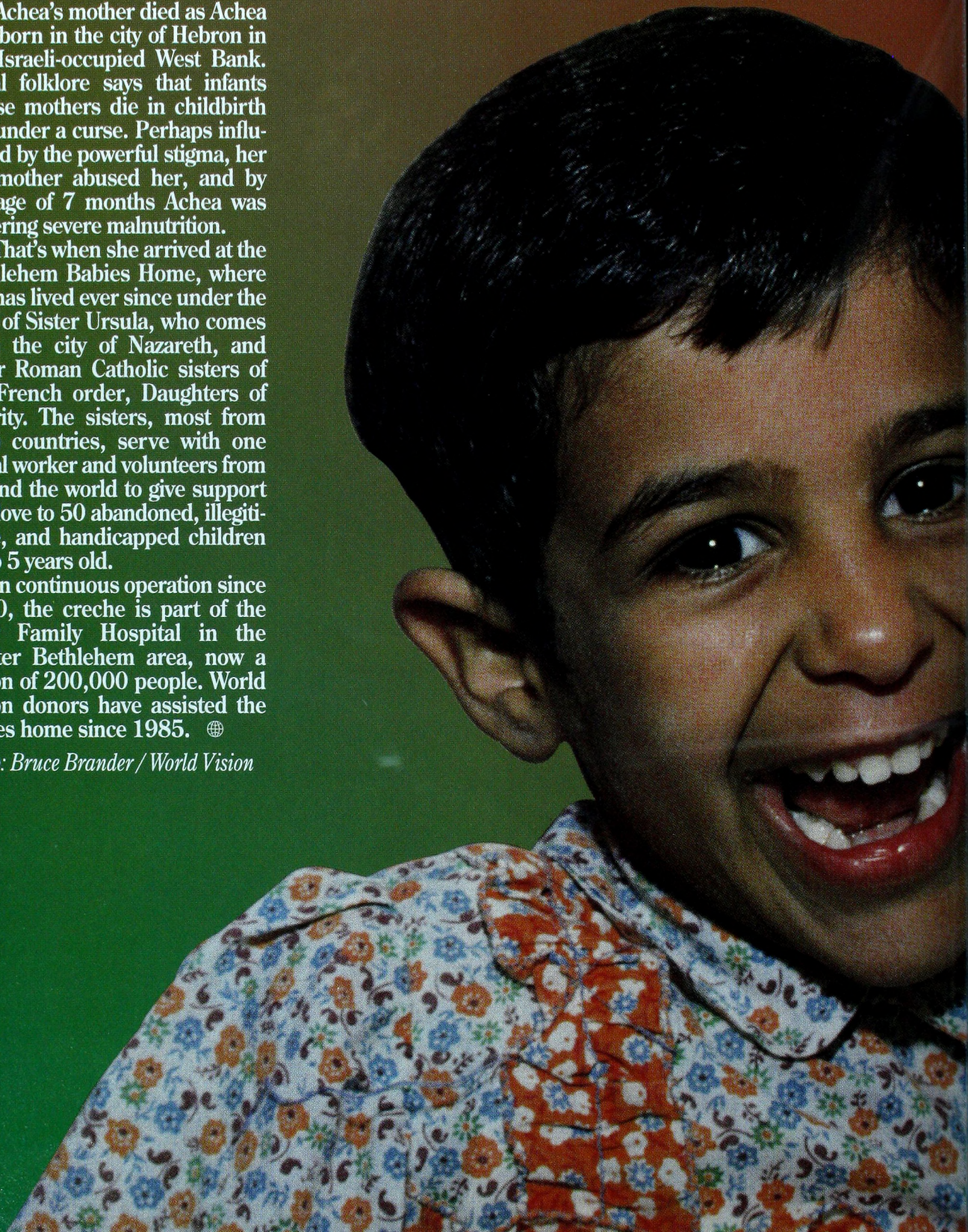
In the city of Jesus' birth, 5-year-old Achea receives a big kiss from Sister Ursula Samara at the Bethlehem Babies' Home.

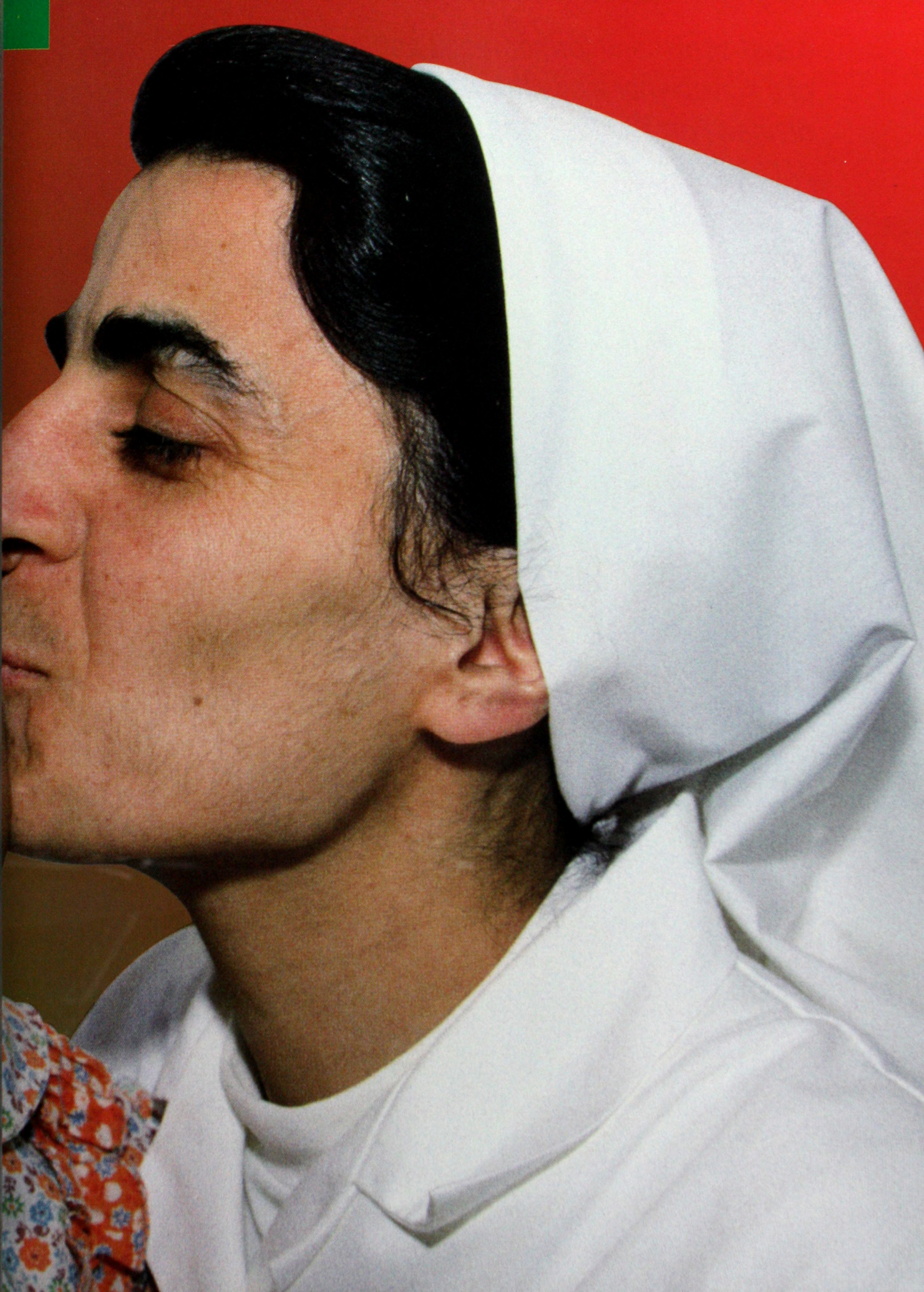
Achea's mother died as Achea was born in the city of Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Local folklore says that infants whose mothers die in childbirth live under a curse. Perhaps influenced by the powerful stigma, her stepmother abused her, and by the age of 7 months Achea was suffering severe malnutrition.

That's when she arrived at the Bethlehem Babies Home, where she has lived ever since under the care of Sister Ursula, who comes from the city of Nazareth, and other Roman Catholic sisters of the French order, Daughters of Charity. The sisters, most from Arab countries, serve with one social worker and volunteers from around the world to give support and love to 50 abandoned, illegitimate, and handicapped children up to 5 years old.

In continuous operation since 1920, the creche is part of the Holy Family Hospital in the greater Bethlehem area, now a region of 200,000 people. World Vision donors have assisted the babies home since 1985. 🌐

Photo: Bruce Brander / World Vision





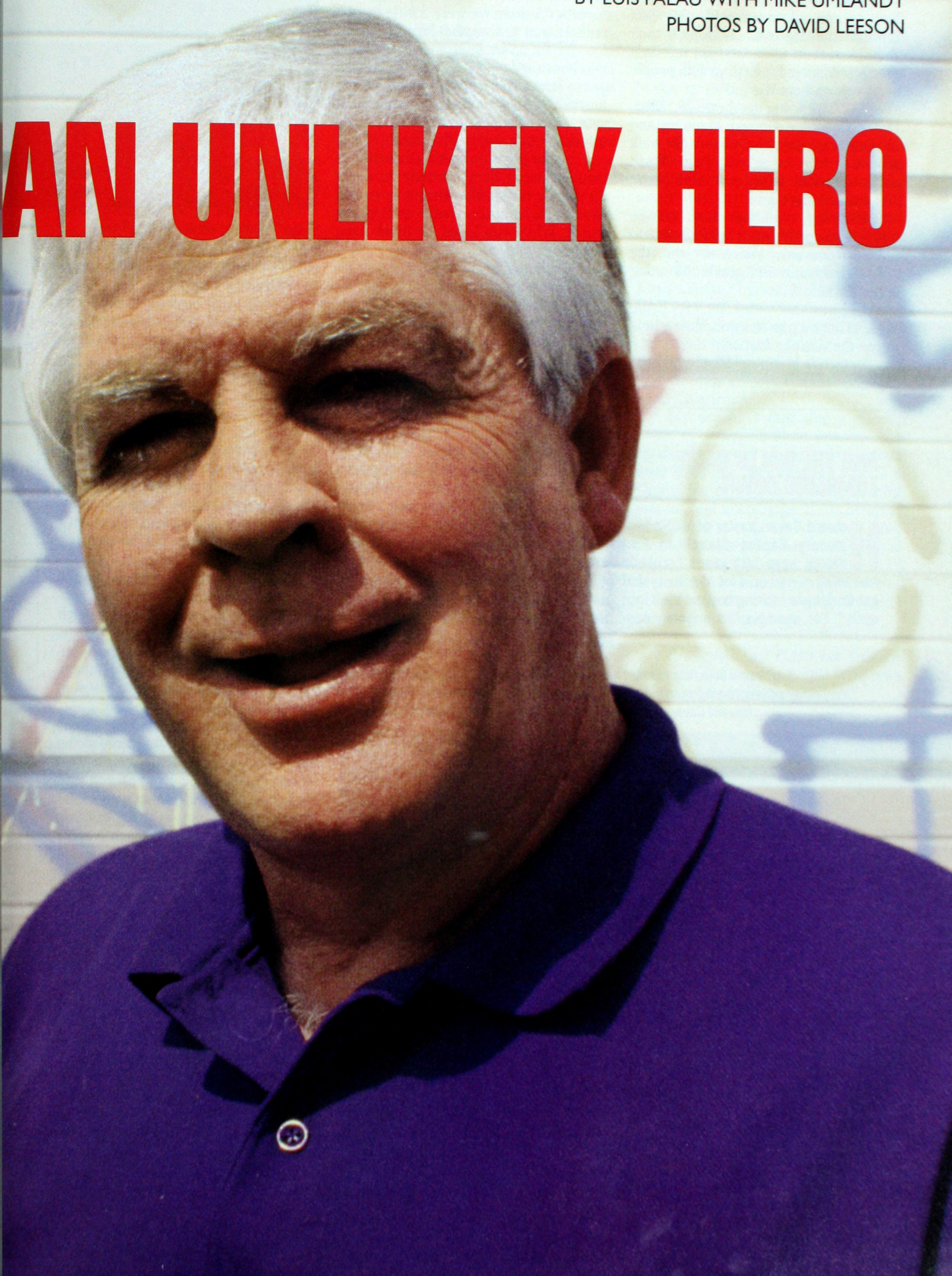
A self-confessed former racist and grandson of a slaveowner leads the way in healing racially divided Fort Worth, Texas.

ERNIE HORN IS

He is perhaps the last person you'd expect to lead the way in healing racial divisions in Fort Worth, Texas. And not just because his grandfather owned slaves in Kentucky. Ernie, owner of E. Horn Construction Inc., lives a very comfortable life. Why get involved in the messy ugliness of racism?

BY LUIS PALAU WITH MIKE UMLANDT
PHOTOS BY DAVID LEESON

AN UNLIKELY HERO



In his heart, Ernie long understood how people are reconciled with God through the death of his Son. It took years, however, to understand this as a practical concept for dealing with people in downtown Fort Worth.

The story begins June 26, 1993. Police Detective Donald Manning and his date were enjoying a late-night walk around a lake in an east Fort Worth park when four men confronted them; one was holding a gun.

Manning, holding his service weapon behind his back, told his date to move to one side. When she did, the man with the gun fired and hit Manning in the left side.

"He was shot with a Tech 9," Ernie says. "That's a gun that will blow a hole in you the size of a football."

Detective Manning, 28, died. Three days later police arrested several young

men after one of them bragged to friends, "A dude we were trying to jack pulled a gun and we shot him."

As the contractor for a couple of neighborhood police stations, Ernie had got to know Manning and had talked to him about the Lord. Ernie says Manning was "a cops' cop in Fort Worth—dedicated, talented, happy-go-lucky."

In any city, a policeman's murder is headline news. In Fort Worth, a city divided by race and besieged by gangs, Manning's murder made everything worse. White cop killed by black gang banger.

The day of Manning's funeral, Ernie was having lunch with Gary Turner, coordinator of an evangelistic crusade that my team—the Luis Palau Evangelistic Team—and I were planning in Fort Worth. Running out of time, Gary went with Ernie to the funeral chapel.

Ernie describes the experience as "supernatural." During the funeral service, he felt an "expectation" that he tried to rationalize and dismiss in the emotion of those moments. "But the Lord really spoke to me and said, 'I'm going to reveal to you the beginning of a new thing.'"

Afterward Ernie and Gary drove to the cemetery for the interment service. Ernie watched as the funeral procession of more than 2,000 people, including about 500 police officers, approached the grave site. Again the Lord spoke to him: "Look at their eyes."

"That frightened me, because I didn't understand what I was supposed to be doing," he says.

As the flag covering Manning's casket was folded and presented to Manning's mother, Ernie again heard, "Look into their eyes."

"I looked, and there were like 500

AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Howard Caver, pastor of World Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Worth, says last year's "crusade whirlwind stirred up a lot of activity that got Christians looking beyond their four walls." For example, an ongoing pas-

tors' prayer group helped tear down racial, denominational, and size barriers.

"When we come together, our differences don't matter," Howard says. "I forget I'm a pastor of a small church. No one's thinking, *Who are you? You pastor only 50 people. We've created such strong bonds, that's not a consideration.*"

World Missionary Baptist Church was trying to start a Christian school last

fall for neighborhood children. But in mid-August, the church was short \$2,100 to pay for building renovations. Howard told the congregation they needed to pray. "We know that God's going to perform a miracle—he's always faithful—but we only have until tomorrow to get it done."

As he started his sermon, several men entered the church. They were Christian brothers Howard had met through prayer efforts for the Luis Palau crusade. About a hundred others from their congregation, James Avenue Baptist Church, followed them in. "We'd like to interrupt your service," one of the men said.

The surprise guests from James Avenue announced that they were giving their congregation's entire offering that morning to help their sister church start the school. They presented a check for \$9,000, enough not only for building renovations, but now the teacher could be paid.

When Howard read the amount, hallelujahs and amens by both congregations lifted the roof.

"This would not have occurred without ministers coming together to pray and work," Howard says. "Whatever Christ asks you to do, it may be impossible for you alone, but remember, you've got the Body. If we keep off to our little selves because we are Baptist or black or white or whatever, we're going to miss the other part of the Body ministering to us, because we've amputated our hand. That's what I'm telling people wherever I go. Open yourself up to the walls coming down. They shouldn't have been there in the first place."

—Mike Umlandt

Last year's Luis Palau crusade in Fort Worth, Texas, brought together pastors from many different backgrounds. Those meetings led an affluent church to help Pastor Howard Caver (left) start a Christian school for neighborhood children.





Luis Palau led an evangelistic crusade in Fort Worth, Texas that resulted in racial reconciliation and healing that has continued to this day.

John Waynes, .357-caliber Magnums strapped to their sides. Every one of them had on sunglasses. I couldn't see their eyes. But as they started pulling their sunglasses off and wiping the tears, I saw the same hopelessness that you see on television in the eyes of starving people."

Days later, at a weekly prayer meeting for the crusade, Ernie says, the Lord spoke again: "If I can't send my people to be part of the solution, who am I going to send?"

Ernie prayed, "Lord, show us how we can be part of the solution, and how we can come together."

That summer, he helped mobilize community and denominational leaders for our crusade in October. People of all races began coming together.

"In doing this, a lot of people thought I was a missile out of control," Ernie says. "By what authority did I keep showing up at community meetings, like the crime commission, and trying to get all these churches to come together?"

Ernie obeyed the Lord's leading, but inside he felt unworthy. Increasing contact with minorities through his crusade and community involvement was exposing a dark side of his heart: racial prejudice.

It showed up most overtly at work. Ernie had just hired additional iron workers—all white—for a construction project. Every interview with a black man concluded the same way: "We'll get back with you later."

"If God was fixin' to do a new thing, I had to get out of his way and let him do it," Ernie says.

Ernie and crusade leaders in Fort Worth called a meeting of some 30 black pastors from the area where the young man who shot Manning had grown up. Ernie's idea was to enlist their support for a youth rally in an inner-city park—to get people to work together toward solutions and overcome the hopelessness that most were feeling.

Sitting in a circle face to face with mostly black people, Ernie fought back tears. "I was feeling real insecure and frightened about addressing these people and telling them the vision about what Palau's team was doing, what was fixin' to happen, about God doing a new thing.

"And then I realized it wasn't stage fright. I was under conviction. As I looked in the eyes of these black pastors, I confessed to them my prejudice and sin, and how in my business I had acted with partiality. I repented and asked them to forgive me.

"I was feeling pretty good then, but all of a sudden I had that same insecure feeling again, and I had to repent for the sins of my father's generation, and my grandfather's. That sure was God, because I don't think about things like that."

With only a few days' notice, about 4,000 young people—including rival gang members of the Bloods and Crips—showed up at a "reconciliation rally" at a Fort Worth park. A few weeks later, the Greater Fort Worth Crusade brought black and white, rich and poor together to work at solving the city's problems from the inside out.

Spearheaded by my friend Ernie Horn, volunteers had canvassed inner-city neighborhoods, inviting young people to the crusade. Buses brought more than 500 young people to the Convention Center. On the crusade's youth night, the crowd of 9,000 erupted in applause as three inner-city gang members were the first to make their way to the area in front of the platform to profess their newfound faith in Christ.

"Unless we change the heart, we haven't changed anything," I preached at the crusade's final rally. That evening, a drug dealer responded to the gospel invitation, giving his life to Jesus Christ. That same moment, a few feet away, a prominent Fort Worth physician was making the same commitment.

A year after the crusade, Fort Worth's churches and community leaders continue to work together to change their city. This past spring, pastors, businessmen, and the city's superintendent of schools cooperated to bring motivational speaker Joseph Jennings to Fort Worth. He spoke to more than 30,000 kids in 17 schools. At three evening rallies at Baptist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches, Jennings told 6,700 young people and parents how the Lord had rescued him from drug use and gang activity, and then he invited the kids to give their lives to Jesus Christ. At

When Ernie Horn addressed a group of black pastors for the first time, he confessed his sin of racism—and then his father's and grandfather's.

those three rallies, more than 400 made first-time decisions for the Lord.

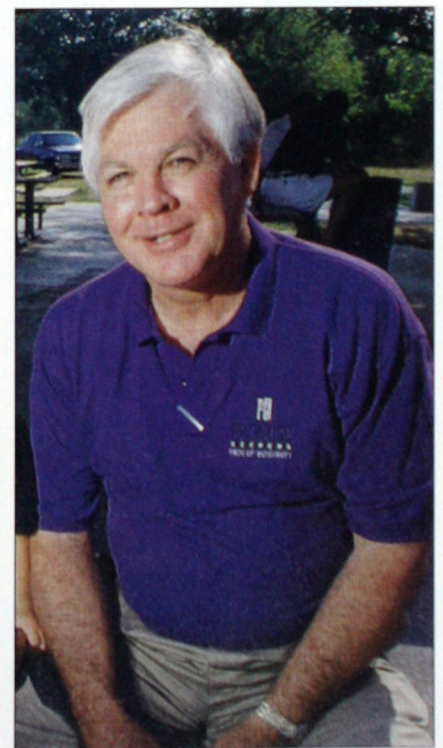
The United States desperately needs to hear this message of reconciliation. When I left Argentina for the United States in 1960, this country was still a place where many peoples of the world could come for freedom and opportunity.

All that is endangered today as the nation turns its back on the Lord. The United States needs evangelism like never before. Theologian Carl F.H. Henry once said: "The barbarians are coming." Henry could see that without a national wave of evangelization that converts hundreds of thousands of people to Jesus Christ, "barbarians" are going to take over our land. Not foreigners, but our own unrepentant generation, plus our children and grandchildren.

The problem is in the heart, not just the outward behavior that so alarms most Americans.

My dream is this: that a massive wave of evangelization restores this country's days of glory, those spiritual days when joy pervaded the land. The United States was once young in spirit, vibrant, and full of hope. It can be again. The gospel gets to the root of the problems destroying our nation. As demonstrated in Fort Worth, Christ can bring reconciliation—a deep, sincere love for people regardless of culture, race, education, or privilege. ☺

Evangelist Luis Palau has preached the gospel to 11 million people in 62 countries. He lives in Portland, Ore.



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

ON THE WINGS

Sandi Patty will stage her first major concert tour in four years from Feb. 17 through May 20.

Sandi will tour 35 U.S. and Canadian cities performing music from her latest release, "Find It On the Wings." Sandi tours with 4Him, comedian Mark Lowry, and a live band featuring some of the finest musi-

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



cians in Christian music. The group 4Him will perform music from their latest compact disc, "The Ride."

Sandi recently returned from visiting her sponsored children in World Vision projects in Ethiopia. Concert-goers will have the opportunity to become child sponsors.

For tour information, call (800) 432-4200.

VICTIMS NO MORE

Two churches in Lafayette, Ind., offer juvenile offenders an alternative to settling their disputes in court. Acting upon their commitment to the biblical concepts of justice, peace, and reconciliation, the Lafayette Church of the Brethren and Mennonite Fellowship introduced a victim-offender reconciliation program called Mediation Services of Tippecanoe County, Inc.

Court officials or probation officers can refer cases to MSTC, but both victims and offenders must

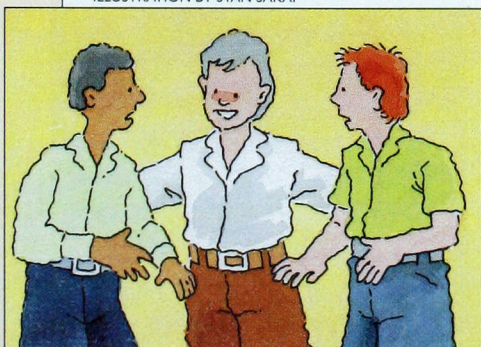
agree to work with a pair of mediators to settle their dispute. MSTC executive director Pat Hession says the majority of cases referred to them result in face-to-face meetings and settlements.

To learn more about Tippecanoe's mediation program, call (317) 474-0501.

For resources or training in dispute resolution, contact the national non-profit organization, Community Board, in San Francisco. The Community Board works with teachers, counselors, and administrators, showing them why conflicts occur and how to mediate them. The organization also works with private and public agencies and juvenile correctional facilities. The dispute resolution seminars are offered five times a year.

For more information, contact the Community Board, 1540 Market St., Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102; or call (415) 552-1250.

ILLUSTRATION BY STAN SAKAI



LOVE CONNECTION

LOVE means never having to say, "I'm sorry, we can't help," says Virgil Gulker, founder of the World Vision program LOVE INC, which matches local church volunteers with people in need.

In January 1994, LOVE INC joined forces with CONNECT, a Christmas gift-giving ministry.

At Christmas, CONNECT links churches and social service agencies to AIDS victims, foster children, and poor families of Monmouth County, New Jersey. Volunteers go caroling, dress up as Santa Claus to hand out gifts, and cook Christmas dinners for those in need. With the gifts, volunteers present the gospel by giving Bibles, devotionals, and Christian coloring books to families.

For more information, contact Carolyn Eyerma at (908) 224-1171 Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-noon.

Compiled and written by Stephanie Stevenson

WHAT POSSESSES YOU?

Break Forth Into Joy: Beyond a Consumer Lifestyle, produced by the nonprofit organization Alternatives, encourages Christians to challenge consumerism. The video explains the difference between

Break Forth Into JOY!

needs and wants, offers practical suggestions on how to simplify life, and teaches people new ways to value others by offering creative Christmas gift-giving ideas.

Whose Birthday is it Anyway?, an Advent and Christmas resource booklet, also is available from Alternatives. The booklet gives suggestions on how to control spending, plan gift-giving, and think about the message behind the gifts.

For more information contact Karl Lehman, Alternatives, P.O. Box 429, Ellenwood, GA 30049, or call (404) 961-0102.

“If we’re understanding that everything around us is a gift, a created gift, then we tend to handle it with more gentility than we do when we think that everything is just a material possession that we can discard.”

—Pastor Adei Greenpastures-Doty,
Cherokee Indian,
“Break Forth Into Joy”

Give your young people an experience they'll remember for a lifetime.



On February 24-25, 1995, groups of young people from around the nation will come together for a special event they'll never forget—the **30 Hour Famine**. ■ Tell your church youth group or a local youth organization about it. **Every day, 35,000 kids around the world die of hunger or hunger-related causes.** ■ First your young people

will ask friends and family to sponsor them. Then they'll spend 30 hours without food to help feed starving children. ■ The **30 Hour Famine** is great fun, but the young people will also learn important lessons about life. And they'll be making an incredible difference—last year, participants raised over \$1 million to send food to the world's

world vision

starving children. ■ To learn more, call toll free **1-800-7-FAMINE** or mail the coupon today. We'll send you a free 30 Hour Famine video to share with a group of caring young people. In Canada, call 1-800-387-8080.



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YES! I'm ready to help feed starving kids with the **30 Hour Famine**. Please send me the free video and materials for _____ participants.

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Address _____

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Phone (_____) _____ 8521 _____

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30 Hour Famine • P.O. Box 1131 • Pasadena, CA 91131

A museum of Christianity... a land of dead stones with the living faithful gone... a Christian theme park with the Christians departed—this bleak vision of the Holy Land's future is shared by Christian leaders throughout the towns and countryside where Jesus walked and taught nearly two millennia ago.

WILL CHRISTIAN EMIGRATION LEAVE THE HOLY LAND

A LAND *of* DEAD STONES?

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
BRUCE BRANDER

A stone wall built by ancient Jews, Romans, Crusaders, and Ottoman Turks surrounds Jerusalem's Old City.

We, as Christians, have become an insignificant part of the population," said Canon Riah Abu El Assal, 57, Archdeacon of the Jerusalem diocese of the Evangelical Episcopal Church. At the middle of the century, Christians represented 25 percent of the Holy Land's population, he explained in his small stone Christ Church in the hilly city of Nazareth near the traditional site where the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the Messiah. Now imprecise statistics place the number of Christians between 1.5 and 2.5 percent.

In less than 30 years, Canon Riah continued, the count of Christians in the faith's geographical heart, Jerusalem, has dropped from 28,000 to 10,000. The story of decline repeats itself all over the land of the gospel. Jesus' birthplace of Bethlehem today has a Muslim majority

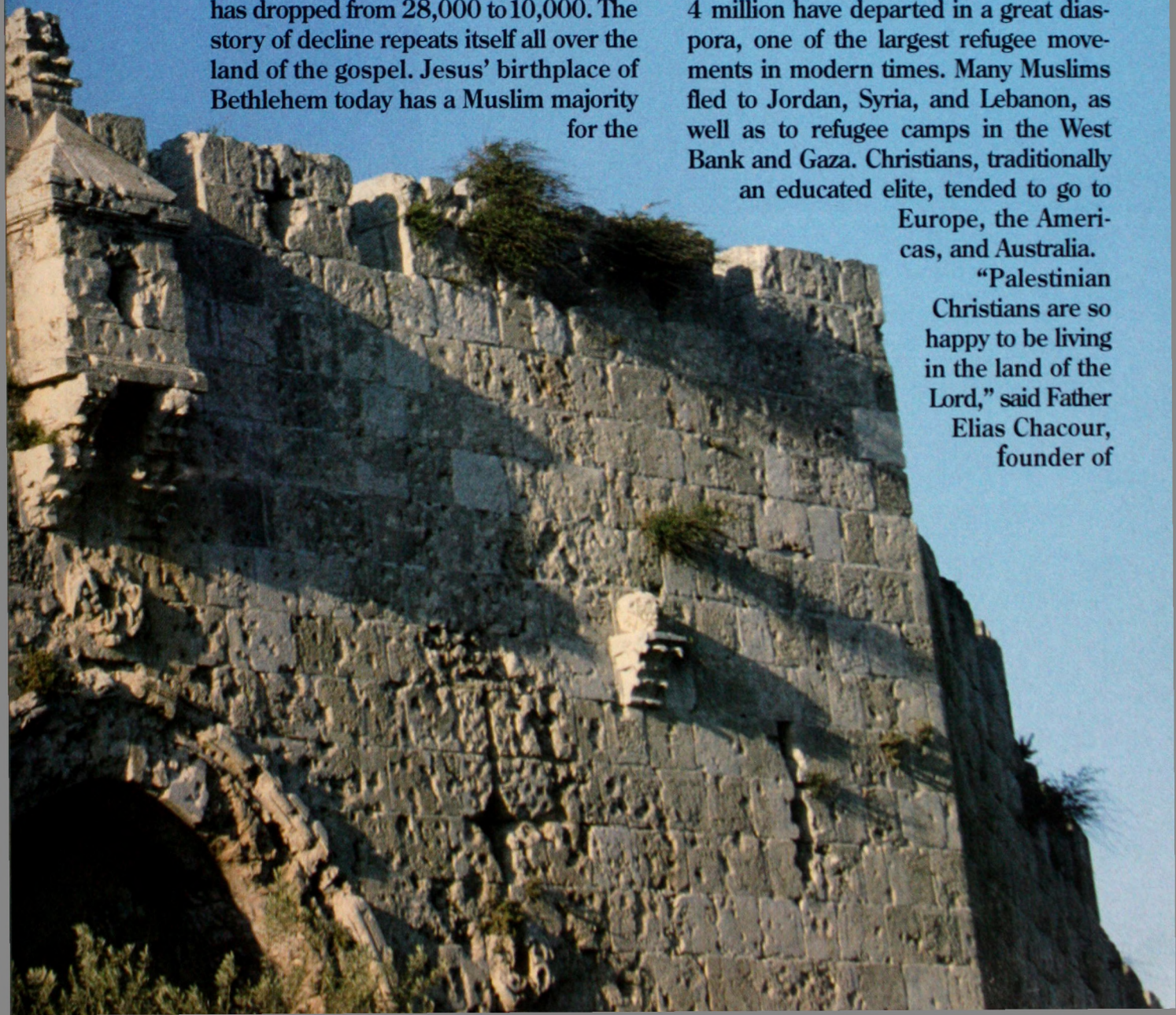
for the

first time in history. His boyhood home of Nazareth, 90 percent Christian not long ago, is now 65 percent Muslim. From Ramallah, a West Bank town near the place where Mary and Joseph realized they had left the 12-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem, 60,000 Christians have emigrated to Europe, the United States, and other countries. Only 6,000 remain among an 80-percent Muslim majority.

Steady emigration started bleeding the Holy Land of its Christian population in 1948, when the new state of Israel began taking over huge tracts of Palestinian territory. Some 2 million Palestinian Arabs—Muslim and Christian—still live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Israel occupied following the 1967 "Six-Day War." But another 4 million have departed in a great diaspora, one of the largest refugee movements in modern times. Many Muslims fled to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as to refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Christians, traditionally an educated elite, tended to go to

Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

"Palestinian Christians are so happy to be living in the land of the Lord," said Father Elias Chacour, founder of



Prophet Elias Community College in the parched and rocky hill town of Ibillin near the Sea of Galilee. Ordained in the ancient Melkite Catholic church, which rejected Gnosticism in favor of the orthodoxy of the Apostles during Christianity's first centuries, he added, "It is our privilege to be descendants of the very first Christians."

Reflecting that visitors from the West often think of Christianity as their missionary export, the 54-year-old priest cited, "My family was converted on the day of Pentecost—the first Pentecost. Whenever we Christians from the Holy Land look upon other Christians, we have the impression that they are all our children. It is because of my forefathers, and the grace of God, that others became Christian."

"On the other hand," continued the world-renowned author and champion of reconciliation between Jews and Arabs, "Christians of the Holy Land happen to be Palestinians. As such, they have endured everything that other Palestinians suffer: from deportation to exile to persecution to deprivation to confiscation of land, confiscation of homes and destruction of villages—like my native village, Biram, which was an entirely Christian village."

ENMITY DISTORTS IMAGES

Until recent peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Palestinian Arabs lived under an oppressive occupation that defied a United Nations Security Council resolution calling on Israel to withdraw. Meanwhile, Israelis faced constant fear of attack from radical Arab groups.

With the 1987 start of uprisings

Steady emigration started bleeding the Holy Land of its Christian population in 1948.

known as the intifada—from the Arabic word for "shake loose"—the strife turned especially intense. Overseas, the international image of both Palestinians and Israelis suffered, one conceived as hooded terrorists, the other as Uzi-toting bullies committing human-rights abuses.

The conceptions are hardly accurate. Israelis the visitor encounters are likely to be sophisticated builders of a First-World country in a Third-World region. The Arabs, as farmers, tradesmen, business and professional people, generally are kind and hospitable, in the tradition of the Middle East. Yet their conflict led to bloodshed, abuses, fear, and hatred on both sides, turning almost everyone mutually suspicious and distrustful.

To suppress activities ranging from stone throwing and displaying the Palestinian flag to terrorist attacks, Israeli military authorities imposed rule by the gun. As a consequence, Palestinian Arabs, guilty and innocent, saw family members beaten, imprisoned without trial, tortured, and shot. Frequent curfews pre-

vented Arabs from traveling or even leaving their homes for food. Their schools and universities were closed for as long as four years at a time.

Unemployment soared. Palestinians traveling to jobs in Israel often were turned back at checkpoints. Christians who in past times held preferred posts requiring higher education, faced competition with the new ruling society and often were squeezed out of the market.

In desperation, many saw departure as the only answer.

"The emigration of Christians from the Holy Land is one of the most alarming threats to our existence," Father Chacour said. "Palestinian Christians are leaving the country in a very speedy way. They look for more friendly societies for their children. The main threat is that within a few years we might have a Holy Land that is reduced to stones and sands and antiquities with no meaning whatsoever."

Those who stay behind have felt depressed and anxious as their numbers diminish, and they live in political impotence, said Bishara Awad, a 54-year-old Protestant evangelical. A suave, handsome man whose six brothers and sisters have emigrated, Awad stayed behind to found the Bethlehem Bible College. There, young local Christians from all denominations strengthen their grounding in the faith. "The Palestinian church is a suffering church at this time," he said. "If this trend continues, our church buildings will become like museums."

CHRISTIANS FEEL IGNORED

Holy Land Christians also feel ignored and abandoned by the church elsewhere in the world. "We are invisible to the Christian West," said 42-year-old Jerusalem attorney and human-rights activist Jonathan Kuttab, a member of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem. "When they think about the Middle East, they think about Judaism versus Islam, and they tend to identify with the Jews and with the state of Israel over and against the Palestinians—and the Christians."

Palestinians generally believe the West has tried to expiate guilt over anti-Semitism and the Nazi holocaust by favoring Zionist expansion into Arab lands, while overlooking the price paid by former residents whose ancestral roots there often go back hundreds, even thousands of years.

Kuttab is a member of a group of lay people and clergy who grapple with many complex questions of Israeli land acquisitions and the Palestinian response. They ask: Is the Christian God tribal or universal? Is God's relation with the Jewish people in the Old Testament superseded by

WORLD VISION IN THE HOLY LAND

World Vision began work in the Holy Land in 1975 with child care projects. Following a policy of serving the poor regardless of race, nationality, or faith, the agency assists people in greatest need in Israel and the occupied territories.

World Vision has maintained a bookmobile for village children who lack educational materials. The agency supports the Bethlehem Bible College and many schools from kindergarten to secondary level. It offers a broad range of vocational training for men and women and helps communities set up income-generating projects.

In the Gaza Strip, one of the Middle East's most economically depressed areas, World Vision helped a hospital establish a social welfare department and improve virtually the only modern surgical facility in the region. It also aids other medical facilities, including an out-patient clinic in Jerusalem's Old City that welcomes the ill regardless of their ability to pay.

World Vision has provided food, clothing, and medical treatment for families of breadwinners jailed, disabled, or killed in conflicts between Palestinian Arabs and Israel's occupation forces. The agency also supports organizations offering physical therapy and psychological counseling for people injured during the confrontations.

In 1994, World Vision donors helped more than 5,500 children through 30 sponsorship projects in the Holy Land. Currently, World Vision supports a total of 56 projects in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. 🌐



Eager pupils raise hands in a grade three mathematics class at the Greek Orthodox Christian Primary School in Gaza, one of many Holy Land Schools supported by World Vision.

the New Testament, where he gives all people who believe in him power to become children of God? How does this translate politically? Should Palestinians fight for their freedom, dignity, land, and homes, or is there a better way to deal with suffering and oppression—the way Jesus taught? Can they carry Jesus' message to Muslims? Do they also have a message for Jews about not relying for safety upon weapons and brute force?

PEACE SURPRISES SKEPTICS

The peace process that began in late 1993 has surprised many skeptics with its successes. First came limited Palestinian self-rule in May 1994. Within months, talks and agreements followed between Israel and formerly implacable Arab neighbors. Though opposed by extremists on both sides and viewed with caution by everyone else, the negotiations are welcomed as the start of reconciliation by Jews longing for security and Palestinian Arabs weary of military occupation. They could even slow migrations and possibly bring people back.

"Both sides are on a good track," said Father Chacour in Ibillin, "because

Is God's relation with the Jewish people in the Old Testament superceded by the New Testament, where He gives all people who believe in Him power to become children of God?

both sides are saying we need to share the land. This is not a religious conflict, not a racial conflict. It is a claim on the same land of two nations with the same power of claim, which is religious, historical, emotional, rational. We are starting to speak about integration of both communities. I think we are on the good way."

"It is the first step in the right direction," agreed Canon Riah in Nazareth.

"Dialogue implies recognition. We're excited that Israel sees us as equal human beings. This country has been shared by Christians, Muslims, and Jews for thousands of years. I see a possible Palestine-Israel federation, like a new Switzerland. I'd love to live to the day when that comes about. Ten years is realistic, I think."

Yet Christian leaders concur the politics of peace is not enough.

"There is the danger of people expecting and accepting eternal strife because they have not learned the lesson of forgiveness," said Jonathan Kuttab in Jerusalem. "It is a gift from God to be able to forgive and start anew. It's something we need to pray for, for the Jews and for the Palestinians, that they will be able to experience the healing of forgiveness."

CHRISTIANS BUILD BY EDUCATING

Meanwhile, Christian leaders are not passively awaiting uncertain outcomes of the peace process to improve the welfare of Christians who remain in the Holy Land.

"Many of our young people have

nothing to do but sit on the streetcorner looking on their fathers' land which has been confiscated," said Father Chacour. "I thought libraries would be the best thing to occupy their time—to befriend them with books. By the grace of God and also with the help of friends, we already have opened eight libraries."

Father Chacour also has organized summer camps. At the same time, with substantial help from World Vision, he built his community college from an 82-student school 11 years ago to an institution for 1,700 young Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Druse scholars. "The challenge is to bring the different segments of the population to live together, learn together, work together, suffer together, and hope together," said the priest who has received major international honors for his efforts toward social and political reconciliation in the Holy Land.

Bishara Awad of the Bethlehem Bible College has opened an extension in Nazareth. "We are a force encouraging Christians to stay," he said. "We have

I see a possible
Palestine-Israel
federation, like a
new Switzerland."

—Canon Riah Abu El Assal

found that Christians who have a deep personal conviction face hardship better. We have graduated almost 70 students, and 95 percent of them are still in the country."

"As a priest, I have to work on building a new era for Christianity," said 30-year-old Father Emil Salayta, principal of the Latin Catholic school for 372 students and pastor for some 850 parishioners in the West Bank village of Beir Zeit. "We have schools in all our churches," he explained. "With the best kind of education, our young people will be needed in the country, have a role in the society, rather than feeling alienated and having to look for another place to live."

Along with other Christian leaders, Father Salayta believes that churches are directly responsible for the recent slowing of emigration.

"I am grateful for this," he said. "We need more persons here to represent Christianity besides the clergy. We need Christians to give a live testimony of faith."

"Surely," Father Salayta concluded, "we don't want to see the day when we have only monuments and museums in the holy places." 🌐

NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

"Should we cut off Africa?" is a question many people must be asking as one disaster follows another on the continent—Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda. Sadly, still other African countries face impending or ongoing civil war and hunger. We posed the query about cutting off Africa to Tim Stafford, author and senior editor at *Christianity Today*, on the eve of his departure for Kenya last summer. His response is our cover story.

World Vision recognizes the impossibility of saving a continent, or even an entire country from disaster. Yet sometimes we need to remind ourselves to look past the hungry, beaten-by-circumstance masses of people to see the individual child, a family, a village, and realize that assistance toward a new life takes place one person, one family, one community at a time. While we cannot save the whole world, we definitely can help people in it.

World Vision has given the same personalized care to the children of Haiti since 1957. Watch for our Haiti Update in our February/March issue.

—Terry Madison

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Art Director **Don Aylard**
Managing Editor **Bruce Brander**
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Production Coordinator **Janet Dahring**
Contributing Editor **Rebecca Russell**
Assistant Editors **Jane Sutton, Shelly Ngo**
Editorial Assistant **Stephanie Stevenson**
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World Vision is a nonprofit, Christian humanitarian agency dedicated to serving God by helping people care for those in need. It ministers to children and families, provides emergency aid, fosters self-reliance, furthers evangelism, strengthens Christian leadership, and increases public awareness of poverty around the world.

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In Your Spare



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IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

A virgin birth is an inextricable link between the human and the divine. With the darkness penetrated and angels singing, the kingdom of God comes as a child in a manger. For God, this is neither accident nor surprise. It all happens "in the fullness of time."

Some months ago, I was discussing the role of children with a friend. My friend summed up their importance with a profound theological insight: "I think children are God's timepiece of history." His phrase encourages biblical reflection on how God has used the child to punctuate history.

The significance of children begins early. With humanity's fall, the kingdoms are set in conflict, and children are clearly found in the middle. "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed."

God gave us the ability to choose, even as he warns us of the consequences of bad choices. Sin enters the world, and children, always the most innocent and vulnerable, seem the first victims. It's as if God were saying, "I told you what would happen, but why would you put the kids through this? I'll take a special interest in those kids!" This deep concern for children is a theme that runs throughout Scripture.

Abraham takes his promised child, Isaac, to the mountain for sacrifice. Why would God demand such a thing, especially when Abraham's seed was to be multiplied into a great nation? Child sacrifice, however, was not rare in Abraham's time. The gods of Canaan demanded it, became infamous because of it. The God of history was demonstrating the difference between himself and those Canaanite gods. Children are to be preserved. A substitute was provided and Isaac's life was spared.

For the people of Israel, their choice of God carried with it responsibility for their offspring. Clearly, the God of history demands reverence and respect for those who are the most vulnerable, the children.

Listen to how the Old Testament concludes. "Lo, I will send you the Prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse." The historical event of Christ's second coming is linked to the relationship we have with our children and the relationship we allow our children to have with us.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks his strongest words against anyone who would cause a child to stumble. "It would be better if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea." Self-inflicted, retroactive annihilation is ours if we choose to put a stumbling block in front of a child.

On a more positive note, Jesus also said that the coming kingdom would be made up of children, and those of us who would become like them. And we "suffer the little children"; we allow them to come to the Lord. We do everything possible to facilitate a relationship between our children and our Lord.

We certainly have a lot of children to work with: 1.8 billion in the world under the age of 15. Of these, some 1.4 billion are growing up in non-Christian settings. What a significant missiological challenge! Children need to be part of our vision and our burden for a world that God so loved that he gave us a little child.

Unfortunately, this very day 38,000 children under the age of 5 will die from preventable diseases. They will continue to die at this rate, unless we take seriously the God of history. The orphanages in Romania continue to be full. Young girls in Thailand are still being forced into prostitution. In southern Sudan, the children are first to go hungry, first to die—last in that culture's priorities.

In America, increasingly children are born into poverty. Increasingly, with families both rich and poor, they are abandoned. Drive-by killers take their lives, some shot in strollers. Fifty percent of our growing homeless population is comprised of children.

Why would the God of history reveal himself through a child? It's simple, yet incomprehensibly profound. He loves us. Nowhere in history did God ever turn his back on his children. Except once. For the family closest to him, his only begotten Son, there was to be rejection. Our sin was great, but his grace was more abundant. No ram was caught in the thicket this time. The child had to stay on the altar. God's love for us required it.

A historical event: the birth of a child that caused the angels to sing. That child, however, was born to die. Adam's sin, my sin, the sin of the world produced a momentarily tragic event, allowed by God, who wants only to love us. Our grateful hearts seek to capture the enormity of God's love. Our naturalness precludes anything but a small glimmer of the magnitude of that love. Someday, however, we will know all ... "in the fullness of time." ☉

The kingdom of God comes as a child in a manger.



A baby naps in a hammock in northern Thailand.

RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION

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Call or write today to order your Love Loaves or ask for more information.

Miracles can begin here!

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Yes! I want to begin the Love Loaf program in my church.

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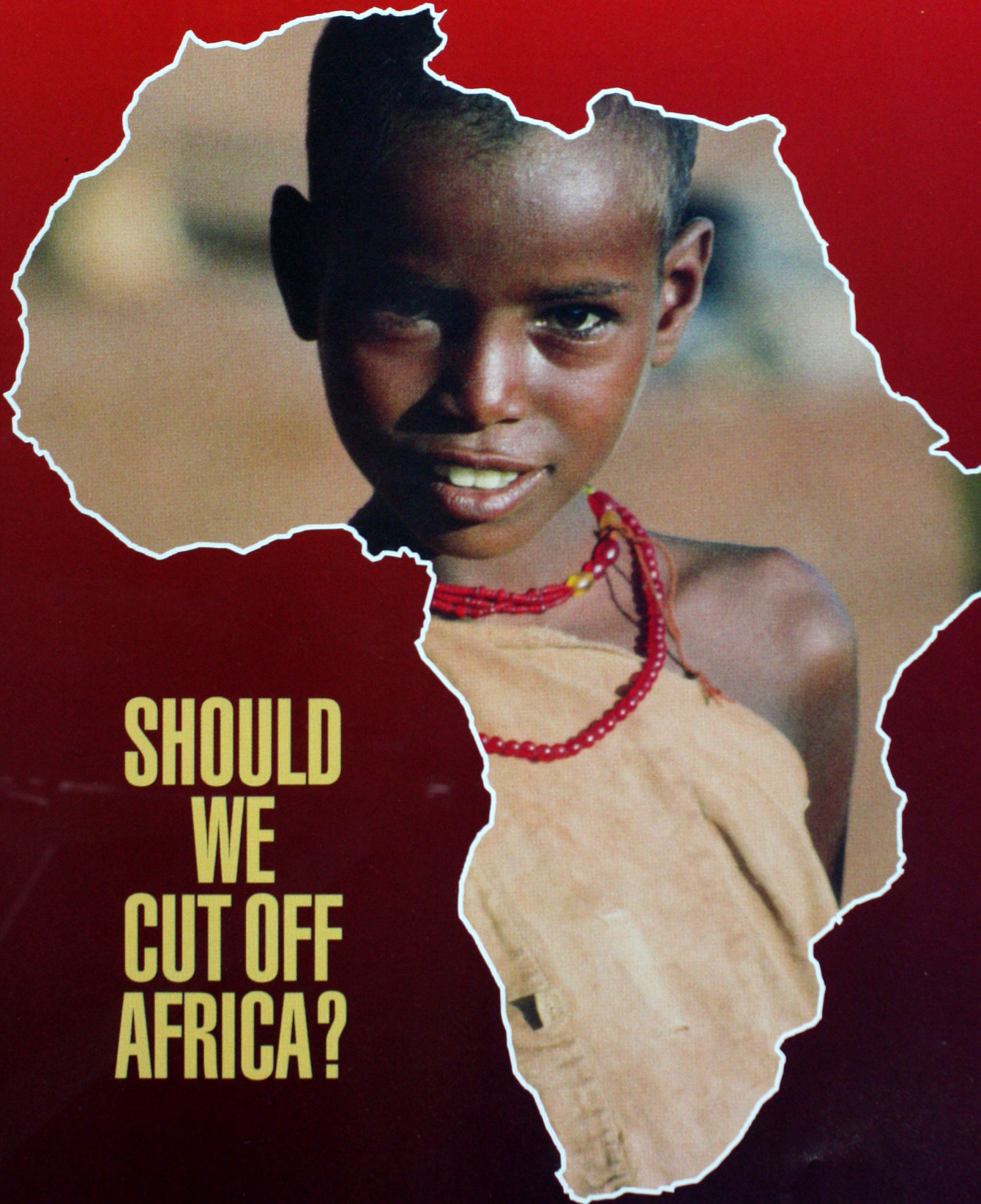
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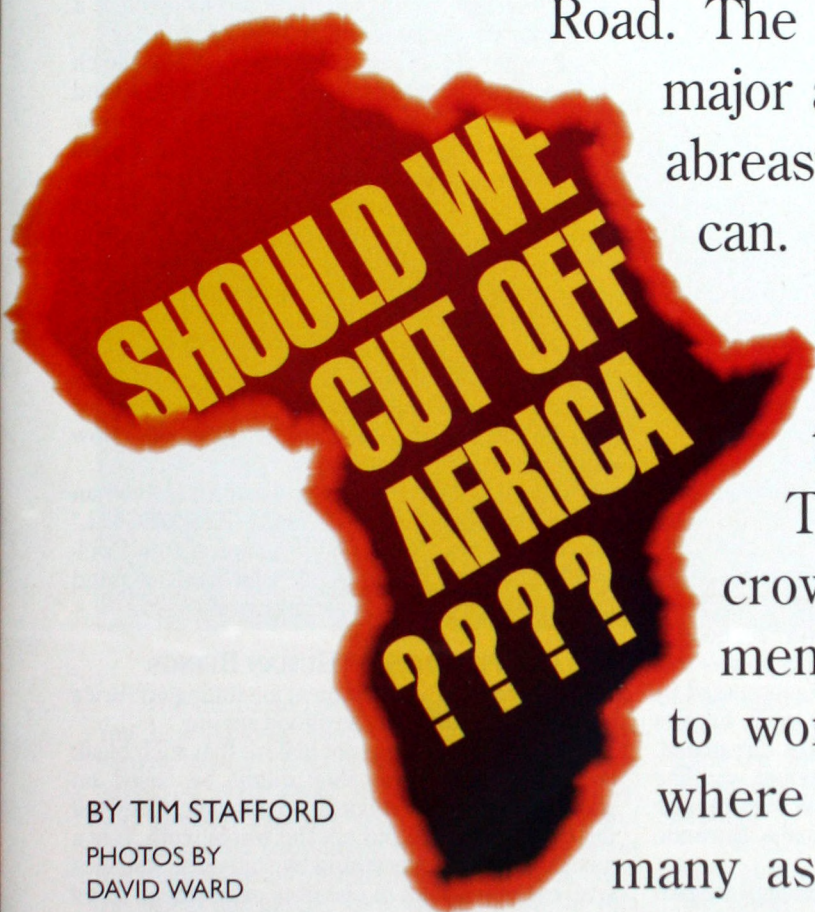
**SHOULD
WE
CUT OFF
AFRICA?**

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THE QUESTION
PROBABLY
PREYS ON

**THE MINDS OF
MANY OF US IN THE
PROSPEROUS
WESTERN WORLD,
EVEN IF WE DON'T
ASK IT OPENLY.**



BY TIM STAFFORD
PHOTOS BY
DAVID WARD

In Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, where my family and I spent last summer, a fast-moving line of men in ragged clothes forms each dawn along Mbagathi Road. The line snakes for miles by major arteries, about four people abreast walking as fast as they can. From a distance, it looks like a crowd just out of a football stadium, spilling toward their cars.

This is no happy sports crowd, however. These are men, and some women, going to work. They leave the slum where they live—homes with as many as 10 people per room, no windows, no toilets—and throng to Nairobi's industrial area. They earn just enough to survive. They have no money for bus fare, so they walk, even in the rain.

STATISTICS TELL THE TRUTH TO A POINT, BUT NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH. IT IS A MISTAKE TO JUDGE EVERYTHING BY STATISTICS.

The line passed near my home each day when I lived in Nairobi 15 years ago. It is there still. It has not diminished, and I cannot think that it will any time in the foreseeable future. For me that line is a symbol—and more than a symbol, the reality—of Kenya's lack of progress, indeed of all Africa's. The line stands for the hundreds of millions of Africans who struggle to make economic progress, and end up barely surviving.

Should we cut off Africa? The question probably preys on the minds of many of us in the prosperous Western world, even if we don't ask it openly. Such a possibility is quite real today, as aid funds once earmarked for Africa are diverted to other parts of the world, such as Eastern Europe. The prospect horrifies people like me who care about Africa. I have lived in Kenya, traveled in many other African countries, and I love Africa. But I must face the arguments for cutting off the continent.

The strongest argument is failure. Billions of dollars have been pumped into Africa over the past 30 years. The United Kingdom, the World Bank, the United States, European governments, hundreds of mission organizations and a host of non-profit charities such as World Vision have devoted resources—people, money, plans—to helping Africa. What do they have to show for it? If you look at international statistics, it would seem they have been throwing the money away. By almost any measure—economic, political, ecological, medical—the African continent is worse off now than when they began.

While the rest of the world grows far more food per capita than it used to, Africa alone grows less. Meanwhile, its population growth rate booms, with ever more mouths to feed. AIDS booms too. Malaria and sleeping sickness, once suppressed by modern medicine, are out of control again. Forests are being chopped down; species are threatened. Africa leads the world in refugees, famine, war. The continent supplies the world's media with regular horror stories: Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda. Where next?

Many Western countries increasingly regard Africa as both hopeless and irrelevant to their interests. What difference would it make if Africa one day simply dropped off the map of international concern? From a pragmatic perspective, some argue it would make little difference. We would miss certain resources—oil from Nigeria and Angola, copper from Zambia, diamonds from South Africa, and coffee and tea from Kenya. But our economies would adjust, and we would go on.

It's tempting to shrug, to say, "We tried to help, but it did no good. Our money is better spent elsewhere. Let's cut off Africa."

THE PROBLEM OF DEPENDENCY

Some informed people argue that foreign assistance has made matters worse. Aid can feed the tendency to dependency, to look to Europe or the United States for solutions instead of solving problems locally.

A high percentage of Africa's top political leaders have been dictators: brutal, incompetent, greedy, and corrupt. They are largely responsible for Africa's problems, because of their ruinous economic policies, personal kleptocracy, and murderous politics. How do such terrible leaders stay afloat? One answer is: They receive foreign aid. By controlling where it goes, they are able to maintain their power.

Private aid organizations can bypass such leaders and target specific communities and churches with their assistance. Yet dependency exists there too. I recall a program to build a small dam in an arid area of West Africa. The aid organization, a Christian charity, was careful to do the project right. Lengthy discussions were held to ensure that villagers wanted the changes the dam would bring, that they would contribute to its building, that they would feel responsible for its upkeep.

When the dam was completed, aid officials flew in for a handing-over ceremony. Village elders spoke proudly of their new dam. "We thank you for your help in realizing our dream," they said. "Now this is our dam."

A year later the aid organization received an urgent cablegram: "YOUR DAM IS LEAKING." When new, it was "our dam." When problems developed, it became "your dam." That habit of mind does great damage whenever it spreads.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF HUMAN BEINGS

In a nutshell, the argument for cutting off Africa is this: We are not doing any good anyway.

I do not agree. I do not believe that such bleak assessments, however they might be based on statistics and media reports, are realistic. They tell the truth to a point, but not the whole truth. It is a mistake to judge everything by statistics. Statistics level everything out to one gray assessment. They give the average, not the detailed variation that makes up the average.

The news media do not even report the average, only the disastrous. While the horrors of Rwanda went on last summer, I was in Nairobi, just a few hundred miles away. Watching CNN one had the feeling that Africa in general was in upheaval. But in Nairobi I felt no more impact than if I had been in London or Los Angeles. Horrible as it was, Rwanda's trouble was Rwanda's—not shared by the 51 other countries in Africa. The media do not give that perspective.



BRUCE BRANDER / WORLD VISION



The media do not often highlight good news. You heard plenty about Uganda when the barbarous dictator Idi Amin was there, but how much have you read about the country's spectacular improvement over the past decade? What about Ghana and its overhauled economy? What about the restoration of Mozambique and Eritrea since the recent end of civil wars? Do you know the role that international aid is playing in those reversals?

Even though I have lived in Africa, I sometimes get hooked by negative media reports. Flying into Nairobi with my family at the beginning of last summer, I felt misgivings. I'd read so much disheartening news. Would my children be safe, with all the violent crime I'd heard about? Would the bleakness of hunger and poverty overwhelm our senses?

Reality, however, was far more complex than what I had seen in the news. The moment we landed, my sense of Africa as a basket case began to fade and

to be replaced by a far subtler image of Africa as a place where many people have problems—and some are solving them. Perhaps I can best explain this by describing Kenyan friends who met me at the airport.

Haron Wachira and his wife, Margaret, were there. Haron at one time edited a Christian magazine I helped start. He was very active in Kenya's 1992 presidential election—the first multi-party vote in the nation's 30-year history.

According to him, the ruling party cheated its way to victory. Haron concluded that business, not politics, held the best prospects for transforming Kenya at this time. He has launched a company that is assembling computers and selling them throughout East Africa. Business is prospering, thanks to a program of economic liberalization pushed by the World Bank and insisted on by nations providing foreign aid.

For Haron and his family, life in Africa is a

Though growing populations and migration from the countryside continue to crowd city slums, "zones of opportunity" in African business build modern skylines, like the prosperous profile of Nairobi, Kenya.

SEVERE PROBLEMS WERE UNDENIABLE. BUT EQUALLY OBVIOUS WAS THE VIBRANT LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND CHURCHES.

mixed picture. He foresees no end to Kenya's troubles, because they are enmeshed with Kenya's political problems. At the same time, there are zones of opportunity where he can create jobs, subsidize ministry (he spends many of his weekends visiting high schools to talk about his faith), and show an alternative pattern of leadership.

Kimani and Wairimu Nyoike also were at the airport. Kimani, a lifelong politician, spent a year in solitary confinement for his political views, and nearly died in prison. But with the help of a son who studied at the University of Pennsylvania, he and Wairimu, who was once head of nursing for the central government hospital, are raising and selling tomatoes on a large scale. Kimani plans to get back

into politics for the 1997 elections. "We cannot stop hoping," he told me. And clearly, he had not stopped.

We saw similar signs of troubles and hopes during the entire six weeks we spent in Kenya. Severe problems were undeniable. But equally obvious was the vibrant life of individuals, families, and churches. The picture was not one of failure vs. success. It was as complex as human beings themselves.

Yes, the line of slum-dwellers still snakes through Nairobi each dawn, but aid is making a difference in the lives of individuals in that line. I talked to Paul Gachie, a friend who heads a small-loans program for a Christian relief and development agency. They are helping exactly the kind of poor urban slum

A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Famines in Ethiopia will never be over. In the past 250 years, drought and famine have struck somewhere in the mountainous East African country on an average of once every 11 years. Should we, then, cut off Ethiopia?

If we had severed the country from our concerns during the Great Famine of 1984-86, 10 million people might have died of starvation, instead of 1 million. If we had discarded Ethiopia and its people in 1990, another famine would have wiped away vast masses of people, instead of being prevented by prompt and well-directed aid.

Yet aid alone is not an answer to the country's historic cycle of hunger. Relief must be followed by rehabilitation—putting people back on their feet. After that comes development to reduce or eliminate the need for future aid.

A model of successful development is the Ansokia Valley, a remote stretch of land 200 miles north of the capital, Addis Ababa. When World Vision workers went there in October 1984, they found a dustbowl with hardly a tree in sight, where 60,000 people were starving.

Early aid supplies arrived on rented camel caravans. Meanwhile, local people strong enough to work carried soil in baskets and stamped it flat for an airstrip. Then they built an all-weather road, with a bridge, to the nearest highway.

Soon World Vision was distributing agricultural supplies: seeds, farm tools, oxen for plowing, livestock for new herds. From tree nurseries cultivating more than 60 varieties of seedlings, agency workers gave families young trees to be planted for fruit, fuel, timber, and soil-stabilization. On a demonstration farm, World Vision introduced peanuts, bananas, guava, tomatoes, beekeeping, poultry raising, fish farming.

Food-for-work projects terraced hillsides for new fields and piped clean water to village reservoirs. Health teams set up medical clinics. Trainers taught drought-resistant agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, weaving, knitting, basic literacy. World Vision helped maintain an elementary school and built a high school.

Today Ansokia Valley is green from end to end, with millions of trees and rich fields of corn, sorghum, and rice. Prosperous and self-sustaining, the people of the valley now export food to other regions of the country.

—Bruce Brander

A model of successful development in Africa, Ethiopia's Ansokia Valley was transformed in only a few years from a dust bowl full of starving people into a self-sustaining exporter of food.





dwellers I saw marching beside the road in the morning. Gachie told me they have made nearly a thousand small business loans, with not one default. The slum dwellers formed groups that meet weekly and guarantee the loans. If one person defaults, the whole group cannot get another loan. Therefore, they do not default. That is one case—and many others could be cited—where aid given with care and intelligence truly helps people.

IT'S HARD TO HELP PEOPLE

Should we cut off Africa? The question has parallels in U.S. society, too. Should we cut off drug rehabilitation? Its success rate is less than 50 percent. Or, to bring it even closer to home, should we stop trying to help families? The stability of family life in the United States, measured statistically, continues to go downhill. But when family life seminars are offered, many people are helped. Should we quit because many are not? Of course not! Mere statistics do not tell us all we need to know.

The complaint about dependency is, similarly, only half the truth. Dependency can be a problem wherever one person tries to help another. It is a problem in U.S. programs to house the homeless. It is a problem in farm subsidy programs.

Helping people—any people—always is hard. Help must be given thoughtfully and selectively—in Africa as everywhere else. Most aid organizations are aware of this, and they work hard to ensure their money is wisely spent. The small-business loans program is a good example. It doesn't breed dependence, but independence.

Should we cut off Africa? I would say just the opposite: we should give more, because there is so much more need than we can even begin to touch.

The help we give for disaster relief saves lives. That aid is extremely effective. When people are starving, we nurture them back to health. When Rwandan refugees are dying from cholera and other waterborne diseases, we provide water treatment facilities.

Certainly, this solves no long-term problems. The people we feed today must eat again tomorrow. But allowing them to starve solves no long-term problems either. In relief the issue is: Will they live? Relief says yes! I, for one, want to be a part of that.

When people survive, the next step is to help them escape poverty so they will not need repeated rescues. That brings us to development. Development aid raises more complex issues than relief. It is the difference between putting out a fire and rebuilding the damaged structure.

Is development aid effective? Yes and no. I see no evidence that aid by itself can reverse global



A Mozambican mother and her child look forward to peace and development as a long civil war in their country ends and national growth begins.

economic patterns, or transform cultures, or overcome political paralysis. It cannot save continents, or even countries. Aid can, however, help individual children to go school. It can help particular villages to get a clean water supply. It can provide slum-dwelling families with a small business loan that will enable them to escape poverty.

It is important to remember that we help one person, one village, one community at a time. No honest aid organization will claim it is saving everyone in need everywhere. But partial success is still success. The statistical Big Picture of the sagging African economy is not the only picture. Just as important are the family snapshots of people, villages, communities that are helped successfully.

We quite rightly study global statistics, and test the effectiveness of various approaches to development. It is important to have an accurate grasp of

THE FACT IS, WE CAN DO GOOD, AND A LOT OF IT. IN AFRICA, WE CAN FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE VICTIMIZED BY WAR AND FAMINE.



Citizens of the West African country of Ghana have seen their economy grow and thrive.

what works. Statistics and other scientific ways of measurement help us see clearly. For example, statistics have played a role in demolishing socialist economics, which have done so much harm in Africa.

But statistics also can be used demoniacally: to justify a shrug of indifference. They can tempt us not to love our neighbors, not to care about the poor. We can be tempted to give up on troubled people and withdraw into ourselves. We can use statistics to convince ourselves that we cannot do any good anyway, so why try.

The fact is, we can do good, and a lot of it. In Africa, we can feed hungry people victimized by war and famine. We can cure their ills. We can provide clean water. We can send children to school. We can teach farming techniques. We can provide vocational training for income generation. We can help protect God's animal and plant creation.

Finally, and this is the bottom-line reason for me, God offers us no alternative to giving. I read in Scripture that God's people are to be generous and fair. I do not read that our generosity is contingent on full and constant success.

"The poor you will always have with you," Jesus said (Matt. 26:11). He did not add, "So forget them." On the contrary, he commanded his disciples to "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it

back. Do to others as you would have them do to you," (Luke 6:30-31).

When I lived in Kenya, I was often confronted by people who told stories of deprivation and need. It was difficult to know which of the stories were true. If I gave, I undoubtedly would be cheated at times. What to do? I tried to give carefully and discerningly, but I kept to this motto: "I would rather be cheated a hundred times than develop a heart of stone."

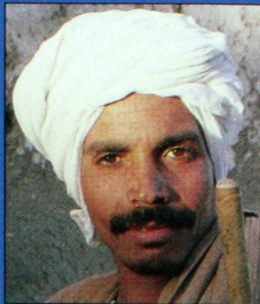
I suspect that God is more concerned about my generosity than about the impact of my generosity. God can and does provide for needy people in other ways. He can get at my stony heart in only one way, however: by convincing me to not hold back from other's needs.

If Americans generally decide that the African basket case can be dropped—that it is hopeless and irrelevant to their lives—the perverse decision will come back to haunt us in the hardening of our national character. We need to be people who care about the world. We need to be people who care about people other than ourselves.

In keeping Africa on the map of our concerns, we may not reverse all of the continent's fortunes, but we can provide much real help for many real people. In doing so, we become real people ourselves. ☉

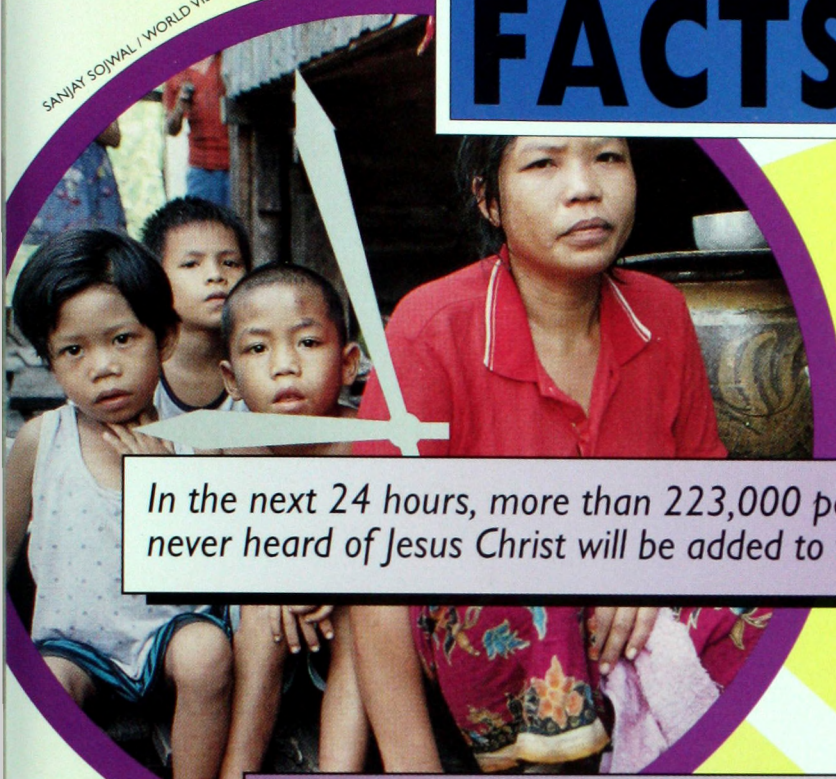
Tim Stafford is a free-lance writer in Santa Rosa, Calif.

FACING THE FACTS



DAVID DOBSON / WORLD VISION

SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

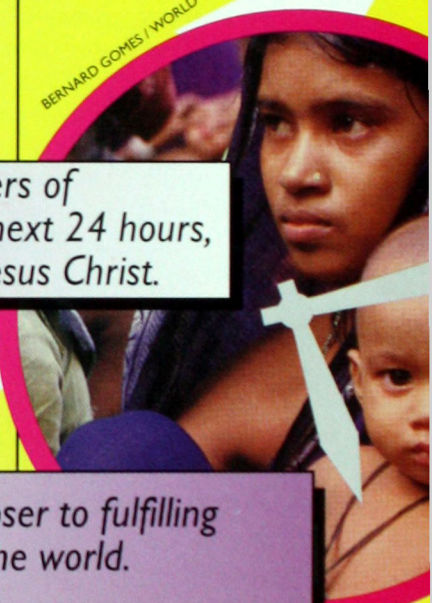


In the next 24 hours, more than 223,000 people who have never heard of Jesus Christ will be added to the world.

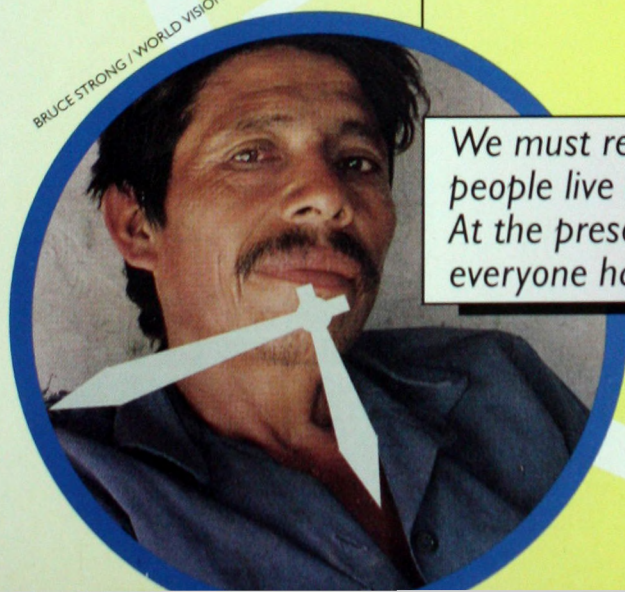
While populations explode, unprecedented numbers of missionaries are reaching out to the world. In the next 24 hours, more than 235,000 will hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

That means we will be 13,000 people closer to fulfilling the goal of evangelizing every person in the world.

BERNARD GOMES / WORLD VISION



BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



We must remember, however, that more than 1.3 billion people live in the least evangelized parts of the world. At the present rate, it will take more than 300 years before everyone has heard the Good News!

Source: AD2000 Global Monitor, November 1991

The information on this page can also be found in *The Changing Shape World Mission*, published by Mission Advanced Research and Communications, a division of World Vision. For information about obtaining a copy of this booklet and other MARC publications, call 800-777-7752

In the city of Jesus' birth, 5-year-old Achea receives a big kiss from Sister Ursula Samara at the Bethlehem Babies' Home.

Achea's mother died as Achea was born in the city of Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Local folklore says that infants whose mothers die in childbirth live under a curse. Perhaps influenced by the powerful stigma, her stepmother abused her, and by the age of 7 months Achea was suffering severe malnutrition.

That's when she arrived at the Bethlehem Babies Home, where she has lived ever since under the care of Sister Ursula, who comes from the city of Nazareth, and other Roman Catholic sisters of the French order, Daughters of Charity. The sisters, most from Arab countries, serve with one social worker and volunteers from around the world to give support and love to 50 abandoned, illegitimate, and handicapped children up to 5 years old.

In continuous operation since 1920, the creche is part of the Holy Family Hospital in the greater Bethlehem area, now a region of 200,000 people. World Vision donors have assisted the babies home since 1985. 🌐

Photo: Bruce Brander / World Vision





A self-confessed former racist and grandson of a slaveowner leads the way in healing racially divided Fort Worth, Texas.

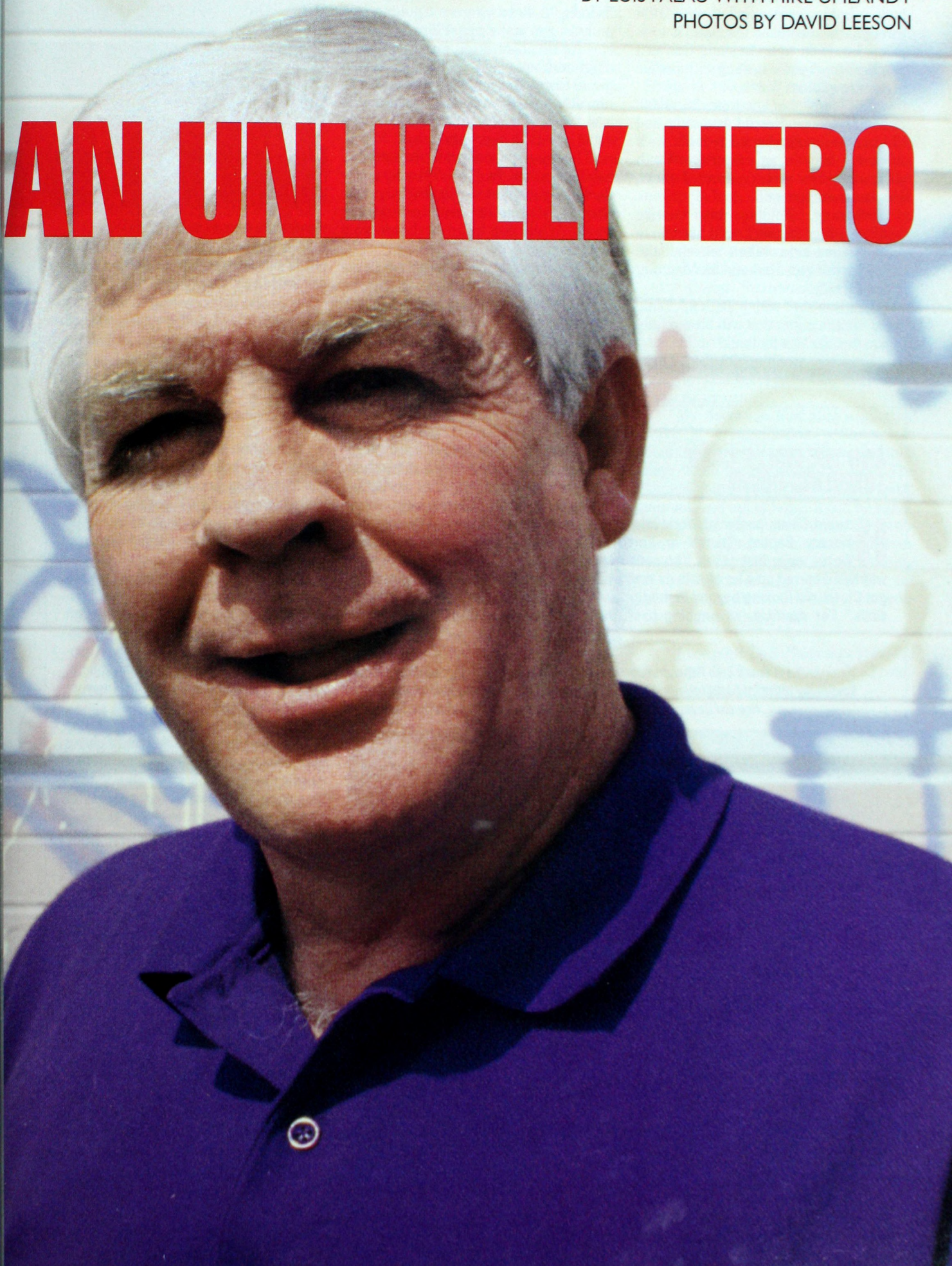
ERNIE HORN IS



He is perhaps the last person you'd expect to lead the way in healing racial divisions in Fort Worth, Texas. And not just because his grandfather owned slaves in Kentucky. Ernie, owner of E. Horn Construction Inc., lives a very comfortable life. Why get involved in the messy ugliness of racism?

BY LUIS PALAU WITH MIKE UMLANDT
PHOTOS BY DAVID LEESON

AN UNLIKELY HERO



In his heart, Ernie long understood how people are reconciled with God through the death of his Son. It took years, however, to understand this as a practical concept for dealing with people in downtown Fort Worth.

The story begins June 26, 1993. Police Detective Donald Manning and his date were enjoying a late-night walk around a lake in an east Fort Worth park when four men confronted them; one was holding a gun.

Manning, holding his service weapon behind his back, told his date to move to one side. When she did, the man with the gun fired and hit Manning in the left side.

"He was shot with a Tech 9," Ernie says. "That's a gun that will blow a hole in you the size of a football."

Detective Manning, 28, died. Three days later police arrested several young

men after one of them bragged to friends, "A dude we were trying to jack pulled a gun and we shot him."

As the contractor for a couple of neighborhood police stations, Ernie had got to know Manning and had talked to him about the Lord. Ernie says Manning was "a cops' cop in Fort Worth—dedicated, talented, happy-go-lucky."

In any city, a policeman's murder is headline news. In Fort Worth, a city divided by race and besieged by gangs, Manning's murder made everything worse. White cop killed by black gang banger.

The day of Manning's funeral, Ernie was having lunch with Gary Turner, coordinator of an evangelistic crusade that my team—the Luis Palau Evangelistic Team—and I were planning in Fort Worth. Running out of time, Gary went with Ernie to the funeral chapel.

Ernie describes the experience as "supernatural." During the funeral service, he felt an "expectation" that he tried to rationalize and dismiss in the emotion of those moments. "But the Lord really spoke to me and said, 'I'm going to reveal to you the beginning of a new thing.'"

Afterward Ernie and Gary drove to the cemetery for the interment service. Ernie watched as the funeral procession of more than 2,000 people, including about 500 police officers, approached the grave site. Again the Lord spoke to him: "Look at their eyes."

"That frightened me, because I didn't understand what I was supposed to be doing," he says.

As the flag covering Manning's casket was folded and presented to Manning's mother, Ernie again heard, "Look into their eyes."

"I looked, and there were like 500

AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Howard Caver, pastor of World Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Worth, says last year's "crusade whirlwind stirred up a lot of activity that got Christians looking beyond their four walls." For example, an ongoing pas-

tors' prayer group helped tear down racial, denominational, and size barriers.

"When we come together, our differences don't matter," Howard says. "I forget I'm a pastor of a small church. No one's thinking, *Who are you? You pastor only 50 people.* We've created such strong bonds, that's not a consideration."

World Missionary Baptist Church was trying to start a Christian school last

fall for neighborhood children. But in mid-August, the church was short \$2,100 to pay for building renovations. Howard told the congregation they needed to pray. "We know that God's going to perform a miracle—he's always faithful—but we only have until tomorrow to get it done."

As he started his sermon, several men entered the church. They were Christian brothers Howard had met through prayer efforts for the Luis Palau crusade. About a hundred others from their congregation, James Avenue Baptist Church, followed them in. "We'd like to interrupt your service," one of the men said.

The surprise guests from James Avenue announced that they were giving their congregation's entire offering that morning to help their sister church start the school. They presented a check for \$9,000, enough not only for building renovations, but now the teacher could be paid.

When Howard read the amount, hallelujahs and amens by both congregations lifted the roof.

"This would not have occurred without ministers coming together to pray and work," Howard says. "Whatever Christ asks you to do, it may be impossible for you alone, but remember, you've got the Body. If we keep off to our little selves because we are Baptist or black or white or whatever, we're going to miss the other part of the Body ministering to us, because we've amputated our hand. That's what I'm telling people wherever I go. Open yourself up to the walls coming down. They shouldn't have been there in the first place."

—Mike Umlandt

Last year's Luis Palau crusade in Fort Worth, Texas, brought together pastors from many different backgrounds. Those meetings led an affluent church to help Pastor Howard Caver (left) start a Christian school for neighborhood children.





Luis Palau led an evangelistic crusade in Fort Worth, Texas that resulted in racial reconciliation and healing that has continued to this day.

John Waynes, .357-caliber Magnums strapped to their sides. Every one of them had on sunglasses. I couldn't see their eyes. But as they started pulling their sunglasses off and wiping the tears, I saw the same hopelessness that you see on television in the eyes of starving people."

Days later, at a weekly prayer meeting for the crusade, Ernie says, the Lord spoke again: "If I can't send my people to be part of the solution, who am I going to send?"

Ernie prayed, "Lord, show us how we can be part of the solution, and how we can come together."

That summer, he helped mobilize community and denominational leaders for our crusade in October. People of all races began coming together.

"In doing this, a lot of people thought I was a missile out of control," Ernie says. "By what authority did I keep showing up at community meetings, like the crime commission, and trying to get all these churches to come together?"

Ernie obeyed the Lord's leading, but inside he felt unworthy. Increasing contact with minorities through his crusade and community involvement was exposing a dark side of his heart: racial prejudice.

It showed up most overtly at work. Ernie had just hired additional iron workers—all white—for a construction project. Every interview with a black man concluded the same way: "We'll get back with you later."

"If God was fixin' to do a new thing, I had to get out of his way and let him do it," Ernie says.

Ernie and crusade leaders in Fort Worth called a meeting of some 30 black pastors from the area where the young man who shot Manning had grown up. Ernie's idea was to enlist their support for a youth rally in an inner-city park—to get people to work together toward solutions and overcome the hopelessness that most were feeling.

Sitting in a circle face to face with mostly black people, Ernie fought back tears. "I was feeling real insecure and frightened about addressing these people and telling them the vision about what Palau's team was doing, what was fixin' to happen, about God doing a new thing.

"And then I realized it wasn't stage fright. I was under conviction. As I looked in the eyes of these black pastors, I confessed to them my prejudice and sin, and how in my business I had acted with partiality. I repented and asked them to forgive me.

"I was feeling pretty good then, but all of a sudden I had that same insecure feeling again, and I had to repent for the sins of my father's generation, and my grandfather's. That sure was God, because I don't think about things like that."

With only a few days' notice, about 4,000 young people—including rival gang members of the Bloods and Crips—showed up at a "reconciliation rally" at a Fort Worth park. A few weeks later, the Greater Fort Worth Crusade brought black and white, rich and poor together to work at solving the city's problems from the inside out.

Spearheaded by my friend Ernie Horn, volunteers had canvassed inner-city neighborhoods, inviting young people to the crusade. Buses brought more than 500 young people to the Convention Center. On the crusade's youth night, the crowd of 9,000 erupted in applause as three inner-city gang members were the first to make their way to the area in front of the platform to profess their newfound faith in Christ.

"Unless we change the heart, we haven't changed anything," I preached at the crusade's final rally. That evening, a drug dealer responded to the gospel invitation, giving his life to Jesus Christ. That same moment, a few feet away, a prominent Fort Worth physician was making the same commitment.

A year after the crusade, Fort Worth's churches and community leaders continue to work together to change their city. This past spring, pastors, businessmen, and the city's superintendent of schools cooperated to bring motivational speaker Joseph Jennings to Fort Worth. He spoke to more than 30,000 kids in 17 schools. At three evening rallies at Baptist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches, Jennings told 6,700 young people and parents how the Lord had rescued him from drug use and gang activity, and then he invited the kids to give their lives to Jesus Christ. At

When Ernie Horn addressed a group of black pastors for the first time, he confessed his sin of racism—and then his father's and grandfather's.

those three rallies, more than 400 made first-time decisions for the Lord.

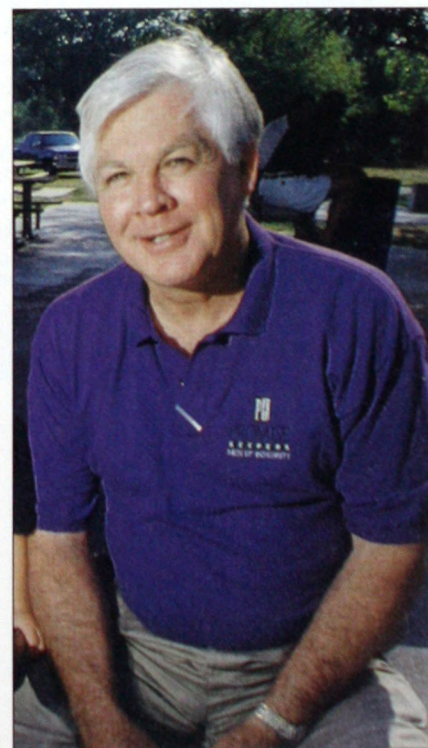
The United States desperately needs to hear this message of reconciliation. When I left Argentina for the United States in 1960, this country was still a place where many peoples of the world could come for freedom and opportunity.

All that is endangered today as the nation turns its back on the Lord. The United States needs evangelism like never before. Theologian Carl F.H. Henry once said: "The barbarians are coming." Henry could see that without a national wave of evangelization that converts hundreds of thousands of people to Jesus Christ, "barbarians" are going to take over our land. Not foreigners, but our own unrepentant generation, plus our children and grandchildren.

The problem is in the heart, not just the outward behavior that so alarms most Americans.

My dream is this: that a massive wave of evangelization restores this country's days of glory, those spiritual days when joy pervaded the land. The United States was once young in spirit, vibrant, and full of hope. It can be again. The gospel gets to the root of the problems destroying our nation. As demonstrated in Fort Worth, Christ can bring reconciliation—a deep, sincere love for people regardless of culture, race, education, or privilege. ☉

Evangelist Luis Palau has preached the gospel to 11 million people in 62 countries. He lives in Portland, Ore.



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

ON THE WINGS

Sandi Patty will stage her first major concert tour in four years from Feb. 17 through May 20.

Sandi will tour 35 U.S. and Canadian cities performing music from her latest release, "Find It On the Wings." Sandi tours with 4Him, comedian Mark Lowry, and a live band featuring some of the finest musi-



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

cians in Christian music. The group 4Him will perform music from their latest compact disc, "The Ride."

Sandi recently returned from visiting her sponsored children in World Vision projects in Ethiopia. Concert-goers will have the opportunity to become child sponsors.

For tour information, call (800) 432-4200.

VICTIMS NO MORE

Two churches in Lafayette, Ind., offer juvenile offenders an alternative to settling their disputes in court. Acting upon their commitment to the biblical concepts of justice, peace, and reconciliation, the Lafayette Church of the Brethren and Mennonite Fellowship introduced a victim-offender reconciliation program called Mediation Services of Tippecanoe County, Inc.

Court officials or probation officers can refer cases to MSTC, but both victims and offenders must

agree to work with a pair of mediators to settle their dispute. MSTC executive director Pat Hession says the majority of cases referred to them result in face-to-face meetings and settlements.

To learn more about Tippecanoe's mediation program, call (317) 474-0501.

For resources or training in dispute resolution, contact the national non-profit organization, Community Board, in San Francisco. The Community Board works with teachers, counselors, and administrators, showing them why conflicts occur and how to mediate them. The organization also works with private and public agencies and juvenile correctional facilities. The dispute resolution seminars are offered five times a year.

For more information, contact the Community Board, 1540 Market St., Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102; or call (415) 552-1250.

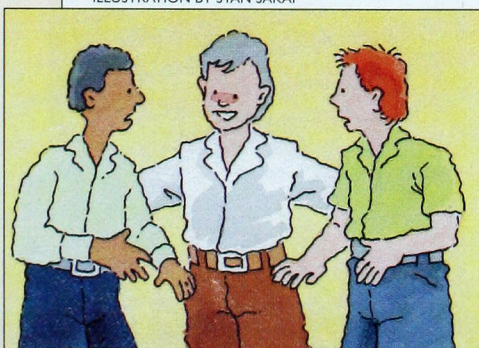


ILLUSTRATION BY STAN SAKAI

LOVE CONNECTION

LOVE means never having to say, "I'm sorry, we can't help," says Virgil Gulker, founder of the World Vision program LOVE INC, which matches local church volunteers with people in need.

In January 1994, LOVE INC joined forces with CONNECT, a Christmas gift-giving ministry.

At Christmas, CONNECT links churches and social service agencies to AIDS victims, foster children, and poor families of Monmouth County, New Jersey. Volunteers go caroling, dress up as Santa Claus to hand out gifts, and cook Christmas dinners for those in need. With the gifts, volunteers present the gospel by giving Bibles, devotionals, and Christian coloring books to families.

For more information, contact Carolyn Eyerma at (908) 224-1171 Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-noon.

Compiled and written by Stephanie Stevenson

WHAT POSSESSES YOU?

Break Forth Into Joy: Beyond a Consumer Lifestyle, produced by the nonprofit organization Alternatives, encourages Christians to challenge consumerism. The video explains the difference between



needs and wants, offers practical suggestions on how to simplify life, and teaches people new ways to value others by offering creative Christmas gift-giving ideas.

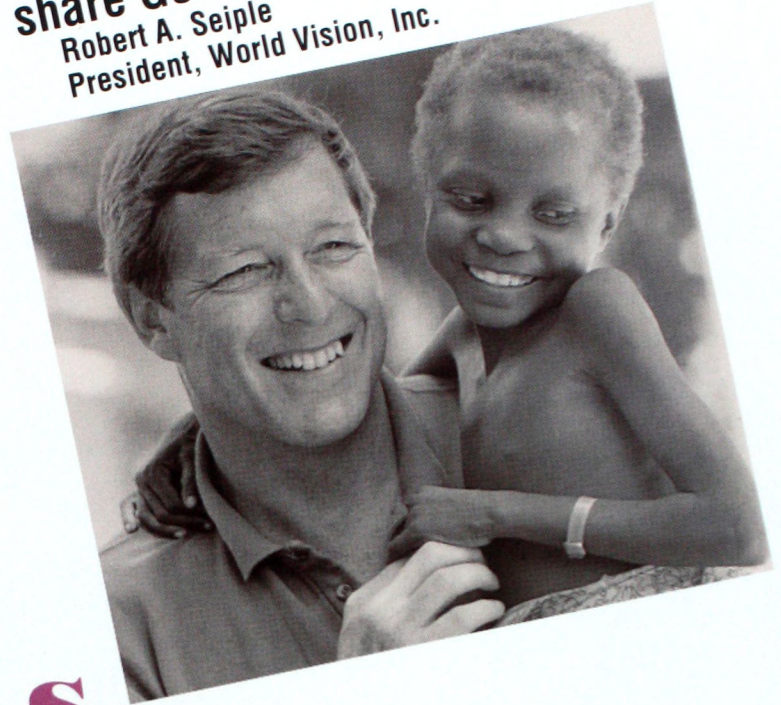
Whose Birthday is it Anyway?, an Advent and Christmas resource booklet, also is available from Alternatives. The booklet gives suggestions on how to control spending, plan gift-giving, and think about the message behind the gifts.

For more information contact Karl Lehman, Alternatives, P.O. Box 429, Ellenwood, GA 30049, or call (404) 961-0102.

“If we’re understanding that everything around us is a gift, a created gift, then we tend to handle it with more gentility than we do when we think that everything is just a material possession that we can discard.”

—Pastor Adei Greenpastures-Doty,
Cherokee Indian,
“Break Forth Into Joy”

“The Host of Hope is a way to share God’s blessings with others.”
Robert A. Seiple
President, World Vision, Inc.



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FWV114

A museum of Christianity... a land of dead stones with the living faithful gone... a Christian theme park with the Christians departed—this bleak vision of the Holy Land's future is shared by Christian leaders throughout the towns and countryside where Jesus walked and taught nearly two millennia ago.

WILL CHRISTIAN EMIGRATION LEAVE THE HOLY LAND

A LAND *of* DEAD STONES?

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
BRUCE BRANDER

A stone wall built by ancient Jews, Romans, Crusaders, and Ottoman Turks surrounds Jerusalem's Old City.

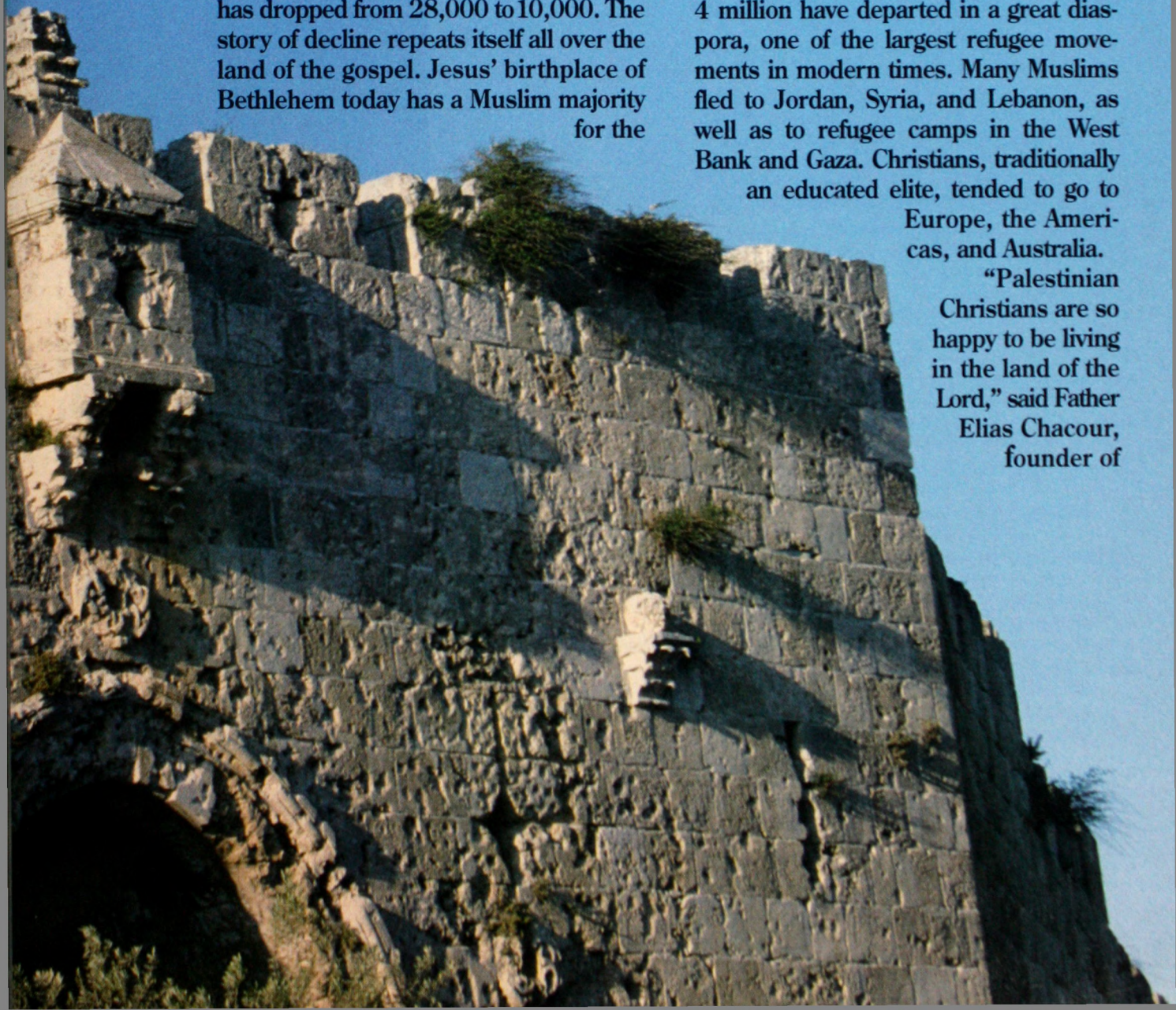
We, as Christians, have become an insignificant part of the population,” said Canon Riah Abu El Assal, 57, Archdeacon of the Jerusalem diocese of the Evangelical Episcopal Church. At the middle of the century, Christians represented 25 percent of the Holy Land’s population, he explained in his small stone Christ Church in the hilly city of Nazareth near the traditional site where the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the Messiah. Now imprecise statistics place the number of Christians between 1.5 and 2.5 percent.

In less than 30 years, Canon Riah continued, the count of Christians in the faith’s geographical heart, Jerusalem, has dropped from 28,000 to 10,000. The story of decline repeats itself all over the land of the gospel. Jesus’ birthplace of Bethlehem today has a Muslim majority for the

first time in history. His boyhood home of Nazareth, 90 percent Christian not long ago, is now 65 percent Muslim. From Ramallah, a West Bank town near the place where Mary and Joseph realized they had left the 12-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem, 60,000 Christians have emigrated to Europe, the United States, and other countries. Only 6,000 remain among an 80-percent Muslim majority.

Steady emigration started bleeding the Holy Land of its Christian population in 1948, when the new state of Israel began taking over huge tracts of Palestinian territory. Some 2 million Palestinian Arabs—Muslim and Christian—still live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Israel occupied following the 1967 “Six-Day War.” But another 4 million have departed in a great diaspora, one of the largest refugee movements in modern times. Many Muslims fled to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as to refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Christians, traditionally an educated elite, tended to go to Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

“Palestinian Christians are so happy to be living in the land of the Lord,” said Father Elias Chacour, founder of



Prophet Elias Community College in the parched and rocky hill town of Ibillin near the Sea of Galilee. Ordained in the ancient Melkite Catholic church, which rejected Gnosticism in favor of the orthodoxy of the Apostles during Christianity's first centuries, he added, "It is our privilege to be descendants of the very first Christians."

Reflecting that visitors from the West often think of Christianity as their missionary export, the 54-year-old priest cited, "My family was converted on the day of Pentecost—the first Pentecost. Whenever we Christians from the Holy Land look upon other Christians, we have the impression that they are all our children. It is because of my forefathers, and the grace of God, that others became Christian."

"On the other hand," continued the world-renowned author and champion of reconciliation between Jews and Arabs, "Christians of the Holy Land happen to be Palestinians. As such, they have endured everything that other Palestinians suffer: from deportation to exile to persecution to deprivation to confiscation of land, confiscation of homes and destruction of villages—like my native village, Biram, which was an entirely Christian village."

ENMITY DISTORTS IMAGES

Until recent peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Palestinian Arabs lived under an oppressive occupation that defied a United Nations Security Council resolution calling on Israel to withdraw. Meanwhile, Israelis faced constant fear of attack from radical Arab groups.

With the 1987 start of uprisings

Steady emigration started bleeding the Holy Land of its Christian population in 1948.

known as the intifada—from the Arabic word for "shake loose"—the strife turned especially intense. Overseas, the international image of both Palestinians and Israelis suffered, one conceived as hooded terrorists, the other as Uzi-toting bullies committing human-rights abuses.

The conceptions are hardly accurate. Israelis the visitor encounters are likely to be sophisticated builders of a First-World country in a Third-World region. The Arabs, as farmers, tradesmen, business and professional people, generally are kind and hospitable, in the tradition of the Middle East. Yet their conflict led to bloodshed, abuses, fear, and hatred on both sides, turning almost everyone mutually suspicious and distrustful.

To suppress activities ranging from stone throwing and displaying the Palestinian flag to terrorist attacks, Israeli military authorities imposed rule by the gun. As a consequence, Palestinian Arabs, guilty and innocent, saw family members beaten, imprisoned without trial, tortured, and shot. Frequent curfews pre-

vented Arabs from traveling or even leaving their homes for food. Their schools and universities were closed for as long as four years at a time.

Unemployment soared. Palestinians traveling to jobs in Israel often were turned back at checkpoints. Christians who in past times held preferred posts requiring higher education, faced competition with the new ruling society and often were squeezed out of the market.

In desperation, many saw departure as the only answer.

"The emigration of Christians from the Holy Land is one of the most alarming threats to our existence," Father Chacour said. "Palestinian Christians are leaving the country in a very speedy way. They look for more friendly societies for their children. The main threat is that within a few years we might have a Holy Land that is reduced to stones and sands and antiquities with no meaning whatsoever."

Those who stay behind have felt depressed and anxious as their numbers diminish, and they live in political impotence, said Bishara Awad, a 54-year-old Protestant evangelical. A suave, handsome man whose six brothers and sisters have emigrated, Awad stayed behind to found the Bethlehem Bible College. There, young local Christians from all denominations strengthen their grounding in the faith. "The Palestinian church is a suffering church at this time," he said. "If this trend continues, our church buildings will become like museums."

CHRISTIANS FEEL IGNORED

Holy Land Christians also feel ignored and abandoned by the church elsewhere in the world. "We are invisible to the Christian West," said 42-year-old Jerusalem attorney and human-rights activist Jonathan Kuttab, a member of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem. "When they think about the Middle East, they think about Judaism versus Islam, and they tend to identify with the Jews and with the state of Israel over and against the Palestinians—and the Christians."

Palestinians generally believe the West has tried to expiate guilt over anti-Semitism and the Nazi holocaust by favoring Zionist expansion into Arab lands, while overlooking the price paid by former residents whose ancestral roots there often go back hundreds, even thousands of years.

Kuttab is a member of a group of lay people and clergy who grapple with many complex questions of Israeli land acquisitions and the Palestinian response. They ask: Is the Christian God tribal or universal? Is God's relation with the Jewish people in the Old Testament superseded by

WORLD VISION IN THE HOLY LAND

World Vision began work in the Holy Land in 1975 with child care projects. Following a policy of serving the poor regardless of race, nationality, or faith, the agency assists people in greatest need in Israel and the occupied territories.

World Vision has maintained a bookmobile for village children who lack educational materials. The agency supports the Bethlehem Bible College and many schools from kindergarten to secondary level. It offers a broad range of vocational training for men and women and helps communities set up income-generating projects.

In the Gaza Strip, one of the Middle East's most economically depressed areas, World Vision helped a hospital establish a social welfare department and improve virtually the only modern surgical facility in the region. It also aids other medical facilities, including an out-patient clinic in Jerusalem's Old City that welcomes the ill regardless of their ability to pay.

World Vision has provided food, clothing, and medical treatment for families of breadwinners jailed, disabled, or killed in conflicts between Palestinian Arabs and Israel's occupation forces. The agency also supports organizations offering physical therapy and psychological counseling for people injured during the confrontations.

In 1994, World Vision donors helped more than 5,500 children through 30 sponsorship projects in the Holy Land. Currently, World Vision supports a total of 56 projects in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. ☉



Eager pupils raise hands in a grade three mathematics class at the Greek Orthodox Christian Primary School in Gaza, one of many Holy Land Schools supported by World Vision.

the New Testament, where he gives all people who believe in him power to become children of God? How does this translate politically? Should Palestinians fight for their freedom, dignity, land, and homes, or is there a better way to deal with suffering and oppression—the way Jesus taught? Can they carry Jesus' message to Muslims? Do they also have a message for Jews about not relying for safety upon weapons and brute force?

PEACE SURPRISES SKEPTICS

The peace process that began in late 1993 has surprised many skeptics with its successes. First came limited Palestinian self-rule in May 1994. Within months, talks and agreements followed between Israel and formerly implacable Arab neighbors. Though opposed by extremists on both sides and viewed with caution by everyone else, the negotiations are welcomed as the start of reconciliation by Jews longing for security and Palestinian Arabs weary of military occupation. They could even slow migrations and possibly bring people back.

"Both sides are on a good track," said Father Chacour in Ibillin, "because

Is God's relation with the Jewish people in the Old Testament superceded by the New Testament, where He gives all people who believe in Him power to become children of God?

both sides are saying we need to share the land. This is not a religious conflict, not a racial conflict. It is a claim on the same land of two nations with the same power of claim, which is religious, historical, emotional, rational. We are starting to speak about integration of both communities. I think we are on the good way."

"It is the first step in the right direction," agreed Canon Riah in Nazareth.

"Dialogue implies recognition. We're excited that Israel sees us as equal human beings. This country has been shared by Christians, Muslims, and Jews for thousands of years. I see a possible Palestine-Israel federation, like a new Switzerland. I'd love to live to the day when that comes about. Ten years is realistic, I think."

Yet Christian leaders concur the politics of peace is not enough.

"There is the danger of people expecting and accepting eternal strife because they have not learned the lesson of forgiveness," said Jonathan Kuttab in Jerusalem. "It is a gift from God to be able to forgive and start anew. It's something we need to pray for, for the Jews and for the Palestinians, that they will be able to experience the healing of forgiveness."

CHRISTIANS BUILD BY EDUCATING

Meanwhile, Christian leaders are not passively awaiting uncertain outcomes of the peace process to improve the welfare of Christians who remain in the Holy Land.

"Many of our young people have

nothing to do but sit on the streetcorner looking on their fathers' land which has been confiscated," said Father Chacour. "I thought libraries would be the best thing to occupy their time—to befriend them with books. By the grace of God and also with the help of friends, we already have opened eight libraries."

Father Chacour also has organized summer camps. At the same time, with substantial help from World Vision, he built his community college from an 82-student school 11 years ago to an institution for 1,700 young Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Druse scholars. "The challenge is to bring the different segments of the population to live together, learn together, work together, suffer together, and hope together," said the priest who has received major international honors for his efforts toward social and political reconciliation in the Holy Land.

Bishara Awad of the Bethlehem Bible College has opened an extension in Nazareth. "We are a force encouraging Christians to stay," he said. "We have

I see a possible Palestine-Israel federation, like a new Switzerland."

—Canon Riah Abu El Assal

found that Christians who have a deep personal conviction face hardship better. We have graduated almost 70 students, and 95 percent of them are still in the country."

"As a priest, I have to work on building a new era for Christianity," said 30-year-old Father Emil Salayta, principal of the Latin Catholic school for 372 students and pastor for some 850 parishioners in the West Bank village of Beir Zeit. "We have schools in all our churches," he explained. "With the best kind of education, our young people will be needed in the country, have a role in the society, rather than feeling alienated and having to look for another place to live."

Along with other Christian leaders, Father Salayta believes that churches are directly responsible for the recent slowing of emigration.

"I am grateful for this," he said. "We need more persons here to represent Christianity besides the clergy. We need Christians to give a live testimony of faith.

"Surely," Father Salayta concluded, "we don't want to see the day when we have only monuments and museums in the holy places." ☉

NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

"Should we cut off Africa?" is a question many people must be asking as one disaster follows another on the continent—Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda. Sadly, still other African countries face impending or ongoing civil war and hunger. We posed the query about cutting off Africa to Tim Stafford, author and senior editor at *Christianity Today*, on the eve of his departure for Kenya last summer. His response is our cover story.

World Vision recognizes the impossibility of saving a continent, or even an entire country from disaster. Yet sometimes we need to remind ourselves to look past the hungry, beaten-by-circumstance masses of people to see the individual child, a family, a village, and realize that assistance toward a new life takes place one person, one family, one community at a time. While we cannot save the whole world, we definitely can help people in it.

World Vision has given the same personalized care to the children of Haiti since 1957. Watch for our Haiti Update in our February/March issue.

—Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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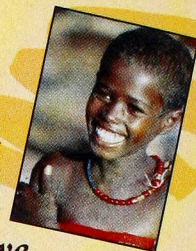
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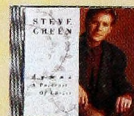
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IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

A virgin birth is an inextricable link between the human and the divine. With the darkness penetrated and angels singing, the kingdom of God comes as a child in a manger. For God, this is neither accident nor surprise. It all happens "in the fullness of time."

Some months ago, I was discussing the role of children with a friend. My friend summed up their importance with a profound theological insight: "I think children are God's timepiece of history." His phrase encourages biblical reflection on how God has used the child to punctuate history.

The significance of children begins early. With humanity's fall, the kingdoms are set in conflict, and children are clearly found in the middle. "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed."

God gave us the ability to choose, even as he warns us of the consequences of bad choices. Sin enters the world, and children, always the most innocent and vulnerable, seem the first victims. It's as if God were saying, "I told you what would happen, but why would you put the kids through this? I'll take a special interest in those kids!" This deep concern for children is a theme that runs throughout Scripture.

Abraham takes his promised child, Isaac, to the mountain for sacrifice. Why would God demand such a thing, especially when Abraham's seed was to be multiplied into a great nation? Child sacrifice, however, was not rare in Abraham's time. The gods of Canaan demanded it, became infamous because of it. The God of history was demonstrating the difference between himself and those Canaanite gods. Children are to be preserved. A substitute was provided and Isaac's life was spared.

For the people of Israel, their choice of God carried with it responsibility for their offspring. Clearly, the God of history demands reverence and respect for those who are the most vulnerable, the children.

Listen to how the Old Testament concludes. "Lo, I will send you the Prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse." The historical event of Christ's second coming is linked to the relationship we have with our children and the relationship we allow our children to have with us.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks his strongest words against anyone who would cause a child to stumble. "It would be better if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea." Self-inflicted, retroactive annihilation is ours if we choose to put a stumbling block in front of a child.

On a more positive note, Jesus also said that the coming kingdom would be made up of children, and those of us who would become like them. And we "suffer the little children"; we allow them to come to the Lord. We do everything possible to facilitate a relationship between our children and our Lord.

We certainly have a lot of children to work with: 1.8 billion in the world under the age of 15. Of these, some 1.4 billion are growing up in non-Christian settings. What a significant missiological challenge! Children need to be part of our vision and our burden for a world that God so loved that he gave us a little child.

Unfortunately, this very day 38,000 children under the age of 5 will die from preventable diseases. They will continue to die at this rate, unless we take seriously the God of history. The orphanages in Romania continue to be full. Young girls in Thailand are still being forced into prostitution. In southern Sudan, the children are first to go hungry, first to die—last in that culture's priorities.

In America, increasingly children are born into poverty. Increasingly, with families both rich and poor, they are abandoned. Drive-by killers take their lives, some shot in strollers. Fifty percent of our growing homeless population is comprised of children.

Why would the God of history reveal himself through a child? It's simple, yet incomprehensibly profound. He loves us. Nowhere in history did God ever turn his back on his children. Except once. For the family closest to him, his only begotten Son, there was to be rejection. Our sin was great, but his grace was more abundant. No ram was caught in the thicket this time. The child had to stay on the altar. God's love for us required it.

A historical event: the birth of a child that caused the angels to sing. That child, however, was born to die. Adam's sin, my sin, the sin of the world produced a momentarily tragic event, allowed by God, who wants only to love us. Our grateful hearts seek to capture the enormity of God's love. Our naturalness precludes anything but a small glimmer of the magnitude of that love. Someday, however, we will know all ... "in the fullness of time." ☉

The kingdom of God comes as a child in a manger.



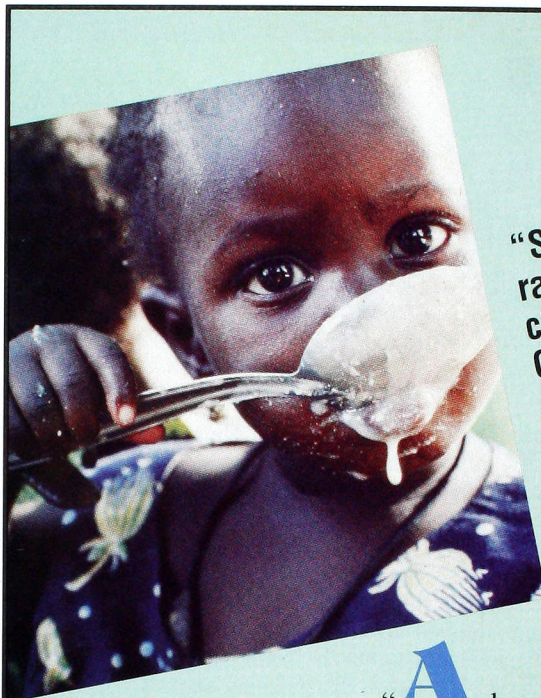
A baby naps in a hammock in northern Thailand.

RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION

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