

WORLD VISION®

June/July 1990

Joni Eareckson Tada:

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLD'S DISABLED

Third World Debt:

WHO **P**AYS THE
PRICE?

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WITH THE
POOR



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Joni Eareckson Tada lifts her voice for the world's physically disabled. Here, she shares what went through her mind as she addressed delegates last July at the Lausanne II conference in the Philippines, where she spoke on behalf of the "least of the brethren."

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It's not a typical church. It doesn't have a pipe organ. It doesn't even have a building. But ask Donnell and Pam Blake and their two daughters if Washington, D.C.'s Jubilee Church is doing the work of the church, and they'll tell you how they got out of a homeless shelter and into an apartment of their own.

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"In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails," says author Clif Cartland. "As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch."

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The Third World's debt crisis affects all of us, but no one as much as the poor in debtor countries. Where did this crisis come from? What can we do about it? Here's a beginner's guide.



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Working among the poorest of the poor, as World Vision does in 89 countries, often means identifying with those on the fringes of society because of physical disabilities. No one better represents their needs and aspirations than Joni Eareckson Tada does in our lead story.

And don't overlook *Bodies in Motion*, the first of a continuing series dealing with creative solutions developed by local churches to meet pressing community needs.

Terry Madison

WORLDVISION

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We need your help! We have no values."

It was an amazing and historic statement, not without irony, and it created a chill of awe, wonder, and anticipation. It was made by a social scientist from the Academy of Science in Moscow. With the new freedom of travel, he was in the West. And with the new freedom of thought, he was lamenting the lack of values, indeed, the bleeding away of values in the Soviet Union during the 70-year oppressive communist rule.

"Under Stalin we were taught that it was OK to lie, to steal, to cheat, even to kill. But with this new openness, we find that our values have been lost. We want to do a value study, using the benchmark of the Ten Commandments. We want to interview 10,000 Russian families in the next two years and assess how far we have fallen from the values inherent in those commandments. Then we hope to find some strategies to take us back again. Will you help us?"

Recently I heard of two historic incidents that frame this 70-year period. Both are relevant and neither one overstates reality. The first one happened in 1915. A Russian Armenian was reading his Bible when he was beheaded. I saw the Bible—large, thick, and well used. Inside was a reddish stain that permeated most of the book. The stain was the blood of this man, one of more than a million casualties of a religious and ethnic holocaust.

The other event happened toward the end of that 70-year period. A large shipment of Bibles entered Romania from the West, and Ceausescu's lieutenants confiscated them, shredded them, and turned them into pulp. Then they had the pulp reconstituted into toilet paper and sold to the West.

What happened between these two events fits the description given by God to the prophet Amos: "Behold, the days are coming when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing of the Words of the Lord." Alexander Solzhenitsyn explained that same period in Russian history this way: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this happened."

The communist world lost a transcendent

vision of God as well as biblical values. Yet today we see the seeds of new hope, the tender sprouts of new beginnings. It is this hope we feel in the words of the sociologist: "Can you help us?" It is the cry we hear over and over coming out of the Soviet Union: "We need a perestroika of the soul."

We see this most dramatically, perhaps, in the request received recently by Western mission organizations for 50 million Bibles for children. It comes from people who very much desire a better future than that which they've had recently.

"Can you help us?" When I hear this I think of the question Jesus asked: "If a son asks his father for food, would he give him a scorpion?" No, of course not. But there is a hunger in the Soviet Union, and it comes from deep within the soul. It is just as strong as the spark that couldn't be denied and the light that wouldn't go out, even under 70 years of godless suppression. Solzhenitsyn also said, "But, as is always the case in times of persecution and suffering, the awareness of God in my country has attained great acuteness and profundity."

Would that we could match that awareness of God. Would that our Western value system were so strong that the purity of moral values could flow through these newly opened floodgates. The sad fact is already evident: *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines will be sold for a profit before the West can give away Bibles.

Perhaps the challenge of responding to the Russian request for 50 million Bibles can do more than break the famine of the Word in the East. Perhaps the exercise could rejuvenate and reclaim the moral witness of the church in the West.

"Can you help us?"

Most assuredly, we answer, "Yes!" The church can gather funds, the mission societies can provide the Bibles, we can assemble a Christian Marshall Plan. And as we do, we say to the Soviet Christians—who can tell us so much about the cost of discipleship, who have been a light that will not go out, who have been the presence of Christ incarnate in the most difficult times—thank you for asking the question. Thank you for giving us another chance to respond.

Now that the Soviet Union is asking for values, what have we to offer?

**ENDING A
70-YEAR
FAMINE**

The World's Weakest—

*Often overlooked,
this minority
group crosses all
ethnic, religious,
and socioeconomic
boundaries.*

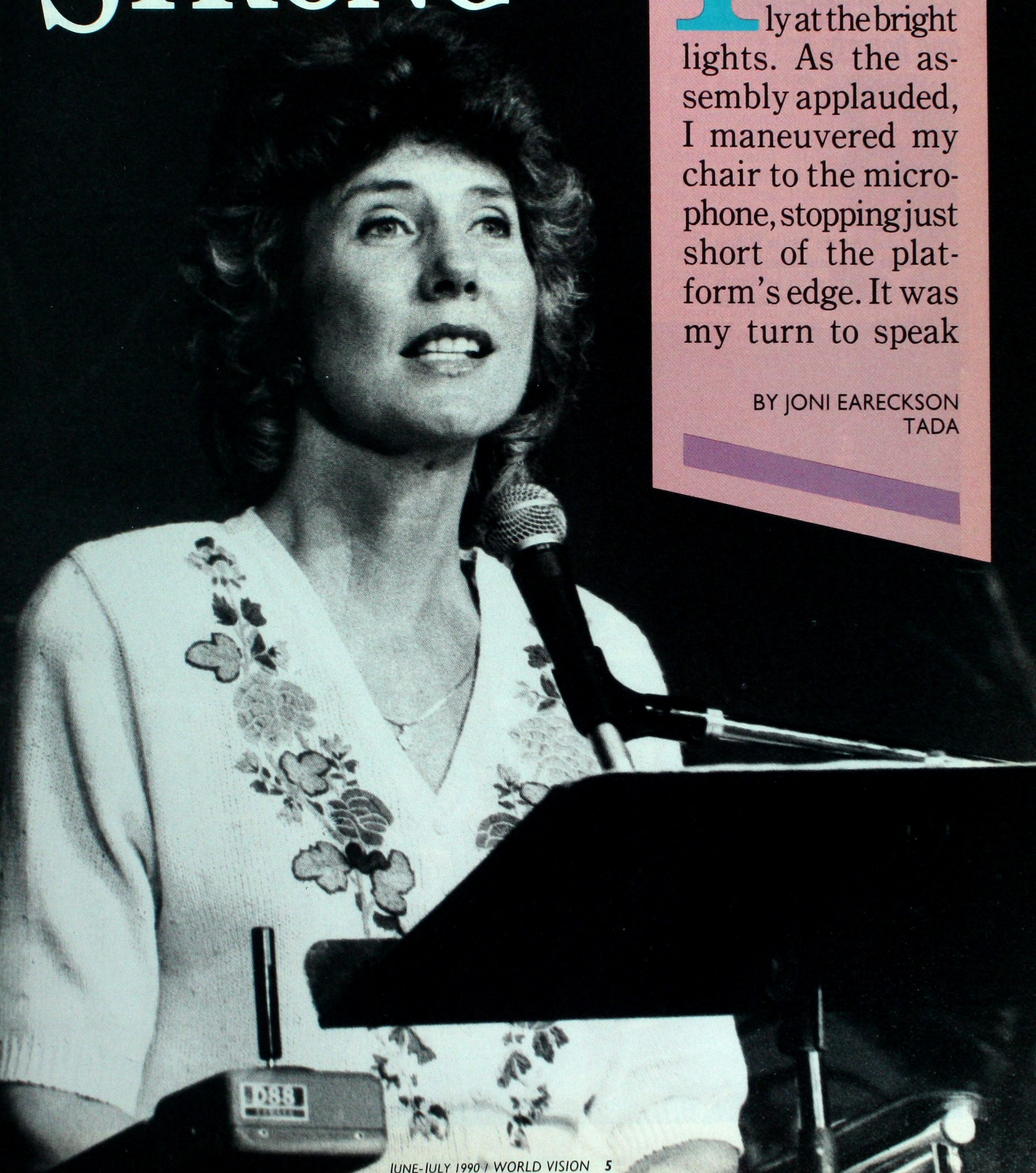


516 Million STRONG

PHOTO BY AKE LUNDBURG

I powered my wheelchair on to the stage, wincing slightly at the bright lights. As the assembly applauded, I maneuvered my chair to the microphone, stopping just short of the platform's edge. It was my turn to speak

BY JONI EARECKSON
TADA



Their unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.

Joni visits the "House Without Steps," a Christian rehabilitation center on the outskirts of Manila, the Philippines.

at last year's Lausanne II conference in Manila, the Philippines—my chance to help 4,000 Christian leaders understand the plight of 516 million people with disabilities around the world.

I motioned for my friend Camille, a sign language interpreter, to stand close to me. I wanted the TV camera to pick her up—not just so deaf people could 'hear' the message, but to show these leaders that it was acceptable for an interpreter to stand by them whenever they spoke from a platform.

As the applause waned, I glanced at my watch. I had exactly 11 minutes to drive home the need to share Christ's love with the world's disabled.

I took a deep breath and began: *If evangelism is taking the good news of help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless, shouldn't we be most concerned about sharing Christ's love with those who are most helpless and hopeless?*

My text wasn't merely words on a white page. Each sentence and verse of

Scripture reflected the face and name of a mentally or physically disabled person I admired and respected.

My voice boomed across the auditorium: *No evangelistic outreach is possible to disabled people without addressing their physical impairment in some way. People with disabilities have had to learn to play the part of the cowering and indebted in order to survive in the world of the physically capable. They have often been treated as if they were children. These unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.*

As I spoke, I thought of the paraplegics in a shabby rehab clinic in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Their wheelchairs are made from bicycle parts, their hospital beds are fashioned from metal and plastic plumbing pipes. Their families, already at the bottom of the poverty ladder, cannot afford to care for them; they are



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

beyond the reach of social services and vocational training. And the Hindu neighbors of these young, paralyzed men look upon them with disdain and indifference—their physical infirmities having plunged them to the bottom of the reincarnation ladder.

Yet Valerie, a Christian therapist at the clinic, brings light and life into the daily routine of those paraplegics. To her, the men are not pitiful, helpless cripples. They are people who happen to be spinal-cord injured—some from falling out of palm trees while cutting coconuts, others from carrying heavy scaffolds of stones and bricks.

Valerie offers them the hope, worth, and dignity that Christ's love gives, and they have grasped it. Spiritually, these men in makeshift wheelchairs have risen above their unjust social handicaps.

I continued my address: *Our attitudes would be corrected, our motivation focused, and our enthusiasm ignited if*

we truly understood the joy of sharing the gospel and Christ's love with those who are deemed, by the world, most helpless.

I smiled as I thought of Maria, a young, severely handicapped woman in Romania. Her family lives in a small home in Oradea in the northern mountains. Barely taller than a dwarf, Maria lives with constant pain from a twisted spine and a shortened leg. She is grateful to be able to walk with a cane.

Yet Maria also lived under her country's brutal communist regime. She knows the frustration of standing and waiting in long lines for vegetables or toilet paper. She has experienced the double handicap of poverty and political oppression.

Maria's family is proud of her. She is intelligent, self-taught, and the townspeople admire her enthusiasm for Christ. She labors to translate Christian books into her people's language. Her greatest desire? To help people with disabilities in her torn and devastated country find hope in Christ. Maria knows the joy of sharing the gospel with those who, like her, are deemed helpless by the world.

The audience was listening and seemed genuinely interested. I glanced at my watch and saw that I had only a few minutes to finish. Camille's hands were probably getting tired from signing so fast, but I picked up the pace.

It is the 'least of the brethren' and the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor. Christians have the only message that can save and deliver, the only message that vindicates God's good name as the one who is supremely and benevolently sovereign over deformities and diseases. Christians have the gospel message that joins the sighted and the blind, the hearing and the deaf, the intellectually capable with the mentally handicapped.

It is the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor.

In my mind I pictured George, an evangelist in Malawi who uses an old, badly battered wheelchair. He had just written me several weeks earlier, asking me to send him my husband's used shirts—his were wearing out and he wanted to dress his best as an ambassador for Christ.

George wheels himself from village to village over bumpy, rutted dirt roads that connect the small towns in Malawi. He longs for a power wheelchair during such exhausting journeys, but realizes such a luxury is far beyond his grasp.

Despite sore muscles and callouses on his hands, he keeps going. His deepest desire is to share Christ with others who are handicapped, to tell them that, despite their poverty and hunger, God is in control for their good and his glory.

Some welcome George's message, others don't. Nevertheless through the sheer force of God's grace and George's magnetic personality, Christians in this small African country have noticed George's efforts. They, too, are becoming more sensitive to the needs of disabled people in their towns and villages.

I looked out on the crowd of Christian leaders, many of whom were African, judging by their brightly colored robes and headgear. *I wish George were here*, I thought, as I began to wind up my message.

No other ministry better demonstrates Christ's heart of compassion than ministries to people with disabilities. Those who are helpless, no matter what their handicap, see themselves in the

Valerie and patient



JONI AND FRIENDS



**No ministry
better demonstrates
Christ's compassion than
ministries
to the disabled.**

Man of Sorrows because he became one of them. Jesus' message was clear. We are all without help or hope as long as we are without him. But he was also clear that his good news was, in some way, especially for those who suffer the helplessness and hopelessness that physical infirmity can often bring.

I glanced at Camille. Her animated hand gestures were communicating the message loud and clear. I knew she must be thinking of deaf people who had touched her life, perhaps even the little Haitian deaf boy she had met as a college student while on a short-term mission in the poorest parts of Haiti.

The boy was bright and intelligent but shunned by his playmates. They told Camille that he was stupid because he couldn't speak. Camille, drawn to this lonely deaf child, mimed to him her message of friendship with wide, sweeping gestures. He soon left an imprint on her, convincing her to spend her life ministering to the world's deaf.

I closed my address with these final words from Scripture:

"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

I paused to allow that verse to touch the hearts of those leaders, then continued: *It may well be that the level of our commitment to preach the gospel will be judged according to our willingness to reach the very weakest of those who need him most.*

I thanked the assembly, backed my wheelchair from the microphone, and wheeled to the wings of the stage with Camille. I quickly prayed that the message would remain imprinted on

those leaders' hearts as they traveled back to their homelands.

I pictured them reaching out and touching the Indian child with Down's

Maria



JONI AND FRIENDS

syndrome cradled in his mother's arms ... the blind grandfather led through the Moroccan village by his son ... the paralyzed teenager sitting twisted as she grinds corn for her family's meal ... the deaf woman living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, considered crazy because she can't speak and uses funny hand signs

... the mentally handicapped boy in Sumatra kept hidden in a dark bedroom by his family.

I asked God to give each leader the courage, tempered with tenderness, to not only declare Christ's gospel to these needy people but to demonstrate it as well.

Camille held a glass of water to my mouth. I was just ready to leave the anteroom when an Asian man with an engaging, tooth-missing grin stopped me. I lifted my arm for him to shake, but he answered with his own awkward attempt to lift his artificial hand. We laughed—we had a lot in common.

A translator said the man's name was U and that he was from Thailand. The translator went on to say that U was challenged to return to Bangkok with a deepened desire to reach people like himself.

Before Jacinto's parents abandoned him in the hospital, probably expecting that he would die from his wounds, they changed his name to Chicaipa Maopa—"Bringer of Bad Luck."

When I first met Jacinto in June 1988, the boy was all alone in that hospital in Tete, Mozambique. A few weeks earlier he had stepped on a land mine that blew away most of his right leg, shattered his left knee, and ripped into his right wrist and elbow.

"Lying there in the hospital, I was sure I was going to die," Jacinto told me when I saw him again last year.

"But when Nick started visiting me, I started getting another idea. I couldn't understand why Nick liked me, but I believed him when he said he wanted to be my friend."

Nick Dexter, a World Vision agronomist, remembers: "The first thing I told him was, 'Your name is not Chicaipa. It's Jacinto.'"

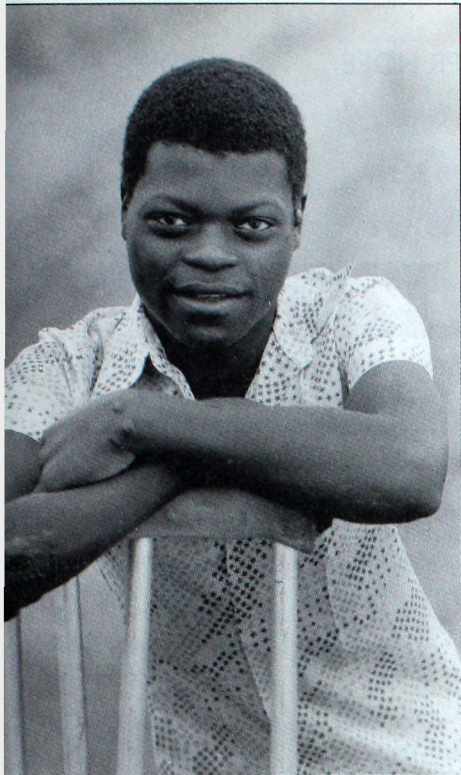
When the boy was discharged from the hospital, Nick took him home, where Nick and a few other staff members took Jacinto under their wing. Then he drove Jacinto to Harare, Zimbabwe, for a month of therapy.

In Zimbabwe, a Brazilian missionary couple befriended Jacinto. "They came to check on how I was doing and they brought me books to

That was it. That's all I needed to hear. Somewhere, I knew, a child, a father, a grandparent—someone with a mental or physical disability—would have his or her life changed for Christ's sake. U and George, Maria and Valerie, and thousands like them would carry the gospel to those "poor in the eyes of the world." Hundreds, perhaps even thousands of handicapped people would become "rich in faith and would inherit the kingdom promised to those who love him."

Somewhere there would be those faithful few who would help reach 516 million physically and mentally handicapped people around the world. And through our united prayers, the world would certainly be changed. □

Joni Eareckson Tada is president of JONI AND FRIENDS, a ministry that links disabled people with the church. She lives in Woodland Hills, Calif.



read," he says. "They told me that God is with me, that I shouldn't be afraid. They prayed with me and taught me how to believe.

"I had never even thought about God before, but before I came back to Mozambique I decided to give my life to Jesus," he says.

When Jacinto returned to Mozambique, he was accepted into the SOS Children's Village, an orphanage on the outskirts of Tete, though he is not truly an orphan. In February 1989 he started fourth grade and is now at the top of his class.

Nick says that Jacinto is a quick learner, and that he reads pretty well. So well, in fact, that he has now read the New Testament from cover to cover.

"Nobody has pushed him to do any of this," Nick says. "Jacinto is genuinely hungry to understand God's Word. He reads his Bible every day."

Jacinto's new best friend is Argelino Sidati, another resident of the orphanage. Crippled by polio, Argelino, like Jacinto, knows more about suffering than any 13-year-old should. Last year he watched machete-wielding RENAMO guerrillas hack his mother and father to death. His six older brothers and sisters escaped, he thinks, but he doesn't expect to see them again.

Jacinto and Argelino are virtually inseparable, helping each other find a place in a society that usually

musters little more than pity for the disabled.

"Our future depends on how hard we study," Jacinto says. "We can't use our legs, so we'll use our heads and our hands." The two are planning to take typing lessons soon in a neighboring town.

When I last saw Jacinto, I asked him for his favorite Scripture verse, and he rattled off, in Portuguese, the first 21 verses of John 3. I teased him, saying I had only asked for one verse. He replied by quoting 2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

"I know that many people have been praying for me," Jacinto told me. "And now I know that God has the power to answer impossible prayers. So I am praying for peace in this country. The *bandidos armados* are ruining Mozambique. Look what they've done to me! We need peace. More than anything else we need peace, and I know that Jesus can give it to us.

"One day," he added, "when our peace comes, I would like to stand beside President Chissano and tell him what I feel. I would say, 'Sir, God answers prayer. Now we are free, because of Jesus.'"

By David Ward, a photojournalist living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

One of the 516 Million:
**BRINGER
of BAD LUCK**



Joni and her husband, Ken Tada, befriend two handicapped women at a rehabilitation center in the Philippines.

Jubilee Church, Washington, D.C.

**PEW
POTATOES
NEED
NOT
APPLY**

It was about a year and a half ago when Donnell and Pam Blake got the phone call. The Blakes and their two little girls were living in the notorious Capitol City Inn, a former motel where Washington, D.C., “stores families that don’t have nowhere to live,” as Pam says. A stranger was on the line offering them what sounded like the chance of a lifetime—an apartment and a support network to help them make it on their own.

But Pam and Donnell had to do some real soul-searching. The offer would only be good if they stayed together as a family, and they had already been separated for six months of the two years they’d been married. Taking this offer would mean casting their lot together, counting on each other to make it work.

“You be scared and puzzled and worried,” Pam says. “You wonder, would we just be together for a while, or is the situation seriously going to get better? That’s the type of things would go through anybody’s mind. Then too, I had to think about the security of my children [Shaneka, 6, and Roshena, 3]. Welfare is the pits, but at least I know I have something coming in to buy me and my children what we need. If I get back with this man, I get no government assistance.”

On the other hand, the shelter was no kind of life for children. Shaneka used to sit in a corner and cry, “Mama, I don’t like this. Why can’t you cook me some food? Why do we always have to go stand in that line? Let’s go away from here.”

Pam would try to explain. “I looked at her and I could not break it down to a 5-year-old level for her to understand. Because there *wasn’t* no understand.”

Pam and Donnell had had enough of shelters. They had watched enough people get sucked into perpetual shelter life, had watched the drugs, the stealing, the violence, and had seen what happened to the children. Ten-year-old girls would brag to Pam that they could teach her more about “being with a man” than she knew. “And they weren’t lying,” Pam says. “It’s pathetic.”

In the end, they decided they would trust these strangers, trust each other, and do whatever they could to get out of the shelter. So Pam prayed, “Please God, don’t let me be making the wrong mistake,” and they said yes to the people on the phone.

Just before Thanksgiving 1988, Pat Sitar and Gary McMichael from Jubilee Church visited the shelter to meet Pam and Donnell. A few days later Gary showed them a brick apartment building in the Adams Morgan neighborhood and said they

would be living there before Christmas.

The apartment building Gary showed Pam and Donnell is owned by Jubilee Housing, a non-profit organization that grew out of Jubilee Church in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., about five miles northwest of the Capitol. The church is one of eight “faith communities” that make up the non-denominational Church of the Saviour.

Within about 20 square blocks, Jubilee Church and three or four other Church of the Saviour sub-groups have founded the housing ministry, a job placement service, a family health clinic, a coffeehouse, a children’s ministry, a Montessori school, a hospital for the homeless, and transitional programs for homeless men and homeless, pregnant women.

They had to trust each other and trust these strangers.

This might sound like a systematic outreach plan, but it’s not. The Church of the Saviour has shied away from long-range planning since its earliest days in the 1940s. Its ministries are more like living things that are conceived, birthed, and nurtured within this small family.

And it *is* small. Jubilee Church has about 25 full-fledged members, eight or 10 intern members, and maybe 60 or 70 who gather on Monday evenings for worship. Even this seems too large for the kind of church Jubilee wants to be, and a small core group is branching out to start a new congregation.

No, this is not a typical church. It doesn’t have a pipe organ or even a church building. Jubilee Church has one calling: “To be the people of God in the midst of low-income people.” All its members go through a period of prayer, study, and dialogue to seek their own part in that calling.

Does everyone receive a clear call to a specific ministry?

“It comes with much greater clarity for some



JIM HUBBARD

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

people than for others," says Gordon Cosby, pastor and one of the founders of Church of the Saviour. "If you are faithful to God's call as far as you know it, more clarity often comes in time."

When Pat Sitar received her call, it was so clear she couldn't avoid it.

Pat had worked in the Jubilee Housing office for 13 years, and she had known almost all the children who lived there from the time they were born. She grieved like their own mother when they took up drugs or got pregnant or dropped out of school.

Pat was taking a class at the church to explore her calling. Again and again she kept coming back to the children of Jubilee. But she didn't think she had it in her to start a new ministry. She prayed and reflected and talked to people, sure that she must be missing what God *really* was calling her to do.

"I'm trying to leave myself open to whatever God has for me, but all I can see are the children," she told Gordon Cosby, who was leading the class.

"Pat, that sounds like a call," he said.

In the Church of the Saviour, when people perceive a calling to begin a new work, they first carry it around for nine months, like a child in the womb. Then, if it still seems that is what God wants them to do, they take a church service to "sound the call." If two or more people respond and commit themselves to the new mission, the church blesses and commissions the new venture.

Pat's love for the children of Jubilee Housing grew into the Good Shepherd ministry: an after-school program in a few basement rooms of a Jubilee apartment, a youth center in another building's basement, and a handful of other activities for Jubilee children. Pat had her doubts in the beginning, but she thrived in the work.

One thing still troubled her, though—it still hurt so badly to lose children.

"It is inevitable that families sometimes have to be evicted from the apartments for various reasons," she says quietly. "It's very painful. I think of the chaos those children live in, and I know we will just lose touch with them."

Determined to do what she could to help homeless families, even on a small scale, Pat joined her Good Shepherd ministry with Jubilee Housing. They would look for a homeless family with children, a family without a drug problem, and they would plug that family into Jubilee Church's support network. They called the new ministry "Turning Points," and they hired Gary McMichael to oversee it.

In November 1988, they found Pam and Donnell Blake and their two children living in the Capitol City Inn.

After the Blakes received Pat and Gary's promise of a new home by Christmas, the wait began.

"That was the longest wait in the *whole world*," Pam says. "I think Donnell called every other day. If it wasn't for me, he might've called every single day."

The closer it got to Christmas, Donnell began to voice the doubt they had pushed to the back of their minds in the beginning. "Those folks lied," he said.

But they didn't lie. "December 16 we was in here," Pam says. "I don't know where they got it or how they did it, but they brought us practically everything we needed. We had one of the best Christmases that I ever could dream of. They told us they would try to make this Christmas make up for the things we've been through. And they did. A real tree and everything. We have had things overflowing. And we've been here ever since."

Today Pam is assistant manager of a bagel shop downtown. She got the job through Jubilee Jobs, a full-service employment agency that began as a desk and phone in the Jubilee Housing office.

"Terry Flood was my counselor, and I'd recommend her to anybody," Pam says. "Terry do her job. She's mean, but she's good. She's very strict, but she'll work with you and listen to you. I got discouraged because when she sent me on interviews, nobody got back to me. She encouraged me to have faith, it's not the end of the world, don't give up. She really cares."

Once a week Gary McMichael and Pam sit down together. "We go over the things we have accomplished, and if we have a problem, I'll discuss it with him," Pam said. "But he don't ever tell us how to do it. He might suggest things, but mainly we keep talking about it until we find a way."

That is the spirit of Jubilee Church, which is not called to fix things for people but to live beside them as servants.

Donnell summed it up this way: "Me and Pam, we try to be about this family and we are trying to do it right. We been through hell back at the shelter and sometimes we go through torment out here too. We thank God for Gary and Pat and them, but at the same time we thank God for us, because he made us strong and got us back together and put us here." □



JIM HUBBARD

The neighborhood kids were Pat's calling, hard as she tried to resist it.

For more information, write to the Church of the Saviour at 2025 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

'WASTING TIME' *with the* POOR

The streets of Calcutta were dark. Here and there a vendor still tried to sell his wares, but most of the buyers had long since gone. People were already sleeping in the streets.

We turned in to a lane where there were no lights. The pavement was broken, and the houses were built right out to the edge of the sidewalk, their walls dirty with what seemed like the stains of hundreds of years.

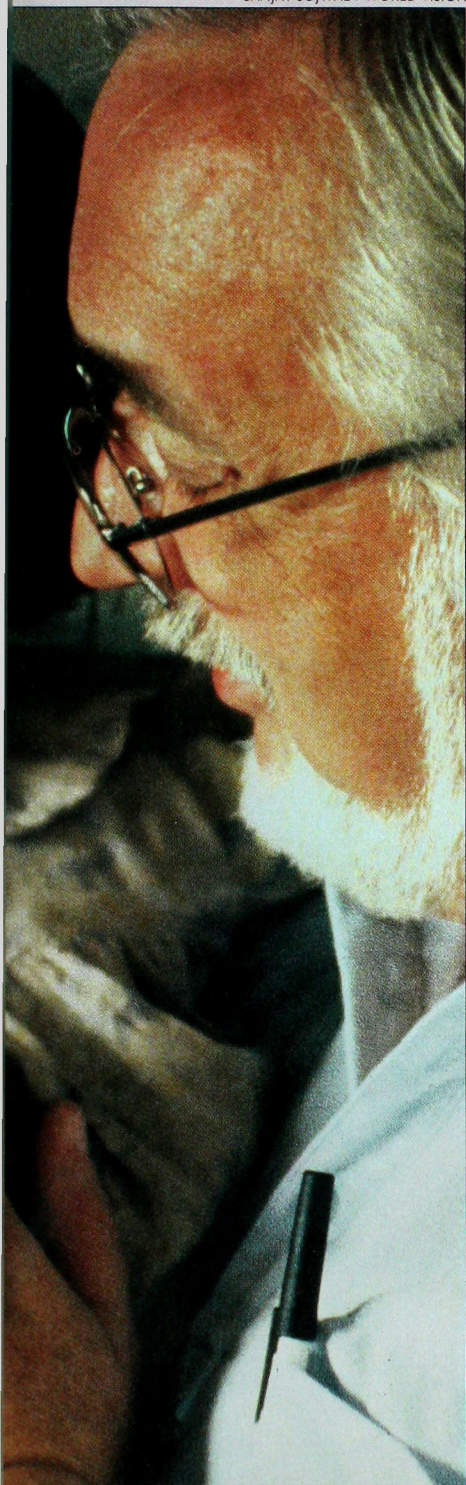
A shaft of light shone through one window. I caught a glimpse of wood panelling, deep blue mosaic tile, and a crystal light. At first it was only a touch of beauty where I had least expected it. But it came to mean more.

Even in the most deeply bruised of the human family, there are gifts to discover. Through the lonely and the fragile, from whom I often pull away, Christ comes to me most deeply.

I could have learned that lesson at home, but I didn't. I had to leave my comfort and isolation. Something in me had to be awakened by Asia's pervasive poverty.

I was traveling with a group brought together by the Ministry of Money, a project of the Church of the





Saviour in Washington, D.C., which takes affluent North Americans to visit some of the poorest people in the world. We went on a three-week "reverse mission" to learn from the poor, and to offer them nothing but ourselves.

Poverty was not new to me. I have worked for months among homeless young men in downtown Los Angeles. But nothing prepared me for this trip.

Gaunt infants with deep, sunken eyes will never again be simply pictures in a famine-relief appeal. In Manila, the Philippines, I stood by the crib of one infant, praying that the peace of Christ would calm his constant, feeble cries. At a health center in Calcutta, India, I massaged the twisted toothpick legs of a little girl with beautiful, sad eyes. There were 20 more like her in that room.

Often I wished for something big to do, something that would make poverty go away.

Instead I began to learn how to do what others have called "wasting time" with the needy. For me that meant learning to be available to God and to others, an availability that often looked and felt like wasting time.

Pipi was the first to teach me that lesson. I met Pipi in an orphanage in Manila. He was mute, but he knew how to ask for—and get—my atten-

tion. We played finger games that he created, walked where he wanted to walk, did whatever he wanted to do. Pipi made the rules and I simply followed, giving this needy little boy my undivided attention.

Another time, a little boy climbed up into my arms and laid his head on my shoulder. I began to rock him back and forth, and he turned until he was cradled in my arms like a baby. His eyes closed, but he wasn't sleeping. He was soaking up all the love he could get. I was "wasting time," with nothing to do but be with him.

In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails. As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch.

Anger, sadness, and shame

If the trip brought gentleness out of me, it also brought out deep anger. The people we met had so few choices. They spent every ounce of energy on survival. Whole families lived in a single small room; others lived on the street under an old piece of plastic. I wondered what life must be like when the monsoons flood the streets. These things made me angry and sad.

I marvelled that Aram, a rickshaw puller in Calcutta, had run passengers 25 to 50 miles a day for 15 years. He ate rice and lentils twice a day, and every month he sent his money home to his family in a distant state. I was angry that anyone should live like that.

At Olongapo, the site of the giant Subic Bay U.S. Navy Base in the Philippines, we met a few of the 16,000 "hospitality girls" whose customers are U.S. servicemen. Olongapo left me with a deep sense of shame.

Then my anger turned closer to home. I have so much. I live what the poor of the world would call an extravagant life. I could leave behind the poverty of Manila or Calcutta; they cannot.

A few years ago, when Henri Nouwen left Harvard to work among the mentally handicapped, he observed

Maybe
I could have
learned the
same things
in the comfort
of home.
But I didn't.

that he received more from them than he was able to give. That was my experience too. I found that people living in poverty understood some things far better than I.

I marvelled at the persistence of vendors who worked all day and into the night to sell a few pieces of fruit. Thrift and recycling are almost an art among Asia's poor. Thousands live by salvaging things from piles of rotting garbage. A woman and her little children make a living by separating broken pieces of clear and colored glass.

Finding hope where Christ is

Calcutta's poverty overwhelmed me. Its streets were crowded beyond imagination, its air thick with pollution. Yet it was a wonder. "Warm, cunning, and beautiful in a strange kind of way," an Indian writer described it.

Millions have left the poverty of rural India for Calcutta. Whole families set up housekeeping on the city's crowded streets and lanes. No one should have to live on the streets, yet part of the wonder of Calcutta is that a squatter's claim to sidewalk space or a tiny piece of ground is protected by law. I thought of the early morning police loudspeakers that roust the poor who sleep on the streets in many U.S. cities, and of the water trucks that wash the sidewalks to rid them of cardboard shelters and the belongings left by the homeless.

For most of Asia's poor, there is no escape from poverty. Yet I found hope where followers of Christ live among the poor and treat them with dignity. Sometimes it has transformed entire communities.

Bagong Barrio in the Philippines was one of those places. Most of the former garbage dump's 65,000 people share their small homes with two or more families. But over the past 12 years the barrio has been changing. Small groups of Christians meet to pray, study Scripture, and work together for justice. Twenty pastoral layworkers from the Catholic church have led the "little Davids" of Bagong Barrio

in tackling their Goliaths.

Another island of hope is Pilkhana, across the crowded Howrah Bridge from Calcutta. Some call it "The City of Joy," the name used by Dominique Lapierre in his novel about life in Calcutta.

Twenty-two years ago a young French priest went to live in Pilkhana. He encouraged the people to form the Seva Sangh Samiti—the Committee to Help Together. Their first project was a health center. Then came wells and paved roads, nutrition classes, free medicine for those who could not pay, school uniforms (a requirement in India), books, even pencils so that every child could get an education.

With Victor Gergeon, whose mother was one of the first members of the committee, we walked through Pilkhana and felt the warmth and hope of the people. We talked with Indian doctors who work full-time in the medical center for the equivalent of \$40 a month.

I will never forget entering a room in the medical center to see the beaming faces of 20 children, hands raised to their foreheads in the traditional Indian greeting that looks so much like prayer. Quickly they surrounded me, begging to be picked up. I lifted them one at a time, then two, and finally three at once. All the while there were shouts and laughter. It was as if all the hope of Pilkhana was distilled in that wonderful place.

Next steps

From Calcutta we flew to Bangkok for a day of rest, then on to the Gulf of Thailand for two days of silent retreat. Two quiet days to reflect on the voices of the poor, to be open to God's voice.

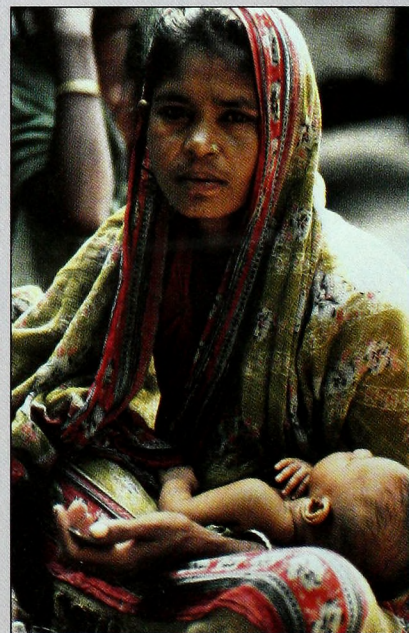
Now I have left the squatter's settlements of Manila, the crowded streets of Calcutta, the silent retreat of Thailand. My next steps will be taken here in the United States. I do not know what those steps will be. But my pilgrimage has taught me to welcome the tears and joys of the journey. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer and editor living in Glendale, Calif.

ABOUT MINISTRY of MONEY

Trips to the Third World are one way that Ministry of Money tries to promote an "authentic Christian perspective on money." Founded by Don McClanen, who earlier founded the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Ministry of Money also provides workshops in the United States to help people who are "trapped and crippled by affluence" move toward "freedom, joy, and self-giving."

For more information, contact Ministry of Money at 2 Professional Dr., Suite 220, Gaithersburg, MD 20879; (301) 670-9606. □



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

AS USUAL, THEY PRAYED

They needed more money. Not a lot, but bills were mounting and they weren't sure how they'd pay them, let alone cover expenses in the future. If something didn't happen soon, Bethel Agricultural Fellowship, with its 30-bed hospital, agricultural center, mobile medical clinic, evangelism programs, and orphanage for almost 700 children, could face serious cutbacks in its ministry.

Bethel Fellowship, located 100 miles southwest of Madras, India, in the village of Danishpet, had faced hard times in the past. The five Indian evangelists who founded the fellowship were acquainted with money problems. But they never asked for money. They never held fund-raisers or sent out mail appeals. The only thing they ever did was pray, and this time was no different.

G.S. Mohan summoned staff, students, and orphans to the cinder-block chapel for a special meeting. They all removed their shoes, leaving them on the porch outside before walking across the cold concrete for a place on the floor.

"We're going to pray to Jesus and tell him about our need," Mohan told them. They prayed just for enough money to pay their bills and to meet the increased expenses they faced in the future. Then they went back to work or school.

Two days later, a letter arrived from the Netherlands. It was from the head of an organiza-

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray** for the provision of Bibles and for other efforts to relieve "spiritual famine" in the Soviet Union (pages 3-4).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Joni Eareckson Tada's commitment to people with handicaps, and for the ways she enables the church to open up to such people. (pages 5-9).
- ◆ **Ask** for experiences that will open you to the voice of God through the voices of the poor (pages 12-14).
- ◆ **Pray** for the policy-makers who handle the Third World's debt crisis (pages 18-22).

tion that had been supporting Bethel Fellowship regularly.

"Our income has increased recently," she wrote, "and I want you to know that our donations to your ministry will be increasing as well."

She had not heard about Bethel's financial crisis, but the amount she sent was exactly what they needed. No more, no less. They paid their bills and the increased pledge kept them out of debt.

To Mohan and his staff, the incident isn't unusual. Prayer is a natural part of their daily life.

Twice a day, at the sound of a bell, everyone at Bethel pauses for silent prayer. Once, in the middle of a lecture to a group of visiting college students from the United States, the bell sounded. Mohan stopped his talk in mid-sentence. After a moment, he opened his eyes and continued.

"He didn't say, 'Oh, excuse me, I have to pray now.' He just stopped and prayed," one of the students said afterward. "I thought that was such a strong statement of where their priorities are. I think we all could take a lesson from that."

We could. We who are so used to giving to the needy in developing countries often find it difficult to be on the receiving end. But here we could take a lesson. Maybe we will. □ *Randy Miller*

We came to know that if we were going to learn to pray, we were going to have to pray. Christ ever remains the great teacher of prayer.

Elizabeth O'Connor in
Call to Commitment

CLIFF BRIGGS



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope



College students spend "quality time" with Philadelphia children.

into public housing neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

They run day camps (much like vacation Bible schools) in the morning, and in the afternoon they spend time one-on-one with kids. On Thursdays the volunteers take time to worship together and get guidance about challenges that have come up during the week.

For information about the program, run by the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, contact Dr. Tony Campolo, Eastern College, St. Davids, PA 19087.

200 ON THE TOWN

Every weekday morning, from late June through late August, about 200 college students from around the United States fan out

SHE'S GOT THEIR NUMBER

Homeless people in the neighborhood around Dégagé Ministries, Grand Rapids, Mich., know Robyn Saylor's got their number. She runs Dégagé's Phone Club, which makes two telephone lines available to the homeless and operates a message service for them. It's proven to be a vital connection.

Of the 350 calls the Phone Club puts through each month, about 25 percent are to prospective employers. Saylor says the most rewarding

part of her job is when she can be the link that helps someone get a job. (She was unemployed herself when her pastor told her about the Phone Club opening.)

Dégagé Ministries is a Christian coffeehouse holdout from the '70s that has grown into a many-sided ministry. It enjoys strong support from the local churches. More than 200 volunteers help with other outreach ministries such as grocery distribution, high-school completion courses, and men's and women's Bible studies.

Contact the Phone Club at Dégagé Ministries, 10 Weston SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

STEAL THIS, PLEASE

The people at Hill District Ministries in Pittsburgh, Pa., don't care who copies them. The more people steal their ideas, the happier they'll be. That's why they've kept careful how-to records of all their efforts to serve their community.

Hill District Ministries is a group of neighborhood churches that used to get together just on special occasions for fellowship. The deep needs of their neighborhood brought them closer together, as they saw they couldn't address them alone. There are Baptists, United Methodists, African Methodist Episcopalans, Catholics, and other churches working together to address problems in housing, employment, substance abuse, nutrition, and family stability.

"That sounds like we're all over the place, but they all are tied together and they have to be addressed together," says Rev. Thomas Smith, who has been behind Hill District Ministries since its beginning. "The housing element is really central, because we're trying to help people have a stake in the community."

For information, contact Hill District Ministries, Inc., 2228 Wylie Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219; (412) 281-0607.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

“We discovered that one does not make up missions. One stands in readiness and in the fullness of time God gives them. They are not superimposed, but they emerge from the life of a people to help express that life.”

Elizabeth O'Connor
in *Call to Commitment*



PRENATAL CARING



Room in the inn for new moms.

A handful of women in Ventura County, Calif., who were concerned about the abortion issue began praying in 1984 about what they could do.

They discovered there wasn't a shelter in the whole county where a single, pregnant woman could go for support if she wanted to let her baby live.

That's how Tender Life was born, in an old Victorian house with room for eight mothers-to-be.

Tender Life offers childbirth classes, adoption counseling, Bible study, and life skills classes for women living in the house. They are encouraged to finish their education and get job training, and they can stay for three months after giving birth. Christian families in the area take in additional women to help them through pregnancy and childbirth.

For information contact Tender Life, P.O. Box 7610, Oxnard, CA 93031; (805) 983-0501.

Last night these young Americans came closer to starvation. And closer to God.



They were stretched by a 30-hour weekend fast. Together with planned activities. Games. Films. Discussion. Prayers. Bible study. And songs.

These young Christians felt what it's like to be hungry. And they raised money to help feed hungry families around the world.

They shared an unforgettable night and day of fellowship and fun. Hunger and joy. They shared an experience that brought them closer to each other. Closer to a starving world. And closer to God.

That's the World Vision Planned Famine program. Share it with the young people of your church. And let them share their feelings with a hungry world.

Find out more about the complete Planned Famine program for your church's young people.

Call today Toll-free ☎ 1-800-444-2522 Or mail this coupon and we'll call you.



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Church _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Please send me materials needed to organize our Planned Famine today. We are considering the date: _____
(Allow 30 days for shipping materials.)

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J60PS1

*Third World
governments
owe a surreal
\$1.2 trillion
in debt, but ...*

**WHO
PAY**



Who pays the price for Zambia's foreign debt?

■ A housewife who dies of a gunshot wound because the police, out of fuel, can't respond quickly to her cry for help.

■ The nearly 200 patients in an 80-bed clinic, where a nurse can't find a wire cutter to open shipments of medical supplies.

■ A young barber who goes out of business because money shortages and high interest keep driving up the rent.

■ The residents of Choma, where there isn't a barber because no one can borrow the \$200 start-up capital.

Third World debt is not only a banker's and bureaucrat's crisis. It belongs to the hundreds of millions of ordinary people in "developing" nations who are watching hard-won progress in health, education, and quality of life slip through their fingers.

In the past decade, the ballooning foreign debt has reversed the flow of money from wealthy nations to poorer nations. By 1988, the poorer countries were actually turning over a net \$50 billion a year to the wealthier countries—that is, \$50 billion more than all the aid, new loans,

**THE
PRICE?**



and investments they received.

As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial noted in 1989, "The world is topsy-turvy when countries that should be experiencing a net inflow of capital to finance development are instead shipping capital abroad."

The total debt of the Third World in 1989 was an almost surreal \$1.2 trillion. Where did all that money go? Some of it was wisely invested, but much of it was mismanaged and misappropriated. Brazil's government spent an estimated \$20 billion on a plan to build 10 nuclear power plants by 1980. Only one has been built, and it doesn't work properly.

Argentina's military regime borrowed money to buy weapons and to help fund the 1978 World Cup soccer championship. An estimated \$15 billion of Brazil's debt, \$20 billion of Argentina's debt, and \$22 billion of Venezuela's debt went into private bank accounts abroad.

"Too many loans were made to dictators who invested huge amounts of money in pet projects, without any accountability to the people," says Manfred Grellert, a native Brazilian and World Vision vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean

region. "Now we have to weigh these 'illegitimate' debts against the government's social debt to its citizens."

As Grellert suggests, however, borrowers are seldom the only ones to blame for bad loans. During the 1960s and 1970s, banks and governments practically threw money at the Third World. The lenders hoped to foster economic growth in these countries, which would lead to greater appetites for imported goods from the United States and other industrial countries.

The lure of large, immediate profits from the loans also played a role. By 1982, as much as 20 percent of Citicorp Bank's profits were from loans to Brazil alone.

A government can't default on a loan, right? That's what the lenders assumed. Too many of them slackened their normal screening. It was like a 2 a.m. car dealer's ad: "Bad credit? Repossessions? No problem!" Lenders didn't look carefully at the financial condition of the borrowing countries, or at the feasibility of the projects the loans would finance.

Another factor in the lending spree was the huge amount of capital that

was available. "The world was awash in petro-dollars," explains David Befus, economics professor at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Some economists blame the problem on the lack of other ways for the world to absorb excess capital, not on any particular evil on the part of borrowers or lenders."

And then there were the interest rates. Many of the loans to Third World governments were tied to the rise and fall of interest rates in the world economy. As it turned out, that was practically all rise and no fall.

But the people responsible for amassing the debt, both borrowers and lenders, are not the people who bear its brunt. It is the poor in debtor countries who sacrifice most for the debt.

Why the poor more than others? First of all, they have the least "fat" to trim when the economy backslides. A middle-class family might give up eating *out* once a week; a poor family

By 1988, poorer countries were paying out \$50 million more than they received in aid, new loans, and investments.

might give up *eating* once a week.

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, a social worker visited a home with five children. The parents were out looking for food in garbage dumps. The children looked terrible, and the social worker asked if they had eaten recently. "Yes, Miss. Yesterday Mommy made little cakes from wet newspapers." The social worker was stunned. "Mommy takes a sheet of newspaper, makes it into a ball, and soaks it in water and, when it is nice and soft, kneads it into little cakes. We eat them, drink some water, and feel nice and full inside."

Wages in Brazil have been cut 50 percent in the past five years. Five years ago Brazilians could buy a cook stove for what it costs now to buy a kilo of black beans.

So-called "austerity measures" haven't benefitted the poor, either. Like a local banker dealing with a financially troubled client, the International Monetary Fund (a big lender connected with the United Nations that operates on free-market principles) sat down in the 1980s for a friendly chat with some of the worst cases.

"Listen," the IMF said, "you'll need to tighten your belt a little. Otherwise we won't be able to lend you any more."

Unable to function without borrowing money every year, the debtor countries had little choice but to agree. These austerity programs, sometimes called "structural adjustment," amount to a few simple concepts: cutting government spending, freezing wages, discouraging imports by making them more expensive, and encouraging exports. The aim is to prod debtor countries to become "economically viable"—to spend only what they earn.

Austerity measures may squeeze payments out of a debtor country, but the human costs have been too high.

Because poor people usually have the least political clout to fight for their piece of a shrinking government budget, services that primarily benefit the poor tend to be cut before those that benefit more influential groups.

Health care for the poor is sometimes cut back. Thomas Burns, a missionary in Peru, told of a visit to Felicita, a 22-year-old polio victim. Her two older brothers died of tuberculosis in 1982. Since then Burns has buried Felicita's mother and father, both tuberculosis victims. Burns told a U.S. Senate finance subcommittee, "There is no doubt in my mind that the debt is the cause of their deaths. Money their government spends on interest to foreign banks is money taken away from the health and well-being of the poor."

Sanitation services may also be curtailed. In the Dominican Republic, 7-year-old Juanito Perez picks through a mountain of garbage between houses made of sticks and rusted car parts. The government can afford enough trucks to collect only about a third of the garbage in Santo Domingo, and slums are not high on the list of priority areas.

Austerity measures often mean an end to government subsidies on fuel and food. At the same time, the push to boost exports encourages farmers to grow cash crops instead of food, causing food prices to rise. As the cost of food and other basics shoots up, wages are held down.

In Mexico, Maria Guerrero told a reporter about the poor health of her six children. They have white spots on their skin, which she thinks are caused by lack of protein. Maria can no longer afford milk; the price went up because it is no longer subsidized. "We just drink cinnamon tea," she said. "We'll die soon."

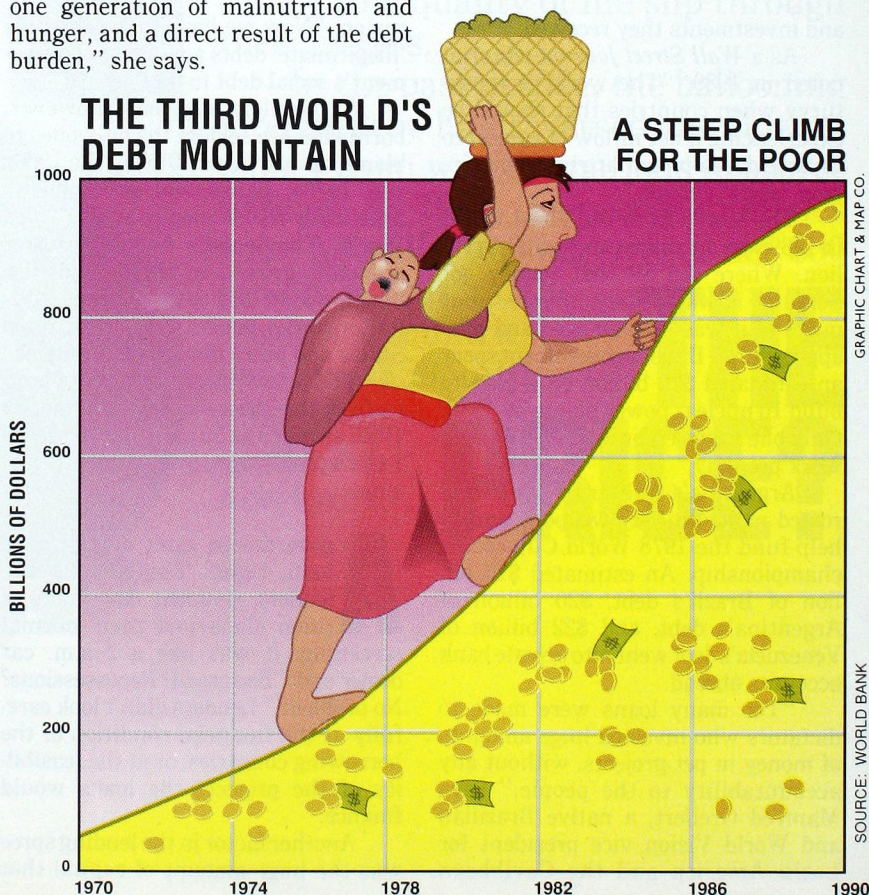
Yet Mexico was praised for heroic efforts to pay its debts between 1982 and 1985. During that period real wages fell 45 percent. An anthropologist who recently returned from Mexico reports a dramatic rise in cases of mental retardation. "This is a direct effect of one generation of malnutrition and hunger, and a direct result of the debt burden," she says.

Another effect of austerity measures is that imported goods are either priced out of reach or simply not available. Medical supplies are in such short supply in Zambia that people who need non-emergency surgery are often asked to wait until they can procure their own scalpels and gloves for the surgeon.

Austerity programs were intended as an emergency measure to deal with countries unable to meet their debt payments. Observers have compared austerity measures to "economic electroshock therapy" and "rearranging the furniture in a debtors' prison." The measures may help squeeze debt payments out of a country, critics say, but the costs are unacceptable—both the harm to people and the squelching of any long-term economic growth.

Now the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund show signs of shifting their position. "They have realized that they went too far," says Joseph Ki-Zerbo, an African political scientist and historian. He told the French monthly *Jeune Afrique Economie*, "The medicine would have killed the patient, and nobody wants to see a period of widespread political instability in Africa."

The poor of the Third World are not the only ones hurt by their nations' debt payments. The more these debtor countries have to pay banks, the less



they have left to buy imported products. When Latin American countries had to cut imports to make debt payments between 1981 and 1986, U.S. exports to the region fell from \$43 billion to \$30 billion. That

cost more than a million U.S. jobs and severely aggravated the farm crisis.

The long fingers of the debt crisis also reach into the international drug trade. Illegal exported drugs can be a vital source of foreign income for debt-ridden countries. In Peru, drug money coming into the country equals 20 percent of official export earnings. Cocaine revenue in Bolivia is about three times the value of all other exports. It's not surprising that farmers are easily recruited to grow coca, a crop that brings five to ten times the profit of any other. Debt didn't cause the drug economy, but it creates conditions that make illegal drugs a more irresistible cash crop.

The debt crisis also affects the environment. Environmental programs are a comparative luxury, not a priority during economic triage. They are quickly cut. At the same time, with poverty worsened by national debt, people who live on the land sacrifice their natural resources for survival.

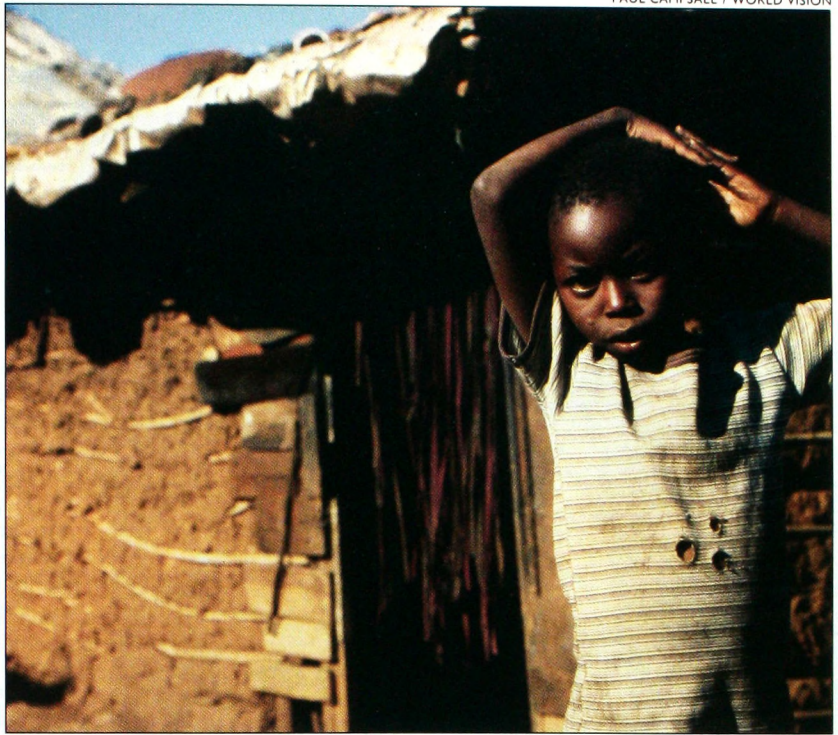
Some conservation organizations have experimented with "debt-for-nature" swaps, paying a portion of a country's debt in exchange for conservation of certain wilderness areas.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has tried a similar idea: "debt-for-development" swaps. For example, one bank recently handed UNICEF all \$800,000 of its loans to Sudan. Now Sudan repays the loan in its own currency, rather than hard-to-get dollars, by installing wells with hand pumps for Sudanese villagers.

Though a creative approach, these swaps aren't the answer to the debt crisis. In the long run, they barely reduce the debt. UNICEF's \$800,000 project in Sudan, for example, is only a tiny fraction of the nation's \$13 billion total debt. The swaps also grant outsiders authority to intervene in matters of national sovereignty.

The way out of the debt crisis follows a much more radical path. Increasingly, the word *forgiveness* is being used. A few years ago, outright debt forgiveness for governments was out of the question. Today it's a routine

National debt exacts a high price from the young; health and education spending is often cut.



assumption. The question has become how much Third World debt will be written off as loss. Debt forgiveness began in early 1989.

Forgiveness—it almost sounds Christian. Is it possible to go a step further, to think about this complex global crisis in biblical terms?

The Bible calls for periodically giving the poor a fresh, debt-free start (Deuteronomy 15:1-4). Old Testament law also forbids charging interest to the poor (Leviticus 25:35-38).

"Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security." (Deuteronomy 24:6) At the time, millstones

were essential to a family's livelihood, grinding the flour used to bake bread. Taking even the upper millstone as loan security would create tremendous hardship. Surely debtor nations are pawning their own livelihood and future when they skimp on the education and health of their people.

In the Bible these concepts are presented as matters of justice and decency, and also as matters of obedience to God. Taking them seriously in the international arena is a radical step, but a radical approach appears to be just what is needed.

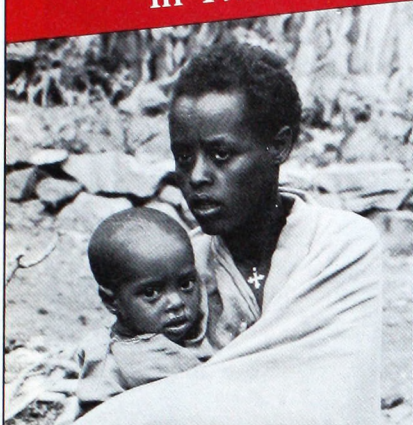
Of course, lenders may be reluctant to deal with a country that hasn't made good on previous loans—just as individuals shy away from lending to friends who didn't repay them the last time. The Old Testament foresees this problem. "Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: 'The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,' so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing." (Deuteronomy 15:9)

This warning is given not as a lofty ideal, but as practical national policy. The passage makes clear that the well-being of everyone—rich, poor, and in-between—depends on just and decent treatment of poor debtors.

Relieving the debt won't remove poverty, and there's no guarantee governments will use freed-up funds to help the poor. Still, it's unlikely the situation for the poor will get worse by

The Bible makes it clear that everyone's well-being depends on decent treatment of poor debtors.

Your people need to know more about Ethiopia's famine than what they read in *Time*



Ethiopia's people are in crisis, and while *Time* and *Newsweek* often describe their plight, they don't tell your people what they can do to help them.

Sociologist, author and dynamic Christian speaker Tony Campolo visited Africa. And in World Vision's 16-minute color film, "Africa in Crisis," he candidly reveals the compelling truth about the situation.



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At the same time that we wrestle with the complications, there are realistic, concrete ways to respond.

relieving the debt, and there's a good chance things would improve for them. At the very least it would be easier for working people to borrow start-up capital for small businesses, which provide a big proportion of the jobs in the Third World.

"Do Christians south of the equator believe that northern Christians care about their hard times? I would have to say, in many cases, not really," says Manfred Grellert. "But I still believe that the church can be a tremendous energy, a moral force in these issues. Just make yourselves aware. If the Christian segment of the U.S. population takes their public life seriously, much can be done."

This includes more than just pushing for policy change. "At the same time that we wrestle with the complications of the situation, it is good for us Christians to think about realistic, concrete ways to respond," David Befus says.

Several church denominations and Christian organizations, for example, sell crafts and products from the Third World and return a fair profit directly to the producers, who often form a cooperative and use extra profits for schools, health care, and other community benefits.

Revolving loan funds also counteract the effects of the debt crisis. These low-cost loans to the poor enable many to become self-reliant business people and even, in many cases, to employ others. As loans are repaid, credit is extended to other entrepreneurs. Here are a few examples from Colombia:

In Bucaramanga, Silverio Penalosa bought a used machine for making women's shoes. He and his wife began doing piecework for a factory. With

another loan they bought more equipment, and now they sell their own line of shoes and employ nine workers from their community.

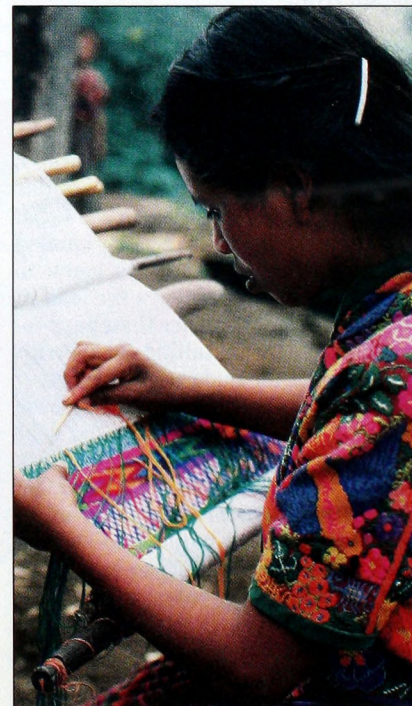
The Rodriguez family opened a convenience store in their garage with the help of a loan. "We started selling eggs and soft drinks, then candy and cookies and school supplies," says Isadora Rodriguez. "Although we're surrounded by supermarkets, people come to our door starting at 5 a.m. Now we're thinking of expanding."

Waldina Cortes used to sell about 10 homemade meat pies a day. As her business grew, she borrowed money for an oven and a delivery bicycle. Later she bought a small grain mill for making flour. Now she makes between 350 and 400 pies a day.

Debt crisis or not, the poor everywhere have trouble borrowing money at manageable rates. In severely indebted countries, that problem is aggravated. Revolving loans can be a good way to reach out to people who are paying dearly for their country's debts.

By working the political system and reaching out with assistance, North Americans can relieve the debt crisis that affects all of us. The Christian faith has a practical perspective on the debt crisis, one that is surely no more "impossible" than the suggestions of bankers and bureaucrats. □

Jack Straus is president of Mission Imports, Inc., in Dallas, Texas.



TERRI OWENS / WORLD VISION

Direct assistance to artisans and small businesses can ease the burden of national debt on poor families.

RESCUED—BY THE GHETTO

In 1980, when word circulated that 14 members of Jackson State's football team "got religion," Tennessee State boasted to the newspapers that their defense would "baptize them with fire." Mississippi offensive guard Derek Perkins did not see the humor. In fact, Mississippi's team captain spoke for him when he prayed before the game: "God, they don't know you. They don't understand your baptism and they don't understand your fire. They are making a mockery of you." Then he made an announcement, like something straight out of Exodus: God had promised them the victory.

It wasn't until the end of the fourth quarter that an apparent loss turned into a miraculous win for Jackson State. The coaches were dumbstruck. Massive offensive linemen shouted, "Praise Jesus!" And even Derek was hard-pressed to explain that day's victory.

Derek's own performance against Tennessee was the crown of a season so impressive that professional scouts were already beginning to court him. But in an odd twist on the American dream, the ghetto rescued Perkins from a lucrative future in professional athletics. During his junior year he traded the football dorms for Jackson's inner city, "to see if Daddy's stuff worked."

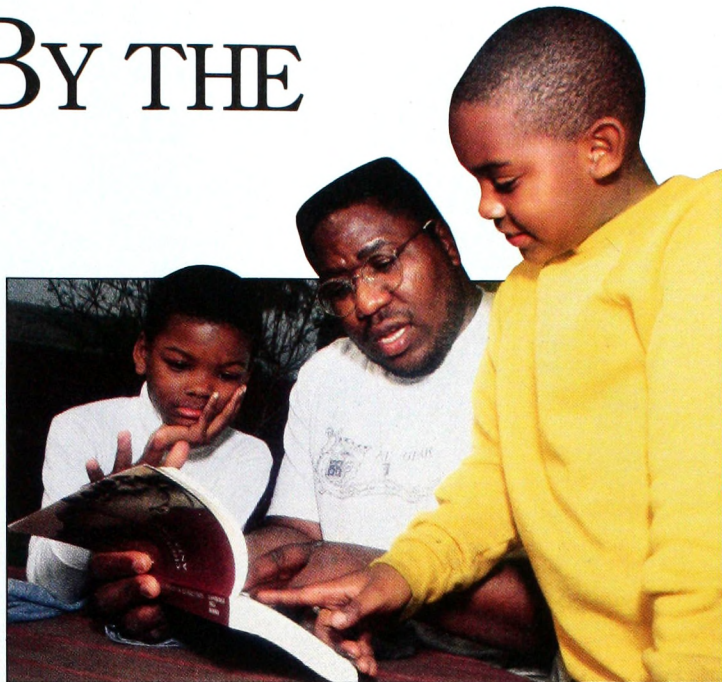
Daddy's "stuff" is the radical urban-renewal plan of Derek's father, John Perkins. Determined to test that plan independently, Derek immersed himself in the lives of the boys who were his new neighbors. He soon found himself, at 21, the spiritual and practical father to nine teenage gang members. Within three months, they had all received Christ.

That summer, a trip to Africa gave him the chance to see people poorer in possessions than his inner-city children, but richer in something else. "They were noble. They made me love my heritage. They made me want to be more committed to Christian things." It soon became clear that "athletics just weren't important."

He returned to Mississippi anxious to teach his boys what he had learned. But during the month that he was gone, the boys had scattered.

Fall football training was about to start, and the newspapers announced Derek's return as the force most likely to solidify the offense. A new line coach studied his films from the previous year and made Derek a once-in-a-lifetime offer. "If you play for me this year, I'll get you into the NFL."

Professional scouts later confirmed that a dream-come-true career in football seemed available for the taking. The only problem was, Derek didn't want it.



CARRIE MOONEYHAM

"After I saw the kids scattered, I couldn't be on campus. These kids were hungry and needed leadership. There's a thousand people to replace me on a football team, but there wasn't one other to give his life to the children."

He did not go back to the dorm, or to football, or even to college that year. Ten years later, defensive linemen are not the only grateful ones.

The population of 30 children at the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, Calif., will swell to 80 during the summer of 1990. Since 98 percent of them come from single-parent homes, it's easy to see why many consider 31-year-old Perkins their surrogate father.

Barking pit bulls, drug dealing, and murder once characterized this neighborhood that a local newspaper called the "bull's eye" of Pasadena's high-crime area. Now the only thing that interrupts the afternoon quiet is the daily after-school barrage of children.

If you ask neighbors about the center, they don't always remember the Swahili name, but they know all about the place. "Those are the folks that challenged the drug dealers."

Just for the record, the name *Harambee* is a word that Derek adopted on that trip to Africa. It's a fitting description for the new kind of offensive line he started. It means, "let's get together and push."

Derek Perkins starts each day with an intense prayer not unlike the one he prayed with a football captain years ago. "God, they do not know you. They do not know your baptism and they do not know your fire." And, like something straight out of Exodus, God has promised him the victory. □

By Lauralee Mannes, a free-lance writer in Altadena, Calif.

There were thousands to replace him on a football team, but not one other to give his life to the children.

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WORLD VISION®

June/July 1990

Joni Eareckson Tada:

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLD'S DISABLED

Third World Debt:

WHO **P**AYS THE
PRICE?

'**W**ASTING TIME'
WITH THE
POOR



4 **The World's Weakest—
516 Million Strong**

Joni Eareckson Tada lifts her voice for the world's physically disabled. Here, she shares what went through her mind as she addressed delegates last July at the Lausanne II conference in the Philippines, where she spoke on behalf of the "least of the brethren."

10 **Pew Potatoes Need Not Apply**

It's not a typical church. It doesn't have a pipe organ. It doesn't even have a building. But ask Donnell and Pam Blake and their two daughters if Washington, D.C.'s Jubilee Church is doing the work of the church, and they'll tell you how they got out of a homeless shelter and into an apartment of their own.

14 **'Wasting Time'
With the Poor**

"In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails," says author Clif Cartland. "As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch."

18 **Who Pays the
Price?**

The Third World's debt crisis affects all of us, but no one as much as the poor in debtor countries. Where did this crisis come from? What can we do about it? Here's a beginner's guide.



GRAPHIC CHART & MAP CO.

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Working among the poorest of the poor, as World Vision does in 89 countries, often means identifying with those on the fringes of society because of physical disabilities. No one better represents their needs and aspirations than Joni Eareckson Tada does in our lead story.

And don't overlook *Bodies in Motion*, the first of a continuing series dealing with creative solutions developed by local churches to meet pressing community needs.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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We need your help! We have no values."

It was an amazing and historic statement, not without irony, and it created a chill of awe, wonder, and anticipation. It was made by a social scientist from the Academy of Science in Moscow. With the new freedom of travel, he was in the West. And with the new freedom of thought, he was lamenting the lack of values, indeed, the bleeding away of values in the Soviet Union during the 70-year oppressive communist rule.

"Under Stalin we were taught that it was OK to lie, to steal, to cheat, even to kill. But with this new openness, we find that our values have been lost. We want to do a value study, using the benchmark of the Ten Commandments. We want to interview 10,000 Russian families in the next two years and assess how far we have fallen from the values inherent in those commandments. Then we hope to find some strategies to take us back again. Will you help us?"

Recently I heard of two historic incidents that frame this 70-year period. Both are relevant and neither one overstates a reality. The first one happened in 1915. A Russian Armenian was reading his Bible when he was beheaded. I saw the Bible—large, thick, and well used. Inside was a reddish stain that permeated most of the book. The stain was the blood of this man, one of more than a million casualties of a religious and ethnic holocaust.

The other event happened toward the end of that 70-year period. A large shipment of Bibles entered Romania from the West, and Ceausescu's lieutenants confiscated them, shredded them, and turned them into pulp. Then they had the pulp reconstituted into toilet paper and sold to the West.

What happened between these two events fits the description given by God to the prophet Amos: "Behold, the days are coming when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing of the Words of the Lord." Alexander Solzhenitsyn explained that same period in Russian history this way: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this happened."

The communist world lost a transcendent

vision of God as well as biblical values. Yet today we see the seeds of new hope, the tender sprouts of new beginnings. It is this hope we feel in the words of the sociologist: "Can you help us?" It is the cry we hear over and over coming out of the Soviet Union: "We need a perestroika of the soul."

We see this most dramatically, perhaps, in the request received recently by Western mission organizations for 50 million Bibles for children. It comes from people who very much desire a better future than that which they've had recently.

"Can you help us?" When I hear this I think of the question Jesus asked: "If a son asks his father for food, would he give him a scorpion?" No, of course not. But there is a hunger in the Soviet Union, and it comes from deep within the soul. It is just as strong as the spark that couldn't be denied and the light that wouldn't go out, even under 70 years of godless suppression. Solzhenitsyn also said, "But, as is always the case in times of persecution and suffering, the awareness of God in my country has attained great acuteness and profundity."

Would that we could match that awareness of God. Would that our Western value system were so strong that the purity of moral values could flow through these newly opened floodgates. The sad fact is already evident: *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines will be sold for a profit before the West can give away Bibles.

Perhaps the challenge of responding to the Russian request for 50 million Bibles can do more than break the famine of the Word in the East. Perhaps the exercise could rejuvenate and reclaim the moral witness of the church in the West.

"Can you help us?"

Most assuredly, we answer, "Yes!" The church can gather funds, the mission societies can provide the Bibles, we can assemble a Christian Marshall Plan. And as we do, we say to the Soviet Christians—who can tell us so much about the cost of discipleship, who have been a light that will not go out, who have been the presence of Christ incarnate in the most difficult times—thank you for asking the question. Thank you for giving us another chance to respond.

Now that the Soviet Union is asking for values, what have we to offer?

**ENDING A
70-YEAR**

FAMINE

The World's Weakest—

*Often overlooked,
this minority
group crosses all
ethnic, religious,
and socioeconomic
boundaries.*

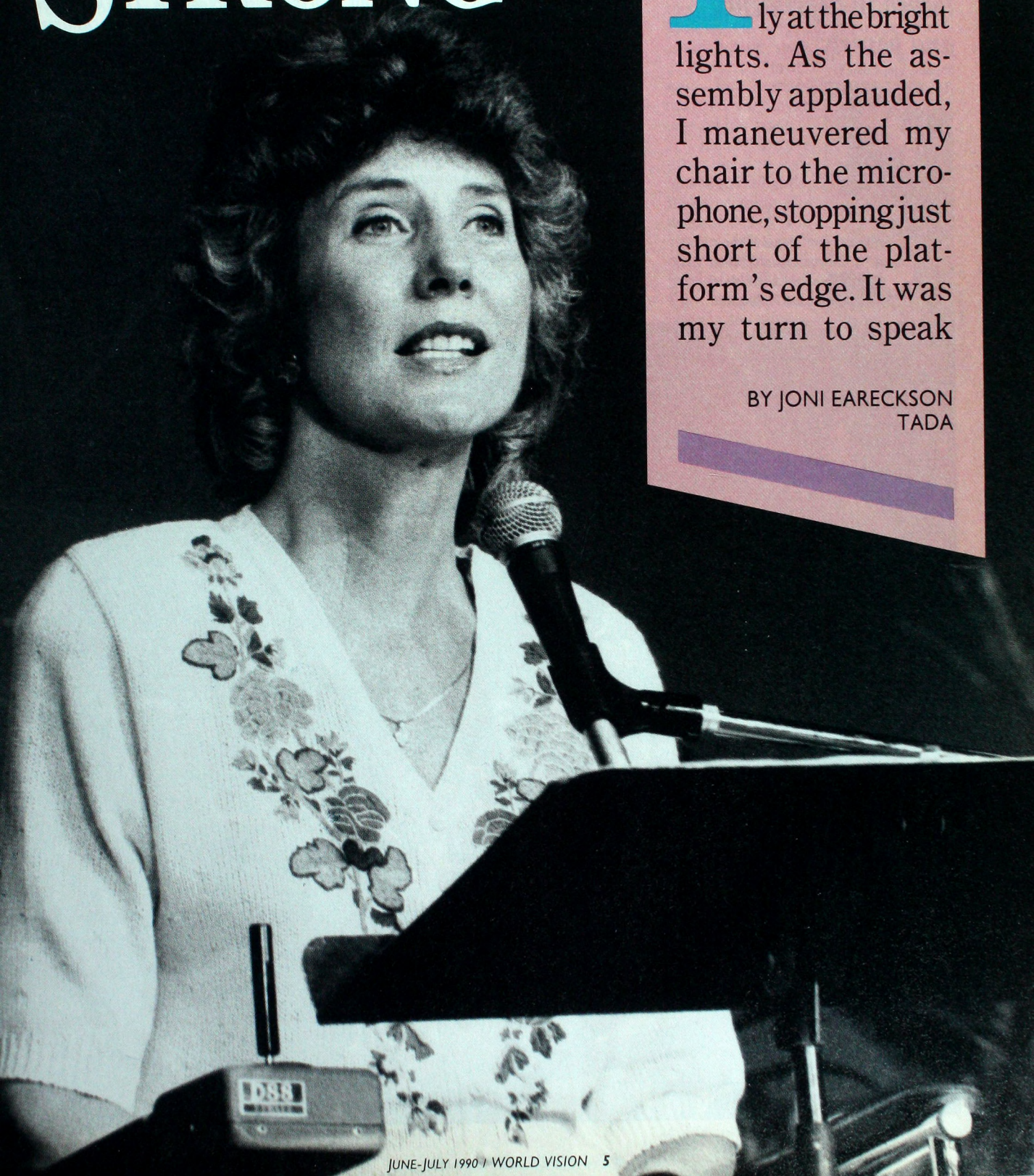


516 Million STRONG

PHOTO BY AKE LUNDBURG

I powered my wheelchair on to the stage, wincing slightly at the bright lights. As the assembly applauded, I maneuvered my chair to the microphone, stopping just short of the platform's edge. It was my turn to speak

BY JONI EARECKSON
TADA



Their unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.

Joni visits the "House Without Steps," a Christian rehabilitation center on the outskirts of Manila, the Philippines.

at last year's Lausanne II conference in Manila, the Philippines—my chance to help 4,000 Christian leaders understand the plight of 516 million people with disabilities around the world.

I motioned for my friend Camille, a sign language interpreter, to stand close to me. I wanted the TV camera to pick her up—not just so deaf people could 'hear' the message, but to show these leaders that it was acceptable for an interpreter to stand by them whenever they spoke from a platform.

As the applause waned, I glanced at my watch. I had exactly 11 minutes to drive home the need to share Christ's love with the world's disabled.

I took a deep breath and began: *If evangelism is taking the good news of help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless, shouldn't we be most concerned about sharing Christ's love with those who are most helpless and hopeless?*

My text wasn't merely words on a white page. Each sentence and verse of

Scripture reflected the face and name of a mentally or physically disabled person I admired and respected.

My voice boomed across the auditorium: *No evangelistic outreach is possible to disabled people without addressing their physical impairment in some way. People with disabilities have had to learn to play the part of the cowering and indebted in order to survive in the world of the physically capable. They have often been treated as if they were children. These unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.*

As I spoke, I thought of the paraplegics in a shabby rehab clinic in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Their wheelchairs are made from bicycle parts, their hospital beds are fashioned from metal and plastic plumbing pipes. Their families, already at the bottom of the poverty ladder, cannot afford to care for them; they are



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

beyond the reach of social services and vocational training. And the Hindu neighbors of these young, paralyzed men look upon them with disdain and indifference—their physical infirmities having plunged them to the bottom of the reincarnation ladder.

Yet Valerie, a Christian therapist at the clinic, brings light and life into the daily routine of those paraplegics. To her, the men are not pitiful, helpless cripples. They are people who happen to be spinal-cord injured—some from falling out of palm trees while cutting coconuts, others from carrying heavy scaffolds of stones and bricks.

Valerie offers them the hope, worth, and dignity that Christ's love gives, and they have grasped it. Spiritually, these men in makeshift wheelchairs have risen above their unjust social handicaps.

I continued my address: *Our attitudes would be corrected, our motivation focused, and our enthusiasm ignited if*

we truly understood the joy of sharing the gospel and Christ's love with those who are deemed, by the world, most helpless.

I smiled as I thought of Maria, a young, severely handicapped woman in Romania. Her family lives in a small home in Oradea in the northern mountains. Barely taller than a dwarf, Maria lives with constant pain from a twisted spine and a shortened leg. She is grateful to be able to walk with a cane.

Yet Maria also lived under her country's brutal communist regime. She knows the frustration of standing and waiting in long lines for vegetables or toilet paper. She has experienced the double handicap of poverty and political oppression.

Maria's family is proud of her. She is intelligent, self-taught, and the townspeople admire her enthusiasm for Christ. She labors to translate Christian books into her people's language. Her greatest desire? To help people with disabilities in her torn and devastated country find hope in Christ. Maria knows the joy of sharing the gospel with those who, like her, are deemed helpless by the world.

The audience was listening and seemed genuinely interested. I glanced at my watch and saw that I had only a few minutes to finish. Camille's hands were probably getting tired from signing so fast, but I picked up the pace.

It is the 'least of the brethren' and the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor. Christians have the only message that can save and deliver, the only message that vindicates God's good name as the one who is supremely and benevolently sovereign over deformities and diseases. Christians have the gospel message that joins the sighted and the blind, the hearing and the deaf, the intellectually capable with the mentally handicapped.

It is the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor.

In my mind I pictured George, an evangelist in Malawi who uses an old, badly battered wheelchair. He had just written me several weeks earlier, asking me to send him my husband's used shirts—his were wearing out and he wanted to dress his best as an ambassador for Christ.

George wheels himself from village to village over bumpy, rutted dirt roads that connect the small towns in Malawi. He longs for a power wheelchair during such exhausting journeys, but realizes such a luxury is far beyond his grasp.

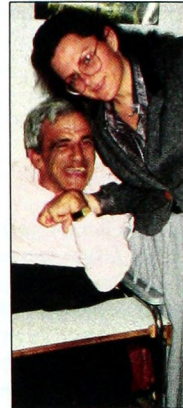
Despite sore muscles and callouses on his hands, he keeps going. His deepest desire is to share Christ with others who are handicapped, to tell them that, despite their poverty and hunger, God is in control for their good and his glory.

Some welcome George's message, others don't. Nevertheless through the sheer force of God's grace and George's magnetic personality, Christians in this small African country have noticed George's efforts. They, too, are becoming more sensitive to the needs of disabled people in their towns and villages.

I looked out on the crowd of Christian leaders, many of whom were African, judging by their brightly colored robes and headgear. *I wish George were here*, I thought, as I began to wind up my message.

No other ministry better demonstrates Christ's heart of compassion than ministries to people with disabilities. Those who are helpless, no matter what their handicap, see themselves in the

Valerie and patient



JONI AND FRIENDS



*No ministry
better demonstrates
Christ's compassion than
ministries
to the disabled.*

Man of Sorrows because he became one of them. Jesus' message was clear. We are all without help or hope as long as we are without him. But he was also clear that his good news was, in some way, especially for those who suffer the helplessness and hopelessness that physical infirmity can often bring.

I glanced at Camille. Her animated hand gestures were communicating the message loud and clear. I knew she must be thinking of deaf people who had touched her life, perhaps even the little Haitian deaf boy she had met as a college student while on a short-term mission in the poorest parts of Haiti.

The boy was bright and intelligent but shunned by his playmates. They told Camille that he was stupid because he couldn't speak. Camille, drawn to this lonely deaf child, mimed to him her message of friendship with wide, sweeping gestures. He soon left an imprint on her, convincing her to spend her life ministering to the world's deaf.

I closed my address with these final words from Scripture:

"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

I paused to allow that verse to touch the hearts of those leaders, then continued: *It may well be that the level of our commitment to preach the gospel will be judged according to our willingness to reach the very weakest of those who need him most.*

I thanked the assembly, backed my wheelchair from the microphone, and wheeled to the wings of the stage with Camille. I quickly prayed that the message would remain imprinted on

those leaders' hearts as they traveled back to their homelands.

I pictured them reaching out and touching the Indian child with Down's

Maria



JONI AND FRIENDS

syndrome cradled in his mother's arms ... the blind grandfather led through the Moroccan village by his son ... the paralyzed teenager sitting twisted as she grinds corn for her family's meal ... the deaf woman living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, considered crazy because she can't speak and uses funny hand signs

... the mentally handicapped boy in Sumatra kept hidden in a dark bedroom by his family.

I asked God to give each leader the courage, tempered with tenderness, to not only declare Christ's gospel to these needy people but to demonstrate it as well.

Camille held a glass of water to my mouth. I was just ready to leave the anteroom when an Asian man with an engaging, tooth-missing grin stopped me. I lifted my arm for him to shake, but he answered with his own awkward attempt to lift his artificial hand. We laughed—we had a lot in common.

A translator said the man's name was U and that he was from Thailand. The translator went on to say that U was challenged to return to Bangkok with a deepened desire to reach people like himself.

Before Jacinto's parents abandoned him in the hospital, probably expecting that he would die from his wounds, they changed his name to Chicaipa Maopa—"Bringer of Bad Luck."

When I first met Jacinto in June 1988, the boy was all alone in that hospital in Tete, Mozambique. A few weeks earlier he had stepped on a land mine that blew away most of his right leg, shattered his left knee, and ripped into his right wrist and elbow.

"Lying there in the hospital, I was sure I was going to die," Jacinto told me when I saw him again last year.

"But when Nick started visiting me, I started getting another idea. I couldn't understand why Nick liked me, but I believed him when he said he wanted to be my friend."

Nick Dexter, a World Vision agronomist, remembers: "The first thing I told him was, 'Your name is not Chicaipa. It's Jacinto.'"

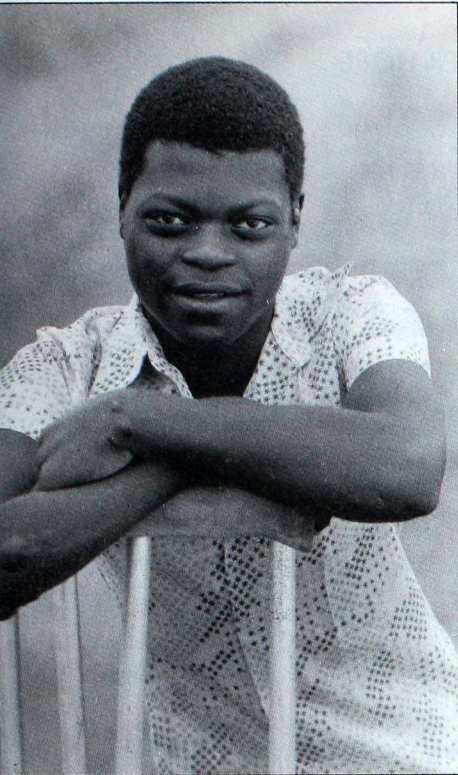
When the boy was discharged from the hospital, Nick took him home, where Nick and a few other staff members took Jacinto under their wing. Then he drove Jacinto to Harare, Zimbabwe, for a month of therapy.

In Zimbabwe, a Brazilian missionary couple befriended Jacinto. "They came to check on how I was doing and they brought me books to

That was it. That's all I needed to hear. Somewhere, I knew, a child, a father, a grandparent—someone with a mental or physical disability—would have his or her life changed for Christ's sake. U and George, Maria and Valerie, and thousands like them would carry the gospel to those "poor in the eyes of the world." Hundreds, perhaps even thousands of handicapped people would become "rich in faith and would inherit the kingdom promised to those who love him."

Somewhere there would be those faithful few who would help reach 516 million physically and mentally handicapped people around the world. And through our united prayers, the world would certainly be changed. □

Joni Eareckson Tada is president of JONI AND FRIENDS, a ministry that links disabled people with the church. She lives in Woodland Hills, Calif.



read," he says. "They told me that God is with me, that I shouldn't be afraid. They prayed with me and taught me how to believe.

"I had never even thought about God before, but before I came back to Mozambique I decided to give my life to Jesus," he says.

When Jacinto returned to Mozambique, he was accepted into the SOS Children's Village, an orphanage on the outskirts of Tete, though he is not truly an orphan. In February 1989 he started fourth grade and is now at the top of his class.

Nick says that Jacinto is a quick learner, and that he reads pretty well. So well, in fact, that he has now read the New Testament from cover to cover.

"Nobody has pushed him to do any of this," Nick says. "Jacinto is genuinely hungry to understand God's Word. He reads his Bible every day."

Jacinto's new best friend is Argelino Sidati, another resident of the orphanage. Crippled by polio, Argelino, like Jacinto, knows more about suffering than any 13-year-old should. Last year he watched machete-wielding RENAMO guerrillas hack his mother and father to death. His six older brothers and sisters escaped, he thinks, but he doesn't expect to see them again.

Jacinto and Argelino are virtually inseparable, helping each other find a place in a society that usually

musters little more than pity for the disabled.

"Our future depends on how hard we study," Jacinto says. "We can't use our legs, so we'll use our heads and our hands." The two are planning to take typing lessons soon in a neighboring town.

When I last saw Jacinto, I asked him for his favorite Scripture verse, and he rattled off, in Portuguese, the first 21 verses of John 3. I teased him, saying I had only asked for one verse. He replied by quoting 2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

"I know that many people have been praying for me," Jacinto told me. "And now I know that God has the power to answer impossible prayers. So I am praying for peace in this country. The *bandidos armados* are ruining Mozambique. Look what they've done to me! We need peace. More than anything else we need peace, and I know that Jesus can give it to us.

"One day," he added, "when our peace comes, I would like to stand beside President Chissano and tell him what I feel. I would say, 'Sir, God answers prayer. Now we are free, because of Jesus.'"

By David Ward, a photojournalist living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

One of the 516 Million:

BRINGER of BAD LUCK



Joni and her husband, Ken Tada, befriend two handicapped women at a rehabilitation center in the Philippines.

Jubilee Church, Washington, D.C.

**PEW
POTATOES
NEED
NOT
APPLY**

It was about a year and a half ago when Donnell and Pam Blake got the phone call. The Blakes and their two little girls were living in the notorious Capitol City Inn, a former motel where Washington, D.C., “stores families that don’t have nowhere to live,” as Pam says. A stranger was on the line offering them what sounded like the chance of a lifetime—an apartment and a support network to help them make it on their own.

But Pam and Donnell had to do some real soul-searching. The offer would only be good if they stayed together as a family, and they had already been separated for six months of the two years they’d been married. Taking this offer would mean casting their lot together, counting on each other to make it work.

“You be scared and puzzled and worried,” Pam says. “You wonder, would we just be together for a while, or is the situation seriously going to get better? That’s the type of things would go through anybody’s mind. Then too, I had to think about the security of my children [Shaneka, 6, and Roshena, 3]. Welfare is the pits, but at least I know I have something coming in to buy me and my children what we need. If I get back with this man, I get no government assistance.”

On the other hand, the shelter was no kind of life for children. Shaneka used to sit in a corner and cry, “Mama, I don’t like this. Why can’t you cook me some food? Why do we always have to go stand in that line? Let’s go away from here.”

Pam would try to explain. “I looked at her and I could not break it down to a 5-year-old level for her to understand. Because there *wasn’t* no understand.”

Pam and Donnell had had enough of shelters. They had watched enough people get sucked into perpetual shelter life, had watched the drugs, the stealing, the violence, and had seen what happened to the children. Ten-year-old girls would brag to Pam that they could teach her more about “being with a man” than she knew. “And they weren’t lying,” Pam says. “It’s pathetic.”

In the end, they decided they would trust these strangers, trust each other, and do whatever they could to get out of the shelter. So Pam prayed, “Please God, don’t let me be making the wrong mistake,” and they said yes to the people on the phone.

Just before Thanksgiving 1988, Pat Sitar and Gary McMichael from Jubilee Church visited the shelter to meet Pam and Donnell. A few days later Gary showed them a brick apartment building in the Adams Morgan neighborhood and said they

would be living there before Christmas.

The apartment building Gary showed Pam and Donnell is owned by Jubilee Housing, a non-profit organization that grew out of Jubilee Church in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., about five miles northwest of the Capitol. The church is one of eight “faith communities” that make up the non-denominational Church of the Saviour.

Within about 20 square blocks, Jubilee Church and three or four other Church of the Saviour sub-groups have founded the housing ministry, a job placement service, a family health clinic, a coffeehouse, a children’s ministry, a Montessori school, a hospital for the homeless, and transitional programs for homeless men and homeless, pregnant women.

They had to trust each other and trust these strangers.

This might sound like a systematic outreach plan, but it’s not. The Church of the Saviour has shied away from long-range planning since its earliest days in the 1940s. Its ministries are more like living things that are conceived, birthed, and nurtured within this small family.

And it *is* small. Jubilee Church has about 25 full-fledged members, eight or 10 intern members, and maybe 60 or 70 who gather on Monday evenings for worship. Even this seems too large for the kind of church Jubilee wants to be, and a small core group is branching out to start a new congregation.

No, this is not a typical church. It doesn’t have a pipe organ or even a church building. Jubilee Church has one calling: “To be the people of God in the midst of low-income people.” All its members go through a period of prayer, study, and dialogue to seek their own part in that calling.

Does everyone receive a clear call to a specific ministry?

“It comes with much greater clarity for some



JIM HUBBARD

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

people than for others," says Gordon Cosby, pastor and one of the founders of Church of the Saviour. "If you are faithful to God's call as far as you know it, more clarity often comes in time."

When Pat Sitar received her call, it was so clear she couldn't avoid it.

Pat had worked in the Jubilee Housing office for 13 years, and she had known almost all the children who lived there from the time they were born. She grieved like their own mother when they took up drugs or got pregnant or dropped out of school.

Pat was taking a class at the church to explore her calling. Again and again she kept coming back to the children of Jubilee. But she didn't think she had it in her to start a new ministry. She prayed and reflected and talked to people, sure that she must be missing what God *really* was calling her to do.

"I'm trying to leave myself open to whatever God has for me, but all I can see are the children," she told Gordon Cosby, who was leading the class.

"Pat, that sounds like a call," he said.

In the Church of the Saviour, when people perceive a calling to begin a new work, they first carry it around for nine months, like a child in the womb. Then, if it still seems that is what God wants them to do, they take a church service to "sound the call." If two or more people respond and commit themselves to the new mission, the church blesses and commissions the new venture.

Pat's love for the children of Jubilee Housing grew into the Good Shepherd ministry: an after-school program in a few basement rooms of a Jubilee apartment, a youth center in another building's basement, and a handful of other activities for Jubilee children. Pat had her doubts in the beginning, but she thrived in the work.

One thing still troubled her, though—it still hurt so badly to lose children.

"It is inevitable that families sometimes have to be evicted from the apartments for various reasons," she says quietly. "It's very painful. I think of the chaos those children live in, and I know we will just lose touch with them."

Determined to do what she could to help homeless families, even on a small scale, Pat joined her Good Shepherd ministry with Jubilee Housing. They would look for a homeless family with children, a family without a drug problem, and they would plug that family into Jubilee Church's support network. They called the new ministry "Turning Points," and they hired Gary McMichael to oversee it.

In November 1988, they found Pam and Donnell Blake and their two children living in the Capitol City Inn.

After the Blakes received Pat and Gary's promise of a new home by Christmas, the wait began.

"That was the longest wait in the *whole world*," Pam says. "I think Donnell called every other day. If it wasn't for me, he might've called every single day."

The closer it got to Christmas, Donnell began to voice the doubt they had pushed to the back of their minds in the beginning. "Those folks lied," he said.

But they didn't lie. "December 16 we was in here," Pam says. "I don't know where they got it or how they did it, but they brought us practically everything we needed. We had one of the best Christmases that I ever could dream of. They told us they would try to make this Christmas make up for the things we've been through. And they did. A real tree and everything. We have had things overflowing. And we've been here ever since."

Today Pam is assistant manager of a bagel shop downtown. She got the job through Jubilee Jobs, a full-service employment agency that began as a desk and phone in the Jubilee Housing office.

"Terry Flood was my counselor, and I'd recommend her to anybody," Pam says. "Terry do her job. She's mean, but she's good. She's very strict, but she'll work with you and listen to you. I got discouraged because when she sent me on interviews, nobody got back to me. She encouraged me to have faith, it's not the end of the world, don't give up. She really cares."

Once a week Gary McMichael and Pam sit down together. "We go over the things we have accomplished, and if we have a problem, I'll discuss it with him," Pam said. "But he don't ever tell us how to do it. He might suggest things, but mainly we keep talking about it until we find a way."

That is the spirit of Jubilee Church, which is not called to fix things for people but to live beside them as servants.

Donnell summed it up this way: "Me and Pam, we try to be about this family and we are trying to do it right. We been through hell back at the shelter and sometimes we go through torment out here too. We thank God for Gary and Pat and them, but at the same time we thank God for *us*, because he made us strong and got us back together and put us here." □



JIM HUBBARD

The neighborhood kids were Pat's calling, hard as she tried to resist it.

For more information, write to the Church of the Saviour at 2025 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

'WASTING TIME' *with the* POOR

The streets of Calcutta were dark. Here and there a vendor still tried to sell his wares, but most of the buyers had long since gone. People were already sleeping in the streets.

We turned in to a lane where there were no lights. The pavement was broken, and the houses were built right out to the edge of the sidewalk, their walls dirty with what seemed like the stains of hundreds of years.

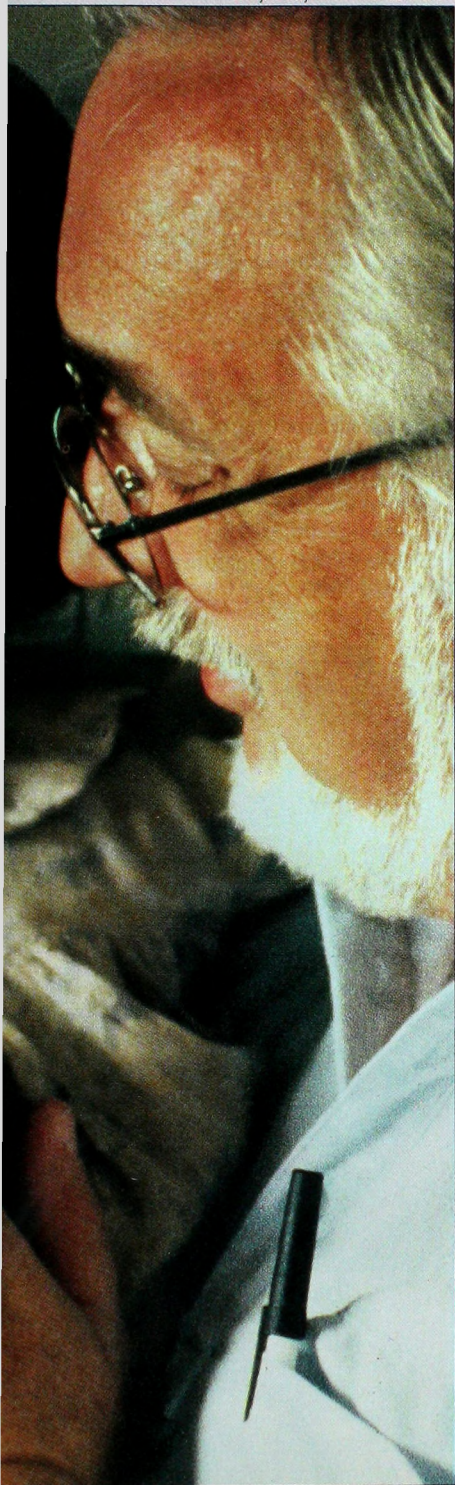
A shaft of light shone through one window. I caught a glimpse of wood panelling, deep blue mosaic tile, and a crystal light. At first it was only a touch of beauty where I had least expected it. But it came to mean more.

Even in the most deeply bruised of the human family, there are gifts to discover. Through the lonely and the fragile, from whom I often pull away, Christ comes to me most deeply.

I could have learned that lesson at home, but I didn't. I had to leave my comfort and isolation. Something in me had to be awakened by Asia's pervasive poverty.

I was traveling with a group brought together by the Ministry of Money, a project of the Church of the





Saviour in Washington, D.C., which takes affluent North Americans to visit some of the poorest people in the world. We went on a three-week "reverse mission" to learn from the poor, and to offer them nothing but ourselves.

Poverty was not new to me. I have worked for months among homeless young men in downtown Los Angeles. But nothing prepared me for this trip.

Gaunt infants with deep, sunken eyes will never again be simply pictures in a famine-relief appeal. In Manila, the Philippines, I stood by the crib of one infant, praying that the peace of Christ would calm his constant, feeble cries. At a health center in Calcutta, India, I massaged the twisted toothpick legs of a little girl with beautiful, sad eyes. There were 20 more like her in that room.

Often I wished for something big to do, something that would make poverty go away.

Instead I began to learn how to do what others have called "wasting time" with the needy. For me that meant learning to be available to God and to others, an availability that often looked and felt like wasting time.

Pipi was the first to teach me that lesson. I met Pipi in an orphanage in Manila. He was mute, but he knew how to ask for—and get—my atten-

tion. We played finger games that he created, walked where he wanted to walk, did whatever he wanted to do. Pipi made the rules and I simply followed, giving this needy little boy my undivided attention.

Another time, a little boy climbed up into my arms and laid his head on my shoulder. I began to rock him back and forth, and he turned until he was cradled in my arms like a baby. His eyes closed, but he wasn't sleeping. He was soaking up all the love he could get. I was "wasting time," with nothing to do but be with him.

In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails. As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch.

Anger, sadness, and shame

If the trip brought gentleness out of me, it also brought out deep anger. The people we met had so few choices. They spent every ounce of energy on survival. Whole families lived in a single small room; others lived on the street under an old piece of plastic. I wondered what life must be like when the monsoons flooded the streets. These things made me angry and sad.

I marvelled that Aram, a rickshaw puller in Calcutta, had run passengers 25 to 50 miles a day for 15 years. He ate rice and lentils twice a day, and every month he sent his money home to his family in a distant state. I was angry that anyone should live like that.

At Olongapo, the site of the giant Subic Bay U.S. Navy Base in the Philippines, we met a few of the 16,000 "hospitality girls" whose customers are U.S. servicemen. Olongapo left me with a deep sense of shame.

Then my anger turned closer to home. I have so much. I live what the poor of the world would call an extravagant life. I could leave behind the poverty of Manila or Calcutta; they cannot.

A few years ago, when Henri Nouwen left Harvard to work among the mentally handicapped, he observed

Maybe
I could have
learned the
same things
in the comfort
of home.
But I didn't.

that he received more from them than he was able to give. That was my experience too. I found that people living in poverty understood some things far better than I.

I marvelled at the persistence of vendors who worked all day and into the night to sell a few pieces of fruit. Thrift and recycling are almost an art among Asia's poor. Thousands live by salvaging things from piles of rotting garbage. A woman and her little children make a living by separating broken pieces of clear and colored glass.

Finding hope where Christ is

Calcutta's poverty overwhelmed me. Its streets were crowded beyond imagination, its air thick with pollution. Yet it was a wonder. "Warm, cunning, and beautiful in a strange kind of way," an Indian writer described it.

Millions have left the poverty of rural India for Calcutta. Whole families set up housekeeping on the city's crowded streets and lanes. No one should have to live on the streets, yet part of the wonder of Calcutta is that a squatter's claim to sidewalk space or a tiny piece of ground is protected by law. I thought of the early morning police loudspeakers that roust the poor who sleep on the streets in many U.S. cities, and of the water trucks that wash the sidewalks to rid them of cardboard shelters and the belongings left by the homeless.

For most of Asia's poor, there is no escape from poverty. Yet I found hope where followers of Christ live among the poor and treat them with dignity. Sometimes it has transformed entire communities.

Bagong Barrio in the Philippines was one of those places. Most of the former garbage dump's 65,000 people share their small homes with two or more families. But over the past 12 years the barrio has been changing. Small groups of Christians meet to pray, study Scripture, and work together for justice. Twenty pastoral layworkers from the Catholic church have led the "little Davids" of Bagong Barrio

in tackling their Goliaths.

Another island of hope is Pilkhana, across the crowded Howrah Bridge from Calcutta. Some call it "The City of Joy," the name used by Dominique Lapierre in his novel about life in Calcutta.

Twenty-two years ago a young French priest went to live in Pilkhana. He encouraged the people to form the Seva Sangh Samiti—the Committee to Help Together. Their first project was a health center. Then came wells and paved roads, nutrition classes, free medicine for those who could not pay, school uniforms (a requirement in India), books, even pencils so that every child could get an education.

With Victor Gergeon, whose mother was one of the first members of the committee, we walked through Pilkhana and felt the warmth and hope of the people. We talked with Indian doctors who work full-time in the medical center for the equivalent of \$40 a month.

I will never forget entering a room in the medical center to see the beaming faces of 20 children, hands raised to their foreheads in the traditional Indian greeting that looks so much like prayer. Quickly they surrounded me, begging to be picked up. I lifted them one at a time, then two, and finally three at once. All the while there were shouts and laughter. It was as if all the hope of Pilkhana was distilled in that wonderful place.

Next steps

From Calcutta we flew to Bangkok for a day of rest, then on to the Gulf of Thailand for two days of silent retreat. Two quiet days to reflect on the voices of the poor, to be open to God's voice.

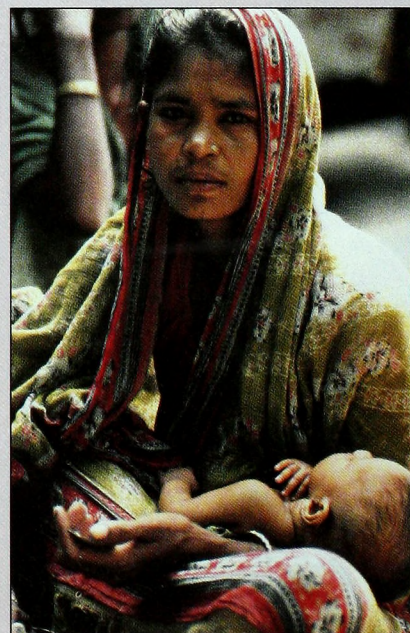
Now I have left the squatter's settlements of Manila, the crowded streets of Calcutta, the silent retreat of Thailand. My next steps will be taken here in the United States. I do not know what those steps will be. But my pilgrimage has taught me to welcome the tears and joys of the journey. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer and editor living in Glendale, Calif.

ABOUT MINISTRY of MONEY

Trips to the Third World are one way that Ministry of Money tries to promote an "authentic Christian perspective on money." Founded by Don McClanen, who earlier founded the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Ministry of Money also provides workshops in the United States to help people who are "trapped and crippled by affluence" move toward "freedom, joy, and self-giving."

For more information, contact Ministry of Money at 2 Professional Dr., Suite 220, Gaithersburg, MD 20879; (301) 670-9606. □



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

AS USUAL, THEY PRAYED

They needed more money. Not a lot, but bills were mounting and they weren't sure how they'd pay them, let alone cover expenses in the future. If something didn't happen soon, Bethel Agricultural Fellowship, with its 30-bed hospital, agricultural center, mobile medical clinic, evangelism programs, and orphanage for almost 700 children, could face serious cutbacks in its ministry.

Bethel Fellowship, located 100 miles southwest of Madras, India, in the village of Danishpet, had faced hard times in the past. The five Indian evangelists who founded the fellowship were acquainted with money problems. But they never asked for money. They never held fund-raisers or sent out mail appeals. The only thing they ever did was pray, and this time was no different.

G.S. Mohan summoned staff, students, and orphans to the cinder-block chapel for a special meeting. They all removed their shoes, leaving them on the porch outside before walking across the cold concrete for a place on the floor.

"We're going to pray to Jesus and tell him about our need," Mohan told them. They prayed just for enough money to pay their bills and to meet the increased expenses they faced in the future. Then they went back to work or school.

Two days later, a letter arrived from the Netherlands. It was from the head of an organiza-

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray** for the provision of Bibles and for other efforts to relieve "spiritual famine" in the Soviet Union (pages 3-4).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Joni Eareckson Tada's commitment to people with handicaps, and for the ways she enables the church to open up to such people. (pages 5-9).
- ◆ **Ask** for experiences that will open you to the voice of God through the voices of the poor (pages 12-14).
- ◆ **Pray** for the policy-makers who handle the Third World's debt crisis (pages 18-22).

tion that had been supporting Bethel Fellowship regularly.

"Our income has increased recently," she wrote, "and I want you to know that our donations to your ministry will be increasing as well."

She had not heard about Bethel's financial crisis, but the amount she sent was exactly what they needed. No more, no less. They paid their bills and the increased pledge kept them out of debt.

To Mohan and his staff, the incident isn't unusual. Prayer is a natural part of their daily life.

Twice a day, at the sound of a bell, everyone at Bethel pauses for silent prayer. Once, in the middle of a lecture to a group of visiting college students from the United States, the bell sounded. Mohan stopped his talk in mid-sentence. After a moment, he opened his eyes and continued.

"He didn't say, 'Oh, excuse me, I have to pray now.' He just stopped and prayed," one of the students said afterward. "I thought that was such a strong statement of where their priorities are. I think we all could take a lesson from that."

We could. We who are so used to giving to the needy in developing countries often find it difficult to be on the receiving end. But here we could take a lesson. Maybe we will. □ *Randy Miller*

We came to know that if we were going to learn to pray, we were going to have to pray. Christ ever remains the great teacher of prayer.

Elizabeth O'Connor in
Call to Commitment

CLIFF BRIGGS



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope



200 ON THE TOWN

Every weekday morning, from late June through late August, about 200 college students from around the United States fan out

College students spend "quality time" with Philadelphia children.

into public housing neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

They run day camps (much like vacation Bible schools) in the morning, and in the afternoon they spend time one-on-one with kids. On Thursdays the volunteers take time to worship together and get guidance about challenges that have come up during the week.

For information about the program, run by the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, contact Dr. Tony Campolo, Eastern College, St. Davids, PA 19087.

SHE'S GOT THEIR NUMBER

Homeless people in the neighborhood around Dégagé Ministries, Grand Rapids, Mich., know Robyn Saylor's got their number. She runs Dégagé's Phone Club, which makes two telephone lines available to the homeless and operates a message service for them. It's proven to be a vital connection.

Of the 350 calls the Phone Club puts through each month, about 25 percent are to prospective employers. Saylor says the most rewarding

part of her job is when she can be the link that helps someone get a job. (She was unemployed herself when her pastor told her about the Phone Club opening.)

Dégagé Ministries is a Christian coffeehouse holdout from the '70s that has grown into a many-sided ministry. It enjoys strong support from the local churches. More than 200 volunteers help with other outreach ministries such as grocery distribution, high-school completion courses, and men's and women's Bible studies.

Contact the Phone Club at Dégagé Ministries, 10 Weston SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

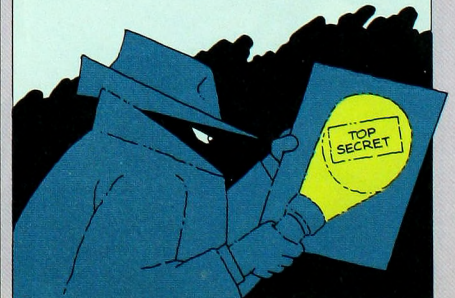
STEAL THIS, PLEASE

The people at Hill District Ministries in Pittsburgh, Pa., don't care who copies them. The more people steal their ideas, the happier they'll be. That's why they've kept careful how-to records of all their efforts to serve their community.

Hill District Ministries is a group of neighborhood churches that used to get together just on special occasions for fellowship. The deep needs of their neighborhood brought them closer together, as they saw they couldn't address them alone. There are Baptists, United Methodists, African Methodist Episcopal, Catholics, and other churches working together to address problems in housing, employment, substance abuse, nutrition, and family stability.

"That sounds like we're all over the place, but they all are tied together and they have to be addressed together," says Rev. Thomas Smith, who has been behind Hill District Ministries since its beginning. "The housing element is really central, because we're trying to help people have a stake in the community."

For information, contact Hill District Ministries, Inc., 2228 Wylie Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219; (412) 281-0607.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

“ We discovered that one does not make up missions. One stands in readiness and in the fullness of time God gives them. They are not superimposed, but they emerge from the life of a people to help express that life.

Elizabeth O'Connor
in *Call to Commitment*

”

PRENATAL CARING

A handful of women in Ventura County, Calif., who were concerned about the abortion issue began praying in 1984 about what they could do.

Room in the inn for new moms.

They discovered there wasn't a shelter in the whole county where a single, pregnant woman could go for support if she wanted to let her baby live.

That's how Tender Life was born, in an old Victorian house with room for eight mothers-to-be.

Tender Life offers childbirth classes, adoption counseling, Bible study, and life skills classes for women living in the house. They are encouraged to finish their education and get job training, and they can stay for three months after giving birth. Christian families in the area take in additional women to help them through pregnancy and childbirth.

For information contact Tender Life, P.O. Box 7610, Oxnard, CA 93031; (805) 983-0501.

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

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

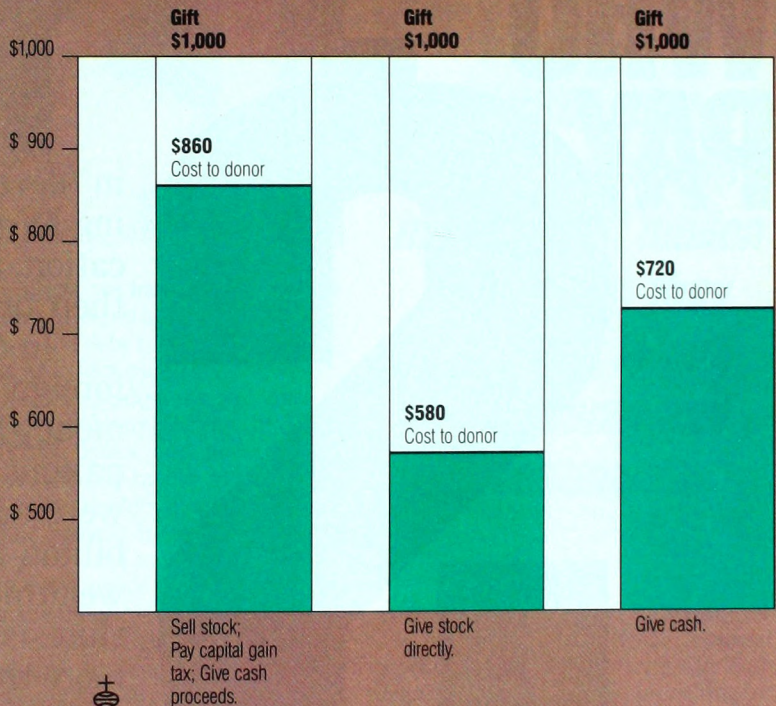
What is the plan? A wise way to give. Greater tax benefits are available to you when you give stock directly to **World Vision** rather than selling the stock and donating cash.

A Profit-Sharing Plan For Profit-Takers

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

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

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



WORLD VISION 919 West Huntington Drive, Monrovia, California 91016

For more information, call the Planned Giving Office 1-800-426-5753 (outside California) or, 1-800-451-8024 (inside California).

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

Please send me World Vision's stock brochure

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip code _____

FMC005

*Third World
governments
owe a surreal
\$1.2 trillion
in debt, but ...*

**WHO
PAY**



Who pays the price for Zambia's foreign debt?

■ A housewife who dies of a gunshot wound because the police, out of fuel, can't respond quickly to her cry for help.

■ The nearly 200 patients in an 80-bed clinic, where a nurse can't find a wire cutter to open shipments of medical supplies.

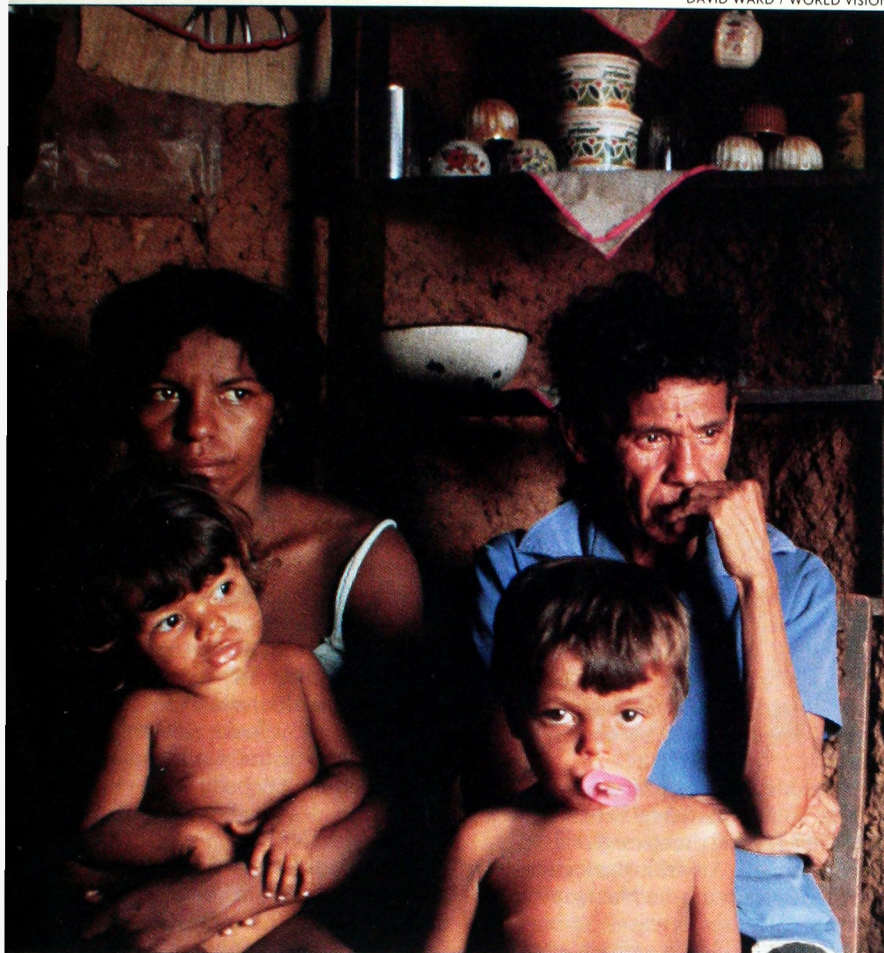
■ A young barber who goes out of business because money shortages and high interest keep driving up the rent.

■ The residents of Choma, where there isn't a barber because no one can borrow the \$200 start-up capital.

Third World debt is not only a banker's and bureaucrat's crisis. It belongs to the hundreds of millions of ordinary people in "developing" nations who are watching hard-won progress in health, education, and quality of life slip through their fingers.

In the past decade, the ballooning foreign debt has reversed the flow of money from wealthy nations to poorer nations. By 1988, the poorer countries were actually turning over a net \$50 billion a year to the wealthier countries—that is, \$50 billion more than all the aid, new loans,

**THE
PRICE?**



and investments they received.

As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial noted in 1989, "The world is topsy-turvy when countries that should be experiencing a net inflow of capital to finance development are instead shipping capital abroad."

The total debt of the Third World in 1989 was an almost surreal \$1.2 trillion. Where did all that money go? Some of it was wisely invested, but much of it was mismanaged and misappropriated. Brazil's government spent an estimated \$20 billion on a plan to build 10 nuclear power plants by 1980. Only one has been built, and it doesn't work properly.

Argentina's military regime borrowed money to buy weapons and to help fund the 1978 World Cup soccer championship. An estimated \$15 billion of Brazil's debt, \$20 billion of Argentina's debt, and \$22 billion of Venezuela's debt went into private bank accounts abroad.

"Too many loans were made to dictators who invested huge amounts of money in pet projects, without any accountability to the people," says Manfred Grellert, a native Brazilian and World Vision vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean

region. "Now we have to weigh these 'illegitimate' debts against the government's social debt to its citizens."

As Grellert suggests, however, borrowers are seldom the only ones to blame for bad loans. During the 1960s and 1970s, banks and governments practically threw money at the Third World. The lenders hoped to foster economic growth in these countries, which would lead to greater appetites for imported goods from the United States and other industrial countries.

The lure of large, immediate profits from the loans also played a role. By 1982, as much as 20 percent of Citicorp Bank's profits were from loans to Brazil alone.

A government can't default on a loan, right? That's what the lenders assumed. Too many of them slackened their normal screening. It was like a 2 a.m. car dealer's ad: "Bad credit? Repossessions? No problem!" Lenders didn't look carefully at the financial condition of the borrowing countries, or at the feasibility of the projects the loans would finance.

Another factor in the lending spree was the huge amount of capital that

was available. "The world was awash in petro-dollars," explains David Befus, economics professor at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Some economists blame the problem on the lack of other ways for the world to absorb excess capital, not on any particular evil on the part of borrowers or lenders."

And then there were the interest rates. Many of the loans to Third World governments were tied to the rise and fall of interest rates in the world economy. As it turned out, that was practically all rise and no fall.

But the people responsible for amassing the debt, both borrowers and lenders, are not the people who bear its brunt. It is the poor in debtor countries who sacrifice most for the debt.

Why the poor more than others? First of all, they have the least "fat" to trim when the economy backslides. A middle-class family might give up eating *out* once a week; a poor family

By 1988, poorer countries were paying out \$50 million more than they received in aid, new loans, and investments.

might give up *eating* once a week.

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, a social worker visited a home with five children. The parents were out looking for food in garbage dumps. The children looked terrible, and the social worker asked if they had eaten recently. "Yes, Miss. Yesterday Mommy made little cakes from wet newspapers." The social worker was stunned. "Mommy takes a sheet of newspaper, makes it into a ball, and soaks it in water and, when it is nice and soft, kneads it into little cakes. We eat them, drink some water, and feel nice and full inside."

Wages in Brazil have been cut 50 percent in the past five years. Five years ago Brazilians could buy a cook stove for what it costs now to buy a kilo of black beans.

So-called "austerity measures" haven't benefitted the poor, either. Like a local banker dealing with a financially troubled client, the International Monetary Fund (a big lender connected with the United Nations that operates on free-market principles) sat down in the 1980s for a friendly chat with some of the worst cases.

"Listen," the IMF said, "you'll need to tighten your belt a little. Otherwise we won't be able to lend you any more."

Unable to function without borrowing money every year, the debtor countries had little choice but to agree. These austerity programs, sometimes called "structural adjustment," amount to a few simple concepts: cutting government spending, freezing wages, discouraging imports by making them more expensive, and encouraging exports. The aim is to prod debtor countries to become "economically viable"—to spend only what they earn.

Austerity measures may squeeze payments out of a debtor country, but the human costs have been too high.

Because poor people usually have the least political clout to fight for their piece of a shrinking government budget, services that primarily benefit the poor tend to be cut before those that benefit more influential groups.

Health care for the poor is sometimes cut back. Thomas Burns, a missionary in Peru, told of a visit to Felicita, a 22-year-old polio victim. Her two older brothers died of tuberculosis in 1982. Since then Burns has buried Felicita's mother and father, both tuberculosis victims. Burns told a U.S. Senate finance subcommittee, "There is no doubt in my mind that the debt is the cause of their deaths. Money their government spends on interest to foreign banks is money taken away from the health and well-being of the poor."

Sanitation services may also be curtailed. In the Dominican Republic, 7-year-old Juanito Perez picks through a mountain of garbage between houses made of sticks and rusted car parts. The government can afford enough trucks to collect only about a third of the garbage in Santo Domingo, and slums are not high on the list of priority areas.

Austerity measures often mean an end to government subsidies on fuel and food. At the same time, the push to boost exports encourages farmers to grow cash crops instead of food, causing food prices to rise. As the cost of food and other basics shoots up, wages are held down.

In Mexico, Maria Guerrero told a reporter about the poor health of her six children. They have white spots on their skin, which she thinks are caused by lack of protein. Maria can no longer afford milk; the price went up because it is no longer subsidized. "We just drink cinnamon tea," she said. "We'll die soon."

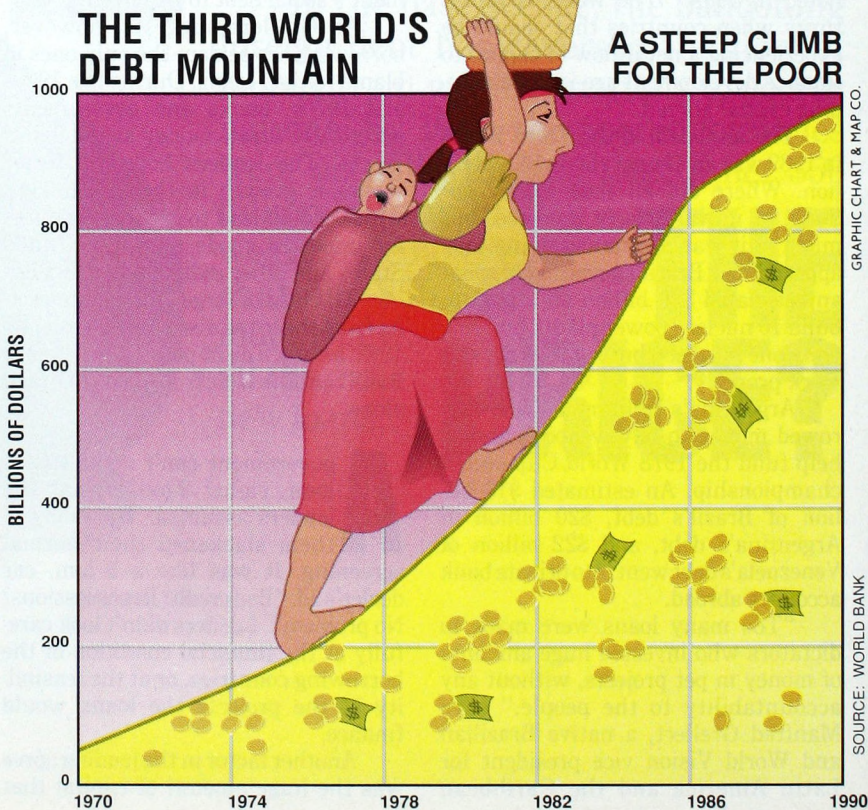
Yet Mexico was praised for heroic efforts to pay its debts between 1982 and 1985. During that period real wages fell 45 percent. An anthropologist who recently returned from Mexico reports a dramatic rise in cases of mental retardation. "This is a direct effect of one generation of malnutrition and hunger, and a direct result of the debt burden," she says.

Another effect of austerity measures is that imported goods are either priced out of reach or simply not available. Medical supplies are in such short supply in Zambia that people who need non-emergency surgery are often asked to wait until they can procure their own scalpels and gloves for the surgeon.

Austerity programs were intended as an emergency measure to deal with countries unable to meet their debt payments. Observers have compared austerity measures to "economic electroshock therapy" and "rearranging the furniture in a debtors' prison." The measures may help squeeze debt payments out of a country, critics say, but the costs are unacceptable—both the harm to people and the squelching of any long-term economic growth.

Now the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund show signs of shifting their position. "They have realized that they went too far," says Joseph Ki-Zerbo, an African political scientist and historian. He told the French monthly *Jeune Afrique Economie*, "The medicine would have killed the patient, and nobody wants to see a period of widespread political instability in Africa."

The poor of the Third World are not the only ones hurt by their nations' debt payments. The more these debtor countries have to pay banks, the less



they have left to buy imported products. When Latin American countries had to cut imports to make debt payments between 1981 and 1986, U.S. exports to the region fell from \$43 billion to \$30 billion. That

cost more than a million U.S. jobs and severely aggravated the farm crisis.

The long fingers of the debt crisis also reach into the international drug trade. Illegal exported drugs can be a vital source of foreign income for debt-ridden countries. In Peru, drug money coming into the country equals 20 percent of official export earnings. Cocaine revenue in Bolivia is about three times the value of all other exports. It's not surprising that farmers are easily recruited to grow coca, a crop that brings five to ten times the profit of any other. Debt didn't cause the drug economy, but it creates conditions that make illegal drugs a more irresistible cash crop.

The debt crisis also affects the environment. Environmental programs are a comparative luxury, not a priority during economic triage. They are quickly cut. At the same time, with poverty worsened by national debt, people who live on the land sacrifice their natural resources for survival.

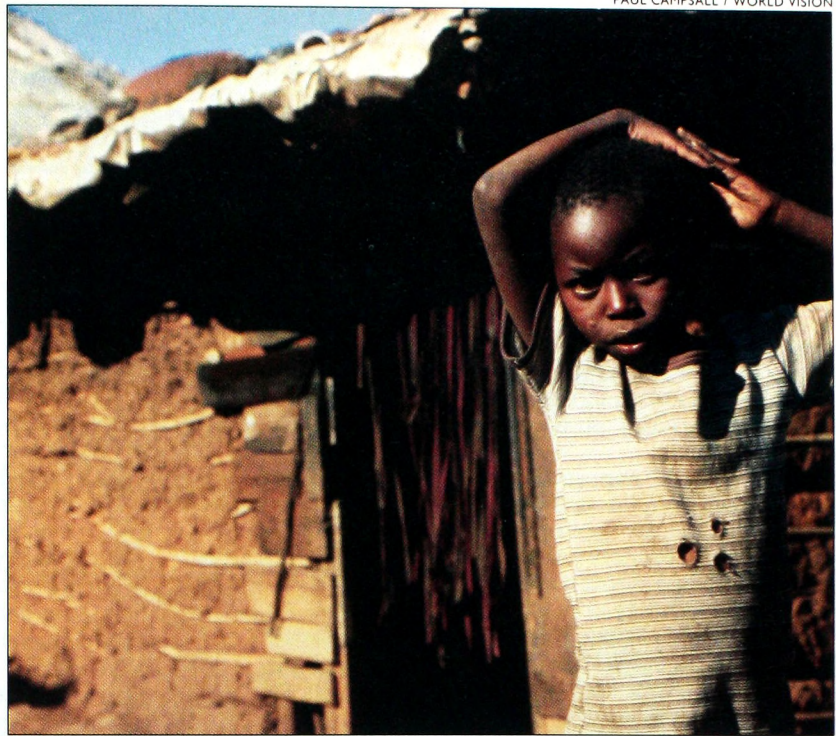
Some conservation organizations have experimented with "debt-for-nature" swaps, paying a portion of a country's debt in exchange for conservation of certain wilderness areas.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has tried a similar idea: "debt-for-development" swaps. For example, one bank recently handed UNICEF all \$800,000 of its loans to Sudan. Now Sudan repays the loan in its own currency, rather than hard-to-get dollars, by installing wells with hand pumps for Sudanese villagers.

Though a creative approach, these swaps aren't the answer to the debt crisis. In the long run, they barely reduce the debt. UNICEF's \$800,000 project in Sudan, for example, is only a tiny fraction of the nation's \$13 billion total debt. The swaps also grant outsiders authority to intervene in matters of national sovereignty.

The way out of the debt crisis follows a much more radical path. Increasingly, the word *forgiveness* is being used. A few years ago, outright debt forgiveness for governments was out of the question. Today it's a routine

National debt exacts a high price from the young; health and education spending is often cut.



assumption. The question has become how much Third World debt will be written off as loss. Debt forgiveness began in early 1989.

Forgiveness—it almost sounds Christian. Is it possible to go a step further, to think about this complex global crisis in biblical terms?

The Bible calls for periodically giving the poor a fresh, debt-free start (Deuteronomy 15:1-4). Old Testament law also forbids charging interest to the poor (Leviticus 25:35-38).

"Do not take a pair of millstones—even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security." (Deuteronomy 24:6) At the time, millstones

were essential to a family's livelihood, grinding the flour used to bake bread. Taking even the upper millstone as loan security would create tremendous hardship. Surely debtor nations are pawning their own livelihood and future when they skimp on the education and health of their people.

In the Bible these concepts are presented as matters of justice and decency, and also as matters of obedience to God. Taking them seriously in the international arena is a radical step, but a radical approach appears to be just what is needed.

Of course, lenders may be reluctant to deal with a country that hasn't made good on previous loans—just as individuals shy away from lending to friends who didn't repay them the last time. The Old Testament foresees this problem. "Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: 'The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,' so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing." (Deuteronomy 15:9)

This warning is given not as a lofty ideal, but as practical national policy. The passage makes clear that the well-being of everyone—rich, poor, and in-between—depends on just and decent treatment of poor debtors.

Relieving the debt won't remove poverty, and there's no guarantee governments will use freed-up funds to help the poor. Still, it's unlikely the situation for the poor will get worse by

The Bible makes it clear that everyone's well-being depends on decent treatment of poor debtors.

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At the same time that we wrestle with the complications, there are realistic, concrete ways to respond.

relieving the debt, and there's a good chance things would improve for them. At the very least it would be easier for working people to borrow start-up capital for small businesses, which provide a big proportion of the jobs in the Third World.

"Do Christians south of the equator believe that northern Christians care about their hard times? I would have to say, in many cases, not really," says Manfred Grellert. "But I still believe that the church can be a tremendous energy, a moral force in these issues. Just make yourselves aware. If the Christian segment of the U.S. population takes their public life seriously, much can be done."

This includes more than just pushing for policy change. "At the same time that we wrestle with the complications of the situation, it is good for us Christians to think about realistic, concrete ways to respond," David Befus says.

Several church denominations and Christian organizations, for example, sell crafts and products from the Third World and return a fair profit directly to the producers, who often form a cooperative and use extra profits for schools, health care, and other community benefits.

Revolving loan funds also counteract the effects of the debt crisis. These low-cost loans to the poor enable many to become self-reliant business people and even, in many cases, to employ others. As loans are repaid, credit is extended to other entrepreneurs. Here are a few examples from Colombia:

In Bucaramanga, Silverio Penaloza bought a used machine for making women's shoes. He and his wife began doing piecework for a factory. With

another loan they bought more equipment, and now they sell their own line of shoes and employ nine workers from their community.

The Rodriguez family opened a convenience store in their garage with the help of a loan. "We started selling eggs and soft drinks, then candy and cookies and school supplies," says Isadora Rodriguez. "Although we're surrounded by supermarkets, people come to our door starting at 5 a.m. Now we're thinking of expanding."

Waldina Cortes used to sell about 10 homemade meat pies a day. As her business grew, she borrowed money for an oven and a delivery bicycle. Later she bought a small grain mill for making flour. Now she makes between 350 and 400 pies a day.

Debt crisis or not, the poor everywhere have trouble borrowing money at manageable rates. In severely indebted countries, that problem is aggravated. Revolving loans can be a good way to reach out to people who are paying dearly for their country's debts.

By working the political system and reaching out with assistance, North Americans can relieve the debt crisis that affects all of us. The Christian faith has a practical perspective on the debt crisis, one that is surely no more "impossible" than the suggestions of bankers and bureaucrats. □

Jack Straus is president of Mission Imports, Inc., in Dallas, Texas.



Direct assistance to artisans and small businesses can ease the burden of national debt on poor families.

RESCUED—BY THE GHETTO

In 1980, when word circulated that 14 members of Jackson State's football team "got religion," Tennessee State boasted to the newspapers that their defense would "baptize them with fire." Mississippi offensive guard Derek Perkins did not see the humor. In fact, Mississippi's team captain spoke for him when he prayed before the game: "God, they don't know you. They don't understand your baptism and they don't understand your fire. They are making a mockery of you." Then he made an announcement, like something straight out of Exodus: God had promised them the victory.

It wasn't until the end of the fourth quarter that an apparent loss turned into a miraculous win for Jackson State. The coaches were dumbstruck. Massive offensive linemen shouted, "Praise Jesus!" And even Derek was hard-pressed to explain that day's victory.

Derek's own performance against Tennessee was the crown of a season so impressive that professional scouts were already beginning to court him. But in an odd twist on the American dream, the ghetto rescued Perkins from a lucrative future in professional athletics. During his junior year he traded the football dorms for Jackson's inner city, "to see if Daddy's stuff worked."

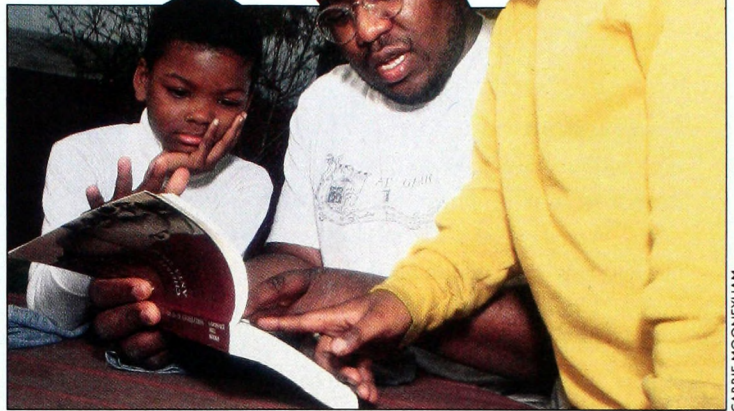
Daddy's "stuff" is the radical urban-renewal plan of Derek's father, John Perkins. Determined to test that plan independently, Derek immersed himself in the lives of the boys who were his new neighbors. He soon found himself, at 21, the spiritual and practical father to nine teenage gang members. Within three months, they had all received Christ.

That summer, a trip to Africa gave him the chance to see people poorer in possessions than his inner-city children, but richer in something else. "They were noble. They made me love my heritage. They made me want to be more committed to Christian things." It soon became clear that "athletics just weren't important."

He returned to Mississippi anxious to teach his boys what he had learned. But during the month that he was gone, the boys had scattered.

Fall football training was about to start, and the newspapers announced Derek's return as the force most likely to solidify the offense. A new line coach studied his films from the previous year and made Derek a once-in-a-lifetime offer. "If you play for me this year, I'll get you into the NFL."

Professional scouts later confirmed that a dream-come-true career in football seemed available for the taking. The only problem was, Derek didn't want it.



CARRIE MOONEYHAM

"After I saw the kids scattered, I couldn't be on campus. These kids were hungry and needed leadership. There's a thousand people to replace me on a football team, but there wasn't one other to give his life to the children."

He did not go back to the dorm, or to football, or even to college that year. Ten years later, defensive linemen are not the only grateful ones.

The population of 30 children at the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, Calif., will swell to 80 during the summer of 1990. Since 98 percent of them come from single-parent homes, it's easy to see why many consider 31-year-old Perkins their surrogate father.

Barking pit bulls, drug dealing, and murder once characterized this neighborhood that a local newspaper called the "bull's eye" of Pasadena's high-crime area. Now the only thing that interrupts the afternoon quiet is the daily after-school barrage of children.

If you ask neighbors about the center, they don't always remember the Swahili name, but they know all about the place. "Those are the folks that challenged the drug dealers."

Just for the record, the name *Harambee* is a word that Derek adopted on that trip to Africa. It's a fitting description for the new kind of offensive line he started. It means, "let's get together and push."

Derek Perkins starts each day with an intense prayer not unlike the one he prayed with a football captain years ago. "God, they do not know you. They do not know your baptism and they do not know your fire." And, like something straight out of Exodus, God has promised him the victory. □

By Lauralee Mannes, a free-lance writer in Altadena, Calif.

There were thousands to replace him on a football team, but not one other to give his life to the children.

"Every child should have the opportunity to wake up with a dream of hope in their hearts—that's why I appreciate the work of World Vision."

Larnelle Harris



Published by
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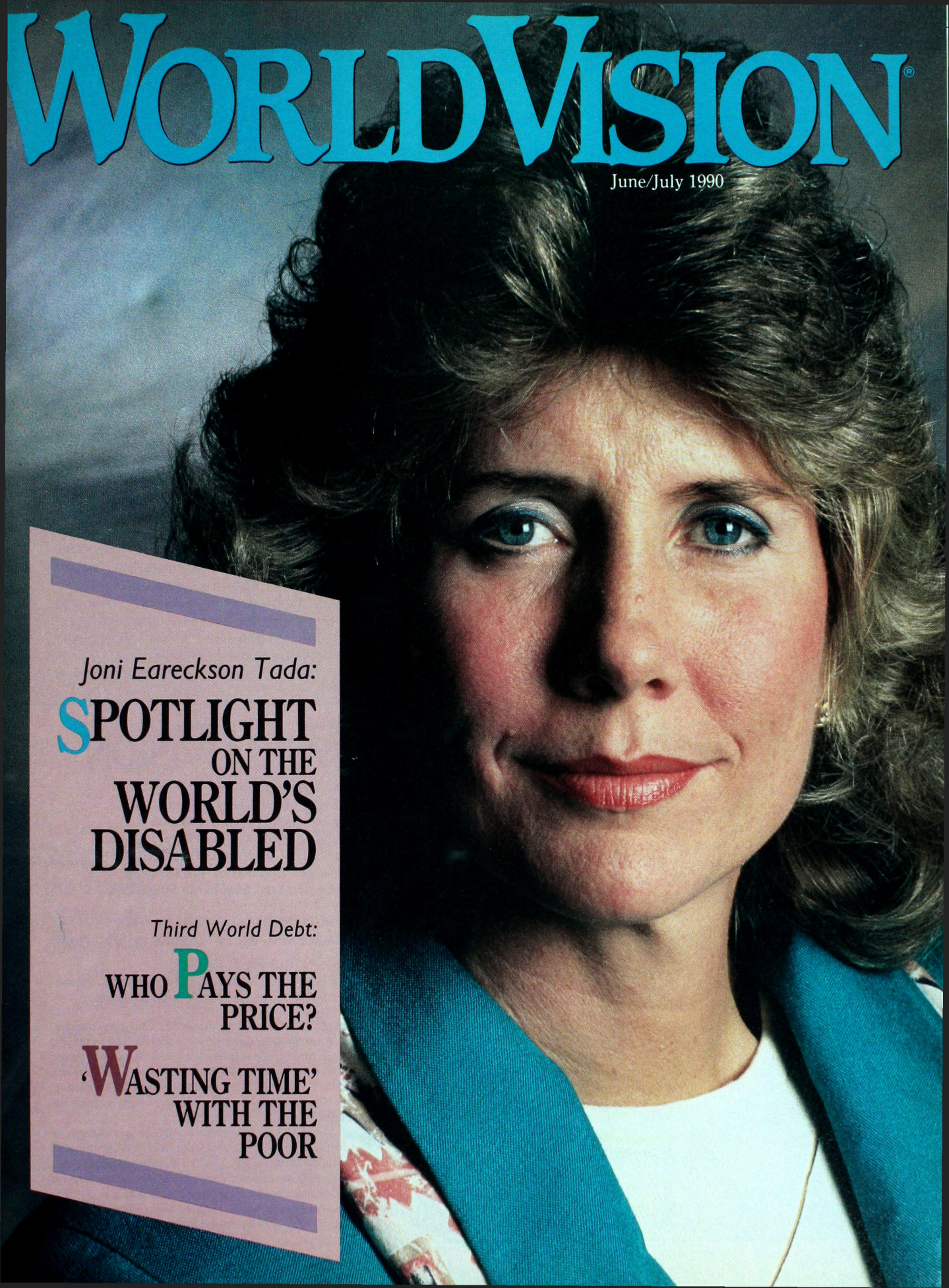
Joni Eareckson Tada:

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLD'S DISABLED

Third World Debt:

WHO **P**AYS THE
PRICE?

'**W**ASTING TIME'
WITH THE
POOR



4 **The World's Weakest—
516 Million Strong**

Joni Eareckson Tada lifts her voice for the world's physically disabled. Here, she shares what went through her mind as she addressed delegates last July at the Lausanne II conference in the Philippines, where she spoke on behalf of the "least of the brethren."

10 **Pew Potatoes Need Not Apply**

It's not a typical church. It doesn't have a pipe organ. It doesn't even have a building. But ask Donnell and Pam Blake and their two daughters if Washington, D.C.'s Jubilee Church is doing the work of the church, and they'll tell you how they got out of a homeless shelter and into an apartment of their own.

14 **'Wasting Time'
With the Poor**

"In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails," says author Clif Cartland. "As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch."

18 **Who Pays the
Price?**

The Third World's debt crisis affects all of us, but no one as much as the poor in debtor countries. Where did this crisis come from? What can we do about it? Here's a beginner's guide.



GRAPHIC CHART & MAP CO.

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Working among the poorest of the poor, as World Vision does in 89 countries, often means identifying with those on the fringes of society because of physical disabilities. No one better represents their needs and aspirations than Joni Eareckson Tada does in our lead story.

And don't overlook *Bodies in Motion*, the first of a continuing series dealing with creative solutions developed by local churches to meet pressing community needs.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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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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We need your help! We have no values."

It was an amazing and historic statement, not without irony, and it created a chill of awe, wonder, and anticipation. It was made by a social scientist from the Academy of Science in Moscow. With the new freedom of travel, he was in the West. And with the new freedom of thought, he was lamenting the lack of values, indeed, the bleeding away of values in the Soviet Union during the 70-year oppressive communist rule.

"Under Stalin we were taught that it was OK to lie, to steal, to cheat, even to kill. But with this new openness, we find that our values have been lost. We want to do a value study, using the benchmark of the Ten Commandments. We want to interview 10,000 Russian families in the next two years and assess how far we have fallen from the values inherent in those commandments. Then we hope to find some strategies to take us back again. Will you help us?"

Recently I heard of two historic incidents that frame this 70-year period. Both are relevant and neither one overstates reality. The first one happened in 1915. A Russian Armenian was reading his Bible when he was beheaded. I saw the Bible—large, thick, and well used. Inside was a reddish stain that permeated most of the book. The stain was the blood of this man, one of more than a million casualties of a religious and ethnic holocaust.

The other event happened toward the end of that 70-year period. A large shipment of Bibles entered Romania from the West, and Ceausescu's lieutenants confiscated them, shredded them, and turned them into pulp. Then they had the pulp reconstituted into toilet paper and sold to the West.

What happened between these two events fits the description given by God to the prophet Amos: "Behold, the days are coming when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing of the Words of the Lord." Alexander Solzhenitsyn explained that same period in Russian history this way: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this happened."

The communist world lost a transcendent

vision of God as well as biblical values. Yet today we see the seeds of new hope, the tender sprouts of new beginnings. It is this hope we feel in the words of the sociologist: "Can you help us?" It is the cry we hear over and over coming out of the Soviet Union: "We need a perestroika of the soul."

We see this most dramatically, perhaps, in the request received recently by Western mission organizations for 50 million Bibles for children. It comes from people who very much desire a better future than that which they've had recently.

"Can you help us?" When I hear this I think of the question Jesus asked: "If a son asks his father for food, would he give him a scorpion?" No, of course not. But there is a hunger in the Soviet Union, and it comes from deep within the soul. It is just as strong as the spark that couldn't be denied and the light that wouldn't go out, even under 70 years of godless suppression. Solzhenitsyn also said, "But, as is always the case in times of persecution and suffering, the awareness of God in my country has attained great acuteness and profundity."

Would that we could match that awareness of God. Would that our Western value system were so strong that the purity of moral values could flow through these newly opened flood-gates. The sad fact is already evident: *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines will be sold for a profit before the West can give away Bibles.

Perhaps the challenge of responding to the Russian request for 50 million Bibles can do more than break the famine of the Word in the East. Perhaps the exercise could rejuvenate and reclaim the moral witness of the church in the West.

"Can you help us?"

Most assuredly, we answer, "Yes!" The church can gather funds, the mission societies can provide the Bibles, we can assemble a Christian Marshall Plan. And as we do, we say to the Soviet Christians—who can tell us so much about the cost of discipleship, who have been a light that will not go out, who have been the presence of Christ incarnate in the most difficult times—thank you for asking the question. Thank you for giving us another chance to respond.

Now that the Soviet Union is asking for values, what have we to offer?

**ENDING A
70-YEAR**

FAMINE

The World's Weakest—

*Often overlooked,
this minority
group crosses all
ethnic, religious,
and socioeconomic
boundaries.*

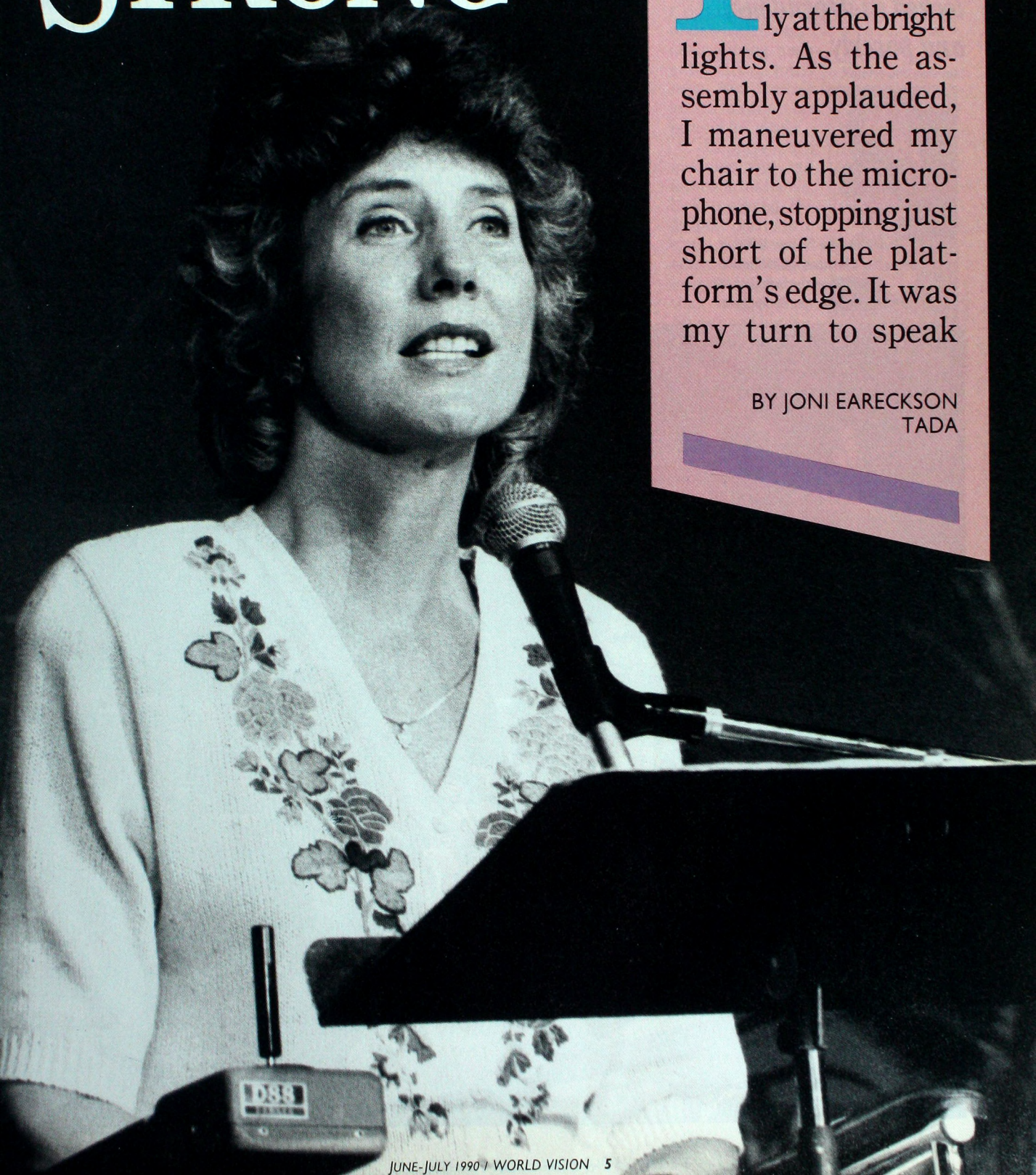


516 Million STRONG

PHOTO BY AKE LUNDBURG

I powered my wheelchair on to the stage, wincing slightly at the bright lights. As the assembly applauded, I maneuvered my chair to the microphone, stopping just short of the platform's edge. It was my turn to speak

BY JONI EARECKSON
TADA



Their unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.

Joni visits the "House Without Steps," a Christian rehabilitation center on the outskirts of Manila, the Philippines.

at last year's Lausanne II conference in Manila, the Philippines—my chance to help 4,000 Christian leaders understand the plight of 516 million people with disabilities around the world.

I motioned for my friend Camille, a sign language interpreter, to stand close to me. I wanted the TV camera to pick her up—not just so deaf people could 'hear' the message, but to show these leaders that it was acceptable for an interpreter to stand by them whenever they spoke from a platform.

As the applause waned, I glanced at my watch. I had exactly 11 minutes to drive home the need to share Christ's love with the world's disabled.

I took a deep breath and began: *If evangelism is taking the good news of help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless, shouldn't we be most concerned about sharing Christ's love with those who are most helpless and hopeless?*

My text wasn't merely words on a white page. Each sentence and verse of

Scripture reflected the face and name of a mentally or physically disabled person I admired and respected.

My voice boomed across the auditorium: *No evangelistic outreach is possible to disabled people without addressing their physical impairment in some way. People with disabilities have had to learn to play the part of the cowering and indebted in order to survive in the world of the physically capable. They have often been treated as if they were children. These unjust social handicaps keep disabled people locked in dependency and poverty.*

As I spoke, I thought of the paraplegics in a shabby rehab clinic in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Their wheelchairs are made from bicycle parts, their hospital beds are fashioned from metal and plastic plumbing pipes. Their families, already at the bottom of the poverty ladder, cannot afford to care for them; they are



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

beyond the reach of social services and vocational training. And the Hindu neighbors of these young, paralyzed men look upon them with disdain and indifference—their physical infirmities having plunged them to the bottom of the reincarnation ladder.

Yet Valerie, a Christian therapist at the clinic, brings light and life into the daily routine of those paraplegics. To her, the men are not pitiful, helpless cripples. They are people who happen to be spinal-cord injured—some from falling out of palm trees while cutting coconuts, others from carrying heavy scaffolds of stones and bricks.

Valerie offers them the hope, worth, and dignity that Christ's love gives, and they have grasped it. Spiritually, these men in makeshift wheelchairs have risen above their unjust social handicaps.

I continued my address: *Our attitudes would be corrected, our motivation focused, and our enthusiasm ignited if*



we truly understood the joy of sharing the gospel and Christ's love with those who are deemed, by the world, most helpless.

I smiled as I thought of Maria, a young, severely handicapped woman in Romania. Her family lives in a small home in Oradea in the northern mountains. Barely taller than a dwarf, Maria lives with constant pain from a twisted spine and a shortened leg. She is grateful to be able to walk with a cane.

Yet Maria also lived under her country's brutal communist regime. She knows the frustration of standing and waiting in long lines for vegetables or toilet paper. She has experienced the double handicap of poverty and political oppression.

Maria's family is proud of her. She is intelligent, self-taught, and the townspeople admire her enthusiasm for Christ. She labors to translate Christian books into her people's language. Her greatest desire? To help people with disabilities in her torn and devastated country find hope in Christ. Maria knows the joy of sharing the gospel with those who, like her, are deemed helpless by the world.

The audience was listening and seemed genuinely interested. I glanced at my watch and saw that I had only a few minutes to finish. Camille's hands were probably getting tired from signing so fast, but I picked up the pace.

It is the 'least of the brethren' and the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor. Christians have the only message that can save and deliver, the only message that vindicates God's good name as the one who is supremely and benevolently sovereign over deformities and diseases. Christians have the gospel message that joins the sighted and the blind, the hearing and the deaf, the intellectually capable with the mentally handicapped.

It is the 'weakest members of the body' who are to be given special places of honor.

In my mind I pictured George, an evangelist in Malawi who uses an old, badly battered wheelchair. He had just written me several weeks earlier, asking me to send him my husband's used shirts—his were wearing out and he wanted to dress his best as an ambassador for Christ.

George wheels himself from village to village over bumpy, rutted dirt roads that connect the small towns in Malawi. He longs for a power wheelchair during such exhausting journeys, but realizes such a luxury is far beyond his grasp.

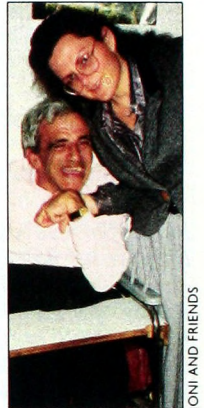
Despite sore muscles and callouses on his hands, he keeps going. His deepest desire is to share Christ with others who are handicapped, to tell them that, despite their poverty and hunger, God is in control for their good and his glory.

Some welcome George's message, others don't. Nevertheless through the sheer force of God's grace and George's magnetic personality, Christians in this small African country have noticed George's efforts. They, too, are becoming more sensitive to the needs of disabled people in their towns and villages.

I looked out on the crowd of Christian leaders, many of whom were African, judging by their brightly colored robes and headgear. *I wish George were here*, I thought, as I began to wind up my message.

No other ministry better demonstrates Christ's heart of compassion than ministries to people with disabilities. Those who are helpless, no matter what their handicap, see themselves in the

Valerie and patient



JONI AND FRIENDS

*No ministry
better demonstrates
Christ's compassion than
ministries
to the disabled.*

Man of Sorrows because he became one of them. Jesus' message was clear. We are all without help or hope as long as we are without him. But he was also clear that his good news was, in some way, especially for those who suffer the helplessness and hopelessness that physical infirmity can often bring.

I glanced at Camille. Her animated hand gestures were communicating the message loud and clear. I knew she must be thinking of deaf people who had touched her life, perhaps even the little Haitian deaf boy she had met as a college student while on a short-term mission in the poorest parts of Haiti.

The boy was bright and intelligent but shunned by his playmates. They told Camille that he was stupid because he couldn't speak. Camille, drawn to this lonely deaf child, mimed to him her message of friendship with wide, sweeping gestures. He soon left an imprint on her, convincing her to spend her life ministering to the world's deaf.

I closed my address with these final words from Scripture:

"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

I paused to allow that verse to touch the hearts of those leaders, then continued: *It may well be that the level of our commitment to preach the gospel will be judged according to our willingness to reach the very weakest of those who need him most.*

I thanked the assembly, backed my wheelchair from the microphone, and wheeled to the wings of the stage with Camille. I quickly prayed that the message would remain imprinted on

those leaders' hearts as they traveled back to their homelands.

I pictured them reaching out and touching the Indian child with Down's syndrome cradled in his mother's arms ... the blind grandfather led through the Moroccan village by his son ... the paralyzed teenager sitting twisted as she grinds corn for her family's meal ... the deaf woman living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, considered crazy because she can't speak and uses funny hand signs

... the mentally handicapped boy in Sumatra kept hidden in a dark bedroom by his family.

I asked God to give each leader the courage, tempered with tenderness, to not only declare Christ's gospel to these needy people but to demonstrate it as well.

Camille held a glass of water to my mouth. I was just ready to leave the anteroom when an Asian man with an engaging, tooth-missing grin stopped me. I lifted my arm for him to shake, but he answered with his own awkward attempt to lift his artificial hand. We laughed—we had a lot in common.

A translator said the man's name was U and that he was from Thailand. The translator went on to say that U was challenged to return to Bangkok with a deepened desire to reach people like himself.

Maria



JONI AND FRIENDS

Before Jacinto's parents abandoned him in the hospital, probably expecting that he would die from his wounds, they changed his name to Chicaipa Maopa—"Bringer of Bad Luck."

When I first met Jacinto in June 1988, the boy was all alone in that hospital in Tete, Mozambique. A few weeks earlier he had stepped on a land mine that blew away most of his right leg, shattered his left knee, and ripped into his right wrist and elbow.

"Lying there in the hospital, I was sure I was going to die," Jacinto told me when I saw him again last year.

"But when Nick started visiting me, I started getting another idea. I couldn't understand why Nick liked me, but I believed him when he said he wanted to be my friend."

Nick Dexter, a World Vision agronomist, remembers: "The first thing I told him was, 'Your name is not Chicaipa. It's Jacinto.'"

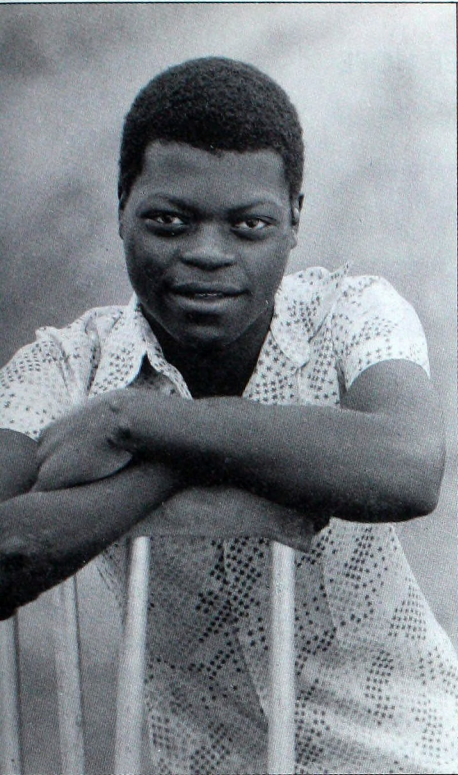
When the boy was discharged from the hospital, Nick took him home, where Nick and a few other staff members took Jacinto under their wing. Then he drove Jacinto to Harare, Zimbabwe, for a month of therapy.

In Zimbabwe, a Brazilian missionary couple befriended Jacinto. "They came to check on how I was doing and they brought me books to

That was it. That's all I needed to hear. Somewhere, I knew, a child, a father, a grandparent—someone with a mental or physical disability—would have his or her life changed for Christ's sake. U and George, Maria and Valerie, and thousands like them would carry the gospel to those "poor in the eyes of the world." Hundreds, perhaps even thousands of handicapped people would become "rich in faith and would inherit the kingdom promised to those who love him."

Somewhere there would be those faithful few who would help reach 516 million physically and mentally handicapped people around the world. And through our united prayers, the world would certainly be changed. □

Joni Eareckson Tada is president of JONI AND FRIENDS, a ministry that links disabled people with the church. She lives in Woodland Hills, Calif.



read," he says. "They told me that God is with me, that I shouldn't be afraid. They prayed with me and taught me how to believe.

"I had never even thought about God before, but before I came back to Mozambique I decided to give my life to Jesus," he says.

When Jacinto returned to Mozambique, he was accepted into the SOS Children's Village, an orphanage on the outskirts of Tete, though he is not truly an orphan. In February 1989 he started fourth grade and is now at the top of his class.

Nick says that Jacinto is a quick learner, and that he reads pretty well. So well, in fact, that he has now read the New Testament from cover to cover.

"Nobody has pushed him to do any of this," Nick says. "Jacinto is genuinely hungry to understand God's Word. He reads his Bible every day."

Jacinto's new best friend is Argelino Sidati, another resident of the orphanage. Crippled by polio, Argelino, like Jacinto, knows more about suffering than any 13-year-old should. Last year he watched machete-wielding RENAMO guerrillas hack his mother and father to death. His six older brothers and sisters escaped, he thinks, but he doesn't expect to see them again.

Jacinto and Argelino are virtually inseparable, helping each other find a place in a society that usually

musters little more than pity for the disabled.

"Our future depends on how hard we study," Jacinto says. "We can't use our legs, so we'll use our heads and our hands." The two are planning to take typing lessons soon in a neighboring town.

When I last saw Jacinto, I asked him for his favorite Scripture verse, and he rattled off, in Portuguese, the first 21 verses of John 3. I teased him, saying I had only asked for one verse. He replied by quoting 2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

"I know that many people have been praying for me," Jacinto told me. "And now I know that God has the power to answer impossible prayers. So I am praying for peace in this country. The *bandidos armados* are ruining Mozambique. Look what they've done to me! We need peace. More than anything else we need peace, and I know that Jesus can give it to us.

"One day," he added, "when our peace comes, I would like to stand beside President Chissano and tell him what I feel. I would say, 'Sir, God answers prayer. Now we are free, because of Jesus.'"

By David Ward, a photojournalist living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

One of the 516 Million:

BRINGER of BAD LUCK



Joni and her husband, Ken Tada, befriend two handicapped women at a rehabilitation center in the Philippines.

Jubilee Church, Washington, D.C.

**PEW
POTATOES
NEED
NOT
APPLY**

It was about a year and a half ago when Donnell and Pam Blake got the phone call. The Blakes and their two little girls were living in the notorious Capitol City Inn, a former motel where Washington, D.C., “stores families that don’t have nowhere to live,” as Pam says. A stranger was on the line offering them what sounded like the chance of a lifetime—an apartment and a support network to help them make it on their own.

But Pam and Donnell had to do some real soul-searching. The offer would only be good if they stayed together as a family, and they had already been separated for six months of the two years they’d been married. Taking this offer would mean casting their lot together, counting on each other to make it work.

“You be scared and puzzled and worried,” Pam says. “You wonder, would we just be together for a while, or is the situation seriously going to get better? That’s the type of things would go through anybody’s mind. Then too, I had to think about the security of my children [Shaneka, 6, and Roshena, 3]. Welfare is the pits, but at least I know I have something coming in to buy me and my children what we need. If I get back with this man, I get no government assistance.”

On the other hand, the shelter was no kind of life for children. Shaneka used to sit in a corner and cry, “Mama, I don’t like this. Why can’t you cook me some food? Why do we always have to go stand in that line? Let’s go away from here.”

Pam would try to explain. “I looked at her and I could not break it down to a 5-year-old level for her to understand. Because there *wasn’t* no understand.”

Pam and Donnell had had enough of shelters. They had watched enough people get sucked into perpetual shelter life, had watched the drugs, the stealing, the violence, and had seen what happened to the children. Ten-year-old girls would brag to Pam that they could teach her more about “being with a man” than she knew. “And they weren’t lying,” Pam says. “It’s pathetic.”

In the end, they decided they would trust these strangers, trust each other, and do whatever they could to get out of the shelter. So Pam prayed, “Please God, don’t let me be making the wrong mistake,” and they said yes to the people on the phone.

Just before Thanksgiving 1988, Pat Sitar and Gary McMichael from Jubilee Church visited the shelter to meet Pam and Donnell. A few days later Gary showed them a brick apartment building in the Adams Morgan neighborhood and said they

would be living there before Christmas.

The apartment building Gary showed Pam and Donnell is owned by Jubilee Housing, a non-profit organization that grew out of Jubilee Church in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., about five miles northwest of the Capitol. The church is one of eight “faith communities” that make up the non-denominational Church of the Saviour.

Within about 20 square blocks, Jubilee Church and three or four other Church of the Saviour sub-groups have founded the housing ministry, a job placement service, a family health clinic, a coffeehouse, a children’s ministry, a Montessori school, a hospital for the homeless, and transitional programs for homeless men and homeless, pregnant women.

They had to trust each other and trust these strangers.

This might sound like a systematic outreach plan, but it’s not. The Church of the Saviour has shied away from long-range planning since its earliest days in the 1940s. Its ministries are more like living things that are conceived, birthed, and nurtured within this small family.

And it *is* small. Jubilee Church has about 25 full-fledged members, eight or 10 intern members, and maybe 60 or 70 who gather on Monday evenings for worship. Even this seems too large for the kind of church Jubilee wants to be, and a small core group is branching out to start a new congregation.

No, this is not a typical church. It doesn’t have a pipe organ or even a church building. Jubilee Church has one calling: “To be the people of God in the midst of low-income people.” All its members go through a period of prayer, study, and dialogue to seek their own part in that calling.

Does everyone receive a clear call to a specific ministry?

“It comes with much greater clarity for some



JIM HUBBARD

The church being the church among the poor

people than for others," says Gordon Cosby, pastor and one of the founders of Church of the Saviour. "If you are faithful to God's call as far as you know it, more clarity often comes in time."

When Pat Sitar received her call, it was so clear she couldn't avoid it.

Pat had worked in the Jubilee Housing office for 13 years, and she had known almost all the children who lived there from the time they were born. She grieved like their own mother when they took up drugs or got pregnant or dropped out of school.

Pat was taking a class at the church to explore her calling. Again and again she kept coming back to the children of Jubilee. But she didn't think she had it in her to start a new ministry. She prayed and reflected and talked to people, sure that she must be missing what God *really* was calling her to do.

"I'm trying to leave myself open to whatever God has for me, but all I can see are the children," she told Gordon Cosby, who was leading the class.

"Pat, that sounds like a call," he said.

In the Church of the Saviour, when people perceive a calling to begin a new work, they first carry it around for nine months, like a child in the womb. Then, if it still seems that is what God wants them to do, they take a church service to "sound the call." If two or more people respond and commit themselves to the new mission, the church blesses and commissions the new venture.

Pat's love for the children of Jubilee Housing grew into the Good Shepherd ministry: an after-school program in a few basement rooms of a Jubilee apartment, a youth center in another building's basement, and a handful of other activities for Jubilee children. Pat had her doubts in the beginning, but she thrived in the work.

One thing still troubled her, though—it still hurt so badly to lose children.

"It is inevitable that families sometimes have to be evicted from the apartments for various reasons," she says quietly. "It's very painful. I think of the chaos those children live in, and I know we will just lose touch with them."

Determined to do what she could to help homeless families, even on a small scale, Pat joined her Good Shepherd ministry with Jubilee Housing. They would look for a homeless family with children, a family without a drug problem, and they would plug that family into Jubilee Church's support network. They called the new ministry "Turning Points," and they hired Gary McMichael to oversee it.

In November 1988, they found Pam and Donnell Blake and their two children living in the Capitol City Inn.

After the Blakes received Pat and Gary's promise of a new home by Christmas, the wait began.

"That was the longest wait in the *whole world*," Pam says. "I think Donnell called every other day. If it wasn't for me, he might've called every single day."

The closer it got to Christmas, Donnell began to voice the doubt they had pushed to the back of their minds in the beginning. "Those folks lied," he said.

But they didn't lie. "December 16 we was in here," Pam says. "I don't know where they got it or how they did it, but they brought us practically everything we needed. We had one of the best Christmases that I ever could dream of. They told us they would try to make this Christmas make up for the things we've been through. And they did. A real tree and everything. We have had things overflowing. And we've been here ever since."

Today Pam is assistant manager of a bagel shop downtown. She got the job through Jubilee Jobs, a full-service employment agency that began as a desk and phone in the Jubilee Housing office.

"Terry Flood was my counselor, and I'd recommend her to anybody," Pam says. "Terry do her job. She's mean, but she's good. She's very strict, but she'll work with you and listen to you. I got discouraged because when she sent me on interviews, nobody got back to me. She encouraged me to have faith, it's not the end of the world, don't give up. She really cares."

Once a week Gary McMichael and Pam sit down together. "We go over the things we have accomplished, and if we have a problem, I'll discuss it with him," Pam said. "But he don't ever tell us how to do it. He might suggest things, but mainly we keep talking about it until we find a way."

That is the spirit of Jubilee Church, which is not called to fix things for people but to live beside them as servants.

Donnell summed it up this way: "Me and Pam, we try to be about this family and we are trying to do it right. We been through hell back at the shelter and sometimes we go through torment out here too. We thank God for Gary and Pat and them, but at the same time we thank God for us, because he made us strong and got us back together and put us here." □



The neighborhood kids were Pat's calling, hard as she tried to resist it.

For more information, write to the Church of the Saviour at 2025 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

'WASTING TIME' *with the* POOR

The streets of Calcutta were dark. Here and there a vendor still tried to sell his wares, but most of the buyers had long since gone. People were already sleeping in the streets.

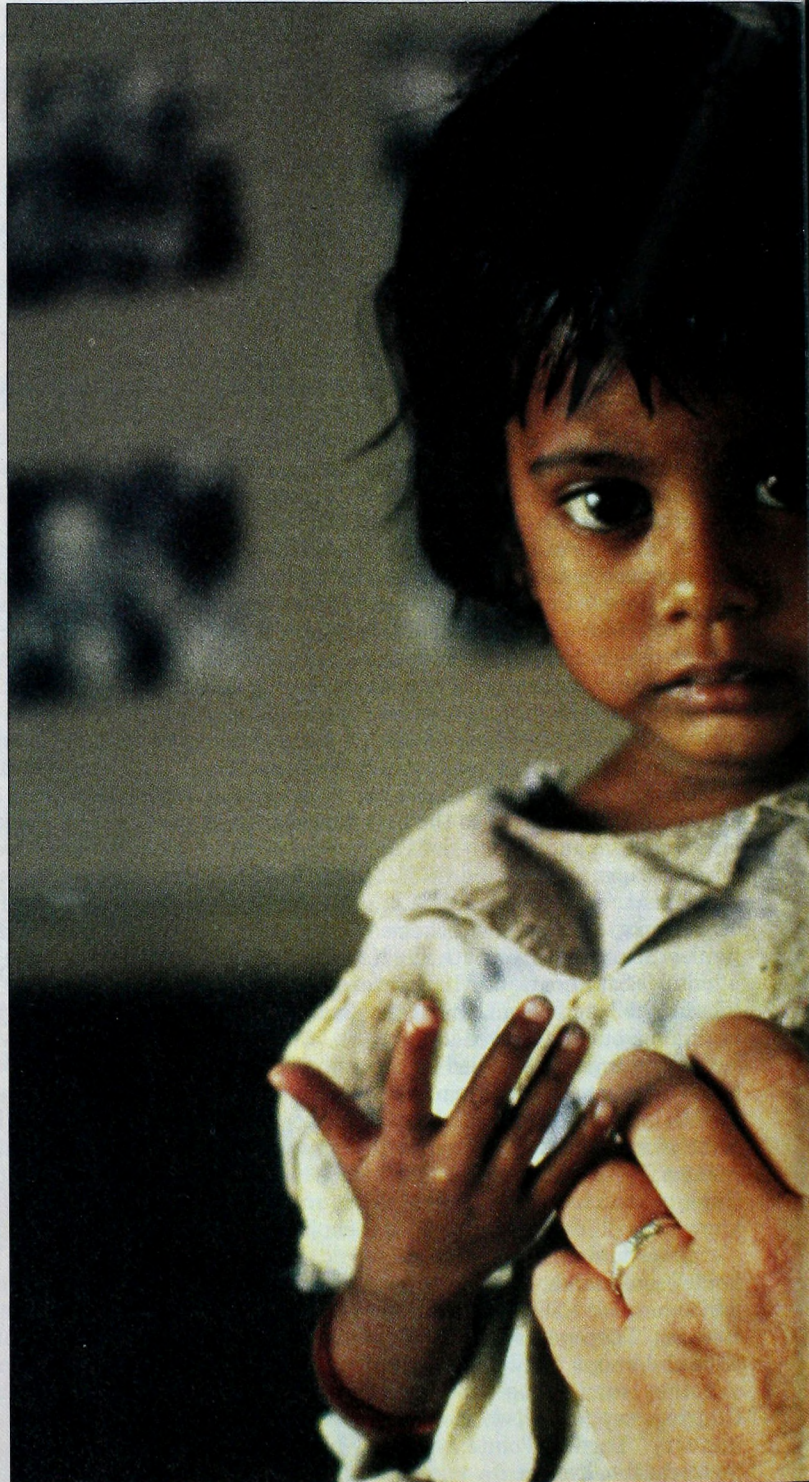
We turned in to a lane where there were no lights. The pavement was broken, and the houses were built right out to the edge of the sidewalk, their walls dirty with what seemed like the stains of hundreds of years.

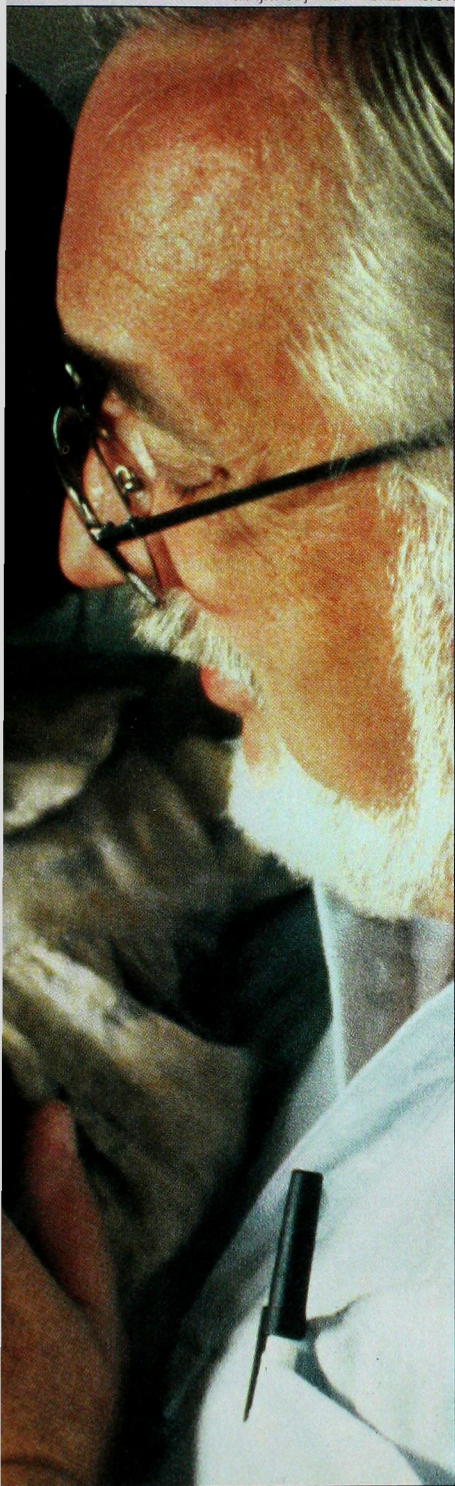
A shaft of light shone through one window. I caught a glimpse of wood panelling, deep blue mosaic tile, and a crystal light. At first it was only a touch of beauty where I had least expected it. But it came to mean more.

Even in the most deeply bruised of the human family, there are gifts to discover. Through the lonely and the fragile, from whom I often pull away, Christ comes to me most deeply.

I could have learned that lesson at home, but I didn't. I had to leave my comfort and isolation. Something in me had to be awakened by Asia's pervasive poverty.

I was traveling with a group brought together by the Ministry of Money, a project of the Church of the





Saviour in Washington, D.C., which takes affluent North Americans to visit some of the poorest people in the world. We went on a three-week "reverse mission" to learn from the poor, and to offer them nothing but ourselves.

Poverty was not new to me. I have worked for months among homeless young men in downtown Los Angeles. But nothing prepared me for this trip.

Gaunt infants with deep, sunken eyes will never again be simply pictures in a famine-relief appeal. In Manila, the Philippines, I stood by the crib of one infant, praying that the peace of Christ would calm his constant, feeble cries. At a health center in Calcutta, India, I massaged the twisted toothpick legs of a little girl with beautiful, sad eyes. There were 20 more like her in that room.

Often I wished for something big to do, something that would make poverty go away.

Instead I began to learn how to do what others have called "wasting time" with the needy. For me that meant learning to be available to God and to others, an availability that often looked and felt like wasting time.

Pipi was the first to teach me that lesson. I met Pipi in an orphanage in Manila. He was mute, but he knew how to ask for—and get—my atten-

tion. We played finger games that he created, walked where he wanted to walk, did whatever he wanted to do. Pipi made the rules and I simply followed, giving this needy little boy my undivided attention.

Another time, a little boy climbed up into my arms and laid his head on my shoulder. I began to rock him back and forth, and he turned until he was cradled in my arms like a baby. His eyes closed, but he wasn't sleeping. He was soaking up all the love he could get. I was "wasting time," with nothing to do but be with him.

In a Calcutta home for the mentally ill, some men asked us to clip their fingernails. As I held one man's hand I realized his nails were already clipped. In that moment I knew I was not clipping fingernails, I was offering the gentle comfort of a human touch.

Anger, sadness, and shame

If the trip brought gentleness out of me, it also brought out deep anger. The people we met had so few choices. They spent every ounce of energy on survival. Whole families lived in a single small room; others lived on the street under an old piece of plastic. I wondered what life must be like when the monsoons flood the streets. These things made me angry and sad.

I marvelled that Aram, a rickshaw puller in Calcutta, had run passengers 25 to 50 miles a day for 15 years. He ate rice and lentils twice a day, and every month he sent his money home to his family in a distant state. I was angry that anyone should live like that.

At Olongapo, the site of the giant Subic Bay U.S. Navy Base in the Philippines, we met a few of the 16,000 "hospitality girls" whose customers are U.S. servicemen. Olongapo left me with a deep sense of shame.

Then my anger turned closer to home. I have so much. I live what the poor of the world would call an extravagant life. I could leave behind the poverty of Manila or Calcutta; they cannot.

A few years ago, when Henri Nouwen left Harvard to work among the mentally handicapped, he observed

Maybe
I could have
learned the
same things
in the comfort
of home.
But I didn't.

that he received more from them than he was able to give. That was my experience too. I found that people living in poverty understood some things far better than I.

I marvelled at the persistence of vendors who worked all day and into the night to sell a few pieces of fruit. Thrift and recycling are almost an art among Asia's poor. Thousands live by salvaging things from piles of rotting garbage. A woman and her little children make a living by separating broken pieces of clear and colored glass.

Finding hope where Christ is

Calcutta's poverty overwhelmed me. Its streets were crowded beyond imagination, its air thick with pollution. Yet it was a wonder. "Warm, cunning, and beautiful in a strange kind of way," an Indian writer described it.

Millions have left the poverty of rural India for Calcutta. Whole families set up housekeeping on the city's crowded streets and lanes. No one should have to live on the streets, yet part of the wonder of Calcutta is that a squatter's claim to sidewalk space or a tiny piece of ground is protected by law. I thought of the early morning police loudspeakers that roust the poor who sleep on the streets in many U.S. cities, and of the water trucks that wash the sidewalks to rid them of cardboard shelters and the belongings left by the homeless.

For most of Asia's poor, there is no escape from poverty. Yet I found hope where followers of Christ live among the poor and treat them with dignity. Sometimes it has transformed entire communities.

Bagong Barrio in the Philippines was one of those places. Most of the former garbage dump's 65,000 people share their small homes with two or more families. But over the past 12 years the barrio has been changing. Small groups of Christians meet to pray, study Scripture, and work together for justice. Twenty pastoral layworkers from the Catholic church have led the "little Davids" of Bagong Barrio

in tackling their Goliaths.

Another island of hope is Pilkhana, across the crowded Howrah Bridge from Calcutta. Some call it "The City of Joy," the name used by Dominique Lapierre in his novel about life in Calcutta.

Twenty-two years ago a young French priest went to live in Pilkhana. He encouraged the people to form the Seva Sangh Samiti—the Committee to Help Together. Their first project was a health center. Then came wells and paved roads, nutrition classes, free medicine for those who could not pay, school uniforms (a requirement in India), books, even pencils so that every child could get an education.

With Victor Gergeon, whose mother was one of the first members of the committee, we walked through Pilkhana and felt the warmth and hope of the people. We talked with Indian doctors who work full-time in the medical center for the equivalent of \$40 a month.

I will never forget entering a room in the medical center to see the beaming faces of 20 children, hands raised to their foreheads in the traditional Indian greeting that looks so much like prayer. Quickly they surrounded me, begging to be picked up. I lifted them one at a time, then two, and finally three at once. All the while there were shouts and laughter. It was as if all the hope of Pilkhana was distilled in that wonderful place.

Next steps

From Calcutta we flew to Bangkok for a day of rest, then on to the Gulf of Thailand for two days of silent retreat. Two quiet days to reflect on the voices of the poor, to be open to God's voice.

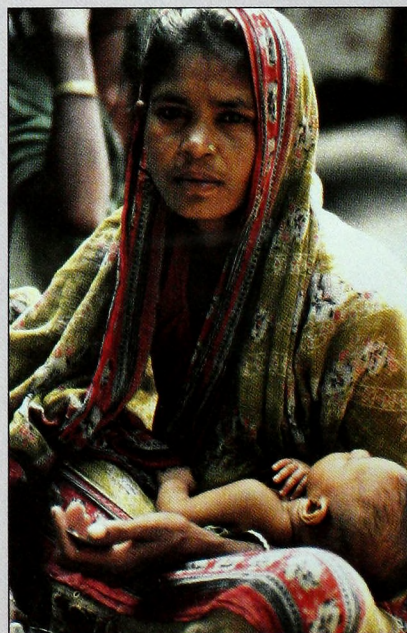
Now I have left the squatter's settlements of Manila, the crowded streets of Calcutta, the silent retreat of Thailand. My next steps will be taken here in the United States. I do not know what those steps will be. But my pilgrimage has taught me to welcome the tears and joys of the journey. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer and editor living in Glendale, Calif.

ABOUT MINISTRY of MONEY

Trips to the Third World are one way that Ministry of Money tries to promote an "authentic Christian perspective on money." Founded by Don McClanen, who earlier founded the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Ministry of Money also provides workshops in the United States to help people who are "trapped and crippled by affluence" move toward "freedom, joy, and self-giving."

For more information, contact Ministry of Money at 2 Professional Dr., Suite 220, Gaithersburg, MD 20879; (301) 670-9606. □



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

AS USUAL, THEY PRAYED

They needed more money. Not a lot, but bills were mounting and they weren't sure how they'd pay them, let alone cover expenses in the future. If something didn't happen soon, Bethel Agricultural Fellowship, with its 30-bed hospital, agricultural center, mobile medical clinic, evangelism programs, and orphanage for almost 700 children, could face serious cutbacks in its ministry.

Bethel Fellowship, located 100 miles southwest of Madras, India, in the village of Danishpet, had faced hard times in the past. The five Indian evangelists who founded the fellowship were acquainted with money problems. But they never asked for money. They never held fund-raisers or sent out mail appeals. The only thing they ever did was pray, and this time was no different.

G.S. Mohan summoned staff, students, and orphans to the cinder-block chapel for a special meeting. They all removed their shoes, leaving them on the porch outside before walking across the cold concrete for a place on the floor.

"We're going to pray to Jesus and tell him about our need," Mohan told them. They prayed just for enough money to pay their bills and to meet the increased expenses they faced in the future. Then they went back to work or school.

Two days later, a letter arrived from the Netherlands. It was from the head of an organiza-

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray** for the provision of Bibles and for other efforts to relieve "spiritual famine" in the Soviet Union (pages 3-4).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Joni Eareckson Tada's commitment to people with handicaps, and for the ways she enables the church to open up to such people. (pages 5-9).
- ◆ **Ask for** experiences that will open you to the voice of God through the voices of the poor (pages 12-14).
- ◆ **Pray for** the policy-makers who handle the Third World's debt crisis (pages 18-22).

tion that had been supporting Bethel Fellowship regularly.

"Our income has increased recently," she wrote, "and I want you to know that our donations to your ministry will be increasing as well."

She had not heard about Bethel's financial crisis, but the amount she sent was exactly what they needed. No more, no less. They paid their bills and the increased pledge kept them out of debt.

To Mohan and his staff, the incident isn't unusual. Prayer is a natural part of their daily life.

Twice a day, at the sound of a bell, everyone at Bethel pauses for silent prayer. Once, in the middle of a lecture to a group of visiting college

students from the United States, the bell sounded. Mohan stopped his talk in mid-sentence. After a moment, he opened his eyes and continued.

"He didn't say, 'Oh, excuse me, I have to pray now.' He just stopped and prayed," one of the students said afterward. "I thought that was such a strong statement of where their priorities are. I think we all could take a lesson from that."

We could. We who are so used to giving to the needy in developing countries often find it difficult to be on the receiving end. But here we could take a lesson. Maybe we will. □ *Randy Miller*

We came to know that if we were going to learn to pray, we were going to have to pray. Christ ever remains the great teacher of prayer.

Elizabeth O'Connor in
Call to Commitment

CLIFF BRIGGS



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope



College students spend "quality time" with Philadelphia children.

into public housing neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

They run day camps (much like vacation Bible schools) in the morning, and in the afternoon they spend time one-on-one with kids. On Thursdays the volunteers take time to worship together and get guidance about challenges that have come up during the week.

For information about the program, run by the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, contact Dr. Tony Campolo, Eastern College, St. Davids, PA 19087.

200 ON THE TOWN

Every weekday morning, from late June through late August, about 200 college students from around the United States fan out

STEAL THIS, PLEASE

The people at Hill District Ministries in Pittsburgh, Pa., don't care who copies them. The more people steal their ideas, the happier they'll be. That's why they've kept careful how-to records of all their efforts to serve their community.

Hill District Ministries is a group of neighborhood churches that used to get together just on special occasions for fellowship. The deep needs of their neighborhood brought them closer together, as they saw they couldn't address them alone. There are Baptists, United Methodists, African Methodist Episcopal, Catholics, and other churches working together to address problems in housing, employment, substance abuse, nutrition, and family stability.

"That sounds like we're all over the place, but they all are tied together and they have to be addressed together," says Rev. Thomas Smith, who has been behind Hill District Ministries since its beginning. "The housing element is really central, because we're trying to help people have a stake in the community."

For information, contact Hill District Ministries, Inc., 2228 Wylie Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219; (412) 281-0607.

SHE'S GOT THEIR NUMBER

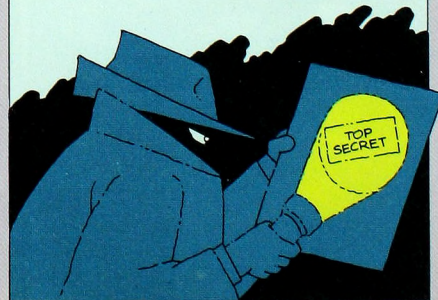
Homeless people in the neighborhood around Dégagé Ministries, Grand Rapids, Mich., know Robyn Saylor's got their number. She runs Dégagé's Phone Club, which makes two telephone lines available to the homeless and operates a message service for them. It's proven to be a vital connection.

Of the 350 calls the Phone Club puts through each month, about 25 percent are to prospective employers. Saylor says the most rewarding

part of her job is when she can be the link that helps someone get a job. (She was unemployed herself when her pastor told her about the Phone Club opening.)

Dégagé Ministries is a Christian coffeehouse holdout from the '70s that has grown into a many-sided ministry. It enjoys strong support from the local churches. More than 200 volunteers help with other outreach ministries such as grocery distribution, high-school completion courses, and men's and women's Bible studies.

Contact the Phone Club at Dégagé Ministries, 10 Weston SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

“ We discovered that one does not make up missions. One stands in readiness and in the fullness of time God gives them. They are not superimposed, but they emerge from the life of a people to help express that life.
Elizabeth O'Connor
 in *Call to Commitment* **”**

PRENATAL CARING



Room in the inn for new moms.

A handful of women in Ventura County, Calif., who were concerned about the abortion issue began praying in 1984 about what they could do.

They discovered there wasn't a shelter in the whole county where a single, pregnant woman could go for support if she wanted to let her baby live.

That's how Tender Life was born, in an old Victorian house with room for eight mothers-to-be.

Tender Life offers childbirth classes, adoption counseling, Bible study, and life skills classes for women living in the house. They are encouraged to finish their education and get job training, and they can stay for three months after giving birth. Christian families in the area take in additional women to help them through pregnancy and childbirth.

For information contact Tender Life, P.O. Box 7610, Oxnard, CA 93031; (805) 983-0501.

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

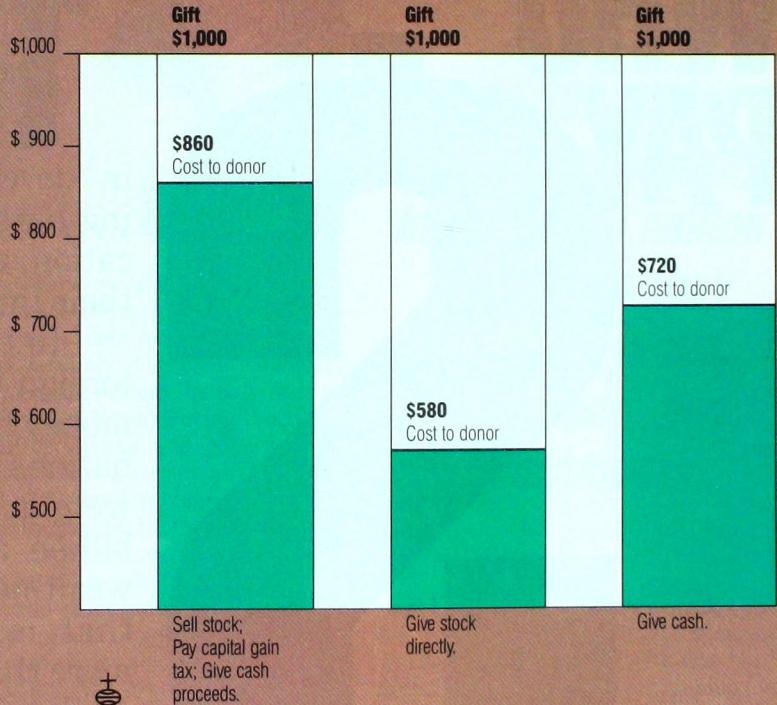
When you decide that it's time to sell off some stock you have held long-term, please consider the profit-sharing plan.

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

A Profit-Sharing Plan For Profit-Takers

How does the plan work? Let's say you're in the 28% tax bracket and you want to give \$1,000. Here are three ways you can make your gift: give the cash from the sale of stock (original cost—\$500); give the stock; or give cash.

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



WORLD VISION 919 West Huntington Drive, Monrovia, California 91016

For more information, call the Planned Giving Office 1-800-426-5753 (outside California) or, 1-800-451-8024 (inside California).

Please call me. Name _____
 Telephone (_____) _____
 area code (best time to call)

Please send me World Vision's stock brochure
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip code _____

FMC005

*Third World
governments
owe a surreal
\$1.2 trillion
in debt, but ...*

**WHO
PAY**



Who pays the price for Zambia's foreign debt?

■ A housewife who dies of a gunshot wound because the police, out of fuel, can't respond quickly to her cry for help.

■ The nearly 200 patients in an 80-bed clinic, where a nurse can't find a wire cutter to open shipments of medical supplies.

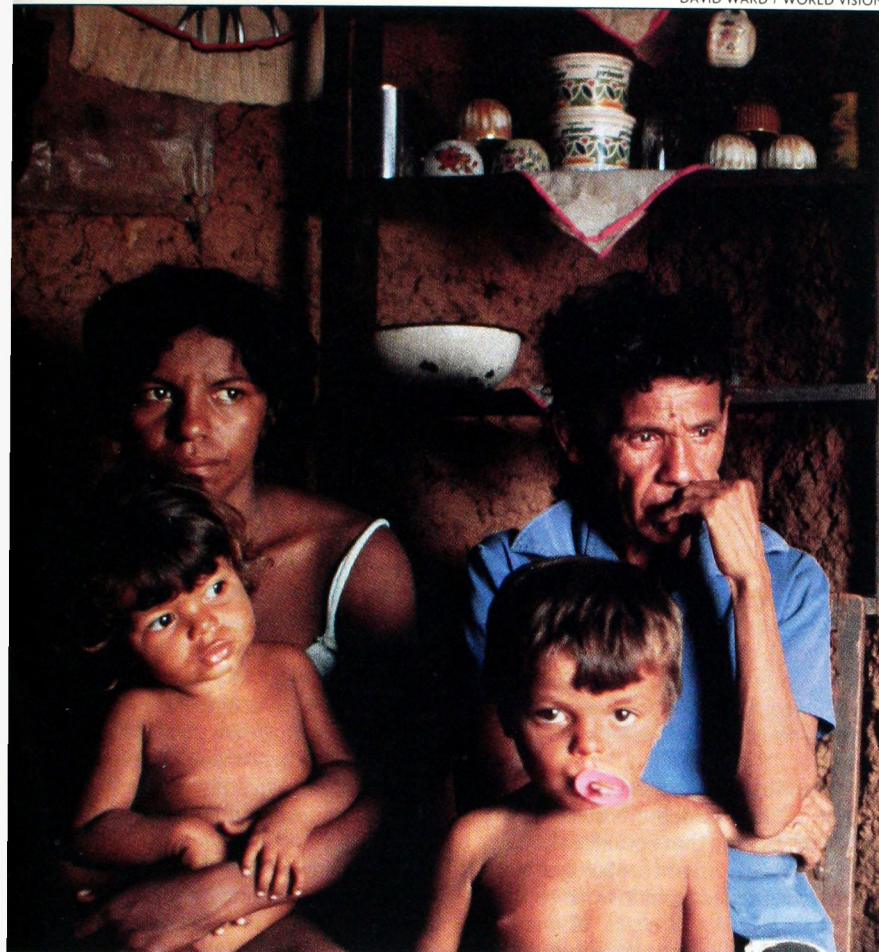
■ A young barber who goes out of business because money shortages and high interest keep driving up the rent.

■ The residents of Choma, where there isn't a barber because no one can borrow the \$200 start-up capital.

Third World debt is not only a banker's and bureaucrat's crisis. It belongs to the hundreds of millions of ordinary people in "developing" nations who are watching hard-won progress in health, education, and quality of life slip through their fingers.

In the past decade, the ballooning foreign debt has reversed the flow of money from wealthy nations to poorer nations. By 1988, the poorer countries were actually turning over a net \$50 billion a year to the wealthier countries—that is, \$50 billion more than all the aid, new loans,

**THE
PRICE?**



and investments they received.

As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial noted in 1989, "The world is topsyturvy when countries that should be experiencing a net inflow of capital to finance development are instead shipping capital abroad."

The total debt of the Third World in 1989 was an almost surreal \$1.2 trillion. Where did all that money go? Some of it was wisely invested, but much of it was mismanaged and misappropriated. Brazil's government spent an estimated \$20 billion on a plan to build 10 nuclear power plants by 1980. Only one has been built, and it doesn't work properly.

Argentina's military regime borrowed money to buy weapons and to help fund the 1978 World Cup soccer championship. An estimated \$15 billion of Brazil's debt, \$20 billion of Argentina's debt, and \$22 billion of Venezuela's debt went into private bank accounts abroad.

"Too many loans were made to dictators who invested huge amounts of money in pet projects, without any accountability to the people," says Manfred Grellert, a native Brazilian and World Vision vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean

region. "Now we have to weigh these 'illegitimate' debts against the government's social debt to its citizens."

As Grellert suggests, however, borrowers are seldom the only ones to blame for bad loans. During the 1960s and 1970s, banks and governments practically threw money at the Third World. The lenders hoped to foster economic growth in these countries, which would lead to greater appetites for imported goods from the United States and other industrial countries.

The lure of large, immediate profits from the loans also played a role. By 1982, as much as 20 percent of Citicorp Bank's profits were from loans to Brazil alone.

A government can't default on a loan, right? That's what the lenders assumed. Too many of them slackened their normal screening. It was like a 2 a.m. car dealer's ad: "Bad credit? Repossessions? No problem!" Lenders didn't look carefully at the financial condition of the borrowing countries, or at the feasibility of the projects the loans would finance.

Another factor in the lending spree was the huge amount of capital that

was available. "The world was awash in petro-dollars," explains David Befus, economics professor at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Some economists blame the problem on the lack of other ways for the world to absorb excess capital, not on any particular evil on the part of borrowers or lenders."

And then there were the interest rates. Many of the loans to Third World governments were tied to the rise and fall of interest rates in the world economy. As it turned out, that was practically all rise and no fall.

But the people responsible for amassing the debt, both borrowers and lenders, are not the people who bear its brunt. It is the poor in debtor countries who sacrifice most for the debt.

Why the poor more than others? First of all, they have the least "fat" to trim when the economy backslides. A middle-class family might give up eating *out* once a week; a poor family

By 1988, poorer countries were paying out \$50 million more than they received in aid, new loans, and investments.

might give up *eating* once a week.

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, a social worker visited a home with five children. The parents were out looking for food in garbage dumps. The children looked terrible, and the social worker asked if they had eaten recently. "Yes, Miss. Yesterday Mommy made little cakes from wet newspapers." The social worker was stunned. "Mommy takes a sheet of newspaper, makes it into a ball, and soaks it in water and, when it is nice and soft, kneads it into little cakes. We eat them, drink some water, and feel nice and full inside."

Wages in Brazil have been cut 50 percent in the past five years. Five years ago Brazilians could buy a cook stove for what it costs now to buy a kilo of black beans.

So-called "austerity measures" haven't benefitted the poor, either. Like a local banker dealing with a financially troubled client, the International Monetary Fund (a big lender connected with the United Nations that operates on free-market principles) sat down in the 1980s for a friendly chat with some of the worst cases.

"Listen," the IMF said, "you'll need to tighten your belt a little. Otherwise we won't be able to lend you any more."

Unable to function without borrowing money every year, the debtor countries had little choice but to agree. These austerity programs, sometimes called "structural adjustment," amount to a few simple concepts: cutting government spending, freezing wages, discouraging imports by making them more expensive, and encouraging exports. The aim is to prod debtor countries to become "economically viable"—to spend only what they earn.

Austerity measures may squeeze payments out of a debtor country, but the human costs have been too high.

Because poor people usually have the least political clout to fight for their piece of a shrinking government budget, services that primarily benefit the poor tend to be cut before those that benefit more influential groups.

Health care for the poor is sometimes cut back. Thomas Burns, a missionary in Peru, told of a visit to Felicita, a 22-year-old polio victim. Her two older brothers died of tuberculosis in 1982. Since then Burns has buried Felicita's mother and father, both tuberculosis victims. Burns told a U.S. Senate finance subcommittee, "There is no doubt in my mind that the debt is the cause of their deaths. Money their government spends on interest to foreign banks is money taken away from the health and well-being of the poor."

Sanitation services may also be curtailed. In the Dominican Republic, 7-year-old Juanito Perez picks through a mountain of garbage between houses made of sticks and rusted car parts. The government can afford enough trucks to collect only about a third of the garbage in Santo Domingo, and slums are not high on the list of priority areas.

Austerity measures often mean an end to government subsidies on fuel and food. At the same time, the push to boost exports encourages farmers to grow cash crops instead of food, causing food prices to rise. As the cost of food and other basics shoots up, wages are held down.

In Mexico, Maria Guerrero told a reporter about the poor health of her six children. They have white spots on their skin, which she thinks are caused by lack of protein. Maria can no longer afford milk; the price went up because it is no longer subsidized. "We just drink cinnamon tea," she said. "We'll die soon."

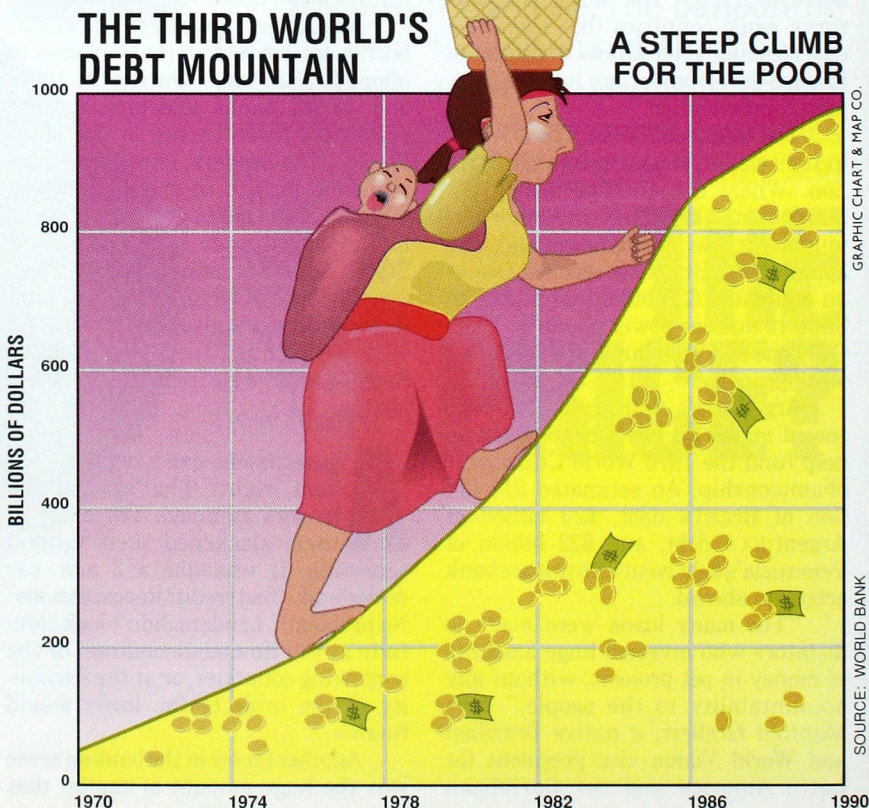
Yet Mexico was praised for heroic efforts to pay its debts between 1982 and 1985. During that period real wages fell 45 percent. An anthropologist who recently returned from Mexico reports a dramatic rise in cases of mental retardation. "This is a direct effect of one generation of malnutrition and hunger, and a direct result of the debt burden," she says.

Another effect of austerity measures is that imported goods are either priced out of reach or simply not available. Medical supplies are in such short supply in Zambia that people who need non-emergency surgery are often asked to wait until they can procure their own scalpels and gloves for the surgeon.

Austerity programs were intended as an emergency measure to deal with countries unable to meet their debt payments. Observers have compared austerity measures to "economic electroshock therapy" and "rearranging the furniture in a debtors' prison." The measures may help squeeze debt payments out of a country, critics say, but the costs are unacceptable—both the harm to people and the squelching of any long-term economic growth.

Now the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund show signs of shifting their position. "They have realized that they went too far," says Joseph Ki-Zerbo, an African political scientist and historian. He told the French monthly *Jeune Afrique Economie*, "The medicine would have killed the patient, and nobody wants to see a period of widespread political instability in Africa."

The poor of the Third World are not the only ones hurt by their nations' debt payments. The more these debtor countries have to pay banks, the less



they have left to buy imported products. When Latin American countries had to cut imports to make debt payments between 1981 and 1986, U.S. exports to the region fell from \$43 billion to \$30 billion. That

cost more than a million U.S. jobs and severely aggravated the farm crisis.

The long fingers of the debt crisis also reach into the international drug trade. Illegal exported drugs can be a vital source of foreign income for debt-ridden countries. In Peru, drug money coming into the country equals 20 percent of official export earnings. Cocaine revenue in Bolivia is about three times the value of all other exports. It's not surprising that farmers are easily recruited to grow coca, a crop that brings five to ten times the profit of any other. Debt didn't cause the drug economy, but it creates conditions that make illegal drugs a more irresistible cash crop.

The debt crisis also affects the environment. Environmental programs are a comparative luxury, not a priority during economic triage. They are quickly cut. At the same time, with poverty worsened by national debt, people who live on the land sacrifice their natural resources for survival.

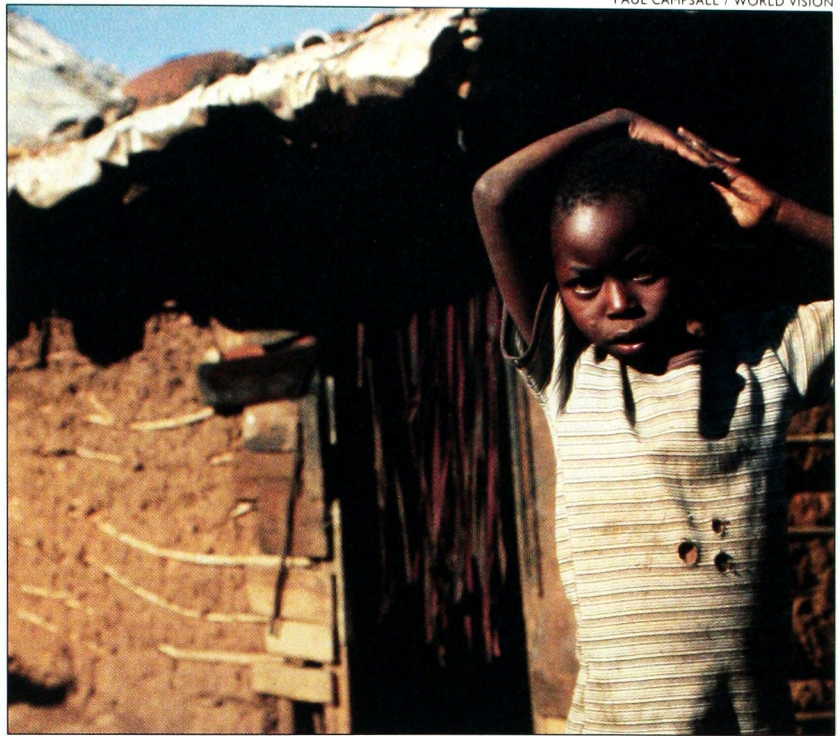
Some conservation organizations have experimented with "debt-for-nature" swaps, paying a portion of a country's debt in exchange for conservation of certain wilderness areas.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has tried a similar idea: "debt-for-development" swaps. For example, one bank recently handed UNICEF all \$800,000 of its loans to Sudan. Now Sudan repays the loan in its own currency, rather than hard-to-get dollars, by installing wells with hand pumps for Sudanese villagers.

Though a creative approach, these swaps aren't the answer to the debt crisis. In the long run, they barely reduce the debt. UNICEF's \$800,000 project in Sudan, for example, is only a tiny fraction of the nation's \$13 billion total debt. The swaps also grant outsiders authority to intervene in matters of national sovereignty.

The way out of the debt crisis follows a much more radical path. Increasingly, the word *forgiveness* is being used. A few years ago, outright debt forgiveness for governments was out of the question. Today it's a routine

National debt exacts a high price from the young; health and education spending is often cut.



assumption. The question has become how much Third World debt will be written off as loss. Debt forgiveness began in early 1989.

Forgiveness—it almost sounds Christian. Is it possible to go a step further, to think about this complex global crisis in biblical terms?

The Bible calls for periodically giving the poor a fresh, debt-free start (Deuteronomy 15:1-4). Old Testament law also forbids charging interest to the poor (Leviticus 25:35-38).

"Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security." (Deuteronomy 24:6) At the time, millstones

were essential to a family's livelihood, grinding the flour used to bake bread. Taking even the upper millstone as loan security would create tremendous hardship. Surely debtor nations are pawning their own livelihood and future when they skimp on the education and health of their people.

In the Bible these concepts are presented as matters of justice and decency, and also as matters of obedience to God. Taking them seriously in the international arena is a radical step, but a radical approach appears to be just what is needed.

Of course, lenders may be reluctant to deal with a country that hasn't made good on previous loans—just as individuals shy away from lending to friends who didn't repay them the last time. The Old Testament foresees this problem. "Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: 'The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,' so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing." (Deuteronomy 15:9)

This warning is given not as a lofty ideal, but as practical national policy. The passage makes clear that the well-being of everyone—rich, poor, and in-between—depends on just and decent treatment of poor debtors.

Relieving the debt won't remove poverty, and there's no guarantee governments will use freed-up funds to help the poor. Still, it's unlikely the situation for the poor will get worse by

The Bible makes it clear that everyone's well-being depends on decent treatment of poor debtors.

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At the same time that we wrestle with the complications, there are realistic, concrete ways to respond.

relieving the debt, and there's a good chance things would improve for them. At the very least it would be easier for working people to borrow start-up capital for small businesses, which provide a big proportion of the jobs in the Third World.

"Do Christians south of the equator believe that northern Christians care about their hard times? I would have to say, in many cases, not really," says Manfred Grellert. "But I still believe that the church can be a tremendous energy, a moral force in these issues. Just make yourselves aware. If the Christian segment of the U.S. population takes their public life seriously, much can be done."

This includes more than just pushing for policy change. "At the same time that we wrestle with the complications of the situation, it is good for us Christians to think about realistic, concrete ways to respond," David Befus says.

Several church denominations and Christian organizations, for example, sell crafts and products from the Third World and return a fair profit directly to the producers, who often form a cooperative and use extra profits for schools, health care, and other community benefits.

Revolving loan funds also counteract the effects of the debt crisis. These low-cost loans to the poor enable many to become self-reliant business people and even, in many cases, to employ others. As loans are repaid, credit is extended to other entrepreneurs. Here are a few examples from Colombia:

In Bucaramanga, Silverio Penaloza bought a used machine for making women's shoes. He and his wife began doing piecework for a factory. With

another loan they bought more equipment, and now they sell their own line of shoes and employ nine workers from their community.

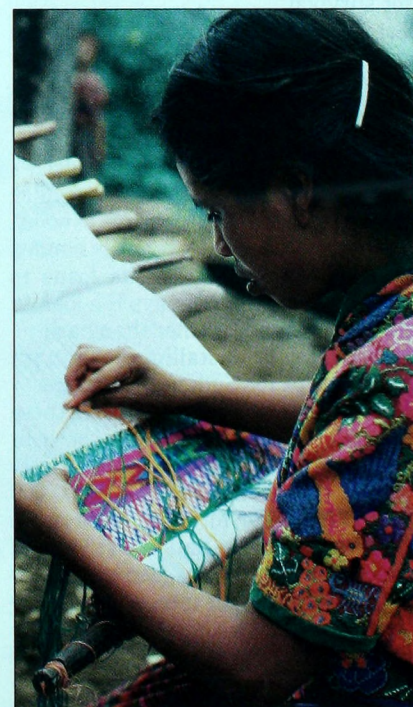
The Rodriguez family opened a convenience store in their garage with the help of a loan. "We started selling eggs and soft drinks, then candy and cookies and school supplies," says Isadora Rodriguez. "Although we're surrounded by supermarkets, people come to our door starting at 5 a.m. Now we're thinking of expanding."

Waldina Cortes used to sell about 10 homemade meat pies a day. As her business grew, she borrowed money for an oven and a delivery bicycle. Later she bought a small grain mill for making flour. Now she makes between 350 and 400 pies a day.

Debt crisis or not, the poor everywhere have trouble borrowing money at manageable rates. In severely indebted countries, that problem is aggravated. Revolving loans can be a good way to reach out to people who are paying dearly for their country's debts.

By working the political system and reaching out with assistance, North Americans can relieve the debt crisis that affects all of us. The Christian faith has a practical perspective on the debt crisis, one that is surely no more "impossible" than the suggestions of bankers and bureaucrats. □

Jack Straus is president of Mission Imports, Inc., in Dallas, Texas.



Direct assistance to artisans and small businesses can ease the burden of national debt on poor families.

TERRI OWENS / WORLD VISION

RESCUED—BY THE GHETTO

In 1980, when word circulated that 14 members of Jackson State's football team "got religion," Tennessee State boasted to the newspapers that their defense would "baptize them with fire." Mississippi offensive guard Derek Perkins did not see the humor. In fact, Mississippi's team captain spoke for him when he prayed before the game: "God, they don't know you. They don't understand your baptism and they don't understand your fire. They are making a mockery of you." Then he made an announcement, like something straight out of Exodus: God had promised them the victory.

It wasn't until the end of the fourth quarter that an apparent loss turned into a miraculous win for Jackson State. The coaches were dumbstruck. Massive offensive linemen shouted, "Praise Jesus!" And even Derek was hard-pressed to explain that day's victory.

Derek's own performance against Tennessee was the crown of a season so impressive that professional scouts were already beginning to court him. But in an odd twist on the American dream, the ghetto rescued Perkins from a lucrative future in professional athletics. During his junior year he traded the football dorms for Jackson's inner city, "to see if Daddy's stuff worked."

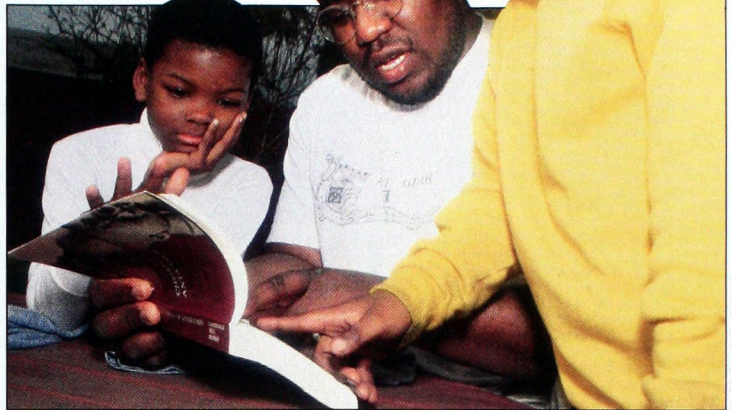
Daddy's "stuff" is the radical urban-renewal plan of Derek's father, John Perkins. Determined to test that plan independently, Derek immersed himself in the lives of the boys who were his new neighbors. He soon found himself, at 21, the spiritual and practical father to nine teenage gang members. Within three months, they had all received Christ.

That summer, a trip to Africa gave him the chance to see people poorer in possessions than his inner-city children, but richer in something else. "They were noble. They made me love my heritage. They made me want to be more committed to Christian things." It soon became clear that "athletics just weren't important."

He returned to Mississippi anxious to teach his boys what he had learned. But during the month that he was gone, the boys had scattered.

Fall football training was about to start, and the newspapers announced Derek's return as the force most likely to solidify the offense. A new line coach studied his films from the previous year and made Derek a once-in-a-lifetime offer. "If you play for me this year, I'll get you into the NFL."

Professional scouts later confirmed that a dream-come-true career in football seemed available for the taking. The only problem was, Derek didn't want it.



CARRIE MOONEYHAM

"After I saw the kids scattered, I couldn't be on campus. These kids were hungry and needed leadership. There's a thousand people to replace me on a football team, but there wasn't one other to give his life to the children."

He did not go back to the dorm, or to football, or even to college that year. Ten years later, defensive linemen are not the only grateful ones.

The population of 30 children at the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, Calif., will swell to 80 during the summer of 1990. Since 98 percent of them come from single-parent homes, it's easy to see why many consider 31-year-old Perkins their surrogate father.

Barking pit bulls, drug dealing, and murder once characterized this neighborhood that a local newspaper called the "bull's eye" of Pasadena's high-crime area. Now the only thing that interrupts the afternoon quiet is the daily after-school barrage of children.

If you ask neighbors about the center, they don't always remember the Swahili name, but they know all about the place. "Those are the folks that challenged the drug dealers."

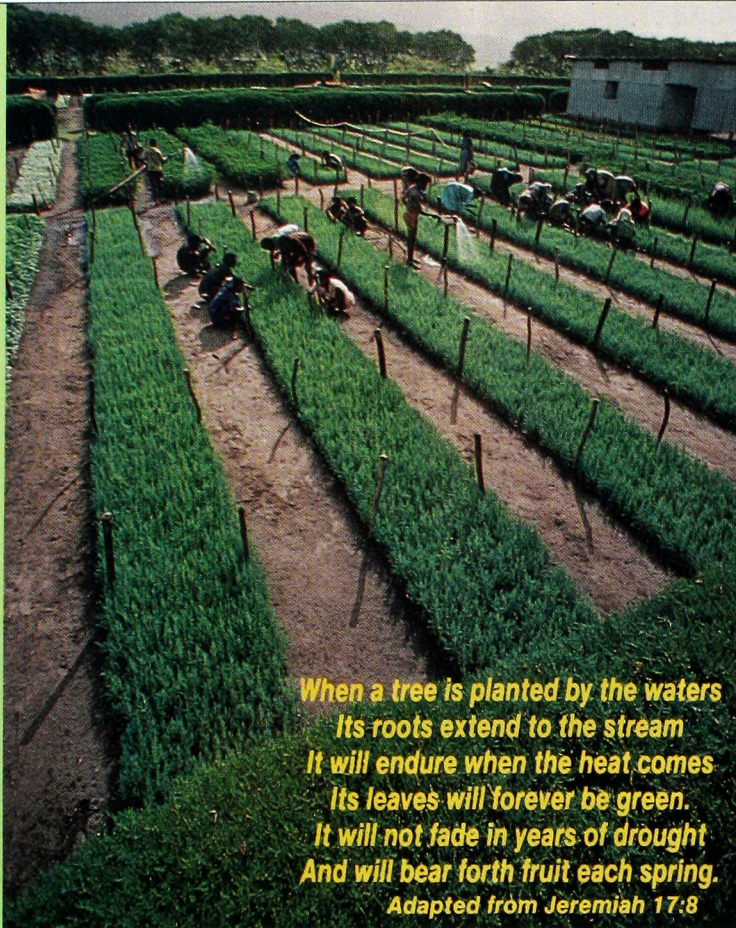
Just for the record, the name *Harambee* is a word that Derek adopted on that trip to Africa. It's a fitting description for the new kind of offensive line he started. It means, "let's get together and push."

Derek Perkins starts each day with an intense prayer not unlike the one he prayed with a football captain years ago. "God, they do not know you. They do not know your baptism and they do not know your fire." And, like something straight out of Exodus, God has promised him the victory. □

By Lauralee Mannes, a free-lance writer in Altadena, Calif.

There were thousands to replace him on a football team, but not one other to give his life to the children.

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**When a tree is planted by the waters
Its roots extend to the stream
It will endure when the heat comes
Its leaves will forever be green.
It will not fade in years of drought
And will bear forth fruit each spring.
Adapted from Jeremiah 17:8**

Trees are God's gift of life, our source of oxygen, food, warmth and shelter. Their grace and majesty are a delight. Yet some Third-World children have never seen a tree. They see only endless stretches of parched, dry earth. Their eyes burn with dust in the unrelenting heat.

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