

WORLD VISION[®]

June/July 1991

MO ZAMBIQUE



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More than 14 years of civil war and unspeakable terror have earned Mozambique its standing as the most miserable country in the world in which to live. Yet some Mozambicans see their suffering as a kind of blessing, because thousands of people are turning to God and the church is growing as never before.

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Kenneth Begishe grew up in Arizona a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. He describes his youth as a blur of drunkenness and shame. But a graveyard prayer in Chicago led Begishe to Christ and back to Arizona to help the church minister to the Navajo people.

10 **The Burden of Age**

In the developing world, there are signs that economic hardships and increasing urbanization are slowly eroding time-honored traditions of respecting and caring for the elderly. Once esteemed for their wisdom, the aged now face neglect and abandonment in countries without the resources to take care of them.



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Reports of American servicemen studying the Bible and accepting Christ during their Middle East tour of duty were cause for rejoicing. Other brothers and sisters in Christ—thousands of Kurds, Iraqis and Palestinians who love our Lord—became tragic victims of the war. Many of them lost family, homes, jobs, and a stable future. We must pray for those new in the faith, and for those whose faith has been tested by fire.
Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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SOPHIE'S CHOICE?

A few years ago, during a terrible famine in Chad, World Vision workers came upon a Chadian woman who had given birth to twins. The young mother had come to the painful realization that she did not have the resources to keep both her children alive. She needed to make a choice—which one would live, which one would die.

No one knows what terrible mental and emotional anguish went into this decision, but by the time we arrived, the decision had already been made. And it was irreparable. One child was robust and healthy. He would make it. The other was thin and sallow, skin stretched tightly across his tiny frame, and he was vomiting. Clearly he would be dead within a few days.

I think of all the choices that confront me. Compared to the Chadian mother, none of them seem major—where to work, what to wear, what kind of car to drive, where to send my children to college, which doctors to go to. What is clear is that all my choices are made from a position of strength, multiple options, a veritable smorgasbord of opportunities. The Chadian mother, in contrast, had to make an impossible choice from a position of

abject poverty and hopelessness.

I've thought often of that young mother in these last few days. Spending a week in Romania and observing a few of the 200,000 children abandoned by their parents, I witnessed other acts of desperation that flow out of impossible choices.

This is a new revelation to me, because I could not conceive of a situation where ethics would be so disregarded as to dump children into state-run institutions. How could Romanian parents have allowed this to happen?

I had assumed it was a case of lost values. Communism erodes ethical considerations; Ceausescu destroyed them. We had identified the "bad guy." Now we just needed to energize the Romanian church to recapture values which had

systematically disappeared under totalitarian rule.

Too simple. And unfair to the people of Romania. While the Ceausescu regime contributed to the hopelessness parents felt, the desperate nature of poverty creates these impossible choices. Because babies are still keeping the orphanages filled—more than a year after the death of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp, a desperate human condition so pervasive and destructive that it precludes normal ethics. Romanian parents have no choice, no options. The poorest country in Eastern Europe causes families to either give up their children to the state or watch them starve to death. And that alternative denies any meaningful choice.

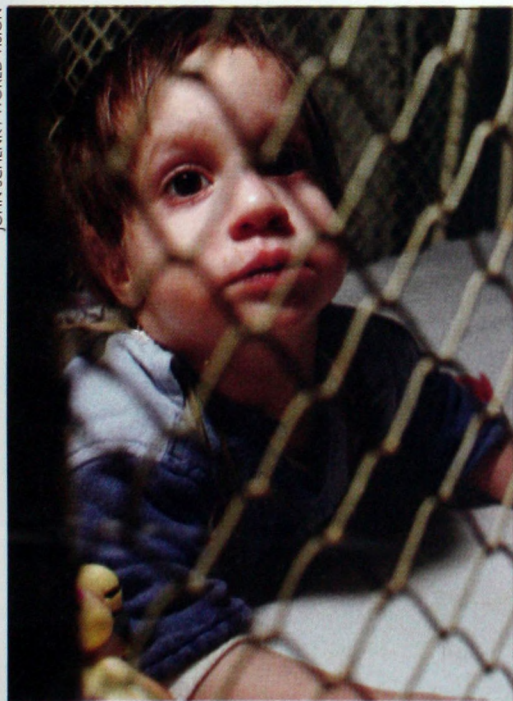
But I still struggle with the explanation. Somehow we understand the plight of a Chadian mother but cannot assimilate into our thinking her metaphorical equivalent in Eastern Europe. This may say more about our attitudes than about the Romanian parents.

One of the most honest statements I've heard came from an American woman after watching an ABC 20/20 segment on the Romanian orphans. "The thing that shocked me the most," she said, "was that they were all white." Yes, they *are* all white, and we are not used to seeing white children in the middle of such destructive poverty. It's different when they are black, brown, or yellow! In fact, might it not also be true that we have developed a higher tolerance level toward the pain of a black African?

This past week, attempting to understand the human dynamics unfolding in Romania, I was forced to confront the latent racism within me. The Romanian children are white. I had higher expectations of their parents. I was being both racist and paternalistic. God forgive me!

The kind of poverty that precludes ethical considerations, that forces impossible choices, that destroys part of ourselves in the process, is color-blind. As we begin to see the magnitude of the human drama unfolding in Romania, may we be more sensitive, more understanding, more compassionate, and *more outraged* about the fact that babies, black and white, are falling on the wrong side of an impossible choice. □

Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp.



JOHN SCHENK / WORLD VISION

A Romanian child in a home for the "irrecoverable."

BY TANYA BRENNEMAN
AND GINGER HOPE

*In
Mozambique,
the world's
most
miserable
country,
the church
is growing
as never
before.*

OUT OF THE SOIL OF SUFFERING

MO ZAM BIQUE



DAVID C. BITCHIE / WORLD VISION

The day our village was attacked, RENAMO soldiers kidnapped my wife and four of our children. My 6-year-old boy and I were left behind. After a year without my family, I decided to find them and live in captivity with them.

When I arrived in [RENAMO-held] Caixiti, the soldiers questioned me. I was afraid they might beat me or kill me. But I persuaded them I meant no harm—after all, I had my little child with me. They let me search for my family, and when I found them I learned that my oldest son had starved to death.

In Caixiti I found a small group of believers, but they were discouraged. I realized God had sent me there to encourage them. When I left two years later, the church numbered 2,000. Ten years ago churches were not growing like this. The growth started in 1973, when the confusion started.

We continually pray. Many suffer from the war. They are innocent. I have the courage to continue bringing people into the kingdom that is secure, because here it is never secure. God has given me this courage.

Simão Augusto

Simão Augusto is a pastor in what has been judged the worst place on earth to live. Mozambique stands at the top of the International Human Suffering Index, head and shoulders above even such traumatized countries as Angola and Afghanistan.

It's a distinction Mozambique has earned only too well. The index, compiled by the Population Crisis Committee in Washington, D.C., takes into account a broad spectrum of indicators—economic, social, health, personal freedom. The 14-year war between RENAMO rebels and FRELIMO government forces has shot all those indicators to pieces in Mozambique.

There is another list on which Mozambique would surely place or show: the Rapid Spread of Christianity Index, if there were such a thing. Christian churches in Mozambique are growing and reproducing as never before, and the growth started in earnest "when the confusion started," as Augusto so delicately understates.

Since 1977, RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) has been fighting the government, which was then Marxist but has since moved steadily away from Marxism. Although RENAMO has no political identity of substance, it was supported by the South African government until 1989. (South Africa's withdrawal of support was due in large part to pressure from private relief organizations, eyewitnesses to the havoc wrought by RENAMO.)

Whatever its original aims, by all reliable accounts RENAMO has func-

tioned as a perpetrator of indiscriminate terror and violence. RENAMO forces, known in Mozambique as *banditos*, routinely use tactics such as mass executions, razing of villages, forced labor, and systematic rape and torture, according to U.S. State Department reports and eyewitness accounts.

The devastation of Mozambique is most visible in the government-run camps for *deslocados* (displaced persons). Starvation and disease are at home among the mud-and-straw huts. Every *deslocado* has family members who starved to death, whose throats were slit, who were kidnapped, or who were burned alive in their huts while they slept. Almost all of them have lost almost everything. Grief, crisis, and loss have defined their lives.

Serfina Amilia Tolsiva, a pastor's wife housed in a *deslocado* center in Gilé, lived with her family in captivity for five

years after RENAMO attacked her village, Namagala, in 1986.

"They took all our clothes and dishes," Tolsiva says. "They did other things I cannot talk about. If they found persons dressed in clothes, they killed them."

Tolsiva became a RENAMO slave, working in the fields, hauling water, preparing their food. "If they found you sitting down, they would kill you. We were afraid every single day that they would kill us. I saw whole families shot down."

A group of Christians continued to meet in captivity and even built a little church. That group supported Tolsiva when her husband got in trouble with RENAMO:

"They came to take our little girls to have sex with them. My husband finally was courageous enough to stand up to them and forbid them to take the girls unless they wanted to marry them first. They beat him and tied him up and left him in the dirt for 24 hours. They said they would force him to join them so he would learn how it felt to be like them, with no wife. We were very frightened for his life. But thanks to God, they let my husband go. It was a miracle."

Tolsiva and her family finally escaped. They hid for three days in the bush. Then they made their way to Morrua, where for the first time in five years they saw people with clothes.

"We saw people eating meat sauce with salt," Tolsiva says, "but we were only able to forage for wild roots and leaves. We heard that Gilé had a health center, so we came here to get help for the children. When I arrived I was still

Pain and suffering produce a fork in the road. It is not possible to remain unchanged.

**Tim Hansel
You Gotta Keep Dancin'**



Pastor Avalino Mutelima baptizes new members of Union Baptist Church (Zalala, Zambezia province) in the Indian Ocean.

naked. A woman gave me this sack to wear around my waist. We had only a big blanket I made out of bark.

"In the midst of all this I never felt abandoned by God. I felt his presence with us all the time. We were slaves and prisoners for a very long time. God helped us see that this suffering and war would pass, but that we would be with God forever."

In 1975 a Marxist-Leninist government took control of Mozambique, banned church activities, and seized all church property. In 1982, when the government began to move away from Marxism, the church received official permission to operate again. Today there is complete religious freedom. But religious freedom is not the cause of Mozambique's extraordinary church growth, according to Mozambican Christians. The war is.

"I walked through all of Sofala Province in 1968 and never heard of a single church," says Pastor Manuel José Maveu. "In those times, we had not gone through war and suffering. Now we hear of growth everywhere. The suffering know God better."

Another pastor, Nicolão Inacio, puts it even more strongly: "The war has opened people's hearts to God. Their suffering turns their spirits to him. There was never such growth before. I could say that this war has been a blessing in disguise because so many thousands of people are coming to Christ. The *deslocados* are a large majority of the new believers, and they take the gospel back home with them. There, they evan-

*Jesus did not
come to explain away
suffering or remove it.
He came to fill it with
his presence.*

Paul Claudel in
Where Is God When It Hurts?
by Philip Yancey

gelize and bring many hundreds more to Christ."

Calling the virtual destruction of a country a "blessing in disguise" may sound cruel. But coming from a Mozambican Christian trying to endure and understand a life framed by terror and loss, the words are not easily dismissed.

Undeniably, the uprooting and scattering of several million people has exposed more Mozambicans to Christianity for the first time. An estimated 2 million Mozambicans are in *deslocado* centers within the country and another million live in refugee centers in neighboring countries.

"The paradox of the *deslocado* situation is that it brings such suffering and yet provides such opportunities for church growth," says Dick Morgan, a missionary in Mozambique with the African Evangelical Fellowship. "People who before the war lived many days'

walk away from the nearest Christians are now living next door to Christians in the government centers."

While the mingling of Christians with a greater spectrum of the population helps explain why so many more Mozambicans are hearing the gospel, it doesn't explain why so many are responding. They are responding, say Mozambican Christians, because the gospel of Christ meets their suffering on three key levels: offering healing from trauma, freedom from bitterness, and the strength to endure what must still be suffered daily.

According to Augusto, there is a marked difference between Christians and non-Christians in dealing with trauma. "I have seen a lot of people in the war zone who are so depressed they won't eat. I have seen people die from anger and grief." Christians, he says, "find consolation and comfort in God. They recover from their grief and let go of their anger. God consoles, and that is the difference."

Antonio Juzi Olese, a displaced peasant farmer now living in Mariebe Center in Nicoadala, Zambezia province, says the poverty of Mozambican churches makes that healing message starkly clear. "Here in our mud-and-thatch church we have absolutely nothing to give. It is only the Spirit of God that the church can give to help our people. Here we know the living God and we now sing praises for how he has changed our lives," Olese says.

Christians in Mozambique testify that their faith gives them the capacity to forgive devastating atrocities. Chipamba,

A NATION WITHERS

The first word of the catastrophe in Morrua, Mozambique, a former mining town deep in the interior, came from a band of 50 naked, starving men. They emerged from the bush one day at a World Vision emergency feeding center at Gilé, 40 miles east, unclothed except for strips of tree bark.

"There are 20,000 of us in Morrua," they told a stunned worker at the feeding center.

One week later, Joseph DeVries, a World Vision supervisor in the provincial capital of Quelimane, touched down on Morrua's rocky landing strip in the first plane to land there in eight years.

Morrua was filled with the eerie silence of a community too sick for anything but an interminable series of funerals. In a shack near the center of town the visitors found a family of seven just returned from its fifth burial. From a dark corner came the exhausted moaning of a child. She would die of starvation by nightfall.

After living at a bare subsistence level behind rebel lines, the people of Morrua were now free but were more cut off than ever from food, seeds, and farming tools. They were in danger of perishing, in effect, from freedom itself.

Mozambique is like that today: a country of 14.5 million people just emerging into the promise of peace and development 16 years after its independence from Portugal, but in peril of wasting away before it has a chance to fulfill that promise.

Rich in land and minerals, Mozambique is in potentially better shape than such other African countries as Sudan and Ethiopia, where poor land and rainfall conditions, exacerbated by civil war, have produced repeated famines. Mozambique could conceivably grow enough food to feed itself and could raise cashews and cotton for export. But virtually no development has occurred here in 16 years of independence, mostly due to the same rural

insurgency that made refugees out of Morrua's people.

The scanty roads that existed in 1975 to serve the country's potentially rich farmland are destroyed, the bridges downed or mined. One million Mozambicans live as refugees in neighboring countries, and another 2 million to 3 million are displaced within Mozambique.

Morrua, once an agricultural and mining center, is a microcosm of Mozambique's condition: sitting atop wealth but living in desperation. Still, Morrua is in better shape than many other communities. At least Morrua has a usable airstrip and cultivable land in the district.

But for every Morrua there is at least one Mulevala, a district about 40 miles away, where the scale of the human catastrophe remains unknown because the area still cannot be reached by outside assistance. Mulevala cannot be served from the air because RENAMO sabotaged its airstrip with a dozen deep, crosswise trenches. In November 1990, two bush pilots tried to land, one of them a Soviet helicopter pilot who said he was fired on and hit from the ground. Both vowed never to go back.

Another side of Mozambique's relief dilemma is easy to visualize in Pebane, a coastal district about 850 miles north of Maputo that has supported 200,000 war refugees. Pebane is little more than beach and sandspits, unsuitable for growing anything but a few sorry shoots of cassava. And it is at the end of a long relief supply line from the capital, so food deliveries are irregular.

Officials should be relieved that about 50,000 refugees have already left Pebane on their way home to begin cultivating their old land anew. But ironically, as more people return to their old homes and land, the strain on relief agencies becomes greater.

In that situation, says Nancy Barnes, the United Nations' emergency officer in Maputo, "you have to penetrate into localities where the roads have been abandoned for years. Operations take longer because most districts have no vehicles. People go [home] by foot, but for supplying them we need trucks. The resettling process will require phenomenal resources." □

By Michael A. Hiltzik, a Los Angeles Times staff writer. Copyright, 1990, Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission.

a World Vision agricultural officer, was captured by RENAMO and held for several months.

"The *banditos* destroyed our family home and our sewing machine, which was our means of livelihood," he says. "My fervent prayers were answered as the family escaped safely and found me in the city. Each one arrived completely naked.

"I have forgiven the men who have done these things to us, because I know they only do these things because they do not know God. I pray for them continually, that they will come and join us here in our house of prayer. They are suffering too, you know," he says.

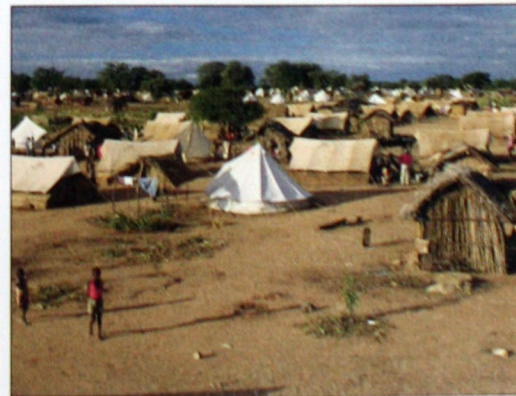
Mozambicans speak of their faith not only as a source of healing for past trauma, but as a source of strength in the round-the-clock endurance test that is daily life in Mozambique. It is not only the hope of eternal comfort that sustains them, they say, but a minute-by-minute reliance on God.

Perhaps the testimonies of three women express this best. Elisa Martinho watched three of her children starve to death. She herself was weak and sick, as were her other two children. She says she despaired and considered suicide.

"Then I remembered hearing of a God who was the only truth in the world," she says. "I began to pray to this God, and he gave me the emotional strength to go on, and the physical strength to walk into Gilé, carrying my two children all the way. God was with me as we traveled, and I feel him with me now every minute."

Ruth Simba of Morrua lost five children and her husband. She wears only tree bark. "We are continually crying, thinking of all our family now departed from us. But we still know God is with us, and that he brought us here [to a World Vision feeding center]. Without his help we would not have made it here.

Center for
displaced persons
in Tete province



DAVID C. RITCHIE / WORLD VISION

But I sometimes still don't know how much longer we can go on."

Fatima Socre, also of Morrua: "The *banditos* burned down my house in the village. We fled to Morrua, but then our food ran out. The children were all healthy until we arrived here. Now one of them has died and the others are getting worse every day. We eat only leaves. We are so very weak. I don't have any breast milk to keep my newborn baby alive. Yet I am convinced that God loves us and has brought us here."

None of this makes the war all right. None of this makes it tolerable that Mozambique ranks number one in the world for human misery. No one, in Mozambique or outside it, is saying that.

Why this suffering? I have struggled so much with this question," says Pastor Avalino Mutelima, who was traveling to Swaziland for radio training when he heard his hometown had been attacked. He returned immediately and walked through the bush looking for his wife, children, and parents.

"I saw horrible things. People cut in pieces, others burnt inside their huts, dead bodies everywhere. I wondered when the bodies would be those of my own family."

On the sixth day, Mutelima found his family alive. He took them, on foot, to the town of Quelimane—all but his parents, who were too weak for the trip. He tried several times to return for them but couldn't safely enter the area. Finally he received word that they both had died.

"Why would God allow us, his children, to be tormented and killed?" Mutelima asks. "I have thought of many possibilities: punishment for the way the country turned against God at its independence, or perhaps a sign of the end times.

"Finally I realized that there is no peace in this world. Only in God's love is there peace. Our spirits already live in the peace and the arms of God." □

Tanya Brenneman is a World Vision journalist based in southern Africa. Additional reporting by June Mears, a writer living in Pasadena, Calif.

World Vision has aided Mozambican war victims since 1984 with food, clothing, health care, farming tools, and support for Christian leaders. In fiscal year 1991, World Vision has committed over \$4 million in aid to the troubled country.



Cassava roots are all this deslocado has to feed her children. The starchy tuber—often called the "famine crop" because it can be dug up when other food is unavailable—fills the stomach but has scant nutritional value.

WINDS OF WAR, WINDS OF PRAYER

Jan. 16, 1991. The decision has been made. We are a nation at war. Distant powers have determined a course of action so profound and far-reaching as to affect not only me, snug in my California condo, but the entire world.

I am in turmoil. I have two reflective children who ask probing questions about matters as practical as what a SCUD missile is and as philosophical as why war exists. They watch, on CNN, Israeli children calmly putting on gas masks and retreating into sealed rooms to listen to the pervasive, eerie rise and fall of air-raid sirens. They hear about a sea of Iraqi refugees flooding into Jordan. The constant political debates of friends frustrate me. It doesn't even matter what side they're on: My world is out of orbit, beyond explanation.

I pray. But I am overwhelmed by the subject each time I approach the throne of God. How can I sort out the barrage of mental pictures, gut reactions, individual lives, nations, and leaders of nations into meaningful segments of a rationally expressed petition? The prayer of my heart is for peace; but it seems so naive, even trite, to think that a simple "Lord, please bring peace" would somehow move the hand of God to intervene in international chaos.

Now we're a few days into the war. I am on my way to work, feeling strangely foreign in the midst of the familiar. Snatches of scripture and images of battle vie for attention, and tears threaten to upstage the other two with emotion. In desperation I call out, "Lord, show me how to pray. I know your spirit desires to do that for me, and I don't even know how to begin." Suddenly I remember the disciples asking the same thing of Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray."

I begin to recite out loud, in my little white Mazda on a Southern California freeway, "Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." When I come to "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," I pause and repeat the words in modern English: "YOUR kingdom come, YOUR will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

I realize I am praying the perfect will of God. The words are charmed arrows instantly finding their mark. "Give me this day." No, I can't personalize this one. "Give us—all of us—this day our daily bread. Forgive our sins, and God, please help us to forgive the sins of those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine—YOURS—is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. It was then, it is now, and it will be for all time. Forever and ever amen."

The barrier is broken. I keep praying with a clarity not my own, giving thanks for the peace that has come to the battle within me.

The following Sunday I hear my favorite Bible teacher talk about I Samuel 23: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." He uses the verse to illustrate how one person can move nations through prayer.

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray because I don't get the instant fix that my culture and I seem to demand, because I'm not sure how to pray, because I'm one imperfect person, and all the other excuses I manufacture.

I know prayer changes things. More importantly, I believe it does. But in times of stress, I chafe and feel helpless. I get in the way of my own prayer. Still, I ask for help in how to pray, and I receive it in the form of a prayer. And the answer to that prayer for peace begins within my war-torn heart. That is consistent with God's principles—that his kingdom, his peace, starts within each one of us.

God alone knows how he will answer my prayer for peace in the Middle East. And he doesn't ask me to know. He only asks me to pray. □

Donna Sanders is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

O Lord,
my prayer
seemed too small
until I saw it
as part of
the coming
of the kingdom
of God.

Reginald Hollis



CLIFF NIELSEN



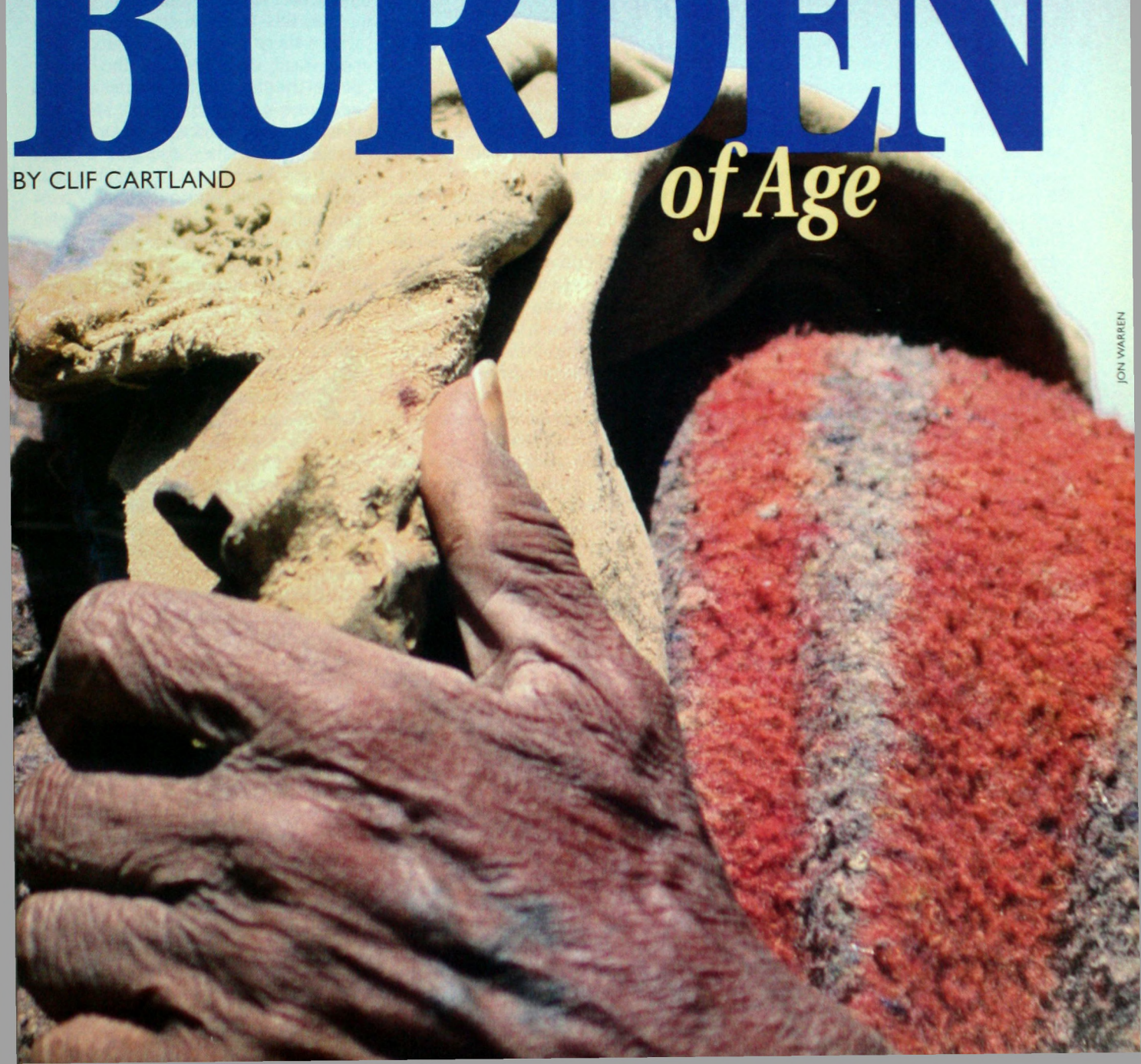
*There are signs
that the image of
the "respected
elder" is threat-
ened by trends of
Third World
The poverty.*

Some people called Clotario Blest compassionate. Others called him powerful. One thing they all agreed on—he had helped found Chile's most influential labor union. Clotario Blest died recently at age 92. Thousands attended his funeral. A stream of political leaders and union officials spoke glowingly of his dignified place in Chilean history, and he was laid to rest with fitting ceremony. But the pomp and circumstance belied a harsher reality. Clotario Blest died a broken, forgotten old man. For years he had lived alone in a miserable boarding house. Just before his death, Franciscan priests found him and took him from the squalor of his room to the pristine quiet of

BURDEN

of Age

BY CLIF CARTLAND



their monastery. They tried to restore some weight to his 90-pound frame, but he had been neglected too long.

Clotario Blest is no exception. Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society. I believe most Americans, while decrying the neglect of some of our own older people, admire other cultures for their time-honored traditions of valuing the elderly. We perceive the developing world as more respectful of aging parents and relatives, more sensitive to their needs, more inclined to heed their wisdom.

But World Vision correspondents paint a different picture, reporting that the elderly are increasingly regarded as "a nuisance, another mouth to feed."

Recent trends in developing countries are causing upheavals in traditional attitudes toward the elderly. And although instances of abuse and neglect do not mean that entire nations have forsaken their traditions, there are warning signs that attitudes are changing.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians, for example, have left their island home to escape political and economic problems. But in their desperate search for a new life, "burdensome" older relatives are often abandoned. That is the story of 89-year-old Madame Clenic. Her children moved to the United States and left their widowed mother behind. Seven years ago they returned for a visit and found Clenic badly cared for and in poor health. They took her to the Asile Communal, a Christian home for the aged in Port-au-Prince, and left again. In the seven years since, they have not contacted her once—not by mail, not by phone. "The children will come back to Haiti for the funeral," says Sister Emmanuelle, the director. "It seems as if a dead parent is more important than one who is alive but very old."

Eccuador correspondents report that young people claim, "Old people are out of fashion. We need to pay attention to those who will be here to build the future of the world." Others say, "Old people cannot change, so they have very little to contribute. Their best years have already passed."

The attitude of some Hondurans toward the elderly is "scorn, mockery, discomfort," says Oscar Chicas, a World Vision correspondent. In a depressed economy, a person who can no longer work is seen as "old, worthless furniture." Unless the person is a professional, "he has to live the rest of his life begging on the streets, even if he has a family."

That may seem heartless. But in the developing world, where resources must be stretched for a family to survive, the sheer number of elderly people—160

million—can be overwhelming to a younger, struggling population.

Urbanization is another factor in the abandonment of the elderly. Each day in the developing world, thousands of people migrate from farms and villages to cities, hoping for economic stability. "It used to be that people lived together in the village, and the elderly were fed and cared for by their sons' wives," says Esther Wamboi, 72, of central Kenya. "Children usually inherited land or livestock from the old people, and the old people were honored and respected by

Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society.

the young," she recalls. "At harvest time each adult child would give the parents a measure of grain to help them feel they owned something.

"The old had their grandchildren around them, and they delighted in telling them stories. Today, grandchildren are usually away in the city, and the old parents are eaten up by loneliness. Many of those who live very long become so depressed, especially when most of the people their own age are dead, that they long to die. I know of some who have taken their own lives..." Esther's voice trails off. She sits silently, feeling her own loneliness.

There is no such thing as retirement in much of the developing world. Millions of men and women are forced to work well beyond age 65. Many work until they literally drop dead or until they are unable to continue.

Rosa, a Colombian, has painted furniture for more than 40 years. Her children are all professionals, but at age 67 she still works six days a week, then prepares food and washes clothes for her children and grandchildren. A portion of her small income goes toward family expenses. For Rosa and thousands of other Colombian seniors, the day they stop contributing money or labor is the day they are sent to a home for the aged.

Don Alfredo Cabrera Castañeda is 88 years old. He was born in a village in northeast Guatemala. Each week he goes back to his village to sell vegetables, bringing back peppers and bananas to sell in the city. From his small income he pays his family's electric and water bills.

Hezron Munyiri left his rural Kenya

home for Nairobi in 1942. He "retired" from his job almost 20 years ago. Today, he and his wife live in abject poverty. "Life in Nairobi is very difficult for old people," he says. "We own nothing, and our children have hardly anything to spare for us." Though old and weak, Munyiri, a blacksmith, still works every day to support himself, his wife, and the grandchildren who live with them. And he grows a few crops on the banks of the polluted Nairobi River.

In the United States, the voice of the American Association of Retired Persons is loud and clear. Its representatives lobby effectively at all levels of government. As a member, I appreciate the discounts and services. But I can't help wondering: Who lobbies for the People of the Developing World Who Cannot Retire? Who lobbies, not for discounts, but for life's bare necessities? And for the deeper need for dignity?

In this world of scarce resources where there is often little left for the poor—and even less for the elderly poor—the church can still offer Christ's compassion. Christian homes for the elderly have been recognized for the outstanding care they provide. Clotario Blest was helped by Christians, as was Madame Clenic. And in Peru, a TV crew producing a special on aging traveled throughout the country, looking at nursing homes. They found ideal conditions at only one place: the Christian-run Hogar Betania.

Serving the elderly, especially the elderly poor, is quiet work. There was nothing dramatic about easing the pain of Clotario Blest's last days. Or providing a loving touch for Madame Clenic. The world would not be dramatically changed if we could find some small way to make life easier for the Rosas, the Don Alfredos, or the Hezron Munyiris of the developing world. But *we* would be changed.

Children in the developing world often smile and laugh in spite of their poverty, and those smiles reward us for our compassion. That seldom happens with the elderly. They've seen too much of life. The years have taken their toll. The smiles don't come as easily. So we need to be patient, to slow down, to hear their stories, to help them feel they are still making a contribution.

The greatest tragedy is not physical neglect. It's having no one to say, "You're still important." That may be the greatest gift younger people can give older people everywhere, and it doesn't take anything but time. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer in Burbank, Calif.

IN THE HEART of downtown Atlanta, across from Woodruff Park, I encountered the man. He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt. His legs were twisted and deformed. His pants reeked of urine.

A number of people had stopped to administer first aid, but he lashed out at them, driving them back with his flailing. Several offered to call an ambulance, but he angrily protested. It seemed he would rather die than accept assistance he did not request. Eventually, people began to ignore him and walk past with dispassionate glances.

The man was bleeding profusely. Blood seemed to ooze from his pores as though forced by some intense internal pressure. Even his face poured red. I grew dizzy and sick to my stomach as I watched. The man's writhing and groaning became more intense. Finally he cried out in desperation: *Someone help me or I will die!*

I was immobilized, caught between self-protection and a moral imperative to help. As I inched cautiously toward the man, a friend of mine strode forward and, removing his wool tweed topcoat, wrapped the man and lifted him in his arms. Only then did I rush to help. Opening a glass door to the lobby of an office building, we eased the small twisted man down onto the marble floor. We knelt beside him, unsure what to do or say. In that moment of silent attention, the man began to speak. His disconnected phrases soon wove a cohesive picture of his plight. He wanted to return to his home, a little trailer from which he had been evicted due to some minor code violations. As he talked and we listened, his needs seemed surprisingly simple—a small electrical problem and some minor carpentry—tasks I could easily perform.

Then I noticed his bleeding had stopped. We had administered no first aid, yet his pain had subsided and his knotted-up legs had begun to relax. I real-



FROM A PHOTO BY JON WARREN

ized, too, that my fear of this helpless, bleeding man had calmed.

I left for a short time to do the repairs that would enable the man to return to his home. The tasks weren't difficult, and in performing them I felt an unexpected sense of joy. When I returned to the man, I was surprised to find that his clothes were clean and his hair was neatly combed. His wild, repulsive appearance had disappeared. He looked quite normal. As we helped him to his feet we discovered that with a little steadying, he could walk under his own power.

The three of us walked the short distance to his trailer. When we came within sight of it, the man let go of our arms and walked the rest of the way on his own.

The loud ring of my 6:30 wake-up call jolted me to reality. I was not on a downtown Atlanta street. I was in a Chicago hotel room. But these vivid dream-scenes stayed with me.

He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt.

A mix of emotions poured into my conscious world. Repulsion. Fear of contagion. Shame for my reluctance. Surprise at the simplicity of the remedy. Joy in small deeds.

For long moments I lay there, my wakened mind scanning for meaning among this powerful imagery. How deep is the pain, the outrage, of one whose real needs go unheeded while helpers impose their cures. How closely related to healing are listening and touching. How light and joyful are the deeds that enable. How overwhelming is the obligation to cure.

I got up to capture these dream thoughts on paper before they released me to the busyness of the day. □

Bob Lupton is founder of FCS Urban Ministries in Atlanta. This essay first appeared in the newsletter Urban Perspectives.

JOYFUL
the DEEDS that
ENABLE

BY BOB LUPTON

Preserving the Gift

No one can guarantee good health. Not even the United Nations. So what does it mean to say children have a "right" to health?

At the very least, it means getting rid of the causes of needless child illness and death.

The first step is immunization. Six diseases are the main cause of 38,000 child deaths per day. Those same diseases—whooping cough, measles, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and tuberculosis—can be prevented with an inexpensive series of immunizations.

The second step is to improve sanitation. Contaminated water is the leading cause of death in young children. Open sewers and other health hazards add to the problem. Cleaner water and better hygiene mean less disease.

A final step is women's literacy. Mothers who can read are more likely to learn about good nutrition, to be more knowledgeable when preparing family meals, to be more aware of the first signs of illness.

Though good health is not humanity's gift to bestow, proper preventive care certainly is. □





JON WARREN

A little boy holds very still as an intravenous feeding implant in his hand gives him some added nutrients.

ERIC WHEATER



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

An Indian mother takes precautions against the spread of bacteria.

This mother can provide a better life for her family by learning to read.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Ginger Hope

JAMES MURPHY



HAVE SQUEEGEE, WILL TRAVEL

Yes, they do windows. Los Angeles-based Victory Outreach has begun a commercial window-washing service called Clear Vision. The business is part of Victory Outreach's "re-entry" component, which teaches educational, vocational, and living skills to young men and women who have completed a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

Clear Vision gives its clients, which include prestigious downtown businesses, an unconditional guaran-

tee. "If they're not satisfied with the work for any reason, the crew will come back and do it again," says James Murphy, a Victory Outreach staffer.

"This helps teach the discipline to do the job right the first time," Murphy says. "Many of the guys have never worked a full-time job in their lives. They're learning the basics, including how to work as a team."

For information contact Victory Outreach, P.O. Box 15459, Los Angeles, CA 90015; (213) 746-9853.

“Lord, let me hunger enough that I not forget the world's hunger. Let me hunger enough that I may have bread to share. Let me hunger enough that I may long for the Bread of Heaven. Let me hunger enough that I may be filled. But, O Lord, let me not hunger so much that I seek after that which is not bread, nor try to live by bread alone. Amen.”

(From *Banquet of Praise*, a collection of worship resources and music published by Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20018.)

PERSONAL DELIVERY

“We could just take that money, write a check, and send it down to Mexico, and they could sure use it,” says Al Fleming, referring to \$17,000 that students at Olivet Nazarene University (Kankakee, Ill.) raised for a service trip to Mexico this summer.

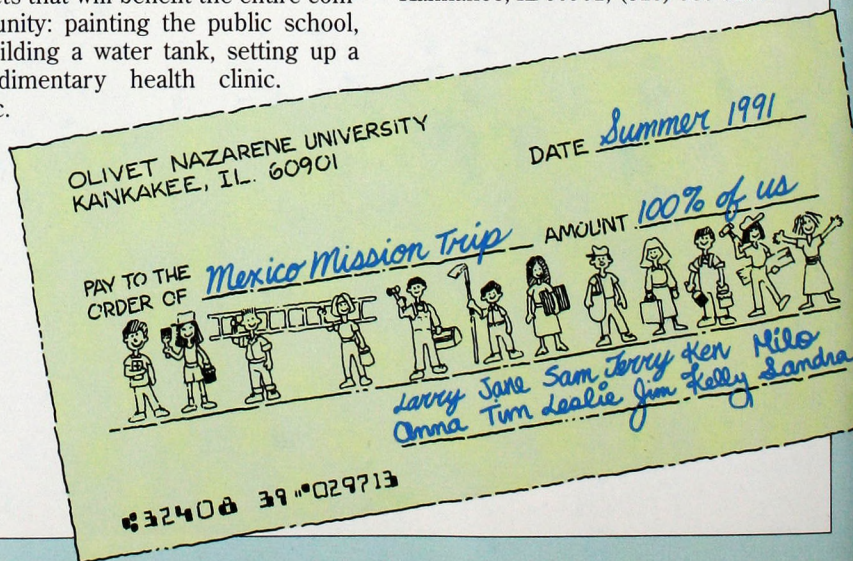
“So why are we going ourselves?” Professor Fleming continues. “I hope the answer is that these students will never be the same after this experience. When I was in college, I went to Trinidad on a similar project, and it changed my life.”

Fleming's group is one of several from Church of the Nazarene campuses across the country spending about two weeks this summer in vil-

lages 200 miles north of Mexico City. The area's citrus economy was hit hard by a cold spell during the growing season. Fleming notes that the student group, while working through local churches, takes care to plan projects that will benefit the entire community: painting the public school, building a water tank, setting up a rudimentary health clinic, etc.

“This is the other reason we go ourselves—to show people that we care, that we're not just throwing money at them,” Fleming says.

For information contact Dr. Al Fleming, Olivet Nazarene University, Kankakee, IL 60901; (815) 939-5267.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

FIVE OF A KIND

Five vital movements within Christianity, too often cut adrift from one another, will be firmly moored together at the Renovaré National Conference on Personal Spiritual Renewal, Oct. 23-26 in Pasadena, Calif.

Renovaré, founded by Richard Foster, is a Christ-centered, international, ecumenical movement for the



renewal of the church. It pulls together the contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, and evangelical movements. Renovaré insists that the Christian life consists of all of these: the prayer-filled life, the virtuous life, the Spirit-empowered life, the compassionate life, and the Word-centered life.

For information about the conference or the Renovaré movement, contact Renovaré, P.O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879; (312) 261-5870.

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J61PS1

First Baptist Church

MORE THAN A FREE LUNCH

BY RICK NATHANSON

The Foster family visits with Dennis Lihte, director of Noon Day Ministry, in their home. From left: Mandy, Susan, and Brandie Foster; Dennis Lihte; Rita, Mike and Charles Foster.



PAUL BEARCE

The economy in Texarkana, Texas, was bad and getting worse when Rita and Mike Foster decided to move with their four children to Albuquerque, N.M., in June 1989. Mike had lined up a construction job, but because of car trouble, the family arrived in Albuquerque a day late. Mike's job had been given to someone else.

After a week of unsuccessful job hunting and the rapid depletion of their savings, the Fosters contacted The United Way. The agency put them in touch with Noon Day Ministry, the main daytime shelter for Albuquerque's homeless. Grateful for the midday meal, the Foster family immediately pitched in to help clean up. Noon Day director Dennis Lihte

noticed the Fosters' efforts and hired them to do a few chores around the shelter.

"Everything is fine and the children are happy," Rita said. "We're so grateful to Noon Day. It gives you the little nudge that you need to get started, but you've got to be willing to go the rest of the way to get back on your feet. If you don't help yourself, you'll be right back there on the street."

That the Fosters have come a long way since their first noon meal at Noon Day is evidence of how far the ministry itself has come.

In 1982, a local relief agency asked the First Baptist Church to provide a meal and devotional service for the needy. The church agreed to do so—for four Wednesdays. There was no money in the church budget for the feeding program, so a Sunday school class, led by church member Calvin Horn, agreed to pay \$1.50 for each meal served. About 70 people showed up for the first few meals, but the number quickly grew to more than 200, and the church started offering three lunches weekly.

As expenses grew, other churches—Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and non-denominational—donated generously. They recognized First Baptist's downtown location was well-suited for serving the homeless.

noticed the Fosters' efforts and hired them to do a few chores around the shelter.

"It made us feel better knowing that we made this money, rather than having someone give it to us," said Rita. "It gave us back our pride."

The Fosters' determination to help themselves made them good candidates for Noon Day's transitional housing program.

If families can show they will be able to sustain themselves after a short period of economic aid—perhaps one or two months—Noon Day helps them find housing and pays the move-in costs.

"The transitional housing program is not for the people whose lives are one crisis after another," Lihte said. "Those people do need help, but two months after we help them they're having another crisis and they're homeless again."

Once the Fosters' car was repaired, Mike landed a construction job. In the meantime, the family had made friends at the First Baptist Church. A Sunday school class "adopted" them and helped them set up their new home.

Six months later Mike found himself between jobs. With only Rita's income from temporary jobs, the family again faced the prospect of homeless-

ness. Noon Day Ministry received its name, taken from Isaiah 58:10 ("If you spend yourself on behalf of the hungry your night will become like the noon day").

The noon meal, of course, barely scratched the surface of the needs of the homeless. Other obvious needs were for showers, laundry facilities, clothing, haircuts, toiletries, and telephone access.

Calvin Horn led efforts to establish a place for addressing those needs. Many of the supporters of those first Wednesday lunches became boosters, fund-raisers, and contributors to the building project. In June 1988, Noon Day Ministry opened the doors of its new two-story building in the parking lot behind First Baptist Church. Members of First Baptist and other Albuquerque congregations volunteer in Noon Day's programs.

"Sometimes people accuse us of supplying a Band-Aid solution to the problems of the homeless," said Joe McKinney, pastor of First Baptist. "I don't think that's true. But even if it were, what's wrong with a Band-Aid? Everyone needs one from time to time." □

Rick Nathanson is a reporter for the Albuquerque Journal.

For more information contact Noon Day Ministry, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 26446, Albuquerque, NM 87125; (505) 247-3611

BY GINGER HOPE
PHOTOS BY SUSAN RAE LAKIN

A
Navajo pastor
keeps his eye on
the wolf and the
setting sun.

DREAMS OF A SHEPHERD

I dreamed I was standing on a mountainside covered with sheep. It was spring. Every time the sheep saw the beautiful green grass, they ran over and tried to bite it off before other sheep could get it.

All of a sudden I heard a voice say, "Look toward the west." I looked and the sun was almost set.

In my dream, I thought back to when I was small, when I was a shepherder. My father and mother were real strict about the sheep. It meant a spanking if I didn't get the sheep back into the fold before sunset,



because if I didn't, some sheep would be lost.

I began to take the sheep back toward the fold. But every time I would take some sheep over and go back for more, the first group would wander away.

I looked around for help. Sure enough, there were some kids sitting in a circle a distance away, playing with little stones.

So I yelled at them: "What are you doing? Come over!" When they looked up I saw that their bodies were of children, but their heads and faces were of mature men. I felt embarrassed, if they really were mature men, for showing disrespect. I spoke again in a polite way: "I have something to tell you."

They all rose and came and stood around me. I told them exactly what the voice told me. I said, "The sheep need to get back into the fold before the sun sets." They all got in line as I told them and we were pushing the sheep forward. Then all of a sudden I saw sheep going back on my right side and my left side. I turned and looked, and some shepherders were missing. They were back playing again. I was so frustrated I didn't know what to do next.

Then the voice said to look toward the west as far as I could see. I saw something coming. It was a little dot, and it was getting bigger. All of a sudden I saw it was a wolf, big and muscular.

I ran back to get the other herders. I told them about the wolf. "He will be here in no time, so we better do something," I said.

We all agreed and we lined up again the same way, and this time the voice spoke to me and said, "Take hold of each others' hands." The voice told me the wolf was not after the sheep but was after the shepherders, because he knew that if he killed the shepherders, then one by one he could get all the sheep.

That scared me. I was really holding on, and I was telling the other shepherders to hold on tight and push the sheep forward. We were getting the sheep forward when I woke up.

Kenneth Begishe puzzled a long time over that dream. For two years the Navajo pastor asked God what he was supposed to do about it. Eventually he came to understand that the shepherders were *all* the Christian ministers on the Navajo reservation, not just the ones in his particular brand of Pentecostal non-denominationalism. He was to bring them all together, train them, let them encourage one another.

The ministers were harder to convince than the boy-men in his dream. "A lot of them that were better educated than me asked, 'Who are you to do this? Are you starting a new ministry? Is this another denomination?'" Begishe says.

But by all accounts, the monthly

"ministry meetings" of the Fellowship of Ministering Churches have allayed such fears over the past dozen years. The group has managed to shun competition, cliquishness, and power-mongering.

That is largely due to the influence of Kenneth Begishe, a quiet man in jeans and cowboy boots who seems almost universally known across the western Arizona reservation.

He was born in the 1940s into a very traditional Navajo family. The old ways were strong where he grew up. Many of the local families' ancestors had hidden in the mountains and escaped "The Long Walk," when Kit Carson herded about 8,000 Navajos into Fort Sumner, New

When he drank, the self-hatred he had internalized at 'white school' came seething to the surface.

Mexico, and kept them there long enough for much of their cultural structure to disintegrate.

Begishe was born "to" the Folded Arms People (his mother's clan) "for" the Bitter Water People (his father's clan). He was raised in a series of forked-stick hogans (mud-covered, dome-shaped dwellings) within a few miles of where his powder-blue prefab home now stands. He was a good son, a good brother, and a good Navajo. He herded sheep and rounded up horses. He sketched landscapes and fashioned animals out of canyon clay for his little sisters.

He sat beside the medicine men at "sings" (sacred ceremonies), studying the long chants and intricate sand paintings. His friends still joke that if he weren't a preacher, Kenneth Begishe would probably be a medicine man.

Then he went to school.

It was a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school. This was the BIA of the vintage that washed out little Navajos' mouths with lye soap for speaking Navajo. *Old Navajo ways are bad*, Begishe learned at school before he was 10. *You will never get anywhere until you give them up for the white ways. Then you will have cars and televisions and a good life.*

It was a confusing message for a good Navajo boy. It sent a lot of Navajos

into no-man's-land, alienated from their elders and stonewalled by the American Dream.

The anesthetic of choice in that no-man's-land comes in a bottle. Like almost all the Navajo boys at boarding school, Begishe started to drink. Everybody did it, not only at school but across the reservation, although it was illegal to sell or consume alcohol there.

"It was like a hillbilly lifestyle," Begishe says. "A lot of home brew, a lot of drinking and fighting. The women would take the children and hide."

He was still a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. When he drank, the dissonant self-hatred he had internalized at "white school" came seething up to the surface.

Begishe would go home drunk and pick fights with anyone in sight. He would stagger into a hogan during a sacred ceremony and pull down the wood-stove chimney, sending everyone outside until the smoke cleared. The next morning he would wake up sober and horrified with shame, hiding in his mother's hogan for days.

This is how Begishe recalls his entire youth: a blur of drunkenness and shame. Others remember more. Oswald Werner, for one.

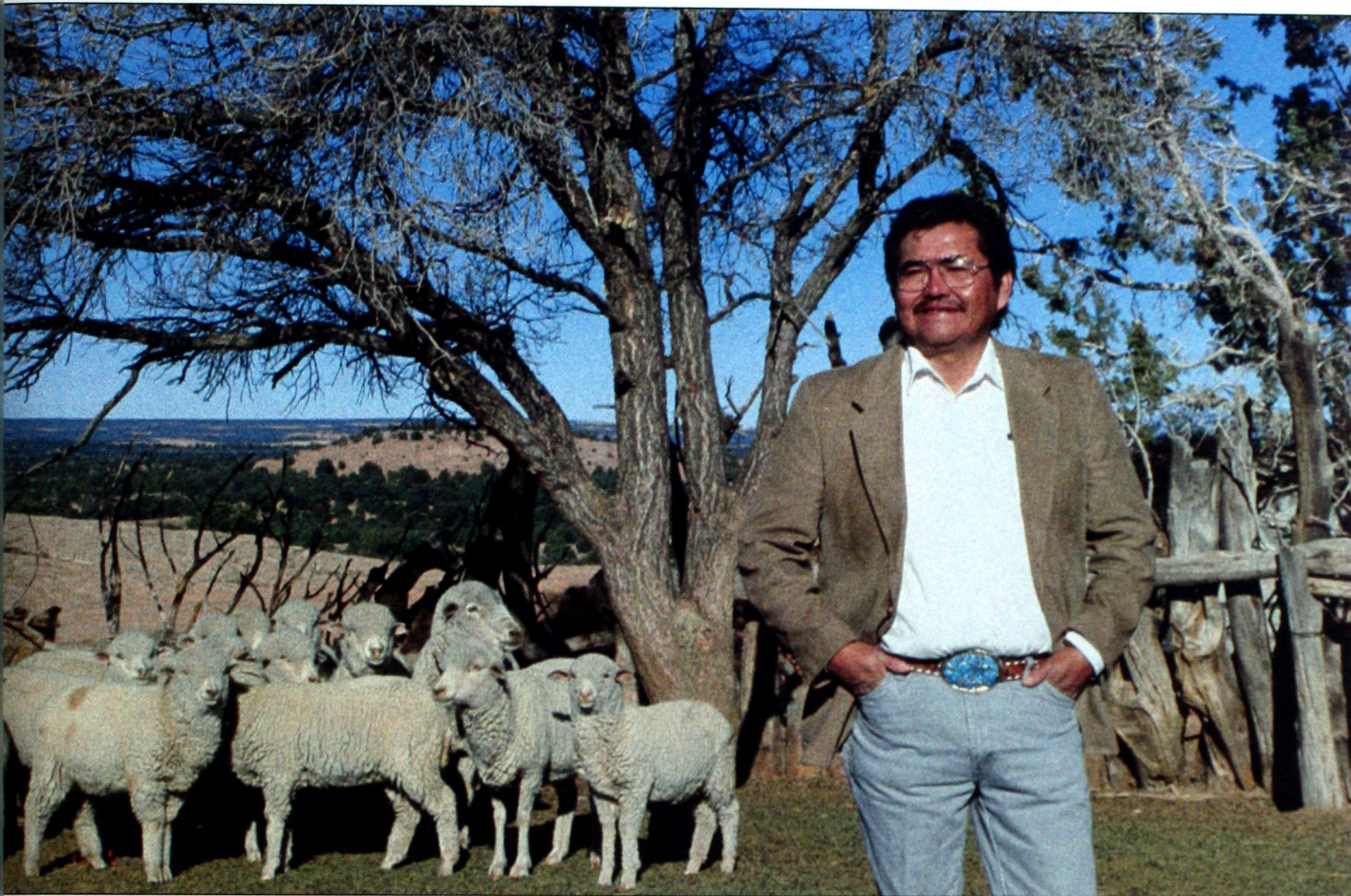
In 1960, Werner was a young doctoral student living with his wife and children in a guest hogan at the Shonto Trading Post, studying Trader Navajo—the pidgin Navajo spoken by white traders on the reservation. One of his "language consultants"—at a dollar an hour—was 16-year-old Kenneth Begishe.

"I saw right away that Kenneth was a bright boy, very observant about his own culture, with a knack for languages," says Werner, now professor of anthropology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Begishe left the reservation in 1963, eventually joining Werner in Chicago on a major project, a Navajo medical dictionary. But for Begishe this was no feat. It was defeat. He left because he was too good a Navajo to stomach the way he was shaming his family, and too bad a drinker to stop.

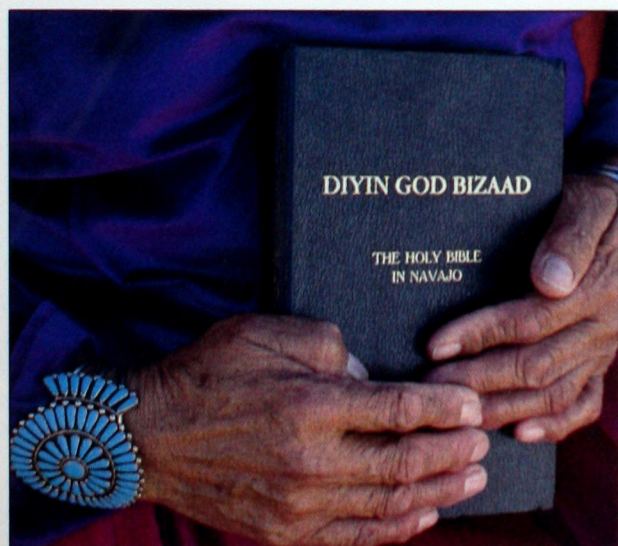
Something decisive happened in





Chicago. In the middle of a drunken street fight, Begishe found himself inexplicably alone in a deserted cemetery. For a Navajo, this is a terrible thing. Traditional Navajos won't even enter a house where someone once died.

Begishe ran around wildly, looking for a gap in the high iron fence. Finally he gave up and laid down right on a grave, with his head on the tombstone. He prayed one of those end-of-the-line prayers: "God, if you are there, you see where I am. I am going to die if my life goes on this way. So if you want to do something, do it now."



In the morning he got up and started toward the fence. The next thing he knew, he was outside on the sidewalk. He doesn't know how he got there.

"I guess I got translated or something," he says, telling the story over late-night supper in a neighbor's trailer.

His 16-year-old daughter, Cassandra, bursts out laughing. "Translated? Dad!"

Everybody around the kitchen table has a good laugh on Begishe. He shrugs good-naturedly. "Well, I don't know what else to call it," he says.

Elbow-to-elbow over mutton soup, blue corn mush, and fry bread, the group savors again a story they've heard dozens of times before, prompting and correcting the soft-spoken man who is their father, brother, clansman, and pastor.

The story continues in Oklahoma City, where a Shawnee Indian took Begishe to hear a Pentecostal evangelist. There Begishe heard God say, "Your prayer in the graveyard is being answered. This is it."

Not long afterward,

"I didn't know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and we learned as we went along."

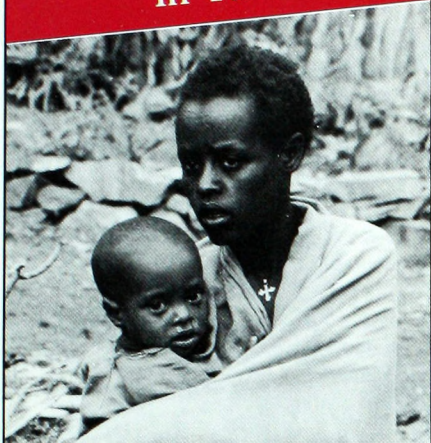
in his mother's hogan, and later in her one-room 10 x 10 house, Kenneth Begishe started a church.

"I didn't really know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and then we learned as we went along." It is a sentence he will repeat almost verbatim as he ticks off dozens of enterprises he has begun since then.

"We didn't know how to build a church, but we just started. ..."

They mixed the concrete in the upside-down cab of a junked pickup truck, and had to pour the floor three layers thick before they got it level, but they built a church. Men in jeans and cowboy hats, women in long full skirts and velveteen blouses, all of them wrapped in Navajo wool blankets, would stand in the back of the tiny church with the black wood stove and the mix-n-match

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donated pews while Begishe preached. Horse-drawn wagons filled the empty lot outside White Post church in those days. Begishe's old green Chevy went through more U-joints than he can remember, bouncing over the red dirt roads of the reservation well into the night, taking five, six carloads of people home after every service.

The big denominations built their Indian missions in the cities and towns. Begishe knew that the church, in order

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

to win the people, would have to go to the Navajo people, who traditionally live in tiny, scattered clusters across the arid mesas.

So when five or 10 people from a certain area started attending White Post Church, Begishe would start looking for a pastor among them. He didn't call it "indigenous leadership development," but that's exactly what Begishe was doing. He told his fledgling pastors that they didn't need a white education, that they didn't need a white missionary to lean on, that God would give them everything they needed to do the work.

Not that Begishe is against education. Far from it. It's one of the reservation's most pressing needs, and he knows it. That's why he put in years on the local BIA school board, a board he says was powerless even to dismiss a patently incompetent teacher. (Begishe's handling of the stymie was typical of his personal style, quietly assertive: He simply sat in the back of the classroom and stared at that teacher day after day until the teacher eventually left.)

But there simply wasn't time to wait for a whole crop of pastors to work their way through a formal education. Not pastors like Joe Shortman, a

retirement-age military veteran who started Cow Springs Church in a new wood-frame building he had originally intended as his own home.

"I don't think he really ever went to school, but he's a real good minister," Begishe says. "If this were a denomination, they would probably send us off to Bible school, and then they would give us a nice building and keep us there. In a church like that, Joe Shortman would never be a pastor."

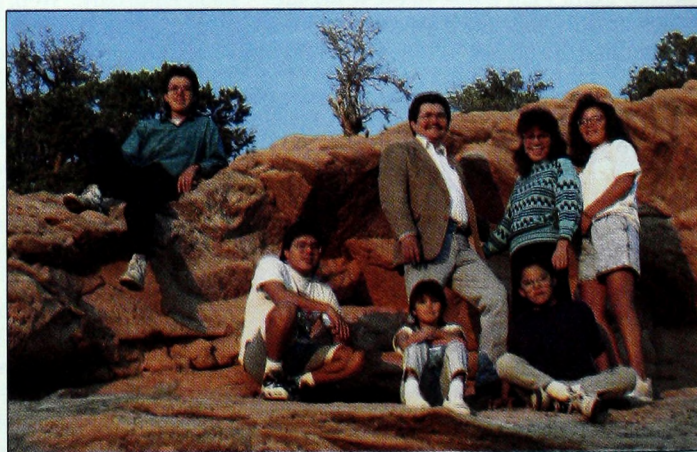
Shortman is one of three or four dozen leaders—men and women, from their 20s to their 70s, mostly Navajo, one or two whites—who meet one Saturday a month, sitting around long tables and working their way down a chalkboard agenda that might cover anything from finances to theology to plumbing. Characteristic Navajo teasing—aimed just as often at oneself as at another—sends loud laughter around the room when the discussion bogs down.

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

Begishe sits in front with the other directors, but he doesn't say much, because this particular session is mainly about him and his various projects, and how they're shooting off in so many directions: a boarding home for orphans, a proposed Christian television station, a Christian school, and more.

"Maybe we should put all these projects together and call it Kenneth Begishe Ministries," one man suggests, joking. Laughter shakes the room for almost a full minute. It's a safe joke because nobody here would take it seriously, and that says something. The celebrity-loner mentality flies in the face of everything the Fellowship of Ministering Churches stands for.

Nobody laughs louder than Ken-



The Begishe family (standing, from left): Kenneth, Mary, Cassandra; (seated) Tim, Mike, Sophia, and Sonny.

neth Begishe. He takes off his glasses, wipes his eyes, and then they move on. □

PAST THE POINT OF NOT CARING

BY KELLY WEBER

I approach the darkened building, thinking about the difference it has made in my life. Raised in the latter part of this century, I learned to value self-importance, self-attainment, and detachment. But in the early-morning hours of the past year, these beliefs have been quietly removed, leaving room for compassion, humility, and faith.

I open the door and Marie greets me. "Are you Tom? Are you my boy Tom?"

"No, Marie, go back to bed. Tom will come and tuck you in."

I am a Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA) in this long-term care facility, otherwise known as a nursing home. The shift report is about to begin. Thirty feet of corridor slide by unnoticed. Lee's chant hangs in the air as I approach—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—then drifts away behind me. At Station B, the registered nurse recites nightly procedures and problems. "Gary Davis in 37B has tried to leave twice, so keep your eye on him. Gina Collins in 14B is okay, just frightened and confused." At 10:53 p.m. my shift begins.

My partner Debbie and I go to Edith's room—our first stop—and change her sheets. She awakens and whispers, "Thank you." Debbie leans over, kisses her on the forehead and tells her, "I love you. Good night."

This ritual used to bother me. Once I asked Debbie if perhaps it wasn't too intimate, too involved. After all, these people are so near death. Getting familiar with them makes their death more painful for us.

"I suppose it might look that way," Debbie answered. "You're still new. But you're just holding back your emotions because you're scared. Everybody you know is going to die, your parents, your spouse, your children. These people are just closer to death. Don't be afraid for them. They're not."

Debbie planted a seed of compassion within me, but my fears and the values I acquired were to keep it dormant for a while longer.

Then I met Cornelia.

Nel, as she liked to be called, was 88, blind, diabetic, and a dual amputee, having lost her legs to gangrene. She chose me as her friend because my voice reminded her of her late husband's. But lying in her bed, aged, unwhole, with clouded, glassy eyes, she at first made me uncomfortable. She frightened me.

Nel somehow sensed my reluctance. "I don't bite, you know. And surely you could outrun me," she laughed. Guilt forced me back to her bedside, and slowly the walls I had built up began to crack.

Each night we would tell each other our life

stories, Nel always encouraging the conversation along. Then one night she stopped me in mid-sentence. "Kelly, don't tell me about yesterdays. I've got a head full of them. Don't waste my time with tomorrows, either. Just tell me about today." She patted my hand and smiled.

From then on I saved a piece of each day to bring color and depth to her world. "Nel, I saw a flock of geese flying overhead today. Canadian Honkers, I think. They flew into the distance with their cries following behind them."

In exchange, she gave me a view of yesterday:



"I remember once I saw so many geese, they filled the horizon," and a glimpse of tomorrow: "Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

Late one night while I was changing her sheets, she grasped my hand and told me to sit beside her.

"Hon, tonight I don't want to hear about today. Tell me instead about forever." I could hear her breathing in the quiet room.

I looked at her face and realized, as did she, that forever was all that was left to her. There was no place for me to hide, nor—oddly—did I want to. I gathered her to me and told her of sunlight, of love, of God. In turn, she showed me life and death, and the love in each of these.

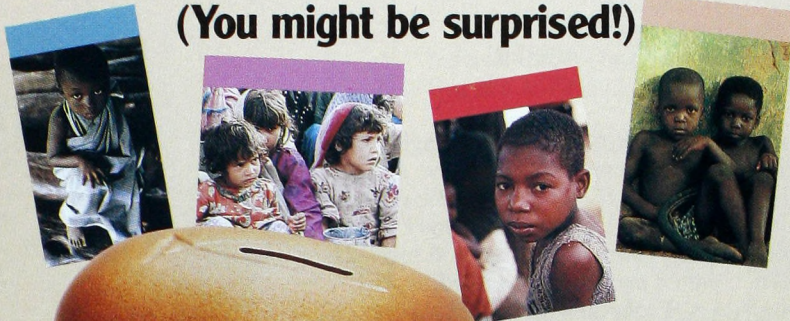
It is 6:58 a.m. Lee's litany—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—ends abruptly as breakfast arrives. I shuffle toward my car. This morning, nothing really happened. There were no Cornelias in my life today. Perhaps there will be again tomorrow. □

Kelly Weber is a free-lance writer in Black, Mo.

"Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

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June/July 1991

MO ZAMBIQUE



Mozambique: A Suffering Church, A Growing Church

Growing Old in the Third World

Dreams of a Navajo Shepherd

4 **Mozambique: Out of the Soil of Suffering**

More than 14 years of civil war and unspeakable terror have earned Mozambique its standing as the most miserable country in the world in which to live. Yet some Mozambicans see their suffering as a kind of blessing, because thousands of people are turning to God and the church is growing as never before.

13 **Joyful the Deeds That Enable**

The poor are not always easy to love or help. Our desire to help often mingles with feelings of repulsion and fear. In this short essay, urban minister Bob Lupton relates his own thoughts and emotions about helping the poor.

19 **Dreams of a Navajo Shepherd**

Kenneth Begishe grew up in Arizona a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. He describes his youth as a blur of drunkenness and shame. But a graveyard prayer in Chicago led Begishe to Christ and back to Arizona to help the church minister to the Navajo people.

10 **The Burden of Age**

In the developing world, there are signs that economic hardships and increasing urbanization are slowly eroding time-honored traditions of respecting and caring for the elderly. Once esteemed for their wisdom, the aged now face neglect and abandonment in countries without the resources to take care of them.



ERIC WHEATER

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Reports of American servicemen studying the Bible and accepting Christ during their Middle East tour of duty were cause for rejoicing. Other brothers and sisters in Christ—thousands of Kurds, Iraqis and Palestinians who love our Lord—became tragic victims of the war. Many of them lost family, homes, jobs, and a stable future. We must pray for those new in the faith, and for those whose faith has been tested by fire.

Terry Madison

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SOPHIE'S CHOICE?

A few years ago, during a terrible famine in Chad, World Vision workers came upon a Chadian woman who had given birth to twins. The young mother had come to the painful realization that she did not have the resources to keep both her children alive. She needed to make a choice—which one would live, which one would die.

No one knows what terrible mental and emotional anguish went into this decision, but by the time we arrived, the decision had already been made. And it was irreparable. One child was robust and healthy. He would make it. The other was thin and sallow, skin stretched tightly across his tiny

frame, and he was vomiting. Clearly he would be dead within a few days.

I think of all the choices that confront me. Compared to the Chadian mother, none of them seem major—where to work, what to wear, what kind of car to drive, where to send my children to college, which doctors to go to. What is clear is that all my choices are made from a position of strength, multiple options, a veritable smorgasbord of opportunities. The Chadian mother, in contrast, had to make an impossible choice from a position of

abject poverty and hopelessness.

I've thought often of that young mother in these last few days. Spending a week in Romania and observing a few of the 200,000 children abandoned by their parents, I witnessed other acts of desperation that flow out of impossible choices.

This is a new revelation to me, because I could not conceive of a situation where ethics would be so disregarded as to dump children into state-run institutions. How could Romanian parents have allowed this to happen?

I had assumed it was a case of lost values. Communism erodes ethical considerations; Ceausescu destroyed them. We had identified the "bad guy." Now we just needed to energize the Romanian church to recapture values which had

systematically disappeared under totalitarian rule.

Too simple. And unfair to the people of Romania. While the Ceausescu regime contributed to the hopelessness parents felt, the desperate nature of poverty creates these impossible choices. Because babies are still keeping the orphanages filled—more than a year after the death of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp, a desperate human condition so pervasive and destructive that it precludes normal ethics. Romanian parents have no choice, no options. The poorest country in Eastern Europe causes families to either give up their children to the state or watch them starve to death. And that alternative denies any meaningful choice.

But I still struggle with the explanation. Somehow we understand the plight of a Chadian mother but cannot assimilate into our thinking her metaphorical equivalent in Eastern Europe. This may say more about our attitudes than about the Romanian parents.

One of the most honest statements I've heard came from an American woman after watching an ABC 20/20 segment on the Romanian orphans. "The thing that shocked me the most," she said, "was that they were all white." Yes, they *are* all white, and we are not used to seeing white children in the middle of such destructive poverty. It's different when they are black, brown, or yellow! In fact, might it not also be true that we have developed a higher tolerance level toward the pain of a black African?

This past week, attempting to understand the human dynamics unfolding in Romania, I was forced to confront the latent racism within me. The Romanian children are white. I had higher expectations of their parents. I was being both racist and paternalistic. God forgive me!

The kind of poverty that precludes ethical considerations, that forces impossible choices, that destroys part of ourselves in the process, is color-blind. As we begin to see the magnitude of the human drama unfolding in Romania, may we be more sensitive, more understanding, more compassionate, and *more outraged* about the fact that babies, black and white, are falling on the wrong side of an impossible choice. □

JOHN SCHENK / WORLD VISION



A Romanian child in a home for the "irrecoverable."

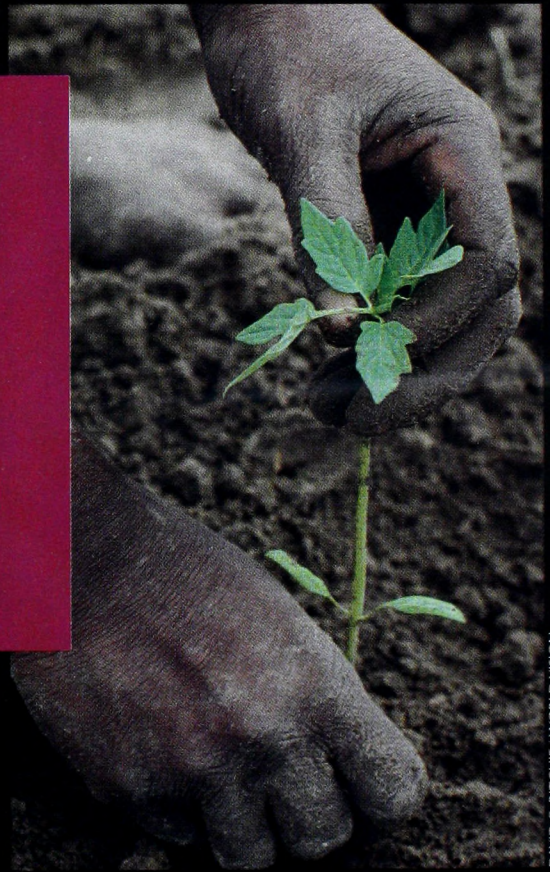
Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp.

BY TANYA BRENNEMAN
AND GINGER HOPE

*In
Mozambique,
the world's
most
miserable
country,
the church
is growing
as never
before.*

OUT OF THE SOIL OF SUFFERING

MO ZAM BIQUE



DAVID C. RITCHE / WORLD VISION

The day our village was attacked, RENAMO soldiers kidnapped my wife and four of our children. My 6-year-old boy and I were left behind. After a year without my family, I decided to find them and live in captivity with them.

When I arrived in [RENAMO-held] Caixiti, the soldiers questioned me. I was afraid they might beat me or kill me. But I persuaded them I meant no harm—after all, I had my little child with me. They let me search for my family, and when I found them I learned that my oldest son had starved to death.

In Caixiti I found a small group of believers, but they were discouraged. I realized God had sent me there to encourage them. When I left two years later, the church numbered 2,000. Ten years ago churches were not growing like this. The growth started in 1973, when the confusion started.

We continually pray. Many suffer from the war. They are innocent. I have the courage to continue bringing people into the kingdom that is secure, because here it is never secure. God has given me this courage.

Simão Augusto

Simão Augusto is a pastor in what has been judged the worst place on earth to live. Mozambique stands at the top of the International Human Suffering Index, head and shoulders above even such traumatized countries as Angola and Afghanistan.

It's a distinction Mozambique has earned only too well. The index, compiled by the Population Crisis Committee in Washington, D.C., takes into account a broad spectrum of indicators—economic, social, health, personal freedom. The 14-year war between RENAMO rebels and FRELIMO government forces has shot all those indicators to pieces in Mozambique.

There is another list on which Mozambique would surely place or show: the Rapid Spread of Christianity Index, if there were such a thing. Christian churches in Mozambique are growing and reproducing as never before, and the growth started in earnest "when the confusion started," as Augusto so delicately understates.

Since 1977, RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) has been fighting the government, which was then Marxist but has since moved steadily away from Marxism. Although RENAMO has no political identity of substance, it was supported by the South African government until 1989. (South Africa's withdrawal of support was due in large part to pressure from private relief organizations, eyewitnesses to the havoc wrought by RENAMO.)

Whatever its original aims, by all reliable accounts RENAMO has func-

tioned as a perpetrator of indiscriminate terror and violence. RENAMO forces, known in Mozambique as *banditos*, routinely use tactics such as mass executions, razing of villages, forced labor, and systematic rape and torture, according to U.S. State Department reports and eyewitness accounts.

The devastation of Mozambique is most visible in the government-run camps for *deslocados* (displaced persons). Starvation and disease are at home among the mud-and-straw huts. Every *deslocado* has family members who starved to death, whose throats were slit, who were kidnapped, or who were burned alive in their huts while they slept. Almost all of them have lost almost everything. Grief, crisis, and loss have defined their lives.

Serfina Amilia Tolsiva, a pastor's wife housed in a *deslocado* center in Gilé, lived with her family in captivity for five

years after RENAMO attacked her village, Namagala, in 1986.

"They took all our clothes and dishes," Tolsiva says. "They did other things I cannot talk about. If they found persons dressed in clothes, they killed them."

Tolsiva became a RENAMO slave, working in the fields, hauling water, preparing their food. "If they found you sitting down, they would kill you. We were afraid every single day that they would kill us. I saw whole families shot down."

A group of Christians continued to meet in captivity and even built a little church. That group supported Tolsiva when her husband got in trouble with RENAMO:

"They came to take our little girls to have sex with them. My husband finally was courageous enough to stand up to them and forbid them to take the girls unless they wanted to marry them first. They beat him and tied him up and left him in the dirt for 24 hours. They said they would force him to join them so he would learn how it felt to be like them, with no wife. We were very frightened for his life. But thanks to God, they let my husband go. It was a miracle."

Tolsiva and her family finally escaped. They hid for three days in the bush. Then they made their way to Morrua, where for the first time in five years they saw people with clothes.

"We saw people eating meat sauce with salt," Tolsiva says, "but we were only able to forage for wild roots and leaves. We heard that Gilé had a health center, so we came here to get help for the children. When I arrived I was still

Pain and suffering produce a fork in the road. It is not possible to remain unchanged.

**Tim Hansel
You Gotta Keep Dancin'**



Pastor Avalino Mutelima baptizes new members of Union Baptist Church (Zalala, Zambezia province) in the Indian Ocean.

naked. A woman gave me this sack to wear around my waist. We had only a big blanket I made out of bark.

"In the midst of all this I never felt abandoned by God. I felt his presence with us all the time. We were slaves and prisoners for a very long time. God helped us see that this suffering and war would pass, but that we would be with God forever."

In 1975 a Marxist-Leninist government took control of Mozambique, banned church activities, and seized all church property. In 1982, when the government began to move away from Marxism, the church received official permission to operate again. Today there is complete religious freedom. But religious freedom is not the cause of Mozambique's extraordinary church growth, according to Mozambican Christians. The war is.

"I walked through all of Sofala Province in 1968 and never heard of a single church," says Pastor Manuel José Maveu. "In those times, we had not gone through war and suffering. Now we hear of growth everywhere. The suffering know God better."

Another pastor, Nicolão Inacio, puts it even more strongly: "The war has opened people's hearts to God. Their suffering turns their spirits to him. There was never such growth before. I could say that this war has been a blessing in disguise because so many thousands of people are coming to Christ. The *deslocados* are a large majority of the new believers, and they take the gospel back home with them. There, they evan-

*Jesus did not
come to explain away
suffering or remove it.
He came to fill it with
his presence.*

Paul Claudel in
Where Is God When It Hurts?
by Philip Yancey

gelize and bring many hundreds more to Christ."

Calling the virtual destruction of a country a "blessing in disguise" may sound cruel. But coming from a Mozambican Christian trying to endure and understand a life framed by terror and loss, the words are not easily dismissed.

Undeniably, the uprooting and scattering of several million people has exposed more Mozambicans to Christianity for the first time. An estimated 2 million Mozambicans are in *deslocado* centers within the country and another million live in refugee centers in neighboring countries.

"The paradox of the *deslocado* situation is that it brings such suffering and yet provides such opportunities for church growth," says Dick Morgan, a missionary in Mozambique with the African Evangelical Fellowship. "People who before the war lived many days'

walk away from the nearest Christians are now living next door to Christians in the government centers."

While the mingling of Christians with a greater spectrum of the population helps explain why so many more Mozambicans are hearing the gospel, it doesn't explain why so many are responding. They are responding, say Mozambican Christians, because the gospel of Christ meets their suffering on three key levels: offering healing from trauma, freedom from bitterness, and the strength to endure what must still be suffered daily.

According to Augusto, there is a marked difference between Christians and non-Christians in dealing with trauma. "I have seen a lot of people in the war zone who are so depressed they won't eat. I have seen people die from anger and grief." Christians, he says, "find consolation and comfort in God. They recover from their grief and let go of their anger. God consoles, and that is the difference."

Antonio Juzi Olese, a displaced peasant farmer now living in Mariebe Center in Nicoadala, Zambezia province, says the poverty of Mozambican churches makes that healing message starkly clear. "Here in our mud-and-thatch church we have absolutely nothing to give. It is only the Spirit of God that the church can give to help our people. Here we know the living God and we now sing praises for how he has changed our lives," Olese says.

Christians in Mozambique testify that their faith gives them the capacity to forgive devastating atrocities. Chipamba,

A NATION WITHERS

The first word of the catastrophe in Morrua, Mozambique, a former mining town deep in the interior, came from a band of 50 naked, starving men. They emerged from the bush one day at a World Vision emergency feeding center at Gilé, 40 miles east, unclothed except for strips of tree bark.

"There are 20,000 of us in Morrua," they told a stunned worker at the feeding center.

One week later, Joseph DeVries, a World Vision supervisor in the provincial capital of Quelimane, touched down on Morrua's rocky landing strip in the first plane to land there in eight years.

Morrua was filled with the eerie silence of a community too sick for anything but an interminable series of funerals. In a shack near the center of town the visitors found a family of seven just returned from its fifth burial. From a dark corner came the exhausted moaning of a child. She would die of starvation by nightfall.

After living at a bare subsistence level behind rebel lines, the people of Morrua were now free but were more cut off than ever from food, seeds, and farming tools. They were in danger of perishing, in effect, from freedom itself.

Mozambique is like that today: a country of 14.5 million people just emerging into the promise of peace and development 16 years after its independence from Portugal, but in peril of wasting away before it has a chance to fulfill that promise.

Rich in land and minerals, Mozambique is in potentially better shape than such other African countries as Sudan and Ethiopia, where poor land and rainfall conditions, exacerbated by civil war, have produced repeated famines. Mozambique could conceivably grow enough food to feed itself and could raise cashews and cotton for export. But virtually no development has occurred here in 16 years of independence, mostly due to the same rural

insurgency that made refugees out of Morrua's people.

The scanty roads that existed in 1975 to serve the country's potentially rich farmland are destroyed, the bridges downed or mined. One million Mozambicans live as refugees in neighboring countries, and another 2 million to 3 million are displaced within Mozambique.

Morrua, once an agricultural and mining center, is a microcosm of Mozambique's condition: sitting atop wealth but living in desperation. Still, Morrua is in better shape than many other communities. At least Morrua has a usable airstrip and cultivable land in the district.

But for every Morrua there is at least one Mulevala, a district about 40 miles away, where the scale of the human catastrophe remains unknown because the area still cannot be reached by outside assistance. Mulevala cannot be served from the air because RENAMO sabotaged its airstrip with a dozen deep, crosswise trenches. In November 1990, two bush pilots tried to land, one of them a Soviet helicopter pilot who said he was fired on and hit from the ground. Both vowed never to go back.

Another side of Mozambique's relief dilemma is easy to visualize in Pebane, a coastal district about 850 miles north of Maputo that has supported 200,000 war refugees. Pebane is little more than beach and sandspits, unsuitable for growing anything but a few sorry shoots of cassava. And it is at the end of a long relief supply line from the capital, so food deliveries are irregular.

Officials should be relieved that about 50,000 refugees have already left Pebane on their way home to begin cultivating their old land anew. But ironically, as more people return to their old homes and land, the strain on relief agencies becomes greater.

In that situation, says Nancy Barnes, the United Nations' emergency officer in Maputo, "you have to penetrate into localities where the roads have been abandoned for years. Operations take longer because most districts have no vehicles. People go [home] by foot, but for supplying them we need trucks. The resettling process will require phenomenal resources." □

By Michael A. Hiltzik, a Los Angeles Times staff writer. Copyright, 1990, Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission.

a World Vision agricultural officer, was captured by RENAMO and held for several months.

"The *banditos* destroyed our family home and our sewing machine, which was our means of livelihood," he says. "My fervent prayers were answered as the family escaped safely and found me in the city. Each one arrived completely naked.

"I have forgiven the men who have done these things to us, because I know they only do these things because they do not know God. I pray for them continually, that they will come and join us here in our house of prayer. They are suffering too, you know," he says.

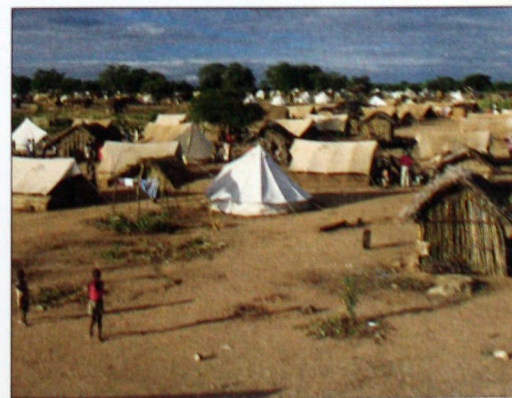
Mozambicans speak of their faith not only as a source of healing for past trauma, but as a source of strength in the round-the-clock endurance test that is daily life in Mozambique. It is not only the hope of eternal comfort that sustains them, they say, but a minute-by-minute reliance on God.

Perhaps the testimonies of three women express this best. Elisa Martinho watched three of her children starve to death. She herself was weak and sick, as were her other two children. She says she despaired and considered suicide.

"Then I remembered hearing of a God who was the only truth in the world," she says. "I began to pray to this God, and he gave me the emotional strength to go on, and the physical strength to walk into Gilé, carrying my two children all the way. God was with me as we traveled, and I feel him with me now every minute."

Ruth Simba of Morrua lost five children and her husband. She wears only tree bark. "We are continually crying, thinking of all our family now departed from us. But we still know God is with us, and that he brought us here [to a World Vision feeding center]. Without his help we would not have made it here.

Center for
displaced persons
in Tete province



DAVID C. RITCHIE / WORLD VISION

But I sometimes still don't know how much longer we can go on."

Fatima Socre, also of Morrua: "The *banditos* burned down my house in the village. We fled to Morrua, but then our food ran out. The children were all healthy until we arrived here. Now one of them has died and the others are getting worse every day. We eat only leaves. We are so very weak. I don't have any breast milk to keep my newborn baby alive. Yet I am convinced that God loves us and has brought us here."

None of this makes the war all right. None of this makes it tolerable that Mozambique ranks number one in the world for human misery. No one, in Mozambique or outside it, is saying that.

Why this suffering? I have struggled so much with this question," says Pastor Avalino Mutelima, who was traveling to Swaziland for radio training when he heard his hometown had been attacked. He returned immediately and walked through the bush looking for his wife, children, and parents.

"I saw horrible things. People cut in pieces, others burnt inside their huts, dead bodies everywhere. I wondered when the bodies would be those of my own family."

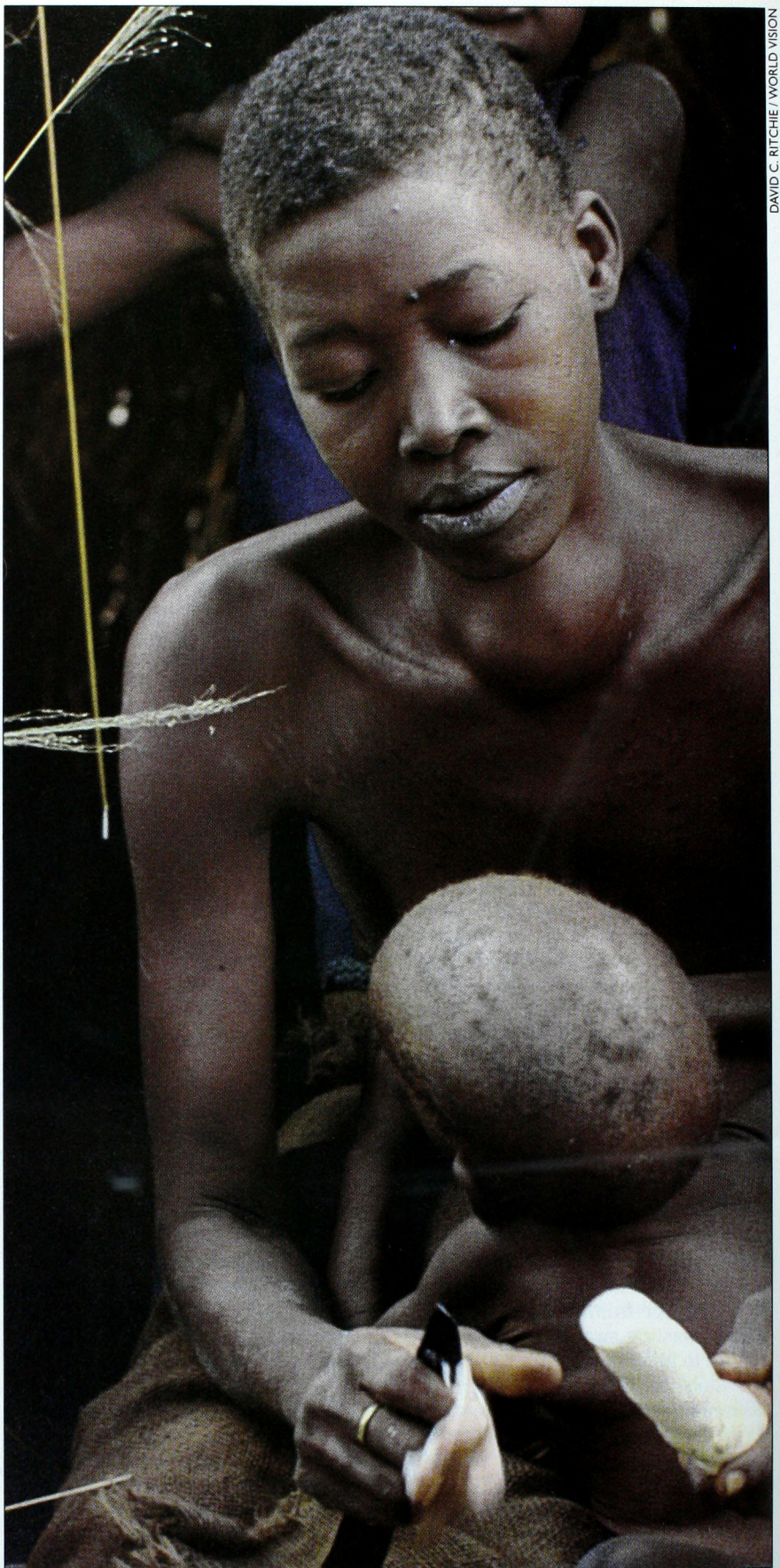
On the sixth day, Mutelima found his family alive. He took them, on foot, to the town of Quelimane—all but his parents, who were too weak for the trip. He tried several times to return for them but couldn't safely enter the area. Finally he received word that they both had died.

"Why would God allow us, his children, to be tormented and killed?" Mutelima asks. "I have thought of many possibilities: punishment for the way the country turned against God at its independence, or perhaps a sign of the end times.

"Finally I realized that there is no peace in this world. Only in God's love is there peace. Our spirits already live in the peace and the arms of God." □

Tanya Brenneman is a World Vision journalist based in southern Africa. Additional reporting by June Mears, a writer living in Pasadena, Calif.

World Vision has aided Mozambican war victims since 1984 with food, clothing, health care, farming tools, and support for Christian leaders. In fiscal year 1991, World Vision has committed over \$4 million in aid to the troubled country.



Cassava roots are all this deslocado has to feed her children. The starchy tuber—often called the "famine crop" because it can be dug up when other food is unavailable—fills the stomach but has scant nutritional value.

WINDS OF WAR, WINDS OF PRAYER

Jan. 16, 1991. The decision has been made. We are a nation at war. Distant powers have determined a course of action so profound and far-reaching as to affect not only me, snug in my California condo, but the entire world.

I am in turmoil. I have two reflective children who ask probing questions about matters as practical as what a SCUD missile is and as philosophical as why war exists. They watch, on CNN, Israeli children calmly putting on gas masks and retreating into sealed rooms to listen to the pervasive, eerie rise and fall of air-raid sirens. They hear about a sea of Iraqi refugees flooding into Jordan. The constant political debates of friends frustrate me. It doesn't even matter what side they're on: My world is out of orbit, beyond explanation.

I pray. But I am overwhelmed by the subject each time I approach the throne of God. How can I sort out the barrage of mental pictures, gut reactions, individual lives, nations, and leaders of nations into meaningful segments of a rationally expressed petition? The prayer of my heart is for peace; but it seems so naive, even trite, to think that a simple "Lord, please bring peace" would somehow move the hand of God to intervene in international chaos.

Now we're a few days into the war. I am on my way to work, feeling strangely foreign in the midst of the familiar. Snatches of scripture and images of battle vie for attention, and tears threaten to upstage the other two with emotion. In desperation I call out, "Lord, show me how to pray. I know your spirit desires to do that for me, and I don't even know how to begin." Suddenly I remember the disciples asking the same thing of Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray."

I begin to recite out loud, in my little white Mazda on a Southern California freeway, "Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." When I come to "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," I pause and repeat the words in modern English: "YOUR kingdom come, YOUR will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

I realize I am praying the perfect will of God. The words are charmed arrows instantly finding their mark. "Give me this day." No, I can't personalize this one. "Give us—all of us—this day our daily bread. Forgive our sins, and God, please help us to forgive the sins of those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine—YOURS—is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. It was then, it is now, and it will be for all time. Forever and ever amen."

The barrier is broken. I keep praying with a clarity not my own, giving thanks for the peace that has come to the battle within me.

The following Sunday I hear my favorite Bible teacher talk about I Samuel 23: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." He uses the verse to illustrate how one person can move nations through prayer.

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray because I don't get the instant fix that my culture and I seem to demand, because I'm not sure how to pray, because I'm one imperfect person, and all the other excuses I manufacture.

I know prayer changes things. More importantly, I believe it does. But in times of stress, I chafe and feel helpless. I get in the way of my own prayer. Still, I ask for help in how to pray, and I receive it in the form of a prayer. And the answer to that prayer for peace begins within my war-torn heart. That is consistent with God's principles—that his kingdom, his peace, starts within each one of us.

God alone knows how he will answer my prayer for peace in the Middle East. And he doesn't ask me to know. He only asks me to pray. □

Donna Sanders is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

O Lord,
my prayer
seemed too small
until I saw it
as part of
the coming
of the kingdom
of God.

Reginald Hollis



CLIFF NELSEN



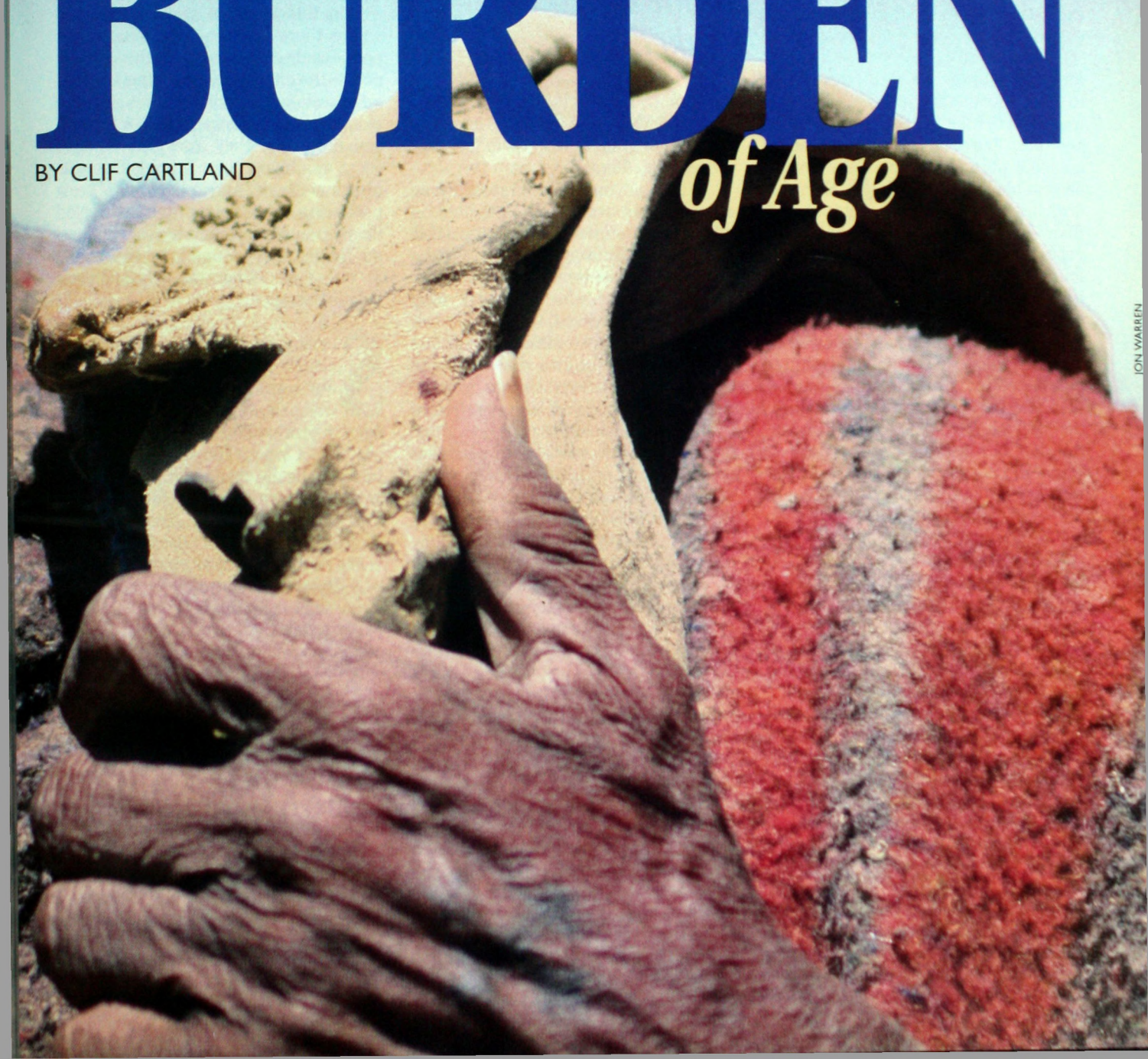
*There are signs
that the image of
the "respected
elder" is threat-
ened by trends of
Third World
The poverty.*

Some people called Clotario Blest compassionate. Others called him powerful. One thing they all agreed on—he had helped found Chile's most influential labor union. Clotario Blest died recently at age 92. Thousands attended his funeral. A stream of political leaders and union officials spoke glowingly of his dignified place in Chilean history, and he was laid to rest with fitting ceremony. But the pomp and circumstance belied a harsher reality. Clotario Blest died a broken, forgotten old man. For years he had lived alone in a miserable boarding house. Just before his death, Franciscan priests found him and took him from the squalor of his room to the pristine quiet of

BURDEN

BY CLIF CARTLAND

of Age



their monastery. They tried to restore some weight to his 90-pound frame, but he had been neglected too long.

Clotario Blest is no exception. Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society. I believe most Americans, while decrying the neglect of some of our own older people, admire other cultures for their time-honored traditions of valuing the elderly. We perceive the developing world as more respectful of aging parents and relatives, more sensitive to their needs, more inclined to heed their wisdom.

But World Vision correspondents paint a different picture, reporting that the elderly are increasingly regarded as "a nuisance, another mouth to feed."

Recent trends in developing countries are causing upheavals in traditional attitudes toward the elderly. And although instances of abuse and neglect do not mean that entire nations have forsaken their traditions, there are warning signs that attitudes are changing.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians, for example, have left their island home to escape political and economic problems. But in their desperate search for a new life, "burdensome" older relatives are often abandoned. That is the story of 89-year-old Madame Clenic. Her children moved to the United States and left their widowed mother behind. Seven years ago they returned for a visit and found Clenic badly cared for and in poor health. They took her to the Asile Communal, a Christian home for the aged in Port-au-Prince, and left again. In the seven years since, they have not contacted her once—not by mail, not by phone. "The children will come back to Haiti for the funeral," says Sister Emmanuelle, the director. "It seems as if a dead parent is more important than one who is alive but very old."

Ecuadoran correspondents report that young people claim, "Old people are out of fashion. We need to pay attention to those who will be here to build the future of the world." Others say, "Old people cannot change, so they have very little to contribute. Their best years have already passed."

The attitude of some Hondurans toward the elderly is "scorn, mockery, discomfort," says Oscar Chicas, a World Vision correspondent. In a depressed economy, a person who can no longer work is seen as "old, worthless furniture." Unless the person is a professional, "he has to live the rest of his life begging on the streets, even if he has a family."

That may seem heartless. But in the developing world, where resources must be stretched for a family to survive, the sheer number of elderly people—160

million—can be overwhelming to a younger, struggling population.

Urbanization is another factor in the abandonment of the elderly. Each day in the developing world, thousands of people migrate from farms and villages to cities, hoping for economic stability. "It used to be that people lived together in the village, and the elderly were fed and cared for by their sons' wives," says Esther Wamboi, 72, of central Kenya. "Children usually inherited land or livestock from the old people, and the old people were honored and respected by

Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society.

the young," she recalls. "At harvest time each adult child would give the parents a measure of grain to help them feel they owned something.

"The old had their grandchildren around them, and they delighted in telling them stories. Today, grandchildren are usually away in the city, and the old parents are eaten up by loneliness. Many of those who live very long become so depressed, especially when most of the people their own age are dead, that they long to die. I know of some who have taken their own lives..." Esther's voice trails off. She sits silently, feeling her own loneliness.

There is no such thing as retirement in much of the developing world. Millions of men and women are forced to work well beyond age 65. Many work until they literally drop dead or until they are unable to continue.

Rosa, a Colombian, has painted furniture for more than 40 years. Her children are all professionals, but at age 67 she still works six days a week, then prepares food and washes clothes for her children and grandchildren. A portion of her small income goes toward family expenses. For Rosa and thousands of other Colombian seniors, the day they stop contributing money or labor is the day they are sent to a home for the aged.

Don Alfredo Cabrera Castañeda is 88 years old. He was born in a village in northeast Guatemala. Each week he goes back to his village to sell vegetables, bringing back peppers and bananas to sell in the city. From his small income he pays his family's electric and water bills.

Hezron Munyiri left his rural Kenya

home for Nairobi in 1942. He "retired" from his job almost 20 years ago. Today, he and his wife live in abject poverty. "Life in Nairobi is very difficult for old people," he says. "We own nothing, and our children have hardly anything to spare for us." Though old and weak, Munyiri, a blacksmith, still works every day to support himself, his wife, and the grandchildren who live with them. And he grows a few crops on the banks of the polluted Nairobi River.

In the United States, the voice of the American Association of Retired Persons is loud and clear. Its representatives lobby effectively at all levels of government. As a member, I appreciate the discounts and services. But I can't help wondering: Who lobbies for the People of the Developing World Who Cannot Retire? Who lobbies, not for discounts, but for life's bare necessities? And for the deeper need for dignity?

In this world of scarce resources where there is often little left for the poor—and even less for the elderly poor—the church can still offer Christ's compassion. Christian homes for the elderly have been recognized for the outstanding care they provide. Clotario Blest was helped by Christians, as was Madame Clenic. And in Peru, a TV crew producing a special on aging traveled throughout the country, looking at nursing homes. They found ideal conditions at only one place: the Christian-run Hogar Betania.

Serving the elderly, especially the elderly poor, is quiet work. There was nothing dramatic about easing the pain of Clotario Blest's last days. Or providing a loving touch for Madame Clenic. The world would not be dramatically changed if we could find some small way to make life easier for the Rosas, the Don Alfredos, or the Hezron Munyiris of the developing world. But *we* would be changed.

Children in the developing world often smile and laugh in spite of their poverty, and those smiles reward us for our compassion. That seldom happens with the elderly. They've seen too much of life. The years have taken their toll. The smiles don't come as easily. So we need to be patient, to slow down, to hear their stories, to help them feel they are still making a contribution.

The greatest tragedy is not physical neglect. It's having no one to say, "You're still important." That may be the greatest gift younger people can give older people everywhere, and it doesn't take anything but time. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer in Burbank, Calif.

IN THE HEART of downtown Atlanta, across from Woodruff Park, I encountered the man. He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt. His legs were twisted and deformed. His pants reeked of urine.

A number of people had stopped to administer first aid, but he lashed out at them, driving them back with his flailing. Several offered to call an ambulance, but he angrily protested. It seemed he would rather die than accept assistance he did not request. Eventually, people began to ignore him and walk past with dispassionate glances.

The man was bleeding profusely. Blood seemed to ooze from his pores as though forced by some intense internal pressure. Even his face poured red. I grew dizzy and sick to my stomach as I watched. The man's writhing and groaning became more intense. Finally he cried out in desperation: *Someone help me or I will die!*

I was immobilized, caught between self-protection and a moral imperative to help. As I inched cautiously toward the man, a friend of mine strode forward and, removing his wool tweed topcoat, wrapped the man and lifted him in his arms. Only then did I rush to help. Opening a glass door to the lobby of an office building, we eased the small twisted man down onto the marble floor. We knelt beside him, unsure what to do or say. In that moment of silent attention, the man began to speak. His disconnected phrases soon wove a cohesive picture of his plight. He wanted to return to his home, a little trailer from which he had been evicted due to some minor code violations. As he talked and we listened, his needs seemed surprisingly simple—a small electrical problem and some minor carpentry—tasks I could easily perform.

Then I noticed his bleeding had stopped. We had administered no first aid, yet his pain had subsided and his knotted-up legs had begun to relax. I real-



FROM A PHOTO BY JON WARREN

ized, too, that my fear of this helpless, bleeding man had calmed.

I left for a short time to do the repairs that would enable the man to return to his home. The tasks weren't difficult, and in performing them I felt an unexpected sense of joy. When I returned to the man, I was surprised to find that his clothes were clean and his hair was neatly combed. His wild, repulsive appearance had disappeared. He looked quite normal. As we helped him to his feet we discovered that with a little steadying, he could walk under his own power.

The three of us walked the short distance to his trailer. When we came within sight of it, the man let go of our arms and walked the rest of the way on his own.

The loud ring of my 6:30 wake-up call jolted me to reality. I was not on a downtown Atlanta street. I was in a Chicago hotel room. But these vivid dream-scenes stayed with me.

He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt.

A mix of emotions poured into my conscious world. Repulsion. Fear of contagion. Shame for my reluctance. Surprise at the simplicity of the remedy. Joy in small deeds.

For long moments I lay there, my wakened mind scanning for meaning among this powerful imagery. How deep is the pain, the outrage, of one whose real needs go unheeded while helpers impose their cures. How closely related to healing are listening and touching. How light and joyful are the deeds that enable. How overwhelming is the obligation to cure.

I got up to capture these dream thoughts on paper before they released me to the busyness of the day. □

BY BOB LUPTON

Bob Lupton is founder of FCS Urban Ministries in Atlanta. This essay first appeared in the newsletter Urban Perspectives.

JOYFUL
the DEEDS that
ENABLE

Preserving the Gift

No one can guarantee good health. Not even the United Nations. So what does it mean to say children have a "right" to health? At the very least, it means getting rid of the causes of needless child illness and death.

The first step is immunization. Six diseases are the main cause of 38,000 child deaths per day. Those same diseases—whooping cough, measles, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and tuberculosis—can be prevented with an inexpensive series of immunizations.

The second step is to improve sanitation. Contaminated water is the leading cause of death in young children. Open sewers and other health hazards add to the problem. Cleaner water and better hygiene mean less disease.

A final step is women's literacy. Mothers who can read are more likely to learn about good nutrition, to be more knowledgeable when preparing family meals, to be more aware of the first signs of illness.

Though good health is not humanity's gift to bestow, proper preventive care certainly is. □





JON WARREN

A little boy holds very still as an intravenous feeding implant in his hand gives him some added nutrients.

ERIC WHEATER



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

An Indian mother takes precautions against the spread of bacteria.

This mother can provide a better life for her family by learning to read.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Ginger Hope

JAMES MURPHY



HAVE SQUEEGEE, WILL TRAVEL

Yes, they do windows. Los Angeles-based Victory Outreach has begun a commercial window-washing service called Clear Vision. The business is part of Victory Outreach's "re-entry" component, which teaches educational, vocational, and living skills to young men and women who have completed a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

Clear Vision gives its clients, which include prestigious downtown businesses, an unconditional guaran-

tee. "If they're not satisfied with the work for any reason, the crew will come back and do it again," says James Murphy, a Victory Outreach staffer.

"This helps teach the discipline to do the job right the first time," Murphy says. "Many of the guys have never worked a full-time job in their lives. They're learning the basics, including how to work as a team."

For information contact Victory Outreach, P.O. Box 15459, Los Angeles, CA 90015; (213) 746-9853.

“Lord, let me hunger enough that I not forget the world's hunger. Let me hunger enough that I may have bread to share. Let me hunger enough that I may long for the Bread of Heaven. Let me hunger enough that I may be filled. But, O Lord, let me not hunger so much that I seek after that which is not bread, nor try to live by bread alone. Amen.”

(From *Banquet of Praise*, a collection of worship resources and music published by Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20018.)

PERSONAL DELIVERY

“We could just take that money, write a check, and send it down to Mexico, and they could sure use it,” says Al Fleming, referring to \$17,000 that students at Olivet Nazarene University (Kankakee, Ill.) raised for a service trip to Mexico this summer.

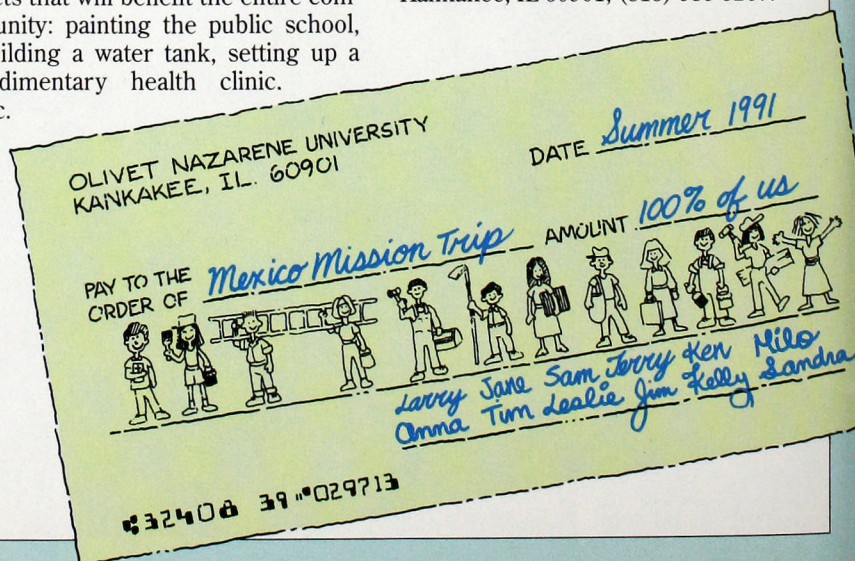
“So why are we going ourselves?” Professor Fleming continues. “I hope the answer is that these students will never be the same after this experience. When I was in college, I went to Trinidad on a similar project, and it changed my life.”

Fleming's group is one of several from Church of the Nazarene campuses across the country spending about two weeks this summer in vil-

lages 200 miles north of Mexico City. The area's citrus economy was hit hard by a cold spell during the growing season. Fleming notes that the student group, while working through local churches, takes care to plan projects that will benefit the entire community: painting the public school, building a water tank, setting up a rudimentary health clinic, etc.

“This is the other reason we go ourselves—to show people that we care, that we're not just throwing money at them,” Fleming says.

For information contact Dr. Al Fleming, Olivet Nazarene University, Kankakee, IL 60901; (815) 939-5267.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

FIVE OF A KIND

Five vital movements within Christianity, too often cut adrift from one another, will be firmly moored together at the Renovaré National Conference on Personal Spiritual Renewal, Oct. 23-26 in Pasadena, Calif.

Renovaré, founded by Richard Foster, is a Christ-centered, international, ecumenical movement for the

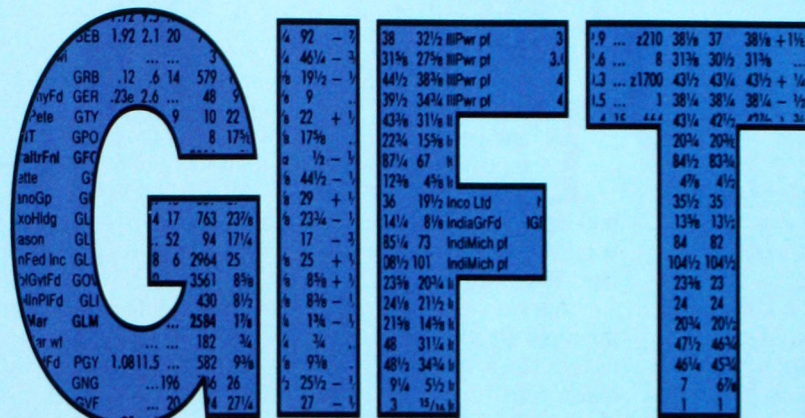


renewal of the church. It pulls together the contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, and evangelical movements. Renovaré insists that the Christian life consists of all of these: the prayer-filled life, the virtuous life, the Spirit-empowered life, the compassionate life, and the Word-centered life.

For information about the conference or the Renovaré movement, contact Renovaré, P.O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879; (312) 261-5870.

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FMA 106

First Baptist Church

MORE THAN A FREE LUNCH

BY RICK NATHANSON

The Foster family visits with Dennis Lihte, director of Noon Day Ministry, in their home. From left: Mandy, Susan, and Brandie Foster; Dennis Lihte; Rita, Mike and Charles Foster.



PAUL BEARCE

The economy in Texarkana, Texas, was bad and getting worse when Rita and Mike Foster decided to move with their four children to Albuquerque, N.M., in June 1989. Mike had lined up a construction job, but because of car trouble, the family arrived in Albuquerque a day late. Mike's job had been given to someone else.

After a week of unsuccessful job hunting and the rapid depletion of their savings, the Fosters contacted The United Way. The agency put them in touch with Noon Day Ministry, the main daytime shelter for Albuquerque's homeless. Grateful for the midday meal, the Foster family immediately pitched in to help clean up. Noon Day director Dennis Lihte

noticed the Fosters' efforts and hired them to do a few chores around the shelter.

"It made us feel better knowing that we made this money, rather than having someone give it to us," said Rita. "It gave us back our pride."

The Fosters' determination to help themselves made them good candidates for Noon Day's transitional housing program.

If families can show they will be able to sustain themselves after a short period of economic aid—perhaps one or two months—Noon Day helps them find housing and pays the move-in costs.

"The transitional housing program is not for the people whose lives are one crisis after another," Lihte said. "Those people do need help, but two months after we help them they're having another crisis and they're homeless again."

Once the Fosters' car was repaired, Mike landed a construction job. In the meantime, the family had made friends at the First Baptist Church. A Sunday school class "adopted" them and helped them set up their new home.

Six months later Mike found himself between jobs. With only Rita's income from temporary jobs, the family again faced the prospect of homeless-

ness. Noon Day helped them through the dry spell. Mike found another job with a long-established Albuquerque company, and in June 1990 the family was able to move to a better neighborhood.

"Everything is fine and the children are happy," Rita said. "We're so grateful to Noon Day. It gives you the little nudge that you need to get started, but you've got to be willing to go the rest of the way to get back on your feet. If you don't help yourself, you'll be right back there on the street."

That the Fosters have come a long way since their first noon meal at Noon Day is evidence of how far the ministry itself has come.

In 1982, a local relief agency asked the First Baptist Church to provide a meal and devotional service for the needy. The church agreed to do so—for four Wednesdays. There was no money in the church budget for the feeding program, so a Sunday school class, led by church member Calvin Horn, agreed to pay \$1.50 for each meal served. About 70 people showed up for the first few meals, but the number quickly grew to more than 200, and the church started offering three lunches weekly.

As expenses grew, other churches—Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and non-denominational—donated generously. They recognized First Baptist's downtown location was well-suited for serving the homeless.

It was then that Noon Day Ministry received its name, taken from Isaiah 58:10 ("If you spend yourself on behalf of the hungry your night will become like the noon day").

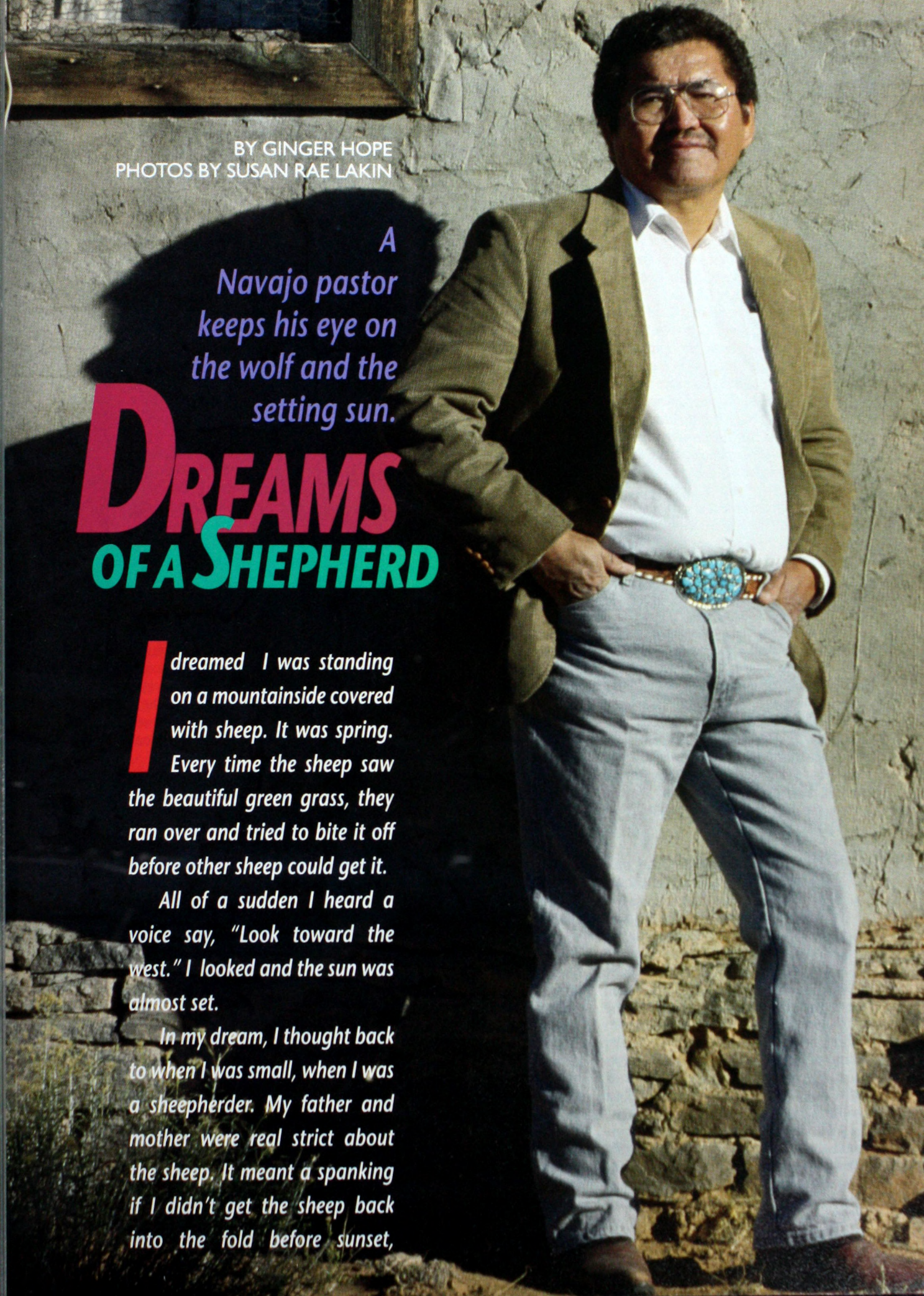
The noon meal, of course, barely scratched the surface of the needs of the homeless. Other obvious needs were for showers, laundry facilities, clothing, haircuts, toiletries, and telephone access.

Calvin Horn led efforts to establish a place for addressing those needs. Many of the supporters of those first Wednesday lunches became boosters, fund-raisers, and contributors to the building project. In June 1988, Noon Day Ministry opened the doors of its new two-story building in the parking lot behind First Baptist Church. Members of First Baptist and other Albuquerque congregations volunteer in Noon Day's programs.

"Sometimes people accuse us of supplying a Band-Aid solution to the problems of the homeless," said Joe McKinney, pastor of First Baptist. "I don't think that's true. But even if it were, what's wrong with a Band-Aid? Everyone needs one from time to time." □

Rick Nathanson is a reporter for the Albuquerque Journal.

For more information contact Noon Day Ministry, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 26446, Albuquerque, NM 87125; (505) 247-3611

A man with glasses, wearing a light-colored suit jacket, a white shirt, and light-colored trousers with a large, ornate turquoise belt buckle, stands against a rough stone wall. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking towards the camera. The background is a textured stone wall with a wooden window frame visible in the upper left corner.

BY GINGER HOPE
PHOTOS BY SUSAN RAE LAKIN

A
Navajo pastor
keeps his eye on
the wolf and the
setting sun.

DREAMS OF A SHEPHERD

I dreamed I was standing on a mountainside covered with sheep. It was spring. Every time the sheep saw the beautiful green grass, they ran over and tried to bite it off before other sheep could get it.

All of a sudden I heard a voice say, "Look toward the west." I looked and the sun was almost set.

In my dream, I thought back to when I was small, when I was a shepherd. My father and mother were real strict about the sheep. It meant a spanking if I didn't get the sheep back into the fold before sunset,

because if I didn't, some sheep would be lost.

I began to take the sheep back toward the fold. But every time I would take some sheep over and go back for more, the first group would wander away.

I looked around for help. Sure enough, there were some kids sitting in a circle a distance away, playing with little stones.

So I yelled at them: "What are you doing? Come over!" When they looked up I saw that their bodies were of children, but their heads and faces were of mature men. I felt embarrassed, if they really were mature men, for showing disrespect. I spoke again in a polite way: "I have something to tell you."

They all rose and came and stood around me. I told them exactly what the voice told me. I said, "The sheep need to get back into the fold before the sun sets." They all got in line as I told them and we were pushing the sheep forward. Then all of a sudden I saw sheep going back on my right side and my left side. I turned and looked, and some shepherders were missing. They were back playing again. I was so frustrated I didn't know what to do next.

Then the voice said to look toward the west as far as I could see. I saw something coming. It was a little dot, and it was getting bigger. All of a sudden I saw it was a wolf, big and muscular.

I ran back to get the other herders. I told them about the wolf. "He will be here in no time, so we better do something," I said.

We all agreed and we lined up again the same way, and this time the voice spoke to me and said, "Take hold of each others' hands." The voice told me the wolf was not after the sheep but was after the shepherders, because he knew that if he killed the shepherders, then one by one he could get all the sheep.

That scared me. I was really holding on, and I was telling the other shepherders to hold on tight and push the sheep forward. We were getting the sheep forward when I woke up.

Kenneth Begishe puzzled a long time over that dream. For two years the Navajo pastor asked God what he was supposed to do about it. Eventually he came to understand that the shepherders were *all* the Christian ministers on the Navajo reservation, not just the ones in his particular brand of Pentecostal non-denominationalism. He was to bring them all together, train them, let them encourage one another.

The ministers were harder to convince than the boy-men in his dream. "A lot of them that were better educated than me asked, 'Who are you to do this? Are you starting a new ministry? Is this another denomination?'" Begishe says.

But by all accounts, the monthly

"ministry meetings" of the Fellowship of Ministering Churches have allayed such fears over the past dozen years. The group has managed to shun competition, cliquishness, and power-mongering.

That is largely due to the influence of Kenneth Begishe, a quiet man in jeans and cowboy boots who seems almost universally known across the western Arizona reservation.

He was born in the 1940s into a very traditional Navajo family. The old ways were strong where he grew up. Many of the local families' ancestors had hidden in the mountains and escaped "The Long Walk," when Kit Carson herded about 8,000 Navajos into Fort Sumner, New

When he drank, the self-hatred he had internalized at 'white school' came seething to the surface.

Mexico, and kept them there long enough for much of their cultural structure to disintegrate.

Begishe was born "to" the Folded Arms People (his mother's clan) "for" the Bitter Water People (his father's clan). He was raised in a series of forked-stick hogans (mud-covered, dome-shaped dwellings) within a few miles of where his powder-blue prefab home now stands. He was a good son, a good brother, and a good Navajo. He herded sheep and rounded up horses. He sketched landscapes and fashioned animals out of canyon clay for his little sisters.

He sat beside the medicine men at "sings" (sacred ceremonies), studying the long chants and intricate sand paintings. His friends still joke that if he weren't a preacher, Kenneth Begishe would probably be a medicine man.

Then he went to school.

It was a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school. This was the BIA of the vintage that washed out little Navajos' mouths with lye soap for speaking Navajo. *Old Navajo ways are bad*, Begishe learned at school before he was 10. *You will never get anywhere until you give them up for the white ways. Then you will have cars and televisions and a good life.*

It was a confusing message for a good Navajo boy. It sent a lot of Navajos

into no-man's-land, alienated from their elders and stonewalled by the American Dream.

The anesthetic of choice in that no-man's-land comes in a bottle. Like almost all the Navajo boys at boarding school, Begishe started to drink. Everybody did it, not only at school but across the reservation, although it was illegal to sell or consume alcohol there.

"It was like a hillbilly lifestyle," Begishe says. "A lot of home brew, a lot of drinking and fighting. The women would take the children and hide."

He was still a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. When he drank, the dissonant self-hatred he had internalized at "white school" came seething up to the surface.

Begishe would go home drunk and pick fights with anyone in sight. He would stagger into a hogan during a sacred ceremony and pull down the wood-stove chimney, sending everyone outside until the smoke cleared. The next morning he would wake up sober and horrified with shame, hiding in his mother's hogan for days.

This is how Begishe recalls his entire youth: a blur of drunkenness and shame. Others remember more. Oswald Werner, for one.

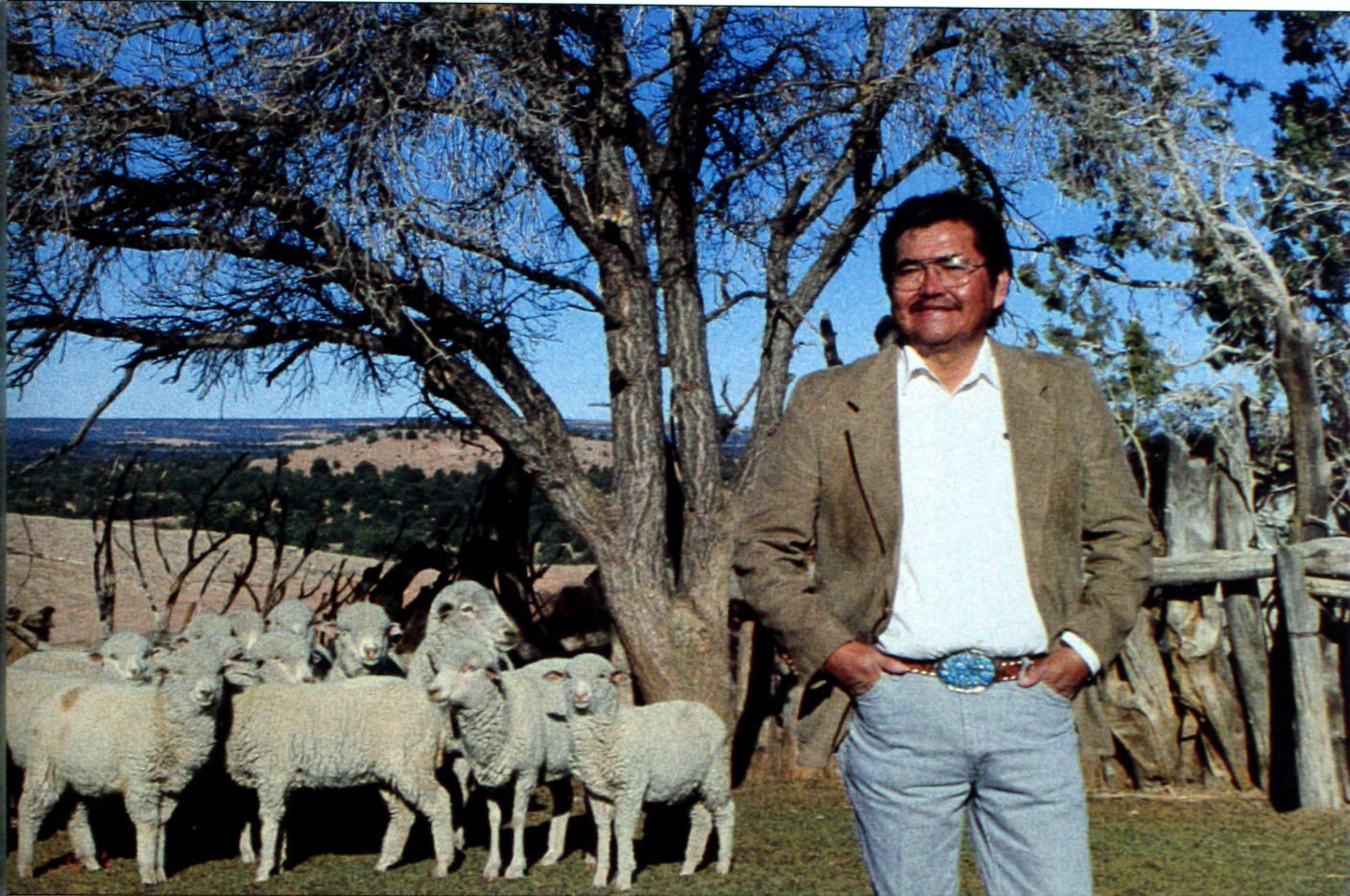
In 1960, Werner was a young doctoral student living with his wife and children in a guest hogan at the Shonto Trading Post, studying Trader Navajo—the pidgin Navajo spoken by white traders on the reservation. One of his "language consultants"—at a dollar an hour—was 16-year-old Kenneth Begishe.

"I saw right away that Kenneth was a bright boy, very observant about his own culture, with a knack for languages," says Werner, now professor of anthropology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Begishe left the reservation in 1963, eventually joining Werner in Chicago on a major project, a Navajo medical dictionary. But for Begishe this was no feat. It was defeat. He left because he was too good a Navajo to stomach the way he was shaming his family, and too bad a drinker to stop.

Something decisive happened in





Chicago. In the middle of a drunken street fight, Begishe found himself inexplicably alone in a deserted cemetery. For a Navajo, this is a terrible thing. Traditional Navajos won't even enter a house where someone once died.

Begishe ran around wildly, looking for a gap in the high iron fence. Finally he gave up and laid down right on a grave, with his head on the tombstone. He prayed one of those end-of-the-line prayers: "God, if you are there, you see where I am. I am going to die if my life goes on this way. So if you want to do something, do it now."

In the morning he got up and started toward the fence. The next thing he knew, he was outside on the sidewalk. He doesn't know how he got there.

"I guess I got translated or something," he says, telling the story over late-night supper in a neighbor's trailer.

His 16-year-old daughter, Cassandra, bursts out laughing. "Translated? Dad!"

Everybody around the kitchen table has a good laugh on Begishe. He shrugs good-naturedly. "Well, I don't know what else to call it," he says.

Elbow-to-elbow over mutton soup,

blue corn mush, and fry bread, the group savors again a story they've heard dozens of times before, prompting and correcting the soft-spoken man who is their father, brother, clansman, and pastor.

The story continues in Oklahoma City, where a Shawnee Indian took Begishe to hear a Pentecostal evangelist. There Begishe heard God say, "Your prayer in the graveyard is being answered. This is it."

Not long afterward,

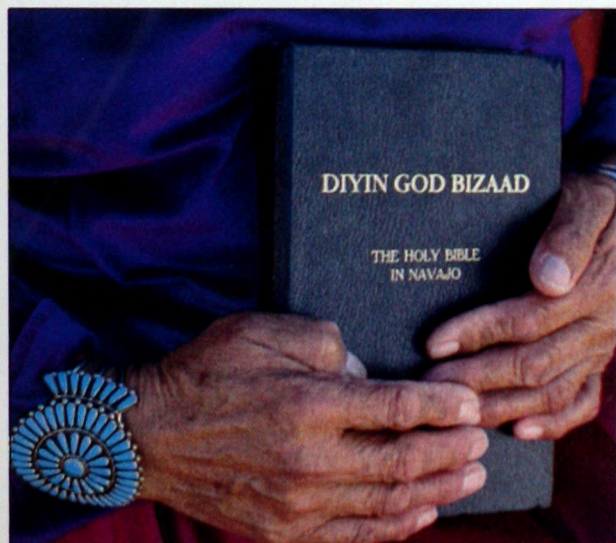
I didn't know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and we learned as we went along."

in his mother's hogan, and later in her one-room 10 x 10 house, Kenneth Begishe started a church.

"I didn't really know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and then we learned as we went along." It is a sentence he will repeat almost verbatim as he ticks off dozens of enterprises he has begun since then.

"We didn't know how to build a church, but we just started. ..."

They mixed the concrete in the upside-down cab of a junked pickup truck, and had to pour the floor three layers thick before they got it level, but they built a church. Men in jeans and cowboy hats, women in long full skirts and velveteen blouses, all of them wrapped in Navajo wool blankets, would stand in the back of the tiny church with the black wood stove and the mix-n-match



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donated pews while Begishe preached. Horse-drawn wagons filled the empty lot outside White Post church in those days. Begishe's old green Chevy went through more U-joints than he can remember, bouncing over the red dirt roads of the reservation well into the night, taking five, six carloads of people home after every service.

The big denominations built their Indian missions in the cities and towns. Begishe knew that the church, in order

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

to win the people, would have to go to the Navajo people, who traditionally live in tiny, scattered clusters across the arid mesas.

So when five or 10 people from a certain area started attending White Post Church, Begishe would start looking for a pastor among them. He didn't call it "indigenous leadership development," but that's exactly what Begishe was doing. He told his fledgling pastors that they didn't need a white education, that they didn't need a white missionary to lean on, that God would give them everything they needed to do the work.

Not that Begishe is against education. Far from it. It's one of the reservation's most pressing needs, and he knows it. That's why he put in years on the local BIA school board, a board he says was powerless even to dismiss a patently incompetent teacher. (Begishe's handling of the stymie was typical of his personal style, quietly assertive: He simply sat in the back of the classroom and stared at that teacher day after day until the teacher eventually left.)

But there simply wasn't time to wait for a whole crop of pastors to work their way through a formal education. Not pastors like Joe Shortman, a

retirement-age military veteran who started Cow Springs Church in a new wood-frame building he had originally intended as his own home.

"I don't think he really ever went to school, but he's a real good minister," Begishe says. "If this were a denomination, they would probably send us off to Bible school, and then they would give us a nice building and keep us there. In a church like that, Joe Shortman would never be a pastor."

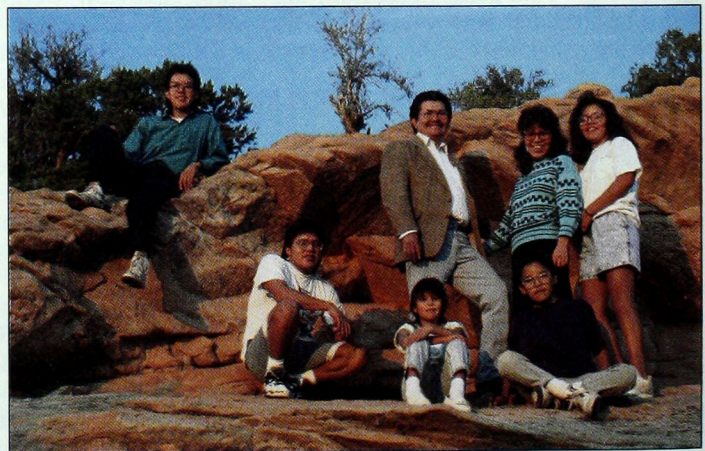
Shortman is one of three or four dozen leaders—men and women, from their 20s to their 70s, mostly Navajo, one or two whites—who meet one Saturday a month, sitting around long tables and working their way down a chalkboard agenda that might cover anything from finances to theology to plumbing. Characteristic Navajo teasing—aimed just as often at oneself as at another—sends loud laughter around the room when the discussion bogs down.

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

Begishe sits in front with the other directors, but he doesn't say much, because this particular session is mainly about him and his various projects, and how they're shooting off in so many directions: a boarding home for orphans, a proposed Christian television station, a Christian school, and more.

"Maybe we should put all these projects together and call it Kenneth Begishe Ministries," one man suggests, joking. Laughter shakes the room for almost a full minute. It's a safe joke because nobody here would take it seriously, and that says something. The celebrity-loner mentality flies in the face of everything the Fellowship of Ministering Churches stands for.

Nobody laughs louder than Ken-



The Begishe family (standing, from left): Kenneth, Mary, Cassandra; (seated) Tim, Mike, Sophia, and Sonny.

neth Begishe. He takes off his glasses, wipes his eyes, and then they move on. □

PAST THE POINT OF NOT CARING

BY KELLY WEBER

I approach the darkened building, thinking about the difference it has made in my life. Raised in the latter part of this century, I learned to value self-importance, self-attainment, and detachment. But in the early-morning hours of the past year, these beliefs have been quietly removed, leaving room for compassion, humility, and faith.

I open the door and Marie greets me. "Are you Tom? Are you my boy Tom?"

"No, Marie, go back to bed. Tom will come and tuck you in."

I am a Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA) in this long-term care facility, otherwise known as a nursing home. The shift report is about to begin. Thirty feet of corridor slide by unnoticed. Lee's chant hangs in the air as I approach—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—then drifts away behind me. At Station B, the registered nurse recites nightly procedures and problems. "Gary Davis in 37B has tried to leave twice, so keep your eye on him. Gina Collins in 14B is okay, just frightened and confused." At 10:53 p.m. my shift begins.

My partner Debbie and I go to Edith's room—our first stop—and change her sheets. She awakens and whispers, "Thank you." Debbie leans over, kisses her on the forehead and tells her, "I love you. Good night."

This ritual used to bother me. Once I asked Debbie if perhaps it wasn't too intimate, too involved. After all, these people are so near death. Getting familiar with them makes their death more painful for us.

"I suppose it might look that way," Debbie answered. "You're still new. But you're just holding back your emotions because you're scared. Everybody you know is going to die, your parents, your spouse, your children. These people are just closer to death. Don't be afraid for them. They're not."

Debbie planted a seed of compassion within me, but my fears and the values I acquired were to keep it dormant for a while longer.

Then I met Cornelia.

Nel, as she liked to be called, was 88, blind, diabetic, and a dual amputee, having lost her legs to gangrene. She chose me as her friend because my voice reminded her of her late husband's. But lying in her bed, aged, unwhole, with clouded, glassy eyes, she at first made me uncomfortable. She frightened me.

Nel somehow sensed my reluctance. "I don't bite, you know. And surely you could outrun me," she laughed. Guilt forced me back to her bedside, and slowly the walls I had built up began to crack.

Each night we would tell each other our life

stories, Nel always encouraging the conversation along. Then one night she stopped me in mid-sentence. "Kelly, don't tell me about yesterdays. I've got a head full of them. Don't waste my time with tomorrows, either. Just tell me about today." She patted my hand and smiled.

From then on I saved a piece of each day to bring color and depth to her world. "Nel, I saw a flock of geese flying overhead today. Canadian Honkers, I think. They flew into the distance with their cries following behind them."

In exchange, she gave me a view of yesterday:



"I remember once I saw so many geese, they filled the horizon," and a glimpse of tomorrow: "Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

Late one night while I was changing her sheets, she grasped my hand and told me to sit beside her.

"Hon, tonight I don't want to hear about today. Tell me instead about forever." I could hear her breathing in the quiet room.

I looked at her face and realized, as did she, that forever was all that was left to her. There was no place for me to hide, nor—oddly—did I want to. I gathered her to me and told her of sunlight, of love, of God. In turn, she showed me life and death, and the love in each of these.

It is 6:58 a.m. Lee's litany—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—ends abruptly as breakfast arrives. I shuffle toward my car. This morning, nothing really happened. There were no Cornelias in my life today. Perhaps there will be again tomorrow. □

Kelly Weber is a free-lance writer in Black, Mo.

"Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

"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



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June/July 1991

MO ZAMBIQUE



Mozambique: *A Suffering Church, A Growing Church*

Growing Old in the Third World

Dreams of a Navajo Shepherd

4 **Mozambique: Out of the Soil of Suffering**

More than 14 years of civil war and unspeakable terror have earned Mozambique its standing as the most miserable country in the world in which to live. Yet some Mozambicans see their suffering as a kind of blessing, because thousands of people are turning to God and the church is growing as never before.

13 **Joyful the Deeds That Enable**

The poor are not always easy to love or help. Our desire to help often mingles with feelings of repulsion and fear. In this short essay, urban minister Bob Lupton relates his own thoughts and emotions about helping the poor.

19 **Dreams of a Navajo Shepherd**

Kenneth Begishe grew up in Arizona a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. He describes his youth as a blur of drunkenness and shame. But a graveyard prayer in Chicago led Begishe to Christ and back to Arizona to help the church minister to the Navajo people.

10 **The Burden of Age**

In the developing world, there are signs that economic hardships and increasing urbanization are slowly eroding time-honored traditions of respecting and caring for the elderly. Once esteemed for their wisdom, the aged now face neglect and abandonment in countries without the resources to take care of them.



ERIC WHEATER

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Reports of American servicemen studying the Bible and accepting Christ during their Middle East tour of duty were cause for rejoicing. Other brothers and sisters in Christ—thousands of Kurds, Iraqis and Palestinians who love our Lord—became tragic victims of the war. Many of them lost family, homes, jobs, and a stable future. We must pray for those new in the faith, and for those whose faith has been tested by fire.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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SOPHIE'S CHOICE?

A few years ago, during a terrible famine in Chad, World Vision workers came upon a Chadian woman who had given birth to twins. The young mother had come to the painful realization that she did not have the resources to keep both her children alive. She needed to make a choice—which one would live, which one would die.

No one knows what terrible mental and emotional anguish went into this decision, but by the time we arrived, the decision had already been made. And it was irreparable. One child was robust and healthy. He would make it. The other was thin and sallow, skin stretched tightly across his tiny frame, and he was vomiting. Clearly he would be dead within a few days.

I think of all the choices that confront me. Compared to the Chadian mother, none of them seem major—where to work, what to wear, what kind of car to drive, where to send my children to college, which doctors to go to. What is clear is that all my choices are made from a position of strength, multiple options, a veritable smorgasbord of opportunities. The Chadian mother, in contrast, had to make an impossible choice from a position of

abject poverty and hopelessness.

I've thought often of that young mother in these last few days. Spending a week in Romania and observing a few of the 200,000 children abandoned by their parents, I witnessed other acts of desperation that flow out of impossible choices.

This is a new revelation to me, because I could not conceive of a situation where ethics would be so disregarded as to dump children into state-run institutions. How could Romanian parents have allowed this to happen?

I had assumed it was a case of lost values. Communism erodes ethical considerations; Ceausescu destroyed them. We had identified the "bad guy." Now we just needed to energize the Romanian church to recapture values which had

systematically disappeared under totalitarian rule.

Too simple. And unfair to the people of Romania. While the Ceausescu regime contributed to the hopelessness parents felt, the desperate nature of poverty creates these impossible choices. Because babies are still keeping the orphanages filled—more than a year after the death of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp, a desperate human condition so pervasive and destructive that it precludes normal ethics. Romanian parents have no choice, no options. The poorest country in Eastern Europe causes families to either give up their children to the state or watch them starve to death. And that alternative denies any meaningful choice.

But I still struggle with the explanation. Somehow we understand the plight of a Chadian mother but cannot assimilate into our thinking her metaphorical equivalent in Eastern Europe. This may say more about our attitudes than about the Romanian parents.

One of the most honest statements I've heard came from an American woman after watching an ABC 20/20 segment on the Romanian orphans. "The thing that shocked me the most," she said, "was that they were all white." Yes, they *are* all white, and we are not used to seeing white children in the middle of such destructive poverty. It's different when they are black, brown, or yellow! In fact, might it not also be true that we have developed a higher tolerance level toward the pain of a black African?

This past week, attempting to understand the human dynamics unfolding in Romania, I was forced to confront the latent racism within me. The Romanian children are white. I had higher expectations of their parents. I was being both racist and paternalistic. God forgive me!

The kind of poverty that precludes ethical considerations, that forces impossible choices, that destroys part of ourselves in the process, is colorblind. As we begin to see the magnitude of the human drama unfolding in Romania, may we be more sensitive, more understanding, more compassionate, and *more outraged* about the fact that babies, black and white, are falling on the wrong side of an impossible choice. □

Poverty is the culprit. Intense poverty beyond our ability in the West to grasp.



JOHN SCHENK / WORLD VISION

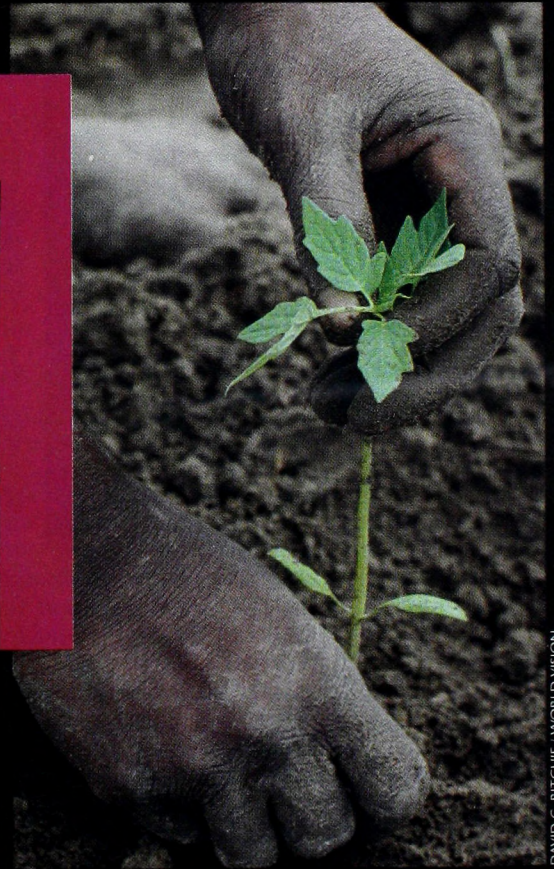
A Romanian child in a home for the "irrecuperable."

BY TANYA BRENNEMAN
AND GINGER HOPE

*In
Mozambique,
the world's
most
miserable
country,
the church
is growing
as never
before.*

OUT OF THE SOIL OF SUFFERING

MO ZAM BIQUE



DAVID C. RITCHE / WORLD VISION

The day our village was attacked, RENAMO soldiers kidnapped my wife and four of our children. My 6-year-old boy and I were left behind. After a year without my family, I decided to find them and live in captivity with them.

When I arrived in [RENAMO-held] Caixiti, the soldiers questioned me. I was afraid they might beat me or kill me. But I persuaded them I meant no harm—after all, I had my little child with me. They let me search for my family, and when I found them I learned that my oldest son had starved to death.

In Caixiti I found a small group of believers, but they were discouraged. I realized God had sent me there to encourage them. When I left two years later, the church numbered 2,000. Ten years ago churches were not growing like this. The growth started in 1973, when the confusion started.

We continually pray. Many suffer from the war. They are innocent. I have the courage to continue bringing people into the kingdom that is secure, because here it is never secure. God has given me this courage.

Simão Augusto

Simão Augusto is a pastor in what has been judged the worst place on earth to live. Mozambique stands at the top of the International Human Suffering Index, head and shoulders above even such traumatized countries as Angola and Afghanistan.

It's a distinction Mozambique has earned only too well. The index, compiled by the Population Crisis Committee in Washington, D.C., takes into account a broad spectrum of indicators—economic, social, health, personal freedom. The 14-year war between RENAMO rebels and FRELIMO government forces has shot all those indicators to pieces in Mozambique.

There is another list on which Mozambique would surely place or show: the Rapid Spread of Christianity Index, if there were such a thing. Christian churches in Mozambique are growing and reproducing as never before, and the growth started in earnest "when the confusion started," as Augusto so delicately understates.

Since 1977, RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) has been fighting the government, which was then Marxist but has since moved steadily away from Marxism. Although RENAMO has no political identity of substance, it was supported by the South African government until 1989. (South Africa's withdrawal of support was due in large part to pressure from private relief organizations, eyewitnesses to the havoc wrought by RENAMO.)

Whatever its original aims, by all reliable accounts RENAMO has func-

tioned as a perpetrator of indiscriminate terror and violence. RENAMO forces, known in Mozambique as *banditos*, routinely use tactics such as mass executions, razing of villages, forced labor, and systematic rape and torture, according to U.S. State Department reports and eyewitness accounts.

The devastation of Mozambique is most visible in the government-run camps for *deslocados* (displaced persons). Starvation and disease are at home among the mud-and-straw huts. Every *deslocado* has family members who starved to death, whose throats were slit, who were kidnapped, or who were burned alive in their huts while they slept. Almost all of them have lost almost everything. Grief, crisis, and loss have defined their lives.

Serfina Amilia Tolsiva, a pastor's wife housed in a *deslocado* center in Gilé, lived with her family in captivity for five

years after RENAMO attacked her village, Namagala, in 1986.

"They took all our clothes and dishes," Tolsiva says. "They did other things I cannot talk about. If they found persons dressed in clothes, they killed them."

Tolsiva became a RENAMO slave, working in the fields, hauling water, preparing their food. "If they found you sitting down, they would kill you. We were afraid every single day that they would kill us. I saw whole families shot down."

A group of Christians continued to meet in captivity and even built a little church. That group supported Tolsiva when her husband got in trouble with RENAMO:

"They came to take our little girls to have sex with them. My husband finally was courageous enough to stand up to them and forbid them to take the girls unless they wanted to marry them first. They beat him and tied him up and left him in the dirt for 24 hours. They said they would force him to join them so he would learn how it felt to be like them, with no wife. We were very frightened for his life. But thanks to God, they let my husband go. It was a miracle."

Tolsiva and her family finally escaped. They hid for three days in the bush. Then they made their way to Morrua, where for the first time in five years they saw people with clothes.

"We saw people eating meat sauce with salt," Tolsiva says, "but we were only able to forage for wild roots and leaves. We heard that Gilé had a health center, so we came here to get help for the children. When I arrived I was still

Pain and suffering produce a fork in the road. It is not possible to remain unchanged.

**Tim Hansel
You Gotta Keep Dancin'**



Pastor Avalino Mutelima baptizes new members of Union Baptist Church (Zalala, Zambezia province) in the Indian Ocean.

naked. A woman gave me this sack to wear around my waist. We had only a big blanket I made out of bark.

"In the midst of all this I never felt abandoned by God. I felt his presence with us all the time. We were slaves and prisoners for a very long time. God helped us see that this suffering and war would pass, but that we would be with God forever."

In 1975 a Marxist-Leninist government took control of Mozambique, banned church activities, and seized all church property. In 1982, when the government began to move away from Marxism, the church received official permission to operate again. Today there is complete religious freedom. But religious freedom is not the cause of Mozambique's extraordinary church growth, according to Mozambican Christians. The war is.

"I walked through all of Sofala Province in 1968 and never heard of a single church," says Pastor Manuel José Maveu. "In those times, we had not gone through war and suffering. Now we hear of growth everywhere. The suffering know God better."

Another pastor, Nicolão Inacio, puts it even more strongly: "The war has opened people's hearts to God. Their suffering turns their spirits to him. There was never such growth before. I could say that this war has been a blessing in disguise because so many thousands of people are coming to Christ. The *deslocados* are a large majority of the new believers, and they take the gospel back home with them. There, they evan-

*Jesus did not
come to explain away
suffering or remove it.
He came to fill it with
his presence.*

Paul Claudel in
Where Is God When It Hurts?
by Philip Yancey

gelize and bring many hundreds more to Christ."

Calling the virtual destruction of a country a "blessing in disguise" may sound cruel. But coming from a Mozambican Christian trying to endure and understand a life framed by terror and loss, the words are not easily dismissed.

Undeniably, the uprooting and scattering of several million people has exposed more Mozambicans to Christianity for the first time. An estimated 2 million Mozambicans are in *deslocado* centers within the country and another million live in refugee centers in neighboring countries.

"The paradox of the *deslocado* situation is that it brings such suffering and yet provides such opportunities for church growth," says Dick Morgan, a missionary in Mozambique with the African Evangelical Fellowship. "People who before the war lived many days'

walk away from the nearest Christians are now living next door to Christians in the government centers."

While the mingling of Christians with a greater spectrum of the population helps explain why so many more Mozambicans are hearing the gospel, it doesn't explain why so many are responding. They are responding, say Mozambican Christians, because the gospel of Christ meets their suffering on three key levels: offering healing from trauma, freedom from bitterness, and the strength to endure what must still be suffered daily.

According to Augusto, there is a marked difference between Christians and non-Christians in dealing with trauma. "I have seen a lot of people in the war zone who are so depressed they won't eat. I have seen people die from anger and grief." Christians, he says, "find consolation and comfort in God. They recover from their grief and let go of their anger. God consoles, and that is the difference."

Antonio Juzi Olese, a displaced peasant farmer now living in Mariebe Center in Nicoadala, Zambezia province, says the poverty of Mozambican churches makes that healing message starkly clear. "Here in our mud-and-thatch church we have absolutely nothing to give. It is only the Spirit of God that the church can give to help our people. Here we know the living God and we now sing praises for how he has changed our lives," Olese says.

Christians in Mozambique testify that their faith gives them the capacity to forgive devastating atrocities. Chipamba,

A NATION WITHERS

The first word of the catastrophe in Morrua, Mozambique, a former mining town deep in the interior, came from a band of 50 naked, starving men. They emerged from the bush one day at a World Vision emergency feeding center at Gilé, 40 miles east, unclothed except for strips of tree bark.

"There are 20,000 of us in Morrua," they told a stunned worker at the feeding center.

One week later, Joseph DeVries, a World Vision supervisor in the provincial capital of Quelimane, touched down on Morrua's rocky landing strip in the first plane to land there in eight years.

Morrua was filled with the eerie silence of a community too sick for anything but an interminable series of funerals. In a shack near the center of town the visitors found a family of seven just returned from its fifth burial. From a dark corner came the exhausted moaning of a child. She would die of starvation by nightfall.

After living at a bare subsistence level behind rebel lines, the people of Morrua were now free but were more cut off than ever from food, seeds, and farming tools. They were in danger of perishing, in effect, from freedom itself.

Mozambique is like that today: a country of 14.5 million people just emerging into the promise of peace and development 16 years after its independence from Portugal, but in peril of wasting away before it has a chance to fulfill that promise.

Rich in land and minerals, Mozambique is in potentially better shape than such other African countries as Sudan and Ethiopia, where poor land and rainfall conditions, exacerbated by civil war, have produced repeated famines. Mozambique could conceivably grow enough food to feed itself and could raise cashews and cotton for export. But virtually no development has occurred here in 16 years of independence, mostly due to the same rural

insurgency that made refugees out of Morrua's people.

The scanty roads that existed in 1975 to serve the country's potentially rich farmland are destroyed, the bridges downed or mined. One million Mozambicans live as refugees in neighboring countries, and another 2 million to 3 million are displaced within Mozambique.

Morrua, once an agricultural and mining center, is a microcosm of Mozambique's condition: sitting atop wealth but living in desperation. Still, Morrua is in better shape than many other communities. At least Morrua has a usable airstrip and cultivable land in the district.

But for every Morrua there is at least one Mulevala, a district about 40 miles away, where the scale of the human catastrophe remains unknown because the area still cannot be reached by outside assistance. Mulevala cannot be served from the air because RENAMO sabotaged its airstrip with a dozen deep, crosswise trenches. In November 1990, two bush pilots tried to land, one of them a Soviet helicopter pilot who said he was fired on and hit from the ground. Both vowed never to go back.

Another side of Mozambique's relief dilemma is easy to visualize in Pebane, a coastal district about 850 miles north of Maputo that has supported 200,000 war refugees. Pebane is little more than beach and sandspits, unsuitable for growing anything but a few sorry shoots of cassava. And it is at the end of a long relief supply line from the capital, so food deliveries are irregular.

Officials should be relieved that about 50,000 refugees have already left Pebane on their way home to begin cultivating their old land anew. But ironically, as more people return to their old homes and land, the strain on relief agencies becomes greater.

In that situation, says Nancy Barnes, the United Nations' emergency officer in Maputo, "you have to penetrate into localities where the roads have been abandoned for years. Operations take longer because most districts have no vehicles. People go [home] by foot, but for supplying them we need trucks. The resettling process will require phenomenal resources." □

By Michael A. Hiltzik, a Los Angeles Times staff writer. Copyright, 1990, Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission.

a World Vision agricultural officer, was captured by RENAMO and held for several months.

"The *banditos* destroyed our family home and our sewing machine, which was our means of livelihood," he says. "My fervent prayers were answered as the family escaped safely and found me in the city. Each one arrived completely naked.

"I have forgiven the men who have done these things to us, because I know they only do these things because they do not know God. I pray for them continually, that they will come and join us here in our house of prayer. They are suffering too, you know," he says.

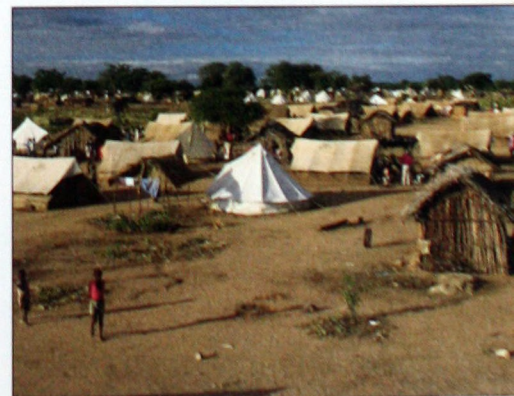
Mozambicans speak of their faith not only as a source of healing for past trauma, but as a source of strength in the round-the-clock endurance test that is daily life in Mozambique. It is not only the hope of eternal comfort that sustains them, they say, but a minute-by-minute reliance on God.

Perhaps the testimonies of three women express this best. Elisa Martinho watched three of her children starve to death. She herself was weak and sick, as were her other two children. She says she despaired and considered suicide.

"Then I remembered hearing of a God who was the only truth in the world," she says. "I began to pray to this God, and he gave me the emotional strength to go on, and the physical strength to walk into Gilé, carrying my two children all the way. God was with me as we traveled, and I feel him with me now every minute."

Ruth Simba of Morrua lost five children and her husband. She wears only tree bark. "We are continually crying, thinking of all our family now departed from us. But we still know God is with us, and that he brought us here [to a World Vision feeding center]. Without his help we would not have made it here.

Center for
displaced persons
in Tete province



DAVID C. RITCHIE / WORLD VISION

But I sometimes still don't know how much longer we can go on."

Fatima Socre, also of Morrua: "The *banditos* burned down my house in the village. We fled to Morrua, but then our food ran out. The children were all healthy until we arrived here. Now one of them has died and the others are getting worse every day. We eat only leaves. We are so very weak. I don't have any breast milk to keep my newborn baby alive. Yet I am convinced that God loves us and has brought us here."

None of this makes the war all right. None of this makes it tolerable that Mozambique ranks number one in the world for human misery. No one, in Mozambique or outside it, is saying that.

Why this suffering? I have struggled so much with this question," says Pastor Avalino Mutelima, who was traveling to Swaziland for radio training when he heard his hometown had been attacked. He returned immediately and walked through the bush looking for his wife, children, and parents.

"I saw horrible things. People cut in pieces, others burnt inside their huts, dead bodies everywhere. I wondered when the bodies would be those of my own family."

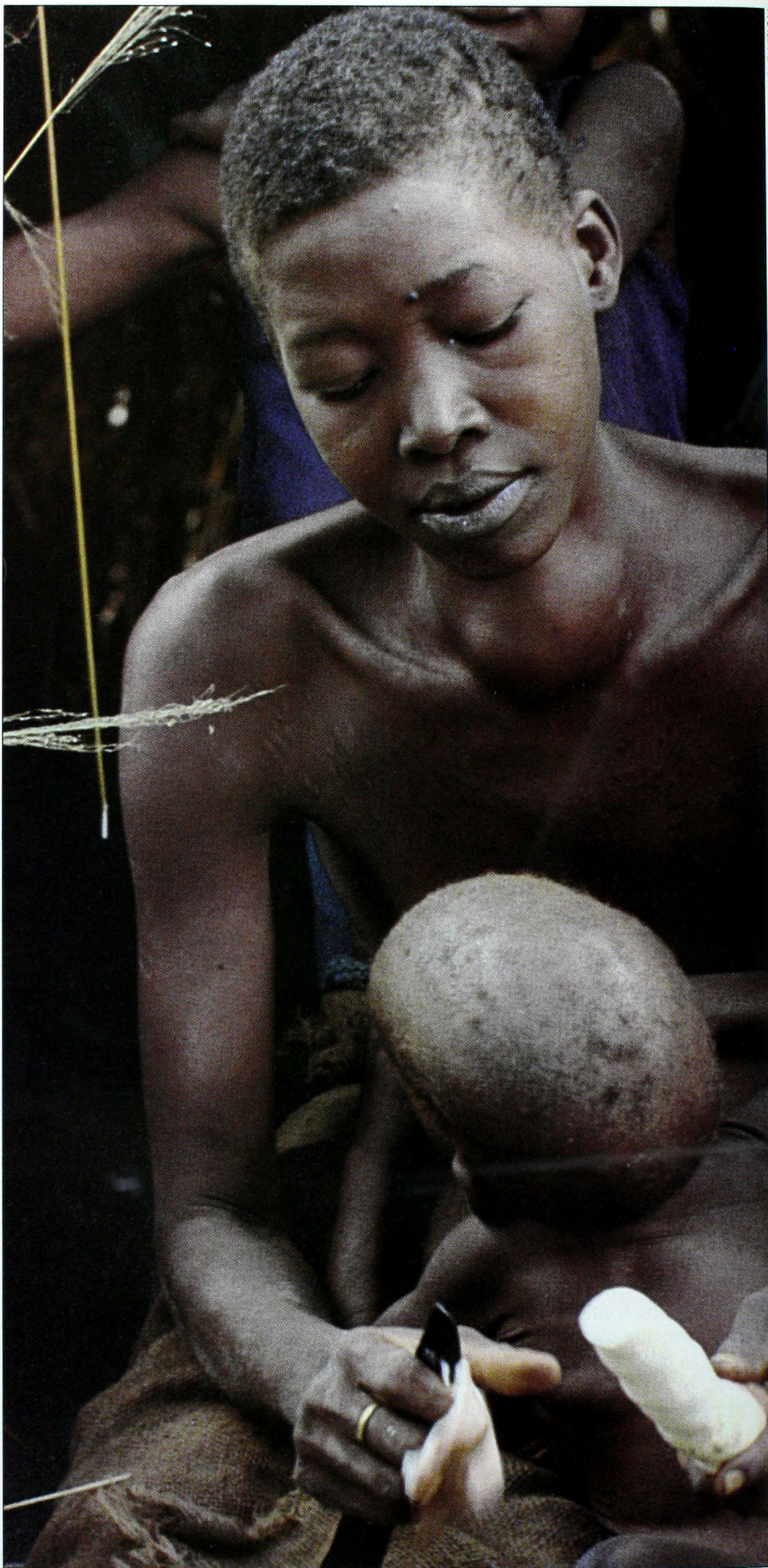
On the sixth day, Mutelima found his family alive. He took them, on foot, to the town of Quelimane—all but his parents, who were too weak for the trip. He tried several times to return for them but couldn't safely enter the area. Finally he received word that they both had died.

"Why would God allow us, his children, to be tormented and killed?" Mutelima asks. "I have thought of many possibilities: punishment for the way the country turned against God at its independence, or perhaps a sign of the end times.

"Finally I realized that there is no peace in this world. Only in God's love is there peace. Our spirits already live in the peace and the arms of God." □

Tanya Brenneman is a World Vision journalist based in southern Africa. Additional reporting by June Mears, a writer living in Pasadena, Calif.

World Vision has aided Mozambican war victims since 1984 with food, clothing, health care, farming tools, and support for Christian leaders. In fiscal year 1991, World Vision has committed over \$4 million in aid to the troubled country.



Cassava roots are all this deslocado has to feed her children. The starchy tuber—often called the "famine crop" because it can be dug up when other food is unavailable—fills the stomach but has scant nutritional value.

WINDS OF WAR, WINDS OF PRAYER

Jan. 16, 1991. The decision has been made. We are a nation at war. Distant powers have determined a course of action so profound and far-reaching as to affect not only me, snug in my California condo, but the entire world.

I am in turmoil. I have two reflective children who ask probing questions about matters as practical as what a SCUD missile is and as philosophical as why war exists. They watch, on CNN, Israeli children calmly putting on gas masks and retreating into sealed rooms to listen to the pervasive, eerie rise and fall of air-raid sirens. They hear about a sea of Iraqi refugees flooding into Jordan. The constant political debates of friends frustrate me. It doesn't even matter what side they're on: My world is out of orbit, beyond explanation.

I pray. But I am overwhelmed by the subject each time I approach the throne of God. How can I sort out the barrage of mental pictures, gut reactions, individual lives, nations, and leaders of nations into meaningful segments of a rationally expressed petition? The prayer of my heart is for peace; but it seems so naive, even trite, to think that a simple "Lord, please bring peace" would somehow move the hand of God to intervene in international chaos.

Now we're a few days into the war. I am on my way to work, feeling strangely foreign in the midst of the familiar. Snatches of scripture and images of battle vie for attention, and tears threaten to upstage the other two with emotion. In desperation I call out, "Lord, show me how to pray. I know your spirit desires to do that for me, and I don't even know how to begin." Suddenly I remember the disciples asking the same thing of Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray."

I begin to recite out loud, in my little white Mazda on a Southern California freeway, "Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." When I come to "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," I pause and repeat the words in modern English: "YOUR kingdom come, YOUR will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

I realize I am praying the perfect will of God. The words are charmed arrows instantly finding their mark. "Give me this day." No, I can't personalize this one. "Give us—all of us—this day our daily bread. Forgive our sins, and God, please help us to forgive the sins of those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine—YOURS—is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. It was then, it is now, and it will be for all time. Forever and ever amen."

The barrier is broken. I keep praying with a clarity not my own, giving thanks for the peace that has come to the battle within me.

The following Sunday I hear my favorite Bible teacher talk about I Samuel 23: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." He uses the verse to illustrate how one person can move nations through prayer.

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray because I don't get the instant fix that my culture and I seem to demand, because I'm not sure how to pray, because I'm one imperfect person, and all the other excuses I manufacture.

I know prayer changes things. More importantly, I believe it does. But in times of stress, I chafe and feel helpless. I get in the way of my own prayer. Still, I ask for help in how to pray, and I receive it in the form of a prayer. And the answer to that prayer for peace begins within my war-torn heart. That is consistent with God's principles—that his kingdom, his peace, starts within each one of us.

God alone knows how he will answer my prayer for peace in the Middle East. And he doesn't ask me to know. He only asks me to pray. □

Donna Sanders is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

O Lord,
my prayer
seemed too small
until I saw it
as part of
the coming
of the kingdom
of God.

Reginald Hollis



CLIFF NIELSEN



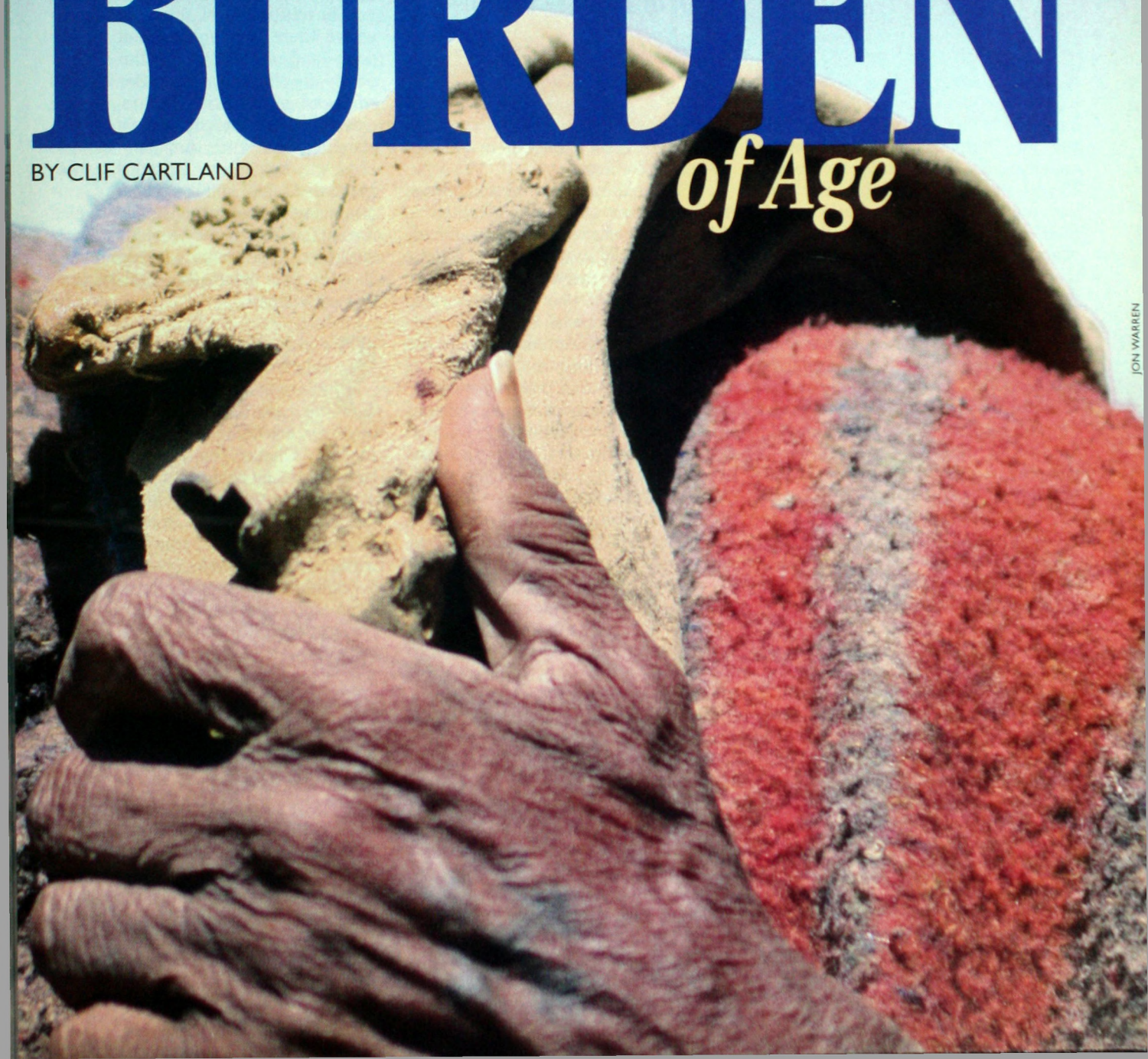
*There are signs
that the image of
the "respected
elder" is threat-
ened by trends of
Third World
The poverty.*

Some people called Clotario Blest compassionate. Others called him powerful. One thing they all agreed on—he had helped found Chile's most influential labor union. Clotario Blest died recently at age 92. Thousands attended his funeral. A stream of political leaders and union officials spoke glowingly of his dignified place in Chilean history, and he was laid to rest with fitting ceremony. But the pomp and circumstance belied a harsher reality. Clotario Blest died a broken, forgotten old man. For years he had lived alone in a miserable boarding house. Just before his death, Franciscan priests found him and took him from the squalor of his room to the pristine quiet of

BURDEN

BY CLIF CARTLAND

of Age



their monastery. They tried to restore some weight to his 90-pound frame, but he had been neglected too long.

Clotario Blest is no exception. Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society. I believe most Americans, while decrying the neglect of some of our own older people, admire other cultures for their time-honored traditions of valuing the elderly. We perceive the developing world as more respectful of aging parents and relatives, more sensitive to their needs, more inclined to heed their wisdom.

But World Vision correspondents paint a different picture, reporting that the elderly are increasingly regarded as "a nuisance, another mouth to feed."

Recent trends in developing countries are causing upheavals in traditional attitudes toward the elderly. And although instances of abuse and neglect do not mean that entire nations have forsaken their traditions, there are warning signs that attitudes are changing.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians, for example, have left their island home to escape political and economic problems. But in their desperate search for a new life, "burdensome" older relatives are often abandoned. That is the story of 89-year-old Madame Clenic. Her children moved to the United States and left their widowed mother behind. Seven years ago they returned for a visit and found Clenic badly cared for and in poor health. They took her to the Asile Communal, a Christian home for the aged in Port-au-Prince, and left again. In the seven years since, they have not contacted her once—not by mail, not by phone. "The children will come back to Haiti for the funeral," says Sister Emmanuelle, the director. "It seems as if a dead parent is more important than one who is alive but very old."

Ecuadoran correspondents report that young people claim, "Old people are out of fashion. We need to pay attention to those who will be here to build the future of the world." Others say, "Old people cannot change, so they have very little to contribute. Their best years have already passed."

The attitude of some Hondurans toward the elderly is "scorn, mockery, discomfort," says Oscar Chicas, a World Vision correspondent. In a depressed economy, a person who can no longer work is seen as "old, worthless furniture." Unless the person is a professional, "he has to live the rest of his life begging on the streets, even if he has a family."

That may seem heartless. But in the developing world, where resources must be stretched for a family to survive, the sheer number of elderly people—160

million—can be overwhelming to a younger, struggling population.

Urbanization is another factor in the abandonment of the elderly. Each day in the developing world, thousands of people migrate from farms and villages to cities, hoping for economic stability. "It used to be that people lived together in the village, and the elderly were fed and cared for by their sons' wives," says Esther Wamboi, 72, of central Kenya. "Children usually inherited land or livestock from the old people, and the old people were honored and respected by

Millions of the world's elderly live alone and overlooked by society.

the young," she recalls. "At harvest time each adult child would give the parents a measure of grain to help them feel they owned something.

"The old had their grandchildren around them, and they delighted in telling them stories. Today, grandchildren are usually away in the city, and the old parents are eaten up by loneliness. Many of those who live very long become so depressed, especially when most of the people their own age are dead, that they long to die. I know of some who have taken their own lives..." Esther's voice trails off. She sits silently, feeling her own loneliness.

There is no such thing as retirement in much of the developing world. Millions of men and women are forced to work well beyond age 65. Many work until they literally drop dead or until they are unable to continue.

Rosa, a Colombian, has painted furniture for more than 40 years. Her children are all professionals, but at age 67 she still works six days a week, then prepares food and washes clothes for her children and grandchildren. A portion of her small income goes toward family expenses. For Rosa and thousands of other Colombian seniors, the day they stop contributing money or labor is the day they are sent to a home for the aged.

Don Alfredo Cabrera Castañeda is 88 years old. He was born in a village in northeast Guatemala. Each week he goes back to his village to sell vegetables, bringing back peppers and bananas to sell in the city. From his small income he pays his family's electric and water bills.

Hezron Munyiri left his rural Kenya

home for Nairobi in 1942. He "retired" from his job almost 20 years ago. Today, he and his wife live in abject poverty. "Life in Nairobi is very difficult for old people," he says. "We own nothing, and our children have hardly anything to spare for us." Though old and weak, Munyiri, a blacksmith, still works every day to support himself, his wife, and the grandchildren who live with them. And he grows a few crops on the banks of the polluted Nairobi River.

In the United States, the voice of the American Association of Retired Persons is loud and clear. Its representatives lobby effectively at all levels of government. As a member, I appreciate the discounts and services. But I can't help wondering: Who lobbies for the People of the Developing World Who Cannot Retire? Who lobbies, not for discounts, but for life's bare necessities? And for the deeper need for dignity?

In this world of scarce resources where there is often little left for the poor—and even less for the elderly poor—the church can still offer Christ's compassion. Christian homes for the elderly have been recognized for the outstanding care they provide. Clotario Blest was helped by Christians, as was Madame Clenic. And in Peru, a TV crew producing a special on aging traveled throughout the country, looking at nursing homes. They found ideal conditions at only one place: the Christian-run Hogar Betania.

Serving the elderly, especially the elderly poor, is quiet work. There was nothing dramatic about easing the pain of Clotario Blest's last days. Or providing a loving touch for Madame Clenic. The world would not be dramatically changed if we could find some small way to make life easier for the Rosas, the Don Alfredos, or the Hezron Munyiris of the developing world. But *we* would be changed.

Children in the developing world often smile and laugh in spite of their poverty, and those smiles reward us for our compassion. That seldom happens with the elderly. They've seen too much of life. The years have taken their toll. The smiles don't come as easily. So we need to be patient, to slow down, to hear their stories, to help them feel they are still making a contribution.

The greatest tragedy is not physical neglect. It's having no one to say, "You're still important." That may be the greatest gift younger people can give older people everywhere, and it doesn't take anything but time. □

Clif Cartland is a free-lance writer in Burbank, Calif.

IN THE HEART of downtown Atlanta, across from Woodruff Park, I encountered the man. He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt. His legs were twisted and deformed. His pants reeked of urine.

A number of people had stopped to administer first aid, but he lashed out at them, driving them back with his flailing. Several offered to call an ambulance, but he angrily protested. It seemed he would rather die than accept assistance he did not request. Eventually, people began to ignore him and walk past with dispassionate glances.

The man was bleeding profusely. Blood seemed to ooze from his pores as though forced by some intense internal pressure. Even his face poured red. I grew dizzy and sick to my stomach as I watched. The man's writhing and groaning became more intense. Finally he cried out in desperation: *Someone help me or I will die!*

I was immobilized, caught between self-protection and a moral imperative to help. As I inched cautiously toward the man, a friend of mine strode forward and, removing his wool tweed topcoat, wrapped the man and lifted him in his arms. Only then did I rush to help. Opening a glass door to the lobby of an office building, we eased the small twisted man down onto the marble floor. We knelt beside him, unsure what to do or say. In that moment of silent attention, the man began to speak. His disconnected phrases soon wove a cohesive picture of his plight. He wanted to return to his home, a little trailer from which he had been evicted due to some minor code violations. As he talked and we listened, his needs seemed surprisingly simple—a small electrical problem and some minor carpentry—tasks I could easily perform.

Then I noticed his bleeding had stopped. We had administered no first aid, yet his pain had subsided and his knotted-up legs had begun to relax. I real-



FROM A PHOTO BY JON WARREN

ized, too, that my fear of this helpless, bleeding man had calmed.

I left for a short time to do the repairs that would enable the man to return to his home. The tasks weren't difficult, and in performing them I felt an unexpected sense of joy. When I returned to the man, I was surprised to find that his clothes were clean and his hair was neatly combed. His wild, repulsive appearance had disappeared. He looked quite normal. As we helped him to his feet we discovered that with a little steadying, he could walk under his own power.

The three of us walked the short distance to his trailer. When we came within sight of it, the man let go of our arms and walked the rest of the way on his own.

The loud ring of my 6:30 wake-up call jolted me to reality. I was not on a downtown Atlanta street. I was in a Chicago hotel room. But these vivid dream-scenes stayed with me.

He was lying on the cold sidewalk, clothes blood-soaked, hair matted with dirt.

A mix of emotions poured into my conscious world. Repulsion. Fear of contagion. Shame for my reluctance. Surprise at the simplicity of the remedy. Joy in small deeds.

For long moments I lay there, my awakened mind scanning for meaning among this powerful imagery. How deep is the pain, the outrage, of one whose real needs go unheeded while helpers impose their cures. How closely related to healing are listening and touching. How light and joyful are the deeds that enable. How overwhelming is the obligation to cure.

I got up to capture these dream thoughts on paper before they released me to the busyness of the day. □

Bob Lupton is founder of FCS Urban Ministries in Atlanta. This essay first appeared in the newsletter Urban Perspectives.

JOYFUL
the DEEDS that
ENABLE

BY BOB LUPTON

Preserving the Gift

No one can guarantee good health. Not even the United Nations. So what does it mean to say children have a "right" to health? At the very least, it means getting rid of the causes of needless child illness and death.

The first step is immunization. Six diseases are the main cause of 38,000 child deaths per day. Those same diseases—whooping cough, measles, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and tuberculosis—can be prevented with an inexpensive series of immunizations.

The second step is to improve sanitation. Contaminated water is the leading cause of death in young children. Open sewers and other health hazards add to the problem. Cleaner water and better hygiene mean less disease.

A final step is women's literacy. Mothers who can read are more likely to learn about good nutrition, to be more knowledgeable when preparing family meals, to be more aware of the first signs of illness.

Though good health is not humanity's gift to bestow, proper preventive care certainly is. □





JON WARREN

A little boy holds very still as an intravenous feeding implant in his hand gives him some added nutrients.

ERIC WHEATER



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION

An Indian mother takes precautions against the spread of bacteria.

This mother can provide a better life for her family by learning to read.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Ginger Hope



HAVE SQUEEGEE, WILL TRAVEL

Yes, they do windows. Los Angeles-based Victory Outreach has begun a commercial window-washing service called Clear Vision. The business is part of Victory Outreach's "re-entry" component, which teaches educational, vocational, and living skills to young men and women who have completed a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

Clear Vision gives its clients, which include prestigious downtown businesses, an unconditional guaran-

tee. "If they're not satisfied with the work for any reason, the crew will come back and do it again," says James Murphy, a Victory Outreach staffer.

"This helps teach the discipline to do the job right the first time," Murphy says. "Many of the guys have never worked a full-time job in their lives. They're learning the basics, including how to work as a team."

For information contact Victory Outreach, P.O. Box 15459, Los Angeles, CA 90015; (213) 746-9853.

“Lord, let me hunger enough that I not forget the world's hunger. Let me hunger enough that I may have bread to share. Let me hunger enough that I may long for the Bread of Heaven. Let me hunger enough that I may be filled. But, O Lord, let me not hunger so much that I seek after that which is not bread, nor try to live by bread alone. Amen.”

(From *Banquet of Praise*, a collection of worship resources and music published by Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20018.)

PERSONAL DELIVERY

"We could just take that money, write a check, and send it down to Mexico, and they could sure use it," says Al Fleming, referring to \$17,000 that students at Olivet Nazarene University (Kankakee, Ill.) raised for a service trip to Mexico this summer.

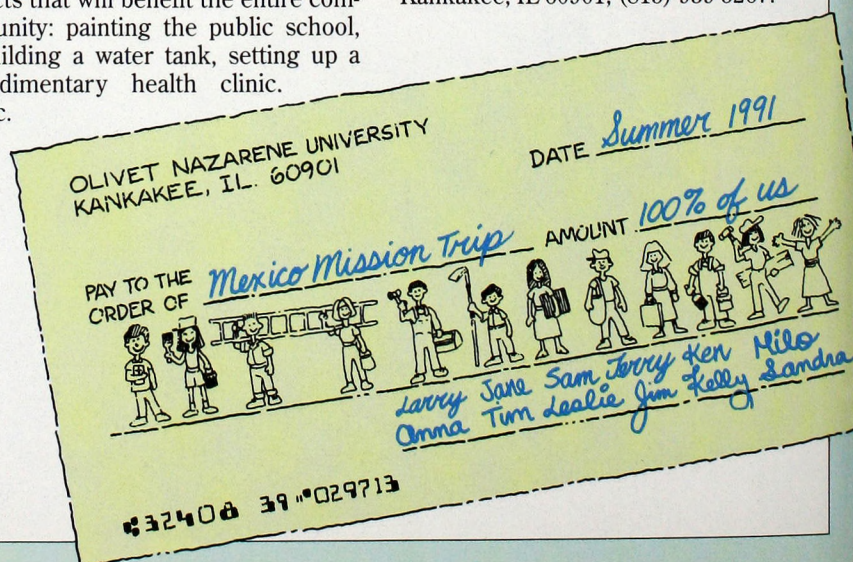
"So why are we going ourselves?" Professor Fleming continues. "I hope the answer is that these students will never be the same after this experience. When I was in college, I went to Trinidad on a similar project, and it changed my life."

Fleming's group is one of several from Church of the Nazarene campuses across the country spending about two weeks this summer in vil-

lages 200 miles north of Mexico City. The area's citrus economy was hit hard by a cold spell during the growing season. Fleming notes that the student group, while working through local churches, takes care to plan projects that will benefit the entire community: painting the public school, building a water tank, setting up a rudimentary health clinic, etc.

"This is the other reason we go ourselves—to show people that we care, that we're not just throwing money at them," Fleming says.

For information contact Dr. Al Fleming, Olivet Nazarene University, Kankakee, IL 60901; (815) 939-5267.

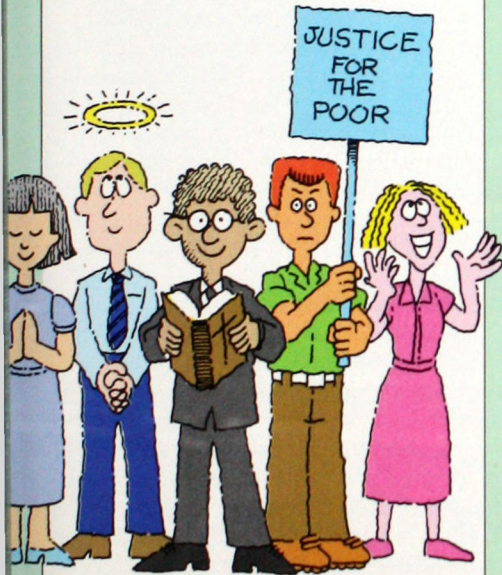


ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

FIVE OF A KIND

Five vital movements within Christianity, too often cut adrift from one another, will be firmly moored together at the Renovaré National Conference on Personal Spiritual Renewal, Oct. 23-26 in Pasadena, Calif.

Renovaré, founded by Richard Foster, is a Christ-centered, international, ecumenical movement for the

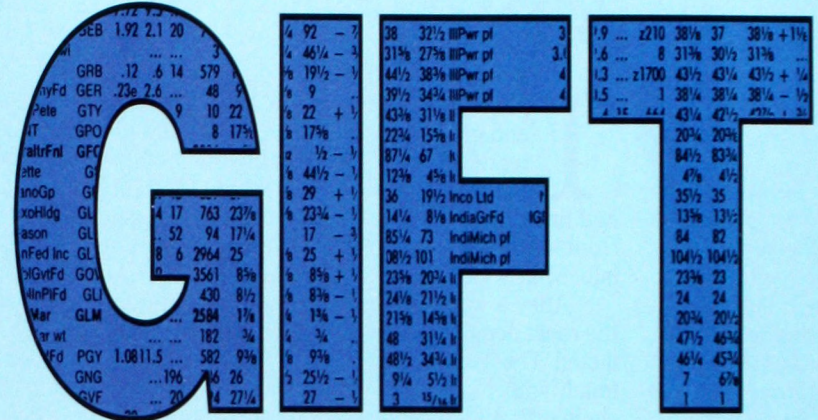


renewal of the church. It pulls together the contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, and evangelical movements. Renovaré insists that the Christian life consists of all of these: the prayer-filled life, the virtuous life, the Spirit-empowered life, the compassionate life, and the Word-centered life.

For information about the conference or the Renovaré movement, contact Renovaré, P.O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879; (312) 261-5870.

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FMA 106

First Baptist Church

MORE THAN A FREE LUNCH

BY RICK NATHANSON

The Foster family visits with Dennis Lihte, director of Noon Day Ministry, in their home. From left: Mandy, Susan, and Brandie Foster; Dennis Lihte; Rita, Mike and Charles Foster.



PAUL BEARCE

The economy in Texarkana, Texas, was bad and getting worse when Rita and Mike Foster decided to move with their four children to Albuquerque, N.M., in June 1989. Mike had lined up a construction job, but because of car trouble, the family arrived in Albuquerque a day late. Mike's job had been given to someone else.

After a week of unsuccessful job hunting and the rapid depletion of their savings, the Fosters contacted The United Way. The agency put them in touch with Noon Day Ministry, the main daytime shelter for Albuquerque's homeless. Grateful for the midday meal, the Foster family immediately pitched in to help clean up. Noon Day director Dennis Lihte

ness. Noon Day helped them through the dry spell. Mike found another job with a long-established Albuquerque company, and in June 1990 the family was able to move to a better neighborhood.

"Everything is fine and the children are happy," Rita said. "We're so grateful to Noon Day. It gives you the little nudge that you need to get started, but you've got to be willing to go the rest of the way to get back on your feet. If you don't help yourself, you'll be right back there on the street."

That the Fosters have come a long way since their first noon meal at Noon Day is evidence of how far the ministry itself has come.

In 1982, a local relief agency asked the First Baptist Church to provide a meal and devotional service for the needy. The church agreed to do so—for four Wednesdays. There was no money in the church budget for the feeding program, so a Sunday school class, led by church member Calvin Horn, agreed to pay \$1.50 for each meal served. About 70 people showed up for the first few meals, but the number quickly grew to more than 200, and the church started offering three lunches weekly.

As expenses grew, other churches—Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and non-denominational—donated generously. They recognized First Baptist's downtown location was well-suited for serving the homeless.

It was then that Noon Day Ministry received its name, taken from Isaiah 58:10 ("If you spend yourself on behalf of the hungry your night will become like the noon day").

The noon meal, of course, barely scratched the surface of the needs of the homeless. Other obvious needs were for showers, laundry facilities, clothing, haircuts, toiletries, and telephone access.

Calvin Horn led efforts to establish a place for addressing those needs. Many of the supporters of those first Wednesday lunches became boosters, fund-raisers, and contributors to the building project. In June 1988, Noon Day Ministry opened the doors of its new two-story building in the parking lot behind First Baptist Church. Members of First Baptist and other Albuquerque congregations volunteer in Noon Day's programs.

"Sometimes people accuse us of supplying a Band-Aid solution to the problems of the homeless," said Joe McKinney, pastor of First Baptist. "I don't think that's true. But even if it were, what's wrong with a Band-Aid? Everyone needs one from time to time." □

Rick Nathanson is a reporter for the Albuquerque Journal.

noticed the Fosters' efforts and hired them to do a few chores around the shelter.

"It made us feel better knowing that we made this money, rather than having someone give it to us," said Rita. "It gave us back our pride."

The Fosters' determination to help themselves made them good candidates for Noon Day's transitional housing program.

If families can show they will be able to sustain themselves after a short period of economic aid—perhaps one or two months—Noon Day helps them find housing and pays the move-in costs.

"The transitional housing program is not for the people whose lives are one crisis after another," Lihte said. "Those people do need help, but two months after we help them they're having another crisis and they're homeless again."

Once the Fosters' car was repaired, Mike landed a construction job. In the meantime, the family had made friends at the First Baptist Church. A Sunday school class "adopted" them and helped them set up their new home.

Six months later Mike found himself between jobs. With only Rita's income from temporary jobs, the family again faced the prospect of homeless-

For more information contact Noon Day Ministry, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 26446, Albuquerque, NM 87125; (505) 247-3611

BY GINGER HOPE
PHOTOS BY SUSAN RAE LAKIN

A
Navajo pastor
keeps his eye on
the wolf and the
setting sun.

DREAMS OF A SHEPHERD

I dreamed I was standing on a mountainside covered with sheep. It was spring. Every time the sheep saw the beautiful green grass, they ran over and tried to bite it off before other sheep could get it.

All of a sudden I heard a voice say, "Look toward the west." I looked and the sun was almost set.

In my dream, I thought back to when I was small, when I was a shepherder. My father and mother were real strict about the sheep. It meant a spanking if I didn't get the sheep back into the fold before sunset,



because if I didn't, some sheep would be lost.

I began to take the sheep back toward the fold. But every time I would take some sheep over and go back for more, the first group would wander away.

I looked around for help. Sure enough, there were some kids sitting in a circle a distance away, playing with little stones.

So I yelled at them: "What are you doing? Come over!" When they looked up I saw that their bodies were of children, but their heads and faces were of mature men. I felt embarrassed, if they really were mature men, for showing disrespect. I spoke again in a polite way: "I have something to tell you."

They all rose and came and stood around me. I told them exactly what the voice told me. I said, "The sheep need to get back into the fold before the sun sets." They all got in line as I told them and we were pushing the sheep forward. Then all of a sudden I saw sheep going back on my right side and my left side. I turned and looked, and some sheepherders were missing. They were back playing again. I was so frustrated I didn't know what to do next.

Then the voice said to look toward the west as far as I could see. I saw something coming. It was a little dot, and it was getting bigger. All of a sudden I saw it was a wolf, big and muscular.

I ran back to get the other herders. I told them about the wolf. "He will be here in no time, so we better do something," I said.

We all agreed and we lined up again the same way, and this time the voice spoke to me and said, "Take hold of each others' hands." The voice told me the wolf was not after the sheep but was after the sheepherders, because he knew that if he killed the sheepherders, then one by one he could get all the sheep.

That scared me. I was really holding on, and I was telling the other sheepherders to hold on tight and push the sheep forward. We were getting the sheep forward when I woke up.

Kenneth Begishe puzzled a long time over that dream. For two years the Navajo pastor asked God what he was supposed to do about it. Eventually he came to understand that the sheepherders were *all* the Christian ministers on the Navajo reservation, not just the ones in his particular brand of Pentecostal non-denominationalism. He was to bring them all together, train them, let them encourage one another.

The ministers were harder to convince than the boy-men in his dream. "A lot of them that were better educated than me asked, 'Who are you to do this? Are you starting a new ministry? Is this another denomination?'" Begishe says.

But by all accounts, the monthly

"ministry meetings" of the Fellowship of Ministering Churches have allayed such fears over the past dozen years. The group has managed to shun competition, cliquishness, and power-mongering.

That is largely due to the influence of Kenneth Begishe, a quiet man in jeans and cowboy boots who seems almost universally known across the western Arizona reservation.

He was born in the 1940s into a very traditional Navajo family. The old ways were strong where he grew up. Many of the local families' ancestors had hidden in the mountains and escaped "The Long Walk," when Kit Carson herded about 8,000 Navajos into Fort Sumner, New

When he drank, the self-hatred he had internalized at 'white school' came seething to the surface.

Mexico, and kept them there long enough for much of their cultural structure to disintegrate.

Begishe was born "to" the Folded Arms People (his mother's clan) "for" the Bitter Water People (his father's clan). He was raised in a series of forked-stick hogans (mud-covered, dome-shaped dwellings) within a few miles of where his powder-blue prefab home now stands. He was a good son, a good brother, and a good Navajo. He herded sheep and rounded up horses. He sketched landscapes and fashioned animals out of canyon clay for his little sisters.

He sat beside the medicine men at "sings" (sacred ceremonies), studying the long chants and intricate sand paintings. His friends still joke that if he weren't a preacher, Kenneth Begishe would probably be a medicine man.

Then he went to school.

It was a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school. This was the BIA of the vintage that washed out little Navajos' mouths with lye soap for speaking Navajo. *Old Navajo ways are bad*, Begishe learned at school before he was 10. *You will never get anywhere until you give them up for the white ways. Then you will have cars and televisions and a good life.*

It was a confusing message for a good Navajo boy. It sent a lot of Navajos

into no-man's-land, alienated from their elders and stonewalled by the American Dream.

The anesthetic of choice in that no-man's-land comes in a bottle. Like almost all the Navajo boys at boarding school, Begishe started to drink. Everybody did it, not only at school but across the reservation, although it was illegal to sell or consume alcohol there.

"It was like a hillbilly lifestyle," Begishe says. "A lot of home brew, a lot of drinking and fighting. The women would take the children and hide."

He was still a good son, a good brother, a good Navajo—except when he drank. When he drank, the dissonant self-hatred he had internalized at "white school" came seething up to the surface.

Begishe would go home drunk and pick fights with anyone in sight. He would stagger into a hogan during a sacred ceremony and pull down the wood-stove chimney, sending everyone outside until the smoke cleared. The next morning he would wake up sober and horrified with shame, hiding in his mother's hogan for days.

This is how Begishe recalls his entire youth: a blur of drunkenness and shame. Others remember more. Oswald Werner, for one.

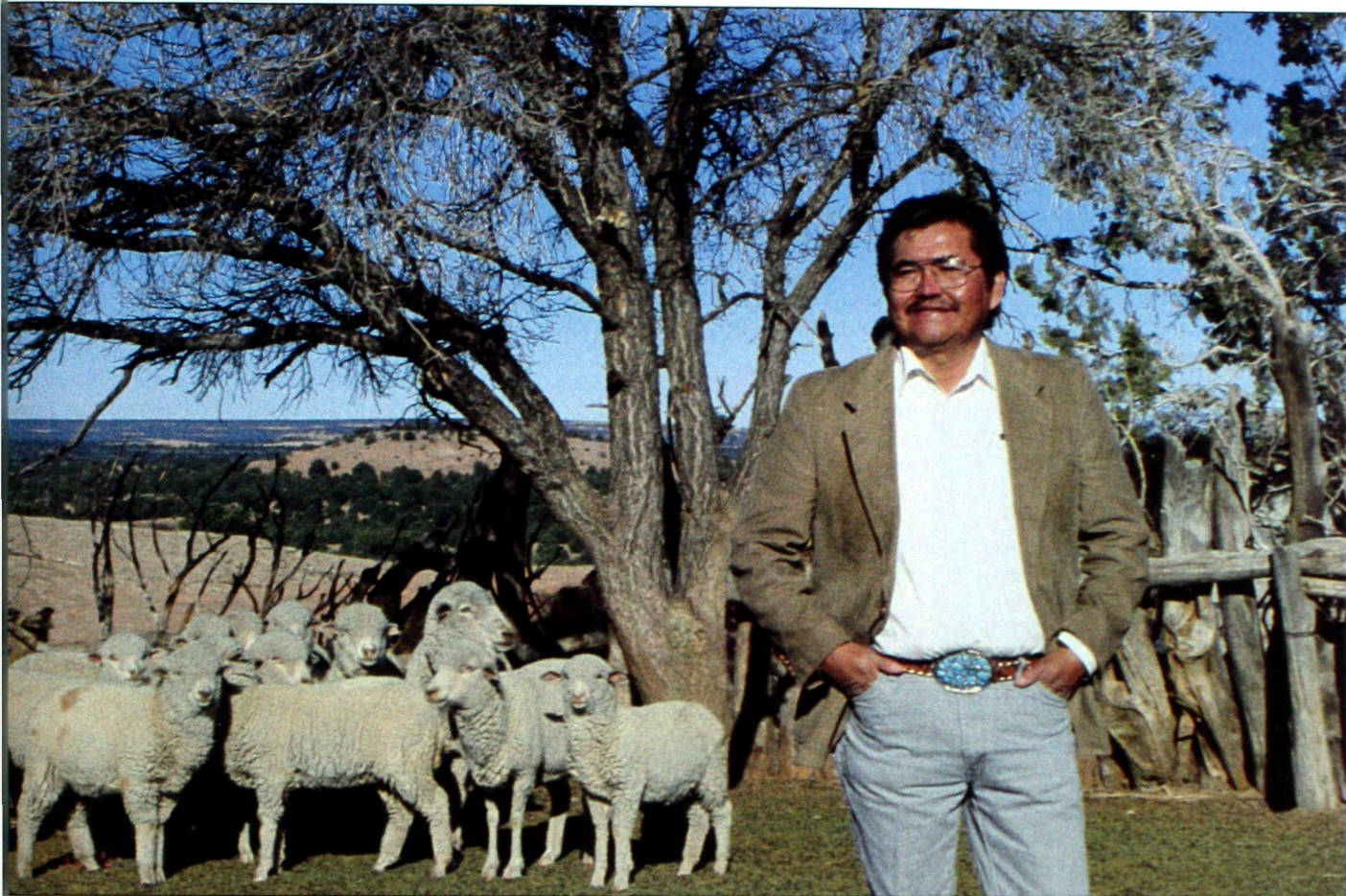
In 1960, Werner was a young doctoral student living with his wife and children in a guest hogan at the Shonto Trading Post, studying Trader Navajo—the pidgin Navajo spoken by white traders on the reservation. One of his "language consultants"—at a dollar an hour—was 16-year-old Kenneth Begishe.

"I saw right away that Kenneth was a bright boy, very observant about his own culture, with a knack for languages," says Werner, now professor of anthropology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Begishe left the reservation in 1963, eventually joining Werner in Chicago on a major project, a Navajo medical dictionary. But for Begishe this was no feat. It was defeat. He left because he was too good a Navajo to stomach the way he was shaming his family, and too bad a drinker to stop.

Something decisive happened in





Chicago. In the middle of a drunken street fight, Begishe found himself inexplicably alone in a deserted cemetery. For a Navajo, this is a terrible thing. Traditional Navajos won't even enter a house where someone once died.

Begishe ran around wildly, looking for a gap in the high iron fence. Finally he gave up and laid down right on a grave, with his head on the tombstone. He prayed one of those end-of-the-line prayers: "God, if you are there, you see where I am. I am going to die if my life goes on this way. So if you want to do something, do it now."

In the morning he got up and started toward the fence. The next thing he knew, he was outside on the sidewalk. He doesn't know how he got there.

"I guess I got translated or something," he says, telling the story over late-night supper in a neighbor's trailer.

His 16-year-old daughter, Cassandra, bursts out laughing. "Translated? Dad!"

Everybody around the kitchen table has a good laugh on Begishe. He shrugs good-naturedly. "Well, I don't know what else to call it," he says.

Elbow-to-elbow over mutton soup, blue corn mush, and fry bread, the group savors again a story they've heard dozens of times before, prompting and correcting the soft-spoken man who is their father, brother, clansman, and pastor.

The story continues in Oklahoma City, where a Shawnee Indian took Begishe to hear a Pentecostal evangelist. There Begishe heard God say, "Your prayer in the graveyard is being answered. This is it."

Not long afterward,

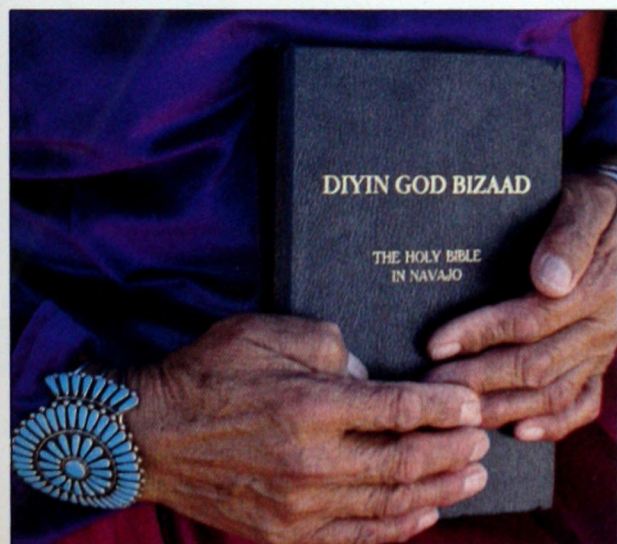
I didn't know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and we learned as we went along."

in his mother's hogan, and later in her one-room 10 x 10 house, Kenneth Begishe started a church.

"I didn't really know how to be a pastor, but I just started, and then we learned as we went along." It is a sentence he will repeat almost verbatim as he ticks off dozens of enterprises he has begun since then.

"We didn't know how to build a church, but we just started. ..."

They mixed the concrete in the upside-down cab of a junked pickup truck, and had to pour the floor three layers thick before they got it level, but they built a church. Men in jeans and cowboy hats, women in long full skirts and velveteen blouses, all of them wrapped in Navajo wool blankets, would stand in the back of the tiny church with the black wood stove and the mix-n-match



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donated pews while Begishe preached.

Horse-drawn wagons filled the empty lot outside White Post church in those days. Begishe's old green Chevy went through more U-joints than he can remember, bouncing over the red dirt roads of the reservation well into the night, taking five, six carloads of people home after every service.

The big denominations built their Indian missions in the cities and towns. Begishe knew that the church, in order

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

to win the people, would have to go to the Navajo people, who traditionally live in tiny, scattered clusters across the arid mesas.

So when five or 10 people from a certain area started attending White Post Church, Begishe would start looking for a pastor among them. He didn't call it "indigenous leadership development," but that's exactly what Begishe was doing. He told his fledgling pastors that they didn't need a white education, that they didn't need a white missionary to lean on, that God would give them everything they needed to do the work.

Not that Begishe is against education. Far from it. It's one of the reservation's most pressing needs, and he knows it. That's why he put in years on the local BIA school board, a board he says was powerless even to dismiss a patently incompetent teacher. (Begishe's handling of the stymie was typical of his personal style, quietly assertive: He simply sat in the back of the classroom and stared at that teacher day after day until the teacher eventually left.)

But there simply wasn't time to wait for a whole crop of pastors to work their way through a formal education. Not pastors like Joe Shortman, a

retirement-age military veteran who started Cow Springs Church in a new wood-frame building he had originally intended as his own home.

"I don't think he really ever went to school, but he's a real good minister," Begishe says. "If this were a denomination, they would probably send us off to Bible school, and then they would give us a nice building and keep us there. In a church like that, Joe Shortman would never be a pastor."

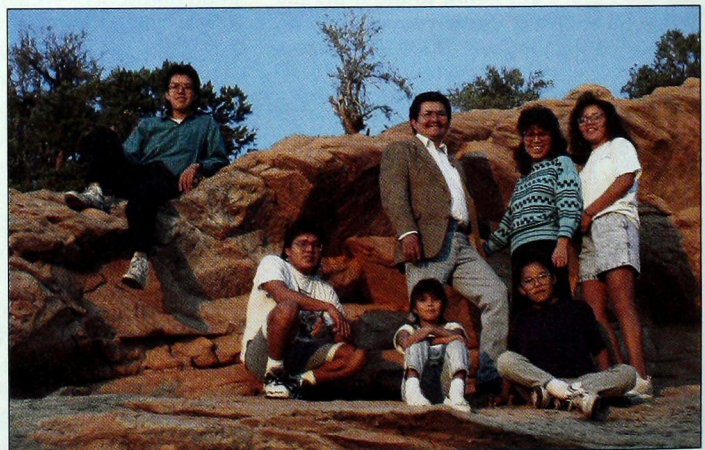
Shortman is one of three or four dozen leaders—men and women, from their 20s to their 70s, mostly Navajo, one or two whites—who meet one Saturday a month, sitting around long tables and working their way down a chalkboard agenda that might cover anything from finances to theology to plumbing. Characteristic Navajo teasing—aimed just as often at oneself as at another—sends loud laughter around the room when the discussion bogs down.

These are the shepherders. This is where they join hands and form a line.

Begishe sits in front with the other directors, but he doesn't say much, because this particular session is mainly about him and his various projects, and how they're shooting off in so many directions: a boarding home for orphans, a proposed Christian television station, a Christian school, and more.

"Maybe we should put all these projects together and call it Kenneth Begishe Ministries," one man suggests, joking. Laughter shakes the room for almost a full minute. It's a safe joke because nobody here would take it seriously, and that says something. The celebrity-loner mentality flies in the face of everything the Fellowship of Ministering Churches stands for.

Nobody laughs louder than Ken-



The Begishe family (standing, from left): Kenneth, Mary, Cassandra; (seated) Tim, Mike, Sophia, and Sonny.

neth Begishe. He takes off his glasses, wipes his eyes, and then they move on. □

PAST THE POINT OF NOT CARING

BY KELLY WEBER

I approach the darkened building, thinking about the difference it has made in my life. Raised in the latter part of this century, I learned to value self-importance, self-attainment, and detachment. But in the early-morning hours of the past year, these beliefs have been quietly removed, leaving room for compassion, humility, and faith.

I open the door and Marie greets me. "Are you Tom? Are you my boy Tom?"

"No, Marie, go back to bed. Tom will come and tuck you in."

I am a Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA) in this long-term care facility, otherwise known as a nursing home. The shift report is about to begin. Thirty feet of corridor slide by unnoticed. Lee's chant hangs in the air as I approach—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—then drifts away behind me. At Station B, the registered nurse recites nightly procedures and problems. "Gary Davis in 37B has tried to leave twice, so keep your eye on him. Gina Collins in 14B is okay, just frightened and confused." At 10:53 p.m. my shift begins.

My partner Debbie and I go to Edith's room—our first stop—and change her sheets. She awakens and whispers, "Thank you." Debbie leans over, kisses her on the forehead and tells her, "I love you. Good night."

This ritual used to bother me. Once I asked Debbie if perhaps it wasn't too intimate, too involved. After all, these people are so near death. Getting familiar with them makes their death more painful for us.

"I suppose it might look that way," Debbie answered. "You're still new. But you're just holding back your emotions because you're scared. Everybody you know is going to die, your parents, your spouse, your children. These people are just closer to death. Don't be afraid for them. They're not."

Debbie planted a seed of compassion within me, but my fears and the values I acquired were to keep it dormant for a while longer.

Then I met Cornelia.

Nel, as she liked to be called, was 88, blind, diabetic, and a dual amputee, having lost her legs to gangrene. She chose me as her friend because my voice reminded her of her late husband's. But lying in her bed, aged, unwhole, with clouded, glassy eyes, she at first made me uncomfortable. She frightened me.

Nel somehow sensed my reluctance. "I don't bite, you know. And surely you could outrun me," she laughed. Guilt forced me back to her bedside, and slowly the walls I had built up began to crack.

Each night we would tell each other our life

stories, Nel always encouraging the conversation along. Then one night she stopped me in mid-sentence. "Kelly, don't tell me about yesterdays. I've got a head full of them. Don't waste my time with tomorrows, either. Just tell me about today." She patted my hand and smiled.

From then on I saved a piece of each day to bring color and depth to her world. "Nel, I saw a flock of geese flying overhead today. Canadian Honkers, I think. They flew into the distance with their cries following behind them."

In exchange, she gave me a view of yesterday:



SUPERSTOCK / FOUR BY FIVE

"I remember once I saw so many geese, they filled the horizon," and a glimpse of tomorrow: "Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

Late one night while I was changing her sheets, she grasped my hand and told me to sit beside her.

"Hon, tonight I don't want to hear about today. Tell me instead about forever." I could hear her breathing in the quiet room.

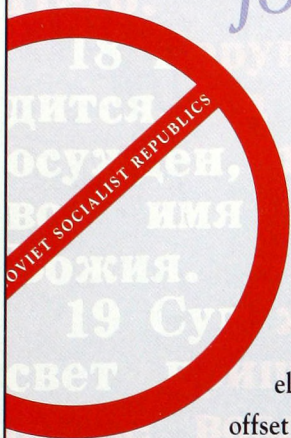
I looked at her face and realized, as did she, that forever was all that was left to her. There was no place for me to hide, nor—oddly—did I want to. I gathered her to me and told her of sunlight, of love, of God. In turn, she showed me life and death, and the love in each of these.

It is 6:58 a.m. Lee's litany—"Oh mother, oh mother, oh mother"—ends abruptly as breakfast arrives. I shuffle toward my car. This morning, nothing really happened. There were no Cornelias in my life today. Perhaps there will be again tomorrow. □

Kelly Weber is a free-lance writer in Black, Mo.

"Everything on God's earth migrates eventually, Kelly. Everything."

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