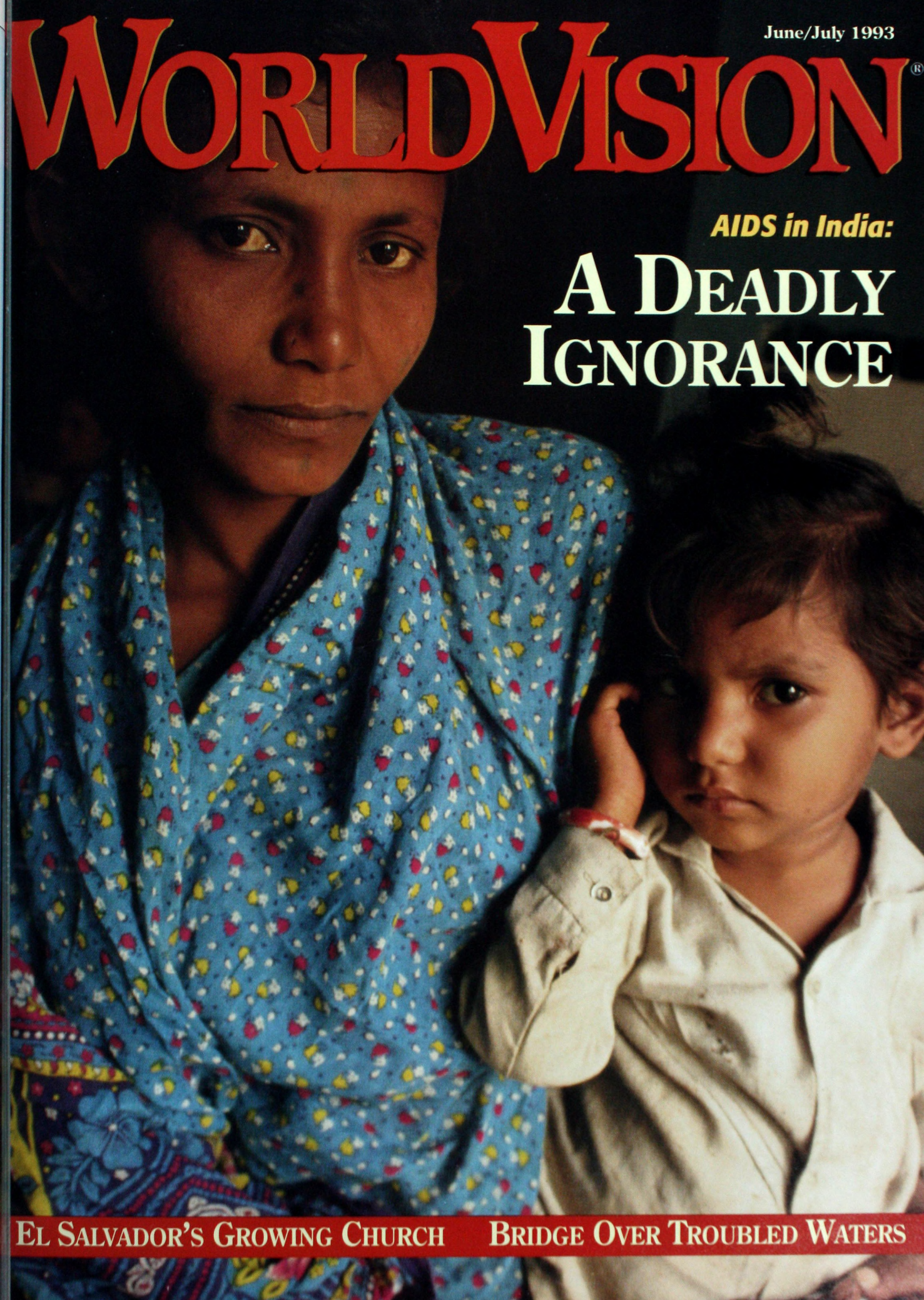


June/July 1993

WORLD VISION[®]

AIDS in India:

A DEADLY IGNORANCE



EL SALVADOR'S GROWING CHURCH

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

AIDS IN INDIA

A DEADLY IGNORANCE

Prostitutes in Bombay's red-light district



THE NUMBER OF AIDS CASES HAS EXPLODED AMONG BOMBAY'S PROSTITUTES, WHO ARE MOSTLY UNEDUCATED ABOUT THE DISEASE. INDIA COULD BECOME HOME TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST NUMBER OF AIDS CASES.



On a humid Friday night in Bombay's red-light district known as Kamathipura, throngs of people mill the streets amid a mad crush of bullock carts, goats, bicycles, and double-decker buses. Above the storefront tea parlors, bars, and hair salons, the brothels operate behind shuttered windows.

Sushila Mary is one of thousands of prostitutes on the streets tonight. White bracelets shimmer on her wrists, and silver jewelry glistens from her earlobes and the wing of her nose. Six years ago, a "suitor" promising marriage lured her from her home state of Karnataka to Bombay, where he sold her into prostitution. Afraid of brutal beatings by the *gundas*, crooks who control the red-light area, she has not fled brothel work.

But lately she has started to fear another danger. She's heard vague rumblings about a new disease in her midst that can kill. "I even thought about running away from here when I heard about it," she says.

The disease is AIDS. But she doesn't know it by name. She doesn't know how it destroys its victims—or how it's transmitted.

All around her swirls the night life of Kamathipura. Prostitutes swing their arms and beckon from doorways, enticing men to tryst with them on small cots upstairs. Most

of the clients are as uninformed about AIDS as Sushila Mary.

Ignorance could cost these men and women their lives. AIDS is carving cruel inroads into India. In November 1992, India had almost 11,000 confirmed cases of HIV infection, a number even the government acknowledges is deceptively low because the country lacks an organized, widespread testing system. Of this infected group, 242 have developed full-blown cases of AIDS. Already, 110 of them have died.

The actual death toll is probably much higher. Within India's inadequate health care system, deaths attributed to meningitis, tuberculosis, pneumonia, or other illnesses might go unexamined for an AIDS link.

Until recently, Africa has been considered the world's most AIDS-ravaged region. Slowly, this focus is shifting to Asia, where an estimated 1.5 million are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. India could become home to the world's largest number of HIV and AIDS cases because of its huge population of

870 million (second only to China).

Various estimates, including one from the World Health Organization, claim that 1 million Indians are infected with HIV. (That is a significant portion of the 13 million worldwide that the WHO estimates have been infected since the start of the pandemic.)

RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Although still in the early stages of an epidemic, India has all the ingredients for an AIDS disaster: widespread poverty and ignorance, a largely unscreened blood supply, and an overburdened health care system. WHO predicts that if the virus goes unchecked, India could have at least 5 million HIV-infected people and 1 million full-blown AIDS cases by 2000.

The AIDS virus, which ravages the immune system and leaves victims vulnerable to deadly bouts with tuberculosis, pneumonia, cancers, and various infections, has the potential to overwhelm India's medical system. An unchecked AIDS epidemic could ulti-

mately divert large amounts of India's national treasury into health care costs, retarding the country's past few years of economic progress. Since the disease strikes victims in their prime working and childrearing years, AIDS-afflicted employees and parents will die, leaving orphans behind.

Bombay's red-light district is gaining a reputation as the nation's most prolific breeding ground for AIDS. A huge pool of migrant workers from poor rural areas have flocked to Bombay, a western port city of 12 million. They come to this financial heart of India to work as factory and construction workers, drivers, and unskilled laborers. They cannot afford to bring their wives, so many visit some of the city's estimated 100,000 prostitutes.

With prostitutes catering to an average of four to six customers a day, including men from the Persian Gulf countries, HIV infection has exploded among these women. In 1987, only 1 percent of prostitutes tested positive for HIV. By 1992, the figure had shot up to 40 percent.

Unsuspecting migrant workers and truck drivers, who patronize red-light districts in Bombay and other cities, carry the virus back to wives and partners in small villages and along expansive truck routes throughout the continent. Even in remote backwoods, the virus has the potential to spread through infected truck drivers, who expect sexual favors in return for allowing women carrying heavy loads of hay to hitch rides with them.

Seven out of 10 Indians diagnosed with HIV have been infected through heterosexual intercourse, according to U.S. surgeon Raj Bothra, president of the India AIDS Foundation USA. Fewer than 1 percent of cases have been attributed to homosexuality, presumably because of strong social and legal sanctions against such relationships. Indians also have been infected through tainted blood products and intravenous drug abuse.

JUST A LIFELONG DISEASE

In Bombay's sprawling Sir J.J. Hospital, Dr. Alka Deshpande stands inside one of India's mere handful of AIDS wards. She is surrounded by a dozen patients, mostly men, lying on metal cots in a large room with red floors and green walls. Over one doorway, there is a lighted shrine to *Ganesha*, the popular Hindu elephant god considered "the remover of all obstacles."

Deshpande talks to 26-year-old "Ramesh," dressed in hospital-issue white pants and top. Employed as an orderly at a private Bombay hospital, Ramesh has just been diagnosed HIV-

SANGEETA'S WARNING

Only a few feet away from her bed at Bombay's Sir J. J. Hospital, Sangeeta Mahadeva, a fragile-looking former prostitute from Kamathipura, sees a terrifying specter of her own future. On another cot lies a young mother who looks like a famine victim, too weak to move as she withers away during the final stages of AIDS.

Mahadeva, 23, is HIV-infected, but not yet ill. She stays at the hospital because the nurses pamper her and use her to counsel other prostitutes about AIDS, she says.

Small signs of hope still illuminate her corner of the room. Her long hair is oiled and braided, her face and hands groomed and bejeweled. The wall behind her bed is decorated with a picture of a small, pig-tailed girl holding a glass of juice, as well as photos of glamorous women. The posters were put up as a gesture of thanks by another patient whom Mahadeva had befriended: an 8-year-old girl who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion.

Mahadeva's life is confined to the hospital, where she passes the day watching Hindi song and dance shows on television or manufacturing shopping

bags out of newspaper.

Sometimes she is haunted by wondering why she contracted a deadly virus at such a young age, she says. It was not one of the nightmares she could have foreseen when, at age 14, she was drugged and kidnapped from her home in Karnataka state, where she lived with her widowed, brickmaker father. She was forced into prostitution, serving as many as 10 customers from morning to night, she says.

Sangeeta weeps silently. Because of her HIV infection, she can't dream of the future, she says. "What is written in my fate has happened to me."

Now, when she counsels prostitutes who come in for checkups and other treatment, she urges them to flee the brothels. "I tell them my life is finished," she says. "If you keep doing this, you'll be in the same position."

—By Katherine Kam





Sunil Carlton D'Souza, a 29-year-old Bombay man infected with HIV, says his greatest worry is that his two younger sisters' wedding prospects will dim once suitors find out he harbors the virus.

positive after coming down with a fever.

Since arriving in town in 1983, he has visited brothels frequently. Three or four times a year he has been able to visit his wife, who lives in Raigad with their 8-month-old child. Ramesh seems not to understand the gravity of his diagnosis. He talks with a faint smile across his lips. All he knows is that he has a "lifelong disease."

Will he reveal his condition to his spouse? "What's the point of telling my wife?" he says. "She's a village woman. She won't understand." Deshpande explains that he thinks he got infected from a prostitute, but doesn't yet know he can infect others.

"Our patients are basically unaware of AIDS," Deshpande says. "When I tell them they are HIV-positive, there is no reaction."

MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Because people like Ramesh and the prostitute who infected him are among the first wave of Indian AIDS victims, the disease has been cast as a red-

light problem afflicting "bad, immoral people," says Dr. Jacob K. John, a psychiatrist who counsels HIV patients. But such focus on "who" gets AIDS, rather than on "how" one gets AIDS, fosters a false sense of security.

Since 1986 when the virus was detected in prostitutes from Tamil Nadu, it has spread beyond high-risk groups into middle professional classes—managers, technicians, sales people—and homemakers and infants born HIV-positive.

The virus, which shook the world more than a decade ago, has only begun reaching India's national consciousness in the past two years. The message, often communicated through newspaper and magazine articles and television spots, has reached mainly the educated. Such education has not widely reached the streets.

Raju Nagulla, a 46-year-old taxi driver, says boys as young as 15 or 16, the sons of wealthy families, have asked him to drive them to Kamathipura. He explains AIDS this way: "Girls get sick,

they don't recover, then they start drying up." When pressed for more technical knowledge, he lumps AIDS with other venereal diseases—dangerous thinking, because only the latter are treatable. Nagulla thinks AIDS might be curable, but he isn't sure.

Kaku, another Bombay man, heard of AIDS as far back as 1985, but has never heard of the HIV dormancy period. Nor is he certain whether the virus can be transmitted just once or indefinitely. Many Bombay residents fret that AIDS can be transmitted through a handshake, mosquitoes, air, water, bed-sheets, or sex with foreigners.

A "WESTERN" DISEASE

Some doctors voice anger that seven years after the first cases were detected in India, so much of the country is still ignorant about AIDS. Three years ago, Dr. Bothra, who serves as a health policy consultant to India, warned officials of a looming AIDS crisis. "They said it's a Western problem, a gay problem—the usual things," Bothra says.

WHAT WORLD VISION IS DOING

In late 1991, World Vision began its "Women and AIDS" research project to create a model AIDS prevention program for urban teen girls in Bombay. In India, a young girl's physical maturing process is veiled in deep mystery. In this sexually conservative society, girls do not receive sex education in school. Nor do they learn from their parents about menstruation, body development, or sexuality, says Professor Asha Bhende, a World Vision sociologist in Bombay.

"They're only told, 'Now, you're grown up. Be careful now. Don't talk to boys.' There's a lot of fear," she says.

With AIDS spreading throughout India, girls on the threshold of adulthood need accurate information about sex

and health more than ever.

In one recent World Vision survey of 211 Bombay teenagers, 24 percent of the girls and 32 percent of the boys had heard of AIDS. Among this fraction, knowledge about transmission was sketchy. When asked how a person contracts AIDS, most mentioned visiting prostitutes or having multiple partners. Almost half these teens who had heard of AIDS also believed it was curable, perhaps through antibiotics.

The project focuses on girls, including those from Bombay slums. "They are absolutely powerless right now," Bhende says. Without education, "They will remain powerless because their mothers are."

She adds: "If you educate one man, you educate one man. But when you educate one woman, you educate

the entire family. She is the gatekeeper of change."

After polling young people about attitudes and beliefs related to sex, Bhende created a six-session talk group that she launched in December 1992 with about 25 girls. The topics included: female identity and gender inequality, menstruation and puberty, sexual harassment and exploitation, and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

Bhende hopes that girls who attend the program will share AIDS information with their peers. When the "Women and AIDS" project ends in 1993, Bhende hopes to present an effective AIDS prevention program to Indian educators, counselors, and social workers who can implement similar programs.

India's leaders assumed the country's strong, traditional Asian values would protect it against a disease of the sexually free-wheeling West. The government, which has just begun responding to the crisis, has been stung by intense criticism at home and abroad for wasting valuable time that could have been spent preventing an AIDS epidemic.

In 1992, the national government began a \$100 million, five-year AIDS prevention program, financed mainly by a World Bank loan. The newly created National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) coordinates a central AIDS policy that focuses on blood bank screening; control of venereal diseases (which can create sores offering the virus easy access); and a safe sex campaign, including condom promotion.

A TABOO SUBJECT

While NACO's plan offers a start, AIDS education presents tremendous challenges in India where talking about sex is taboo. "Even as doctors, we don't discuss sex openly," says Dr. M.R. Chandrakapure, a Bombay health official. "The whole society doesn't."

But effective AIDS prevention requires frank talk about sexual practices. Says one Indian Health Organization pamphlet: "It is time that we talked straight and with the real facts."

And these facts are difficult to disseminate in a country where three-quarters of the huge population live in rural areas and 48 percent is illiterate. Psychiatrist Jacob K. John of Christian Medical College in Tamil Nadu says his HIV patients require a long time to understand AIDS.

"You're looking at a group of people for whom the major consideration is

'How do I survive today? Where's my next meal coming from?' When you talk to them about something that may happen five or 10 years later, it doesn't cut ice. Life is not that long."

Prevention efforts also must strike at the root of some men's deeply entrenched sexual attitudes, Dr. Deshpande says. "It's below their dignity to use a condom," she says. Some view condoms as a barrier to enjoyment, especially when visiting prostitutes, Dr. John adds. "If you're paying money

to get pleasure, why reduce it by using a barrier?" Prostitutes feel they cannot afford to turn away customers who refuse condoms.

Abstinence should be promoted as the best form of AIDS protection for India's youth, "and for that matter, the general population," Dr. Bothra believes. "We should emphasize abstinence before marriage, fidelity within marriage, and a mutual monogamous relationship with a faithful partner." Much of the Indian crisis "is an epidemic of risky behavior," he adds, one in which "personal responsibility" must be stressed.

THE COST OF AIDS

Fear of painful social shunning often keeps the AIDS-infected "cloaked in secrecy," John says. "It's hard to get them to surface to help join the fight." Because of the fright and misinformation about AIDS, sufferers and their loved ones can face cruelties daily. In Indian society, an individual exists within the context of his family, and that means an AIDS victim's entire household can be ostracized.

Families have been forced to move out of their homes, children have been kicked out of schools, and marriages have been difficult to arrange for daughters in the household, even though they are uninfected.

Many also cannot afford treatment. Life-prolonging drugs such as AZT cost about \$16 a day, an exorbitant cost for an unskilled laborer who might earn less than \$1 a day.

India's health budgets are dwarfed by massive problems, including basic diseases that have yet to be controlled,

Over 12 million people globally are infected with HIV.

AIDS WORLDWIDE



Sub-Saharan Africa:

7.5 million+

Southeast Asia:

1.5 million

North America:

1 million+

Latin America/Caribbean:

1 million

North Africa/Middle East:

750,000+

Western Europe:

500,000

Eastern Europe/Central Asia:

50,000

Australasia:

25,000+

East Asia:

25,000

Source:
World Health
Organization

such as tuberculosis, measles, and diarrhea. In a country with a per capita gross national product of \$350, it's hard to divert already scarce resources to the new scourge, Deshpande says. "I can't sacrifice 99 people for one."

NACO also faces blood screening difficulties. The government ordered all blood donations to be tested for HIV as far back as 1989. But to date, no nationwide, systematic screening exists. According to Bothra, 75 percent of the nation's blood supply goes unchecked, especially in small towns and rural areas, where comprehensive testing is hampered by inadequate staffing and a test kit shortage.

Complicating matters, blood donation is a highly commercialized industry in India. Roughly one-third of the blood supply comes from poor professional donors who sell blood several times a month to unregulated, private blood banks. These banks, which almost always lack HIV-testing capabilities, then resell the untested blood—at buyers' risk—to people awaiting transfusions. In Bombay, HIV infection has been found in more than half the professional donors tested, according to Bothra. In India, no national law bans a knowingly infected donor from selling his blood.

The government is trying to increase volunteer blood donation. But Bothra believes India should shut down all commercial blood banks, too. "Nobody should be in this business," he says. "It's criminal when there's a pandemic going on."

A POLITICAL WILL?

Despite his homeland's obstacles to dealing with AIDS, Bothra believes that with NACO, India's leadership has finally gained the political will to do battle. But other doctors aren't so sure. They harbor deep lack of faith in a government legendary for mismanagement and ineffective bureaucracy.

Maharashtra, where Bombay is the capital, is considered one of the states hardest hit by AIDS. Out of 155,000 blood samples taken from those with "high-risk behaviors," such as prostitutes, homosexuals, intravenous drug users, and venereal disease patients, almost 30 percent have tested HIV positive, according to Health Services Director M.R. Chandrakapure.

Despite confirmed HIV cases in the area, some government health officials still insist AIDS is not an issue in the rural villages and that all blood donors are regularly tested. Such evidence of governmental complacency and misinformation continues to upset doctors on the front lines.

"On paper, it sounds as though they have urgency," says Dr. Ishwar Gilada of the Indian Health Organization. "I want to see that in action." The young specialist in sexually transmitted diseases has become a leading AIDS spokesman and vocal critic of the government. "It was possible to prevent a major catastrophe," he says. "We had the time that Africa didn't, and we could have learned from their suffering. We blew it."

In a few more years, when the deceptive dormancy period ends and the official AIDS death toll rockets, the alarm might sound more convincingly. Says World Vision sociologist Dr. Asha Bhende: "Once you find people dying around you, then you're going to wake up in a big way."

An awakening is also needed in parts of India's medical establishment, which has discriminated against HIV patients. In one case, hemophiliac brothers Vineet and Rohit Oberoi of New Delhi claim that once they were diagnosed with HIV, they were thrown out of hospitals with humiliating warn-

SEEDS OF HELP

A few nongovernmental agencies are beginning to help. Agencies have distributed condoms, sometimes to Kamathipura's prostitutes and clients, and others have performed street plays about AIDS to educate truck drivers, factory workers, and slum dwellers.

Few Christians, however, who comprise only 2.4 percent of India's total population, have begun AIDS ministry work, according to Bombay pastor Sumitra Gaikwad, mainly because congregations still don't know about AIDS or harbor misconceptions about catching the disease.

With 30 years experience in hospital administration, Gaikwad is leading the way by pioneering a church-based HIV/AIDS project to help poor and high-risk groups, including prostitutes and slum dwellers, with a medical clinic that would offer HIV testing; counseling for those who test positive; and health education provided by trained church volunteers.



Until recently, Dr. Ishwar Gilada was one of the few officials actively concerned with AIDS prevention in India. As Secretary General of the Indian Health Organization, a volunteer AIDS education and prevention agency, he distributed literature to hundreds of villages, organized rallies, and broadcasted AIDS messages with bullhorns.

ings never to come back.

Anger and weariness have set in at some government hospitals, where patients are routinely moved if they test positive at a private hospital. "The educated elites don't want to touch HIV," says Deshpande of the public J.J. Hospital. "They feel it's all to be dumped on the government hospitals."

"The church in India cannot afford to ignore these realities," Gaikwad says. "A response is thrust upon us if we heed biblical teaching on social responsibility and do not harden our hearts to the compassion of Christ." ☉

Katherine Kam is a free-lance writer living in Corte Madera, Calif.

THE GRAY COAT

BY MARY ELLEN GUDEMAN

*I*t won't take long, I thought as I headed for the train station one Wednesday afternoon. I only had a little business in Osaka, Japan.

At the station, people were lined up at the four automatic ticket dispensers. I chose one where only one woman, wearing a gray coat, was inserting her money. The 70 yen button—the cost for one stop—flashed on. But she only stared at the dispenser. Below the train fare buttons was the platform ticket button. It flashed on, as the cost is the same—70 yen.

She's not getting on the train. Maybe she's meeting someone on the platform. She hesitated. *I'm going to miss my train if she doesn't hurry.* Finally she reached out and pushed the platform ticket button. The ticket dropped into the tray below, but she only stared at it. Exasperated at having to wait, I reached over her shoulder, brushing it, to insert money for my train fare.

Momentarily I forgot her. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw her go through the wicket on my left. She paused under the timetable overhead and looked up. *What a thin coat to wear on this chilly day. She must not have much of this world's goods. And 70 yen is a lot to pay just to get on a platform.* As I went down the steps and crossed over to the platform for Osaka, the young woman hurried up the steps to the opposite platform for Kobe.

I settled down waiting for my train. The 1:29 super-express bound for Kobe would first need to pass through. The thundering sound of its fast approach was almost tuned out by ears long accustomed to the roar.

Suddenly an eerie thud, screeching brakes, then flying fragments and train-bed rocks broke into my consciousness. *Oh, no, the train has left the tracks!* I grabbed my coat to shield my face.

Then, just as suddenly as the horrifying experience had begun, it ended. And out of the deafening silence someone across the platform from me shrieked, "*Niku! Niku!*" (Flesh! Flesh!) One hundred meters down the tracks was the motionless

super-express. From everywhere, people hurried down the platform.

Bits of a mutilated body scattered here and there confirmed the tragedy. Below, in front of me, lying inside the train rails, was the gray coat, grease- and blood-stained.

I had touched that gray coat moments before, without understanding, not caring. She paid 70 yen for her leap into eternity; I paid three times that much to carry out my business in Osaka. If I had spoken to her, I would have missed my train ... and so would she.

At the time of this tragedy, Tanaka-san, a woman in her early 30s, lived near the same train station. She also had attempted to take her life—more than once.

Picking up her newspaper one evening, she noticed a small leaflet fall to the floor, announcing meetings at a local church. Her first impulse was to toss it out.

Life for Tanaka-san had become bitter. She was the youngest of nine children and now she was caring for her sick, elderly mother. An older brother had been killed in the war; another brother was now dying of cancer.

Tanaka-san came at the end of a prayer meeting one evening. I cannot forget the sad sight—that sorrowful face; her bony hands grasping her stomach which suffered from ulcers caused by many evenings spent drinking to forget her troubles.

She greatly needed a friend. But argumentative, quick-tempered, and critical about everyone and everything, she was not easy to befriend. Her unruly nature often led to conflicts at her work where she was a bookkeeper. The others attending our small church avoided her, only adding to her loneliness. Despite this, Tanaka-san continued attending.

I was already overwhelmed with a packed schedule of church planting, Bible study work, and a Bible camp ministry. But with the woman's suicide

"It takes time to unravel a twisted problem or to fill a void with meaning—to be a friend."

SUSAN MCGINNIS



at the train station still fresh in my mind, I invited Tanaka-san to my apartment. This opened the door for innumerable "uninvited" visits, many times lasting up to a couple of hours. I also spent hours counseling her on the telephone. The endless time this consumed wearied me.

But slowly Tanaka-san opened her heart to Christ, a true friend, and she later led her mother to Christ. Since then, the people in the church have grown and learned to love her. Tanaka-san has learned how to get along better with people and is the treasurer of her church.

My friendship with Tanaka-san has had many rocky moments through the years. Often I defended her at church, sometimes putting my own reputation at risk. Other church members' criticism of my friendship with Tanaka-san left me exasperated or in tears.

Even today, Tanaka-san is sometimes difficult to get along with, but we still keep in touch. Almost every week, Tanaka-san sends me tapes about how she is doing.

Over the years since the tragedy at the train station, many Tanaka-sans have interrupted my well-planned schedules—people who need counseling, people who are lonely, people in need of a friend. It takes time to unravel a twisted problem or to fill a void with meaning—to be a friend.

One chilly spring day long ago, God showed me what can happen when I don't take the time. ☉

Mary Ellen Gudeman is a former missionary in Japan. She now lives in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Because of the stresses of El Salvador's civil war, Pastor Daniel Landaverde could count on new faces in church almost every Sunday in Chalatenango Province. The FMLN guerrillas had made their home in this mountainous back-country in the north. They hid in the hills and buried their arms and supplies there; they recruited and organized the peasants. And when the army periodically raided the villages, sometimes even bombing them from the air, the rebels fled.

Life was always stressful in Chalate, as the locals call it, and always basic: no electricity, no running water. The roads were often mined, and the army often burned local crops.

The stress, Landaverde says, drove many in this largely

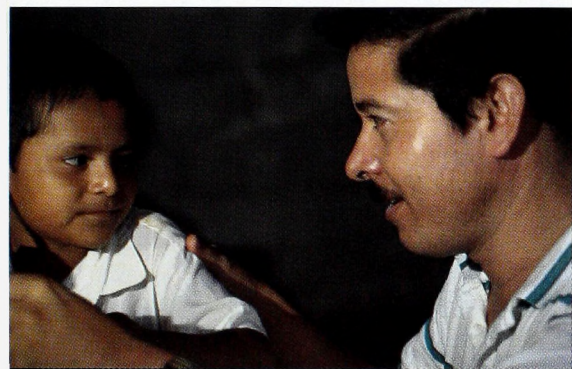
Catholic country to listen to the gospel in evangelical churches, which grew steadily during the 12-year war. From 1979 to 1991 the evangelical church in El Salvador grew from 3 percent to more than 20 percent of the population.

Pastor Landaverde believes Christians need to meet physical needs as well as spiritual ones. His growing church provides social services for about a thousand people, including these girls (far right).

So when the guerrillas signed a truce with the government last year, it raised many questions about the future of the

EL SALVADOR'S

TEXT BY RON WILSON
PHOTOS BY CHRIS REDNER





DURING EL SALVADOR'S 12-YEAR CIVIL WAR, THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH GREW TO MORE THAN 20 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. DESPITE SOME BACKLASH, EVANGELICALS ARE FACING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THE COUNTRY'S POOR AND OPPRESSED, AND TO BE AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION.

GROWING CHURCH

“WHENEVER A COMMITTEE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF LIFE IS FORMED IN A COMMUNITY, THEY CHOOSE AN EVANGELICAL TO LEAD BECAUSE EVANGELICALS HAVE LEARNED TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC AND WORK WELL WITH OTHERS.”

*—Jorge Martinez,
El Salvador's former vice
minister of the Interior*

San Salvador's Tower of Democracy was intended as a monument to El Salvador's prosperous future. Instead, the bomb-shattered office tower is a reminder of the costs of war. It has never been occupied and investors are hesitant to complete the building until a United Nations peace accord is completed.



church: Will the growth rate continue? What will the church do with its newfound respectability? Will it become a force for change in the country or simply another fringe group? And will the church help meet people's needs in this terribly poor country?

"It's true," says Dr. José Heriberto Alvayero, "that the war caused people in desperation to look to God. But I think the real reason for the growth was the courage of Christians to preach the gospel. The church responded to the situation God placed it in."

Alvayero is the president of the Evangelical University of El Salvador, and he echoes many observers of what has been called a tidal wave of change sweeping over Latin America, where evangelical churches are multiplying at a staggering rate. Almost a third of Guatemala, El Salvador's neighbor, is evangelical, including the country's president.

While observers have offered various rationales for the growth, church leaders insist it's primarily a religious movement. Missions scholar Samuel Escobar wrote that "the life of these congregations can only be explained by an infusion of spiritual power."

According to Alvayero, "Christians took advantage of the situation and, in love, opened their arms."

Jorge Martinez, an evangelical formerly in the president's cabinet, suggests an additional reason for the country's church growth: "Many U.S. missionaries left during the war and national leaders took over." In other words, the church became more attractive because it was then an El Salvadoran church, not a foreign one.

INCREASED RESPECT

Martinez himself was a product of the church moving out of the rural poverty-plagued areas and into the city. "To be an evangelical before the war,"

he says, "was considered to be on the lowest strata of society." For years the gospel had taken root mostly in the poverty-plagued rural areas. But then the educated middle class in the city began to listen and believe, lending some respectability to the movement.

In 1976 someone gave Martinez a Bible. "Getting a Bible here is like getting a piece of jewelry," he says. "No one expects you to read it. You open it to a

Psalm, wrap it in plastic, and put it out on a table to keep evil out of the house." But Martinez, like everyone else, was feeling the pressure of the times, and though he had been taught as a child not to read the Bible, he began to search the Scriptures. After a long period of self-examination, he was converted.

Martinez was a good lawyer, and a friend introduced him to a politician named Alfredo Cristiani. He began to do Cristiani's legal work, and when Cristiani became president in 1989, he made Martinez vice minister of the Interior. Today Martinez is the country's most prominent evangelical.

"I'm the first evangelical in the history of El Salvador to be part of the president's cabinet," he says proudly.

Respect for evangelicals is growing. "Whenever a committee for the betterment of life is formed in a community," Martinez says, "they choose an evangelical to lead because evangelicals have learned to speak in public and work well with others."

Evangelicals now have enough respect to be elected to the highest offices in the government, including president, Martinez says. But many Christian leaders still have strong reservations about believers involved in politics.

When Cristiani appointed Martinez, a group of pastors came to him and told him they would pray that God would restore him.

Alvayero, however, has been speaking in churches throughout the country and taking the church temperature. He believes the time is right for evangelicals to move into leadership. "I don't use the word 'politics,'" he says. "I talk about 'social responsibility.'"

Alvayero was chosen recently to lead a new political party, the National Solidarity Movement, which proposes to address moral and political concerns. "I don't believe you can form an evangelical party," he says, "but I believe you can form one with a strong moral and ethical base." Evangelicals are prominent in the new party, which also includes Catholics.

HEALING WOUNDS

While Alvayero, Martinez, and others delve into politics, other evangelicals have begun addressing the social needs of this small country, which suffered a billion and a half dollars worth of damage to its infrastructure because of the war.

Pastor Landaverde confesses that until recently he didn't understand that a Christian should take both the Word of God and food and clothing to needy people. "I've learned that it's not enough to say 'God is love.' We have to show it to people."

During the war, Landaverde had found the stresses in the guerrilla-controlled mountains too great. So he moved his wife and five children to a town far in the south. Today Landaverde's church in Rosario de Mora is a partner with World Vision in a project that provides food, clothes, health care, job training, literacy training, and Bible studies to about a thousand people.

But Landaverde's ministry to the poor is the exception. Church leaders are more apt to believe that feeding the poor is the job of the government, says Alvarero.

"The church has never seen meeting physical needs as important as meeting spiritual needs," says Eduardo Palacio, the pastor of Shalom Baptist Church. His church has been caring for orphans, providing health care, and training women in job skills for years. In addition, Palacio heads the Permanent Committee for National Dialogue, encouraging reconciliation and peace.

"We do see more churches involved in social issues," Palacio admits. "But they don't try to address the larger issues of the violence of our society and the root causes of the problem."

EVANGELICAL BACKLASH

While respect and acceptance for evangelicals is growing, trouble is rising. Palacio has paid a price for his passion for peace. Last year a secret document drafted by the Cristiani government accused him and other church leaders of having links with the FMLN.

And before Martinez started working for Cristiani, his Christian compassion during the war got him into trouble. As a young lawyer he handled the affairs of businesses declaring bankruptcy. While he made money, he watched others suffer, including the peasants in the rural area. So Martinez began making trips into the poorer areas, taking food and clothes and preaching the gospel.

It was risky and he knew that some would ask questions. Is he a leftist? Is he helping the guerrillas? As he returned from one of his trips, he was kidnapped by a death squad, held for eight days,

tortured, and finally released with orders to leave the country. He didn't leave, but he sat in his office for months with no clients. The word had gone out that he might be part of the political left.

During the war, ministries to the poor were often suspected of having ties to the guerrillas, and were threatened by the right-wing death squads.

Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Salvador, for example, faced a series of threats and reprisals for providing health care, education, adult training, and a home for war orphans among the poor. Three church workers were kidnapped by right-wing forces, a deacon disappeared, a youth leader was assassinated, and 40 families fled the country in fear of their lives.

Today many evangelical churches are trying to put past troubles behind them and play a role in what the government calls "National Reconciliation."

binning medical or agricultural work with evangelism.

Good News, the first interdenominational Christian newspaper, appeared last year, and a U.S.-based group began a Christian television station. And to the surprise of many, evangelicals have found easy access to military establishments. One pastor wants the church to help remake "military personnel into individuals with greater humanity and responsibility before God and society."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Although it's too early to judge the effect of the war on the church, and the peace process has run into snags, many are optimistic about the country's future. Business interests predict fast economic growth. The work force is well-trained and considered hardworking.

The poor in the rural areas—a very large part of the country—don't share

Members of Emmanuel Baptist Church faced threats, arrests, kidnappings, and death for providing education, health care, and job skills for poor families believed to be sympathetic to the FMLN. Peace is allowing the church to care for more people with fewer reprisals.



Some, like the Oasis of Love church in San Salvador, have launched a spiritual offensive into the mountains. Using films and gospel literature, they've targeted Nueva Concepcion, a town in Chalete-nango that was once a key supply point for the rebels.

Parachurch groups such as Campus Crusade, Youth With a Mission, and Operation Mobilization are also targeting the poor regions in the mountains, working with local churches and com-

that optimism. Scores of villages never did get much from the government and they don't expect anything to change. The churches did a good job of preaching the gospel during the war, many believe, but if they don't begin to feed the hungry and help the poor, they could find the doors to the hearts of the poor shut in times of peace. ☉

Ron Wilson is a free-lance writer living in Earlysville, Va.

**FIVE ISSUES CONCERNING
THIRD WORLD WOMEN:**

LITERACY
EMPLOYMENT
CHILD BEARING
SINGLE PARENTING
AIDS

Single mothers face a desperate situation in the Third World, where even intact families often struggle to survive. Many husbands and fathers leave dry, rural villages to look for work in the cities; others are killed in war or simply abandon their families. The mother alone is often unable to provide adequate food, shelter, health care, or education. Some single mothers are so desperate they feel forced to sell or abandon their children.

Since her husband deserted her seven years ago, Hourn Thol (right) has struggled to support her four children, ages 7 to 20, in the rural Kandal province of Cambodia. Since 1990, a World Vision Women in Development project has helped ease Hourn Thol's struggle. The project set up a revolving loan fund to help women start small businesses such as pig raising.

Hourn Thol used her loan to start a noodle-making business and has since earned enough money to repay the loan and buy food and clothing for her children. In fact, the small businesses were so successful, all 35 women who received loans in November 1990 repaid them within nine months.

The project also helped the Women's Association of Cambodia open three day-care centers. Each center provides up to 30 children with food, education, and health care.

Before the day-care, single parent Moul Souk had to leave her baby with her 3-year-old daughter while she worked in the paddy fields. The daughter had to ask the neighbors for food. As the more than 180 women benefit from the project, they will teach other women. Three women who learned tailoring through the project are now teaching 16 women in the community. 🌐

Reported and photographed by Sheryl Watkins. Written by Tamera Marko.



S I G N S O F H O P E



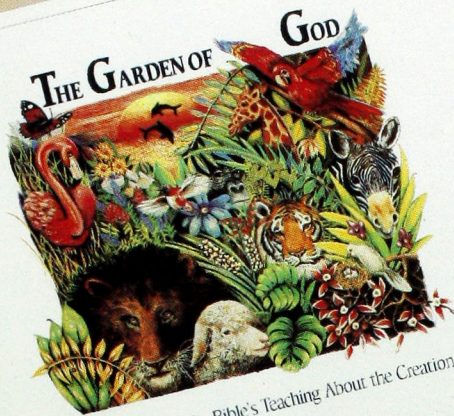
WOMEN OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Tamera Marko and Stephanie Stevenson



Selections from the Bible's Teaching About the Creation

THINK GREEN, THANK GOD

"The Garden of God: Selections from the Bible's Teaching About the Creation" reminds readers that

God entrusted people to care for his Creation long before recycling bins and "think green" slogans. The 32-page, colorfully illustrated book includes Bible verses about praises and concern for God's creation and the Christian's role in caring for it.

Written by Glenn Paauw and illustrated by Gustave Doré, the book retails for \$3.50.

To order, contact the International Bible Society, P.O. Box 35700, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3570; (800) 524-1588 or your local Christian bookstore.

CUTTING THE MUSTARD

Applications are available for the 1993 Mustard Seed Awards honoring innovative, church-sponsored volunteer ministries among the poor. Award recipients receive national recognition and grants up to \$5,000.

For more information, contact Mustard Seed Awards V, World Vision, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-1111, ext. 2162. Applications are due by Oct. 4, 1993.

1992 Mustard Seed Award winners:

Hollywood Urban Project, Hollywood, Calif.

Provides youths and teens with after-school tutoring, job and recreational programs, and Bible studies.

Broadway Community, Inc., New York, N.Y.

Assists homeless with free meals, job referrals, housing, counseling, clothing, education classes, and alcohol rehabilitation.

CHAMPS After-School Program, Dallas, Texas

Provides parents with after-school child care, education classes, and

Christian materials.

Aslan Youth Ministries, Red Bank, N.J.

Provides disadvantaged youth and their families with Bible classes, tutoring, food, clothing, job counseling, financial aid, and recreational activities.

The Step-Up Ministry, Raleigh, N.C.

Assists homeless and poor with budgeting, job skills, and housing.

Common Ground Ministries, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio

Helps inner city residents with food, clothing, housing, nutrition classes, budgeting, and Christian education.



TAKE A DISASTER VACATION

You can spend a week in Florida helping victims of Hurricane Andrew, which left 250,000 homeless. Accommodations include U.S. army-donated Desert Storm tents, hot showers, and meals.

Since November, Forward Edge International, a Christian short-term missions organization, has been coordinating one-week "vacations with a purpose" to help distribute food, repair homes, and share the Gospel with hurricane victims.

You simply organize a missions group from your church and raise airfare and \$195 per individual to pay for food, lodging, and on-site transportation. Forward Edge will provide an experienced leader and organize the activities.

Churches interested in sending mission teams to help Hurricane Andrew victims in Florida or for information about other mission programs, contact Charlene Foster, Forward Edge, 15121-A NE 72nd Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686; (206) 574-3343.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

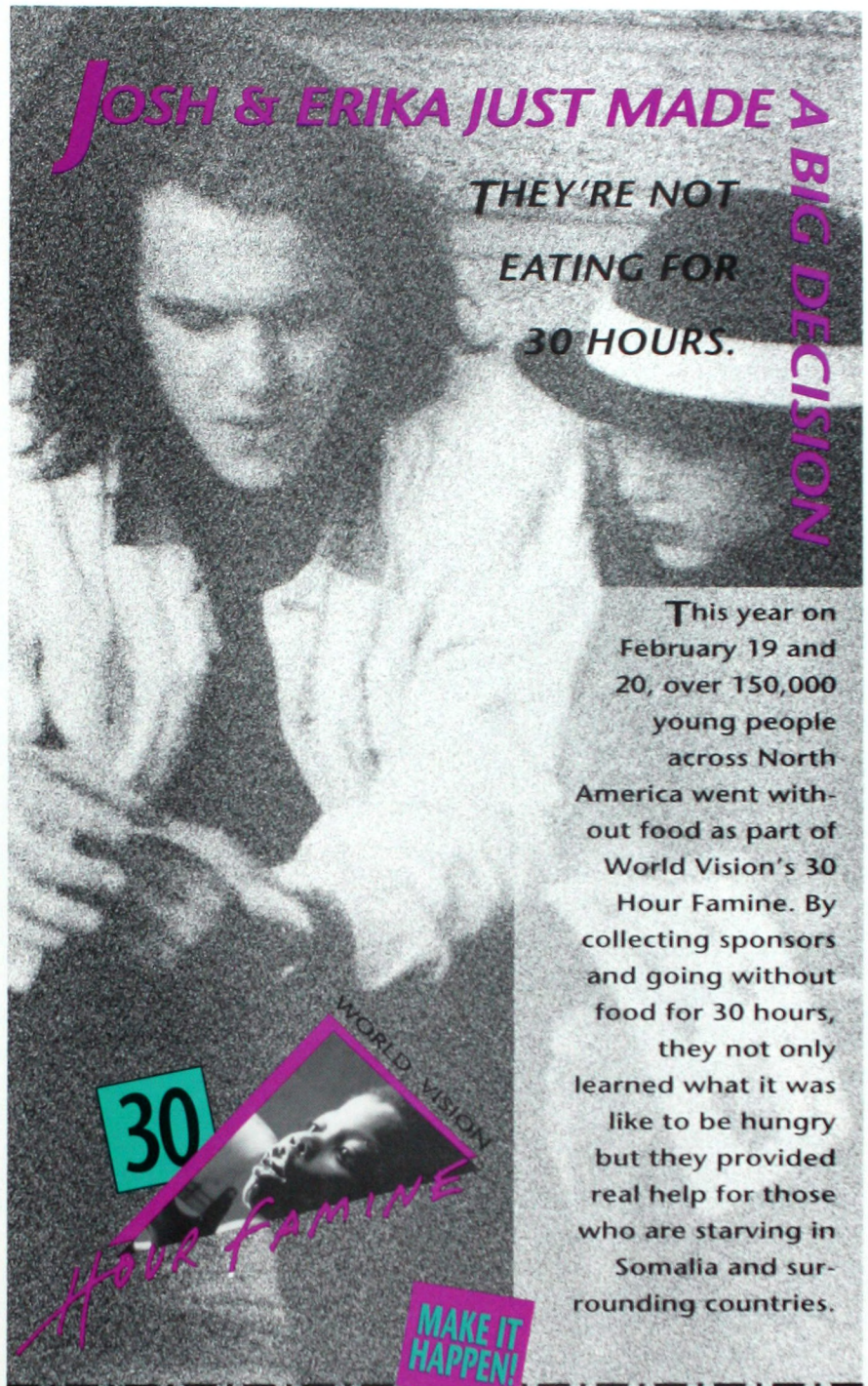
Every morning, as we wake up, 100,000 U.S. children wake up homeless. Every 13 seconds, as we get out of bed, a child is reported abused or neglected. Every 32 seconds, about the time it takes us to walk to the kitchen and put on the coffee, a baby is born into poverty. Every 14 minutes, while we shower and brush our teeth, a baby dies in the United States. Every 64 seconds, while we lock our doors and head for work, a baby is born to a teenage mother. And every 13 hours, before we go back to sleep at night, a preschooler is murdered.

"How To Save The Children," presents almost 200 practical ways to help abused, neglected, and homeless children. Complete with addresses, phone numbers, and brief explanations of people, places, and programs dedicated to this cause, the book's ideas range from smiling at a child on a bus to lobbying as a child advocate.

Written by Amy Hatkoff and Karen Kelly Klopp, co-founders of The Woman's Group to provide support for women and children living in shelters,

the book retails for \$10.00. To order, contact your local bookstore.

“No man ever stood so straight as when he stooped to help a child. —On a plaque in a children's home in Philadelphia.”



JOSH & ERIKA JUST MADE A BIG DECISION

THEY'RE NOT EATING FOR 30 HOURS.

This year on February 19 and 20, over 150,000 young people across North America went without food as part of World Vision's 30 Hour Famine. By collecting sponsors and going without food for 30 hours, they not only learned what it was like to be hungry but they provided real help for those who are starving in Somalia and surrounding countries.

THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE. YOU CAN TOO!

- HERE** is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ to help support the 30 Hour Famine.
- Yes**, I'm interested in participating in the Famine next year on February 25 and 26, 1994 as a group individual.
- PLEASE** send me new information as soon as it's available.

Mail to:
 WORLD VISION
 30 HOUR FAMINE
 P.O. BOX 1131
 PASADENA, CA 91131

Name _____


Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

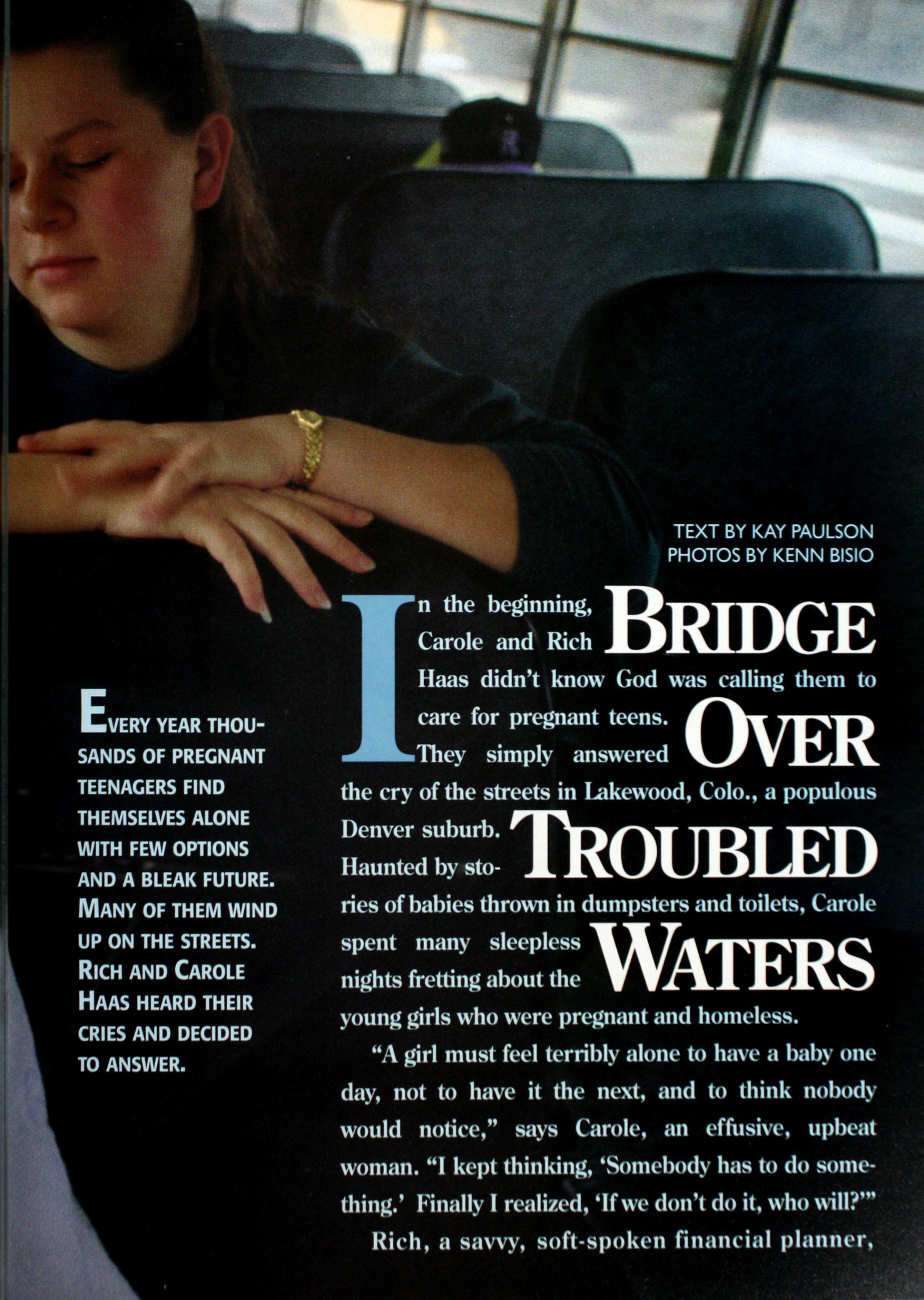
Group name and leader (if applicable) _____

1-800-7FAMINE

0900 8329

A young woman, Amy, is sitting on a school bus. She is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and a grey baseball cap. She is looking towards the camera. In the foreground, a baby carrier is visible, containing a baby wrapped in a white blanket. The carrier also has a grey blanket and a small orange toy. The bus interior is visible, including the seats and windows.

Amy, a 17-year-old Bridgeway resident, takes her baby Christina with her to school.



TEXT BY KAY PAULSON
PHOTOS BY KENN BISIO

EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF PREGNANT TEENAGERS FIND THEMSELVES ALONE WITH FEW OPTIONS AND A BLEAK FUTURE. MANY OF THEM WIND UP ON THE STREETS. RICH AND CAROLE HAAS HEARD THEIR CRIES AND DECIDED TO ANSWER.

In the beginning, Carole and Rich Haas didn't know God was calling them to care for pregnant teens. They simply answered the cry of the streets in Lakewood, Colo., a populous Denver suburb. Haunted by stories of babies thrown in dumpsters and toilets, Carole spent many sleepless nights fretting about the young girls who were pregnant and homeless.

**BRIDGE
OVER
TROUBLED
WATERS**

"A girl must feel terribly alone to have a baby one day, not to have it the next, and to think nobody would notice," says Carole, an effusive, upbeat woman. "I kept thinking, 'Somebody has to do something.' Finally I realized, 'If we don't do it, who will?'"

Rich, a savvy, soft-spoken financial planner,



Carole and Rich Haas

agreed. As chairman of the Housing Authority, which provides housing for poor people in the community, he saw that single mothers were often unable to support themselves. He was troubled by the injustices of a system that often turned short-term crises into lifelong poverty and government subsistence.

"Carole and I wanted to see what would happen if we offered pregnant teens intensive help for six months or a year," Rich says. "I guess God figured if we were 'guppy' enough to jump in, he would add the rest later."

During the next six months, they inventoried their capital, formed a non-profit corporation, located a housemother, and rented a house large enough for four teenage girls. With just word-of-mouth publicity, however, the house filled in two weeks. So the Haases purchased an attractive home that could house up to 10 girls and several babies.

Carole spent hours, day and night, with the scared girls who poured into "Bridgeway"—listening to them, praying for them, setting up classes, seeing them through labor, insisting they complete their education. A former nurse, she was knowledgeable about prenatal care, pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. Empathizing with the girls was easy. Her own parents had died in a plane crash when she was 6, and both she and Rich had grown up in alcoholic homes. Both understood the hard work necessary to break destructive cycles.

"Carole has a special gift from God to motivate teens," Rich says. "She can make them feel important and valuable, make them believe they can accomplish things."

IT TAKES A LOT OF MIRACLES

Three years after Rich and Carole started Bridgeway, another house was donated for their use. But Carole soon found herself stretched beyond her limits, and Rich's income wasn't meeting all the needs. He had to choose: Either let Bridgeway flounder or give up his regular job, take over the administration, and turn to the community for total financial support. He chose Bridgeway, "Although begging is hard work!" he says.

Carole and Rich know God is the real mover behind Bridgeway. It takes a lot of miracles, Rich says, to pay a mortgage, rent an office, support a half-time secretary, and maintain three teen residences, a day-care cottage, and their own household—including four teenagers—on \$97,000 a year. Most of their backing comes from individuals and churches, and a little from corporate grants. Many needed items are donated or salvaged from flea markets and garage sales.

Since Bridgeway opened in November 1986, the program has helped more than 240 babies and girls. Most of the girls are about 17 years old and lack family support. Many have been abused, some severely. Others have been kicked out of their homes because they are pregnant or refuse to get an abor-

tion. Half of the girls have had previous abortions.

"They tell us they were pressured into having an abortion, that they weren't given any choice," Rich says. "They seem to be trying to ease their pain and guilt by replacing the baby they aborted with another baby."

If a girl is undecided about whether to abort when she comes to Bridgeway, Carole refers her to a local pregnancy crisis center. She is also careful to let the girls decide whether to keep their babies or give them up for adoption. She knows the pregnant girls will learn more from watching the new mothers at Bridgeway cope with the tiring schedules, lost freedom, and lonely responsibility than they will by hearing a thousand lectures.

"When a girl wakes up at 3:00 a.m. six months after her baby is born, crying because she doesn't have a baby, or maybe because she does have a baby, she needs to know she is the one who made the decision," Carole says.

GIVING THEM LIVES TO LIVE

While Carole finds it gratifying to have girls tell her things like, "I wouldn't have a child if you hadn't helped me," and, "I wanted to carry my child to term, but I didn't know how to do it," her ambition is to give both the moms and babies "lives to live."

This emphasis on a full, productive life is stressed from the beginning. The Bridgeway program is free for most girls. For those who can pay, it costs \$75

A NEW LIFE

Until she came to Bridgeway, a home founded by Rich and Carole Haas for homeless, pregnant girls, Jen spent her life running from "an invisible ghost" of desperation.

Neglected by a drug-addicted mother, then placed with an abusive, alcoholic adoptive mother, Jen wanted nothing more than to grow up and leave home. At 16 she moved out, quit school, started waitressing, and started heavily using drugs and alcohol. Six months later she was living on the streets.

The next four scary, lonely years, Jen lived with friends or boyfriends or stayed in crash pads, cheap rooms, motels, and shelters. Sometimes she slept in the park; once she woke up in a dump. She'd work for a few days when she needed money. "I know God saved my life," she says now. "I could have been raped and killed, I could have gotten AIDS."

At 19 Jen gave her child up for adoption, thinking that was her only alternative. But when she learned she was pregnant again, she was determined to keep the baby and called Bridgeway for help. Carole Haas agreed to take her in.

"I love Carole Haas," Jen says. "I love her like a true mother. She's given me back self-esteem and hope in life. She kept saying, 'You can!' to me and she was right—I could!"

After living at Bridgeway for 6 months, Jen's son, Collin, was born. She remained at the home until she earned her nursing license and now is living with her son in an apartment. She supports herself and Collin with her nursing job and hopes eventually to become a drug and alcohol abuse counselor.

"I've learned to trust again," Jen says. "I always prayed to God, but I'd get mad at him if he didn't do what I wanted him to. Now I've given my life to God. It's never worked for me to run my own life." —Kay Paulson

a month. "The cost is low so that a girl can go to school full time and work part time," Rich says.

Before the girls move into the house, they are told Bridgeway is a motivator program. Many of the girls' job and parenting skills are inadequate, so they are required to attend classes on nutrition, parenting, adoption, living skills, and career options. They must also receive professional counseling and continue their educations.

A volunteer "Education Coordinator" helps each girl examine her goals and desires. "Many have only thought about the party next weekend as a long-term goal," Rich says. Next, a mentor works with each girl to help her carry out goals.

Licensed counselors donate their time (worth up to \$150 an hour) to help the girls one-on-one. Group counseling is also provided.

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

"Most of the girls are pretty wary at first," Rich says. "They wonder what it is

we really want—are we after their souls? Are we after their babies? When they realize all we want is to make their lives better, they start to wonder what motivates us. Then we can share Christ with them. We never push them to attend church or Bible studies, but very few leave without latching onto God in some way."

One girl refused to accept Christmas presents from a church group until she discovered what they wanted in return. "It was beyond her understanding that people would be nice just because they wanted to share the love of Christ with a stranger at Christmas," Rich says.

Carole and Rich can almost name the day a girl "crosses the bridge" and starts to believe she can make a good life for herself and her baby. "We've seen some of them go on to wonderful things," says Rich.

Former Bridgeway resident Chris Barry was engaged and had the dress picked out when, two months before her wedding, she found out she was

pregnant. When her fiance got scared and left, Chris sought help at Bridgeway. She put her child up for adoption. Today she occasionally fills in at Bridgeway as a housemother while completing her premed degree.

"Over half the girls go on to college or career training," Rich says. "But if you measure success by how far they've come from where they started, almost all of them are successes. The few girls who close down to love don't tend to stay too long. They're too uncomfortable here."

The program's goal is to enable the girls to support themselves by the time their baby is 6 months old. Some are ready earlier, others need more time. "As long as they are trying and learning, we can extend their stay until they are ready," Rich says.

In some cases, when the new mothers leave Bridgeway their needs just begin. One former Bridgeway resident struggled to complete her dental assistant training so she could support herself and her baby while attending



Most of the girls at Bridgeway are about 17 years old and lack family support. Bridgeway offers them education, career guidance, and counseling in a Christian environment.

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college. She almost quit dental school many times because it took her 3 1/2 hours on the bus every day to go to her day-care provider, college, and back home again. "She would get discouraged and say that she didn't have time to study or be with her son," Rich says.


To help provide affordable, local day-care for the mothers, Carole and Rich started the Rainbow Bridge Day Care, which is open from 6:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. By state law, the center can only care for six kids and only two can be infants. The infant spots are usually reserved as free day-care for Bridgeway girls. The other children's fees pay for the day-care staff. Volunteers, affectionately called "rock and rollers" because they rock the babies and roll the balls for the older kids, also help.

THE NEXT DREAM

The Haas' next goal is opening a home for pregnant girls under 16 years old. Everything is in place—the professionals, licensing requirements, a potential home—except the money to open it. State regulations require special social work and nursing supervision for pregnant girls under 16, raising the cost per girl to \$2,000 per month. Which means, Rich says, Bridgeway can house only those younger teens who are plugged into social services or who can pay their way. The others must find a family to take them in, or live with boyfriends, in crash pads, or on the streets.

"The hardest thing I have to do is tell girls we don't have a place for them," Rich says. "We get about 130 calls each year from girls under 16 years old who are homeless and without money. But we can only take one or two a month. You can hear the pain in their voices. There are probably enough needy girls in Denver to fill 10 Bridgeways."

Carole and Rich would also like to help people open homes like Bridgeway in other communities. "All it takes is a little intensive help and they can have a full and productive life," Rich says. "Their babies, if their mother chooses to parent, will also have a much better life if the mother is educated and has the skills and information needed to become a self-reliant member of our community."

This year half a million teens in the United States will deliver babies. For more information about Bridgeway, contact Rich Haas, 85 S. Union Blvd, Suite 204, Lakewood, CO 80228; (303) 969-0515. 

Kay Paulson is a free-lance writer living in Littleton, Colo.

NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

We encouraged readers in our Dec.92/Jan.93 issue to voice support for the bipartisan Select Committee on Hunger, which the *New York Times* called the "conscience of congress." That voice of conscience is now stilled. Congress recently abolished all four House Select Committees.

You'll want to read our feature article on the church in El Salvador in light of the recent report by the U.N.-appointed Commission on Truth. The Commission blamed the Salvadoran military for flagrant human rights abuses, including the murders of several American Catholic clergy. The military vigorously denies the charges; the country's president pushed through a blanket amnesty for those named in the report.


Secretary of State Warren Christopher has appointed a panel to investigate charges that State Department officials misled Congress about these atrocities. U.S. economic and military aid to El Salvador totaled \$6 billion during the past decade.

—Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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ANCIENT GUIDEPOSTS

was rumbling over dusty roads in southern Zimbabwe, half listening to my colleagues' treatise on land management, when a phrase caught my attention: "The people lost their reference points."

The "people" were the natives who originally farmed this part of the world in the late 19th century. They brought to the land a kind of tribal wholism, culture and taboo, land and spirituality, work and faith—all of which were inseparable.

For the native farmers, land holdings were a function of the number of cattle one had and where one wanted those cattle to graze, to browse, to water. Each farmer had a number of "pockets" of land that he would move to as needed.

When the settlers arrived in the early 20th century, land was divided into large contiguous blocks and boundaries were mandated, chopping up traditional native farming methods. These farms were reduced to small plots, regardless of the number of cattle a farmer had to sustain. In essence, native farming as it was once practiced was virtually destroyed.

The ethnic conflicts that followed (and in some ways are continuing to this day) have given anthropologists and sociologists plenty to write about. But there is a need for theological reflection. Because of their wholistic understanding, when the children saw their parents' farming methods discredited, they also began challenging their parents' faith. Faith no longer "worked" and, as faith eroded, "The people lost their reference points."

The days of Jeremiah come to mind. God chastised an apostate people, a people who lost their sense of wholeness. His lament, "the land, the land, the land," fell on the deaf ears of those who hypocritically answered, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." God never intended

the physical (land) and the spiritual (temple) to be separated. Israel's understanding of Yahweh, and God's covenants with his people, would all flow from those two critical identification points.

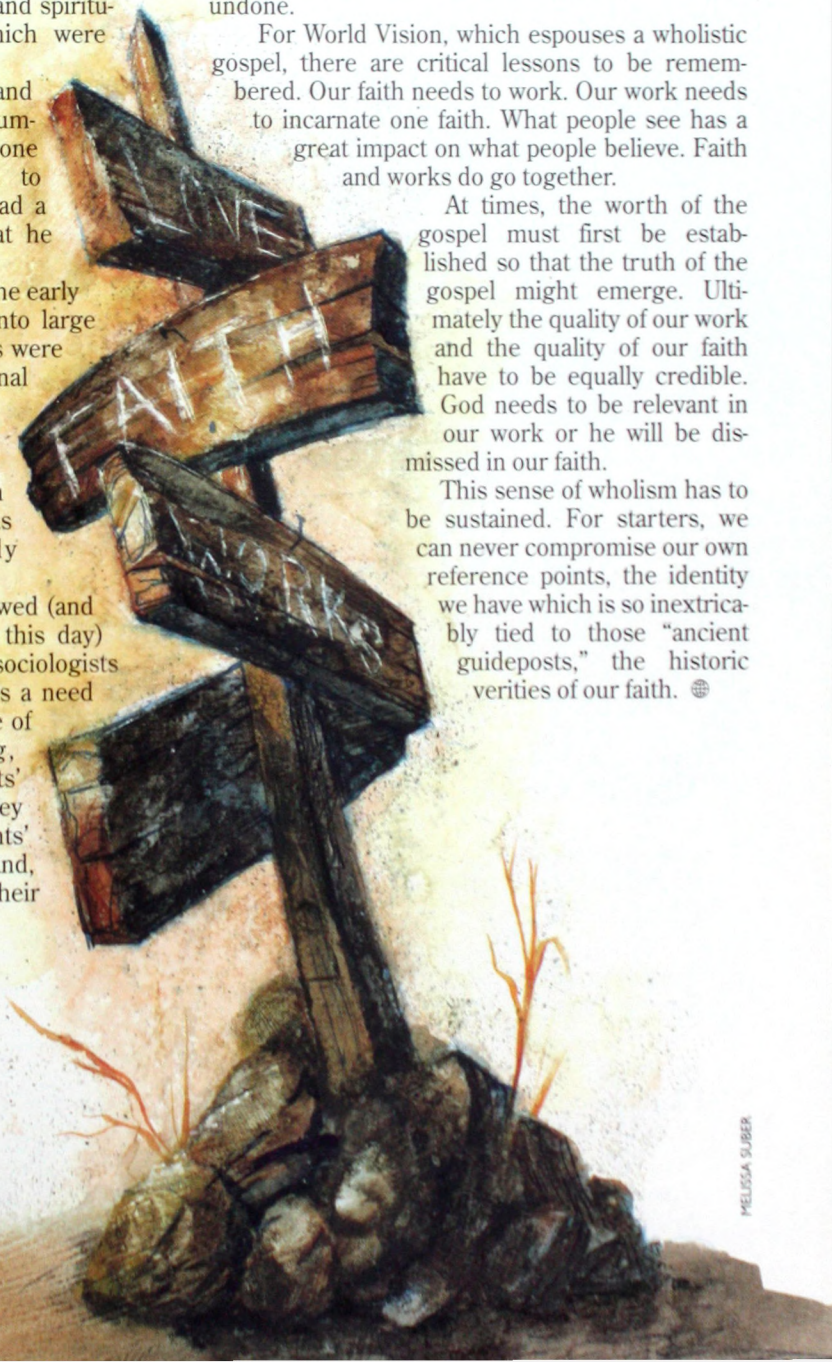
But Israel was not to be whole. A divided people became a distracted people. The reference points, what Jeremiah calls those "ancient guideposts," were lost, and a chosen people became undone.

For World Vision, which espouses a wholistic gospel, there are critical lessons to be remembered. Our faith needs to work. Our work needs to incarnate one faith. What people see has a great impact on what people believe. Faith and works do go together.

At times, the worth of the gospel must first be established so that the truth of the gospel might emerge. Ultimately the quality of our work and the quality of our faith have to be equally credible. God needs to be relevant in our work or he will be dismissed in our faith.

This sense of wholism has to be sustained. For starters, we can never compromise our own reference points, the identity we have which is so inextricably tied to those "ancient guideposts," the historic verities of our faith. ☉

The quality of our work and the quality of our faith have to be equally credible.



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- Please send me a sample Love Loaf and more information.
- Please call me.

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WORLD VISION[®]

AIDS in India:

A DEADLY IGNORANCE

EL SALVADOR'S GROWING CHURCH BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

AIDS IN INDIA

A DEADLY IGNORANCE

Prostitutes in Bombay's red-light district



THE NUMBER OF AIDS CASES HAS EXPLODED AMONG BOMBAY'S PROSTITUTES, WHO ARE MOSTLY UNEDUCATED ABOUT THE DISEASE. INDIA COULD BECOME HOME TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST NUMBER OF AIDS CASES.



On a humid Friday night in Bombay's red-light district known as Kamathipura, throngs of people mill the streets amid a mad crush of bullock carts, goats, bicycles, and double-decker buses. Above the storefront tea parlors, bars, and hair salons, the brothels operate behind shuttered windows.

Sushila Mary is one of thousands of prostitutes on the streets tonight. White bracelets shimmer on her wrists, and silver jewelry glistens from her earlobes and the wing of her nose. Six years ago, a "suitor" promising marriage lured her from her home state of Karnataka to Bombay, where he sold her into prostitution. Afraid of brutal beatings by the *gundas*, crooks who control the red-light area, she has not fled brothel work.

But lately she has started to fear another danger. She's heard vague rumblings about a new disease in her midst that can kill. "I even thought about running away from here when I heard about it," she says.

The disease is AIDS. But she doesn't know it by name. She doesn't know how it destroys its victims—or how it's transmitted.

All around her swirls the night life of Kamathipura. Prostitutes swing their arms and beckon from doorways, enticing men to tryst with them on small cots upstairs. Most

of the clients are as uninformed about AIDS as Sushila Mary.

Ignorance could cost these men and women their lives. AIDS is carving cruel inroads into India. In November 1992, India had almost 11,000 confirmed cases of HIV infection, a number even the government acknowledges is deceptively low because the country lacks an organized, widespread testing system. Of this infected group, 242 have developed full-blown cases of AIDS. Already, 110 of them have died.

The actual death toll is probably much higher. Within India's inadequate health care system, deaths attributed to meningitis, tuberculosis, pneumonia, or other illnesses might go unexamined for an AIDS link.

Until recently, Africa has been considered the world's most AIDS-ravaged region. Slowly, this focus is shifting to Asia, where an estimated 1.5 million are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. India could become home to the world's largest number of HIV and AIDS cases because of its huge population of

870 million (second only to China).

Various estimates, including one from the World Health Organization, claim that 1 million Indians are infected with HIV. (That is a significant portion of the 13 million worldwide that the WHO estimates have been infected since the start of the pandemic.)

RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Although still in the early stages of an epidemic, India has all the ingredients for an AIDS disaster: widespread poverty and ignorance, a largely unscreened blood supply, and an overburdened health care system. WHO predicts that if the virus goes unchecked, India could have at least 5 million HIV-infected people and 1 million full-blown AIDS cases by 2000.

The AIDS virus, which ravages the immune system and leaves victims vulnerable to deadly bouts with tuberculosis, pneumonia, cancers, and various infections, has the potential to overwhelm India's medical system. An unchecked AIDS epidemic could ulti-

mately divert large amounts of India's national treasury into health care costs, retarding the country's past few years of economic progress. Since the disease strikes victims in their prime working and childrearing years, AIDS-afflicted employees and parents will die, leaving orphans behind.

Bombay's red-light district is gaining a reputation as the nation's most prolific breeding ground for AIDS. A huge pool of migrant workers from poor rural areas have flocked to Bombay, a western port city of 12 million. They come to this financial heart of India to work as factory and construction workers, drivers, and unskilled laborers. They cannot afford to bring their wives, so many visit some of the city's estimated 100,000 prostitutes.

With prostitutes catering to an average of four to six customers a day, including men from the Persian Gulf countries, HIV infection has exploded among these women. In 1987, only 1 percent of prostitutes tested positive for HIV. By 1992, the figure had shot up to 40 percent.

Unsuspecting migrant workers and truck drivers, who patronize red-light districts in Bombay and other cities, carry the virus back to wives and partners in small villages and along expansive truck routes throughout the continent. Even in remote backwoods, the virus has the potential to spread through infected truck drivers, who expect sexual favors in return for allowing women carrying heavy loads of hay to hitch rides with them.

Seven out of 10 Indians diagnosed with HIV have been infected through heterosexual intercourse, according to U.S. surgeon Raj Bothra, president of the India AIDS Foundation USA. Fewer than 1 percent of cases have been attributed to homosexuality, presumably because of strong social and legal sanctions against such relationships. Indians also have been infected through tainted blood products and intravenous drug abuse.

JUST A LIFELONG DISEASE

In Bombay's sprawling Sir J.J. Hospital, Dr. Alka Deshpande stands inside one of India's mere handful of AIDS wards. She is surrounded by a dozen patients, mostly men, lying on metal cots in a large room with red floors and green walls. Over one doorway, there is a lighted shrine to *Ganesha*, the popular Hindu elephant god considered "the remover of all obstacles."

Deshpande talks to 26-year-old "Ramesh," dressed in hospital-issue white pants and top. Employed as an orderly at a private Bombay hospital, Ramesh has just been diagnosed HIV-

SANGEETA'S WARNING

Only a few feet away from her bed at Bombay's Sir J. J. Hospital, Sangeeta Mahadeva, a fragile-looking former prostitute from Kamathipura, sees a terrifying specter of her own future. On another cot lies a young mother who looks like a famine victim, too weak to move as she withers away during the final stages of AIDS.

Mahadeva, 23, is HIV-infected, but not yet ill. She stays at the hospital because the nurses pamper her and use her to counsel other prostitutes about AIDS, she says.

Small signs of hope still illuminate her corner of the room. Her long hair is oiled and braided, her face and hands groomed and bejeweled. The wall behind her bed is decorated with a picture of a small, pig-tailed girl holding a glass of juice, as well as photos of glamorous women. The posters were put up as a gesture of thanks by another patient whom Mahadeva had befriended: an 8-year-old girl who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion.

Mahadeva's life is confined to the hospital, where she passes the day watching Hindi song and dance shows on television or manufacturing shopping

bags out of newspaper.

Sometimes she is haunted by wondering why she contracted a deadly virus at such a young age, she says. It was not one of the nightmares she could have foreseen when, at age 14, she was drugged and kidnapped from her home in Karnataka state, where she lived with her widowed, brickmaker father. She was forced into prostitution, serving as many as 10 customers from morning to night, she says.

Sangeeta weeps silently. Because of her HIV infection, she can't dream of the future, she says. "What is written in my fate has happened to me."

Now, when she counsels prostitutes who come in for checkups and other treatment, she urges them to flee the brothels. "I tell them my life is finished," she says. "If you keep doing this, you'll be in the same position."

—By Katherine Kam





Sunil Carlton D'Souza, a 29-year-old Bombay man infected with HIV, says his greatest worry is that his two younger sisters' wedding prospects will dim once suitors find out he harbors the virus.

positive after coming down with a fever.

Since arriving in town in 1983, he has visited brothels frequently. Three or four times a year he has been able to visit his wife, who lives in Raigad with their 8-month-old child. Ramesh seems not to understand the gravity of his diagnosis. He talks with a faint smile across his lips. All he knows is that he has a "lifelong disease."

Will he reveal his condition to his spouse? "What's the point of telling my wife?" he says. "She's a village woman. She won't understand." Deshpande explains that he thinks he got infected from a prostitute, but doesn't yet know he can infect others.

"Our patients are basically unaware of AIDS," Deshpande says. "When I tell them they are HIV-positive, there is no reaction."

MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Because people like Ramesh and the prostitute who infected him are among the first wave of Indian AIDS victims, the disease has been cast as a red-

light problem afflicting "bad, immoral people," says Dr. Jacob K. John, a psychiatrist who counsels HIV patients. But such focus on "who" gets AIDS, rather than on "how" one gets AIDS, fosters a false sense of security.

Since 1986 when the virus was detected in prostitutes from Tamil Nadu, it has spread beyond high-risk groups into middle professional classes—managers, technicians, sales people—and homemakers and infants born HIV-positive.

The virus, which shook the world more than a decade ago, has only begun reaching India's national consciousness in the past two years. The message, often communicated through newspaper and magazine articles and television spots, has reached mainly the educated. Such education has not widely reached the streets.

Raju Nagulla, a 46-year-old taxi driver, says boys as young as 15 or 16, the sons of wealthy families, have asked him to drive them to Kamathipura. He explains AIDS this way: "Girls get sick,

they don't recover, then they start drying up." When pressed for more technical knowledge, he lumps AIDS with other venereal diseases—dangerous thinking, because only the latter are treatable. Nagulla thinks AIDS might be curable, but he isn't sure.

Kaku, another Bombay man, heard of AIDS as far back as 1985, but has never heard of the HIV dormancy period. Nor is he certain whether the virus can be transmitted just once or indefinitely. Many Bombay residents fret that AIDS can be transmitted through a handshake, mosquitoes, air, water, bed-sheets, or sex with foreigners.

A "WESTERN" DISEASE

Some doctors voice anger that seven years after the first cases were detected in India, so much of the country is still ignorant about AIDS. Three years ago, Dr. Bothra, who serves as a health policy consultant to India, warned officials of a looming AIDS crisis. "They said it's a Western problem, a gay problem—the usual things," Bothra says.

WHAT WORLD VISION IS DOING

In late 1991, World Vision began its "Women and AIDS" research project to create a model AIDS prevention program for urban teen girls in Bombay. In India, a young girl's physical maturing process is veiled in deep mystery. In this sexually conservative society, girls do not receive sex education in school. Nor do they learn from their parents about menstruation, body development, or sexuality, says Professor Asha Bhende, a World Vision sociologist in Bombay.

"They're only told, 'Now, you're grown up. Be careful now. Don't talk to boys. There's a lot of fear,'" she says.

With AIDS spreading throughout India, girls on the threshold of adulthood need accurate information about sex

and health more than ever.

In one recent World Vision survey of 211 Bombay teenagers, 24 percent of the girls and 32 percent of the boys had heard of AIDS. Among this fraction, knowledge about transmission was sketchy. When asked how a person contracts AIDS, most mentioned visiting prostitutes or having multiple partners. Almost half these teens who had heard of AIDS also believed it was curable, perhaps through antibiotics.

The project focuses on girls, including those from Bombay slums. "They are absolutely powerless right now," Bhende says. Without education, "They will remain powerless because their mothers are."

She adds: "If you educate one man, you educate one man. But when you educate one woman, you educate

the entire family. She is the gatekeeper of change."

After polling young people about attitudes and beliefs related to sex, Bhende created a six-session talk group that she launched in December 1992 with about 25 girls. The topics included: female identity and gender inequality, menstruation and puberty, sexual harassment and exploitation, and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

Bhende hopes that girls who attend the program will share AIDS information with their peers. When the "Women and AIDS" project ends in 1993, Bhende hopes to present an effective AIDS prevention program to Indian educators, counselors, and social workers who can implement similar programs.

India's leaders assumed the country's strong, traditional Asian values would protect it against a disease of the sexually free-wheeling West. The government, which has just begun responding to the crisis, has been stung by intense criticism at home and abroad for wasting valuable time that could have been spent preventing an AIDS epidemic.

In 1992, the national government began a \$100 million, five-year AIDS prevention program, financed mainly by a World Bank loan. The newly created National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) coordinates a central AIDS policy that focuses on blood bank screening; control of venereal diseases (which can create sores offering the virus easy access); and a safe sex campaign, including condom promotion.

A TABOO SUBJECT

While NACO's plan offers a start, AIDS education presents tremendous challenges in India where talking about sex is taboo. "Even as doctors, we don't discuss sex openly," says Dr. M.R. Chandrakapure, a Bombay health official. "The whole society doesn't."

But effective AIDS prevention requires frank talk about sexual practices. Says one Indian Health Organization pamphlet: "It is time that we talked straight and with the real facts."

And these facts are difficult to disseminate in a country where three-quarters of the huge population live in rural areas and 48 percent is illiterate. Psychiatrist Jacob K. John of Christian Medical College in Tamil Nadu says his HIV patients require a long time to understand AIDS.

"You're looking at a group of people for whom the major consideration is

'How do I survive today? Where's my next meal coming from?' When you talk to them about something that may happen five or 10 years later, it doesn't cut ice. Life is not that long."

Prevention efforts also must strike at the root of some men's deeply entrenched sexual attitudes, Dr. Deshpande says. "It's below their dignity to use a condom," she says. Some view condoms as a barrier to enjoyment, especially when visiting prostitutes, Dr. John adds. "If you're paying money

to get pleasure, why reduce it by using a barrier?" Prostitutes feel they cannot afford to turn away customers who refuse condoms.

Abstinence should be promoted as the best form of AIDS protection for India's youth, "and for that matter, the general population," Dr. Bothra believes. "We should emphasize abstinence before marriage, fidelity within marriage, and a mutual monogamous relationship with a faithful partner." Much of the Indian crisis "is an epidemic of risky behavior," he adds, one in which "personal responsibility" must be stressed.

THE COST OF AIDS

Fear of painful social shunning often keeps the AIDS-infected "cloaked in secrecy," John says. "It's hard to get them to surface to help join the fight." Because of the fright and misinformation about AIDS, sufferers and their loved ones can face cruelties daily. In Indian society, an individual exists within the context of his family, and that means an AIDS victim's entire household can be ostracized.

Families have been forced to move out of their homes, children have been kicked out of schools, and marriages have been difficult to arrange for daughters in the household, even though they are uninfected.

Many also cannot afford treatment. Life-prolonging drugs such as AZT cost about \$16 a day, an exorbitant cost for an unskilled laborer who might earn less than \$1 a day.

India's health budgets are dwarfed by massive problems, including basic diseases that have yet to be controlled,

Over 12 million people globally are infected with HIV.

AIDS WORLDWIDE



Sub-Saharan Africa:
7.5 million+

Southeast Asia:
1.5 million

North America:
1 million+

Latin America/Caribbean:
1 million

North Africa/Middle East:
750,000+

Western Europe:
500,000

Eastern Europe/Central Asia:
50,000

Australasia:
25,000+

East Asia:
25,000

Source:
World Health
Organization

such as tuberculosis, measles, and diarrhea. In a country with a per capita gross national product of \$350, it's hard to divert already scarce resources to the new scourge, Deshpande says. "I can't sacrifice 99 people for one."

NACO also faces blood screening difficulties. The government ordered all blood donations to be tested for HIV as far back as 1989. But to date, no nationwide, systematic screening exists. According to Bothra, 75 percent of the nation's blood supply goes unchecked, especially in small towns and rural areas, where comprehensive testing is hampered by inadequate staffing and a test kit shortage.

Complicating matters, blood donation is a highly commercialized industry in India. Roughly one-third of the blood supply comes from poor professional donors who sell blood several times a month to unregulated, private blood banks. These banks, which almost always lack HIV-testing capabilities, then resell the untested blood—at buyers' risk—to people awaiting transfusions. In Bombay, HIV infection has been found in more than half the professional donors tested, according to Bothra. In India, no national law bans a knowingly infected donor from selling his blood.

The government is trying to increase volunteer blood donation. But Bothra believes India should shut down all commercial blood banks, too. "Nobody should be in this business," he says. "It's criminal when there's a pandemic going on."

A POLITICAL WILL?

Despite his homeland's obstacles to dealing with AIDS, Bothra believes that with NACO, India's leadership has finally gained the political will to do battle. But other doctors aren't so sure. They harbor deep lack of faith in a government legendary for mismanagement and ineffective bureaucracy.

Maharashtra, where Bombay is the capital, is considered one of the states hardest hit by AIDS. Out of 155,000 blood samples taken from those with "high-risk behaviors," such as prostitutes, homosexuals, intravenous drug users, and venereal disease patients, almost 30 percent have tested HIV positive, according to Health Services Director M.R. Chandrakapure.

Despite confirmed HIV cases in the area, some government health officials still insist AIDS is not an issue in the rural villages and that all blood donors are regularly tested. Such evidence of governmental complacency and misinformation continues to upset doctors on the front lines.

"On paper, it sounds as though they have urgency," says Dr. Ishwar Gilada of the Indian Health Organization. "I want to see that in action." The young specialist in sexually transmitted diseases has become a leading AIDS spokesman and vocal critic of the government. "It was possible to prevent a major catastrophe," he says. "We had the time that Africa didn't, and we could have learned from their suffering. We blew it."

In a few more years, when the deceptive dormancy period ends and the official AIDS death toll rockets, the alarm might sound more convincingly. Says World Vision sociologist Dr. Asha Bhende: "Once you find people dying around you, then you're going to wake up in a big way."

An awakening is also needed in parts of India's medical establishment, which has discriminated against HIV patients. In one case, hemophiliac brothers Vineet and Rohit Oberoi of New Delhi claim that once they were diagnosed with HIV, they were thrown out of hospitals with humiliating warn-

SEEDS OF HELP

A few nongovernmental agencies are beginning to help. Agencies have distributed condoms, sometimes to Kamathipura's prostitutes and clients, and others have performed street plays about AIDS to educate truck drivers, factory workers, and slum dwellers.

Few Christians, however, who comprise only 2.4 percent of India's total population, have begun AIDS ministry work, according to Bombay pastor Sumitra Gaikwad, mainly because congregations still don't know about AIDS or harbor misconceptions about catching the disease.

With 30 years experience in hospital administration, Gaikwad is leading the way by pioneering a church-based HIV/AIDS project to help poor and high-risk groups, including prostitutes and slum dwellers, with a medical clinic that would offer HIV testing; counseling for those who test positive; and health education provided by trained church volunteers.



Until recently, Dr. Ishwar Gilada was one of the few officials actively concerned with AIDS prevention in India. As Secretary General of the Indian Health Organization, a volunteer AIDS education and prevention agency, he distributed literature to hundreds of villages, organized rallies, and broadcasted AIDS messages with bullhorns.

ings never to come back.

Anger and weariness have set in at some government hospitals, where patients are routinely moved if they test positive at a private hospital. "The educated elites don't want to touch HIV," says Deshpande of the public J.J. Hospital. "They feel it's all to be dumped on the government hospitals."

"The church in India cannot afford to ignore these realities," Gaikwad says. "A response is thrust upon us if we heed biblical teaching on social responsibility and do not harden our hearts to the compassion of Christ." ❀

Katherine Kam is a free-lance writer living in Corte Madera, Calif.

THE GRAY COAT

BY MARY ELLEN GUDEMAN

*I*t won't take long, I thought as I headed for the train station one Wednesday afternoon. I only had a little business in Osaka, Japan.

At the station, people were lined up at the four automatic ticket dispensers. I chose one where only one woman, wearing a gray coat, was inserting her money. The 70 yen button—the cost for one stop—flashed on. But she only stared at the dispenser. Below the train fare buttons was the platform ticket button. It flashed on, as the cost is the same—70 yen.

She's not getting on the train. Maybe she's meeting someone on the platform. She hesitated. I'm going to miss my train if she doesn't hurry. Finally she reached out and pushed the platform ticket button. The ticket dropped into the tray below, but she only stared at it. Exasperated at having to wait, I reached over her shoulder, brushing it, to insert money for my train fare.

Momentarily I forgot her. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw her go through the wicket on my left. She paused under the timetable overhead and looked up. *What a thin coat to wear on this chilly day. She must not have much of this world's goods. And 70 yen is a lot to pay just to get on a platform.* As I went down the steps and crossed over to the platform for Osaka, the young woman hurried up the steps to the opposite platform for Kobe.

I settled down waiting for my train. The 1:29 super-express bound for Kobe would first need to pass through. The thundering sound of its fast approach was almost tuned out by ears long accustomed to the roar.

Suddenly an eerie thud, screeching brakes, then flying fragments and train-bed rocks broke into my consciousness. *Oh, no, the train has left the tracks!* I grabbed my coat to shield my face.

Then, just as suddenly as the horrifying experience had begun, it ended. And out of the deafening silence someone across the platform from me shrieked, "*Niku! Niku!*" (Flesh! Flesh!) One hundred meters down the tracks was the motionless

super-express. From everywhere, people hurried down the platform.

Bits of a mutilated body scattered here and there confirmed the tragedy. Below, in front of me, lying inside the train rails, was the gray coat, grease- and blood-stained.

I had touched that gray coat moments before, without understanding, not caring. She paid 70 yen for her leap into eternity; I paid three times that much to carry out my business in Osaka. If I had spoken to her, I would have missed my train ... and so would she.

At the time of this tragedy, Tanaka-san, a woman in her early 30s, lived near the same train station. She also had attempted to take her life—more than once.

Picking up her newspaper one evening, she noticed a small leaflet fall to the floor, announcing meetings at a local church. Her first impulse was to toss it out.

Life for Tanaka-san had become bitter. She was the youngest of nine children and now she was caring for her sick, elderly mother. An older brother had been killed in the war; another brother was now dying of cancer.

Tanaka-san came at the end of a prayer meeting one evening. I cannot forget the sad sight—that hollow face; her bony hands grasping her stomach which suffered from ulcers caused by many evenings spent drinking to forget her troubles.

She greatly needed a friend. But argumentative, quick-tempered, and critical about everyone and everything, she was not easy to befriend. Her unruly nature often led to conflicts at her work where she was a bookkeeper. The others attending our small church avoided her, only adding to her loneliness. Despite this, Tanaka-san continued attending.

I was already overwhelmed with a packed schedule of church planting, Bible study work, and a Bible camp ministry. But with the woman's suicide

"It takes time to unravel a twisted problem or to fill a void with meaning—to be a friend."

SUSAN MCGINNIS



at the train station still fresh in my mind, I invited Tanaka-san to my apartment. This opened the door for innumerable "uninvited" visits, many times lasting up to a couple of hours. I also spent hours counseling her on the telephone. The endless time this consumed wearied me.

But slowly Tanaka-san opened her heart to Christ, a true friend, and she later led her mother to Christ. Since then, the people in the church have grown and learned to love her. Tanaka-san has learned how to get along better with people and is the treasurer of her church.

My friendship with Tanaka-san has had many rocky moments through the years. Often I defended her at church, sometimes putting my own reputation at risk. Other church members' criticism of my friendship with Tanaka-san left me exasperated or in tears.

Even today, Tanaka-san is sometimes difficult to get along with, but we still keep in touch. Almost every week, Tanaka-san sends me tapes about how she is doing.

Over the years since the tragedy at the train station, many Tanaka-sans have interrupted my well-planned schedules—people who need counseling, people who are lonely, people in need of a friend. It takes time to unravel a twisted problem or to fill a void with meaning—to be a friend.

One chilly spring day long ago, God showed me what can happen when I don't take the time. ☉

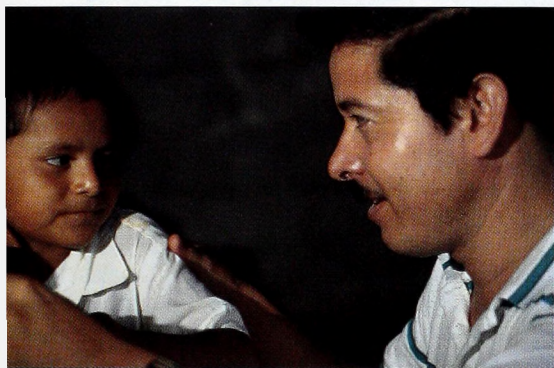
Mary Ellen Gudeman is a former missionary in Japan. She now lives in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Because of the stresses of El Salvador's civil war, Pastor Daniel Landaverde could count on new faces in church almost every Sunday in Chalatenango Province. The FMLN guerrillas had made their home in this mountainous backcountry in the north. They hid in the hills and buried their arms and supplies there; they recruited and organized the peasants. And when the army periodically raided the villages, sometimes even bombing them from the air, the rebels fled.

Life was always stressful in Chalate, as the locals call it, and always basic: no electricity, no running water. The roads were often mined, and the army often burned local crops.

The stress, Landaverde says, drove many in this largely

Catholic country to listen to the gospel in evangelical churches, which grew steadily during the 12-year war. From 1979 to 1991 the evangelical church in El Salvador grew from 3 percent to more than 20 percent of the population.



Pastor Landaverde believes Christians need to meet physical needs as well as spiritual ones. His growing church provides social services for about a thousand people, including these girls (far right).

So when the guerrillas signed a truce with the government last year, it raised many questions about the future of the



EL SALVADOR'S

TEXT BY RON WILSON
PHOTOS BY CHRIS REDNER



DURING EL SALVADOR'S 12-YEAR CIVIL WAR, THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH GREW TO MORE THAN 20 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. DESPITE SOME BACKLASH, EVANGELICALS ARE FACING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THE COUNTRY'S POOR AND OPPRESSED, AND TO BE AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION.

GROWING CHURCH

“WHENEVER A COMMITTEE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF LIFE IS FORMED IN A COMMUNITY, THEY CHOOSE AN EVANGELICAL TO LEAD BECAUSE EVANGELICALS HAVE LEARNED TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC AND WORK WELL WITH OTHERS.”

—Jorge Martinez, El Salvador's former vice minister of the Interior

San Salvador's Tower of Democracy was intended as a monument to El Salvador's prosperous future. Instead, the bomb-shattered office tower is a reminder of the costs of war. It has never been occupied and investors are hesitant to complete the building until a United Nations peace accord is completed.



church: Will the growth rate continue? What will the church do with its newfound respectability? Will it become a force for change in the country or simply another fringe group? And will the church help meet people's needs in this terribly poor country?

"It's true," says Dr. José Heriberto Alvayero, "that the war caused people in desperation to look to God. But I think the real reason for the growth was the courage of Christians to preach the gospel. The church responded to the situation God placed it in."

Alvayero is the president of the Evangelical University of El Salvador, and he echoes many observers of what has been called a tidal wave of change sweeping over Latin America, where evangelical churches are multiplying at a staggering rate. Almost a third of Guatemala, El Salvador's neighbor, is evangelical, including the country's president.

While observers have offered various rationales for the growth, church leaders insist it's primarily a religious movement. Missions scholar Samuel Escobar wrote that "the life of these congregations can only be explained by an infusion of spiritual power."

According to Alvayero, "Christians took advantage of the situation and, in love, opened their arms."

Jorge Martinez, an evangelical formerly in the president's cabinet, suggests an additional reason for the country's church growth: "Many U.S. missionaries left during the war and national leaders took over." In other words, the church became more attractive because it was then an El Salvadoran church, not a foreign one.

INCREASED RESPECT

Martinez himself was a product of the church moving out of the rural poverty-plagued areas and into the city. "To be an evangelical before the war,"

he says, "was considered to be on the lowest strata of society." For years the gospel had taken root mostly in the poverty-plagued rural areas. But then the educated middle class in the city began to listen and believe, lending some respectability to the movement.

In 1976 someone gave Martinez a Bible. "Getting a Bible here is like getting a piece of jewelry," he says. "No one expects you to read it. You open it to a

Psalm, wrap it in plastic, and put it out on a table to keep evil out of the house." But Martinez, like everyone else, was feeling the pressure of the times, and though he had been taught as a child not to read the Bible, he began to search the Scriptures. After a long period of self-examination, he was converted.

Martinez was a good lawyer, and a friend introduced him to a politician named Alfredo Cristiani. He began to do Cristiani's legal work, and when Cristiani became president in 1989, he made Martinez vice minister of the Interior. Today Martinez is the country's most prominent evangelical.

"I'm the first evangelical in the history of El Salvador to be part of the president's cabinet," he says proudly.

Respect for evangelicals is growing. "Whenever a committee for the betterment of life is formed in a community," Martinez says, "they choose an evangelical to lead because evangelicals have learned to speak in public and work well with others."

Evangelicals now have enough respect to be elected to the highest offices in the government, including president, Martinez says. But many Christian leaders still have strong reservations about believers involved in politics.

When Cristiani appointed Martinez, a group of pastors came to him and told him they would pray that God would restore him.

Alvayero, however, has been speaking in churches throughout the country and taking the church temperature. He believes the time is right for evangelicals to move into leadership. "I don't use the word 'politics,'" he says. "I talk about 'social responsibility.'"

Alvayero was chosen recently to lead a new political party, the National Solidarity Movement, which proposes to address moral and political concerns. "I don't believe you can form an evangelical party," he says, "but I believe you can form one with a strong moral and ethical base." Evangelicals are prominent in the new party, which also includes Catholics.

HEALING WOUNDS

While Alvayero, Martinez, and others delve into politics, other evangelicals have begun addressing the social needs of this small country, which suffered a billion and a half dollars worth of damage to its infrastructure because of the war.

Pastor Landaverde confesses that until recently he didn't understand that a Christian should take both the Word of God and food and clothing to needy people. "I've learned that it's not enough to say 'God is love.' We have to show it to people."

During the war, Landaverde had found the stresses in the guerrilla-controlled mountains too great. So he moved his wife and five children to a town far in the south. Today Landaverde's church in Rosario de Mora is a partner with World Vision in a project that provides food, clothes, health care, job training, literacy training, and Bible studies to about a thousand people.

But Landaverde's ministry to the poor is the exception. Church leaders are more apt to believe that feeding the poor is the job of the government, says Alvayero.

"The church has never seen meeting physical needs as important as meeting spiritual needs," says Eduardo Palacio, the pastor of Shalom Baptist Church. His church has been caring for orphans, providing health care, and training women in job skills for years. In addition, Palacio heads the Permanent Committee for National Dialogue, encouraging reconciliation and peace.

"We do see more churches involved in social issues," Palacio admits. "But they don't try to address the larger issues of the violence of our society and the root causes of the problem."

EVANGELICAL BACKLASH

While respect and acceptance for evangelicals is growing, trouble is rising. Palacio has paid a price for his passion for peace. Last year a secret document drafted by the Cristiani government accused him and other church leaders of having links with the FMLN.

And before Martinez started working for Cristiani, his Christian compassion during the war got him into trouble. As a young lawyer he handled the affairs of businesses declaring bankruptcy. While he made money, he watched others suffer, including the peasants in the rural area. So Martinez began making trips into the poorer areas, taking food and clothes and preaching the gospel.

It was risky and he knew that some would ask questions. Is he a leftist? Is he helping the guerrillas? As he returned from one of his trips, he was kidnapped by a death squad, held for eight days,

tortured, and finally released with orders to leave the country. He didn't leave, but he sat in his office for months with no clients. The word had gone out that he might be part of the political left.

During the war, ministries to the poor were often suspected of having ties to the guerrillas, and were threatened by the right-wing death squads.

Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Salvador, for example, faced a series of threats and reprisals for providing health care, education, adult training, and a home for war orphans among the poor. Three church workers were kidnapped by right-wing forces, a deacon disappeared, a youth leader was assassinated, and 40 families fled the country in fear of their lives.

Today many evangelical churches are trying to put past troubles behind them and play a role in what the government calls "National Reconciliation."

binning medical or agricultural work with evangelism.

Good News, the first interdenominational Christian newspaper, appeared last year, and a U.S.-based group began a Christian television station. And to the surprise of many, evangelicals have found easy access to military establishments. One pastor wants the church to help remake "military personnel into individuals with greater humanity and responsibility before God and society."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Although it's too early to judge the effect of the war on the church, and the peace process has run into snags, many are optimistic about the country's future. Business interests predict fast economic growth. The work force is well-trained and considered hardworking.

The poor in the rural areas—a very large part of the country—don't share

Members of Emmanuel Baptist Church faced threats, arrests, kidnappings, and death for providing education, health care, and job skills for poor families believed to be sympathetic to the FMLN. Peace is allowing the church to care for more people with fewer reprisals.



Some, like the Oasis of Love church in San Salvador, have launched a spiritual offensive into the mountains. Using films and gospel literature, they've targeted Nueva Concepcion, a town in Chalete-nango that was once a key supply point for the rebels.

Parachurch groups such as Campus Crusade, Youth With a Mission, and Operation Mobilization are also targeting the poor regions in the mountains, working with local churches and com-

that optimism. Scores of villages never did get much from the government and they don't expect anything to change. The churches did a good job of preaching the gospel during the war, many believe, but if they don't begin to feed the hungry and help the poor, they could find the doors to the hearts of the poor shut in times of peace. ☉

Ron Wilson is a free-lance writer living in Earlysville, Va.

**FIVE ISSUES CONCERNING
THIRD WORLD WOMEN:**

LITERACY
EMPLOYMENT
CHILD BEARING
SINGLE PARENTING
AIDS

Single mothers face a desperate situation in the Third World, where even intact families often struggle to survive. Many husbands and fathers leave dry, rural villages to look for work in the cities; others are killed in war or simply abandon their families. The mother alone is often unable to provide adequate food, shelter, health care, or education. Some single mothers are so desperate they feel forced to sell or abandon their children.

Since her husband deserted her seven years ago, Hourn Thol (right) has struggled to support her four children, ages 7 to 20, in the rural Kandal province of Cambodia. Since 1990, a World Vision Women in Development project has helped ease Hourn Thol's struggle. The project set up a revolving loan fund to help women start small businesses such as pig raising.

Hourn Thol used her loan to start a noodle-making business and has since earned enough money to repay the loan and buy food and clothing for her children. In fact, the small businesses were so successful, all 35 women who received loans in November 1990 repaid them within nine months.

The project also helped the Women's Association of Cambodia open three day-care centers. Each center provides up to 30 children with food, education, and health care.

Before the day-care, single parent Moul Souk had to leave her baby with her 3-year-old daughter while she worked in the paddy fields. The daughter had to ask the neighbors for food. As the more than 180 women benefit from the project, they will teach other women. Three women who learned tailoring through the project are now teaching 16 women in the community. 🌐

Reported and photographed by Sheryl Watkins. Written by Tamera Marko.



S I G N S O F H O P E



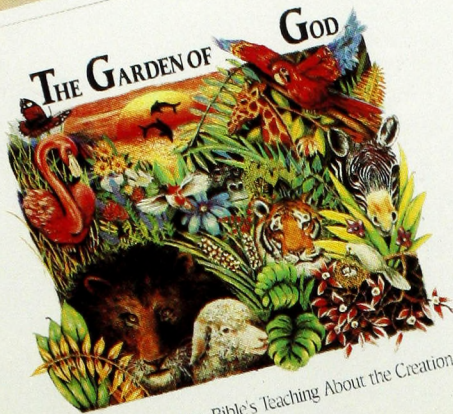
WOMEN OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Tamera Marko and Stephanie Stevenson



Selections from the Bible's Teaching About the Creation

THINK GREEN, THANK GOD

The Garden of God: Selections from the Bible's Teaching About the Creation" reminds readers that

God entrusted people to care for his Creation long before recycling bins and "think green" slogans. The 32-page, colorfully illustrated book includes Bible verses about praises and concern for God's creation and the Christian's role in caring for it.

Written by Glenn Paauw and illustrated by Gustave Doré, the book retails for \$3.50.

To order, contact the International Bible Society, P.O. Box 35700, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3570; (800) 524-1588 or your local Christian bookstore.

CUTTING THE MUSTARD

Applications are available for the 1993 Mustard Seed Awards honoring innovative, church-sponsored volunteer ministries among the poor. Award recipients receive national recognition and grants up to \$5,000.

For more information, contact Mustard Seed Awards V, World Vision, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-1111, ext. 2162. Applications are due by Oct. 4, 1993.

1992 Mustard Seed Award winners:

Hollywood Urban Project, Hollywood, Calif.

Provides youths and teens with after-school tutoring, job and recreational programs, and Bible studies.

Broadway Community, Inc., New York, N.Y.

Assists homeless with free meals, job referrals, housing, counseling, clothing, education classes, and alcohol rehabilitation.

CHAMPS After-School Program, Dallas, Texas

Provides parents with after-school child care, education classes, and

Christian materials.

Aslan Youth Ministries, Red Bank, N.J.

Provides disadvantaged youth and their families with Bible classes, tutoring, food, clothing, job counseling, financial aid, and recreational activities.

The Step-Up Ministry, Raleigh, N.C.

Assists homeless and poor with budgeting, job skills, and housing.

Common Ground Ministries, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio

Helps inner city residents with food, clothing, housing, nutrition classes, budgeting, and Christian education.



TAKE A DISASTER VACATION

You can spend a week in Florida helping victims of Hurricane Andrew, which left 250,000 homeless. Accommodations include U.S. army-donated Desert Storm tents, hot showers, and meals.

Since November, Forward Edge International, a Christian short-term missions organization, has been coordinating one-week "vacations with a purpose" to help distribute food, repair homes, and share the Gospel with hurricane victims.

You simply organize a missions group from your church and raise airfare and \$195 per individual to pay for food, lodging, and on-site transportation. Forward Edge will provide an experienced leader and organize the activities.

Churches interested in sending mission teams to help Hurricane Andrew victims in Florida or for information about other mission programs, contact Charlene Foster, Forward Edge, 15121-A NE 72nd Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686; (206) 574-3343.

Help Secure Your Future—and Hers.



SAVE THE CHILDREN

Every morning, as we wake up, 100,000 U.S. children wake up homeless. Every 13 seconds, as we get out of bed, a child is reported abused or neglected. Every 32 seconds, about the time it takes us to walk to the kitchen and put on the coffee, a baby is born into poverty. Every 14 minutes, while we shower and brush our teeth, a baby dies in the United States. Every 64 seconds, while we lock our doors and head for work, a baby is born to a teenage mother. And every 13 hours, before we go back to sleep at night, a preschooler is murdered.

"How To Save The Children," presents almost 200 practical ways to help abused, neglected, and homeless children. Complete with addresses, phone numbers, and brief explanations of people, places, and programs dedicated to this cause, the book's ideas range from smiling at a child on a bus to lobbying as a child advocate.

Written by Amy Hatkoff and Karen Kelly Klopp, co-founders of The Woman's Group to provide support for women and children living in shel-

ters, the book retails for \$10.00. To order, contact your local bookstore.

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From the Foreword

HOW TO SAVE THE CHILDREN

Innovative resource guide filled with practical ideas to counter the effects of poverty and neglect on America's children.

AMY HATKOFF and KAREN KELLY KLOPP

“No man ever stood so straight as when he stooped to help a child. —On a plaque in a children's home in Philadelphia.”

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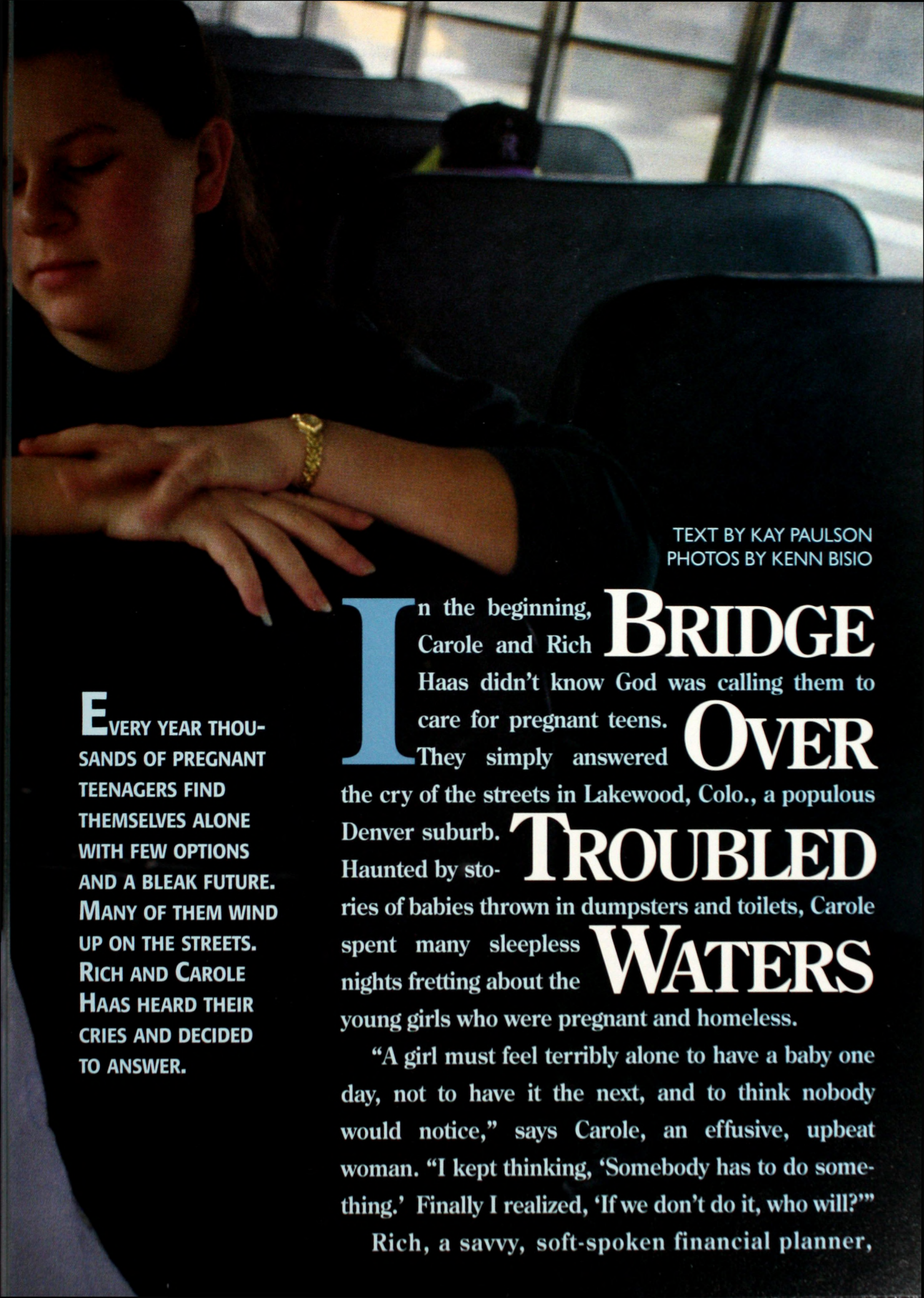
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Amy, a 17-year-old Bridgeway resident, takes her baby Christina with her to school.



TEXT BY KAY PAULSON
PHOTOS BY KENN BISIO

EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF PREGNANT TEENAGERS FIND THEMSELVES ALONE WITH FEW OPTIONS AND A BLEAK FUTURE. MANY OF THEM WIND UP ON THE STREETS. RICH AND CAROLE HAAS HEARD THEIR CRIES AND DECIDED TO ANSWER.

In the beginning, Carole and Rich Haas didn't know God was calling them to care for pregnant teens. They simply answered the cry of the streets in Lakewood, Colo., a populous Denver suburb. Haunted by stories of babies thrown in dumpsters and toilets, Carole spent many sleepless nights fretting about the young girls who were pregnant and homeless.

**BRIDGE
OVER
TROUBLED
WATERS**

"A girl must feel terribly alone to have a baby one day, not to have it the next, and to think nobody would notice," says Carole, an effusive, upbeat woman. "I kept thinking, 'Somebody has to do something.' Finally I realized, 'If we don't do it, who will?'"

Rich, a savvy, soft-spoken financial planner,



Carole and Rich Haas

agreed. As chairman of the Housing Authority, which provides housing for poor people in the community, he saw that single mothers were often unable to support themselves. He was troubled by the injustices of a system that often turned short-term crises into lifelong poverty and government subsistence.

"Carole and I wanted to see what would happen if we offered pregnant teens intensive help for six months or a year," Rich says. "I guess God figured if we were 'guppy' enough to jump in, he would add the rest later."

During the next six months, they inventoried their capital, formed a non-profit corporation, located a housemother, and rented a house large enough for four teenage girls. With just word-of-mouth publicity, however, the house filled in two weeks. So the Haases purchased an attractive home that could house up to 10 girls and several babies.

Carole spent hours, day and night, with the scared girls who poured into "Bridgeway"—listening to them, praying for them, setting up classes, seeing them through labor, insisting they complete their education. A former nurse, she was knowledgeable about prenatal care, pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. Empathizing with the girls was easy. Her own parents had died in a plane crash when she was 6, and both she and Rich had grown up in alcoholic homes. Both understood the hard work necessary to break destructive cycles.

"Carole has a special gift from God to motivate teens," Rich says. "She can make them feel important and valuable, make them believe they can accomplish things."

IT TAKES A LOT OF MIRACLES

Three years after Rich and Carole started Bridgeway, another house was donated for their use. But Carole soon found herself stretched beyond her limits, and Rich's income wasn't meeting all the needs. He had to choose: Either let Bridgeway flounder or give up his regular job, take over the administration, and turn to the community for total financial support. He chose Bridgeway, "Although begging is hard work!" he says.

Carole and Rich know God is the real mover behind Bridgeway. It takes a lot of miracles, Rich says, to pay a mortgage, rent an office, support a half-time secretary, and maintain three teen residences, a day-care cottage, and their own household—including four teenagers—on \$97,000 a year. Most of their backing comes from individuals and churches, and a little from corporate grants. Many needed items are donated or salvaged from flea markets and garage sales.

Since Bridgeway opened in November 1986, the program has helped more than 240 babies and girls. Most of the girls are about 17 years old and lack family support. Many have been abused, some severely. Others have been kicked out of their homes because they are pregnant or refuse to get an abor-

tion. Half of the girls have had previous abortions.

"They tell us they were pressured into having an abortion, that they weren't given any choice," Rich says. "They seem to be trying to ease their pain and guilt by replacing the baby they aborted with another baby."

If a girl is undecided about whether to abort when she comes to Bridgeway, Carole refers her to a local pregnancy crisis center. She is also careful to let the girls decide whether to keep their babies or give them up for adoption. She knows the pregnant girls will learn more from watching the new mothers at Bridgeway cope with the tiring schedules, lost freedom, and lonely responsibility than they will by hearing a thousand lectures.

"When a girl wakes up at 3:00 a.m. six months after her baby is born, crying because she doesn't have a baby, or maybe because she does have a baby, she needs to know she is the one who made the decision," Carole says.

GIVING THEM LIVES TO LIVE

While Carole finds it gratifying to have girls tell her things like, "I wouldn't have a child if you hadn't helped me," and, "I wanted to carry my child to term, but I didn't know how to do it," her ambition is to give both the moms and babies "lives to live."

This emphasis on a full, productive life is stressed from the beginning. The Bridgeway program is free for most girls. For those who can pay, it costs \$75

A NEW LIFE

Until she came to Bridgeway, a home founded by Rich and Carole Haas for homeless, pregnant girls, Jen spent her life running from "an invisible ghost" of desperation.

Neglected by a drug-addicted mother, then placed with an abusive, alcoholic adoptive mother, Jen wanted nothing more than to grow up and leave home. At 16 she moved out, quit school, started waitressing, and started heavily using drugs and alcohol. Six months later she was living on the streets.

The next four scary, lonely years, Jen lived with friends or boyfriends or stayed in crash pads, cheap rooms, motels, and shelters. Sometimes she slept in the park; once she woke up in a dump. She'd work for a few days when she needed money. "I know God saved my life," she says now. "I could have been raped and killed, I could have gotten AIDS."

At 19 Jen gave her child up for adoption, thinking that was her only alternative. But when she learned she was pregnant again, she was determined to keep the baby and called Bridgeway for help. Carole Haas agreed to take her in.

"I love Carole Haas," Jen says. "I love her like a true mother. She's given me back self-esteem and hope in life. She kept saying, 'You can!' to me and she was right—I could!"

After living at Bridgeway for 6 months, Jen's son, Collin, was born. She remained at the home until she earned her nursing license and now is living with her son in an apartment. She supports herself and Collin with her nursing job and hopes eventually to become a drug and alcohol abuse counselor.

"I've learned to trust again," Jen says. "I always prayed to God, but I'd get mad at him if he didn't do what I wanted him to. Now I've given my life to God. It's never worked for me to run my own life." —Kay Paulson

a month. "The cost is low so that a girl can go to school full time and work part time," Rich says.

Before the girls move into the house, they are told Bridgeway is a motivator program. Many of the girls' job and parenting skills are inadequate, so they are required to attend classes on nutrition, parenting, adoption, living skills, and career options. They must also receive professional counseling and continue their educations.

A volunteer "Education Coordinator" helps each girl examine her goals and desires. "Many have only thought about the party next weekend as a long-term goal," Rich says. Next, a mentor works with each girl to help her carry out goals.

Licensed counselors donate their time (worth up to \$150 an hour) to help the girls one-on-one. Group counseling is also provided.

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

"Most of the girls are pretty wary at first," Rich says. "They wonder what it is

we really want—are we after their souls? Are we after their babies? When they realize all we want is to make their lives better, they start to wonder what motivates us. Then we can share Christ with them. We never push them to attend church or Bible studies, but very few leave without latching onto God in some way."

One girl refused to accept Christmas presents from a church group until she discovered what they wanted in return. "It was beyond her understanding that people would be nice just because they wanted to share the love of Christ with a stranger at Christmas," Rich says.

Carole and Rich can almost name the day a girl "crosses the bridge" and starts to believe she can make a good life for herself and her baby. "We've seen some of them go on to wonderful things," says Rich.

Former Bridgeway resident Chris Barry was engaged and had the dress picked out when, two months before her wedding, she found out she was

pregnant. When her fiance got scared and left, Chris sought help at Bridgeway. She put her child up for adoption. Today she occasionally fills in at Bridgeway as a housemother while completing her premed degree.

"Over half the girls go on to college or career training," Rich says. "But if you measure success by how far they've come from where they started, almost all of them are successes. The few girls who close down to love don't tend to stay too long. They're too uncomfortable here."

The program's goal is to enable the girls to support themselves by the time their baby is 6 months old. Some are ready earlier, others need more time. "As long as they are trying and learning, we can extend their stay until they are ready," Rich says.

In some cases, when the new mothers leave Bridgeway their needs just begin. One former Bridgeway resident struggled to complete her dental assistant training so she could support herself and her baby while attending



Most of the girls at Bridgeway are about 17 years old and lack family support. Bridgeway offers them education, career guidance, and counseling in a Christian environment.



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college. She almost quit dental school many times because it took her 3 1/2 hours on the bus every day to go to her day-care provider, college, and back home again. "She would get discouraged and say that she didn't have time to study or be with her son," Rich says.

To help provide affordable, local day-care for the mothers, Carole and Rich started the Rainbow Bridge Day Care, which is open from 6:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. By state law, the center can only care for six kids and only two can be infants. The infant spots are usually reserved as free day-care for Bridgeway girls. The other children's fees pay for the day-care staff. Volunteers, affectionately called "rock and rollers" because they rock the babies and roll the balls for the older kids, also help.

THE NEXT DREAM

The Haas' next goal is opening a home for pregnant girls under 16 years old. Everything is in place—the professionals, licensing requirements, a potential home—except the money to open it. State regulations require special social work and nursing supervision for pregnant girls under 16, raising the cost per girl to \$2,000 per month. Which means, Rich says, Bridgeway can house only those younger teens who are plugged into social services or who can pay their way. The others must find a family to take them in, or live with boyfriends, in crash pads, or on the streets.

"The hardest thing I have to do is tell girls we don't have a place for them," Rich says. "We get about 130 calls each year from girls under 16 years old who are homeless and without money. But we can only take one or two a month. You can hear the pain in their voices. There are probably enough needy girls in Denver to fill 10 Bridgeways."

Carole and Rich would also like to help people open homes like Bridgeway in other communities. "All it takes is a little intensive help and they can have a full and productive life," Rich says. "Their babies, if their mother chooses to parent, will also have a much better life if the mother is educated and has the skills and information needed to become a self-reliant member of our community."

This year half a million teens in the United States will deliver babies. For more information about Bridgeway, contact Rich Haas, 85 S. Union Blvd, Suite 204, Lakewood, CO 80228; (303) 969-0515. ☉

Kay Paulson is a free-lance writer living in Littleton, Colo.

NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

We encouraged readers in our Dec. 92/Jan. 93 issue to voice support for the bipartisan Select Committee on Hunger, which the *New York Times* called the "conscience of congress." That voice of conscience is now stilled. Congress recently abolished all four House Select Committees.

You'll want to read our feature article on the church in El Salvador in light of the recent report by the U.N.-appointed Commission on Truth. The Commission blamed the Salvadoran military for flagrant human rights abuses, including the murders of several American Catholic clergy. The military vigorously denies the charges; the country's president pushed through a blanket amnesty for those named in the report.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher has appointed a panel to investigate charges that State Department officials misled Congress about these atrocities. U.S. economic and military aid to El Salvador totaled \$6 billion during the past decade.

—Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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ANCIENT GUIDEPOSTS

I was rumbling over dusty roads in southern Zimbabwe, half listening to my colleagues' treatise on land management, when a phrase caught my attention: "The people lost their reference points."

The "people" were the natives who originally farmed this part of the world in the late 19th century. They brought to the land a kind of tribal wholism, culture and taboo, land and spirituality, work and faith—all of which were inseparable.

For the native farmers, land holdings were a function of the number of cattle one had and where one wanted those cattle to graze, to browse, to water. Each farmer had a number of "pockets" of land that he would move to as needed.

When the settlers arrived in the early 20th century, land was divided into large contiguous blocks and boundaries were mandated, chopping up traditional native farming methods. These farms were reduced to small plots, regardless of the number of cattle a farmer had to sustain. In essence, native farming as it was once practiced was virtually destroyed.

The ethnic conflicts that followed (and in some ways are continuing to this day) have given anthropologists and sociologists plenty to write about. But there is a need for theological reflection. Because of their wholistic understanding, when the children saw their parents' farming methods discredited, they also began challenging their parents' faith. Faith no longer "worked" and, as faith eroded, "The people lost their reference points."

The days of Jeremiah come to mind. God chastised an apostate people, a people who lost their sense of wholeness. His lament, "the land, the land, the land," fell on the deaf ears of those who hypocritically answered, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." God never intended

the physical (land) and the spiritual (temple) to be separated. Israel's understanding of Yahweh, and God's covenants with his people, would all flow from those two critical identification points.

But Israel was not to be whole. A divided people became a distracted people. The reference points, what Jeremiah calls those "ancient guideposts," were lost, and a chosen people became undone.

For World Vision, which espouses a wholistic gospel, there are critical lessons to be remembered. Our faith needs to work. Our work needs to incarnate one faith. What people see has a great impact on what people believe. Faith and works do go together.

At times, the worth of the gospel must first be established so that the truth of the gospel might emerge. Ultimately the quality of our work and the quality of our faith have to be equally credible. God needs to be relevant in our work or he will be dismissed in our faith.

This sense of wholism has to be sustained. For starters, we can never compromise our own reference points, the identity we have which is so inextricably tied to those "ancient guideposts," the historic verities of our faith. 🌐

The quality of our work and the quality of our faith have to be equally credible.



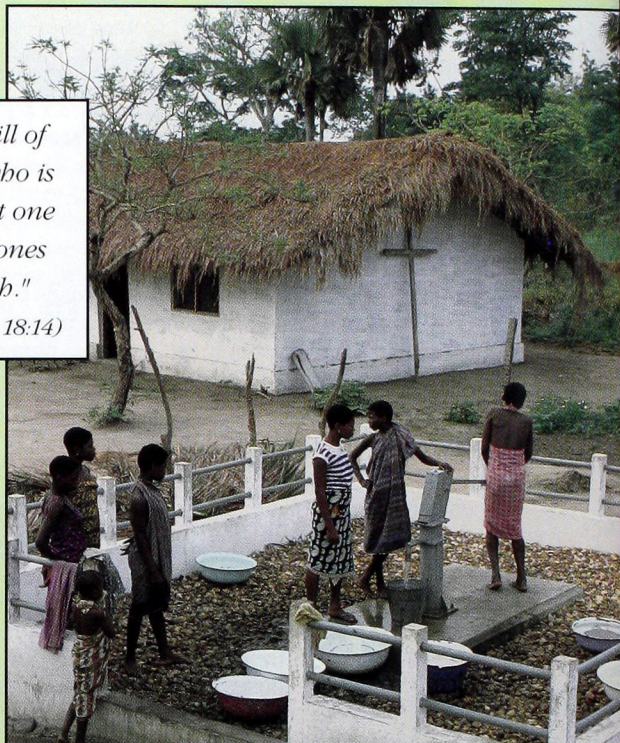
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