

WORLD VISION

February/March 1991

*Suffer the
Children*

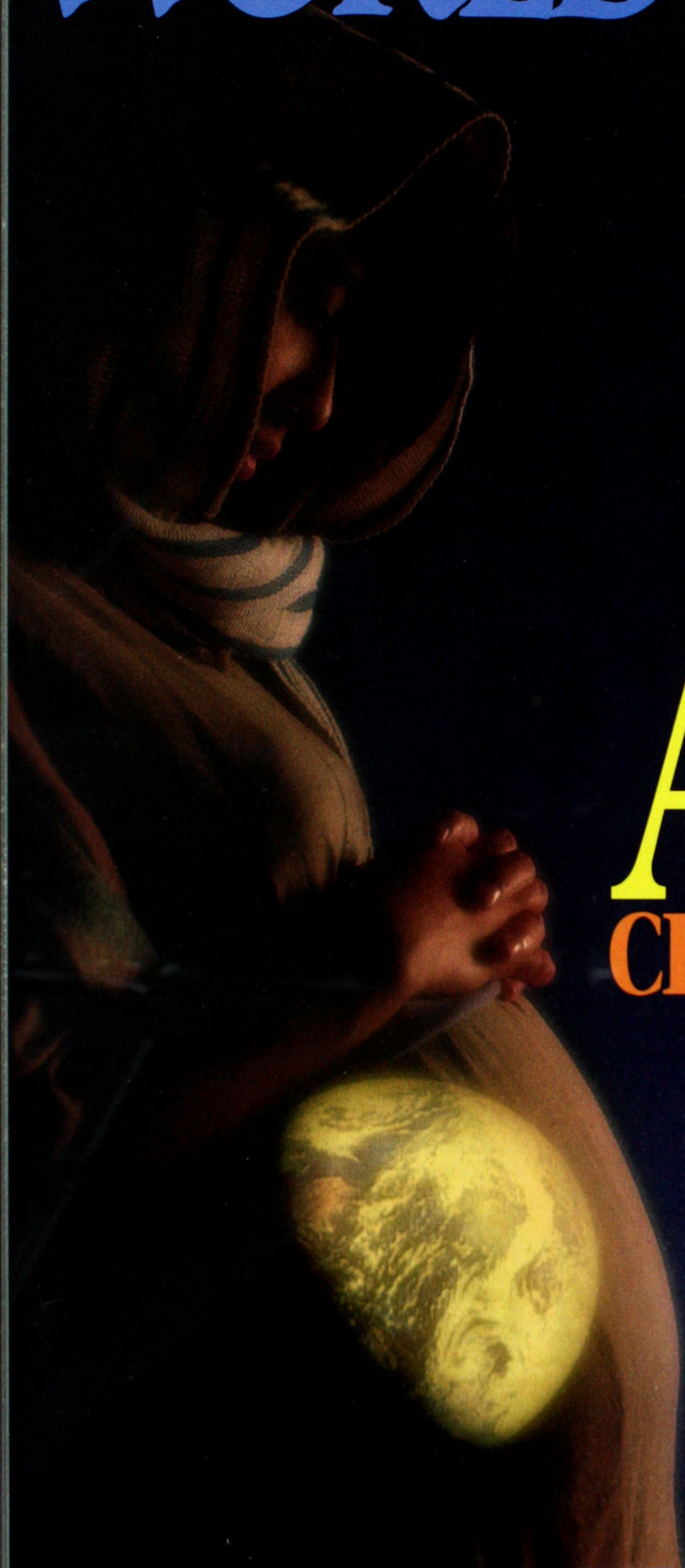
A Photo Essay

In El Salvador

**Life Has the
Last Word**

ALL OUR CHILDREN

*The
Population
Problem*



4 All Our Children

Many experts predict that if world population continues to soar, we will soon face mass starvation, disease, food riots, and environmental destruction. Others, however, argue that the real problem is that too many people have too little access to the resources they need to survive.

10 Life Has the Last Word

Through the suffering of her family and the Salvadoran people she ministers to, an American nurse discovers that when Christians enable one another to fight for life, life has the last word.

12 Going Home to Nothing

Last July, 2 million to 3 million foreigners worked in Iraq and Kuwait. They had come from some of the poorest countries in the world, for wages they couldn't dream of back home. After the invasion most were forced to flee with nothing but the taste of what could have been.

19 Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Jesus told his disciples to "suffer the little children." Yet today, more and more poor children are fighting in wars, dying from easily preventable diseases, and growing up on city streets. But last September, 23 world leaders signed a new agreement to protect the rights of children.

Millions of foreign workers in Iraq and Kuwait have fled since the August invasion.

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Patrick House's creative cover strikingly conveys one of the major challenges of the coming century—a growing world population. "All Our Children" looks at the issue.

While we've prayed for the release of several thousand "human shields" and other "guests" of Iraq, nearly 3 million of its foreign workers have fled for home. What they found there is painfully told in "Going Home to Nothing."

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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KEVIN MCKIERNAN

COVER: PATRICK HOUSE

THE OLD AND ORPHANS REMAIN

Uganda, once considered the pearl of Africa, is dying of AIDS. The entire population is considered high risk. The hardest hit are men and women, ages 18 to 45. The funeral business is booming.

On a recent trip I heard a verse which poignantly describes life in that stricken land. The rhyme gets lost in the translation, but the meaning is clear:

*It is a hard life; an uphill task
That breaks us as we climb.
We have forgotten God, so many
devils around us*

Where shall we go for our judgment day?

I saw many orphaned children while in Uganda. Their voices are soft and young. They are the future of the country, but the rhythmic swaying of their bodies seems to punctuate the fact that, for them, the future is vapor-thin.

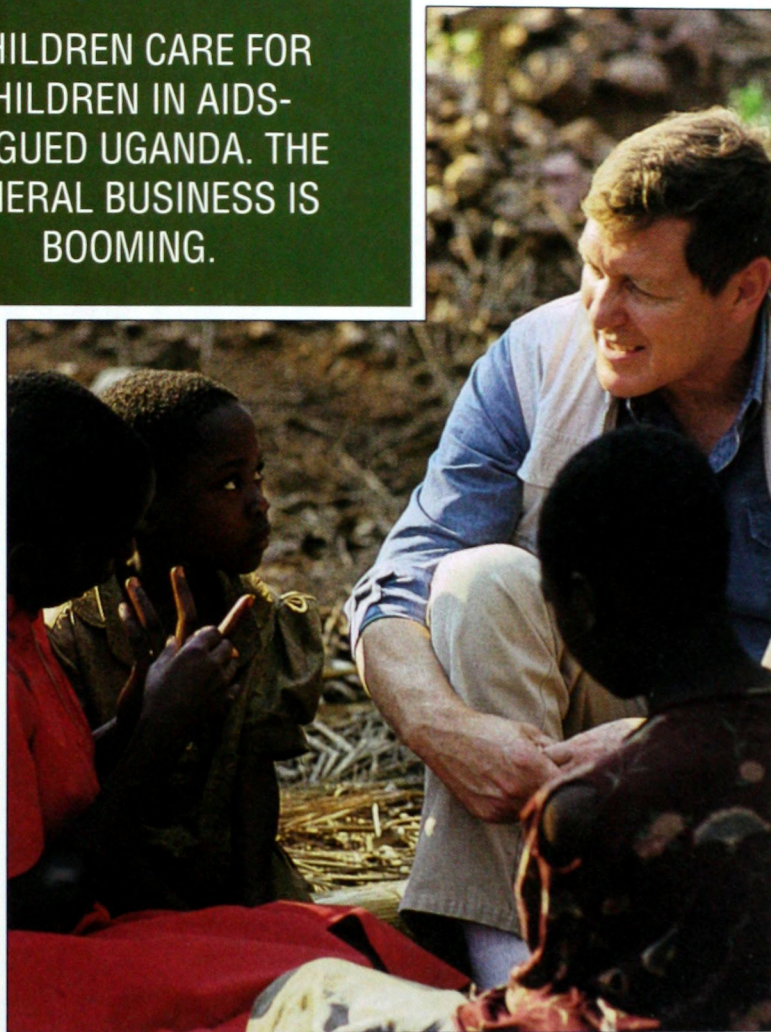
As if daily life weren't difficult enough, many of Uganda's children have seen their mothers and fathers die horrible deaths tainted by AIDS. Four children, ages 8 through 13, buried their parents themselves. The mother died of AIDS on Christmas Eve; the father, one week later on New Year's Eve. Their graves rest among the Matooke trees surrounding their hovel of a house. Rotten bedding is strewn around the yard. The roof has holes. The children sleep together in one bed with no mattress. They can't sleep on the floor because poisonous snakes sometimes slither inside.

The oldest child, Felistus, cooks their daily meals of sweet potatoes, beans, or bananas—the only food available to them. The sole adornment in the house is a picture of the family together, but now that picture faces the wall. "We want to keep it there, but we can't stand to look at it all the time," explains Felistus. Nothing we did or said got Felistus' 6-year-old brother to smile.

In another home, Conzaga, age 12, is the "savior, mother, father, breadwinner, and cook," according to his blind, 86-year-old grandmother. His grandfather, 82 and bedridden, agrees. Conzaga is essentially taking care of two households under one roof—his elderly grandparents and two younger siblings. Conzaga asks us for a blanket because they have only one. The child has become the parent. Tragedy has turned traditional roles upside-down.

Uganda's hope is in the younger generation who have managed to escape the sweeping

CHILDREN CARE FOR CHILDREN IN AIDS-PLAGUED UGANDA. THE FUNERAL BUSINESS IS BOOMING.



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

presence of AIDS. But this generation is also very much at risk. Funerals intrude on every family, on every day. And it will get worse before it gets better. But there are a few bright spots. Three years ago World Vision in Uganda began working in an area absolutely decimated by war. Now the social fabric has been knit back together; values have been instilled; holistic ministry has taken place. And the children now sing of hope, restoration, and a God who remembers.

May our lives, and yours, always bring forth a song of hope and deliverance. May we sing a joyous song about a better present and an eternal tomorrow, even in a land as darkened by despair as Uganda. □

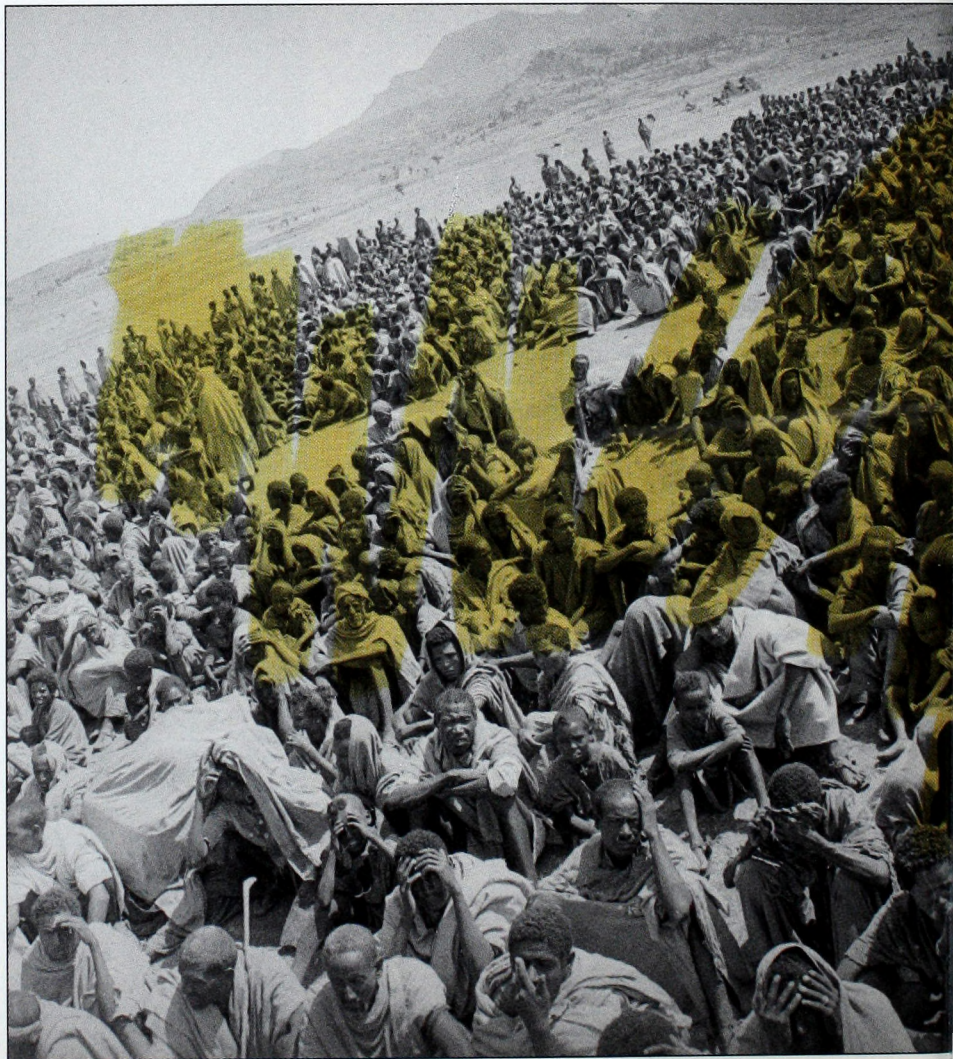
BY BRIAN BIRD AND
KAREN KLEIN

Forty miles from the feeding camp where one of her children died and another survived the “year of death,” as she calls the Ethiopian famine of 1985, Amalesu Georgis sits in her traditional hut praying for the child in her womb. It will be her sixth.

A ALL OUR CHILDREN

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

The
Human
Face
of the
Population
Problem



"I pray to God that this child will be healthy and live a long life. Then he will work in the fields and give me food to eat when I am too old to work," Georgis says. The creases on her sun-beaten face belie her age—she is 29—but bespeak the hardships of life as a Third World woman.

"It is important for me to have many children. We cannot predict the future, but I know some of my children will die when they are young. And I know some will live. These children are my guarantee of a long life," she says.

Half a world away, researchers in hundreds of American universities and a dozen United Nations agencies try to sort out the crises facing our troubled planet, crises like global warming, deforestation, and the disposal of mountains of waste. Because of women like Amalesu Georgis, however, they keep coming back to one issue: population growth. Many experts say that the number of children Georgis bears—she and billions of women like her—could determine the fate of the human race.

With the earth's population cur-

rently passing the 5.3 billion mark, natural resources already show signs of strain. If population growth continues unabated, the number of people on the planet is predicted to hit 10.5 billion by the year 2050. Is world population growth truly a time bomb that will doom civilized society? Or has it become a scapegoat for a whole complex of global issues?

Some experts predict that if world population continues to soar, the world will suffer epidemic starvation, disease, food riots, even nuclear standoffs over dwindling resources. Unrestrained population growth, according to this view, causes poverty, environmental degradation, and widespread malnutrition.

Not so, say other experts, even among those who agree that rampant population growth is dangerous. They refute the idea that overpopulation is humanity's most pressing problem.

"Too many people continue to believe that children are starving simply because there are too many of them," says Stephen Commins, policy advisor for World Vision and a former

director of the development institute at the African Studies Center of the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Children starve," he says, "because of too little access to an ample world food supply, because of inequitable land ownership patterns, and because of other social and economic conditions. Population growth is not the root cause of hunger and other global problems. Rather, it emerges from the very poverty it supposedly causes."

Control of the planet

Rapid population growth is only a recent concern. In the first century A.D., an estimated 250 million people inhabited the earth. That's less than a third of the population of India today. By the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, around 1750, the world's population had grown only to 728 million, far lower than today's population of China.

When the developed world industrialized, however, population started increasing more rapidly, surging to

1984-85 Ethiopian famine: sign of things to come?



about 2.4 billion by 1950. But the truly huge leap was after World War II. In the past four decades, world population has more than doubled.

The sudden change has come, in short, because of our increasing control of the planet. New medicines have brought disease under control. The "Green Revolution"—new pesticides and farming methods—have made more food available in areas where starvation had been common. More babies survive, and people live longer.

The birth rate, however, has not slacked off at the same pace as the death rate. True, people in most industrialized countries are having fewer children, realizing that smaller families mean a higher standard of living. But people in developing countries still raise large families.

Large families are good economic security for people in many Third World countries, says Dr. Eric Ram, World Vision's director of international health.

"It's a question of survival," he says. "Children are seen as an asset rather than a liability. They are social security where no social security exists. That extra pair of hands is part of the survival equation."

Unfortunately, the advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped the survivors escape lifelong poverty, malnutrition, and disease. So the survivors have more babies, and the population spirals out of control.

Deeply entrenched cultural values also reinforce large families in many traditional societies. In Ghana, Africa, where the average woman bears eight children, a large family is considered a blessing from God. Barrenness is a curse. Preventing pregnancy is hindering God in his work. And it is a matter of pride for a man to be able to provide for many children.

The "bomb" and the "explosion"

The study of population trends dates back to the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, when British economist and historian Thomas Malthus warned that an unchecked population would eventually outstrip its capacity to feed itself. He predicted cycles of starvation.

Malthus' theory is echoed by Stanford biology professor Paul Ehrlich, who published a book two decades ago called *The Population Bomb*. In his recent sequel, *The Population Explosion*, Ehrlich points to the 1984-85 Ethiopian famine—which killed one of Amaleseu Georgis' children and an estimated 1 million other Ethiopians—as a deadly hint of things to come if population

Too many people
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many of them.

growth is left unchecked.

Ehrlich estimates that as many as 200 million people, mostly children, have already died from hunger and related diseases in the past 22 years as a result of overpopulation.

"The only human way to solve the population problem is by limiting births," he writes. "Any other way will cause so much destruction, we won't survive as a society."

Such thinking is embraced by some of the leading organizations that study population growth, including the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and The Population Institute.

Disturbing statistics

Indeed, despite an overall slowing in the growth of world population since the late 1960s (down from 2.1 percent to 1.7 percent), some disturbing statistics seem to confirm the theories of Thomas Malthus and his modern counterparts.

For example, the United Nations estimates that at least 65 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mexico, will not be able to feed themselves by the year 2000. Further, the U.N. says that even if food production doubles in the next 12 years, 50 million people in 20 countries will still go hungry.

Lester R. Brown of Worldwatch Institute warns, "In one Third World country after another, the pressure on local life-support systems is becoming intolerable, as can be seen in their dwindling forests, eroding soils, and falling water tables.

"Given the unprecedented numbers of young people who will reach reproductive age within the next two decades, a generation of one-child families may be the key to restoring a sustained improvement in living standards."



ED VAUGHN / WORLD VISION

Other experts, however, point out that the problem of population growth—and its solutions—are far more complex than this "gloom-and-doom" view can account for. Many people go hungry in the United States, for example, which has one of the largest food surpluses in the world.

In the same way, the depletion of natural resources cannot be blamed only on overpopulation.

"The fact is that an increase in population has very little to do with the deterioration of the environment," says Barry Commoner of the Institute for Food and Development Policy. "What determines degradation is [a nation's] choice of [manufacturing] and productive technologies."

A brass factory in Calcutta, for example, pours more chemical toxins into the Ganges River and more pollutants into the air than do all the families living in Calcutta's slums.



Many women in the developing world have as many children as they can. They know that some will die young, but that their surviving children will help support them when they grow too old to work. As one woman said, "These children are my guarantee of a long life."

Standoff against cultural values

Few population theorists would say there isn't a serious population growth problem. But how to tackle the problem? Malthusian thinkers usually favor strong population control measures, such as wider use of contraceptives, voluntary sterilization, or even mandatory one-child families. They say government-imposed family planning may be inevitable, calling China's one-child policy a success.

But some governments, unwilling to adopt China's aggressive tactics toward family planning, find themselves in a standoff against deeply entrenched cultural values.

In India, Indira Gandhi's 1977 election loss was attributed to her aggressive family planning drive, which Muslims and Roman Catholics in particular resisted.

In the Philippines, which is 80 percent Roman Catholic and one of the fastest-growing countries in Asia, with an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent, the government and the Roman Catholic Church are battling over family planning. While the government promotes both natural and artificial birth control methods, the church allows only natural methods.

Myrna, a 28-year-old midwife in a village north of Manila, is caught in the middle. Her village is typical: Most families are Roman Catholic, and most have about five children.

Working for the government, Myrna encourages family planning and promotes both natural and artificial methods, including sterilization and intra-uterine devices (IUDs). But few of the villagers heed her message.

"They believe the church is right in

rejecting artificial means," she says. "No family planning program here will ever succeed without the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church."

Living conditions and less kids

Not many years ago, development workers thought that simply improving people's lives might solve the high birth rate problem. Ensure a secure income and healthy children, the theory went, and families will shrink. But that theory has been largely discounted.

"In countries like Kenya, where advances [in development] have occurred, population has simply exploded," says Graeme Irvine, president of World Vision International. "I'm afraid [the development theory] was a rather naive view of the situation."

Yet quality-of-life improvements do seem to add a crucial element to the success of family planning programs.

"The Masai people in the foothills of Kenya's Mt. Kilimanjaro have accepted

BIRTH SPACING, GHANA STYLE

Although the average Ghanaian woman bears eight children, society frowns on having children too rapidly. Other women might remark to the baby of a pregnant woman, "Your mother did not allow you to enjoy your babyhood at all." This gentle rebuke, made in the presence of the mother, is a subtle way of urging her to plan better next time.

Agnes Phillips, World Vision Ghana journalist

family planning, and they are one of the most independent-minded tribes in all of Africa," says Ram. "They accepted it because they have seen that it works. But it was because they were involved in a project that combined immunization of their children, water management, sanitation, and health care."

Two specific elements are especially important in selling the idea of birth spacing in the Third World, according to economist Michael P. Todaro. One is ensuring that more children survive. The other is raising the status of women so they have the confidence, knowledge, and motivation to limit the size of their families.

In a community development project near Madras, India, population in the participating villages has only marginally increased recently. The project's family planning program suc-



To convince parents in the developing world to have fewer children, it is important to ensure that more of their children will survive, and to raise the status of women so they have knowledge and motivation to limit the size of their families.

WAITING FOR A SON

My first two children are daughters. So I waited to have a son before I had tubectomy," says Sivagami Mohan, 32, of Agaram village near Madras, India.

"According to local customs," she explains, "when a daughter is married, she entails expenses for gold ornaments, kitchen utensils, and a large marriage dinner.

"My husband is a weaver and earns about \$17 a month. We have no savings. When our daughters are married we may have to take a loan at 5 percent interest per month. Maybe we'll be able

to pay it, or maybe we'll lose the pledge of a gold ornament or brass vessels.

"A son, on the other hand, earns money and brings into our home his dowry [money or valuables parents give their daughter at her wedding].

"Hence our preference for sons," Sivagami says.

Teresa Devanbu, a public health nurse for several villages, says that the wait to bear a son sometimes leads to the unwanted birth of daughters.

"Preference to have sons is the chief reason for some women to postpone family planning measures," she says.

However, Devanbu says "more and more women are getting convinced that family planning is no more their enemy, but their friend."

Sam Moses, World Vision India journalist

The advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped them escape their poverty.

ceeded because it enabled the women to see the benefits of smaller families for themselves and their families.

Seniamma, a 27-year-old housewife, has two boys, ages 6 and 2. "Because of the gap between their births," she says, "I could breast-feed them long enough. My sons are quite healthy compared to neighboring boys their age." "Soon I will be able to go to work to earn some money. If I had many children, that would not be possible."

A quality life

The global dilemmas facing humanity and the daily dilemmas facing the poor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are two equally pressing sides of the population question. Clearly it is not enough to point a finger at women like Georgis and say, "You make the change."

The individual people involved in the issue, especially the Third World poor, must not be overlooked. To survive, women like Georgis have to make hard choices, choices that ultimately will affect the world.

But individuals in the First World also make choices about consumption of natural resources, environmentally destructive industries, Third World debt—choices that affect Georgis' life.

"Our guiding principle is Jesus' saying, 'I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly,'" says Dr. Ram. "A quality life is one in which you don't have to have several children simply because you are afraid some of them will die." □

With Sam Moses in India, Joey Umali in the Philippines, and Agnes Phillips in Ghana. Brian Bird is a journalist and screenwriter in Ontario, Calif. Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

UP AGAINST THE WALL

BY DICK EASTMAN WITH ANNA WATERHOUSE

In the fall of 1987, a few days before Thanksgiving, my wife Dee and I were about to observe our usual routine: the 11 o'clock news and then bedtime. But that night, I felt the urge to stay up and pray. Something was stirring inside me, a sadness, a burden I couldn't explain. As I prayed I began to cry, and I felt the Holy Spirit whisper a most unusual assignment.

The next morning I told Dee, "Honey, I've got to go pray at the Berlin Wall." She looked at me for a moment and said, "And *then* what?" But that was all. I had no explanation. I felt only the overwhelming need to confront that stronghold of oppression. Dee knows I never act out of emotion. After her initial surprise, she helped me plan the details of my strange pilgrimage.

*If I think that
[intercessory prayer]
is a way to stay on
the sidelines and be
safe, then I had
better take another
look at the cross.*

E. Dee Freeborn

Just 45 days later, following God's command, I flew to Berlin, where I met up with a fellow Christian who was to be my guide. And on that cold January night I finally stood just a few hundred feet from the infamous

crossing at Checkpoint Charlie, facing my concrete adversary.

As I stood there, I realized how little faith I actually had. In fact, just before I reached out to touch the cold stone, I stopped and looked around to see if anyone was watching. I was embarrassed to do what God had called me to do. But I had come too far to disobey now. I again focused on my mission, and I thought of Jesus' promise to his disciples: *If anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea' and does not doubt ...*

My hands felt the cool, rough surface, and I quickly prayed five words, "In Jesus' name, come down."

Then I waited.

I felt a little silly, but the fact that nothing happened to the wall did not surprise me. My prayer was not just over a wall, but over spiritual strongholds. That I didn't understand much of what had happened spiritually didn't surprise me



Dick Eastman
praying at the
Berlin Wall,
January 1988

either. In a lifetime of reading Scripture and praying, I understand these things less today than ever. But I know someone who understands it all. And he gave me a book. And if I read that book, I will learn to fight victoriously.

I also knew that others were struggling with me. I wasn't the only one who had prayed against the dark forces of that wall. Believers who had lived as captives behind that barrier had prayed far more intensely—for decades—than I had.

I returned home disappointed that I hadn't seen a miracle. I read the papers and watched the news; yet nothing even remotely miraculous happened. The Berlin Wall stood fast. Nevertheless, I knew I had done what God had assigned.

At midnight on Nov. 8, 1989, thousands of people gathered on both sides of the 28-mile-long wall. With hammers, chisels, pocketknives, and fingers, they knocked loose chunks of concrete. In a roar of humanity, the Berlin Wall was no more. □

Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Thank God** for signs of life on the seemingly barren ground of suffering (pages 10-11).
- ♦ **Pray for the millions** of workers who fled Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion and now are trying to resettle in their home countries (pages 12-15).
- ♦ **Ask God to bless** the work of Highway City Ministries and other churches' attempts to unite with the poor in their area (page 18).

We dedicated you to God when you were a baby and we meant it." My parents spoke those words to me in 1981. We had just learned that my

mother's breast cancer had metastasized, and I was agonizing over whether to cancel my plans to go to Bolivia as a missionary. I went to Bolivia. My mother died six weeks later.

Last year, my father repeated those words one hour before a surgeon removed a tumor from his brain. "I recognize your call from God," he told me. "We dedicated you to God when you were a baby, to follow that call. Some people may think that because you're single you should change your plans to be with me, but I don't feel that way."

Five hours later the surgeon told me that the tumor was large, aggressive, and malignant. He gave no hope for recovery. Today, although my father is mentally alert, he can no longer speak. His right hand is useless and his right leg is weak.

Why did my mother die of cancer? Why does my father have a brain tumor? Is it because of sin? One well-meaning Christian said that my mother would have been healed if she had had enough faith. Where is God when Christians suffer?

As my family faces another battle with terminal illness, I think of my friends in El Salvador, where I am ministering now. They deal with suffering and death every day. In the village where I live, about 150 people recently confronted government soldiers and demanded the release of a villager the

soldiers had unjustly arrested. The people were angry and scared, the soldiers seemed hungry for blood. There were brief but violent incidents.

Pedro, an 80-year-old villager, stood out in the crowd. Even the soldiers noted that he didn't cower at their threats and insults. He was not angry or scared but simply determined to hold his ground.

The stand-off ended when the prisoner's wife stepped forward and demanded her right to speak to the officials in charge. The soldiers saw their opportunity and began swinging their clubs. Other soldiers ran up from behind, firing into the air above the villagers' heads.

After the shots died down, Pedro was the first to take his place again. The villagers gathered around him. But it was almost dark, and when an officer threatened to shoot anyone on the streets after 15 minutes, the crowd dispersed.

The next morning I went to Pedro's house and asked him about the confrontation. "I wasn't scared," he said, "because I'm willing to die." Later he told me of four times he had almost

died, but his will to live had saved him.

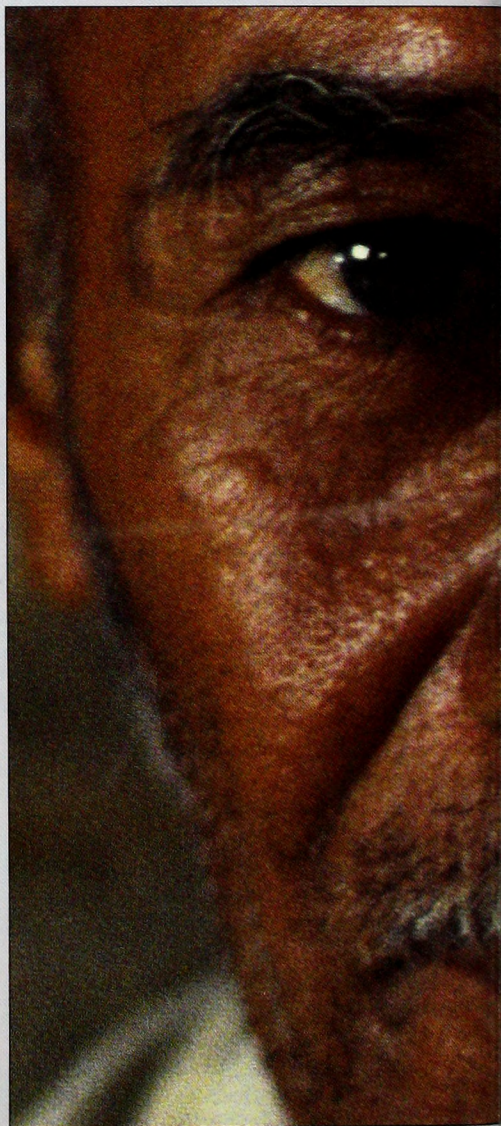
To be willing to die as we fight to live—this is the key. For my father it means accepting his grim prognosis but still fighting for life. For Pedro it means hanging on to life one day to risk death on another.

Fighting to live without being willing to die only makes us deny the facts. We hang on to life, protect it at all costs, and so destroy its meaning. Yet if we are willing to die but don't fight to live, we resign ourselves fatalistically, and so lose our lives long before we die.

Pedro said, "For those who trust in God, no ground is barren." If he is right, then even suffering is not barren ground. God transforms suffering into perseverance, character, and hope. Something that good cannot come out of anything as evil as suffering—not unless God is alive, transforming destruction into vitality.

Pedro is not angry at God for his suffering. "God doesn't cause suffering," he said. "God didn't cause this

For those who trust in God, no ground is barren.



war. Our suffering is because not everyone realizes that we're all equal before God. The big ones walk all over the little ones."

Pedro recognizes that God created the world as an interconnected network. What one person does affects another. We do reap what we sow, but we also reap what the people around us sow. Four of Pedro's children died, not because God was punishing him or because it was God's will, but because some people have more than their share, leaving Pedro too little to provide for his children.

But living in an interconnected world does not just mean suffering for our own and other people's sins. It also means enabling one another. When my mother was ill, our church fasted and prayed with me over the decision to return to Bolivia. Other family members and the church enabled me to leave by assuming responsibility for her on my behalf.

My father now enables me to con-

tinue working in El Salvador because he is willing to let go of me and allow God to meet his needs through others. And those others, in turn, enable him to let me go because he knows they will stand by him. As I return to El Salvador, I leave a piece of myself behind and take a piece of my father and his supportive community with me.

Thomas Merton once wrote, "As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering from our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones." Christ's body is broken in violence, hate, individualism, and inequality; but the bones are being reset. When those in the body of Christ enable each other, life has the last word. Hope springs from suffering. Life sprouts from dead seeds. And death ends in victory, not defeat. □

Susan Classen has worked as a nurse in El Salvador with Mennonite Central Committee since 1984.

Life Has the Last Word

BY SUSAN CLASSEN



ED VAUGHN / WORLD VISION

In 1988, motivated by the dream of a better life for his family, Arumugam left his native Madras, India, for a laborer's job in Kuwait. Today the dream is gone. Orphaned as a boy, Arumugam, 29, worked most of his life selling vegetables in his uncle's small shop. He never attended school and struggled constantly to provide food for his family. But in his new job in Kuwait, loading cargo in the seaport town of Saiba, he was earning \$135 per month—more than double his wages in India—and had cut his old 16-hour workdays in half. He was even able to send \$55 a

month to his family back home. "We had comfort and time for rest in Kuwait," he says.

But that time for rest was destroyed on Aug. 2, 1990, when Iraqi tanks rolled into Kuwait City. While the West focused on military strategies



SAM MOSES/WORLD VISION

Arumugam

and hostages, a human wave of foreign workers like Arumugam fled into the hot, scorpion-infested Saudi desert. At the peak of the migration, 15,000 to 20,000 refugees a day poured into three makeshift camps near the Iraqi border in Jordan.

"The Western press never quite realized the human dimension of this problem until 1 million people were at the border," says Ray Gorre, an information officer for the Philippine Embassy in Los Angeles. "Everybody knew that more than half the work force in Kuwait came mainly from poor countries, but there was very little concern for them." Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, whose country put up \$50 million to help feed and house the refugees, complained, "The plight of these people has only evoked the faintest response from the world community."

For six weeks, Arumugam lived in the refugee camps, bathed in the Tigris River, and ate only bread, rice, and pickles. He finally returned to India, but his family must again survive on the meager wages he makes in his uncle's vegetable shop.

Today most of Kuwait's imported laborers who were uprooted from their jobs as cooks, maids, and construction workers have returned home. They have been reabsorbed

*Millions
of Third
World
workers left
everything
to find
something
in Kuwait.*

*Now
they're...*

**GOING
HOME**

TO NOTHING



into their homelands' flagging economies, which struggle even more without the billions of dollars of foreign revenue that was being reinvested by expatriate workers.

The practice of poor people working in foreign countries dates back to well before the Israelites built pyramids in Egypt. Whole societies were built on the backs of imported labor. But the phenomenon has not been as entrenched—nor the outcome as

The immigrants
came from
places where
extreme
poverty
is endemic
and
widespread.

cruel—as in the Persian Gulf over the past 30 years.

So-called guest workers began traveling to the Gulf in the 1950s, but the boom of foreign labor really started after oil prices skyrocketed in the mid-1970s. The rich Gulf states, unprepared and unwilling to develop their own sources of labor in the wake of the oil boom, welcomed labor from poor nations. Developing countries, in turn, were relieved of some of the pressure to provide jobs, housing, and food subsidies for their burgeoning populations. Before the Iraqi invasion, three of every four workers in Kuwait were foreigners, a half a million of them Asian.

Riad Ajami, director of the International Business Strategy Program at Ohio State University and an expert on the Middle East, says that natives of the Persian Gulf area “believe in living off the work of others. They import Yemenis to make their tea and Westerners to run their sophisticated technology. There is an aversion toward work that is probably natural for all societies that receive such windfall profits in such a short time.”

“Immigrants come from places where extreme poverty is endemic and widespread,” says John Key, World Vision International’s regional director for South Asia. “If a family member can find work abroad, he or she jumps at the idea. Anything would be better than what they’re getting at home,” he says.

Each day in the Philippines, more than 1,000 skilled and unskilled workers go abroad to the United States, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, and other countries to find work. Annually, these expatriate workers send back \$3 billion, which helps fuel the Philippine economy. At least 700,000 Filipinos were working in the Middle East before the invasion.

In the past five years, 12 million Indian immigrants helped save their country from serious financial difficulties by infusing \$10 billion into the Indian economy from their jobs abroad.

While there are many benefits when people from Third World countries find work abroad, there are also sad legacies. When the best educated and most highly motivated people leave, the society that remains is poorer in every sense.

“One of the tragedies in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka,” says Key, “is that those who have money or brains, or both, want to leave, either to get an education elsewhere or because they see no future in their own countries. And their countries desperately need them to stay and work there.”

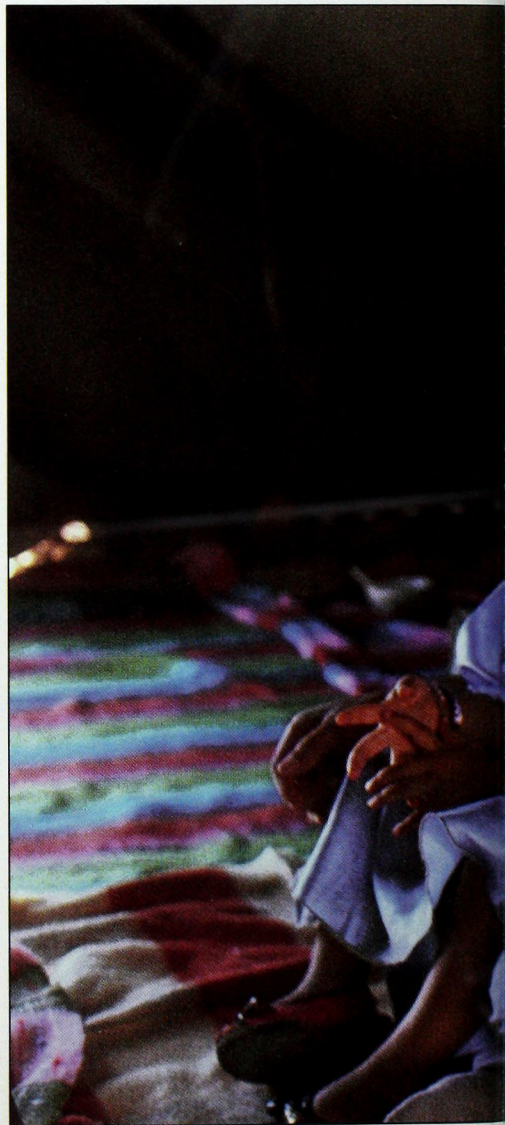
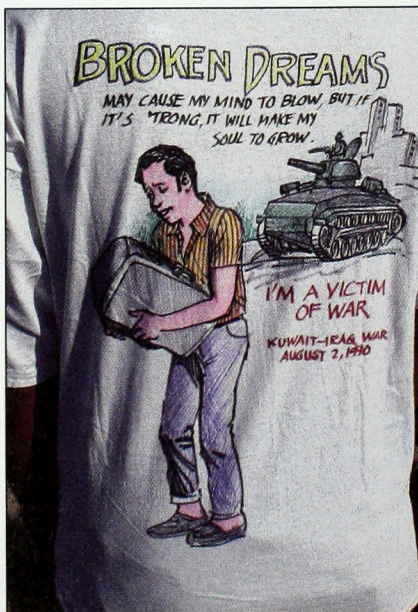
In Madras, John Somaiah had a government job and earned \$33 a month. But in Kuwait, the 43-year-old white-collar worker lived comfortably on the \$3,300 he made as an assistant in the Kuwait Investment Co. Unlike many

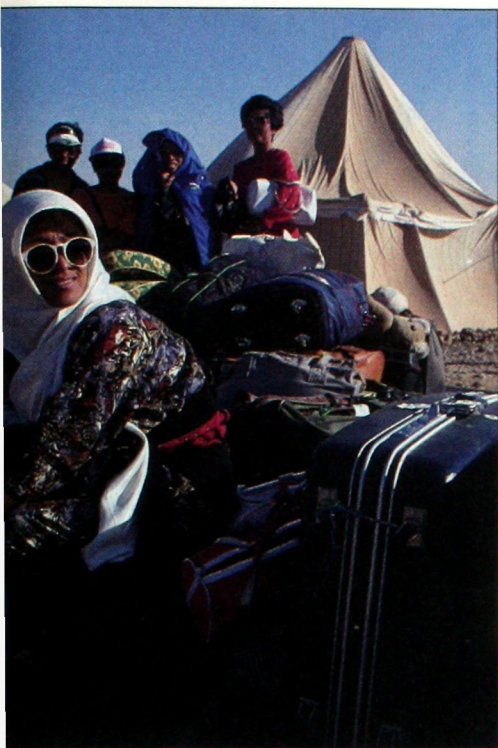
foreign workers who are forced to leave their families when they work abroad, Somaiah was able to take his wife and children to Kuwait.

After the fall of Kuwait, however, Somaiah and his family ended up in the Sha’alaan refugee camp. “Men and women fought like animals over the scraps of food and water that trickled in from relief agencies,” he recalls. “Babies went without milk, there were no sanitation facilities, and the refugees survived on unleavened bread, tomatoes, and cucumbers.”

Along with the brain drain from the Third World come other social problems, especially among families. One in three migrant-worker families split up, and their children are more likely to abuse drugs.

Retired Philippine Army General Jose T. Almonte’s six nieces work abroad as housekeepers. In a *Los Angeles Times* interview, Almonte said, “There is a feeling of shame on our part. A feeling we’ve failed our children,





we've squandered their future, so they must leave to better their lives. And that's a tragedy."

Another sad outcome is the abuse and oppression many workers experience in their new country. During the first six months of 1990, 800 cheated, stranded, and destitute Filipinos returned to Manila from jobs abroad. Some women had been victimized by their employers and told of being forced into prostitution.

When oil prices declined in the late 1980s, some foreign workers simply were not paid. Most didn't complain about their employers, since those who did protest were often quickly shipped back home, Ajami says.

Joseph Corraya, a 32-year-old Bangladeshi with a family of four in Dhaka City, gave most of his life's savings to a recruiter who found him a job in Kuwait in 1983. With little education and few job prospects, he knew that going to the Persian Gulf was his only chance to support his family. But three

months before the invasion, his salary as a hospital janitor was abruptly halted. His wife and two daughters stopped getting their monthly support and lost their small house.

Even for those not abused or cheated, life as an expatriate in the Gulf is hard. Far from their families, most workers save their money for brief, annual visits home. In Kuwait and Iraq, foreigners live in enclaves and suffer discrimination.

Unlike the United States, Persian Gulf countries do not allow foreigners to gain resident status and eventually become citizens. According to Ajami, "The sad truth is that someone who devotes his professional life—20 or more years—to working in one of these countries can be told to leave at a moment's notice, with no rights whatsoever."

Ajami says the practice of treating migrant workers as permanent outsiders has cost Kuwait. "If they had let those workers become stakeholders in



THIRD WORLD NATIONALS

Third World nationals working in Iraq and Kuwait before August 1990:

Egyptians	1,800,000
Palestinians	500,000
Jordanians	400,000
Lebanese	200,000
Indians	200,000
Sri Lankans	120,000
Bangladeshis	90,000
Filipinos	60,000

Compiled by Riad Ajami, director, International Business Strategy Program, Ohio State University.

the society," he says, "they would have been the ones who would have stayed and fought the Iraqis."

But they didn't stay. They had no reason to stay and fight, nothing to stay and fight for. And though most escaped with their lives and returned to their native homes, they had nothing to show for their years of loneliness and labor but memories of war.

Forty-year-old Rose, of the Philippines, is one of those who still wakes up in the pre-dawn hours filled with thoughts of the Iraqi invasion. "I woke up with war," she says. "I feel there will always be war behind me, like a shadow." □

Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Leslie Salisbury and Ginger Hope



WESTMONT COLLEGE

SPRING BREAK-THROUGH

Not all college students hit the slopes or the beach during spring break. This year, 500 students from Westmont College (Santa Barbara, Calif.) will spend the week in one of Mexico's poorest areas.

Through a yearly program called Potter's Clay, the students work with children in Mexican

churches and orphanages, help with construction projects, perform music and drama, and assist a medical and dental team.

"I love seeing Westmont College students exposed to missions and I love the Mexican and American people bonding as brothers and sisters," said Shelly Schar, co-director of Potter's Clay. Contact Potter's Clay at (805) 565-6374.

What worthwhile things are other students doing with their spring break? Write and let us know.



CAN YOU DRAW THE POVERTY LINE?

1. Within \$500, can you name the official U.S. government poverty line for a family of four?

2. How many Americans live below the poverty line?

3. Of the answer to #2, how many work at least part-time?

4. Name three of the six states where 20% or more of the population lives below the poverty line.

5. Compared to other U.S. income brackets, where do poverty-level families rank in charitable giving?

ANSWERS: (1) \$12,675 for a family of four; (2) More than 32 million, or about one in eight; (3) About half; (4) Mississippi (25.6%); West Virginia (22.8%); Arkansas (22.2%); Alabama (21.5%); Louisiana (20.8%); New Mexico (20.7%); (5) Number one, according to a recent Gallup poll. Households with income under \$10,000 donate an average of 5.5% of their income. Middle-income families give the lowest average percentage.

EYE CONTACT

Five hundred-eighty people in Ghana, Africa, who were blind last year can now see, thanks to the Christian Eye Ministry, a California-based organization that provides eye surgery and glasses.

Of Ghana's 160,000 blind people, 120,000 could regain their vision with a simple operation, says Bob Ainsworth of the Christian Eye Ministry.

The organization recycles used eyeglasses and sells them at minimal cost. Churches can help by exhibiting counter displays containing postage-free envelopes that safely ship used eyeglasses. The small profit from selling the glasses supports eye clinics where "people come in one day and can't see, then have surgery, go home, and the next day they can see," says Ainsworth.

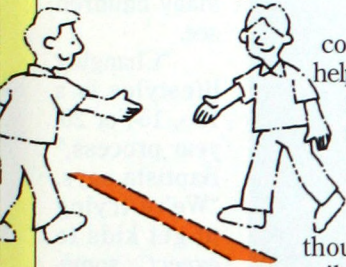
To exhibit a counter display or learn about volunteer opportunities, contact Bob Ainsworth, Christian Eye Ministry, P.O. Box 3721, San Dimas, CA 91773; (714) 599-8955 or (800) 255-EYES.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

BORDER CROSSING

Learn to teach your church to reach out to its neighbors. Crossing Borders is a four-session course that helps church members move out into the world, whether thousands of mile away or



just across the street.

The first step is a training workshop to equip church leaders to teach the course in their own churches. Locations of upcoming workshops: Fairfax, Va., February 22-24; Portland, Ore., April 19-21.

For more information contact Jan Thornton at World Vision, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-1111, extension 3493.

THIEF IN THE HOUSE

“Their property held them in chains...which shackled their courage and choked their faith and hampered their judgment and throttled their souls...If they stored up their treasure in heaven, they would not now have an enemy and a thief within their household...enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masters of their money, but its slaves.

*Cyprian,
3rd-century bishop*



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



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

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

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

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

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for your church's young people.**

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Home phone _____ Office phone _____ Best time to call _____

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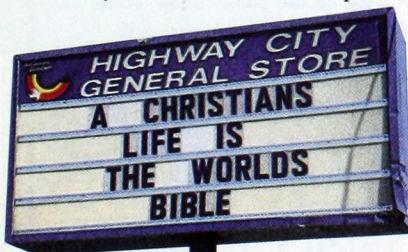
*The church
being the church
among the poor*

A HELPING HAND IN HIGHWAY CITY

BY BRENDA SPOELSTRA

Northwest Baptist Church

*Editorial Note:
Highway City
Ministries and
Northwest Baptist
Church have been
awarded the 1991
Mustard Seed
Award as the top
program in the
United States for
innovative work
with a community
of need.*



*For more
information
contact Highway
City Ministries,
P.O. Box 459,
Angeles Camp, CA
95221*

Highway City sees plenty of traffic. Yet most travelers barely notice this community of tiny houses and dirt yards along Highway 99, the main route into Fresno, Calif.

Cynder Baptista had passed it hundreds of times herself, but one day she took the off-ramp, parked her car, and started knocking on doors.

Baptista had just received Christ, and when she read the Bible, it struck her how much time Jesus spent with the poor. She felt she should follow suit, and Highway City seemed like a good place to start.

She soon learned that a church just two miles up the road wanted to more effectively serve the poor. Baptista helped Northwest Baptist Church start Highway City Ministries.

Highway City's population is predominantly black and Hispanic. Many of the Hispanic people speak little English. Some of the men are farm workers; many of the women are single mothers.

"They live in such difficulty, financially and in all kinds of other ways," Baptista says. "I wanted to let them know how special they are to God. Looking at the conditions they lived in, I was sure they didn't feel that."

The first step was a thrift store in an upstairs room of an office building, because Baptista believed the most pressing need in Highway City was for decent clothing and furniture. At first the store just gave the goods away. Baptista soon realized, however, that the people could keep their dignity only if they gave something in return.

One man came into the store because he needed something to wear for a job interview. He offered to work in exchange for a suit and shoes. Several weeks later, thrift store director Yvonne Koop received a letter from the man thanking her for the help in landing a job. He enclosed \$25.

The thrift store, now in its own building, supplies most of the funds for Highway City Ministries. So church members give their time, not their money, to their needy neighbors. More than 160 volunteers work as clerks, delivery people, tutors, and youth leaders. A few accompany Pastor Carlos Delgado on home visits in Highway City.

Maria, a thrift store customer and a member of the ministry's Bible study group, lives in a mud-alley shack with her four children. Her alcoholic husband left 8 years ago, and recently her 20-year-old son was arrested for drunk driving. The family's only car was impounded.

With support from her friends at the store, Maria found a restaurant job to provide for her family. Her children are in the Highway City Ministries youth programs, and her 20-year-old now attends a Bible study.

As Maria's story illustrates, children in poor communities often lack good role models. They see adults using drugs, alcohol, and infidelity as ways to escape. Short-term jobs are the only kind of employment many children see.

"Changing lifestyles is a 10-, 15-, or 20-year process," Baptista says. "We're trying to get kids to expect something more than what they've seen."

What they find at Highway City Ministries is someone who cares if they get



BRENDA SPOELSTRA / WORLD VISION

an A on a spelling test, someone who is out there cheering for them. "When you put a lot of those little successes together," Baptista says, "you have a child who is going to do something with his life, as opposed to a child who thinks he's a big nothing."

Highway City Ministries is there to change Highway City. But Baptista has watched it change the lives of volunteers, too. When people are asked to reach out to the poor, they often feel threatened at first, she explains. "They wonder, *Does this mean I have to give up my lifestyle? Does this mean I have to dedicate my life to the poor?*"

One church volunteer did not feel any particular empathy for Mexicans or the poor. But after working in the thrift store for just an hour a week, she became so involved with the people who came into the store that eventually she was spending two full days a week there.

"That's not just one woman's story," Baptista says. "It happens all the time."

"The poor aren't the ones that most people would volunteer to be around. So how will the poor find out about God's great love if we, who understand it, don't put ourselves right next to them—and not only tell them, but show them?" □

Brenda Spoelstra is a World Vision staff writer.

The eyes of children growing up in poverty have an unmistakably adult gaze. They carry the weight of adulthood. Between rare moments of

children today. They identified six areas in which children worldwide are victimized: armed conflict, substance abuse, child labor, and lack of family, health, and education. For decades, organizations like World Vision and UNICEF have addressed those areas. But the summit marked the first time that the world leaders recognized these problems and the urgency of resolving them.

- Children have always been victims of war, but in the past decade an increasing number of children, some as young as 8, have been used to fight as soldiers in many conflicts.

- Drugs and alcohol are affecting children in rural and suburban areas, as well as the world's cities. Crack is the leading cause of illness among infants, children, and adolescents living in U. S. cities, according to New York City Health Commissioner Steve Joseph.

- Millions of children are deprived of an education because they must work to help support their families. They are often exploited and forced to work in hazardous conditions for low wages. In some countries, children are preferred as workers over unskilled adults because adults are harder to intimidate and might demand better conditions.

- As many as 100 million children may be living on urban streets around the world. Most of these children have no family. Some have been abandoned, others run away from home because they are mistreated or ignored.

- Six preventable diseases, including measles, whooping cough,



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

diphtheria, tuberculosis, polio, and tetanus, are responsible for the deaths of millions of children every year. Many more die from dehydration (easily prevented with sugar and water).

- In some countries, only a fraction of the children receive even a few years of education. Girls and disabled children are even less likely to receive an education, crippling their chances to grow into self-sufficient adults.

"Suffer the little children," Jesus said to his disciples. Yet for almost 2,000 years, "let the children suffer" more accurately describes the plight of the world's children. In September, however, 23 leaders at the World Summit for Children ratified a set of worldwide standards for child care that will break new ground in the struggle to protect and defend the rights of children. □

Jeff Sellers is a World Vision journalist.

Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Children in Uganda whose parents have died of AIDS



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

Kids Without Parents

Some experts say that as many as 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Child psychologist Robert Coles once warned that "children who go unheeded are going to turn on the world that neglected them." It's a frightening warning. Some experts say that as many 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Some children have been left to survive as best they can after their parents are killed or die of disease. Others run away from sexual and physical abuse, living their lives on the mean streets of the world's cities. In Mexico City alone, 12 million children are living or working on the streets. But no less tragic are the 40,000 Romanian "orphans," abandoned by their parents because of disease or because there were too many other mouths to feed.

Whatever the reason, one thing is certain. They are children who can't go home again. □

Orphanage in Thailand



SANDRO TUCCI / BLACK STAR



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

Orphan in Romania

Ising for money. Sometimes I make enough to rent a room, sometimes I don't. I don't like sleeping on the streets. There are dangerous people there. But I have to be somewhere.

Sida, age 8, Mexico City

Street child in Bolivia

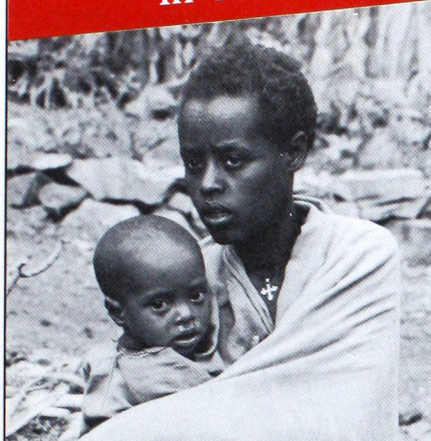


WORLD VISION

I have no family, nothing. I need to find a job. But everyone is looking. What chance do I have? Puma, age 18, Bangladesh

Why am I on the streets? Because I'm garbage. And garbage belongs on the streets. Joanne, age 14, United States

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



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

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



To share with your people what many call Tony Campolo's greatest challenge, simply book a showing of "Africa in Crisis" right now. They will be filled with compassion — and moved to action.

BOOK NOW AT NO CHARGE!

"Africa in Crisis: With Tony Campolo" is available to be shown to your congregation on a free-will offering basis.

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CALL TOLL FREE
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Or return the coupon to **WORLD VISION**
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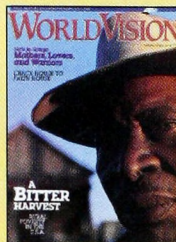
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City _____
State _____ Zip _____
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J21FS1

READERS' RIGHT

Dear Editor:

In reading your article (the Rural Poor, Oct/Nov issue), I noticed the picture of two men sitting on a porch and a dog lying on the ground. The ground was littered, as was the porch.



One fights poverty by working. So many times when I have driven in the "poor" sections of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, in the brightness of day men and women were "sitting." The other day I read a bumper sticker which said, "I'm fighting poverty. I'm working."

You mention how many U.S. companies are leaving the U.S. to obtain cheaper labor in other countries. The rubber industry in Akron, Ohio, is nonexistent because the head of the Rubber Worker's Union kept demanding higher wages and less work. Why do you think U.S. car makers went downhill? Union "leaders" wanted the union members to get more money to justify those "leaders'" jobs.

Economics is no mystery. It takes capital, labor, and raw materials to make wealth. How would you ensure everyone a "fair living standard"? Give them a living? Where would you get the wherewithal?

I herewith give you a quote from Gustave Le Bon: "Socialism, whose dream is to substitute itself for the ancient faiths, proposes only a very low ideal, and to establish it appeals to sentiments lower still With what lever does it seek to raise the soul? With the sentiments of envy and hatred which it creates in the hearts of the multitudes. To the crowd, no longer satisfied with political and civic equality, it proposes equality of condition, without dreaming that social inequalities are born of those natural inequalities that man has always been powerless to change."

I believe it was St. Paul or St. Peter who said, "If a man will not

work, neither shall he eat." I grant you there are many situations which we think are not "fair" to individuals, but who says life must be fair? A man of Solomon's wisdom can't settle that question.

Clyde A. Sluhan,
Chairman and CEO
Master Chemical Corporation
Perrysburg, Ohio

Dear Mr. Sluhan,

Certainly no one wants to pay someone for nothing, nor should one have to. And although World Vision is an advocate for the poor, we certainly have no intention of substituting socialism for the "ancient faiths," especially since Christian evangelism has always been a basic and integral part of our ministry throughout the world.

However, poverty in the Mississippi Delta is a complex issue. It cannot be explained away as simply laziness or union greed. A lack of education—considered unnecessary for the cotton-pickers of years past—is a prime reason children and adults get nowhere fast. Schools are underfunded and overcrowded. Those children who manage to get a decent education move out of the Delta. A shortage of education and job skills quickly translates to a lack of finances for such staples as medicine and nourishing food. As a matter of fact, the incidence of birth defects and mental retardation in the Delta is the highest in the nation, creating even more problems.

Even so, dependence on welfare is not the answer. That is why groups like Habitat for Humanity work under a principle known as "sweat equity," where people are expected to help build their own houses and then pay their own mortgages.

Many times those former recipients turn around and help some other needy family. This isn't a handout; it's lending a helping hand, and creating more opportunity in a depressed environment.

—Editors

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

BY DONNA SANDERS

Returning missionaries often recount how much they learned from the people they went to help. In the safety of our own homes, those lessons are harder to learn.

I was "in the ministry" and accustomed to giving. People brought their troubles to me, and I listened and prayed for their needs. I doled out smiles and hugs and scriptures for every occasion, and if someone had asked me, I would have replied that I did not have a problem with pride.

That was before the angelic visitation, as I have come to think of it.

The Christmas holidays announced their approach with a surprise greeting card from Martin, a childhood friend. He and his companion, Amy, were en route from New York to San Francisco and wanted to stop in Los Angeles to visit us. My husband and I replied that we would love to have them, and we began to pray for opportunities to share our most precious gift, the reality of the Christ child, with our unbelieving guests.

Martin looked much the same as he had ten years earlier, when I had last seen him. He was warm, open, and vivacious. Amy, whom I had never met, was a thin, quiet woman, in her mid-twenties, with large, incredulous brown eyes. She told stories to children in the park, they said. I remember thinking she didn't seem the type.

They stayed with us for only two days, and the opportunity we had prayed for kept eluding us. We were busy with church activities, which we always invited Martin and Amy to attend, but which they always declined. We both felt that Martin was receptive to hearing about Jesus, but that Amy was too guarded.

Finally, the night before their departure, after Amy had fallen asleep, we talked to Martin about Jesus' sacrifice, and how simple it was to receive his life-changing love. Martin wasn't ready to pray with us that night but had more than enough infor-

mation on how to do it in his, and God's, own time.

The next morning, just before Martin and Amy ducked into their pug-nosed VW bug, my husband and I gave each of them a small, inexpensive Christmas gift. Our gift to Martin was Bob Dylan's new album, "Slow Train Comin'"; our gift to Amy a pale, perfectly shaped sand dollar. Martin apologized for not having anything to give us in return. But Amy, doe eyes glistening, opened a volume of Hans Christian Andersen stories. She said this was her gift to us, and began to read.

It was the colorful tale of an argument between a quill pen and an inkwell over which of them was more important. In the end, a hand dipped the pen into the inkwell and, in concert with a clean sheet of paper, created a marvelous story. My eyes were moist by the end of the story, stirred by Amy's animated interpretation and by the nature of this gift—completely without material value, wonderful in its simplicity, lasting in its effect.

Sometime later I realized the full impact of that unexpected gift. I was reading John 13, where Jesus explains to an indignant Peter why it is necessary that he wash Peter's feet. When Peter exclaimed, "Never shall you wash my feet!" he must have believed that his refusal was the right attitude of a true servant of Christ.

I suddenly saw myself in Peter. There is a peculiar kind of pride that sometimes masquerades as humility. It is the subtle deception that I, as a believer, have it all over the rest of the world. My rightful place is that of a servant, and it is I who have something to offer them, not they who can give anything to me. But God used an unbeliever to teach me the same truth he taught Peter. The heart of the servant, the childlike spirit our Lord covets for all of us, is one that is open to receive from a point of weakness as well as give from a point of strength.

The Bible says that in giving to the poor and imprisoned, some have entertained angels unawares. Since my special visitation, I look at what others, including those to whom I "minister," can teach *me*, keeping in mind that God is the hand that creates and that we are simply the tools. I am convinced that angels sometimes extend God's love, or some glimmer of truth, through unlikely-looking vessels—people with failings. People just like me. □

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

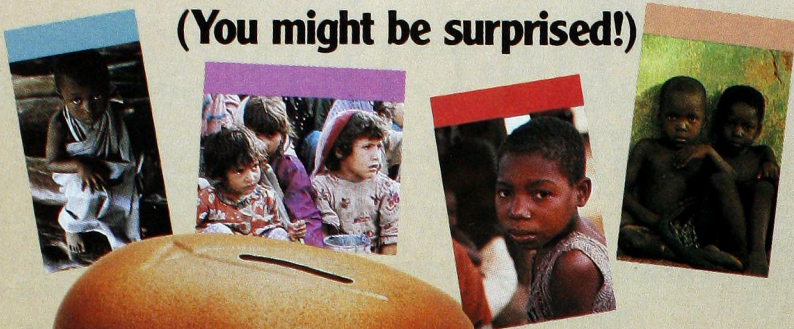
There is a peculiar brand of pride that masquerades as humility.

KEVIN CONRAN



What Can These Little Loaves Do for Your Church and Its Members?

(You might be surprised!)



Last year, with the help of more than 2,000 churches like yours, these little loaves provided more than \$500,000 to help feed hungry children and their families.

But the most amazing thing about them is what they can do for your church and its members!

By participating in World Vision's Love Loaf program, your members will have an opportunity to discover the joy that comes from sharing with others.

Their children will learn the meaning of compassion — and the importance of turning feelings into positive action. And families will be brought closer

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To order your Love Loaves, or for more information, just send in the coupon below today.

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Please send us _____ loaves (one per household).

We plan to distribute them on (date) _____

(Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.)

Also, please send us an inspirational film, VHS to use with this program.

Please send me a sample Love Loaf and additional information. Please call me.



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WORLD VISION®



February/March 1991

*Suffer the
Children*

A Photo Essay

In El Salvador

**Life Has the
Last Word**

ALL OUR CHILDREN

*The
Population
Problem*

4 All Our Children

Many experts predict that if world population continues to soar, we will soon face mass starvation, disease, food riots, and environmental destruction. Others, however, argue that the real problem is that too many people have too little access to the resources they need to survive.

10 Life Has the Last Word

Through the suffering of her family and the Salvadoran people she ministers to, an American nurse discovers that when Christians enable one another to fight for life, life has the last word.

12 Going Home to Nothing

Last July, 2 million to 3 million foreigners worked in Iraq and Kuwait. They had come from some of the poorest countries in the world, for wages they couldn't dream of back home. After the invasion most were forced to flee with nothing but the taste of what could have been.

19 Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Jesus told his disciples to "suffer the little children." Yet today, more and more poor children are fighting in wars, dying from easily preventable diseases, and growing up on city streets. But last September, 23 world leaders signed a new agreement to protect the rights of children.

Millions of foreign workers in Iraq and Kuwait have fled since the August invasion.



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Patrick House's creative cover strikingly conveys one of the major challenges of the coming century—a growing world population. "All Our Children" looks at the issue.

While we've prayed for the release of several thousand "human shields" and other "guests" of Iraq, nearly 3 million of its foreign workers have fled for home. What they found there is painfully told in "Going Home to Nothing."

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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THE OLD AND ORPHANS REMAIN

Uganda, once considered the pearl of Africa, is dying of AIDS. The entire population is considered high risk. The hardest hit are men and women, ages 18 to 45. The funeral business is booming.

On a recent trip I heard a verse which poignantly describes life in that stricken land. The rhyme gets lost in the translation, but the meaning is clear:

*It is a hard life; an uphill task
That breaks us as we climb.*

*We have forgotten God, so many
devils around us*

Where shall we go for our judgment day?

I saw many orphaned children while in Uganda. Their voices are soft and young. They are the future of the country, but the rhythmic swaying of their bodies seems to punctuate the fact that, for them, the future is vapor-thin.

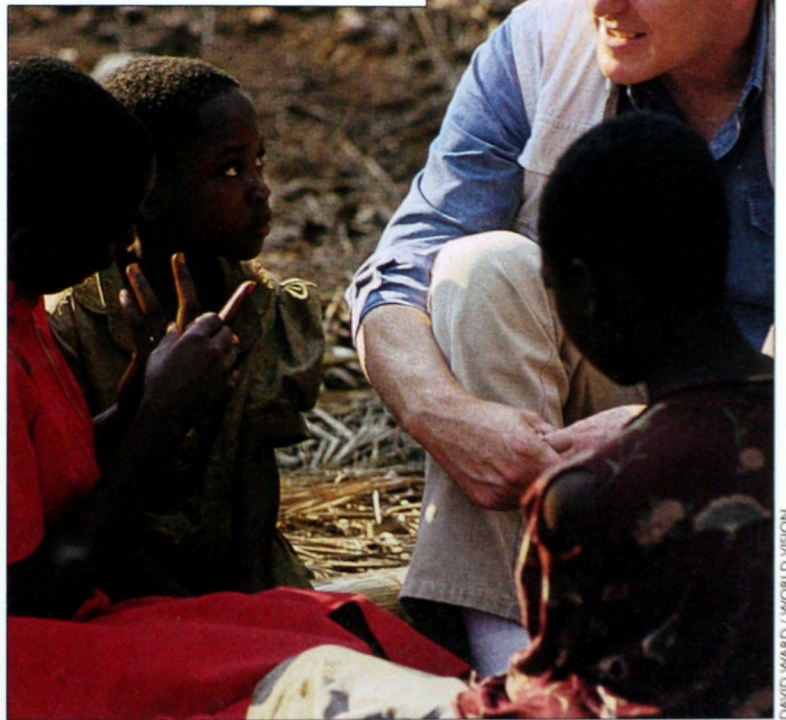
As if daily life weren't difficult enough, many of Uganda's children have seen their mothers and fathers die horrible deaths tainted by AIDS. Four children, ages 8 through 13, buried their parents themselves. The mother died of AIDS on Christmas Eve; the father, one week later on New Year's Eve. Their graves rest among the Matooke trees surrounding their hovel of a house. Rotten bedding is strewn around the yard. The roof has holes. The children sleep together in one bed with no mattress. They can't sleep on the floor because poisonous snakes sometimes slither inside.

The oldest child, Felistus, cooks their daily meals of sweet potatoes, beans, or bananas—the only food available to them. The sole adornment in the house is a picture of the family together, but now that picture faces the wall. "We want to keep it there, but we can't stand to look at it all the time," explains Felistus. Nothing we did or said got Felistus' 6-year-old brother to smile.

In another home, Conzaga, age 12, is the "savior, mother, father, breadwinner, and cook," according to his blind, 86-year-old grandmother. His grandfather, 82 and bedridden, agrees. Conzaga is essentially taking care of two households under one roof—his elderly grandparents and two younger siblings. Conzaga asks us for a blanket because they have only one. The child has become the parent. Tragedy has turned traditional roles upside-down.

Uganda's hope is in the younger generation who have managed to escape the sweeping

CHILDREN CARE FOR CHILDREN IN AIDS-PLAGUED UGANDA. THE FUNERAL BUSINESS IS BOOMING.



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

presence of AIDS. But this generation is also very much at risk. Funerals intrude on every family, on every day. And it will get worse before it gets better. But there are a few bright spots. Three years ago World Vision in Uganda began working in an area absolutely decimated by war. Now the social fabric has been knit back together; values have been instilled; holistic ministry has taken place. And the children now sing of hope, restoration, and a God who remembers.

May our lives, and yours, always bring forth a song of hope and deliverance. May we sing a joyous song about a better present and an eternal tomorrow, even in a land as darkened by despair as Uganda. □

BY BRIAN BIRD AND
KAREN KLEIN

Forty miles from the feeding camp where one of her children died and another survived the “year of death,” as she calls the Ethiopian famine of 1985, Amalesu Georgis sits in her traditional hut praying for the child in her womb. It will be her sixth.

A ALL OUR CHILDREN

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

The
Human
Face
of the
Population
Problem



"I pray to God that this child will be healthy and live a long life. Then he will work in the fields and give me food to eat when I am too old to work," Georgis says. The creases on her sun-beaten face belie her age—she is 29—but bespeak the hardships of life as a Third World woman.

"It is important for me to have many children. We cannot predict the future, but I know some of my children will die when they are young. And I know some will live. These children are my guarantee of a long life," she says.

Half a world away, researchers in hundreds of American universities and a dozen United Nations agencies try to sort out the crises facing our troubled planet, crises like global warming, deforestation, and the disposal of mountains of waste. Because of women like Amalesu Georgis, however, they keep coming back to one issue: population growth. Many experts say that the number of children Georgis bears—she and billions of women like her—could determine the fate of the human race.

With the earth's population cur-

rently passing the 5.3 billion mark, natural resources already show signs of strain. If population growth continues unabated, the number of people on the planet is predicted to hit 10.5 billion by the year 2050. Is world population growth truly a time bomb that will doom civilized society? Or has it become a scapegoat for a whole complex of global issues?

Some experts predict that if world population continues to soar, the world will suffer epidemic starvation, disease, food riots, even nuclear standoffs over dwindling resources. Unrestrained population growth, according to this view, causes poverty, environmental degradation, and widespread malnutrition.

Not so, say other experts, even among those who agree that rampant population growth is dangerous. They refute the idea that overpopulation is humanity's most pressing problem.

"Too many people continue to believe that children are starving simply because there are too many of them," says Stephen Commins, policy advisor for World Vision and a former

director of the development institute at the African Studies Center of the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Children starve," he says, "because of too little access to an ample world food supply, because of inequitable land ownership patterns, and because of other social and economic conditions. Population growth is not the root cause of hunger and other global problems. Rather, it emerges from the very poverty it supposedly causes."

Control of the planet

Rapid population growth is only a recent concern. In the first century A.D., an estimated 250 million people inhabited the earth. That's less than a third of the population of India today. By the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, around 1750, the world's population had grown only to 728 million, far lower than today's population of China.

When the developed world industrialized, however, population started increasing more rapidly, surging to

1984-85 Ethiopian famine: sign of things to come?



about 2.4 billion by 1950. But the truly huge leap was after World War II. In the past four decades, world population has more than doubled.

The sudden change has come, in short, because of our increasing control of the planet. New medicines have brought disease under control. The "Green Revolution"—new pesticides and farming methods—have made more food available in areas where starvation had been common. More babies survive, and people live longer.

The birth rate, however, has not slacked off at the same pace as the death rate. True, people in most industrialized countries are having fewer children, realizing that smaller families mean a higher standard of living. But people in developing countries still raise large families.

Large families are good economic security for people in many Third World countries, says Dr. Eric Ram, World Vision's director of international health.

"It's a question of survival," he says. "Children are seen as an asset rather than a liability. They are social security where no social security exists. That extra pair of hands is part of the survival equation."

Unfortunately, the advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped the survivors escape lifelong poverty, malnutrition, and disease. So the survivors have more babies, and the population spirals out of control.

Deeply entrenched cultural values also reinforce large families in many traditional societies. In Ghana, Africa, where the average woman bears eight children, a large family is considered a blessing from God. Barrenness is a curse. Preventing pregnancy is hindering God in his work. And it is a matter of pride for a man to be able to provide for many children.

The "bomb" and the "explosion"

The study of population trends dates back to the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, when British economist and historian Thomas Malthus warned that an unchecked population would eventually outstrip its capacity to feed itself. He predicted cycles of starvation.

Malthus' theory is echoed by Stanford biology professor Paul Ehrlich, who published a book two decades ago called *The Population Bomb*. In his recent sequel, *The Population Explosion*, Ehrlich points to the 1984-85 Ethiopian famine—which killed one of Amaleseu Georgis' children and an estimated 1 million other Ethiopians—as a deadly hint of things to come if population

Too many people
continue to believe
that children are
starving simply
because there are too
many of them.

growth is left unchecked.

Ehrlich estimates that as many as 200 million people, mostly children, have already died from hunger and related diseases in the past 22 years as a result of overpopulation.

"The only human way to solve the population problem is by limiting births," he writes. "Any other way will cause so much destruction, we won't survive as a society."

Such thinking is embraced by some of the leading organizations that study population growth, including the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and The Population Institute.

Disturbing statistics

Indeed, despite an overall slowing in the growth of world population since the late 1960s (down from 2.1 percent to 1.7 percent), some disturbing statistics seem to confirm the theories of Thomas Malthus and his modern counterparts.

For example, the United Nations estimates that at least 65 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mexico, will not be able to feed themselves by the year 2000. Further, the U.N. says that even if food production doubles in the next 12 years, 50 million people in 20 countries will still go hungry.

Lester R. Brown of Worldwatch Institute warns, "In one Third World country after another, the pressure on local life-support systems is becoming intolerable, as can be seen in their dwindling forests, eroding soils, and falling water tables.

"Given the unprecedented numbers of young people who will reach reproductive age within the next two decades, a generation of one-child families may be the key to restoring a sustained improvement in living standards."



ED VAUGHN / WORLD VISION

Other experts, however, point out that the problem of population growth—and its solutions—are far more complex than this "gloom-and-doom" view can account for. Many people go hungry in the United States, for example, which has one of the largest food surpluses in the world.

In the same way, the depletion of natural resources cannot be blamed only on overpopulation.

"The fact is that an increase in population has very little to do with the deterioration of the environment," says Barry Commoner of the Institute for Food and Development Policy. "What determines degradation is [a nation's] choice of [manufacturing] and productive technologies."

A brass factory in Calcutta, for example, pours more chemical toxins into the Ganges River and more pollutants into the air than do all the families living in Calcutta's slums.



Many women in the developing world have as many children as they can. They know that some will die young, but that their surviving children will help support them when they grow too old to work. As one woman said, "These children are my guarantee of a long life."

Standoff against cultural values

Few population theorists would say there isn't a serious population growth problem. But how to tackle the problem? Malthusian thinkers usually favor strong population control measures, such as wider use of contraceptives, voluntary sterilization, or even mandatory one-child families. They say government-imposed family planning may be inevitable, calling China's one-child policy a success.

But some governments, unwilling to adopt China's aggressive tactics toward family planning, find themselves in a standoff against deeply entrenched cultural values.

In India, Indira Gandhi's 1977 election loss was attributed to her aggressive family planning drive, which Muslims and Roman Catholics in particular resisted.

In the Philippines, which is 80 percent Roman Catholic and one of the fastest-growing countries in Asia, with an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent, the government and the Roman Catholic Church are battling over family planning. While the government promotes both natural and artificial birth control methods, the church allows only natural methods.

Myrna, a 28-year-old midwife in a village north of Manila, is caught in the middle. Her village is typical: Most families are Roman Catholic, and most have about five children.

Working for the government, Myrna encourages family planning and promotes both natural and artificial methods, including sterilization and intra-uterine devices (IUDs). But few of the villagers heed her message.

"They believe the church is right in

rejecting artificial means," she says. "No family planning program here will ever succeed without the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church."

Living conditions and less kids

Not many years ago, development workers thought that simply improving people's lives might solve the high birth rate problem. Ensure a secure income and healthy children, the theory went, and families will shrink. But that theory has been largely discounted.

"In countries like Kenya, where advances [in development] have occurred, population has simply exploded," says Graeme Irvine, president of World Vision International. "I'm afraid [the development theory] was a rather naive view of the situation."

Yet quality-of-life improvements do seem to add a crucial element to the success of family planning programs.

"The Masai people in the foothills of Kenya's Mt. Kilimanjaro have accepted

BIRTH SPACING, GHANA STYLE

Although the average Ghanaian woman bears eight children, society frowns on having children too rapidly. Other women might remark to the baby of a pregnant woman, "Your mother did not allow you to enjoy your babyhood at all." This gentle rebuke, made in the presence of the mother, is a subtle way of urging her to plan better next time.

Agnes Phillips, World Vision Ghana journalist

family planning, and they are one of the most independent-minded tribes in all of Africa," says Ram. "They accepted it because they have seen that it works. But it was because they were involved in a project that combined immunization of their children, water management, sanitation, and health care."

Two specific elements are especially important in selling the idea of birth spacing in the Third World, according to economist Michael P. Todaro. One is ensuring that more children survive. The other is raising the status of women so they have the confidence, knowledge, and motivation to limit the size of their families.

In a community development project near Madras, India, population in the participating villages has only marginally increased recently. The project's family planning program suc-



To convince parents in the developing world to have fewer children, it is important to ensure that more of their children will survive, and to raise the status of women so they have knowledge and motivation to limit the size of their families.

WAITING FOR A SON

My first two children are daughters. So I waited to have a son before I had tubectomy," says Sivagami Mohan, 32, of Agaram village near Madras, India.

"According to local customs," she explains, "when a daughter is married, she entails expenses for gold ornaments, kitchen utensils, and a large marriage dinner.

"My husband is a weaver and earns about \$17 a month. We have no savings. When our daughters are married we may have to take a loan at 5 percent interest per month. Maybe we'll be able

to pay it, or maybe we'll lose the pledge of a gold ornament or brass vessels.

"A son, on the other hand, earns money and brings into our home his dowry [money or valuables parents give their daughter at her wedding].

"Hence our preference for sons," Sivagami says.

Teresa Devanbu, a public health nurse for several villages, says that the wait to bear a son sometimes leads to the unwanted birth of daughters.

"Preference to have sons is the chief reason for some women to postpone family planning measures," she says.

However, Devanbu says "more and more women are getting convinced that family planning is no more their enemy, but their friend."

Sam Moses, World Vision India journalist

The advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped them escape their poverty.

ceeded because it enabled the women to see the benefits of smaller families for themselves and their families.

Seniamma, a 27-year-old housewife, has two boys, ages 6 and 2. "Because of the gap between their births," she says, "I could breast-feed them long enough. My sons are quite healthy compared to neighboring boys their age. 'Soon I will be able to go to work to earn some money. If I had many children, that would not be possible.'"

A quality life

The global dilemmas facing humanity and the daily dilemmas facing the poor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are two equally pressing sides of the population question. Clearly it is not enough to point a finger at women like Georgis and say, "You make the change."

The individual people involved in the issue, especially the Third World poor, must not be overlooked. To survive, women like Georgis have to make hard choices, choices that ultimately will affect the world.

But individuals in the First World also make choices about consumption of natural resources, environmentally destructive industries, Third World debt—choices that affect Georgis' life.

"Our guiding principle is Jesus' saying, 'I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly,'" says Dr. Ram. "A quality life is one in which you don't have to have several children simply because you are afraid some of them will die." □

With Sam Moses in India, Joey Umali in the Philippines, and Agnes Phillips in Ghana. Brian Bird is a journalist and screenwriter in Ontario, Calif. Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

UP AGAINST THE WALL

BY DICK EASTMAN WITH ANNA WATERHOUSE

In the fall of 1987, a few days before Thanksgiving, my wife Dee and I were about to observe our usual routine: the 11 o'clock news and then bedtime. But that night, I felt the urge to stay up and pray. Something was stirring inside me, a sadness, a burden I couldn't explain. As I prayed I began to cry, and I felt the Holy Spirit whisper a most unusual assignment.

The next morning I told Dee, "Honey, I've got to go pray at the Berlin Wall." She looked at me for a moment and said, "And *then* what?" But that was all. I had no explanation. I felt only the overwhelming need to confront that stronghold of oppression. Dee knows I never act out of emotion. After her initial surprise, she helped me plan the details of my strange pilgrimage.

*If I think that
[intercessory prayer]
is a way to stay on
the sidelines and be
safe, then I had
better take another
look at the cross.*

E. Dee Freeborn



Dick Eastman
praying at the
Berlin Wall,
January 1988

Just 45 days later, following God's command, I flew to Berlin, where I met up with a fellow Christian who was to be my guide. And on that cold January night I finally stood just a few hundred feet from the infamous crossing at Checkpoint Charlie, facing my concrete adversary.

As I stood there, I realized how little faith I actually had. In fact, just before I reached out to touch the cold stone, I stopped and looked around to see if anyone was watching. I was embarrassed to do what God had called me to do. But I had come too far to disobey now. I again focused on my mission, and I thought of Jesus' promise to his disciples: *If anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea' and does not doubt ...*

My hands felt the cool, rough surface, and I quickly prayed five words, "In Jesus' name, come down."

Then I waited.

I felt a little silly, but the fact that nothing happened to the wall did not surprise me. My prayer was not just over a wall, but over spiritual strongholds. That I didn't understand much of what had happened spiritually didn't surprise me

either. In a lifetime of reading Scripture and praying, I understand these things less today than ever. But I know someone who understands it all. And he gave me a book. And if I read that book, I will learn to fight victoriously.

I also knew that others were struggling with me. I wasn't the only one who had prayed against the dark forces of that wall. Believers who had lived as captives behind that barrier had prayed far more intensely—for decades—than I had.

I returned home disappointed that I hadn't seen a miracle. I read the papers and watched the news; yet nothing even remotely miraculous happened. The Berlin Wall stood fast. Nevertheless, I knew I had done what God had assigned.

At midnight on Nov. 8, 1989, thousands of people gathered on both sides of the 28-mile-long wall. With hammers, chisels, pocketknives, and fingers, they knocked loose chunks of concrete. In a roar of humanity, the Berlin Wall was no more. □

Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Thank God** for signs of life on the seemingly barren ground of suffering (pages 10-11).
- ♦ **Pray for the millions** of workers who fled Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion and now are trying to resettle in their home countries (pages 12-15).
- ♦ **Ask God to bless** the work of Highway City Ministries and other churches' attempts to unite with the poor in their area (page 18).

“We dedicated you to God when you were a baby and we meant it.” My parents spoke those words to me in 1981. We had just learned that my

mother’s breast cancer had metastasized, and I was agonizing over whether to cancel my plans to go to Bolivia as a missionary. I went to Bolivia. My mother died six weeks later.

Last year, my father repeated those words one hour before a surgeon removed a tumor from his brain. “I recognize your call from God,” he told me. “We dedicated you to God when you were a baby, to follow that call. Some people may think that because you’re single you should change your plans to be with me, but I don’t feel that way.”

Five hours later the surgeon told me that the tumor was large, aggressive, and malignant. He gave no hope for recovery. Today, although my father is mentally alert, he can no longer speak. His right hand is useless and his right leg is weak.

Why did my mother die of cancer? Why does my father have a brain tumor? Is it because of sin? One well-meaning Christian said that my mother would have been healed if she had had enough faith. Where is God when Christians suffer?

As my family faces another battle with terminal illness, I think of my friends in El Salvador, where I am ministering now. They deal with suffering and death every day. In the village where I live, about 150 people recently confronted government soldiers and demanded the release of a villager the

soldiers had unjustly arrested. The people were angry and scared, the soldiers seemed hungry for blood. There were brief but violent incidents.

Pedro, an 80-year-old villager, stood out in the crowd. Even the soldiers noted that he didn’t cower at their threats and insults. He was not angry or scared but simply determined to hold his ground.

The stand-off ended when the prisoner’s wife stepped forward and demanded her right to speak to the officials in charge. The soldiers saw their opportunity and began swinging their clubs. Other soldiers ran up from behind, firing into the air above the villagers’ heads.

After the shots died down, Pedro was the first to take his place again. The villagers gathered around him. But it was almost dark, and when an officer threatened to shoot anyone on the streets after 15 minutes, the crowd dispersed.

The next morning I went to Pedro’s house and asked him about the confrontation. “I wasn’t scared,” he said, “because I’m willing to die.” Later he told me of four times he had almost

died, but his will to live had saved him.

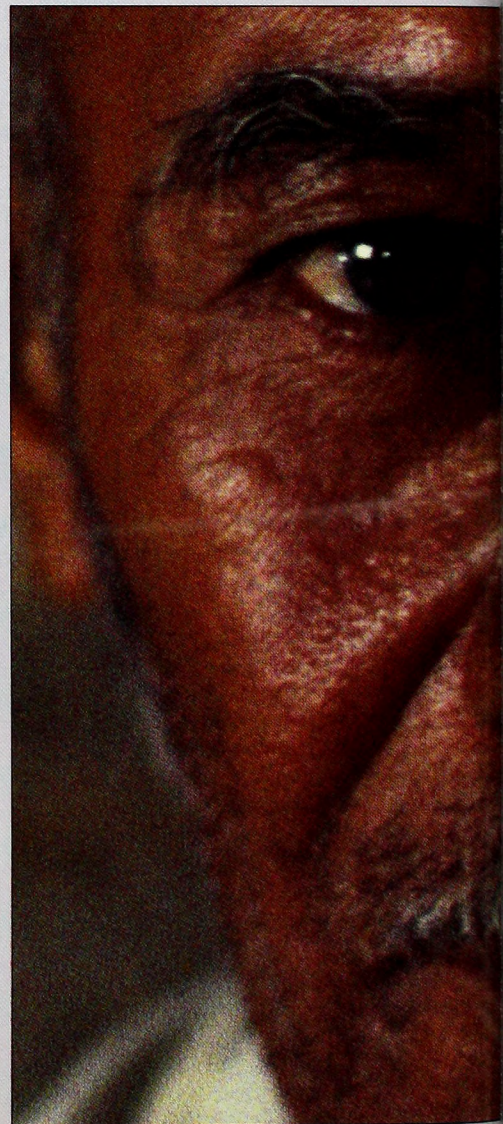
To be willing to die as we fight to live—this is the key. For my father it means accepting his grim prognosis but still fighting for life. For Pedro it means hanging on to life one day to risk death on another.

Fighting to live without being willing to die only makes us deny the facts. We hang on to life, protect it at all costs, and so destroy its meaning. Yet if we are willing to die but don’t fight to live, we resign ourselves fatalistically, and so lose our lives long before we die.

Pedro said, “For those who trust in God, no ground is barren.” If he is right, then even suffering is not barren ground. God transforms suffering into perseverance, character, and hope. Something that good cannot come out of anything as evil as suffering—not unless God is alive, transforming destruction into vitality.

Pedro is not angry at God for his suffering. “God doesn’t cause suffering,” he said. “God didn’t cause this

For those who trust in God, no ground is barren.



war. Our suffering is because not everyone realizes that we're all equal before God. The big ones walk all over the little ones."

Pedro recognizes that God created the world as an interconnected network. What one person does affects another. We do reap what we sow, but we also reap what the people around us sow. Four of Pedro's children died, not because God was punishing him or because it was God's will, but because some people have more than their share, leaving Pedro too little to provide for his children.

But living in an interconnected world does not just mean suffering for our own and other people's sins. It also means enabling one another. When my mother was ill, our church fasted and prayed with me over the decision to return to Bolivia. Other family members and the church enabled me to leave by assuming responsibility for her on my behalf.

My father now enables me to con-

tinue working in El Salvador because he is willing to let go of me and allow God to meet his needs through others. And those others, in turn, enable him to let me go because he knows they will stand by him. As I return to El Salvador, I leave a piece of myself behind and take a piece of my father and his supportive community with me.

Thomas Merton once wrote, "As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering from our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones." Christ's body is broken in violence, hate, individualism, and inequality; but the bones are being reset. When those in the body of Christ enable each other, life has the last word. Hope springs from suffering. Life sprouts from dead seeds. And death ends in victory, not defeat. □

Susan Classen has worked as a nurse in El Salvador with Mennonite Central Committee since 1984.

Life Has the Last Word

BY SUSAN CLASSEN



ED VAUGHN / WORLD VISION

In 1988, motivated by the dream of a better life for his family, Arumugam left his native Madras, India, for a laborer's job in Kuwait. Today the dream is gone.

Orphaned as a boy, Arumugam, 29, worked most of his life selling vegetables in his uncle's small shop. He never attended school and struggled constantly to provide food for his family. But in his new job in Kuwait, loading cargo in the seaport town of Saiba, he was earning \$135 per month—more than double his wages in India—and had cut his old 16-hour workdays in half. He was even able to send \$55 a

month to his family back home. "We had comfort and time for rest in Kuwait," he says.

But that time for rest was destroyed on Aug. 2, 1990, when Iraqi tanks rolled into Kuwait City. While the West focused on military strategies

and hostages, a human wave of foreign workers like Arumugam fled into the hot, scorpion-infested Saudi desert. At the peak of the migration, 15,000 to 20,000 refugees a day poured into three makeshift camps near the Iraqi border in Jordan.



Arumugam

SAM MOSES/WORLD VISION

*Millions
of Third
World
workers left
everything
to find
something
in Kuwait.*

*Now
they're...*

"The Western press never quite realized the human dimension of this problem until 1 million people were at the border," says Ray Gorre, an information officer for the Philippine Embassy in Los Angeles. "Everybody knew that more than half the work force in Kuwait came mainly from poor countries, but there was very little concern for them." Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, whose country put up \$50 million to help feed and house the refugees, complained, "The plight of these people has only evoked the faintest response from the world community."

For six weeks, Arumugam lived in the refugee camps, bathed in the Tigris River, and ate only bread, rice, and pickles. He finally returned to India, but his family must again survive on the meager wages he makes in his uncle's vegetable shop.

Today most of Kuwait's imported laborers who were uprooted from their jobs as cooks, maids, and construction workers have returned home. They have been reabsorbed

**GOING
HOME
TO NOTHING**



into their homelands' flagging economies, which struggle even more without the billions of dollars of foreign revenue that was being reinvested by expatriate workers.

The practice of poor people working in foreign countries dates back to well before the Israelites built pyramids in Egypt. Whole societies were built on the backs of imported labor. But the phenomenon has not been as entrenched—nor the outcome as

The immigrants
came from
places where
extreme
poverty
is endemic
and
widespread.

cruel—as in the Persian Gulf over the past 30 years.

So-called guest workers began traveling to the Gulf in the 1950s, but the boom of foreign labor really started after oil prices skyrocketed in the mid-1970s. The rich Gulf states, unprepared and unwilling to develop their own sources of labor in the wake of the oil boom, welcomed labor from poor nations. Developing countries, in turn, were relieved of some of the pressure to provide jobs, housing, and food subsidies for their burgeoning populations. Before the Iraqi invasion, three of every four workers in Kuwait were foreigners, a half a million of them Asian.

Riad Ajami, director of the International Business Strategy Program at Ohio State University and an expert on the Middle East, says that natives of the Persian Gulf area “believe in living off the work of others. They import Yemenis to make their tea and Westerners to run their sophisticated technology. There is an aversion toward work that is probably natural for all societies that receive such windfall profits in such a short time.”

“Immigrants come from places where extreme poverty is endemic and widespread,” says John Key, World Vision International’s regional director for South Asia. “If a family member can find work abroad, he or she jumps at the idea. Anything would be better than what they’re getting at home,” he says.

Each day in the Philippines, more than 1,000 skilled and unskilled workers go abroad to the United States, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, and other countries to find work. Annually, these expatriate workers send back \$3 billion, which helps fuel the Philippine economy. At least 700,000 Filipinos were working in the Middle East before the invasion.

In the past five years, 12 million Indian immigrants helped save their country from serious financial difficulties by infusing \$10 billion into the Indian economy from their jobs abroad.

While there are many benefits when people from Third World countries find work abroad, there are also sad legacies. When the best educated and most highly motivated people leave, the society that remains is poorer in every sense.

“One of the tragedies in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka,” says Key, “is that those who have money or brains, or both, want to leave, either to get an education elsewhere or because they see no future in their own countries. And their countries desperately need them to stay and work there.”

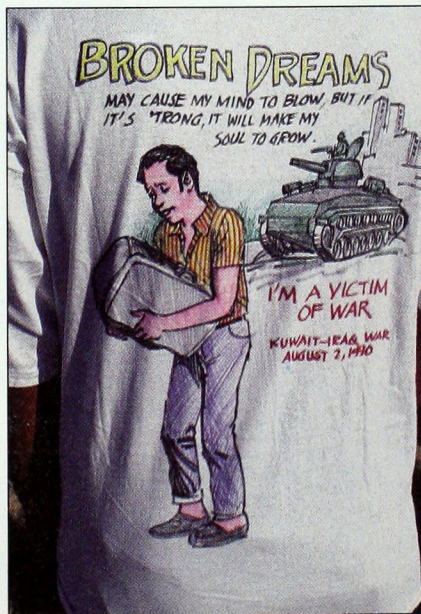
In Madras, John Somaiah had a government job and earned \$33 a month. But in Kuwait, the 43-year-old white-collar worker lived comfortably on the \$3,300 he made as an assistant in the Kuwait Investment Co. Unlike many

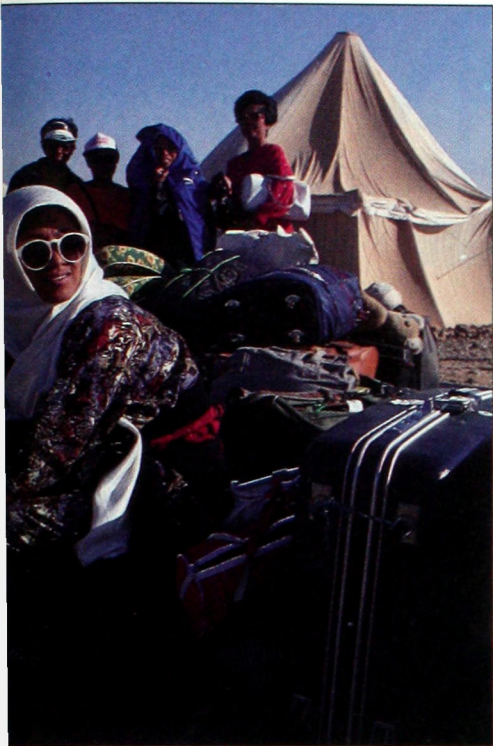
foreign workers who are forced to leave their families when they work abroad, Somaiah was able to take his wife and children to Kuwait.

After the fall of Kuwait, however, Somaiah and his family ended up in the Sha’alaan refugee camp. “Men and women fought like animals over the scraps of food and water that trickled in from relief agencies,” he recalls. “Babies went without milk, there were no sanitation facilities, and the refugees survived on unleavened bread, tomatoes, and cucumbers.”

Along with the brain drain from the Third World come other social problems, especially among families. One in three migrant-worker families split up, and their children are more likely to abuse drugs.

Retired Philippine Army General Jose T. Almonte’s six nieces work abroad as housekeepers. In a *Los Angeles Times* interview, Almonte said, “There is a feeling of shame on our part. A feeling we’ve failed our children,





we've squandered their future, so they must leave to better their lives. And that's a tragedy."

Another sad outcome is the abuse and oppression many workers experience in their new country. During the first six months of 1990, 800 cheated, stranded, and destitute Filipinos returned to Manila from jobs abroad. Some women had been victimized by their employers and told of being forced into prostitution.

When oil prices declined in the late 1980s, some foreign workers simply were not paid. Most didn't complain about their employers, since those who did protest were often quickly shipped back home, Ajami says.

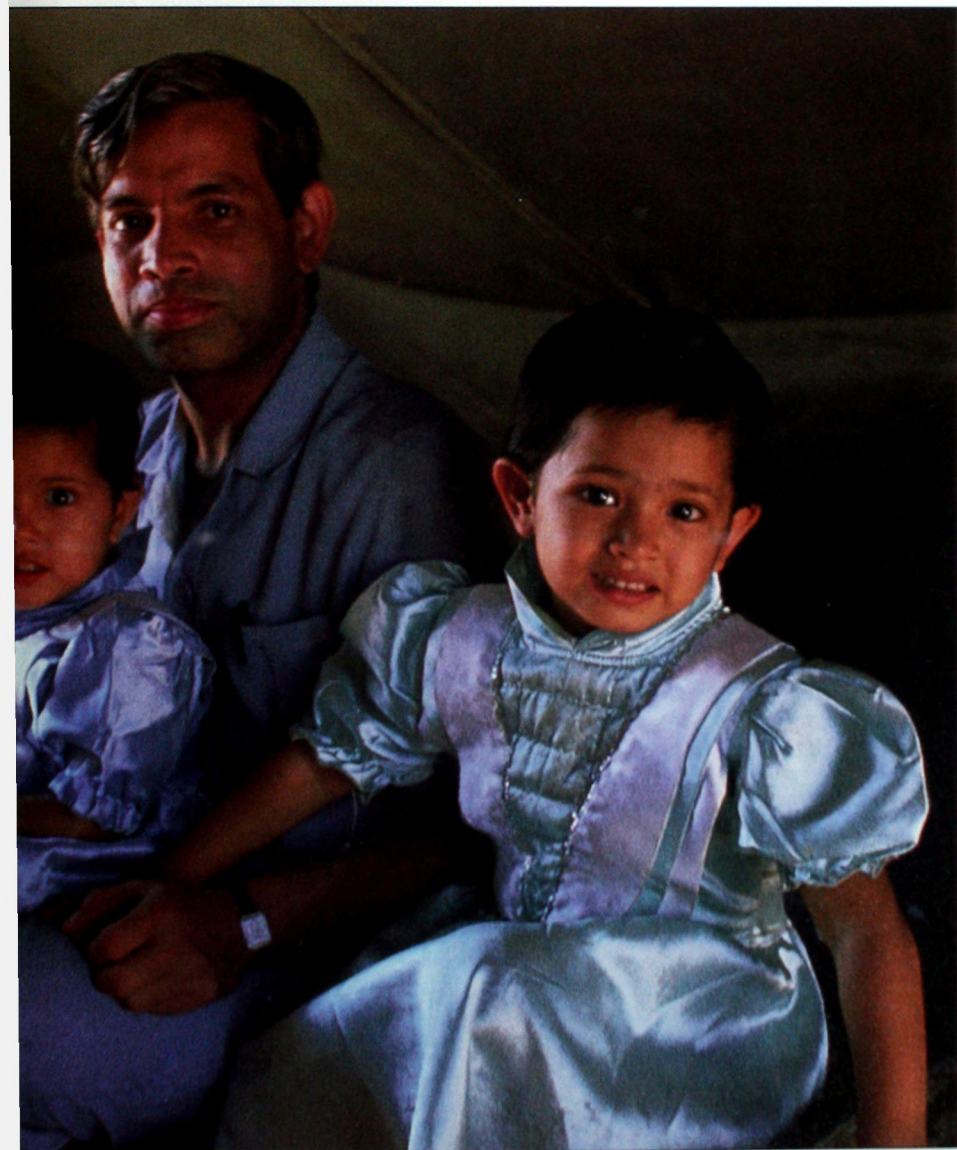
Joseph Corraya, a 32-year-old Bangladeshi with a family of four in Dhaka City, gave most of his life's savings to a recruiter who found him a job in Kuwait in 1983. With little education and few job prospects, he knew that going to the Persian Gulf was his only chance to support his family. But three

months before the invasion, his salary as a hospital janitor was abruptly halted. His wife and two daughters stopped getting their monthly support and lost their small house.

Even for those not abused or cheated, life as an expatriate in the Gulf is hard. Far from their families, most workers save their money for brief, annual visits home. In Kuwait and Iraq, foreigners live in enclaves and suffer discrimination.

Unlike the United States, Persian Gulf countries do not allow foreigners to gain resident status and eventually become citizens. According to Ajami, "The sad truth is that someone who devotes his professional life—20 or more years—to working in one of these countries can be told to leave at a moment's notice, with no rights whatsoever."

Ajami says the practice of treating migrant workers as permanent outsiders has cost Kuwait. "If they had let those workers become stakeholders in



THIRD WORLD NATIONALS

Third World nationals working in Iraq and Kuwait before August 1990:

<i>Egyptians</i>	<i>1,800,000</i>
<i>Palestinians</i>	<i>500,000</i>
<i>Jordanians</i>	<i>400,000</i>
<i>Lebanese</i>	<i>200,000</i>
<i>Indians</i>	<i>200,000</i>
<i>Sri Lankans</i>	<i>120,000</i>
<i>Bangladeshis</i>	<i>90,000</i>
<i>Filipinos</i>	<i>60,000</i>

Compiled by Riad Ajami, director, International Business Strategy Program, Ohio State University.

the society," he says, "they would have been the ones who would have stayed and fought the Iraqis."

But they didn't stay. They had no reason to stay and fight, nothing to stay and fight for. And though most escaped with their lives and returned to their native homes, they had nothing to show for their years of loneliness and labor but memories of war.

Forty-year-old Rose, of the Philippines, is one of those who still wakes up in the pre-dawn hours filled with thoughts of the Iraqi invasion. "I woke up with war," she says. "I feel there will always be war behind me, like a shadow." □

Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Leslie Salisbury
and Ginger Hope



WESTMONT COLLEGE

SPRING BREAK- THROUGH

Not all college students hit the slopes or the beach during spring break. This year, 500 students from Westmont College (Santa Barbara, Calif.) will spend the week in one of Mexico's poorest areas.

Through a yearly program called Potter's Clay, the students work with children in Mexican

churches and orphanages, help with construction projects, perform music and drama, and assist a medical and dental team.

"I love seeing Westmont College students exposed to missions and I love the Mexican and American people bonding as brothers and sisters," said Shelly Schar, co-director of Potter's Clay. Contact Potter's Clay at (805) 565-6374.

What worthwhile things are other students doing with their spring break? Write and let us know.



CAN YOU DRAW THE POVERTY LINE?

1. Within \$500, can you name the official U.S. government poverty line for a family of four?

2. How many Americans live below the poverty line?

3. Of the answer to #2, how many work at least part-time?

4. Name three of the six states where 20% or more of the population lives below the poverty line.

5. Compared to other U.S. income brackets, where do poverty-level families rank in charitable giving?

ANSWERS: (1) \$12,675 for a family of four; (2) More than 32 million, or about one in eight; (3) About half; (4) Mississippi (25.6%); West Virginia (22.8%); Arkansas (22.2%); Alabama (21.5%); Louisiana (20.8%); New Mexico (20.7%); (5) Number one, according to a recent Gallup poll. Households with income under \$10,000 donate an average of 5.5% of their income. Middle-income families give the lowest average percentages.

EYE CONTACT

Five hundred-eighty people in Ghana, Africa, who were blind last year can now see, thanks to the Christian Eye Ministry, a California-based organization that provides eye surgery and glasses.

Of Ghana's 160,000 blind people, 120,000 could regain their vision with a simple operation, says Bob Ainsworth of the Christian Eye Ministry.

The organization recycles used eyeglasses and sells them at minimal cost. Churches can help by exhibiting counter displays containing postage-free envelopes that safely ship used eyeglasses. The small profit from selling the glasses supports eye clinics where "people come in one day and can't see, then have surgery, go home, and the next day they can see," says Ainsworth.

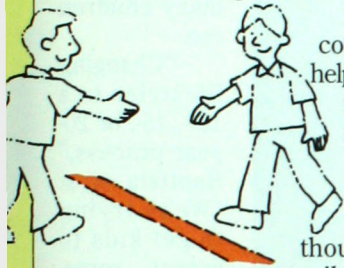
To exhibit a counter display or learn about volunteer opportunities, contact Bob Ainsworth, Christian Eye Ministry, P.O. Box 3721, San Dimas, CA 91773; (714) 599-8955 or (800) 255-EYES.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

BORDER CROSSING

Learn to teach your church to reach out to its neighbors. Crossing Borders is a four-session course that helps church members move out into the world, whether thousands of mile away or



just across the street.

The first step is a training workshop to equip church leaders to teach the course in their own churches. Locations of upcoming workshops: Fairfax, Va., February 22-24; Portland, Ore., April 19-21.

For more information contact Jan Thornton at World Vision, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-1111, extension 3493.

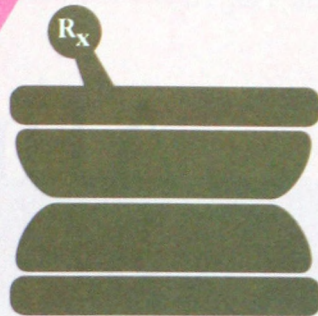
THIEF IN THE HOUSE

“Their property held them in chains...which shackled their courage and choked their faith and hampered their judgment and throttled their souls...If they stored up their treasure in heaven, they would not now have an enemy and a thief within their household...enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masters of their money, but its slaves.
”

*Cyprian,
3rd-century bishop*

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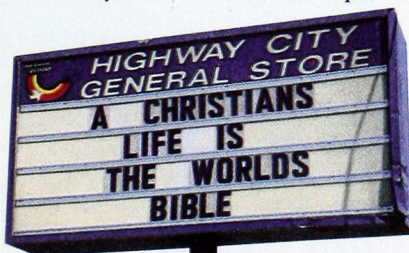
The church
being the church
among the poor

A HELPING HAND IN HIGHWAY CITY

BY BRENDA SPOELSTRA

Northwest Baptist Church

*Editorial Note:
Highway City
Ministries and
Northwest Baptist
Church have been
awarded the 1991
Mustard Seed
Award as the top
program in the
United States for
innovative work
with a community
of need.*



*For more
information
contact Highway
City Ministries,
P.O. Box 459,
Angeles Camp, CA
95221*

Highway City sees plenty of traffic. Yet most travelers barely notice this community of tiny houses and dirt yards along Highway 99, the main route into Fresno, Calif.

Cynder Baptista had passed it hundreds of times herself, but one day she took the off-ramp, parked her car, and started knocking on doors.

Baptista had just received Christ, and when she read the Bible, it struck her how much time Jesus spent with the poor. She felt she should follow suit, and Highway City seemed like a good place to start.

She soon learned that a church just two miles up the road wanted to more effectively serve the poor. Baptista helped Northwest Baptist Church start Highway City Ministries.

Highway City's population is predominantly black and Hispanic. Many of the Hispanic people speak little English. Some of the men are farm workers; many of the women are single mothers.

"They live in such difficulty, financially and in all kinds of other ways," Baptista says. "I wanted to let them know how special they are to God. Looking at the conditions they lived in, I was sure they didn't feel that."

The first step was a thrift store in an upstairs room of an office building, because Baptista believed the most pressing need in Highway City was for decent clothing and furniture. At first the store just gave the goods away. Baptista soon realized, however, that the people could keep their dignity only if they gave something in return.

One man came into the store because he needed something to wear for a job interview. He offered to work in exchange for a suit and shoes. Several weeks later, thrift store director Yvonne Koop received a letter from the man thanking her for the help in landing a job. He enclosed \$25.

The thrift store, now in its own building, supplies most of the funds for Highway City Ministries. So church members give their time, not their money, to their needy neighbors. More than 160 volunteers work as clerks, delivery people, tutors, and youth leaders. A few accompany Pastor Carlos Delgado on home visits in Highway City.

Maria, a thrift store customer and a member of the ministry's Bible study group, lives in a mud-alley shack with her four children. Her alcoholic husband left 8 years ago, and recently her 20-year-old son was arrested for drunk driving. The family's only car was impounded.

With support from her friends at the store, Maria found a restaurant job to provide for her family. Her children are in the Highway City Ministries youth programs, and her 20-year-old now attends a Bible study.

As Maria's story illustrates, children in poor communities often lack good role models. They see adults using drugs, alcohol, and infidelity as ways to escape. Short-term jobs are the only kind of employment many children see.

"Changing lifestyles is a 10-, 15-, or 20-year process," Baptista says. "We're trying to get kids to expect something more than what they've seen."

What they find at Highway City Ministries is someone who cares if they get



BRENDA SPOELSTRA / WORLD VISION

an A on a spelling test, someone who is out there cheering for them. "When you put a lot of those little successes together," Baptista says, "you have a child who is going to do something with his life, as opposed to a child who thinks he's a big nothing."

Highway City Ministries is there to change Highway City. But Baptista has watched it change the lives of volunteers, too. When people are asked to reach out to the poor, they often feel threatened at first, she explains. "They wonder, *Does this mean I have to give up my lifestyle? Does this mean I have to dedicate my life to the poor?*"

One church volunteer did not feel any particular empathy for Mexicans or the poor. But after working in the thrift store for just an hour a week, she became so involved with the people who came into the store that eventually she was spending two full days a week there.

"That's not just one woman's story," Baptista says. "It happens all the time."

"The poor aren't the ones that most people would volunteer to be around. So how will the poor find out about God's great love if we, who understand it, don't put ourselves right next to them—and not only tell them, but show them?" □

Brenda Spoelstra is a World Vision staff writer.

The eyes of children growing up in poverty have an unmistakably adult gaze. They carry the weight of adulthood. Between rare moments of

children today. They identified six areas in which children worldwide are victimized: armed conflict, substance abuse, child labor, and lack of family, health, and education. For decades, organizations like World Vision and UNICEF have addressed those areas. But the summit marked the first time that the world leaders recognized these problems and the urgency of resolving them.

- Children have always been victims of war, but in the past decade an increasing number of children, some as young as 8, have been used to fight as soldiers in many conflicts.

- Drugs and alcohol are affecting children in rural and suburban areas, as well as the world's cities. Crack is the leading cause of illness among infants, children, and adolescents living in U. S. cities, according to New York City Health Commissioner Steve Joseph.

- Millions of children are deprived of an education because they must work to help support their families. They are often exploited and forced to work in hazardous conditions for low wages. In some countries, children are preferred as workers over unskilled adults because adults are harder to intimidate and might demand better conditions.

- As many as 100 million children may be living on urban streets around the world. Most of these children have no family. Some have been abandoned, others run away from home because they are mistreated or ignored.

- Six preventable diseases, including measles, whooping cough,



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

play and laughter, this weight numbs their expressions.

More and more poor children are fighting and dying as soldiers, dying from easily preventable diseases, and growing up without parents on city streets.

Last September, heads of state from around the world met at the United Nations World Summit for Children to discuss the problems facing

diphtheria, tuberculosis, polio, and tetanus, are responsible for the deaths of millions of children every year. Many more die from dehydration (easily prevented with sugar and water).

- In some countries, only a fraction of the children receive even a few years of education. Girls and disabled children are even less likely to receive an education, crippling their chances to grow into self-sufficient adults.

"Suffer the little children," Jesus said to his disciples. Yet for almost 2,000 years, "let the children suffer" more accurately describes the plight of the world's children. In September, however, 23 leaders at the World Summit for Children ratified a set of worldwide standards for child care that will break new ground in the struggle to protect and defend the rights of children. □

Jeff Sellers is a World Vision journalist.

Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Children in Uganda whose parents have died of AIDS



Kids Without Parents

Some experts say that as many as 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Child psychologist Robert Coles once warned that "children who go unheeded are going to turn on the world that neglected them." It's a frightening warning. Some experts say that as many 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Some children have been left to survive as best they can after their parents are killed or die of disease. Others run away from sexual and physical abuse, living their lives on the mean streets of the world's cities. In Mexico City alone, 12 million children are living or working on the streets. But no less tragic are the 40,000 Romanian "orphans," abandoned by their parents because of disease or because there were too many other mouths to feed.

Whatever the reason, one thing is certain. They are children who can't go home again. □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

Orphan in Romania

Ising for money. Sometimes I make enough to rent a room, sometimes I don't. I don't like sleeping on the streets. There are dangerous people there. But I have to be somewhere.
Sida, age 8, Mexico City



Street child in Bolivia

WORLD VISION

Orphanage in Thailand



SANDRO TUCCI / BLACK STAR

I have no family, nothing. I need to find a job. But everyone is looking. What chance do I have?
Puma, age 18, Bangladesh

Why am I on the streets? Because I'm garbage. And garbage belongs on the streets.
Joanne, age 14, United States

READERS' RIGHT



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"Every child should be touched, loved... and should wake up each morning with the hope that his or her dreams can come true. That's why I love World Vision! Sponsorship gives people like you and me the chance to give dignity—and a future—to needy children."

—Larnelle Harris

Five-time Grammy award winner Larnelle Harris knows about the needs of suffering children—and how compassionate people are helping to save them from lives of hunger, poverty and despair. He also knows that through World Vision Childcare Sponsorship, he can help change our hurting world—one child at a time.

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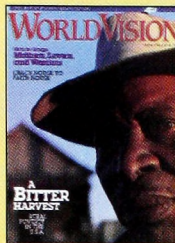
Mail to:

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Childcare Sponsorship
Pasadena, CA 91131



Dear Editor:

In reading your article (the Rural Poor, Oct/Nov issue), I noticed the picture of two men sitting on a porch and a dog lying on the ground. The ground was littered, as was the porch.



One fights poverty by working. So many times when I have driven in the "poor" sections of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, in the brightness of day men and women were "sitting." The other day I read a bumper sticker which said, "I'm fighting poverty. I'm working."

You mention how many U.S. companies are leaving the U.S. to obtain cheaper labor in other countries. The rubber industry in Akron, Ohio, is nonexistent because the head of the Rubber Worker's Union kept demanding higher wages and less work. Why do you think U.S. car makers went downhill? Union "leaders" wanted the union members to get more money to justify those "leaders' jobs.

Economics is no mystery. It takes capital, labor, and raw materials to make wealth. How would you ensure everyone a "fair living standard"? Give them a living? Where would you get the wherewithal?

I herewith give you a quote from Gustave Le Bon: "Socialism, whose dream is to substitute itself for the ancient faiths, proposes only a very low ideal, and to establish it appeals to sentiments lower still . . . With what lever does it seek to raise the soul? With the sentiments of envy and hatred which it creates in the hearts of the multitudes. To the crowd, no longer satisfied with political and civic equality, it proposes equality of condition, without dreaming that social inequalities are born of those natural inequalities that man has always been powerless to change."

I believe it was St. Paul or St. Peter who said, "If a man will not

work, neither shall he eat." I grant you there are many situations which we think are not "fair" to individuals, but who says life must be fair? A man of Solomon's wisdom can't settle that question.

Clyde A. Sluhan,
Chairman and CEO
Master Chemical Corporation
Perrysburg, Ohio

Dear Mr. Sluhan,

Certainly no one wants to pay someone for nothing, nor should one have to. And although World Vision is an advocate for the poor, we certainly have no intention of substituting socialism for the "ancient faiths," especially since Christian evangelism has always been a basic and integral part of our ministry throughout the world.

However, poverty in the Mississippi Delta is a complex issue. It cannot be explained away as simply laziness or union greed. A lack of education—considered unnecessary for the cotton-pickers of years past—is a prime reason children and adults get nowhere fast. Schools are underfunded and overcrowded. Those children who manage to get a decent education move out of the Delta. A shortage of education and job skills quickly translates to a lack of finances for such staples as medicine and nourishing food. As a matter of fact, the incidence of birth defects and mental retardation in the Delta is the highest in the nation, creating even more problems.

Even so, dependence on welfare is not the answer. That is why groups like Habitat for Humanity work under a principle known as "sweat equity," where people are expected to help build their own houses and then pay their own mortgages.

Many times those former recipients turn around and help some other needy family. This isn't a handout; it's lending a helping hand, and creating more opportunity in a depressed environment.

—Editors

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

BY DONNA SANDERS

Returning missionaries often recount how much they learned from the people they went to help. In the safety of our own homes, those lessons are harder to learn.

I was "in the ministry" and accustomed to giving. People brought their troubles to me, and I listened and prayed for their needs. I doled out smiles and hugs and scriptures for every occasion, and if someone had asked me, I would have replied that I did not have a problem with pride.

That was before the angelic visitation, as I have come to think of it.

The Christmas holidays announced their approach with a surprise greeting card from Martin, a childhood friend. He and his companion, Amy, were en route from New York to San Francisco and wanted to stop in Los Angeles to visit us. My husband and I replied that we would love to have them, and we began to pray for opportunities to share our most precious gift, the reality of the Christ child, with our unbelieving guests.

Martin looked much the same as he had ten years earlier, when I had last seen him. He was warm, open, and vivacious. Amy, whom I had never met, was a thin, quiet woman, in her mid-twenties, with large, incredulous brown eyes. She told stories to children in the park, they said. I remember thinking she didn't seem the type.

They stayed with us for only two days, and the opportunity we had prayed for kept eluding us. We were busy with church activities, which we always invited Martin and Amy to attend, but which they always declined. We both felt that Martin was receptive to hearing about Jesus, but that Amy was too guarded.

Finally, the night before their departure, after Amy had fallen asleep, we talked to Martin about Jesus' sacrifice, and how simple it was to receive his life-changing love. Martin wasn't ready to pray with us that night but had more than enough infor-

mation on how to do it in his, and God's, own time.

The next morning, just before Martin and Amy ducked into their pug-nosed VW bug, my husband and I gave each of them a small, inexpensive Christmas gift. Our gift to Martin was Bob Dylan's new album, "Slow Train Comin'"; our gift to Amy a pale, perfectly shaped sand dollar. Martin apologized for not having anything to give us in return. But Amy, doe eyes glistening, opened a volume of Hans Christian Andersen stories. She said this was her gift to us, and began to read.

It was the colorful tale of an argument between a quill pen and an inkwell over which of them was more important. In the end, a hand dipped the pen into the inkwell and, in concert with a clean sheet of paper, created a marvelous story. My eyes were moist by the end of the story, stirred by Amy's animated interpretation and by the nature of this gift—completely without material value, wonderful in its simplicity, lasting in its effect.

Sometime later I realized the full impact of that unexpected gift. I was reading John 13, where Jesus explains to an indignant Peter why it is necessary that he wash Peter's feet. When Peter exclaimed, "Never shall you wash my feet!" he must have believed that his refusal was the right attitude of a true servant of Christ.

I suddenly saw myself in Peter. There is a peculiar kind of pride that sometimes masquerades as humility. It is the subtle deception that I, as a believer, have it all over the rest of the world. My rightful place is that of a servant, and it is I who have something to offer them, not they who can give anything to me. But God used an unbeliever to teach me the same truth he taught Peter. The heart of the servant, the childlike spirit our Lord covets for all of us, is one that is open to receive from a point of weakness as well as give from a point of strength.

The Bible says that in giving to the poor and imprisoned, some have entertained angels unawares. Since my special visitation, I look at what others, including those to whom I "minister," can teach *me*, keeping in mind that God is the hand that creates and that we are simply the tools. I am convinced that angels sometimes extend God's love, or some glimmer of truth, through unlikely-looking vessels—people with failings. People just like me. □

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

There is a peculiar brand of pride that masquerades as humility.

KEVIN CONRAN



A special gift for you— and hope for a needy child!



"Tony, Tony, you are a courageous, courageous young man, and you are giving hope to us all. My wish to you is to continue giving hope . . . hope to all of the people."

*Pope John Paul II
September 15, 1987*

During Pope John Paul II's visit to the U.S., Tony Melendez won the hearts of millions. That's when this young man without arms played the guitar with his feet and sang for the Pope.

So moved was the Pope that he made his way through the crowd to embrace and bless this courageous musician.

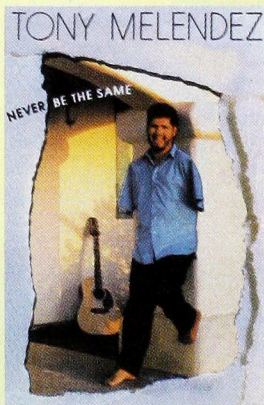
It was Tony Melendez' shining moment. And it launched this talented young man's musical career sky high.

World Vision would like you to have his inspirational first recording. This collection is filled with the joy of God's love. It includes the song "Never Be the Same," which is the one Tony sang to John Paul II, as well as the Spanish track, "Despedida."

This cassette can be yours in appreciation from World Vision for a gift of \$25 or more to help suffering children around the world.

Through World Vision's Childcare Ministry Fund, your gift will help provide a suffering child — and her family and community — with nutritious food, clothing, medical care, and the opportunity to know about God's love.

Enjoy the music that inspired the Pope . . . and make a big difference in a needy child's life! Send your gift today.



Yes, I want to help a needy child.

Please send me Tony Melendez' recording, *Never Be the Same*.

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WORLD VISION

February/March 1991

*Suffer the
Children*

A Photo Essay

In El Salvador

**Life Has the
Last Word**

ALL OUR CHILDREN

*The
Population
Problem*



4 All Our Children

Many experts predict that if world population continues to soar, we will soon face mass starvation, disease, food riots, and environmental destruction. Others, however, argue that the real problem is that too many people have too little access to the resources they need to survive.

10 Life Has the Last Word

Through the suffering of her family and the Salvadoran people she ministers to, an American nurse discovers that when Christians enable one another to fight for life, life has the last word.

12 Going Home to Nothing

Last July, 2 million to 3 million foreigners worked in Iraq and Kuwait. They had come from some of the poorest countries in the world, for wages they couldn't dream of back home. After the invasion most were forced to flee with nothing but the taste of what could have been.

19 Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Jesus told his disciples to "suffer the little children." Yet today, more and more poor children are fighting in wars, dying from easily preventable diseases, and growing up on city streets. But last September, 23 world leaders signed a new agreement to protect the rights of children.

Millions of foreign workers in Iraq and Kuwait have fled since the August invasion.



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Patrick House's creative cover strikingly conveys one of the major challenges of the coming century—a growing world population. "All Our Children" looks at the issue.

While we've prayed for the release of several thousand "human shields" and other "guests" of Iraq, nearly 3 million of its foreign workers have fled for home. What they found there is painfully told in "Going Home to Nothing."

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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THE OLD AND ORPHANS REMAIN

Uganda, once considered the pearl of Africa, is dying of AIDS. The entire population is considered high risk. The hardest hit are men and women, ages 18 to 45. The funeral business is booming.

On a recent trip I heard a verse which poignantly describes life in that stricken land. The rhyme gets lost in the translation, but the meaning is clear:

*It is a hard life; an uphill task
That breaks us as we climb.*

*We have forgotten God, so many
devils around us*

Where shall we go for our judgment day?

I saw many orphaned children while in Uganda. Their voices are soft and young. They are the future of the country, but the rhythmic swaying of their bodies seems to punctuate the fact that, for them, the future is vapor-thin.

As if daily life weren't difficult enough, many of Uganda's children have seen their mothers and fathers die horrible deaths tainted by AIDS. Four children, ages 8 through 13, buried their parents themselves. The mother died of AIDS on Christmas Eve; the father, one week later on New Year's Eve. Their graves rest among the Matooke trees surrounding their hovel of a house. Rotten bedding is strewn around the yard. The roof has holes. The children sleep together in one bed with no mattress. They can't sleep on the floor because poisonous snakes sometimes slither inside.

The oldest child, Felistus, cooks their daily meals of sweet potatoes, beans, or bananas—the only food available to them. The sole adornment in the house is a picture of the family together, but now that picture faces the wall. "We want to keep it there, but we can't stand to look at it all the time," explains Felistus. Nothing we did or said got Felistus' 6-year-old brother to smile.

In another home, Conzaga, age 12, is the "savior, mother, father, breadwinner, and cook," according to his blind, 86-year-old grandmother. His grandfather, 82 and bedridden, agrees. Conzaga is essentially taking care of two households under one roof—his elderly grandparents and two younger siblings. Conzaga asks us for a blanket because they have only one. The child has become the parent. Tragedy has turned traditional roles upside-down.

Uganda's hope is in the younger generation who have managed to escape the sweeping

CHILDREN CARE FOR
CHILDREN IN AIDS-
PLAGUED UGANDA. THE
FUNERAL BUSINESS IS
BOOMING.



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

presence of AIDS. But this generation is also very much at risk. Funerals intrude on every family, on every day. And it will get worse before it gets better. But there are a few bright spots. Three years ago World Vision in Uganda began working in an area absolutely decimated by war. Now the social fabric has been knit back together; values have been instilled; holistic ministry has taken place. And the children now sing of hope, restoration, and a God who remembers.

May our lives, and yours, always bring forth a song of hope and deliverance. May we sing a joyous song about a better present and an eternal tomorrow, even in a land as darkened by despair as Uganda. □

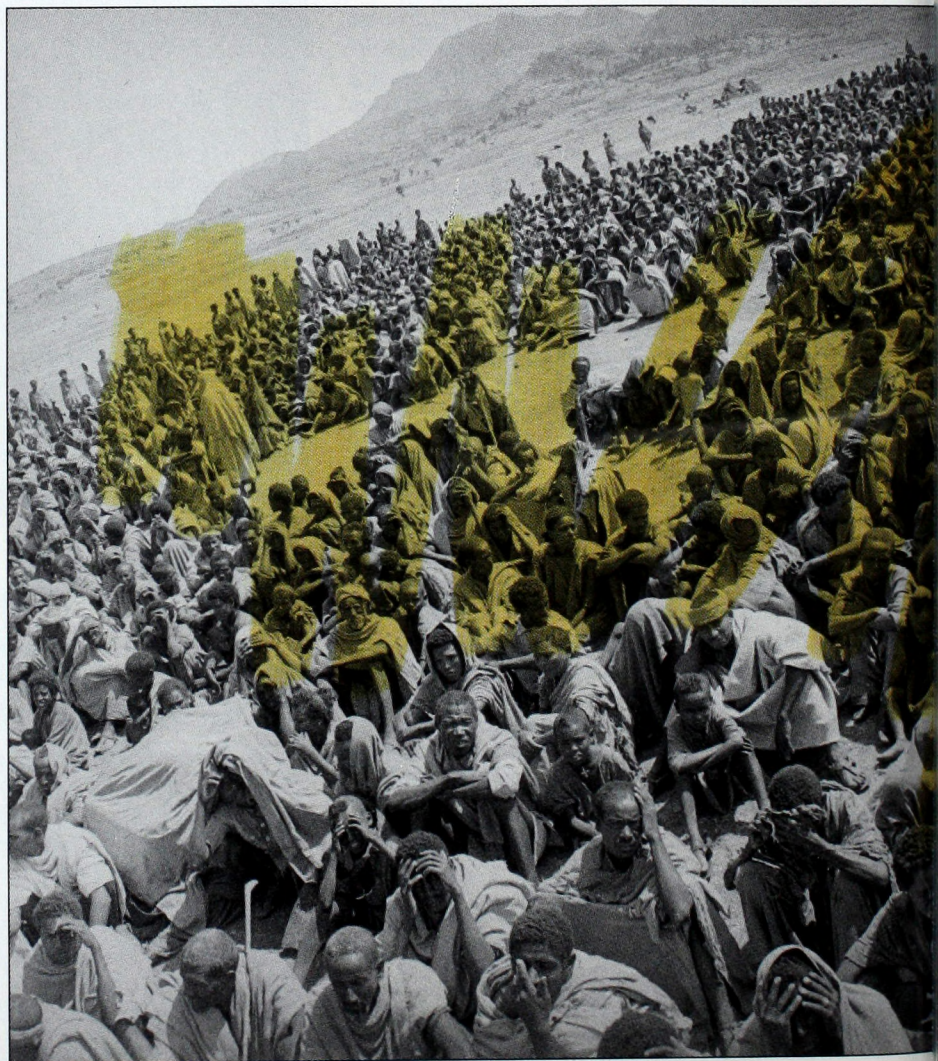
BY BRIAN BIRD AND
KAREN KLEIN

Forty miles from the feeding camp where one of her children died and another survived the “year of death,” as she calls the Ethiopian famine of 1985, Amalesu Georgis sits in her traditional hut praying for the child in her womb. It will be her sixth.

A ALL OUR CHILDREN

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

*The
Human
Face
of the
Population
Problem*



"I pray to God that this child will be healthy and live a long life. Then he will work in the fields and give me food to eat when I am too old to work," Georgis says. The creases on her sun-beaten face belie her age—she is 29—but bespeak the hardships of life as a Third World woman.

"It is important for me to have many children. We cannot predict the future, but I know some of my children will die when they are young. And I know some will live. These children are my guarantee of a long life," she says.

Half a world away, researchers in hundreds of American universities and a dozen United Nations agencies try to sort out the crises facing our troubled planet, crises like global warming, deforestation, and the disposal of mountains of waste. Because of women like Amalesu Georgis, however, they keep coming back to one issue: population growth. Many experts say that the number of children Georgis bears—she and billions of women like her—could determine the fate of the human race.

With the earth's population cur-

rently passing the 5.3 billion mark, natural resources already show signs of strain. If population growth continues unabated, the number of people on the planet is predicted to hit 10.5 billion by the year 2050. Is world population growth truly a time bomb that will doom civilized society? Or has it become a scapegoat for a whole complex of global issues?

Some experts predict that if world population continues to soar, the world will suffer epidemic starvation, disease, food riots, even nuclear standoffs over dwindling resources. Unrestrained population growth, according to this view, causes poverty, environmental degradation, and widespread malnutrition.

Not so, say other experts, even among those who agree that rampant population growth is dangerous. They refute the idea that overpopulation is humanity's most pressing problem.

"Too many people continue to believe that children are starving simply because there are too many of them," says Stephen Commins, policy advisor for World Vision and a former

director of the development institute at the African Studies Center of the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Children starve," he says, "because of too little access to an ample world food supply, because of inequitable land ownership patterns, and because of other social and economic conditions. Population growth is not the root cause of hunger and other global problems. Rather, it emerges from the very poverty it supposedly causes."

Control of the planet

Rapid population growth is only a recent concern. In the first century A.D., an estimated 250 million people inhabited the earth. That's less than a third of the population of India today. By the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, around 1750, the world's population had grown only to 728 million, far lower than today's population of China.

When the developed world industrialized, however, population started increasing more rapidly, surging to

1984-85 Ethiopian famine: sign of things to come?



about 2.4 billion by 1950. But the truly huge leap was after World War II. In the past four decades, world population has more than doubled.

The sudden change has come, in short, because of our increasing control of the planet. New medicines have brought disease under control. The "Green Revolution"—new pesticides and farming methods—have made more food available in areas where starvation had been common. More babies survive, and people live longer.

The birth rate, however, has not slacked off at the same pace as the death rate. True, people in most industrialized countries are having fewer children, realizing that smaller families mean a higher standard of living. But people in developing countries still raise large families.

Large families are good economic security for people in many Third World countries, says Dr. Eric Ram, World Vision's director of international health.

"It's a question of survival," he says. "Children are seen as an asset rather than a liability. They are social security where no social security exists. That extra pair of hands is part of the survival equation."

Unfortunately, the advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped the survivors escape lifelong poverty, malnutrition, and disease. So the survivors have more babies, and the population spirals out of control.

Deeply entrenched cultural values also reinforce large families in many traditional societies. In Ghana, Africa, where the average woman bears eight children, a large family is considered a blessing from God. Barrenness is a curse. Preventing pregnancy is hindering God in his work. And it is a matter of pride for a man to be able to provide for many children.

The "bomb" and the "explosion"

The study of population trends dates back to the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, when British economist and historian Thomas Malthus warned that an unchecked population would eventually outstrip its capacity to feed itself. He predicted cycles of starvation.

Malthus' theory is echoed by Stanford biology professor Paul Ehrlich, who published a book two decades ago called *The Population Bomb*. In his recent sequel, *The Population Explosion*, Ehrlich points to the 1984-85 Ethiopian famine—which killed one of Amaleseu Georgis' children and an estimated 1 million other Ethiopians—as a deadly hint of things to come if population

Too many people
continue to believe
that children are
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because there are too
many of them.

growth is left unchecked.

Ehrlich estimates that as many as 200 million people, mostly children, have already died from hunger and related diseases in the past 22 years as a result of overpopulation.

"The only human way to solve the population problem is by limiting births," he writes. "Any other way will cause so much destruction, we won't survive as a society."

Such thinking is embraced by some of the leading organizations that study population growth, including the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and The Population Institute.

Disturbing statistics

Indeed, despite an overall slowing in the growth of world population since the late 1960s (down from 2.1 percent to 1.7 percent), some disturbing statistics seem to confirm the theories of Thomas Malthus and his modern counterparts.

For example, the United Nations estimates that at least 65 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mexico, will not be able to feed themselves by the year 2000. Further, the U.N. says that even if food production doubles in the next 12 years, 50 million people in 20 countries will still go hungry.

Lester R. Brown of Worldwatch Institute warns, "In one Third World country after another, the pressure on local life-support systems is becoming intolerable, as can be seen in their dwindling forests, eroding soils, and falling water tables.

"Given the unprecedented numbers of young people who will reach reproductive age within the next two decades, a generation of one-child families may be the key to restoring a sustained improvement in living standards."



ED VAUGHN / WORLD VISION

Other experts, however, point out that the problem of population growth—and its solutions—are far more complex than this "gloom-and-doom" view can account for. Many people go hungry in the United States, for example, which has one of the largest food surpluses in the world.

In the same way, the depletion of natural resources cannot be blamed only on overpopulation.

"The fact is that an increase in population has very little to do with the deterioration of the environment," says Barry Commoner of the Institute for Food and Development Policy. "What determines degradation is [a nation's] choice of [manufacturing] and productive technologies."

A brass factory in Calcutta, for example, pours more chemical toxins into the Ganges River and more pollutants into the air than do all the families living in Calcutta's slums.



Many women in the developing world have as many children as they can. They know that some will die young, but that their surviving children will help support them when they grow too old to work. As one woman said, "These children are my guarantee of a long life."

Standoff against cultural values

Few population theorists would say there isn't a serious population growth problem. But how to tackle the problem? Malthusian thinkers usually favor strong population control measures, such as wider use of contraceptives, voluntary sterilization, or even mandatory one-child families. They say government-imposed family planning may be inevitable, calling China's one-child policy a success.

But some governments, unwilling to adopt China's aggressive tactics toward family planning, find themselves in a standoff against deeply entrenched cultural values.

In India, Indira Gandhi's 1977 election loss was attributed to her aggressive family planning drive, which Muslims and Roman Catholics in particular resisted.

In the Philippines, which is 80 percent Roman Catholic and one of the fastest-growing countries in Asia, with an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent, the government and the Roman Catholic Church are battling over family planning. While the government promotes both natural and artificial birth control methods, the church allows only natural methods.

Myrna, a 28-year-old midwife in a village north of Manila, is caught in the middle. Her village is typical: Most families are Roman Catholic, and most have about five children.

Working for the government, Myrna encourages family planning and promotes both natural and artificial methods, including sterilization and intra-uterine devices (IUDs). But few of the villagers heed her message.

"They believe the church is right in

rejecting artificial means," she says. "No family planning program here will ever succeed without the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church."

Living conditions and less kids

Not many years ago, development workers thought that simply improving people's lives might solve the high birth rate problem. Ensure a secure income and healthy children, the theory went, and families will shrink. But that theory has been largely discounted.

"In countries like Kenya, where advances [in development] have occurred, population has simply exploded," says Graeme Irvine, president of World Vision International. "I'm afraid [the development theory] was a rather naive view of the situation."

Yet quality-of-life improvements do seem to add a crucial element to the success of family planning programs.

"The Masai people in the foothills of Kenya's Mt. Kilimanjaro have accepted

BIRTH SPACING, GHANA STYLE

Although the average Ghanaian woman bears eight children, society frowns on having children too rapidly. Other women might remark to the baby of a pregnant woman, "Your mother did not allow you to enjoy your babyhood at all." This gentle rebuke, made in the presence of the mother, is a subtle way of urging her to plan better next time.

Agnes Phillips, *World Vision Ghana* journalist

family planning, and they are one of the most independent-minded tribes in all of Africa," says Ram. "They accepted it because they have seen that it works. But it was because they were involved in a project that combined immunization of their children, water management, sanitation, and health care."

Two specific elements are especially important in selling the idea of birth spacing in the Third World, according to economist Michael P. Todaro. One is ensuring that more children survive. The other is raising the status of women so they have the confidence, knowledge, and motivation to limit the size of their families.

In a community development project near Madras, India, population in the participating villages has only marginally increased recently. The project's family planning program suc-



To convince parents in the developing world to have fewer children, it is important to ensure that more of their children will survive, and to raise the status of women so they have knowledge and motivation to limit the size of their families.

WAITING FOR A SON

My first two children are daughters. So I waited to have a son before I had tubectomy," says Sivagami Mohan, 32, of Agaram village near Madras, India.

"According to local customs," she explains, "when a daughter is married, she entails expenses for gold ornaments, kitchen utensils, and a large marriage dinner.

"My husband is a weaver and earns about \$17 a month. We have no savings. When our daughters are married we may have to take a loan at 5 percent interest per month. Maybe we'll be able

to pay it, or maybe we'll lose the pledge of a gold ornament or brass vessels.

"A son, on the other hand, earns money and brings into our home his dowry [money or valuables parents give their daughter at her wedding].

"Hence our preference for sons," Sivagami says.

Teresa Devanbu, a public health nurse for several villages, says that the wait to bear a son sometimes leads to the unwanted birth of daughters.

"Preference to have sons is the chief reason for some women to postpone family planning measures," she says.

However, Devanbu says "more and more women are getting convinced that family planning is no more their enemy, but their friend."

Sam Moses, World Vision India journalist

The advances that have enabled huge numbers of people to live longer have not helped them escape their poverty.

ceeded because it enabled the women to see the benefits of smaller families for themselves and their families.

Seniamma, a 27-year-old housewife, has two boys, ages 6 and 2. "Because of the gap between their births," she says, "I could breast-feed them long enough. My sons are quite healthy compared to neighboring boys their age." "Soon I will be able to go to work to earn some money. If I had many children, that would not be possible."

A quality life

The global dilemmas facing humanity and the daily dilemmas facing the poor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are two equally pressing sides of the population question. Clearly it is not enough to point a finger at women like Georgis and say, "You make the change."

The individual people involved in the issue, especially the Third World poor, must not be overlooked. To survive, women like Georgis have to make hard choices, choices that ultimately will affect the world.

But individuals in the First World also make choices about consumption of natural resources, environmentally destructive industries, Third World debt—choices that affect Georgis' life.

"Our guiding principle is Jesus' saying, 'I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly,'" says Dr. Ram. "A quality life is one in which you don't have to have several children simply because you are afraid some of them will die." □

With Sam Moses in India, Joey Umali in the Philippines, and Agnes Phillips in Ghana. Brian Bird is a journalist and screenwriter in Ontario, Calif. Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

UP AGAINST THE WALL

BY DICK EASTMAN WITH ANNA WATERHOUSE

In the fall of 1987, a few days before Thanksgiving, my wife Dee and I were about to observe our usual routine: the 11 o'clock news and then bedtime. But that night, I felt the urge to stay up and pray. Something was stirring inside me, a sadness, a burden I couldn't explain. As I prayed I began to cry, and I felt the Holy Spirit whisper a most unusual assignment.

The next morning I told Dee, "Honey, I've got to go pray at the Berlin Wall." She looked at me for a moment and said, "And *then* what?" But that was all. I had no explanation. I felt only the overwhelming need to confront that stronghold of oppression. Dee knows I never act out of emotion. After her initial surprise, she helped me plan the details of my strange pilgrimage.

Just 45 days later, following God's command, I flew to Berlin, where I met up with a fellow Christian who was to be my guide. And on that cold January night I finally stood just a few hundred feet from the infamous

crossing at Checkpoint Charlie, facing my concrete adversary. As I stood there, I realized how little faith I actually had. In fact, just before I reached out to touch the cold stone, I stopped and looked around to see if anyone was watching. I was embarrassed to do what God had called me to do. But I had come too far to disobey now. I again focused on my mission, and I thought of Jesus' promise to his disciples: *If anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea' and does not doubt ...*

My hands felt the cool, rough surface, and I quickly prayed five words, "In Jesus' name, come down."

Then I waited.

I felt a little silly, but the fact that nothing happened to the wall did not surprise me. My prayer was not just over a wall, but over spiritual strongholds. That I didn't understand much of what had happened spiritually didn't surprise me



Dick Eastman
praying at the
Berlin Wall,
January 1988

either. In a lifetime of reading Scripture and praying, I understand these things less today than ever. But I know someone who understands it all. And he gave me a book. And if I read that book, I will learn to fight victoriously.

I also knew that others were struggling with me. I wasn't the only one who had prayed against the dark forces of that wall. Believers who had lived as captives behind that barrier had prayed far more intensely—for decades—than I had.

I returned home disappointed that I hadn't seen a miracle. I read the papers and watched the news; yet nothing even remotely miraculous happened. The Berlin Wall stood fast. Nevertheless, I knew I had done what God had assigned.

At midnight on Nov. 8, 1989, thousands of people gathered on both sides of the 28-mile-long wall. With hammers, chisels, pocketknives, and fingers, they knocked loose chunks of concrete. In a roar of humanity, the Berlin Wall was no more. □

*If I think that
[intercessory prayer]
is a way to stay on
the sidelines and be
safe, then I had
better take another
look at the cross.*

E. Dee Freeborn

Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Thank God** for signs of life on the seemingly barren ground of suffering (pages 10-11).
- ♦ **Pray for the millions** of workers who fled Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion and now are trying to resettle in their home countries (pages 12-15).
- ♦ **Ask God to bless** the work of Highway City Ministries and other churches' attempts to unite with the poor in their area (page 18).

We dedicated you to God when you were a baby and we meant it." My parents spoke those words to me in 1981. We had just learned that my

mother's breast cancer had metastasized, and I was agonizing over whether to cancel my plans to go to Bolivia as a missionary. I went to Bolivia. My mother died six weeks later.

Last year, my father repeated those words one hour before a surgeon removed a tumor from his brain. "I recognize your call from God," he told me. "We dedicated you to God when you were a baby, to follow that call. Some people may think that because you're single you should change your plans to be with me, but I don't feel that way."

Five hours later the surgeon told me that the tumor was large, aggressive, and malignant. He gave no hope for recovery. Today, although my father is mentally alert, he can no longer speak. His right hand is useless and his right leg is weak.

Why did my mother die of cancer? Why does my father have a brain tumor? Is it because of sin? One well-meaning Christian said that my mother would have been healed if she had had enough faith. Where is God when Christians suffer?

As my family faces another battle with terminal illness, I think of my friends in El Salvador, where I am ministering now. They deal with suffering and death every day. In the village where I live, about 150 people recently confronted government soldiers and demanded the release of a villager the

soldiers had unjustly arrested. The people were angry and scared, the soldiers seemed hungry for blood. There were brief but violent incidents.

Pedro, an 80-year-old villager, stood out in the crowd. Even the soldiers noted that he didn't cower at their threats and insults. He was not angry or scared but simply determined to hold his ground.

The stand-off ended when the prisoner's wife stepped forward and demanded her right to speak to the officials in charge. The soldiers saw their opportunity and began swinging their clubs. Other soldiers ran up from behind, firing into the air above the villagers' heads.

After the shots died down, Pedro was the first to take his place again. The villagers gathered around him. But it was almost dark, and when an officer threatened to shoot anyone on the streets after 15 minutes, the crowd dispersed.

The next morning I went to Pedro's house and asked him about the confrontation. "I wasn't scared," he said, "because I'm willing to die." Later he told me of four times he had almost

died, but his will to live had saved him.

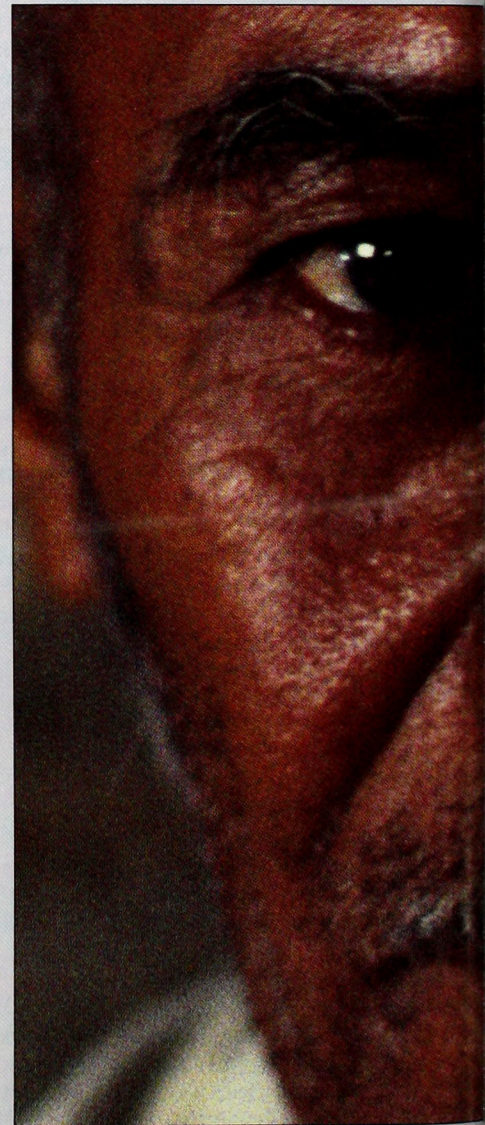
To be willing to die as we fight to live—this is the key. For my father it means accepting his grim prognosis but still fighting for life. For Pedro it means hanging on to life one day to risk death on another.

Fighting to live without being willing to die only makes us deny the facts. We hang on to life, protect it at all costs, and so destroy its meaning. Yet if we are willing to die but don't fight to live, we resign ourselves fatalistically, and so lose our lives long before we die.

Pedro said, "For those who trust in God, no ground is barren." If he is right, then even suffering is not barren ground. God transforms suffering into perseverance, character, and hope. Something that good cannot come out of anything as evil as suffering—not unless God is alive, transforming destruction into vitality.

Pedro is not angry at God for his suffering. "God doesn't cause suffering," he said. "God didn't cause this

For those who trust in God, no ground is barren.



war. Our suffering is because not everyone realizes that we're all equal before God. The big ones walk all over the little ones."

Pedro recognizes that God created the world as an interconnected network. What one person does affects another. We do reap what we sow, but we also reap what the people around us sow. Four of Pedro's children died, not because God was punishing him or because it was God's will, but because some people have more than their share, leaving Pedro too little to provide for his children.

But living in an interconnected world does not just mean suffering for our own and other people's sins. It also means enabling one another. When my mother was ill, our church fasted and prayed with me over the decision to return to Bolivia. Other family members and the church enabled me to leave by assuming responsibility for her on my behalf.

My father now enables me to con-

tinue working in El Salvador because he is willing to let go of me and allow God to meet his needs through others. And those others, in turn, enable him to let me go because he knows they will stand by him. As I return to El Salvador, I leave a piece of myself behind and take a piece of my father and his supportive community with me.

Thomas Merton once wrote, "As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering from our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones." Christ's body is broken in violence, hate, individualism, and inequality; but the bones are being reset. When those in the body of Christ enable each other, life has the last word. Hope springs from suffering. Life sprouts from dead seeds. And death ends in victory, not defeat. □

Susan Classen has worked as a nurse in El Salvador with Mennonite Central Committee since 1984.

Life Has the Last Word

BY SUSAN CLASSEN

ED VAUGHAN / WORLD VISION

In 1988, motivated by the dream of a better life for his family, Arumugam left his native Madras, India, for a laborer's job in Kuwait. Today the dream is gone.

Orphaned as a boy, Arumugam, 29, worked most of his life selling vegetables in his uncle's small shop. He never attended school and struggled constantly to provide food for his family. But in his new job in Kuwait, loading cargo in the seaport town of Saiba, he was earning \$135 per month—more than double his wages in India—and had cut his old 16-hour workdays in half. He was even able to send \$55 a

month to his family back home. "We had comfort and time for rest in Kuwait," he says.

But that time for rest was destroyed on Aug. 2, 1990, when Iraqi tanks rolled into Kuwait City. While the West focused on military strategies

and hostages, a human wave of foreign workers like Arumugam fled into the hot, scorpion-infested Saudi desert. At the peak of the migration, 15,000 to 20,000 refugees a day poured into three makeshift camps near the Iraqi border in Jordan.



Arumugam

*Millions
of Third
World
workers left
everything
to find
something
in Kuwait.*

*Now
they're...*

"The Western press never quite realized the human dimension of this problem until 1 million people were at the border," says Ray Gorre, an information officer for the Philippine Embassy in Los Angeles. "Everybody knew that more than half the work force in Kuwait came mainly from poor countries, but there was very little concern for them." Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, whose country put up \$50 million to help feed and house the refugees, complained, "The plight of these people has only evoked the faintest response from the world community."

For six weeks, Arumugam lived in the refugee camps, bathed in the Tigris River, and ate only bread, rice, and pickles. He finally returned to India, but his family must again survive on the meager wages he makes in his uncle's vegetable shop.

Today most of Kuwait's imported laborers who were uprooted from their jobs as cooks, maids, and construction workers have returned home. They have been reabsorbed

**GOING
HOME
TO NOTHING**



into their homelands' flagging economies, which struggle even more without the billions of dollars of foreign revenue that was being reinvested by expatriate workers.

The practice of poor people working in foreign countries dates back to well before the Israelites built pyramids in Egypt. Whole societies were built on the backs of imported labor. But the phenomenon has not been as entrenched—nor the outcome as

The immigrants
came from
places where
extreme
poverty
is endemic
and
widespread.

cruel—as in the Persian Gulf over the past 30 years.

So-called guest workers began traveling to the Gulf in the 1950s, but the boom of foreign labor really started after oil prices skyrocketed in the mid-1970s. The rich Gulf states, unprepared and unwilling to develop their own sources of labor in the wake of the oil boom, welcomed labor from poor nations. Developing countries, in turn, were relieved of some of the pressure to provide jobs, housing, and food subsidies for their burgeoning populations. Before the Iraqi invasion, three of every four workers in Kuwait were foreigners, a half a million of them Asian.

Riad Ajami, director of the International Business Strategy Program at Ohio State University and an expert on the Middle East, says that natives of the Persian Gulf area “believe in living off the work of others. They import Yemenis to make their tea and Westerners to run their sophisticated technology. There is an aversion toward work that is probably natural for all societies that receive such windfall profits in such a short time.”

“Immigrants come from places where extreme poverty is endemic and widespread,” says John Key, World Vision International’s regional director for South Asia. “If a family member can find work abroad, he or she jumps at the idea. Anything would be better than what they’re getting at home,” he says.

Each day in the Philippines, more than 1,000 skilled and unskilled workers go abroad to the United States, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, and other countries to find work. Annually, these expatriate workers send back \$3 billion, which helps fuel the Philippine economy. At least 700,000 Filipinos were working in the Middle East before the invasion.

In the past five years, 12 million Indian immigrants helped save their country from serious financial difficulties by infusing \$10 billion into the Indian economy from their jobs abroad.

While there are many benefits when people from Third World countries find work abroad, there are also sad legacies. When the best educated and most highly motivated people leave, the society that remains is poorer in every sense.

“One of the tragedies in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka,” says Key, “is that those who have money or brains, or both, want to leave, either to get an education elsewhere or because they see no future in their own countries. And their countries desperately need them to stay and work there.”

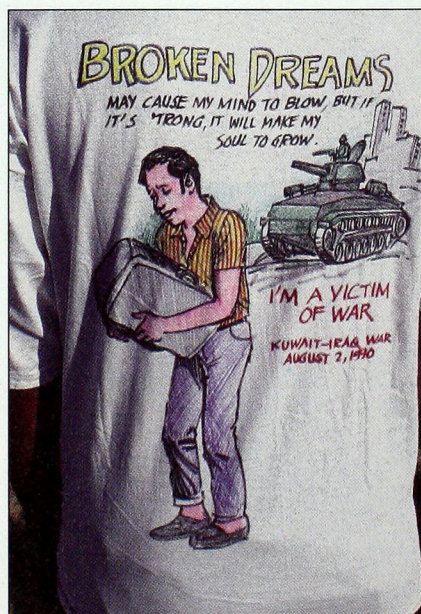
In Madras, John Somaiah had a government job and earned \$33 a month. But in Kuwait, the 43-year-old white-collar worker lived comfortably on the \$3,300 he made as an assistant in the Kuwait Investment Co. Unlike many

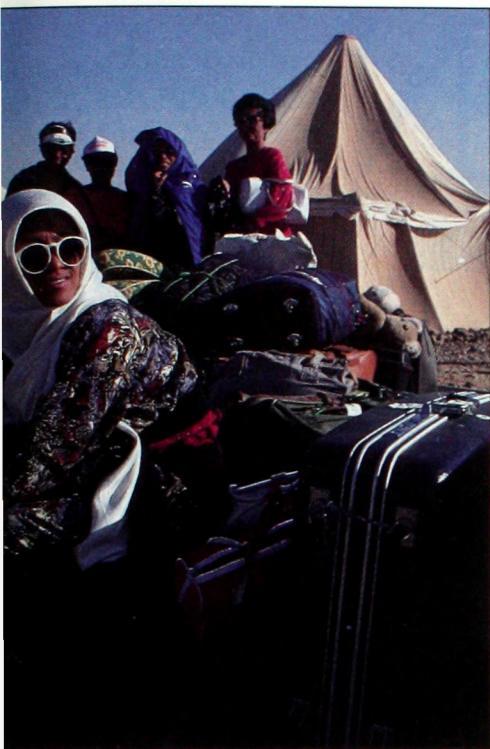
foreign workers who are forced to leave their families when they work abroad, Somaiah was able to take his wife and children to Kuwait.

After the fall of Kuwait, however, Somaiah and his family ended up in the Sha’alaan refugee camp. “Men and women fought like animals over the scraps of food and water that trickled in from relief agencies,” he recalls. “Babies went without milk, there were no sanitation facilities, and the refugees survived on unleavened bread, tomatoes, and cucumbers.”

Along with the brain drain from the Third World come other social problems, especially among families. One in three migrant-worker families split up, and their children are more likely to abuse drugs.

Retired Philippine Army General Jose T. Almonte’s six nieces work abroad as housekeepers. In a *Los Angeles Times* interview, Almonte said, “There is a feeling of shame on our part. A feeling we’ve failed our children,





we've squandered their future, so they must leave to better their lives. And that's a tragedy."

Another sad outcome is the abuse and oppression many workers experience in their new country. During the first six months of 1990, 800 cheated, stranded, and destitute Filipinos returned to Manila from jobs abroad. Some women had been victimized by their employers and told of being forced into prostitution.

When oil prices declined in the late 1980s, some foreign workers simply were not paid. Most didn't complain about their employers, since those who did protest were often quickly shipped back home, Ajami says.

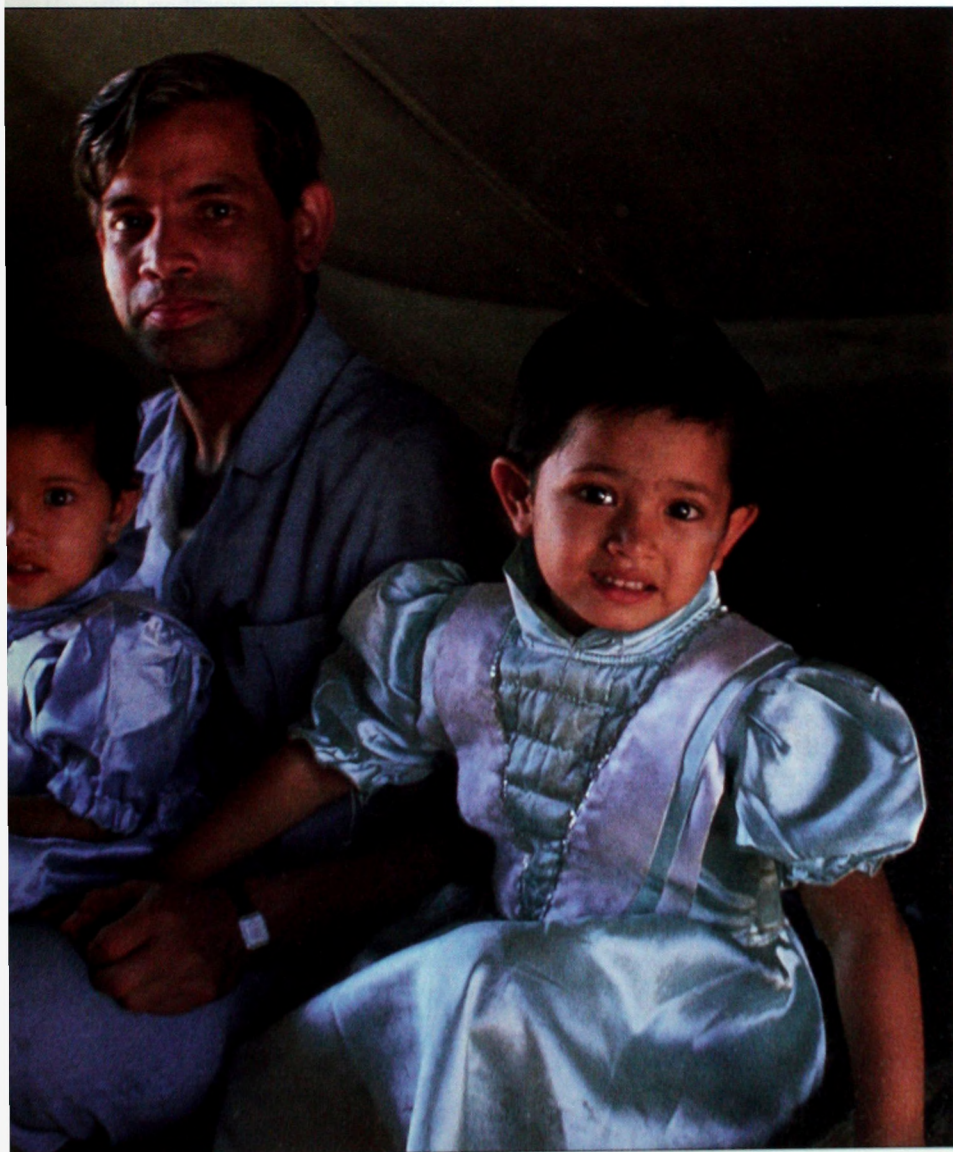
Joseph Corraya, a 32-year-old Bangladeshi with a family of four in Dhaka City, gave most of his life's savings to a recruiter who found him a job in Kuwait in 1983. With little education and few job prospects, he knew that going to the Persian Gulf was his only chance to support his family. But three

months before the invasion, his salary as a hospital janitor was abruptly halted. His wife and two daughters stopped getting their monthly support and lost their small house.

Even for those not abused or cheated, life as an expatriate in the Gulf is hard. Far from their families, most workers save their money for brief, annual visits home. In Kuwait and Iraq, foreigners live in enclaves and suffer discrimination.

Unlike the United States, Persian Gulf countries do not allow foreigners to gain resident status and eventually become citizens. According to Ajami, "The sad truth is that someone who devotes his professional life—20 or more years—to working in one of these countries can be told to leave at a moment's notice, with no rights whatsoever."

Ajami says the practice of treating migrant workers as permanent outsiders has cost Kuwait. "If they had let those workers become stakeholders in



THIRD WORLD NATIONALS

Third World nationals working in Iraq and Kuwait before August 1990:

<i>Egyptians</i>	<i>1,800,000</i>
<i>Palestinians</i>	<i>500,000</i>
<i>Jordanians</i>	<i>400,000</i>
<i>Lebanese</i>	<i>200,000</i>
<i>Indians</i>	<i>200,000</i>
<i>Sri Lankans</i>	<i>120,000</i>
<i>Bangladeshis</i>	<i>90,000</i>
<i>Filipinos</i>	<i>60,000</i>

Compiled by Riad Ajami, director, International Business Strategy Program, Ohio State University.

the society," he says, "they would have been the ones who would have stayed and fought the Iraqis."

But they didn't stay. They had no reason to stay and fight, nothing to stay and fight for. And though most escaped with their lives and returned to their native homes, they had nothing to show for their years of loneliness and labor but memories of war.

Forty-year-old Rose, of the Philippines, is one of those who still wakes up in the pre-dawn hours filled with thoughts of the Iraqi invasion. "I woke up with war," she says. "I feel there will always be war behind me, like a shadow." □

Karen E. Klein is a free-lance writer in Monrovia, Calif.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Leslie Salisbury and Ginger Hope



WESTMONT COLLEGE

SPRING BREAK-THROUGH

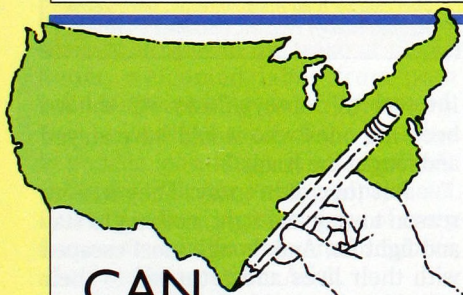
Not all college students hit the slopes or the beach during spring break. This year, 500 students from Westmont College (Santa Barbara, Calif.) will spend the week in one of Mexico's poorest areas.

Through a yearly program called Potter's Clay, the students work with children in Mexican

churches and orphanages, help with construction projects, perform music and drama, and assist a medical and dental team.

"I love seeing Westmont College students exposed to missions and I love the Mexican and American people bonding as brothers and sisters," said Shelly Schar, co-director of Potter's Clay. Contact Potter's Clay at (805) 565-6374.

What worthwhile things are other students doing with their spring break? Write and let us know.



CAN YOU DRAW THE POVERTY LINE?

1. Within \$500, can you name the official U.S. government poverty line for a family of four?

2. How many Americans live below the poverty line?

3. Of the answer to #2, how many work at least part-time?

4. Name three of the six states where 20% or more of the population lives below the poverty line.

5. Compared to other U.S. income brackets, where do poverty-level families rank in charitable giving?

ANSWERS: (1) \$12,675 for a family of four. (2) More than 32 million, or about one in eight. (3) About half. (4) Mississippi (25.6%); West Virginia (22.8%); Arkansas (22.2%); Alabama (21.5%); Louisiana (20.8%); New Mexico (20.7%). (5) Number one, according to a recent Gallup poll. Households with income under \$10,000 donate an average of 5.5% of their income. Middle-income families give the lowest average percentage.

EYE CONTACT

Five hundred-eighty people in Ghana, Africa, who were blind last year can now see, thanks to the Christian Eye Ministry, a California-based organization that provides eye surgery and glasses.

Of Ghana's 160,000 blind people, 120,000 could regain their vision with a simple operation, says Bob Ainsworth of the Christian Eye Ministry.

The organization recycles used eyeglasses and sells them at minimal cost. Churches can help by exhibiting counter displays containing postage-free envelopes that safely ship used eyeglasses. The small profit from selling the glasses supports eye clinics where "people come in one day and can't see, then have surgery, go home, and the next day they can see," says Ainsworth.

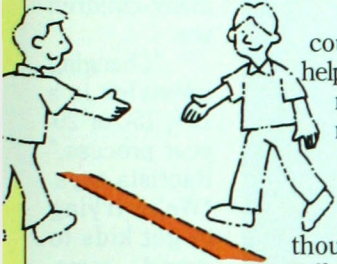
To exhibit a counter display or learn about volunteer opportunities, contact Bob Ainsworth, Christian Eye Ministry, P.O. Box 3721, San Dimas, CA 91773; (714) 599-8955 or (800) 255-EYES.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

BORDER CROSSING

Learn to teach your church to reach out to its neighbors. Crossing Borders is a four-session course that helps church members move out into the world, whether thousands of mile away or



just across the street.

The first step is a training workshop to equip church leaders to teach the course in their own churches. Locations of upcoming workshops: Fairfax, Va., February 22-24; Portland, Ore., April 19-21.

For more information contact Jan Thornton at World Vision, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-1111, extension 3493.

THIEF IN THE HOUSE

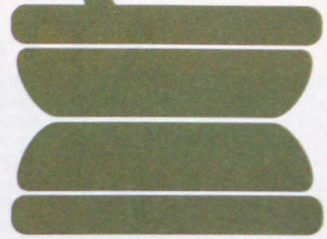
“Their property held them in chains...which shackled their courage and choked their faith and hampered their judgment and throttled their souls...If they stored up their treasure in heaven, they would not now have an enemy and a thief within their household...enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masters of their money, but its slaves.

*Cyprian,
3rd-century bishop*



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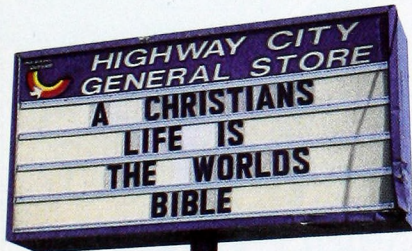
The church
being the church
among the poor

A HELPING HAND IN HIGHWAY CITY

BY BRENDA SPOELSTRA

Northwest Baptist Church

*Editorial Note:
Highway City
Ministries and
Northwest Baptist
Church have been
awarded the 1991
Mustard Seed
Award as the top
program in the
United States for
innovative work
with a community
of need.*



*For more
information
contact Highway
City Ministries,
P.O. Box 459,
Angeles Camp, CA
95221*

Highway City sees plenty of traffic. Yet most travelers barely notice this community of tiny houses and dirt yards along Highway 99, the main route into Fresno, Calif.

Cynder Baptista had passed it hundreds of times herself, but one day she took the off-ramp, parked her car, and started knocking on doors.

Baptista had just received Christ, and when she read the Bible, it struck her how much time Jesus spent with the poor. She felt she should follow suit, and Highway City seemed like a good place to start.

She soon learned that a church just two miles up the road wanted to more effectively serve the poor. Baptista helped Northwest Baptist Church start Highway City Ministries.

Highway City's population is predominantly black and Hispanic. Many of the Hispanic people speak little English. Some of the men are farm workers; many of the women are single mothers.

"They live in such difficulty, financially and in all kinds of other ways," Baptista says. "I wanted to let them know how special they are to God. Looking at the conditions they lived in, I was sure they didn't feel that."

The first step was a thrift store in an upstairs room of an office building, because Baptista believed the most pressing need in Highway City was for decent clothing and furniture. At first the store just gave the goods away. Baptista soon realized, however, that the people could keep their dignity only if they gave something in return.

One man came into the store because he needed something to wear for a job interview. He offered to work in exchange for a suit and shoes. Several weeks later, thrift store director Yvonne Koop received a letter from the man thanking her for the help in landing a job. He enclosed \$25.

The thrift store, now in its own building, supplies most of the funds for Highway City Ministries. So church members give their time, not their money, to their needy neighbors. More than 160 volunteers work as clerks, delivery people, tutors, and youth leaders. A few accompany Pastor Carlos Delgado on home visits in Highway City.

Maria, a thrift store customer and a member of the ministry's Bible study group, lives in a mud-alley shack with her four children. Her alcoholic husband left 8 years ago, and recently her 20-year-old son was arrested for drunk driving. The family's only car was impounded.

With support from her friends at the store, Maria found a restaurant job to provide for her family. Her children are in the Highway City Ministries youth programs, and her 20-year-old now attends a Bible study.

As Maria's story illustrates, children in poor communities often lack good role models. They see adults using drugs, alcohol, and infidelity as ways to escape. Short-term jobs are the only kind of employment many children see.

"Changing lifestyles is a 10-, 15-, or 20-year process," Baptista says. "We're trying to get kids to expect something more than what they've seen."

What they find at Highway City Ministries is someone who cares if they get



BRENDA SPOELSTRA / WORLD VISION

an A on a spelling test, someone who is out there cheering for them. "When you put a lot of those little successes together," Baptista says, "you have a child who is going to do something with his life, as opposed to a child who thinks he's a big nothing."

Highway City Ministries is there to change Highway City. But Baptista has watched it change the lives of volunteers, too. When people are asked to reach out to the poor, they often feel threatened at first, she explains. "They wonder, *Does this mean I have to give up my lifestyle? Does this mean I have to dedicate my life to the poor?*"

One church volunteer did not feel any particular empathy for Mexicans or the poor. But after working in the thrift store for just an hour a week, she became so involved with the people who came into the store that eventually she was spending two full days a week there.

"That's not just one woman's story," Baptista says. "It happens all the time."

"The poor aren't the ones that most people would volunteer to be around. So how will the poor find out about God's great love if we, who understand it, don't put ourselves right next to them—and not only tell them, but show them?" □

Brenda Spoelstra is a World Vision staff writer.

The eyes of children growing up in poverty have an unmistakably adult gaze. They carry the weight of adulthood. Between rare moments of

play and laughter, this weight numbs their expressions.

More and more poor children are fighting and dying as soldiers, dying from easily preventable diseases, and growing up without parents on city streets.

Last September, heads of state from around the world met at the United Nations World Summit for Children to discuss the problems facing

children today. They identified six areas in which children worldwide are victimized: armed conflict, substance abuse, child labor, and lack of family, health, and education. For decades, organizations like World Vision and UNICEF have addressed those areas. But the summit marked the first time that the world leaders recognized these problems and the urgency of resolving them.

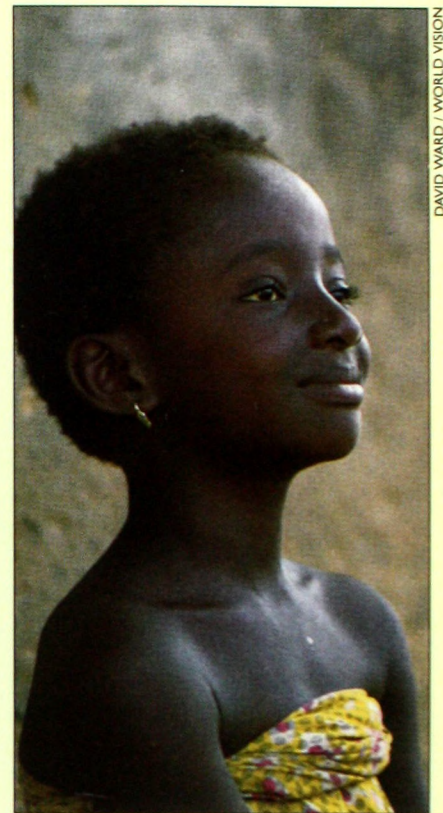
- Children have always been victims of war, but in the past decade an increasing number of children, some as young as 8, have been used to fight as soldiers in many conflicts.

- Drugs and alcohol are affecting children in rural and suburban areas, as well as the world's cities. Crack is the leading cause of illness among infants, children, and adolescents living in U. S. cities, according to New York City Health Commissioner Steve Joseph.

- Millions of children are deprived of an education because they must work to help support their families. They are often exploited and forced to work in hazardous conditions for low wages. In some countries, children are preferred as workers over unskilled adults because adults are harder to intimidate and might demand better conditions.

- As many as 100 million children may be living on urban streets around the world. Most of these children have no family. Some have been abandoned, others run away from home because they are mistreated or ignored.

- Six preventable diseases, including measles, whooping cough,



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

diphtheria, tuberculosis, polio, and tetanus, are responsible for the deaths of millions of children every year. Many more die from dehydration (easily prevented with sugar and water).

- In some countries, only a fraction of the children receive even a few years of education. Girls and disabled children are even less likely to receive an education, crippling their chances to grow into self-sufficient adults.

"Suffer the little children," Jesus said to his disciples. Yet for almost 2,000 years, "let the children suffer" more accurately describes the plight of the world's children. In September, however, 23 leaders at the World Summit for Children ratified a set of worldwide standards for child care that will break new ground in the struggle to protect and defend the rights of children. □

Jeff Sellers is a World Vision journalist.

Suffer the Children or Let the Children Suffer?

Children in Uganda whose parents have died of AIDS



Kids Without Parents

Some experts say that as many as 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Child psychologist Robert Coles once warned that "children who go unheeded are going to turn on the world that neglected them." It's a frightening warning. Some experts say that as many 100 million children throughout the world are living without their families.

Some children have been left to survive as best they can after their parents are killed or die of disease. Others run away from sexual and physical abuse, living their lives on the mean streets of the world's cities. In Mexico City alone, 12 million children are living or working on the streets. But no less tragic are the 40,000 Romanian "orphans," abandoned by their parents because of disease or because there were too many other mouths to feed.

Whatever the reason, one thing is certain. They are children who can't go home again. □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

Orphan in Romania

Ising for money. Sometimes I make enough to rent a room, sometimes I don't. I don't like sleeping on the streets. There are dangerous people there. But I have to be somewhere.

Sida, age 8, Mexico City



Street child in Bolivia

WORLD VISION

Orphanage in Thailand



SANDRO TUCCI / BLACK STAR

I have no family, nothing. I need to find a job. But everyone is looking. What chance do I have?
Puma, age 18, Bangladesh

Why am I on the streets? Because I'm garbage. And garbage belongs on the streets.
Joanne, age 14, United States

READERS' RIGHT



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"Every child should be touched, loved... and should wake up each morning with the hope that his or her dreams can come true. That's why I love World Vision! Sponsorship gives people like you and me the chance to give dignity—and a future—to needy children."

—Larnelle Harris

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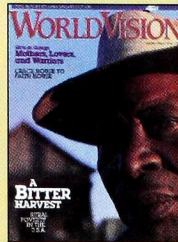
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Dear Editor:

In reading your article (the Rural Poor, Oct/Nov issue), I noticed the picture of two men sitting on a porch and a dog lying on the ground. The ground was littered, as was the porch.



One fights poverty by working. So many times when I have driven in the "poor" sections of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, in the brightness of day men and women were "sitting." The other day I read a bumper sticker which said, "I'm fighting poverty. I'm working."

You mention how many U.S. companies are leaving the U.S. to obtain cheaper labor in other countries. The rubber industry in Akron, Ohio, is nonexistent because the head of the Rubber Worker's Union kept demanding higher wages and less work. Why do you think U.S. car makers went downhill? Union "leaders" wanted the union members to get more money to justify those "leaders' jobs."

Economics is no mystery. It takes capital, labor, and raw materials to make wealth. How would you ensure everyone a "fair living standard"? Give them a living? Where would you get the wherewithal?

I herewith give you a quote from Gustave Le Bon: "Socialism, whose dream is to substitute itself for the ancient faiths, proposes only a very low ideal, and to establish it appeals to sentiments lower still . . . With what lever does it seek to raise the soul? With the sentiments of envy and hatred which it creates in the hearts of the multitudes. To the crowd, no longer satisfied with political and civic equality, it proposes equality of condition, without dreaming that social inequalities are born of those natural inequalities that man has always been powerless to change."

I believe it was St. Paul or St. Peter who said, "If a man will not

work, neither shall he eat." I grant you there are many situations which we think are not "fair" to individuals, but who says life must be fair? A man of Solomon's wisdom can't settle that question.

Clyde A. Sluhan,
Chairman and CEO
Master Chemical Corporation
Perrysburg, Ohio

Dear Mr. Sluhan,

Certainly no one wants to pay someone for nothing, nor should one have to. And although World Vision is an advocate for the poor, we certainly have no intention of substituting socialism for the "ancient faiths," especially since Christian evangelism has always been a basic and integral part of our ministry throughout the world.

However, poverty in the Mississippi Delta is a complex issue. It cannot be explained away as simply laziness or union greed. A lack of education—considered unnecessary for the cotton-pickers of years past—is a prime reason children and adults get nowhere fast. Schools are underfunded and overcrowded. Those children who manage to get a decent education move out of the Delta. A shortage of education and job skills quickly translates to a lack of finances for such staples as medicine and nourishing food. As a matter of fact, the incidence of birth defects and mental retardation in the Delta is the highest in the nation, creating even more problems.

Even so, dependence on welfare is not the answer. That is why groups like Habitat for Humanity work under a principle known as "sweat equity," where people are expected to help build their own houses and then pay their own mortgages.

Many times those former recipients turn around and help some other needy family. This isn't a handout; it's lending a helping hand, and creating more opportunity in a depressed environment.

—Editors

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

BY DONNA SANDERS

Returning missionaries often recount how much they learned from the people they went to help. In the safety of our own homes, those lessons are harder to learn.

I was "in the ministry" and accustomed to giving. People brought their troubles to me, and I listened and prayed for their needs. I doled out smiles and hugs and scriptures for every occasion, and if someone had asked me, I would have replied that I did not have a problem with pride.

That was before the angelic visitation, as I have come to think of it.

The Christmas holidays announced their approach with a surprise greeting card from Martin, a childhood friend. He and his companion, Amy, were en route from New York to San Francisco and wanted to stop in Los Angeles to visit us. My husband and I replied that we would love to have them, and we began to pray for opportunities to share our most precious gift, the reality of the Christ child, with our unbelieving guests.

Martin looked much the same as he had ten years earlier, when I had last seen him. He was warm, open, and vivacious. Amy, whom I had never met, was a thin, quiet woman, in her mid-twenties, with large, incredulous brown eyes. She told stories to children in the park, they said. I remember thinking she didn't seem the type.

They stayed with us for only two days, and the opportunity we had prayed for kept eluding us. We were busy with church activities, which we always invited Martin and Amy to attend, but which they always declined. We both felt that Martin was receptive to hearing about Jesus, but that Amy was too guarded.

Finally, the night before their departure, after Amy had fallen asleep, we talked to Martin about Jesus' sacrifice, and how simple it was to receive his life-changing love. Martin wasn't ready to pray with us that night but had more than enough infor-

mation on how to do it in his, and God's, own time.

The next morning, just before Martin and Amy ducked into their pug-nosed VW bug, my husband and I gave each of them a small, inexpensive Christmas gift. Our gift to Martin was Bob Dylan's new album, "Slow Train Comin'"; our gift to Amy a pale, perfectly shaped sand dollar. Martin apologized for not having anything to give us in return. But Amy, doe eyes glistening, opened a volume of Hans Christian Andersen stories. She said this was her gift to us, and began to read.

It was the colorful tale of an argument between a quill pen and an inkwell over which of them was more important. In the end, a hand dipped the pen into the inkwell and, in concert with a clean sheet of paper, created a marvelous story. My eyes were moist by the end of the story, stirred by Amy's animated interpretation and by the nature of this gift—completely without material value, wonderful in its simplicity, lasting in its effect.

Sometime later I realized the full impact of that unexpected gift. I was reading John 13, where Jesus explains to an indignant Peter why it is necessary that he wash Peter's feet. When Peter exclaimed, "Never shall you wash my feet!" he must have believed that his refusal was the right attitude of a true servant of Christ.

I suddenly saw myself in Peter. There is a peculiar kind of pride that sometimes masquerades as humility. It is the subtle deception that I, as a believer, have it all over the rest of the world. My rightful place is that of a servant, and it is I who have something to offer them, not they who can give anything to me. But God used an unbeliever to teach me the same truth he taught Peter. The heart of the servant, the childlike spirit our Lord covets for all of us, is one that is open to receive from a point of weakness as well as give from a point of strength.

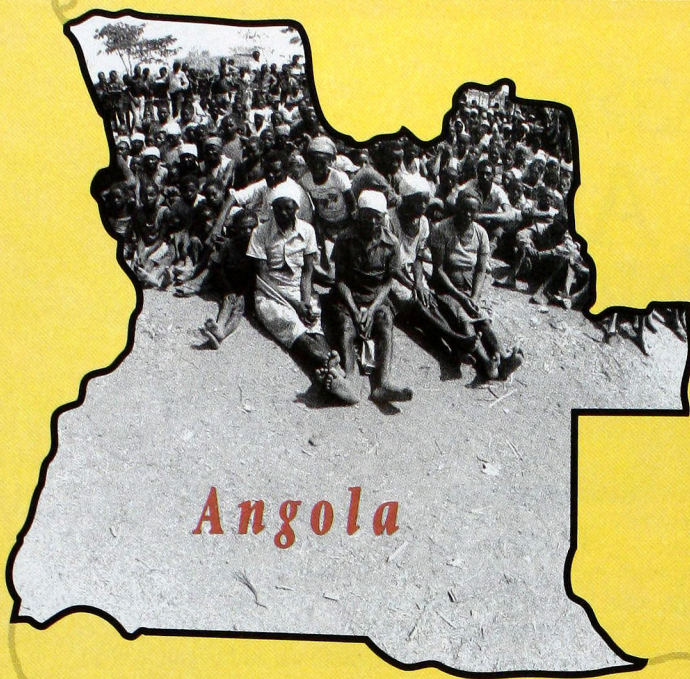
The Bible says that in giving to the poor and imprisoned, some have entertained angels unawares. Since my special visitation, I look at what others, including those to whom I "minister," can teach *me*, keeping in mind that God is the hand that creates and that we are simply the tools. I am convinced that angels sometimes extend God's love, or some glimmer of truth, through unlikely-looking vessels—people with failings. People just like me. □

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

There is a peculiar brand of pride that masquerades as humility.

KEVIN CONRAN





A critical situation is unfolding in the southwestern African nation of Angola. Huge areas are on the brink of starvation due to a severe three-year drought and long civil war.

Jacob Akol, a World Vision journalist instrumental in exposing the 1984-1985 Ethiopian famine to the world, reports that the potential disaster in Angola is on the scale of Ethiopia's famine. Hundreds of thousands of people could starve to death in the next months unless food is rushed to them. Disease is spreading rapidly. People are desperate for food, clean water, shelter, and medicine.

The U.S. government and others have promised \$10.3 million in food and other assistance, but World Vision urgently needs \$2.4 million to rush this aid to the hardest-hit areas of Angola. *South Africa*

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