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WORLD VISION®

CHURCH OUTREACH ISSUE

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The Church:
**STEPPING
OUT**
*into the
Community*

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS ARE NOTHING NEW *in the business world; think of Microsoft and NBC, CNN and Sports Illustrated. But only recently have we seen an upswing in dynamic church alliances that reach across boundaries and barriers. The Information Age brings sharper focus to overwhelming local and international needs, and*

The Church: STEPPING OUT into the Community

Christians learn more than ever about the work of private organizations, local service groups, and even other denominations. With innovative pastors, ministers, and priests leading the way, church members once content to simply give money now want to give themselves.

The following three examples of very different congregations involved in collaborative ministry show how effective the Body of Christ can be when people pool their talents to build partnerships with others in service and relationships with those in need. As the Holy Scripture says, "a cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart"—these webs of collaborative ministry unite Christians in an increasingly divided world.

—BRIAN SELLERS-PETERSEN, *World Vision's Associate Director for Church Partnerships*

NURTURING THE SPIRIT TO SERVE

BY KAREN BEATTIE
PHOTOS BY WILLIAM FAVATA

INTERVIEW

TWO CENTURIES AGO,
JESUS CHRIST TURNED
HIS WORLD AND ITS SOCIAL
STRUCTURE UPSIDE DOWN.

SUDDENLY THE LAST BECAME FIRST,
THE FOOLISH BECAME WISE, AND THE
POOR WERE MADE RICH. THAT'S WHAT
PASTOR BILL HYBELS AND BELIEVERS
AT WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY
CHURCH, LOCATED IN THE AFFLUENT
CHICAGO SUBURB OF BARRINGTON,
DISCOVERED WHEN THEY VENTURED
INTO INNER-CITY CHICAGO AND
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO MINISTER
TO THE POOR. THEY RETURNED TO
BARRINGTON UNDERSTANDING THAT
THEY'RE NOT AS WEALTHY AS THEY
THOUGHT. THE POOR HAD RICHES
THAT SUBURBAN PEOPLE KNEW
LITTLE ABOUT. *(continued on next page)*



In 1994 the church developed a partnership with Vision Chicago (World Vision's urban ministry with MidAmerica Leadership Foundation), which introduced them to inner-city needs. Today the church has 38 ministries to Chicago's poor, with a goal to involve 8,000 people a year in ministries to the inner city and neighboring countries, including the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico.

Throughout Willow Creek's 22-year history, Hybels has shaped the vision

for the church, which now draws 16,500 people to weekend services. He recently talked to World Vision about the church's responsibility to help the poor, how they responded, and the riches they discovered in poverty-stricken communities. Hybels, 45, has written several books, including *Honest to God?*, *Too Busy Not to Pray*, *Descending into Greatness*, and *Fit to be Tied*, which he co-wrote with his wife, Lynne. The Hybels live in Barrington, Ill., with their two college-age children.

AFTER STARTING WILLOW CREEK CHURCH, WHEN DID YOU KNOW IT WAS TIME TO START REACHING INTO INNER-CITY CHICAGO AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES?

We started the church in 1975 with just a few couples, and no money or facilities. We felt we had to stay very focused on the development of the core of Willow Creek so we had a basic launching pad, or headquarters, for all the ministries that would flow out of the church someday. It was about at the 10-year mark that we felt we had a strong enough base that we could then peek over the walls of Willow Creek and start to ask God, "Okay,

Bill Donahue (left) and Alvin Bibbs (right), both on staff with Willow Creek, visit with Nathan Lam (middle), the Director of English as a Second Language at the Pui Tak Center. Part of the Chinese Christian Union Church, the Pui Tak Center is a ministry partner of Willow Creek.



Pui Tak Center 培德中心
A Christian witness to Chinese in Chicago
對芝加哥華人活出基督徒的見証

“THE GOSPEL IS MORE THAN JUST A VERBAL MESSAGE.”

with a stable, growing congregation, what is the next step for us to take with regard to the world outside?”

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE POOR?

It's pretty obvious from the teachings of Jesus that when Christians are given the mandate to spread the gospel it's more than just a verbal message. It's extending the kingdom of God holistically. So part of the church's role is to proclaim the message of salvation, and part of the church's role is to tend to people's needs, whether those needs are relational, emotional, psychological, physical, or financial.

We've tried for the past 10 years or so to wrestle with what that means for Willow Creek Community Church. We have a housing ministry for the suburban poor, a food pantry, a counseling center, a benevolence ministry, and a ministry that repairs cars for single moms and the poor. Last year the more affluent people at Willow Creek donated 600 cars to those who are struggling with transportation. So we're really committed in our suburban area to try to be Christ to our community.

But then we had to figure out what that meant with regard to our responsibility to the inner city and around the world. After many years of dialogue and experimentation with certain partnerships in ministry in the inner city, we linked arms with World Vision. They provided overall direction and leadership to building coalitions of ministries into which Willow Creek could pour its volunteer forces. World Vision, through Vision Chicago, had expertise in urban ministry which we didn't have. But what Willow Creek had was financial resources and volunteer forces.

We're always trying to provide resources and personnel in the hope that the inner-city ministries we help will eventually move toward being self-sustaining. We're very nervous about creating unhealthy dependencies. Vision Chicago showed us—and continually shows us—that if we provide resources and volunteers, we can help ministries catch their own stride and move to a point where they can sustain themselves. Then we can move to other projects.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF POVERTY?

When most people think of that word, they think of financial poverty, or poverty of opportunity that keeps people

entrenched in a dead-end system. Willow Creek exists in an economic zone where that word is rarely used. However, we see spiritual poverty, relational poverty, emotional poverty, marital poverty. We see people who have everything materially but have a vacuum inside their soul. Jesus said, “What does it matter if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?” It's a bad deal. So we try work on the spiritual poverty of the people around Willow Creek, lead them to Christ, disciple them, and then we challenge them to leverage their knowledge, talents, and resources for the sake of those who have less materially.

HOW DID YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POOR DEVELOP?

My father was a successful and eccentric businessman who sent me all over the world because he felt I needed to see the world and become independent. One of the trips he sent me on was throughout Africa, by myself, when I was 16. I landed in Nairobi, Kenya. I took a cab to the hotel and then walked downtown to check out the sights, thinking it was going to be like downtown Kalamazoo, Mich. Instead, I saw stunning, heart-wrenching poverty—people with bloated bellies, discolored hair, and leprosy.

It was a shattering experience. Until that point in my life my main concern was how fast I could get through college so I could take over our family business and make money and buy a bigger boat and fly a faster airplane. I'll never forget going back to my room, getting on my knees before God and saying, “This changes everything. In some way, something I do in the future has to address people who are living in conditions like these.” Once you really see it for yourself, it's pretty hard to close your eyes and your heart to that kind of poverty ever again.

HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE AFFLUENT SUBURBANITES TO CARE ABOUT THE POOR?

The challenge is to get them to experience it, because once a genuinely committed follower of Christ sees the need in the inner city or neighboring nations, and sees the opportunities for advancing the kingdom, then usually that person becomes motivated.

Sometimes people in suburban

churches get a bad rap. Our people work extremely hard, many of them work 70 or 80 hours a week. They ride the train down to the business district, so they leave at 5:30 in the morning and don't get home until at 6:30 at night. They're faithful spouses, conscientious parents, active church members, they're generous with their resources, they lead small groups, they witness to their neighbors. They're terrific people.

So I have to thoughtfully challenge our believers to integrate caring for the poor into the way their life works because it's extraordinarily easy to induce guilt. But that isn't the motivation that will sustain their involvement over a long time. We want to cast a vision. We want them to experience God using them in these cross-cultural situations, and then have that internal, Holy Spirit-ignited flame warm their spirit for future involvement.

WHAT EFFECT HAS SERVING THE POOR HAD ON YOUR CHURCH?

I have no regrets over the time it took to build a strong enough core upon which to build our extension ministries, because when we did start working beyond the walls of Willow Creek, there was a pent-up desire within the church that made it a life-giving experience. Our people were more than ready to extend their miraculous experience of God to those outside of the church, and they had a spirit of wanting to serve and wanting to give and wanting to invest and roll up their sleeves to help others.

As we started doing projects in the inner city, and in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other countries, it was like pouring gasoline on a fairly robust fire. It has been nothing but positive.

HOW DOES MINISTERING TO THE POOR SPIRITUALLY AFFECT THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN MINISTRY?

We started holding pilot groups with believers in our church and asked, “How did Christ get more fully formed in your life?” We learned that the teaching ministry of this church has a significant impact on the spiritual development of the people. But we also learned that there is nearly an equal impact when someone goes down to the inner city to work for a day alongside the poor. When they see God work in a dif-

ferent environment, when they see him working among the poor and with people of different cultures, something transforming happens in their lives.

Our mission at Willow Creek is to turn irreligious people into fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ. So we reasoned that if a cross-cultural ministry experience among the poor has a transforming effect on our believers, then we want every single believer in our church to have at least one of those kinds of experiences every year.

HOW DO YOU AND THOSE IN YOUR CHURCH KEEP FROM BEING OVERWHELMED BY ALL OF THE NEEDS?

Keeping my own perspective clear is one of the major challenges of my leadership: to realize that Willow Creek is not going to win the war on poverty, it's not going to transform Chicago, it's not going to redeem the world. I have to remind myself that Willow Creek is responsible only for identifying its God-given part in the redemptive and compassion-giving drama that we're about—what God is about. So we're not necessarily responsible for the whole city, for all of our neighboring nations, or the whole world. We're responsible for doing that which God directs and calls us to do. The elders of this church spend a lot of time trying to determine what that is. We also spend a lot of time affirming our people and thanking them and inspiring them to be faithful in doing that part. We try not to lay on their shoulders a burden that's heavier than God intended any congregation to bear.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

Absolutely. And one of the reasons why we set the goals that we set, and try to involve our congregation at a certain rate of participation in helping the poor, is so they can be care-givers over the long haul. We don't want them to dive in and drown in the exhaustion and fatigue of it all in the first six months. We try to establish a rhythm of serving in the inner city or in the neighboring nations that would be sustainable for the average member of this church over a long period of time.

HOW DO YOU AVOID PATERNALISM IN YOUR EXTERNAL MINISTRIES?

We talk about this in our training before anyone goes anywhere. We have

thorough training procedures. If 15 people are going to spend a week in the Dominican Republic, they might have half a dozen training sessions during which our international ministry staff reminds them of the values of servanthood and humility and the values of rolling up their sleeves and helping out and being sensitive to a different culture. Servanthood is a deeply entrenched value in this church. Our congregation would see themselves as servants around Willow Creek as well as in these situations—not as experts, but as servants.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE SOCIAL ACTION AND EVANGELISM?

By keeping both of those discussions on the table in all of our planning meetings concerning our investment of resources and people. Scripture calls us to do both. It calls us to pour cups of water in Jesus' name, and calls us to proclaim the gospel. So when we're considering what projects we're going to get behind and what partnerships we're going to form, our folks make the assessments of our investments and wrestle with the mix of ministries we're involved with. We ask, "Which of them are basic relief and which are more evangelistic?" We keep both discussions on the table and try to integrate them in a community as best we can.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE POOR?

Our people come back from serving in the inner city or neighboring nations and talk about the reality of the faith and the depth of the community that exist in the churches in the poverty-stricken areas where we serve. They talk about the expressiveness of the worship, the dependency on God and inner-dependency on each other, and the humility. Often their own lifestyles are challenged and they wonder if their own faith has been a bit too circumstantially oriented.

Those who serve often find that they received more than they gave, and they learned more than they taught. The recurring lesson is that our affluence is not as big a blessing as we think it is, and is often not worth the price that we pay for it. 🌐

Karen Beattie is a free-lance writer in Chicago.

“WHEN THEY SEE GOD WORKING, SOMETHING TRANSFORMING HAPPENS IN THEIR LIVES.”



INTERVIEW

PASTOR WILLIAM S. EPPS HAS SERVED FOR 10 YEARS AT SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH, A 112-YEAR-OLD AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONGREGATION IN THE MIDST OF A PRIMARILY HISPANIC COMMUNITY OF LOS ANGELES. THE CHURCH HAS PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN TEACHING BLACK HISTORY AND WAS A FREQUENT PULPIT FOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. *(continued on next page)*

WHEREVER THERE'S A NEED

BY JAN JOHNSON
PHOTOS BY
ANACLETO RAPPING

In the summer of 1988, Pastor William Epps excited the Second Baptist Church about the overwhelming need for permanent and affordable housing in the Skid Row area. The church took action and mapped out their first project, a nonprofit corporation named Canaan Housing Corporation, to revitalize Skid Row and South Central Los Angeles communities. At several points, Second Baptist received grants from World Vision.

HOW DO YOU INTEGRATE EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ACTION?

There's no way for me to separate the two. When you become a new creature in Christ, everything about you becomes new. Christians are called out, set apart, and different, which causes them to create an alternative community. The kingdoms of this world are not the kingdoms of our Lord. As Christians, we should be working to transform the dominant culture and not be transformed by it.

HOW DID SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH COME TO CARE ABOUT THE SKID ROW AREA?

In 1988 we formed a special committee representative of the cross-section of the church. We spent time on Skid Row during the day and during the night, looking at the statistics on who these people are and how they came to be in this predicament. Without any resistance, the congregation voted to help.

WAS THERE ANY CRITICISM?

The only criticism was that we ought to help the community in which we're located. That helped us define "community." Community is wherever there is a need. When somebody's need and our opportunity intersect, how can the Christian community say, "Well, we can't go down there and do that because it's not in our community"?

HOW DID YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POOR DEVELOP?

Growing up in the black Baptist

church, we learned the basics of what the Bible teaches: you're thankful to God because all that you have comes as a gift from God, thankful to Jesus because he saved you. We learned that the Lord expects to find expressions of thanks in concrete ways in your life—through behavior, lifestyle, what you do for others. A basic tenet of the Judeo-Christian heritage is that you look after widows, orphans, the poor, and needy. You cannot be a decent Christian if you don't do that.

As a child in a black Baptist church, you were taught that service is the price you pay for the space you occupy. There are no free rides. That means we always took up a second offering for those who are less fortunate. As needy people came off the street, or people in our own congregation were needy, we helped with money from the benevolence fund.

Nowadays we take only one offering, but allocate a certain amount to benevolence. When people in our own congregation are in foreclosure because they've fallen on financial hard times, we may take care of the mortgage for a month. We grew up with that. At Second Baptist, we tithe from what we spend on ourselves in operating expenses. For missions and benevolence, we spend about 20 percent of our budget, but we want to do more.

HOW WAS GIVING TO THE POOR TAUGHT IN YOUR HOME?

We discussed it at our dinner table. During family devotions, we talked about people who were less fortunate. If someone dropped by who was hungry, we fed them. It was normal.

My dad worked as a school principal as well as a minister. He would help anybody. Always. The school he ran was for teenage mothers, mostly white. They looked at my father as a surrogate father. There wasn't anything he wouldn't do to help them. He would tell us that so-and-so was coming by because she needed clothes. Or another girl was put out by her mother, so let's find her a place to stay.

My mom was a school teacher and took a special interest in all her students, especially the ones people had written off. If they needed clothes, she got them clothes. If they needed to know

about hygiene, she taught them personal hygiene. She always carried a big lunch to school every day so she had enough to give away to someone. This is what we were taught.

HOW DOES YOUR AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE DISTINCTLY INFLUENCE YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POOR?

Perhaps this emphasis is more pronounced in our African-American faith tradition than others because the only thing we had was each other. During slavery and segregation, we bonded together. We didn't see less fortunate people as threatening to us, but as victims. You didn't blame them for being poor, you helped them.



“YOU DIDN'T BLAME THEM FOR BEING” POOR, YOU HELPED THEM.

If there was someone in need in the average black Baptist church, we wanted to give everyone an opportunity to help this person. That person was brought up front and we took up a special offering right there on the spot. That was normal.

Dad would say things like, “God, first; others, second; self, last.” That’s an unwritten hierarchy in the psyches of most people who were reared in a black Baptist church. You grew up knowing you had to be unselfish and help other people, particularly the poor.

HOW CAN THE CHURCH AVOID A PATRONIZING ATTITUDE IN ITS MINISTRIES?

You have to give people an opportunity to tell you their needs and how you can help them—as opposed to coming up with a pre-fab program. Then you let them work in the program.

At Project Open Door, everyone is a volunteer from Skid Row except the director, William Campbell. Together they work to make it a safe haven for people to come in off the street and get resources that can improve their quality

of life. The participants plan what happens and help in writing the grant proposals. You engage them in helping to put together their program.

You can’t make people do anything. You can provide the opportunity, but your role is not to clone them into your image. Your role is to provide what they need commensurate with your capacity.

HOW HAS SECOND BAPTIST RESPONDED TO THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH-CENTRAL LOS ANGELES (MUCH OF IT HISPANIC AND PACIFIC ISLANDER)?

This used to be an all-black community, but now it’s a transitional Hispanic community, of which 70 percent to 80 percent of the land is owned by absentee landlords. Besides the garden apartments, senior citizens apartments, shelter program, and Christian education program, we also have our adopt-a-block program. [This focuses on repairing homes, improving city services, and stimulating commercial and retail business.] We’re crafting a vision for the community to make it a stable multi-ethnic residential community. World Vision has helped us craft that vision and get certain projects off the ground. We’re buying property as it becomes available and assisting people with loan programs.

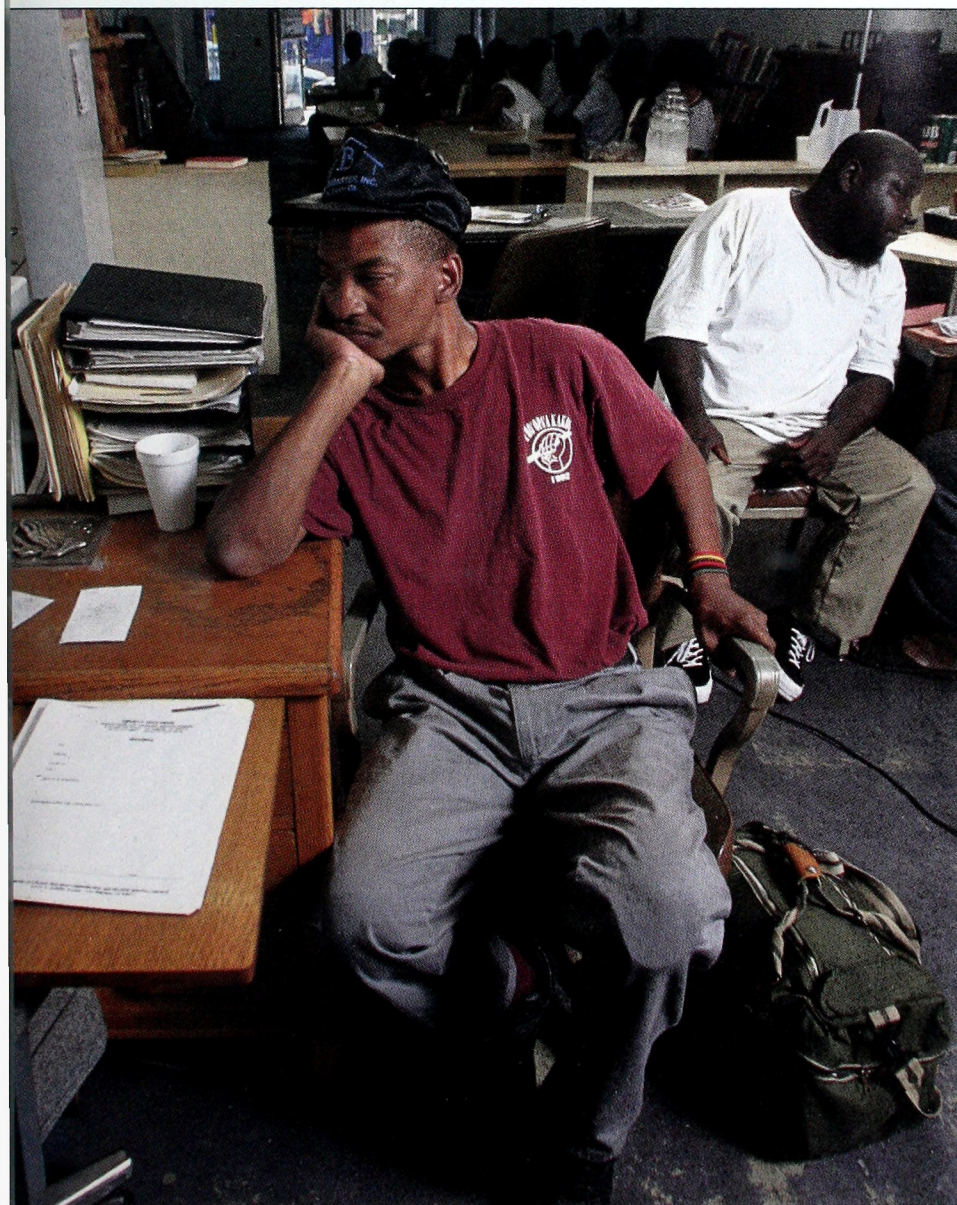
WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO “COMPASSION FATIGUE”—THAT WE GIVE AND GIVE, BUT NOTHING SEEMS TO CHANGE MUCH?

As Christians, we’re mandated by Christ to help. The criteria by which we are going to be judged is spelled out in Jesus’ words: Did you feed me when I was hungry? Did you clothe me when I was naked? Did you visit me when I was in prison?

The more I can do, the better I feel. It’s a privilege. It’s a blessing, not a burden. The Old Testament says that he who giveth to the poor, lendeth to God (Prov. 19:17). I’m awestruck by that notion. We know that God can’t ever be in anyone’s debt, but it says that people who love the Lord could possibly have God in their debt. 🌐

Jan Johnson is a free-lance writer in Simi, Calif.

At Project Open Door, volunteers from Skid Row reach out to their homeless neighbors by offering a drop-in center and community outreach program. Freddie Beverly, a volunteer case manager, discusses with Michael Perry how he can participate in Project Open Door’s programs.



BY CHRISTINE DUBOIS
PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

CULTIVATING



Once an eyesore, this city corner in Tacoma, Wash. soon will be a wildlife sanctuary and natural scenic area for the community's education and enjoyment. Chai Yun (foreground) and fellow members of Holy Family church join Americorps volunteers to replace brambles and weeds with indigenous plants as part of the Urban Wildlife Habitat Project.

A COMMUNITY

THIS
CAMBODIAN
CHURCH
IS BLOOMING
WHERE IT
WAS PLANTED



Looking at the outreach programs at Holy Family of Jesus Cambodian Episcopal Church, in Tacoma, Wash., you might think this is an affluent, suburban congregation with a large paid staff. After all, nearly 30,000 people a year come to the church to get food, learn English, or master new job skills. The church houses the only Southeast Asian food bank in the county, a training program where refugee women can learn everything from parenting skills to computer skills, and an after-school tutoring program for teens. In a garden behind the building, 34 low-income and immigrant families grow vegetables in raised beds.

But this isn't a large, well-heeled suburban parish. It's a small church located a stone's throw from Salishan, the largest public housing development in the country. A typical Sunday morning service draws 25 adults and 30 children. Many of the adults speak little English. Nearly everyone is poor. The pastor doesn't get paid. But with faith, creativity, and the support of other churches and social service agencies, Holy Family of Jesus has become a light to their community.

(continued on next page)

"Living in this neighborhood, it seems like nobody knows you exist," says the Rev. Sam Lee of Holy Family of Jesus. "People feel a loss of hope. We're here to bring that hope back into their lives so they can feel they, too, are important in God's sight."

The church traces its history to October 1980, when St. Matthew Episcopal Church in Tacoma sponsored a Cambodian refugee, Sambun, and two members of his family. Sambun began bringing his daughter to church, and she brought her friends, and they brought theirs. "They just began to come and that's how it began," says the Rt. Rev. David Cochran, retired bishop of Alaska, who served as the Cambodian congregation's first vicar.

SPROUTING ROOTS

Soon the growing congregation needed a place of its own. Since many members lived in the Salishan development, Cochran looked for a site near there. He approached churches and private foundations for funds. His vision: a building that would serve as a center for both worship and service.

"Not only was there a need," he explains, "but that was the basis on which I could raise money. It was built to serve the community's needs, not just the congregation."

The local Episcopal diocese bought the land, and in May 1990, the congregation gathered to dedicate the white, two-level building.

Coincidentally—or maybe not—at about the same time, the Tacoma Housing Authority received a federal grant to fight the growing drug and crime problem in the multi-ethnic Salishan development. As the community grew safer, more people ventured out to meet their neighbors and work together to improve their future. And Holy Family of Jesus was right in the midst of it.

One early project was the garden. The idea, says Sarin Chin, pastoral outreach coordinator, is not just to grow vegetables but to build community. Russians, Samoans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians garden side by side. "We want to share that activity together and bring unity," says Chin, through an interpreter. "That is the ultimate purpose."

The garden also gives older immigrants, many of whom were farmers in their native land, a chance to regain self-esteem, adds Brian Sellers-Petersen, chair of the Holy Family of Jesus Community Services Center Board and associate director of church relations for World Vision.

"They may not be able to go to the grocery store without taking along a grandchild to interpret," he explains. "But they can go in that garden, and they can make things grow. At World Vision, we pride ourselves in helping people to help themselves."

The outreach projects at Holy Family of Jesus are funded through a combination of government grants and funds from churches, foundations, and nonprofit agencies, including World Vision. The HFJ Community Services Center Board oversees the programs and works to build partnerships with other organizations serving the community.

"It all hinges on relationship building," says Pat Harrington, a technical advisor for the church's organizational

development. "That's basic to what we're called in Christ to do—build a relationship with God and then with our neighbor."

RELATIONSHIPS BLOOM

At Holy Family of Jesus, neighbors are always welcome. In the mornings, women enrolled in the Refugee Women's Program study English, practice parenting skills, and learn job skills. After school, low-income and at-risk teens stop by to study, shoot hoops, and make friends at the Homework Connection. On Saturdays, a Samoan Seventh-day Adventist congregation uses the church.

Twice a month, young people from Holy Family of Jesus distribute food for the Southeast Asian Food Bank. It's the only food bank around that offers bamboo shoots, fish sauce, coconut milk, and other staples of Asian cooking.

On Sundays, the small congregation gathers for worship, surrounded by murals depicting life in Cambodia. Lee, now a deacon who will be ordained a priest next year, preaches and celebrates the Eucharist in Khmer.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE REV. SAM LEE

The Rev. Sam Lee of Holy Family Cambodian Episcopal Church is the first Cambodian-born deacon in the Anglican Communion. Freelance writer Christine Dubois talked with him about his ministry.

ARE YOU SURPRISED TO FIND YOURSELF THE PASTOR OF THIS CONGREGATION?

Surprised? Yes. I had no plan or any idea. But I think, according to God's will, that's why I'm here as I am. I feel inadequate to accept this responsibility. But by God's strength, he continues to uphold me and move me forward and give me encouragement to stay at my post.

WHY IS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS CHURCH'S MINISTRY?

All of that activity are the fruits of love that we received from Christ and we want to express it. The community is able to see us, to see the love of God.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SO LITTLE TO SHARE WHAT THEY HAVE WITH OTHERS?

There's a lot of need within this community. We need to open our eyes and hearts. It takes self sacrifice. Sometimes when we're so busy with ourselves or our families, we neglect our sisters and brothers. We need to sacrifice some of time and effort.

This is very crucial in the Cambodian community. There's so much focus on ourselves.

When you lack a job and skills and language, that causes you to focus on material things you want to have and deter you from seeking the spiritual things that need the most. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and these things will be added.' If every one could understand this and believe it with all their heart, there would be fewer problems in this world.

Lee, 41, fled the violence in Cambodia with his family when he was a teen. He arrived in Tacoma in 1976 and has been active at Holy Family of Jesus for the past 10 years. Besides serving without pay as the congregation's pastor, Lee works full time as an auto technician at Sears and has a wife and two children. "It's a handful," he admits. "I find myself divided so much."

For all the community's material needs, Lee is most concerned about their spirits. "There are times of joy and times of sadness," he says of his ministry. "You feel sorry for those who have not come to know Christ and the old nature is acting up. But you're joyful to see one come to know Christ and to see other people express their love."

It's not all smooth sailing. The church hasn't grown as fast as organizers had hoped. It's not easy to share the building with others. And raising up leadership from within the small congregation is a continual challenge. (The church still depends on outside volunteers to staff its church school program.)

But Holy Family of Jesus has been blessed with dedicated supporters—from the Episcopal diocese and elsewhere—who have helped train leaders, raise funds, and lay the foundation for an array of social services.

"I wish I could say that all these ideas came from the congregation itself, but that's not the case," says Cochran. "It's been the outside leadership that has brought people along, and they have responded well."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT GROWS

Vy Sin, 53, has been at the church "since the beginning of time," or, in this case, 1984. Like many Cambodian Christians, he accepted Christ in the refugee camps in Thailand. Arriving in Tacoma in 1984 with the help of the Episcopalian family that sponsored him, he soon made Holy Family of Jesus his home. Today he serves as the church's office liaison.

"The Episcopal Church seemed to be expressing love to all people, regardless of race and language," he says in Khmer, as Lee interprets. "When I saw that, I was compelled to become a member of the church."

Sin knows that loving all people, even your enemies, doesn't come naturally. "Before we came to know Christ, we had a lot of hatred among our neighbors," he says. "Then the fruit of the Spirit grew and showed us faith and we understand what love is. If the Vietnamese people believe in Christ also, they became our brothers and sisters. By knowing Christ, we're able to learn about the love of God with one another."

Lee and Sin seem both proud and embarrassed at the suggestion that their church—which has done so much with so little—can be an example to others.

"We have no plans to teach anyone to do anything," says Lee. "We just stumble along, and when we fall, we dust ourselves off and begin again."

"Our main purpose is to let other people know that focusing on oneself is not all that matters," he adds. "What matters is that we know who we are in Christ and to show the love of God as much as we know how." 🌐

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Christine Dubois is a free-lance writer in Bothell, Wash.





Poly Rajbongshi's afternoon is probably not much different from many 7-year-olds.' She walks a short distance home from school with friends, changes clothes, and helps her mother, Ranjana, with chores—today, caring for the family cows.

But Poly is lucky. Twenty-four percent of school-age children in Bangladesh do not have the opportunity to attend school, and of those who do, five percent drop out before reaching grade five. Child sponsorship through World Vision's Hazaribagh Family Development Project ensures Poly's education will continue.

"I have often asked my daughter what she would like to be when she grows up," says Ranjana. "She says a doctor. If she has such high hopes for herself, then I must be able to provide for her."

In this densely populated, agriculture-dependent country, crops cannot support the rapidly increasing population. Families must search for alternatives for their livelihoods. World Vision's micro-enterprise and income generation programs help. Poly's family received a loan to buy a milk cow. Profits from selling the milk enabled Ranjana to buy a sewing machine, and now she earns additional money by sewing clothes for people in the community.


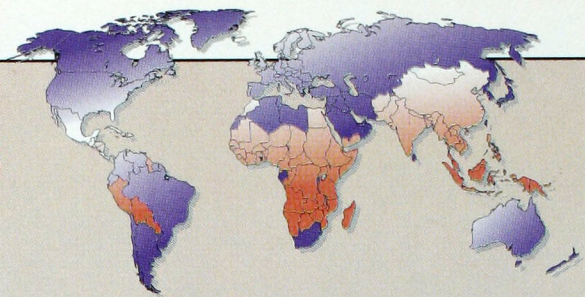
"World Vision has helped our whole family," says Ranjana. "We know how to improve ourselves more than in the past." 

Photo by Mikel Flamm

WORLD VISION NEWS



KIND-HEARTED DONORS PROVIDE HOPE FOR RWANDA

When World Vision offered U.S. donors the chance to send packets of carrot seeds to poverty-stricken farmers in Rwanda, the staff had no idea how successful it would be. More than 35,000 packets of seeds poured in, enough for tens of thousands of families to produce healthy vegetables. These donations provide not only a tangible gift, but a message of encouragement as well.

"We are quite overwhelmed with the generosity shown toward Rwanda's poorest," said acting national director Warren Nyamugasira.

Rwanda is a fertile country, but years of war have left much of the land unproductive. Refugees who return to their ruined homes and overgrown land often lack tools, money, and seeds. World Vision has made restarting agriculture a priority since the 1994 war and has been providing families with hoes, various seeds, and other items for small-scale farming.

"The end result will be families across Rwanda who can rest a little easier knowing they should have something to eat in the future," said World Vision seed specialist Speciose Kantengwa.

Packets of seeds—like these shown by World Vision agriculturist Chantal Akumuntu—poured in from U.S. donors to help Rwandan families.

EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR FLOOD AND HURRICANE VICTIMS

Wind and rain have proved formidable adversaries to the people of Mexico and Somalia in recent months.

Hurricane Pauline smashed into the southeastern coast of Mexico last fall with 120 mile-per-hour winds, des-

WINNIE OGANA / WORLD VISION

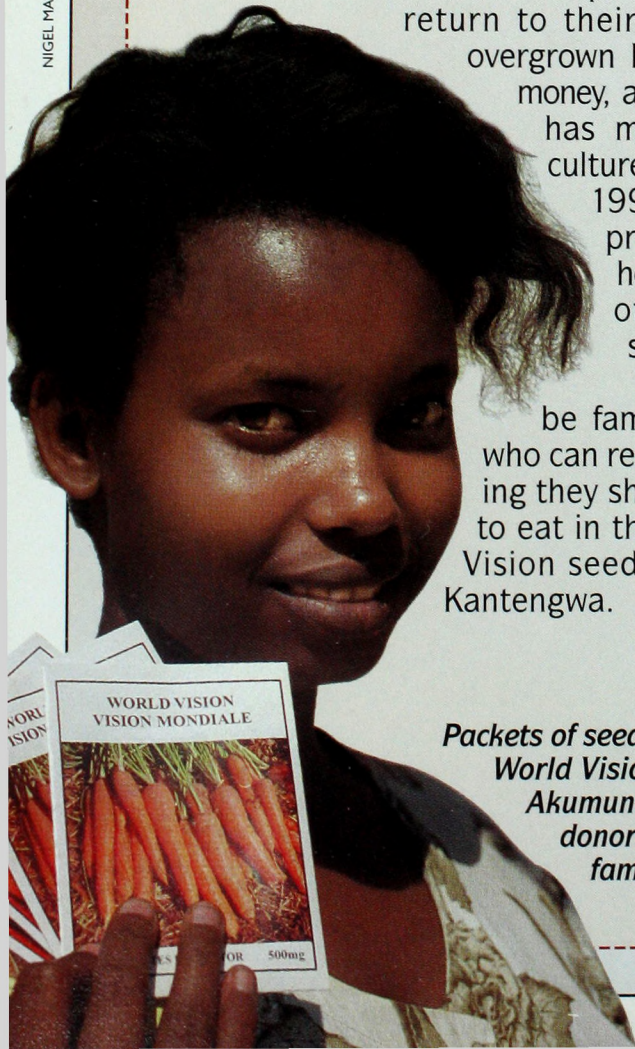


Two Somalis attempt to rescue bags of food from the rising floodwaters using a makeshift raft.

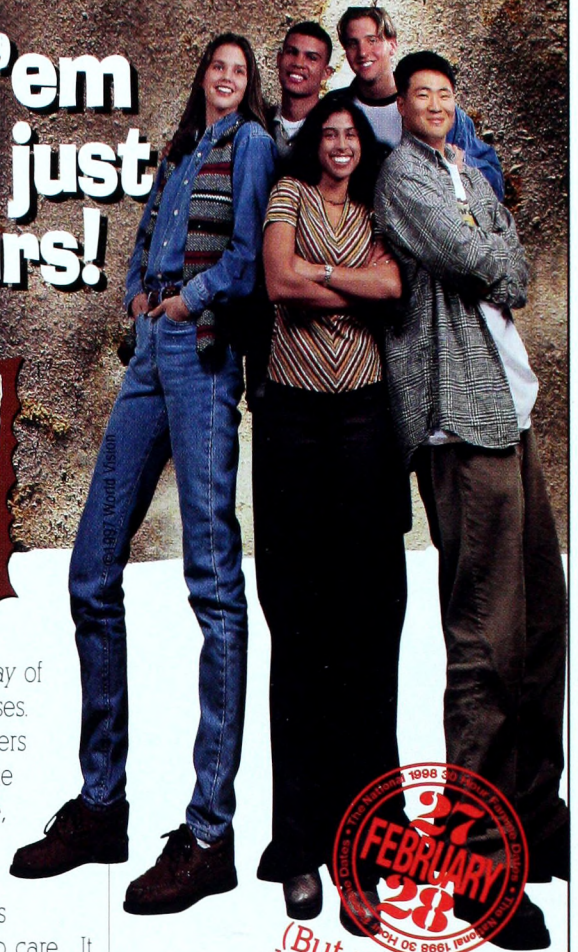
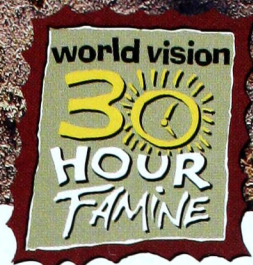
troying homes, roads, and bridges, and stripping families in several World Vision sponsorship projects of all their belongings.

World Vision provided food, clothes, quilts, and first aid. The agency coordinated with other institutions such as the Mexican army, which provided access into the most affected areas, and the Ministry of Health, which offered medicines and medical care. By the end of October, 1,705 families received basic food packages containing items like beans, rice, sugar, coffee, and sardines.

Meanwhile, hundreds of families are homeless in Somalia from the worst flooding to hit the southwest part of the country in 40 years. Floodwaters were still on the rise after more than three weeks of almost incessant rainfall. Agriculture in the region known as Somalia's breadbasket was decimated.



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Hundreds of people have died due to flooding and the resulting lack of food. Somalis resorted to eating roots, leaves, and camped in trees to escape the flood waters. Malaria and dysentery increased in several communities and attacks from snakes and crocodiles posed a threat.

World Vision's emergency response included distributing food, medicines, clean water, and about 16,000 survival kits which contain blankets, plastic sheeting, jerrycans, cooking stoves, and cooking spoons.

For more information on the Somalia floods recovery effort, visit our website:

www.unicef.unon.org/SOMALIA/flood.html

TRAGEDY DEEPENS IN NORTH KOREA

March threatens to be the most vulnerable time yet for North Korea. Cold weather grips the nation, and food stocks from the poor harvest are predicted to run out. The United Nations estimates a 2 million metric ton food deficit, depriving North Koreans of more than half of what they need to survive until next October's harvest.

In the midst of a disaster that grows ever worse, World Vision strives to provide long-term assistance. To alleviate the low agricultural productivity, World Vision is working to distribute high-yielding seeds such as soybeans; one ton of these seeds produces 26 tons of grain for consumption, which translates into more than 100,000 meals.

In the meantime, World Vision is distributing short-term aid in the form of 90 metric tons of maize from China through the World Food Program as well as 2,500 sets of children's winter clothing for the Children's Centers.





Coloring Outside the Lines

PROFILE

You won't find Jacqueline Patton, director of Vision New York, taking the credit for what she's done. Perhaps that is because she approaches life from the perspective that it's not hers. Rather, she emphasizes that God works through her to accomplish his will; she is merely cooperating with what he has already started.

BY MARY SCHNACK
PHOTO BY ANDREW HOLBROOKE

Jacqueline Patton has worked in community development in Harlem for more than 14 years. She also lives there. She knows the neighborhood. More importantly, she is part of the community. She knows its beauty and understands its problems.

Despite her experience within Harlem, she looks at her position as the director of the new office of Vision New York as a blank canvas. "If everything was OK, God would not have put World Vision here," Jacqueline says. "I don't want to do business as usual. God has a design and a vision for the work here. Maybe God wants to do a new thing or has new ways of working together or new ways of seeing old problems. God's responses and ways of addressing things are different each time.

"Just working in a community, or just

You have to live, walk, work, and believe in the community.

living in a community, isn't enough," she says. "You have to live, walk, work, be involved, and believe in that community. It means a great deal in this position. I don't have to prove myself. I know others who are involved in changing Harlem for women, children—people in general—and that helps me when I need to make a phone call to get information, to get a new partner, or discuss a project."

When she walks into a room, Jacqueline fills the space. Her manner, even before she speaks, promises she'll be direct, to-the-point, and will mince few words. However, it's also easy for her to flash a smile, lighting up her entire face. When asked about running the World Vision office, she laughs—and gives a direct response. "I will not be 'running' the program. This program belongs to the community. I'll be working with the people and ministries that will be running the programs."

The Chicago native is just as clear about how she got to her current position. "I tend to approach life from the perspective that it's not mine. When information on this position came to me through a friend, I said I wasn't interested. But I reluctantly began to talk to the Lord about it. Then I was contacted by World Vision and was asked for a résumé. Through a series of discussions, it became more apparent to me that this was my next mission field."

A mission field, not a job. Jacqueline's "job" is to be obedient to Christ and fulfill his call in her life at that time. "I change mission fields—or battlefields. It's not a job. It's never a job."

Her battlefields within Harlem have changed over the years, depending on the community's needs. After graduating from Harvard's Graduate School of Education with an M.Ed. in education administration (she earned her undergraduate degree at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass.), she moved to Harlem with her infant son, David, and four friends.

They formed the Harlem Ark of Freedom, a Christian community designed to provide supportive services to

Harlem. "I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I wanted to be involved in something bigger than myself. I didn't get a call from God to go to Harlem, but it seemed right to me at the time.

"We lived in a community, all of us in the same house, held Bible studies, and preached on the street. We planted ourselves in a community that was alien to us. It took us awhile to gain the confidence of the community. In a year, we had up to 100 urban professionals coming to Bible study."

But with growth, questions of leadership within the group arose. Those questions could not be answered, said Jacqueline, and she and her son David moved to their own place.

As a single mother, Jacqueline modeled a life filled with love, confidence, and accomplishments. This attracted other single mothers and children in the neighborhood. "I was taking children to the park, mothers were asking me to go to the welfare office with them or talk to their boyfriends about a problem. I started to look at how I could systematize a response to these women and children."

Thus was the birth of Potter's House, an institute for single-parent concerns. After much prayer for more space to house the ever-expanding support groups, meetings, and seminars, Jacqueline was able to buy the brownstone where she had first rented a single apartment.

Other mission fields in Harlem that have been blessed by Jacqueline's involvement include the Boy's Choir of Harlem and the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers' College of Columbia University. When her son was young, she wanted to be involved in a mission where she would have flexible hours to be with him after school. "But I also had to make money to support the family. When I looked at my gifts, I knew I could be an advisor. As a consultant, I created mechanisms to help people realize their visions.

"Being a single mother has taught me how to assess a situation and see

what I have in my bag of goodies. I've had to. The Lord has delivered me to be able to throw away the fear and not be afraid to color outside the lines."

However, five years later, Jacqueline got strong messages from God to stop consulting. "I didn't know why. I argued with God. I couldn't see where I was going. I sent out 150 résumés and got no phone calls and no letters."

Then a friend sent her to The Valley, a \$5 million per year, multi-ser-

NEW YORK Visions

Vision New York is World Vision's community-partnership approach to joining churches, community development groups, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations, who, working together, offer hope and a means toward self-sufficiency to those living in poverty and difficult circumstances.

As these organizations work side-by-side coordinating efforts and sharing resources, true transformation takes place for those serving as well as those being served. Entire neighborhoods are changing and healing, one person at a time.

Vision New York addresses three areas: training young community leaders in New York City neighborhoods; enhancing church-based support for children with AIDS; and providing small business loans.

World Vision coordinates similar work in other inner cities across the United States through Vision City partnerships in Chicago, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and the Pacific Northwest.

involved,

vice agency for family and children that is affiliated with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Harlem. She was soon promoted to chief operating officer. "If I hadn't been broken by God first, the power of that position would have gone to my head. The agency was going through a tremendous growth spurt. The Lord wanted the big ship stabilized and turned around. I was able to do that.

"After he accomplished his will through me there, he released me to World Vision."

Jacqueline immediately began working to establish an advisory and policy group of local pastors, community leaders, and residents for Vision New York that will guide her mission work. Then she started listening to the needs of the community. "As welfare reform hits our door," she says, "these problems are going to quadruple."

As a result, Jacqueline has identified three areas of need to address Harlem's systemic poverty and problems: youth development in the churches, a support network for children and parents who have AIDS, and microenterprise development. These areas will be the center of Vision New York's initial focus and strategy.

Jacqueline reached out to the churches with long-term relationships in the neighborhood. "They have strong mission statements and are doing wonderful things, but they could do so much more.

"For example, churches are not equipped to deal with AIDS and AIDS-related issues. World Vision can play a significant role for this need. And you always hear pastors and lay people talk about the young people being left behind. Young people need to have interests in the church. We can help the community churches reach out to the youth." Jacqueline also will be working with churches to promote economic development issues to help create businesses throughout the community.

Jacqueline said she doesn't see herself as starting something new, but coop-

erating with the spirit of God and what he's already started.

"There are so many things to do here, and we'll accomplish them if it's the will of God. The element of the unknown is exhilarating and frightening. But that just strengthens my walk with the Lord because I really depend on him. Start-ups keep me on my knees because I don't know the way.

"I look back and see what God has created through me, and it gives me strength. God's presence in my life and the ability to hear his voice—I can take that with me wherever I go." ☉

Mary Schnack is a free-lance writer in Sedona, Ariz.

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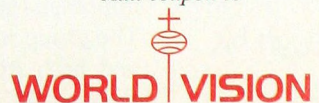
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THE CHURCH AND THE GIFT OF SALVATION

A meeting between the Roman Catholic Archbishop and our World Vision Honduras director had been scheduled. Unfortunately, an automobile accident that almost took the director's life made for a long hospital stay instead. When the Archbishop heard what happened, however, he went to visit the director in the hospital. This may seem like a small and insignificant thing to do, but when a

hierarchy of values, we had just reached agreement on the most important, the gift of salvation.

It was an extraordinary meeting. We were called to look for that which these two historic protagonists could find in common. And not a lowest common denominator, but that which we both could lift up as a common faith in Christ, the binding authority of Holy scripture, and God's magnificent gift of redemption through His Son, Jesus.

The document that emerged is equally extraordinary. I quote a key paragraph:

The New Testament makes it clear that the gift of justification is received through faith. "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). By faith, which is also the gift of God, we repent of our sins and freely adhere to the gospel, the good news of God's saving work for us in Christ. By our response of faith to Christ, we enter into the blessings promised by the gospel. Faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, the will, and the affections, issuing in a changed life. We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (sola fide).

Amazing. What a moment in history! While parts of the Church have been politicized, compromised, made user-friendly at the expense of the gospel's power, God is still prompting individuals to follow "a more excellent way," to realize the gift of unity that was at the heart of our Lord's intercessory prayer. The ability to agree on this highest value—redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, received through faith—creates the potential for a unified Christian witness throughout the Americas.

But this is only a moment. What will the Church do, individually and collectively, to nurture this moment? In the recent past, we have engaged in bitter fighting over the dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals. It has been painful to watch, courageous brothers ridiculed by other Christians, fellowship broken. The non-Christian must legitimately wonder about the attractiveness of the News we call Good.

We can choose to be courageous. We can take those steps that are "above and beyond." We can choose to practice grace, even the grace of an unexpected visitor at a hospital bed.

Yes, there are still many areas of discomfort and disagreement. Perhaps most won't be solved this side of glory. But we also have so much in common. Thanks be to God! We have the gift of Salvation. ☉

TODD BARTEL / WORLD VISION



We were called to... lift up as common faith in Christ, the binding authority of scripture, and God's redemption through his Son.

leader of the Catholic hierarchy voluntarily chooses to pay a hospital call on a staunch Evangelical, in Latin America, grace takes on new meaning.

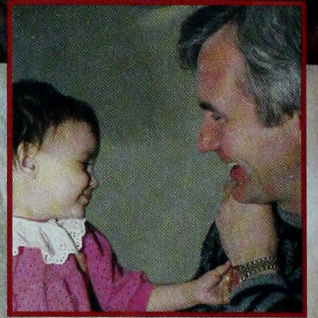
As the visit continued, candor became the order of the day. "What don't you like about Evangelicals?" asked the director. The mocking of the Pope, Marian devotion, and the Catholic administration of the sacraments were noted. And then the question was reversed. "What don't you like about Catholics?" "You look at us and refer to us as a sect," came the reply. Honest dialogue, legitimate concerns, issues for further discussion—but now all in the context of a man who barely escaped death, entertained by a visitor who demonstrated a living knowledge of grace.

A few months ago, I was one of a number of folks sitting around a large table discussing a document important to the Church, "The Gift of Salvation." The group was comprised of American Evangelicals and both American and Latin American Catholic Bishops. A Cardinal from Rome—the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity—was also there. There were many doctrinal positions that would not be discussed that week, but in the



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