

WORLD VISION®



April/May 1990

In Mali:

A CALL TO FARMS

Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias:

**STILL PUSHING
FOR PEACE**

Evangelist Luis Palau:

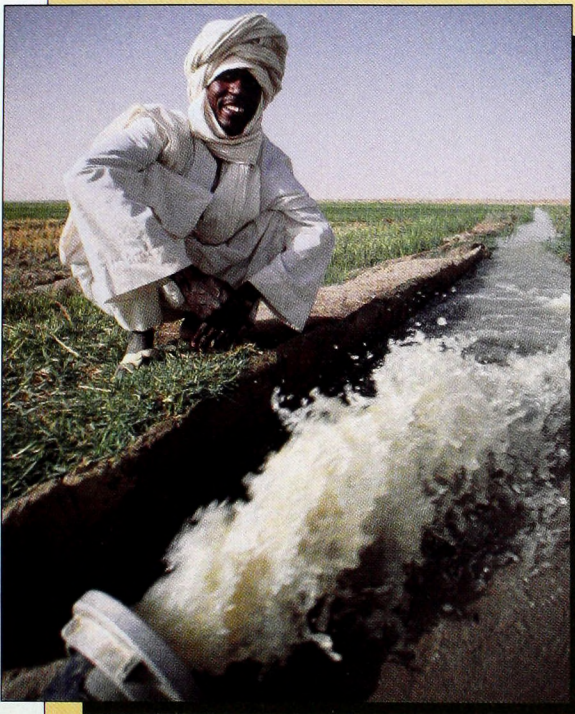
**CHANGING
THE WORLD
FROM
THE INSIDE
OUT**

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Spreading the gospel is all well and good, but why doesn't he do something about the social needs in the Third World countries where he often preaches? Evangelist Luis Palau says social change is exactly what his 25-year ministry has been about.

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West African farmers in Mali's Seventh Region are relying on sweat and ingenuity to fight an advancing desert. Many aid officials say it's a losing battle. But, to everyone's surprise but their own, these tough cultivators are turning barren patches of desert into emerald oases of fertile cropland.



While Songhai farmers are in their fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else.

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World Vision places a priority on holistic evangelism—meeting the physical, social, and spiritual needs of individuals in an integrated approach. You'll find "evangelism" at work, in different ways, in different circumstances, in this issue. The title of Luis Palau's article cuts both ways: Evangelism is social action, and social action sensitively and prayerfully done by Christians can be powerfully evangelistic.

Terry Madison

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Central America's Nobel Prize-winner has an impressive blueprint for peace that's begging to be tried. Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez looks for the day when leaders in that war-ravaged region will put down their guns and take his plan seriously.

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He knows he'll probably get mugged sometime in the next few years. Living on Skid Row in Los Angeles has its downside. But Bill Doulos wouldn't change what he's doing there—helping to provide low-cost housing for inner-city residents, some of whom used to make their beds out of cardboard boxes and concrete.

WORLD VISION

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REDEEMING THE DUMP

The biblical description is unnerving and unbelievable. It is called hell, “where the fire is not quenched and the worm is not consumed.” Christ can only hint at the pathos when he likens it to a garbage dump outside of a Judean city.

In Guatemala City the metaphor and the reality are one and the same. We were standing safely above the city dump on top of a building used by World Vision as a day-care center for children of parents working in the dump. The perpetual internal combustion created billows of noxious fumes and smoke, periodically hiding the hundreds of pickers working through the garbage. Maggots, those worms that, in truth, cannot be consumed, continuously carried out the work of decay.

Drivers and pickers made up the work force of the dump. They deposited, selected, and gathered again the acres upon acres of steaming refuse.

Not only do hundreds of people work in the dump, they also live there with their families. They are held hostage. The economic and living options are inextricably linked. One member of our group said it insightfully: “They were in the dump and the dump was in them.”

The dump is also a dangerous place which the Guatemalan city police refuse to enter. The turf has been staked out by strong-armed thugs who place a high value on the garbage.

Unfortunately, only the garbage appears to have value. Children are abused. Alcohol, drugs, and prostitution provide diversions to lives and income for living. In many families, the fathers are unknown. Brothers and sisters live and sleep together. And they all live for today.

Hope is not easily understood in the dump. Granted, a number of children do gather daily at the World Vision day-care center. And a school bus goes through, allowing a few children—if

their parents don’t protest—to spend part of the day outside. But these represent very, very small signs of hope.

The city’s garbage trucks constantly stream down into the pit. As they arrive, the children, who form the largest group of pickers, swarm in like fish in a tank gobbling up food.

Despair, hopelessness, overwhelming pathos, and spiritual warfare dominate the dump. The forces of darkness, death, and sin are alive and well. It is hell on earth, and I struggled with both the immensity and the intensity of it.

So what can we do? The American “can do” spirit has already gone to work on the problem. Concerned people have held discussions and considered options. They’ve talked about building a larger building to hold more children. They’ve weighed economic alternatives for the area. They’ve contemplated doing more with the health clinic 18 blocks away. They’ve appealed to the government for more help.

But the overwhelming conclusion is clear: first we must win the spiritual warfare going on in that camp. Hell is only transformed by the power of the risen Savior. We have *no* other model. We have no other success. We have no other hope than the One who transcended hell itself.

All of our can-do spirit becomes meaningless unless we win the spiritual war. This is where we need a “can’t-do” attitude. Only the greater power of the resurrection can defeat these forces of darkness.

We are humbled by the dump. But we are encouraged that the One who has overcome the world, the One who has transcended hell, the One who lives within us, can also provide the insight, energy, and perseverance to overcome hell on earth. □

**Unfortunately,
only the
garbage
appears
to have
value.**



“Can’t you do something more practical for the world than preach the resurrected Christ?”

EVANGELISM IS SOCIAL ACTION

A university professor once challenged me: “Palau, how can you go to country after country, where people have so many economic and social problems, and preach about the resurrected Christ? Can’t you do something more practical for them?”

“There isn’t a better way to help them,” I replied. “The people of this world create the problems of this world. If we can lead them to Christ, we will create a climate for other positive, practical changes to take place.”

The professor was right, of course, that we live in a world full of immense problems. A world weighed down by famines, poverty, injustice, oppression, and environmental disasters.

But as Christians, we can help alleviate such misery. We are called to serve as Jesus served, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, breaking the chains of injustice—and leading

“Give me one example of the gospel changing society,” a Russian reporter challenged. So Palau did.





people to receive the gift of life in Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus is our hope that lives can change.

Conversion leads to the greatest social action. As people's lives are changed, they are different in their families, in their jobs, and in society.

I learned this early in my ministry. In November 1965, I was doing a live call-in counseling TV program in the HCJB-TV studios in Quito, Ecuador. I had just prayed with a woman who received Jesus Christ as Savior. The next call was brief. A high-pitched, squeaky voice requested an appointment the next day at 9:30.

The next morning, a small woman walked through the gates of the HCJB property, followed closely by two huge men. As she entered the office, her eyes traveled to every corner before she finally sat down.

"You pastors and priests," she began with disgust. "You are a bunch of thieves and liars and crooks. All you want is to deceive people. All you want is money!"

She went on that way for more than 20 minutes, swearing all the while and smoking every last bit from each cigarette she lit.

I prayed silently, "Lord, how shall I handle this?" Seemingly exhausted, she finally slumped in her chair. "Madam," I said, "is there anything I can do for you? How can I help you?"

She stared at me for an instant, then broke into uncontrollable sobs. When she was composed and could speak again, the edge was gone from

her voice. "You know," she said, "in the 38 years I have lived, you are the first person who has ever asked me if he could help me."

"What is your name?" I asked.

She was suddenly hard again. "Why do you want to know my name?"

"Well, you've said a lot of things here, and I don't even know you. I just want to know how to address you."

"My name is Maria Benitez-Perez," she said triumphantly. I recognized the name as that of a large family of wealth and influence. "I am the female secretary of the Communist Party in Ecuador. I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I am a materialist. I don't believe in God."

With that she took off on another breathless tirade against me, all preachers and priests, and the church.

"Why did you come here?" I broke in. "Just to insult me?"

For the next three hours, she told me her story.

Maria had left home and run away from a religious school as a rebellious teenager. The communists befriended her, and she became a party leader.

"When my mother died and the bishop came to officiate at the ceremony, I mocked him while my mother's body lay there in the casket," she said. "And I've always felt a little guilty about that, even though I don't believe in God, of course."

Every time she got onto the subject of God, she became enraged. But just as often, she would return to her mother's funeral.

"Hey, Palau," she said, "supposing there is a God—which there isn't—

but just supposing there is, do you think he would take a woman like me?"

I had read once that, when dealing with a professed atheist, the best approach is to take one truth from the Bible and stay with it. The Lord gave me Hebrews 10:17.

"Look, Maria, don't worry about what I think. Look at what God thinks." I opened to the verse and turned the Bible so she could see.

"I don't believe in the Bible ..."

"But we're just supposing there's a God, right? Let's just suppose this is his Word. He says, 'Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.'"

She waited, as if there had to be more. "But listen, I've been an adulteress, married three times, and in bed with a lot of men."

I said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"But I haven't told you half my story. I stabbed a comrade who later committed suicide."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"I've led student riots where people were killed."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

Seventeen times I responded to Maria's objections and confessions with that verse. "Would you like Christ to forgive all that you've told me about, and all the rest that I don't even know?" I asked.

"He can't do it," she said.

"You want to try it?"

"It would be a miracle."

"Take a step of faith. Invite him

into your life and try him. See what will happen."

Maria stared at me for a long moment and then bowed her head. "All right," she whispered.

I led her in a simple prayer, confessing her sins, asking forgiveness, and receiving Christ.

When I saw Maria again in January, I was not prepared for what I encountered. Her face was a mess of purple blotches and bruises. Several of her front teeth were missing.

At a meeting of all the communist leaders of the country, she told them, "I am no longer an atheist. I believe in God and in Jesus Christ. I am resigning from the party. We are all a bunch of liars. We deceive people when we tell them there is no God."

A few days later, four of Maria's former comrades attacked her and smashed her face. She was forced to hide in the basements of churches and

HER
CHANGED
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EVENTS.



Rosario Rivera's work with the poor in Lima, Peru, (above) is an about-face from the violent revolution she worked for as a young Marxist guerrilla (at right).



in the homes of missionaries.

"There's going to be a revolution in June," she told me matter-of-factly. "We've had it all planned for months."

It was to be a typical Latin American uprising: students and agitators causing a disturbance in the streets, luring out the army, which would then be attacked and overthrown. The chairman of the Communist Party for Ecuador would take over the country.

Maria remained on the run until June, when the Marxists' network of spies tracked her down. But she talked her four captors into retreating to her father's farm, where they could rest and read a few Christian books she had chosen for them.

On the morning of the revolution, the Communist Party leader came to talk to Maria, his long-time friend. "Maria, why did you become a Christian?"

"Because I believe in God and Jesus Christ, and my faith has changed my life."

"You know," he said, "I have been listening to HCJB radio on shortwave, and those Christians—they almost have me believing there is a God!"

"There is!" she said. "Why don't you become a Christian and get out of

this business? Look at all the lives we've ruined. Here, take this Bible and this book [*Peace With God*, by Billy Graham]. You can go to my father's farm and read them."

Later that morning, the disturbance that was supposed to trigger revolution fizzled into chaos, because the leaders were off on a farm, reading.

Was Maria's conversion to Christ effective social action? Her changed life altered the course of national events—events that would have killed and oppressed the masses.

This certainly was one of the most bizarre encounters in my ministry, but one of only scores I know of in which evangelism proved the best form of social action.

Last fall in Leningrad a Russian reporter challenged me to give him one example demonstrating how the gospel can change lives and society. I told him about Rosario Rivera, a Peruvian Marxist and one of Che Guevara's closest co-workers.

Rosario had experienced one of the saddest childhoods I've ever heard of. Later she slipped into immorality, turned to violence, and became bitter toward God.

After Guevara's death Rosario went

to Lima, Peru's capital, where I happened to be preaching. She came to the stadium angry enough to kill me, but the Lord touched her heart. Early the next morning she trusted Jesus Christ, who completely transformed her.

Instead of resorting to violence to bring about social change, Rosario began to give bread and milk to the poor and provided practical help to hundreds of families living in Lima's slums. Countless thousands have benefited from her ministry, and scores have found new life in Christ. And her story has been published now in Russian, German, and English.

Some months back I met a missionary couple in the Netherlands trying to reach prostitutes with the gospel. Working with them is a former prostitute from Uruguay, South America. She had moved to the Netherlands to minister in the red-light districts.

Several years ago, this woman attended an evangelistic rally where I was preaching. She was converted and now is sharing God's love by reaching out to other prostitutes. The social implications have been widespread.

Near the end of five weeks of evangelistic campaigns in Wales last spring, an old farmer named Peter handed me



Luis Palau's first evangelistic crusade in Bogota, Colombia, 1965.

Mass evangelism in Guatemala: "Christians have penetrated every sphere of society."

PHOTOS COURTESY LUIS PALAU EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

a card. "Thanks, Luis," it said. "I've given up drinking half a bottle of whiskey a day." Several weeks earlier Peter had been converted.

"Do you ever get tempted now when you smell alcohol?" I asked him. "Does it get to you?"

"I can't stand the smell of it," Peter replied. "You said Christ could liberate me instantly, and he did."

To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history. Slavery was abolished in Britain by a group of men who were converted to Christ in the mass evangelistic campaigns of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. Justice and freedom under the law are a direct fruit of the gospel.

In South Africa, Billy Graham's racially integrated campaigns brought whites and blacks together in large public meetings for the first time in that country's history.

Evangelism always has social implications, because it takes place in a social context. In the first century, the gospel bridged cultural barriers between man and woman, Jew and Gentile, slave and free. Paul called Onesimus, Philemon's slave, "Our faithful and dear brother." Writing to Philemon, he wrote, "He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord."

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, the corrupt tax collector's dominating desire turned to charitable giving to the poor and restitution for those he had cheated.

Evangelism is the most effective social action because it deals with the

root of the problem, not with the symptoms alone. The root is human alienation, sinfulness, and evil. Mankind's foremost need is the gospel: first to dispel spiritual darkness, but second to eradicate their utter selfishness.

Most people live for themselves. True Christians live for God and for others out of love. God implants this love within all who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Leo Tolstoy described his experience this way: "For 35 years of my life I was ... a nihilist—not a revolutionary socialist, but a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago faith came to me ... and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation. What I had once wished for I wished for no longer, and I began to desire what I had never desired before."

Imagine a city where a million people become new creations, like Zacchaeus. The gospel can change society because it changes individuals, who then begin to change their families, which then change neighborhoods. And as those individuals live out their faith at home, in schools, in the military, in business, and in government, a quiet revolution occurs.

It is a slow process, but it is potent. It brings lasting change without hatred, murder, revenge, and class warfare.

Most societies change by coercion. The few that change by internal compulsion, without machine guns, are those that have had spiritual revivals. Many historians believe England escaped a revolution like that in France only because of the Wesleyan revival, which in turn roused concern for public health, prison reform, and public education.

This is what Latin American believers are praying for—revival that transforms their nations without bloodshed. And they trust God enough to believe he can do it.

I believe that quiet transformation already is beginning in Guatemala. In a nation of 7 million people, almost one out of every three Guatemalans claims to have been born again.

They have penetrated every sphere of society—politics, education, the military, and business. Their commitment and zeal for the Lord is impressive.

I am proud to preach the gospel, which is the power of God, because nothing helps people more than introducing them to Jesus Christ. Evangelism saves people not only from dying without Christ, but also from living without him. And as they live with him, and for him, they become salt and light in a world lost in sorrow, injustice, violence, hunger, and disease. □

Luis Palau is an evangelist who has preached the gospel to more than 8 million people in 52 countries.

IT IS
A SLOW
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BUT IT IS
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An evangelistic tour in Britain: "To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history."



A CALL TO

ARMS

"Our young men, anyone with strength, abandoned us to find work in other countries," said the old man. Here's one who came back when he heard of the rice irrigation project: Abdurahman Seydou, age 22.



EARLIER IN THE DAY, while it was too hot to talk about much of anything, I had impatiently blurted out my favorite old-man question: "Where did you come from?"

So hours later, after we'd shared a meal of goat meat and rice beneath a magnificent starry sky in Mali, in West Africa, Bagna Aglebyba eased back onto the sand to tell me his story. Other, younger voices chimed in from beyond the campfire, filling in details, recalling fragments of conversation.

Almost an hour later I realized that the exciting events in his story had occurred not last week or last year, but 600 years ago. My illiterate hosts, it seems, are on a first-name basis with people 100 years older than Christopher Columbus.

Small wonder. Those ancestors of the present-day Songhai people were really something. Empire-builders. Intercontinental traders. Founders of universities. Administrators. These days we'd call them a superpower. And until their demise about 250 years ago, Bagna's forebears ruled a vast area spanning a dozen of today's West African countries.

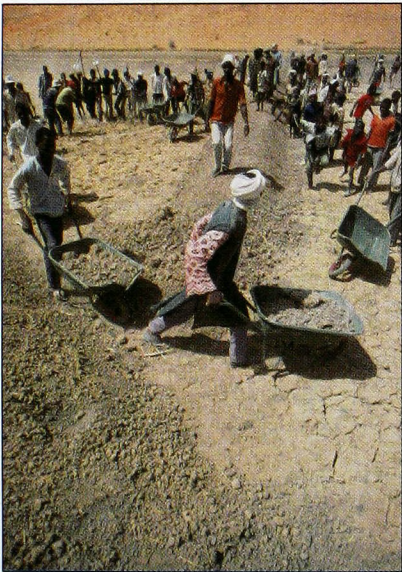
*Descendants
of empire-builders
in West Africa
dig in for the
fight of their lives*

Gao, the commercial capital of that old domain—one of Africa's largest, wealthiest, best-organized kingdoms—lay a few miles up the river from our campsite. Just a little farther was Timbuktu, that metaphor of exotic remoteness.

How did a mighty empire emerge in this place, now an environmental and economic basket case? Simple. Food. Here on the fertile banks of the River Niger, Songhai farmers grew enough to feed most of their known world.

Today, sapped by global climate shifts and relentless environmental degradation, the life-giving river has dwindled to a scant tenth of its former size. In the early 1970s, and again in the '80s, drought fed the advancing Sahara Desert. Trees and wild grasses withered. Crops and herds perished. Scorching winds and shifting sand encircled and sometimes even buried whole villages.

"All the good things in life disappeared," Bagna told me. "Our young men, anyone with strength, aban-



doned us to find work in other countries. Here at home many people starved, especially the children and—" he coughed nervously—" the old people."

In much of Mali's Seventh Region, a New Mexico-size area with a population of about 350,000, the normally harsh conditions of Africa's Sahel (the Sahara's semi-arid southern edge) degenerated to almost hostile desert conditions. The temperature by mid-morning is often 120 degrees. There isn't any shade. With the loss of so

In 120-degree heat, the men of the village of Tacherane build earthen canals. "If this work fails," one of them said, "we are finished."

much natural vegetation, it's become one of the hottest places on earth.

The Seventh Region's unique "floating rice" cultivation, mainstay of the Songhai economy throughout history, has been all but wiped out. The rain can't be counted on to germinate the rice at the proper time. Even if it did, seasonal floodwaters don't reach most of the floodplain fields any more.

And the people, these proud descendants of conquerors, have been reduced to pathetic beggars waiting

We'd been wallowing for hours across a sea of sand. Joe DeVries, a young Floridian agronomist who came to Mali with the United Nations and later joined World Vision, sat behind the wheel of our Land Cruiser.

"The best barrier to the advancing Sahara," Joe abruptly shouted above our engine's roar, "is an army of farmers, standing in their fields, growing food for their children."



impassively for the next truckload of surplus American grain.

Similarly devastated are the Songhai's immediate neighbors, the Tuareg people: 100,000 tent-dwelling shepherds who for centuries have crisscrossed the Seventh Region in a finely tuned quest for pasture and water.

Five years ago, while the world directed its compassion toward Ethiopia, here on the opposite side of Africa, 90 percent of Tuareg camels and nearly two-thirds of the goats and sheep perished—an unimaginable catastrophe for people whose austere existence has always been intertwined with the fate of their livestock.

Now, I knew that many aid officials have all but given up on the Seventh Region. *C'mon Joe, I thought, I respect your zeal, but we both know that a lot of people think mass evacuation may be the only real solution here.*

Then Joe drove us up the side of a huge dune and braked in a cloud of dust. "Ever heard of flood-recession agriculture?"

I hadn't. Far below, ringed by sand dunes, lay a startlingly green field, big as any farm I'd seen in Michigan, my old home.

"Recession sorghum," he said. "Probably about two-thirds of a ton of grain per acre. Not bad for a crop that

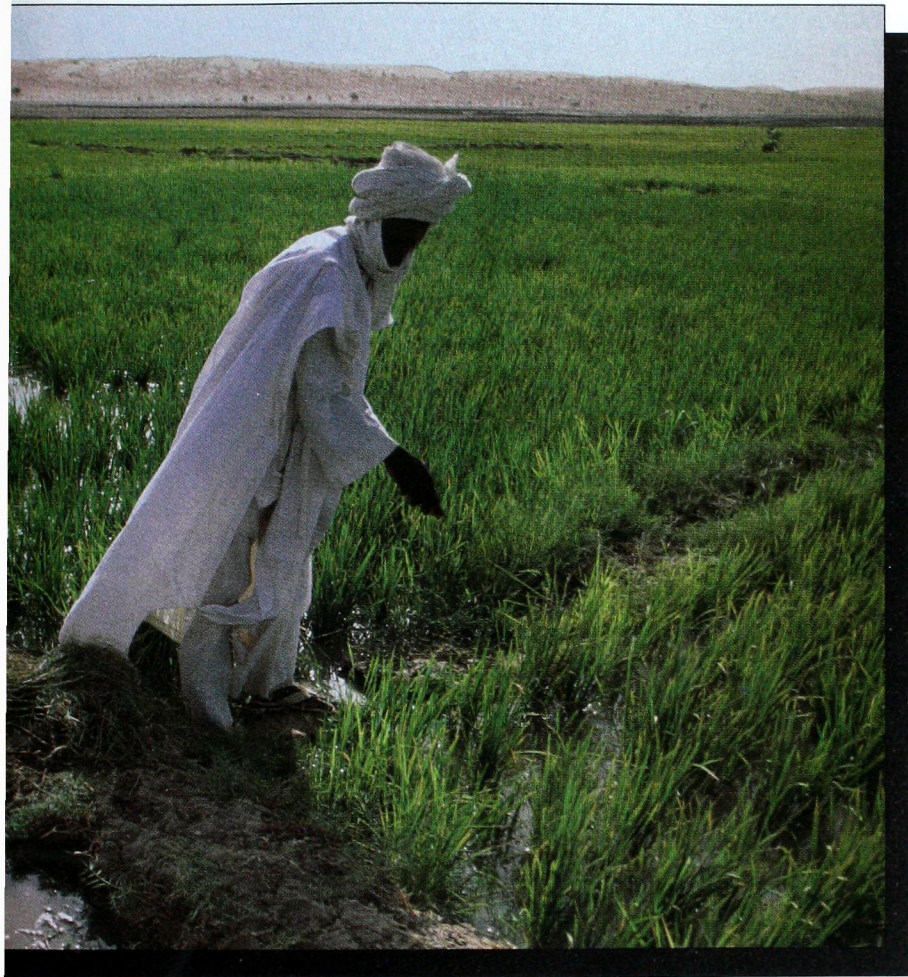
doesn't get a single drop of rain."

Joe explained that while it never rains more than a few inches a year here, runoff water collects in certain valleys and forms temporary lakes. Forty years ago some resourceful Tuareg shepherds discovered that a particular type of sorghum can flourish in these seasonal lake beds. Planted in the sandy clay as soon as the lakes disappear, the seeds grow to maturity using only the moisture left in the soil.

The Tuareg shepherds learned to

time their migratory travels to be near a promising lake bed at sowing time, then return for harvest four months later. After the 1984 drought wiped out their herds, a bumper harvest in 1985 saved lives and convinced skeptics that recession sorghum is here to stay. Today, there are more than eight square miles of scattered fields of shoulder-high sorghum.

"We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists."



"There's still lots of water here," says Joe DeVries (right). "Learning to use it is this country's best hope."

Tuareg communities like Ag Dal-lintah have formed cooperatives to invest a portion of each harvest in development resources, including drought-resistant tree seedlings and an irrigation pump for their first community vegetable garden. The people of Intadeny used sorghum to finance their area's first primary school.

Although World Vision has promoted recession sorghum since 1986, it's not part of some plan to convert the wandering Tuareg shepherds into settled farmers. The fragile ecology of Seventh Region's interior could never support permanent settlements for long.

"The Tuaregs are nomads," Joe

said, "not for sentimental reasons or because it's so wonderful to be on the move. No. They follow their seasonal migration patterns because here at the edge of the Sahara it's the only way to survive. Over the centuries they've learned what it takes to be good stewards of very thinly spread resources."

Helping the riverside Songhai farming villages has required more drastic measures. "Anything short of an agricultural revolution would be a big waste of time," Joe DeVries said.

We sat in the belly of a *pirogue*, a huge dugout canoe, as two boatmen poled us across the broad, gray-green Niger. "They're absolutely desperate," Joe said. "It's impossible for these farmers to feed their children." As the opposite bank came into view, I understood.

Fields where a green carpet of floating rice once grew now stand high and dry above the shrunken river. Robbed of their annual floods, these farms might as well be on the moon.

"Sure, the Niger is down, way down, and I expect it will stay that way," Joe said. "But there's still lots of water here. Learning how to use it is this country's best hope. We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists, as good as the Chinese or Filipinos."

In the distance I spotted 40 or 50 tiny moving figures with pick-axes, shovels, and wheelbarrows. Why were all these guys out in the midday sun during the hottest month of the year, chipping away at the crusty soil?

Dripping with sweat, Ousman Samba explained. "We can't count on the rain or the floods anymore. We haven't had a good harvest since 1972. Now everyone in Tacherane agrees to build a *perimetre irrigue villageois* [village irrigation zone]."

Digging and carrying more than 15,000 cubic yards of soil to build dikes and irrigation canals may prove one of the easier tasks facing the men of Tacherane village. If modern irrigation technology is to succeed here in the desert, they must adopt new ways and learn new skills. The villagers must adapt and control their environment as never before.

When Joe DeVries started working with the people of nearby Gabero, the community was slipping rapidly toward extinction. Nearly everyone can remember how it was before a ridge of reddish sand drifted to the edge of the village. Most of the farm animals are now gone. The wild animals have vanished too, along with their wooded habi-

tat. Starvation and disease have claimed members of every family. Many others left in search of jobs.

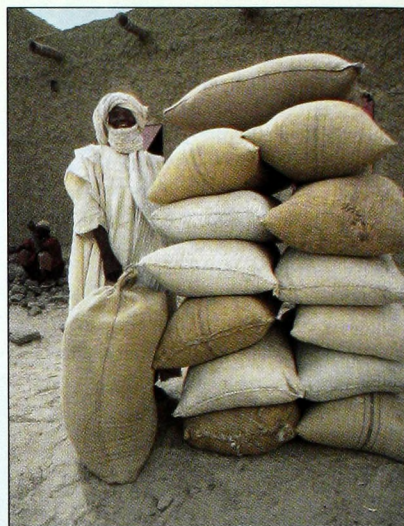
Gabero's leader, Elmaymoune Dicko, wanted to be sure I saw that not all the changes here are for the worse. We zigzagged up and down a maze of canals. A few workmen stood up to their knees in mud, weeding. In the distance a diesel irrigation pump churned.

I'd come prepared for a visual shock—a rectangular green island afloat in a sea of sand. But I hadn't expected the palpably cooler temperature inside that 43-acre *perimetre*, or the sticky mud inside my shoes. Or the

unmistakable feeling of standing on consecrated soil.

"We built it big," Elmaymoune beamed, "because we didn't want anyone to miss out on the blessings." This is the fourth year that every family in Gabero has cultivated a double crop of irrigated rice on family-size plots. Annual yields of almost 5 tons per acre are the norm, 10 times the yield of traditional floating rice.

Joe and his colleagues seem unfazed by the dismal track record of the Green Revolution elsewhere in Africa, where ambitious projects often fail because important political, social, and psychological factors are overlooked, or where



a few prosper while life for the poorest remains essentially unchanged.

"This won't be one of those colossal failures you read about," he says. "There's been too much success already for that. It's the survival instinct. It has to work. It's this, or die. Not many other development programs get such a kick in the rear.

"But even if it can't be sustained forever," Joe insists, "I guarantee that this will have been the most humane and inexpensive way to feed the people of Seventh Region in the meantime."

Although it's too soon to be sure, there are signs that even the climate may have begun to cooperate. In the past four years, rainfall consistently has been heaviest in communities with rice *perimetres*.

"When we're in our green fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else," Joe smiles. "I'm telling you, irrigated rice attracts rain."

The old men, I suspect, will always start their campfire tales in the 14th century. One can only guess how the story might unfold in this latest chapter, now being written across the sand. But a gentle old fellow gave me his personal preview, a summary of recent events too remarkable and too precious to spoil with embellishment.

"God is blessing us," he said. "My sons have returned from their undignified life in the city. We have a real home once more. My wife and my children are at my side. And I am able to look them all in the eye, knowing that I have provided well, thanks be to God." □

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

WHO'S GOT PROBLEMS?

This is sport? Every January since 1979, "The World's Longest Race" has blasted through the heart of Mali's Seventh Region on its 8,000-mile, three-week trajectory: the Paris-Dakar Rally.

Five hundred screaming cars and motorcycles, plus their support vehicles. Thirty-five private aircraft. Mobile TV satellite uplink facilities. About 2,500 foreigners.

"They raced across my backyard this year," said Joe DeVries,

World Vision agricultural engineer. "The first guys came past about noon, and stragglers were limping in at midnight. Then at dawn they all took off again. Except for all the ruts, you'd never know it happened."

Attracting an estimated \$100 million in worldwide television, advertising, and sponsorship revenues, the event uses Africa's poorest corner to showcase an array of motor-vehicle products, consumer electronics, cigarettes, you name it. It has even graced the desert with an "official beverage."

"When I see it all," remarked a bewildered Malian farmer, "I realize that we are not the only people with problems." *David Ward*

Showcasing glamorous products against Africa's poorest corner: the 1990 Paris-Dakar Rally.



BRUCE STRONG



Encountering God through prayer in solitude can be one of the most gratifying things we can experience, says author and priest Henri Nouwen. It can also be one of the most difficult.

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but also that he is actively present in our lives—healing, teaching, and guiding—we need to set aside a time and space to give him our undivided attention. Jesus says, “Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place.”

To bring some solitude into our lives is one of the most necessary but also most difficult disciplines. Even though we may have a deep desire for real solitude, we also experience a certain apprehension as we approach that solitary place and time. As soon as we are alone, without people to talk with, books to read, television to watch, or phone calls to make, an inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again.

Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings, and impulsive desires.

On the contrary, when we have removed our outer distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force. We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises. It is thus not surprising that we have a difficult time being alone. The confrontation with our inner conflicts can be too painful for us to endure.

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray that** people just now receiving Jesus Christ will weave the gospel into the fabric of their societies (pages 4-8).
- ◆ **Thank God** for the ancient wisdom of West African peoples (pages 9-12) *and* for their openness to new ways.
- ◆ **Pray for** the success of peacemakers in Central America (pages 14-15).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Bill Doulos (pages 18-21) and others who show that giving one's life away is not just for superheroes.

PRAYER IN SOLITUDE

It is clear that what matters is faithfulness to the discipline. In the beginning, solitude seems so contrary to our desires that we are constantly tempted to run away from it. One way of running away is daydreaming or simply falling asleep.

But when we stick to our discipline, in the conviction that God is with us even when we do not yet hear him, we slowly discover that we do not want to miss our time alone with God. Although we do not experience much satisfaction in our solitude, we realize that a day without solitude is less “spiritual” than a day with it.

The discipline of solitude is one of the most

One of the things that makes God God is that he knows everything; so when I have wishes in regard to other people, I just say their names. I let him fill in the rest. ... I just keep on saying the names of people I love.

Barbara Grizutti
Harrison

powerful disciplines in developing a prayerful life. It is a simple, though not easy, way to free us from the slavery of our occupations and pre-occupations, and to begin to hear the voice that makes all things new.

Although the discipline of solitude asks us to set aside time and space, what finally

matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do.

The more we train ourselves to spend time with God and him alone, the more we will discover that God is with us at all times and in all places. Then we will be able to recognize him even in the midst of a busy and active life.

Once the solitude of time and space has become a solitude of the heart, we will never have to leave that solitude. We will be able to live the spiritual life in any place and any time. Thus the discipline of solitude enables us to live active lives in the world, while remaining always in the presence of the living God. □

Adapted from *Making All Things New—An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen. Copyright © 1981 by Henri J.M. Nouwen. By arrangement with Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

In December 1989, once again it seemed that Central America would bury itself under an avalanche of violence. Nicaragua battled the Contras and yelled at Honduras for harboring them. El Salvador, in the midst of a civil war, fought desperately against a new guerrilla offensive. Reports trickled out of Guatemala about continuing human-rights abuses. And seemingly all of Latin America was screaming at the United States for shooting it out with Gen. Manuel Noriega.

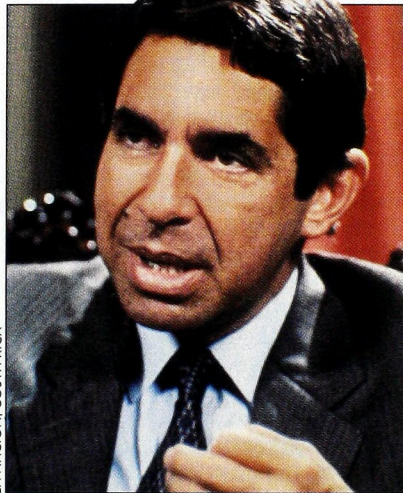
There was, however, one voice calling for peace in the region: President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, perhaps the only statesperson that everyone from the United States

to Nicaragua, and El Salvador to Argentina, respects and admires.

Arias' thoughts and plans are extremely important to North Americans. For the past four years he has presided over Costa Rica, Latin America's most thriving democracy—and the only one with no armed forces.

In 1987, Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize for his plan to end the fighting in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. In March 1988, he established the first extended cease-fire between the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the U.S.-backed Contras. And at a summit meeting of the region's presidents last December, Arias submitted another proposal to end escalating violence in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

There are so many ways of obtaining the support, affection, and gratitude of the people of Latin America through U.S. help and understanding, that I think [the United States] should concentrate on a dialogue with us—not the use of force.
—President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, in a 1988 interview.



LA NACIÓN, COSTA RICA

IN DEFENSE OF PEACEMAKING

*Can Costa Rica's blueprint
work throughout Central America?
President Oscar Arias Sánchez
suggests it can.*

This May, however, the 49-year-old president and peacemaker will step down, having served the constitutional limit of one term in office. W. Dayton Roberts of World Vision recently interviewed President Arias to discuss peacemaking and other issues he has faced during the past four years.

ROBERTS: The Nobel Prize acknowledged not only the value of your peace initiative, but also your leadership as a respected peacemaker in this troubled region. What spiritual values or experiences have launched you into this role?

ARIAS: First, when seeking peace for the region, I represent the deep Costa Rican desire to see the differences between peoples resolved and settled in a civilized way, through dialogue and negotiations, never through violence and war.

Costa Rica has made dialogue its main instrument. To negotiate, one must know how to tolerate, to give in. One must be willing to accept that one may be wrong; one must not have dogmas. There is nothing worse than being a prisoner of dogmas and ideas.

So I have interpreted some of the Costa Rican desire that these problems or conflicts that divide our peoples will be settled and solved through negotiation and dialogue.

War leaves very deep wounds that are difficult to heal. It divides people forever. Examples are the wars in Central America, and the hate and resentment that have left wounds behind. Societies have been completely divided throughout the years. Years go by and those wounds are not erased. But sooner or later, Central America will simply have to find peace.

There are also Christian feelings; that is, the love for human life. Truly, no one can be in favor of violence and of endangering human lives. There is nothing more sacred than the life of a man, woman, or child. This is altogether apart from the fact that war in Central America is damaging Costa Rica's possibilities for economic growth.

ROBERTS: Many years ago, Costa Rica abolished its army. What difference does this make to the Costa Rican people? Do they feel insecure?

ARIAS: Latin America needs to find the courage José Figueres displayed 40 years ago when he abolished the Costa Rican army. Obviously, this has provided Costa Rica with its political and social stability. Since money is not spent on arms, those resources are


used to meet the most urgent needs of our population.

We have built a nation of well-being rather than a nation of fortifications. This is what has made the big difference between Costa Rica and the rest of Latin America.

In the 40 years since we dissolved our army, all the countries of Central America have experienced military dictatorships, and some of them still do. But not Costa Rica. Our liberties have never been threatened, nor have we known the humiliation of a regime imposed on us by force.

While students, peasants, and workmen have died in the conflicts of our sister nations, in 40 years no mother in Costa Rica has wept for the death of her son at the hands of a soldier, or because of a tyrant's indifference. Nor has any Costa Rican been exiled, tortured, imprisoned, or executed by a dictator.

As I recently stated in a speech to



Sooner or later, Central America will simply have to find peace.

the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is time that we honor the *comandantes* of peace, like Don José (Pepe) Figueres, who disarm their people so they can be free and can work for development, rather than the military *comandantes* who senselessly accumulate arms in the face of the hunger and submission of their citizens.

ROBERTS: Disarmament is one of your passions, and you see the production, traffic, and consumption of arms as a plague upon the continent. What have you done to dramatize these concerns and encourage other countries to follow Costa Rica's lead?

ARIAS: We have declared December 1 to be "Army Abolition Day," and we celebrate it with pride. I have also eliminated the ranks and military-type uniforms that had been used by our police.

Each country has its own responsibility in this crusade. Some will have to destroy nuclear warheads and others military uniforms, but all must work, tirelessly, for disarmament, for demili-

tarization.

The arms that were once symbols of liberty and independence have been transformed all too frequently into symbols of underdevelopment and oppression.

ROBERTS: Everything seems to circle back to the need for peacemaking.

ARIAS: War is incompatible with the welfare of the Central American people. With the exception of Costa Rica, all the other countries have been impoverished. Our prosperity, in large measure, is the result of Costa Rica's success in avoiding war.

ROBERTS: Costa Rica has also been unusually successful in involving women in public life and in influential political positions. Why are Costa Rican women generally well-qualified for such positions, and what are you doing to encourage this trend?


ARIAS: That was one of my most important campaign promises. I promised to provide more opportunities for women.

Comparing Costa Rican women's educational level with that of other Latin American women, I think that Costa Rican women have had more educational opportunities. You can see that in our universities today: Half of the students are women. Women were granted the right to vote in 1949, and from then on, their participation in this country's political life has been increasing.

Now I want to cap this process with legislation that will force all political parties and all government administrations to give women their place. This legislation also has sections covering the social and economic rights of women, and protection from sexual abuse.

In the introduction to the proposed law on women's rights is my promise: "I reaffirm our commitment to struggle tirelessly for the full involvement of women. In the same way in which the love and selflessness of Christian women have given testimony to us since Calvary, their full incorporation into our society can only be a promise of a greater Costa Rica."

ROBERTS: One final question. Are you familiar with the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"?

ARIAS: Yes, it is a sustaining thought. 

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope

GETTING PERSONAL

"It works both ways," says Bob Kopeny, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Placentia, Calif. "We support our sister church in Havana out of our abundance, and it helps our people realize how much of the church around the world is a suffering church.

"At the same time, they support us out of their own abundance, with their prayers and encouragement. We already sense this happening. Several of our people are already hoping to meet their sister church face to face soon."

The two churches got together

A Cuban church: ASSIST links U.S. churches with those in restricted countries.



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

through ASSIST, a ministry that links congregations in the United States with those in religiously restricted countries.

Contact ASSIST at P.O. Box 41179, Pasadena, CA 91114-8179; (818) 398-2466.

GINGER HOPE / WORLD VISION



"Now can I play Space Invaders?"

TUTORING AND TLC

It's a sort of controlled chaos. Nine terminals beep and flash. Nine keyboards rattle and click. Nine squirmy kids try to pull one over on four good-natured tutors.

"OK, I finished my spelling, can I play Space Invaders now?"

"No way, I saw how many words you missed that time."

The kid groans and squirms

some more. "This stuff is too hard. I can't get it."

"Sure you can." A playful box of the ears. "Now let's take it nice and slow from the beginning."

This is the Neighborhood Learning Center, two rooms of a tall, skinny row house less than a mile from the Capitol. When Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship, an interdenominational church, asked its neighbors what the church should be doing for the community, this was the answer. Most of the 16 center's volunteer tutors come from the church.

A nearby grade school refers children to the center for tutoring and TLC. Between the after-school homework lab, the art class, the evening tutoring program, and the occasional stray who just drops in to say hi, the center reaches about 30 kids a day.

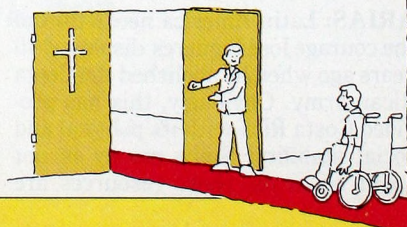
The Neighborhood Learning Center is at 907 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20002; (202) 543-2881.

A BARRIER-FREE CHURCH

"Christ's Love Accessible to All" is the theme of a congress on the church and disability, beginning May 30 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.

This second annual congress, sponsored by Joni and Friends and The Christian Council on Persons With Disabilities, will be the first to include international participants. Joni Eareckson Tada, Dave Roever, and Tim Hansel are among the scheduled speakers.

For registration information contact Joni and Friends, P.O. Box 3333, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.



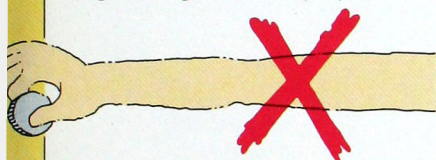
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

JOIN THE CLUB

One of the growing movements among people who work in disadvantaged communities is Christian community development (CCD). Roughly defined, CCD refers to Christians living in communities of need, working alongside the people to improve their lives—as opposed to handout-style charity.

The Christian Community Development Association will help people start or continue CCD work, supplying a forum for mutual support. In the works are five regional training centers, where fledgling CCDers can study the philosophy, techniques, and hands-on work of more mature CCD ministries.

For information contact CCDA, c/o Cynder Baptista, P.O. Box 459, Angels Camp, CA 95221; (209) 728-1485.



“I don't think there's anything in particular about being Christian that enables you to do something that someone else can't do. But I think it might move you to attempt to do something. I once read a book called *The Recovery of Life's Meaning* that spelled out a very simple theology. Creation, it said, was not just an event in time but an ongoing process. We are God's instruments for carrying forward creation. Therefore, the mission of a Christian is to be a co-creator. ... In the spirit of co-creators, we should be moved to solve the problems around us.

James Rouse in
The Other Side



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.

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for your church's young people.**

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Please send me materials needed to organize our Planned Famine today. We are considering the date: _____
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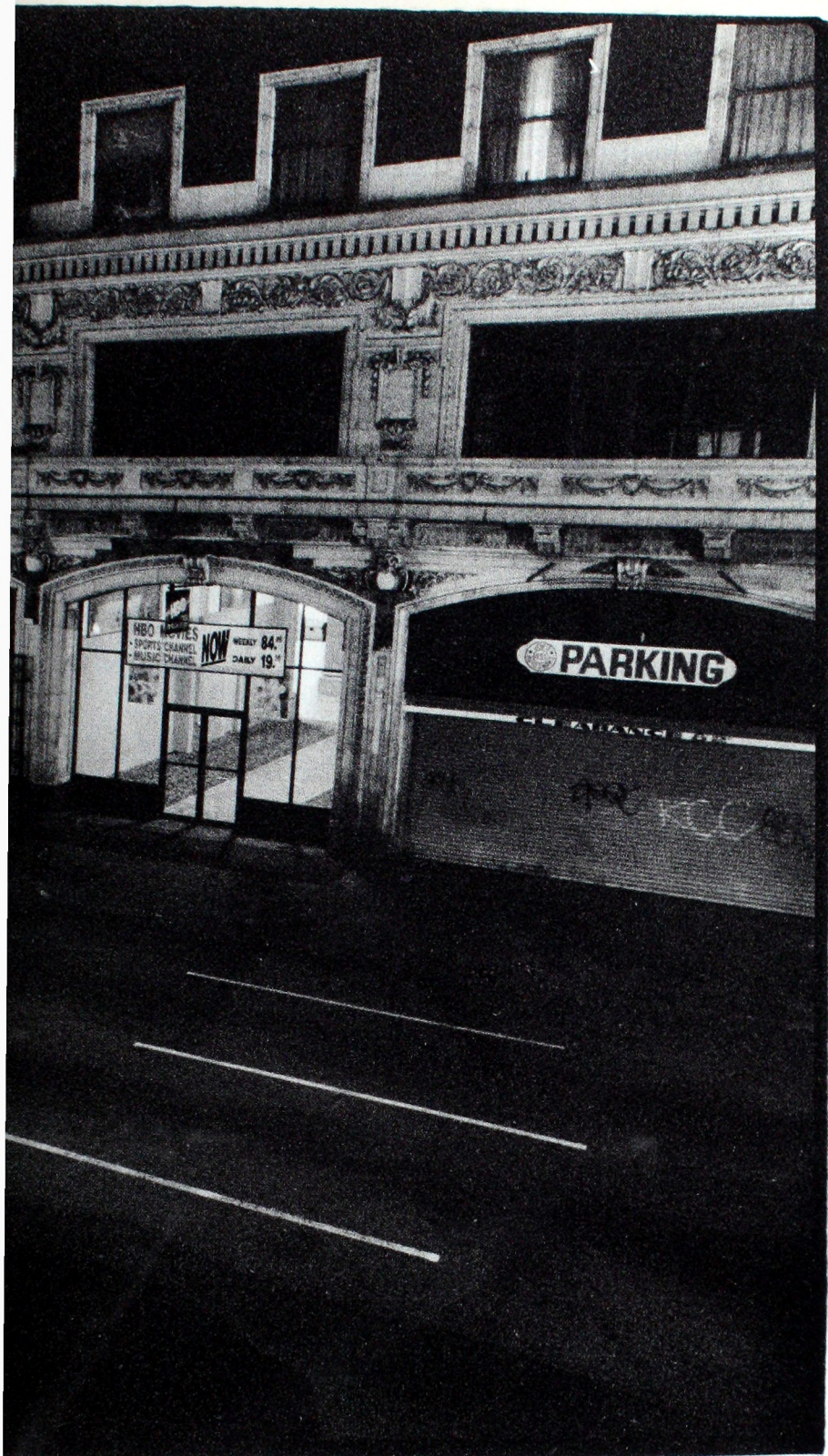
Prostitutes, drug deals and muggings can be seen most any night from Bill's second-story apartment window.

BY RANDY MILLER

Something woke him up. Someone yelling down the street maybe. A car horn. Glass breaking. He's not sure. He checked the time: 4 a.m.

Bill Doulos
lives up to
his name on
Skid Row

A ROOM WITH A VIEW



A light breeze was blowing in through the open window of his one-room apartment in the old Pennsylvania Hotel in the bowels of Los Angeles. He usually kept the window closed. But on that night, the July heat wouldn't let him.

He kicked off the sheets and walked

to the window. The street two stories below was dark and still. Whatever had woken him up had driven away, run off, or fallen asleep.

He stood at the window for a while, feeling the night air on his face and surveying his restless neighborhood in a rare moment of calm. Then a



DEANNE EDWARDS

Renamed "The Genesis" when its new occupants took over last spring, Skid Row's old Pennsylvania Hotel stands as a symbol of hope in a decayed community.

flicker of light caught his eye, like someone lighting a cigarette. He saw the orange profile of a face and the vague form of someone scrunched down on a loading dock in a trash-strewn alley nearby.

But the odd thing was that the light didn't go out. There was no click of metal on metal, no flicking the lighter shut. Just a steady burning. A minute later, it went out. Then he saw it again. A small constant flame. The

kind of steady burn you need for a hit of crack.

Bill Doulos had seen a lot from his window in the two months he had lived in the once-elegant 70-year-old hotel, now flanked by an adult bookstore to the south and a liquor store to the north. From that window, he had seen a continuous parade of prostitutes, pimps, and winos. He'd seen muggings and assaults. He'd seen homeless people warming themselves at sidewalk campfires. He'd seen their sleeping forms crammed into corners, with feet sticking out from under thin plastic sheeting and old cardboard.

“I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. What I'm doing is not heroic.”

But despite everything he'd already seen in the gritty streets of Los Angeles, that lingering orange glow suddenly brought something into focus for him.

“I stood there and watched this guy who was experiencing exhilaration in such a stunningly artificial way because he was living in such desolation,” Bill says. “I mean, here's this guy out in the street in the middle of the darkness, going for this artificial high that, for him, was the only thing he had that resembled hope or beauty or happiness. It was the only thing he had that could remove him, if only for a few seconds at a time, from the desperate situation that is his life. That incident, for me, is a metaphor for people living on Skid Row.”

While most people might wave reality in your face and claim that you just can't save some people, Bill Doulos thinks that as long as someone is breathing, there is a flicker of hope, even if that flicker is coming from under a crack pipe in some back alley. That's part of the reason he wound up on Skid Row himself last April.

Bill has known a lot of barely breathing, bottomed-out people in the past 16 years, mostly through his work in Pasadena, Calif., where he directs Union

Station, a soup kitchen and shelter for the homeless founded by All Saints Episcopal Church in 1973. When All Saints church and Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles joined forces not long ago to purchase and renovate two run-down Skid Row hotels for low-rent apartments, they needed someone to live there as an owners' representative. Bill took the job.

What a noble thing. What a Peace Corps, roll-up-your-sleeves, hunker-down-with-poor-folks-for-a-year kind of thing to do. He knows that some of the people in the middle-class churches who pay his salary have him pegged as some kind of oddball saint.

“I don't feel deprived living in that hotel,” he says. “I resist the idea that there's something special about my living there. I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. I'm not an extremist. What I'm doing is not heroic.”

Maybe not. Still, some risk is involved. A well-dressed white person walking late at night anywhere in the vicinity of Fifth and Main is a heart-warming sight to a mugger. “Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised,” he admits. “But that won't make me change what I'm doing.”

Bill didn't lie awake nights as a child in Johnstown, Penn., dreaming of one day enjoying an alley-view apartment in a Skid Row hotel. For a while, he thought he wanted to be a preacher. One summer in his high school years he read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. What he read, he took seriously. And still does. But sitting in the com-

fortable pews of his boyhood church he began to wonder, “Where is the persecution that Christ promised? Where is the suffering? Where is the sacrifice?”

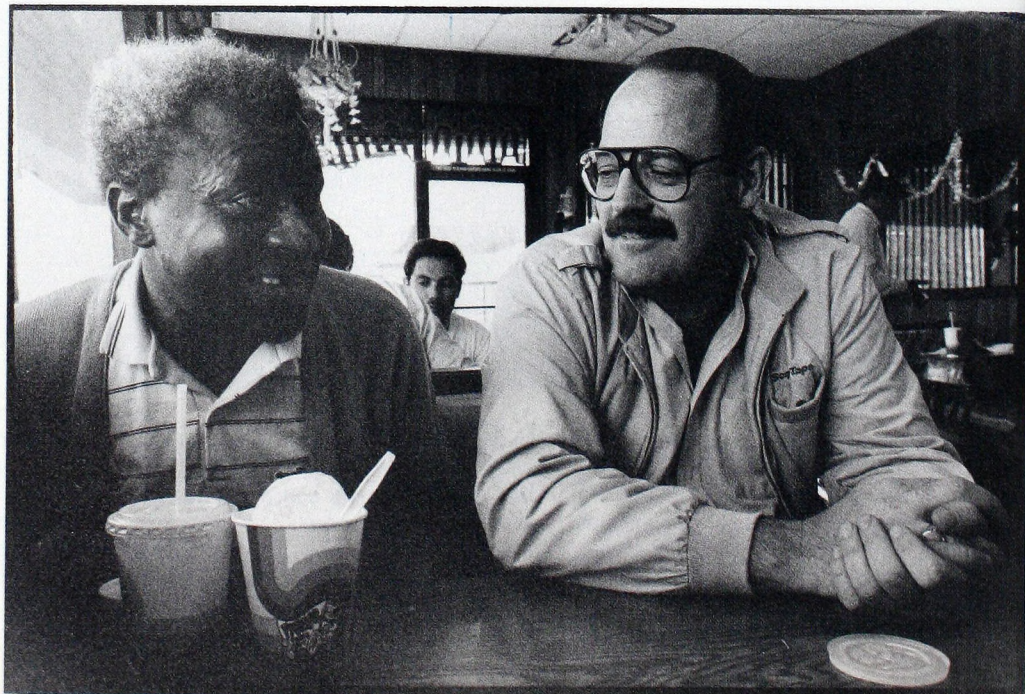
A few years later, with college behind him, he found the answers to some of his questions at Koinonia Farms in Americus, Ga., where a small community of believers were living the kind of gospel he'd found in the Bible. Their example helped shape his faith and guide him into the kind of ministry he practices today. It was during a summer visit to Koinonia that he also decided to change his name.

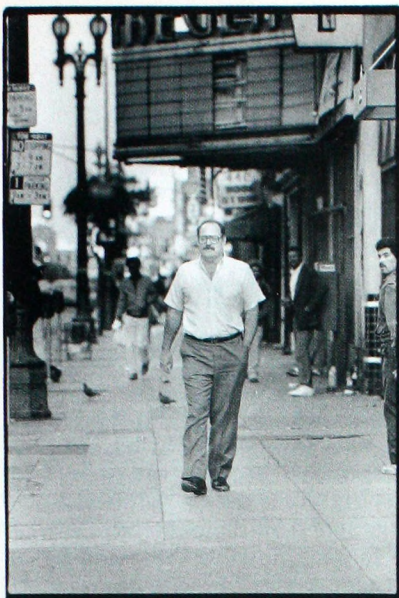
He was born William Henry Lane II in 1943, but decided to take on a name that would symbolize his deepened commitment to Christ. He chose *doulos*, the Greek word the apostle Paul used for slave, or servant, of Christ. During the summer of 1974, he legally changed his name to Bill Lane Doulos.

Bill eventually moved to Pasadena where, in 1974, he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. Shortly after that, he took a job with All Saints church's outreach program to street people. One of his main duties soon became mopping the floor at Union Station.

In those days, he had more time with the street people who wandered through Union Station. Today he spends most of his hours shuffling through stacks of paper on his desk or gnashing his teeth over administrative problems at headache-maker meetings about building codes. But he still makes time for guys like Roosevelt.

“I'd cut off my right arm for Bill Doulos,” says Roosevelt, a recovering alcoholic and longtime friend of Bill's. “Can't nobody say nothin' bad about him, you understand?”





"Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised."

Roosevelt is missing several teeth, his left eye, and the birthdates of three of his five children. The iris of his remaining eye is cloudy, and in the center of it is a milky white dot the size of a match head. He is 90 percent blind, but Bill is hoping Roosevelt will stay sober long enough to qualify for a cornea transplant at the county hospital.

Roosevelt met Bill 16 years ago, shortly after Union Station opened. For most of those years he was drunk. Today he's dry and living in a board-and-care house in the predominantly poor, black section of northwest Pasadena. He is Bill's age, but looks 20 years older.

Lunch twice a week with Roosevelt helps Bill put his administrative hassles into perspective—and keep his sense of humor intact.

"My good eye jumped out on me twice," Roosevelt says, making a stab at some smog-brown mashed potatoes while seated in a booth next to Bill at Pioneer Chicken. "One time I was talking to a guy and it just fell out. I put it back in and I could see fine.

"I lost my fake eye a couple years ago. It was bothering me, so I took it out and put it in my coat pocket. Then some guy stole my coat. I bet he was surprised when he reached into that pocket."

If all goes well, Roosevelt will have both sockets full and his good eye functioning at 20/20 in a few weeks.

The Roosevelts of Skid Row and northwest Pasadena are challenging cases, but Bill finds them easier to deal with—or at least to know what to do with—than people like the well-inten-

tioned woman who wanted to know where she could donate several cardboard boxes for homeless people to sleep in.

"Those people mean well, but the dilemma I face constantly is how to channel people's good intentions into actions that really do some good," Bill says. "Actually, I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive, so that they see outreach not as just a one-shot thing or some kind of novelty, but something that they can do the rest of their lives."

"Bill is the kind of person who seems equally comfortable with either the board president or the wino with a fifth-grade education," says friend and Union Station staff member Bill Morgan. "He can communicate up and down the whole spectrum of life."

One place the whole spectrum converges is at Pasadena's Green Street Park on Christmas day, when Union Station staffers and a few hundred volunteers lay out a holiday feast for the city's street people. It's a place where homeless families, basket ladies, and toothless, grizzly-faced, gray-haired men in grimy polyester mingle with old-money Pasadenans in their Christmas-morning ski sweaters, and acid-washed jeans.

On Christmas 1989, a balmy day under creamy gray skies, the volunteers nearly outnumber the street people. A Donna Reed look-alike in a white Snoopy sweatshirt spoons dressing onto paper plates. A teal blue Jaguar XJ6 slips up to the curb. The driver hops out, opens the trunk and drops off a ham, then makes a hasty getaway. A yuppie choir stands in a half-circle and sings carols, clapping on the downbeat to Jingle Bells, and applauding themselves when they finish. A woman hoists a video camera to her shoulder to capture the day's events.

It all rings a little, well, phony. Lots of people with too much money doing their once-a-year good deed for the poor. Isn't it a little hypocritical? Bill stops his glad-handing and hugging long enough to ponder the question as he looks over the crowd.

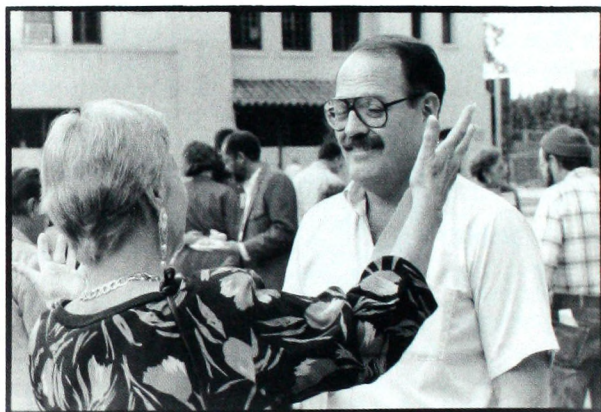
"This organization wouldn't exist if people didn't feel guilty," he says

The woman wanted to know where she could donate cardboard boxes for the homeless to sleep in.

with a half-smile. "I'd rather have people cook their turkeys, drop them off, and leave—if they don't feel they can stay—than to have them not do even that.

"I don't know how to be pure and get anything done," he muses. "I hope to bring people in, show them ways to help, and then nurture them so that they no longer operate just out of guilt.

"I'm not so uptight about how sinful somebody may be. Spiritual navel-gazing and getting all worked up about



"I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive."

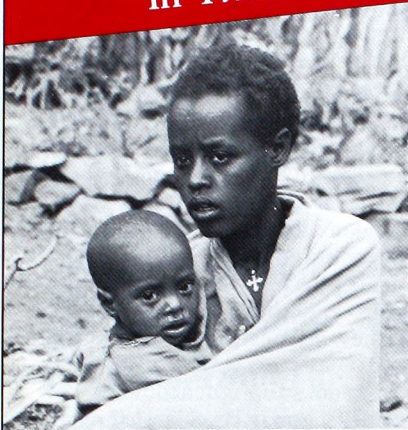
guilt is immobilizing. You can't get anything done that way."

One of the half-dozen books on the nightstand next to Bill's bed in his Skid Row apartment is *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. He read it over Christmas last year. That and *The Plague*, also by Camus.

"Depressing books," Bill says, heading north on the Pasadena freeway from downtown Los Angeles for a little late-evening work. "Camus would say that the essence of reality is that bleak sense of overwhelming pessimism and despair. I say that's what we're up against, and we have to combat it."

No small feat. But possible, perhaps, for one who won't give up on the chance that even a faint orange glow in a darkened alley can be fanned into a flame of hope. □

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BOOKS

THE AGONY OF AFFLUENCE

By William W. Wells. Zondervan Publishing House, 128 pages, \$7.95. Reviewed by Rick Cordell.

Is affluence really agonizing?

Granted, it does bring its own stresses and perplexities. But agony? Many of the millions of Christians, including pastors, who have lived near or below the federal poverty level may be put off by this book's title.

Beyond the distracting title, however, there's a wealth of helpful material packed into this too-short book. It addresses a relevant issue for most American Christians: How should we rich (at least, comparatively) Christians relate to a world of people existing in genuine poverty? Are we, in fact, greedy and gluttonous? Or do we just feel guilty?

In the past 15 years, dozens of books and articles by Christian thinkers have debated such questions. Alas, information overload in yet another field. Even if one had the leisure to read all this, it's unfamiliar terrain. What are the main contours? Where does one begin? True, Larry Burkett can help with the family budget, but that still leaves the broader questions dealt with by the likes of Ron Sider, David Chilton, and Kenneth Copeland.

William Wells begins in the right direction by attempting to correct some basic misconceptions about wealth and justice, national economies and exploitation. He then offers simple descriptions of capitalist and socialist economic systems, evaluating their effectiveness in helping the poor.

Several passages are succinct and insightful, such as the sections on the rights and responsibilities of the poor and the rich. It would be better if Wells had spent another paragraph or two developing some important ideas that he mentions only in passing, such as

the concept of sacrifice.

As an introduction to the main issues, the book does all the things that a good discussion-starter ought to do. Its basic definitions and concise overviews give sufficient clarity and perspective to enable immediate interaction on a productive (if not erudite) level. Wells focuses the primary questions for us and offers his own tentative answers in a way that stimulates more questions.

But his discussion is marred at points by generalizations (e.g. "Jesus was not an ascetic" or "The Bible does not address unjust social structures") that cry out for qualification. For example, in an otherwise sensible and balanced section on appropriate consumption for the Christian, Wells summarily dismisses the "simple lifestyle" approach with a virtual wave of the hand. It's also disappointing to find him indulging in an occasionally facile handling of Scripture, ranging from proof-texting to a sloppy allusion or two.

But back to the heart of the issue: How can a Christian know how much to consume and how much to give? Wells offers a number of apt suggestions. He also acknowledges that we depend ultimately on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but carries that crucial idea no further, leaving the reader to wonder whether the Spirit's guidance is individualistic or arbitrary. Is the church capable of discerning the general direction the Spirit provides, or are we abandoned to "unresolvable dilemmas" and "ambiguity"?

Wells succeeds in drawing readers into the thick of the discussion, which is his goal. The 20 pages following the text greatly enhance the book's usefulness: End notes and an index supplement an excellent annotated bibliography, which surveys both journal articles and books.

This short discussion guide deserves a large audience. Most of us needn't agonize over investing our wealth in it. □

Rick Cordell is a free-lance writer in Portland, Ore.

GOD'S FRIGHTENING CALL

There was no reason Marley Spilman should have felt a void in her life. No reason she could see, anyway. She had achieved the American Dream. She had everything that society had always promised would insure happiness: a beautiful home in a nice neighborhood, a loving husband, and two wonderful children. She worked with Girl Scouts and was choir director at her church. It didn't make sense that she should feel such a gnawing emptiness inside.

Reading the Bible only made things worse, especially those passages where Jesus insists his disciples give up everything in order to follow him. The Old Testament didn't offer much comfort, either. Especially the part about Abraham carrying his commitment to God so far that he was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac if that was what the Lord required.

It was too much to ask. Being willing to give up material possessions was one thing. But turn her back on her family? Could God demand such a thing?

Months of wrestling with those issues left little doubt in her mind that God was calling her for something. But she wasn't ready to fully commit herself if it meant turning away from her family. Not until Pentecost Sunday in 1970, when the sermon title happened to be "Learning to Say Goodbye."

After church, she told her husband about the calling she felt. She told him that God might require her to leave. "We had been married 14 years," she says. "The thought of what might happen was devastating to him. That was the first time I'd ever seen him cry. Finally, he said, 'Honey, if God is calling you, you have to go.'"

She had taken the final step. At that moment, she realized that she was ready to go wherever God would lead. "I felt a rush of the Holy Spirit," she says. "My whole body just flooded with it. It was an incredible spiritual experience."

It may not have been the same angel who grabbed Abraham's hand as he was about to slay Isaac, but eventually Marley realized that she would not have to leave her family. Not permanently, anyway. She did spend a few quiet weeks after that Pentecost Sunday on a farm in rural Minnesota, reading, praying, trying to get a fix on what God had in mind for her. It didn't come into focus all at once, but soon enough she realized that a ministry in

some form of pastoral counseling was the direction she should go.

Shortly after finishing seminary, Marley took a position as associate pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Santa Clara, Calif. But her ministry goes well beyond St. Paul's parish. Today, 20 years after that wrenching, exhilarating Pentecost Sunday, her reach extends to the streets of San Jose, Santa Clara, and surrounding communities, where she is sometimes called the Mother Teresa of Silicon Valley—especially among street people and the homeless.

In 1986 she took a leave from her pastoral position at St. Paul's to devote herself full time to her ministry to the homeless, called ACTS (Acts Contributing To Solutions) for the Homeless. In some ways, ACTS is just an extension of what Marley and her husband have been doing for years on a smaller scale: opening their home to people in need of shelter. They've had as many as 15 people in sleeping bags on their living room floor at one time or another. Through ACTS, she is providing affordable housing for homeless families and individuals.

"All of this is really just an outgrowth of the love and compassion of God. That moves me to see dignity and loveliness in every child of God I encounter," Marley says. "It hasn't always been easy. But I've come to realize that God is faithful. God does not desert us.

"Initially, it can be scary. I was very frightened at first. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!" □

Randy Miller

"Initially, it can be scary. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!"



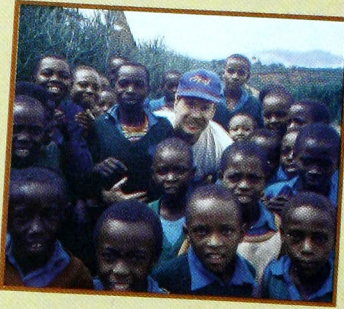
RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION

“I’ve seen it. I’ve been there. As a pastor and childcare sponsor, I wanted to see for myself what World Vision’s child sponsorship program really *does* for children.

So I went to Africa. And what I saw *astonished* me — and thrilled my heart.

I saw hungry children being fed, because of World Vision sponsorship... I saw sick children receiving excellent medical care, because someone back in the United States was sponsoring them.

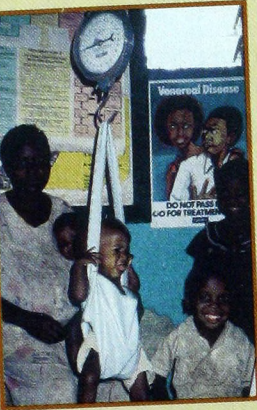
But most important of all, in the countries I visited I saw sponsored children coming to Christ — accepting Him as their Lord and Savior — through the personal, practical, *daily Christian witness* of World Vision’s outstanding workers.



I came home more determined than ever to see *our church family* get involved in reaching children with the life-transforming message of the Gospel — *through World Vision sponsorship.*

We began with our youth group. They set out an empty water jug and put loose change in it to sponsor one little Ethiopian girl. The excitement was contagious as they demonstrated the love of Christ in action.

Soon we all realized that if just a few of our young people, with nothing more than *pocket change*, can help transform one life for eternity — how much more could our whole church family accomplish for the cause of Christ?



Ever since, I’ve encouraged all the pastors I know to experience the joy of World Vision childcare sponsorship. And as a result, I’ve seen *114 needy children* sponsored by Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, adult classes and entire churches.

Please consider how *your church* can sponsor a child through World Vision, and see how your giving can touch a needy child’s life... *for eternity!*”

— Rev. Mark Barrett
Kumalani Chapel
Lahaina, Hawaii



YES! We’d like to consider group sponsorship of a needy child.

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April/May 1990

In Mali:

A CALL TO FARMS

Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias:

**STILL PUSHING
FOR PEACE**

Evangelist Luis Palau:

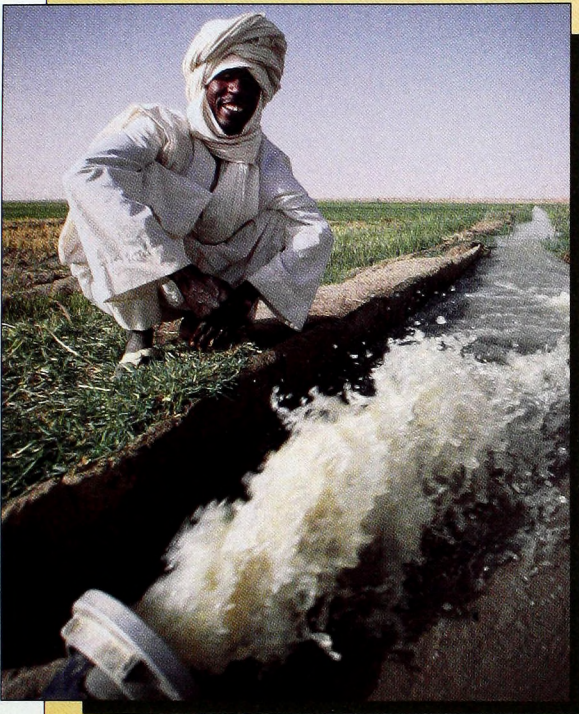
**CHANGING
THE WORLD
FROM
THE INSIDE
OUT**

4 **Evangelism Is Social Action**

Spreading the gospel is all well and good, but why doesn't he do something about the social needs in the Third World countries where he often preaches? Evangelist Luis Palau says social change is exactly what his 25-year ministry has been about.

9 **A Call to Farms**

West African farmers in Mali's Seventh Region are relying on sweat and ingenuity to fight an advancing desert. Many aid officials say it's a losing battle. But, to everyone's surprise but their own, these tough cultivators are turning barren patches of desert into emerald oases of fertile cropland.



While Songhai farmers are in their fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else.

| | |
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| Redeeming the Dump | 2 |
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| God's Frightening Call | 23 |

World Vision places a priority on holistic evangelism—meeting the physical, social, and spiritual needs of individuals in an integrated approach. You'll find "evangelism" at work, in different ways, in different circumstances, in this issue. The title of Luis Palau's article cuts both ways: Evangelism is social action, and social action sensitively and prayerfully done by Christians can be powerfully evangelistic.

Terry Madison

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

14 **In Defense of Peacemaking**

Central America's Nobel Prize-winner has an impressive blueprint for peace that's begging to be tried. Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez looks for the day when leaders in that war-ravaged region will put down their guns and take his plan seriously.

18 **A Room With a View**

He knows he'll probably get mugged sometime in the next few years. Living on Skid Row in Los Angeles has its downside. But Bill Doulos wouldn't change what he's doing there—helping to provide low-cost housing for inner-city residents, some of whom used to make their beds out of cardboard boxes and concrete.

WORLD VISION

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REDEEMING THE DUMP

The biblical description is unnerving and unbelievable. It is called hell, “where the fire is not quenched and the worm is not consumed.” Christ can only hint at the pathos when he likens it to a garbage dump outside of a Judean city.

In Guatemala City the metaphor and the reality are one and the same. We were standing safely above the city dump on top of a building used by World Vision as a day-care center for children of parents working in the dump. The perpetual internal combustion created billows of noxious fumes and smoke, periodically hiding the hundreds of pickers working through the garbage. Maggots, those worms that, in truth, cannot be consumed, continuously carried out the work of decay.

Drivers and pickers made up the work force of the dump. They deposited, selected, and gathered again the acres upon acres of steaming refuse.

Not only do hundreds of people work in the dump, they also live there with their families. They are held hostage. The economic and living options are inextricably linked. One member of our group said it insightfully: “They were in the dump and the dump was in them.”

The dump is also a dangerous place which the Guatemalan city police refuse to enter. The turf has been staked out by strong-armed thugs who place a high value on the garbage.

Unfortunately, only the garbage appears to have value. Children are abused. Alcohol, drugs, and prostitution provide diversions to lives and income for living. In many families, the fathers are unknown. Brothers and sisters live and sleep together. And they all live for today.

Hope is not easily understood in the dump. Granted, a number of children do gather daily at the World Vision day-care center. And a school bus goes through, allowing a few children—if

their parents don’t protest—to spend part of the day outside. But these represent very, very small signs of hope.

The city’s garbage trucks constantly stream down into the pit. As they arrive, the children, who form the largest group of pickers, swarm in like fish in a tank gobbling up food.

Despair, hopelessness, overwhelming pathos, and spiritual warfare dominate the dump. The forces of darkness, death, and sin are alive and well. It is hell on earth, and I struggled with both the immensity and the intensity of it.

So what can we do? The American “can do” spirit has already gone to work on the problem. Concerned people have held discussions and considered options. They’ve talked about building a larger building to hold more children. They’ve weighed economic alternatives for the area. They’ve contemplated doing more with the health clinic 18 blocks away. They’ve appealed to the government for more help.

But the overwhelming conclusion is clear: first we must win the spiritual warfare going on in that camp. Hell is only transformed by the power of the risen Savior. We have *no* other model. We have no other success. We have no other hope than the One who transcended hell itself.

All of our can-do spirit becomes meaningless unless we win the spiritual war. This is where we need a “can’t-do” attitude. Only the greater power of the resurrection can defeat these forces of darkness.

We are humbled by the dump. But we are encouraged that the One who has overcome the world, the One who has transcended hell, the One who lives within us, can also provide the insight, energy, and perseverance to overcome hell on earth. □



**Unfortunately,
only the
garbage
appears
to have
value.**

“Can’t you do something more practical for the world than preach the resurrected Christ?”

EVANGELISM IS SOCIAL ACTION

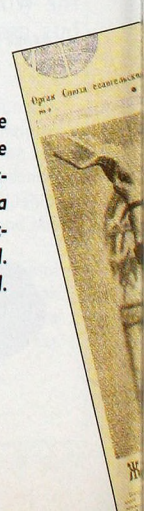
A university professor once challenged me: “Palau, how can you go to country after country, where people have so many economic and social problems, and preach about the resurrected Christ? Can’t you do something more practical for them?”

“There isn’t a better way to help them,” I replied. “The people of this world create the problems of this world. If we can lead them to Christ, we will create a climate for other positive, practical changes to take place.”

The professor was right, of course, that we live in a world full of immense problems. A world weighed down by famines, poverty, injustice, oppression, and environmental disasters.

But as Christians, we can help alleviate such misery. We are called to serve as Jesus served, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, breaking the chains of injustice—and leading

“Give me one example of the gospel changing society,” a Russian reporter challenged. So Palau did.



people to receive the gift of life in Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus is our hope that lives can change.

Conversion leads to the greatest social action. As people's lives are changed, they are different in their families, in their jobs, and in society.

I learned this early in my ministry. In November 1965, I was doing a live call-in counseling TV program in the HCJB-TV studios in Quito, Ecuador. I had just prayed with a woman who received Jesus Christ as Savior. The next call was brief. A high-pitched, squeaky voice requested an appointment the next day at 9:30.

The next morning, a small woman walked through the gates of the HCJB property, followed closely by two huge men. As she entered the office, her eyes traveled to every corner before she finally sat down.

"You pastors and priests," she began with disgust. "You are a bunch of thieves and liars and crooks. All you want is to deceive people. All you want is money!"

She went on that way for more than 20 minutes, swearing all the while and smoking every last bit from each cigarette she lit.

I prayed silently, "Lord, how shall I handle this?" Seemingly exhausted, she finally slumped in her chair. "Madam," I said, "is there anything I can do for you? How can I help you?"

She stared at me for an instant, then broke into uncontrollable sobs. When she was composed and could speak again, the edge was gone from



her voice. "You know," she said, "in the 38 years I have lived, you are the first person who has ever asked me if he could help me."

"What is your name?" I asked.

She was suddenly hard again. "Why do you want to know my name?"

"Well, you've said a lot of things here, and I don't even know you. I just want to know how to address you."

"My name is Maria Benitez-Perez," she said triumphantly. I recognized the name as that of a large family of wealth and influence. "I am the female secretary of the Communist Party in Ecuador. I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I am a materialist. I don't believe in God."

With that she took off on another breathless tirade against me, all preachers and priests, and the church.

"Why did you come here?" I broke in. "Just to insult me?"

For the next three hours, she told me her story.

Maria had left home and run away from a religious school as a rebellious teenager. The communists befriended her, and she became a party leader.

"When my mother died and the bishop came to officiate at the ceremony, I mocked him while my mother's body lay there in the casket," she said. "And I've always felt a little guilty about that, even though I don't believe in God, of course."

Every time she got onto the subject of God, she became enraged. But just as often, she would return to her mother's funeral.

"Hey, Palau," she said, "supposing there is a God—which there isn't—

but just supposing there is, do you think he would take a woman like me?"

I had read once that, when dealing with a professed atheist, the best approach is to take one truth from the Bible and stay with it. The Lord gave me Hebrews 10:17.

"Look, Maria, don't worry about what I think. Look at what God thinks." I opened to the verse and turned the Bible so she could see.

"I don't believe in the Bible ..."

"But we're just supposing there's a God, right? Let's just suppose this is his Word. He says, 'Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.'"

She waited, as if there had to be more. "But listen, I've been an adulteress, married three times, and in bed with a lot of men."

I said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"But I haven't told you half my story. I stabbed a comrade who later committed suicide."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"I've led student riots where people were killed."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

Seventeen times I responded to Maria's objections and confessions with that verse. "Would you like Christ to forgive all that you've told me about, and all the rest that I don't even know?" I asked.

"He can't do it," she said.

"You want to try it?"

"It would be a miracle."

"Take a step of faith. Invite him

into your life and try him. See what will happen."

Maria stared at me for a long moment and then bowed her head. "All right," she whispered.

I led her in a simple prayer, confessing her sins, asking for forgiveness, and receiving Christ.

When I saw Maria again in January, I was not prepared for what I encountered. Her face was a mess of purple blotches and bruises. Several of her front teeth were missing.

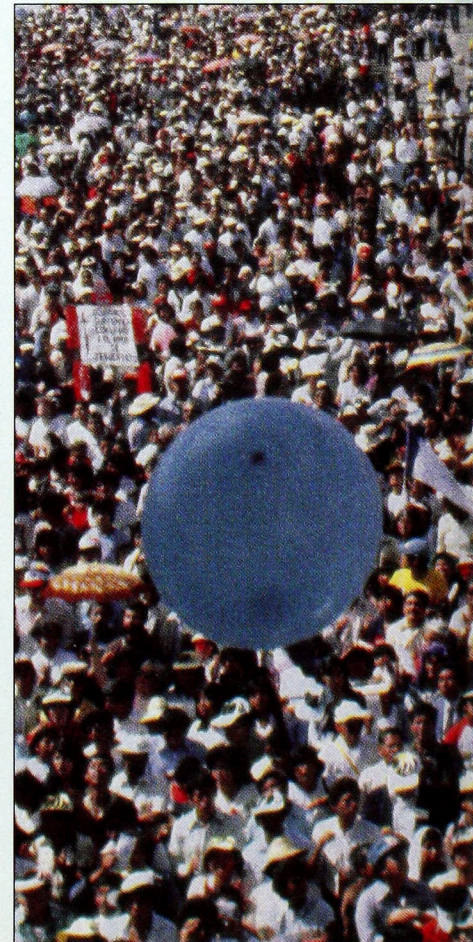
At a meeting of all the communist leaders of the country, she told them, "I am no longer an atheist. I believe in God and in Jesus Christ. I am resigning from the party. We are all a bunch of liars. We deceive people when we tell them there is no God."

A few days later, four of Maria's former comrades attacked her and smashed her face. She was forced to hide in the basements of churches and

HER
CHANGED
LIFE
ALTERED
THE
COURSE OF
NATIONAL
EVENTS.



Rosario Rivera's work with the poor in Lima, Peru, (above) is an about-face from the violent revolution she worked for as a young Marxist guerrilla (at right).



in the homes of missionaries.

"There's going to be a revolution in June," she told me matter-of-factly. "We've had it all planned for months."

It was to be a typical Latin American uprising: students and agitators causing a disturbance in the streets, luring out the army, which would then be attacked and overthrown. The chairman of the Communist Party for Ecuador would take over the country.

Maria remained on the run until June, when the Marxists' network of spies tracked her down. But she talked her four captors into retreating to her father's farm, where they could rest and read a few Christian books she had chosen for them.

On the morning of the revolution, the Communist Party leader came to talk to Maria, his long-time friend. "Maria, why did you become a Christian?"

"Because I believe in God and Jesus Christ, and my faith has changed my life."

"You know," he said, "I have been listening to HCJB radio on shortwave, and those Christians—they almost have me believing there is a God!"

"There is!" she said. "Why don't you become a Christian and get out of

this business? Look at all the lives we've ruined. Here, take this Bible and this book [*Peace With God*, by Billy Graham]. You can go to my father's farm and read them."

Later that morning, the disturbance that was supposed to trigger revolution fizzled into chaos, because the leaders were off on a farm, reading.

Was Maria's conversion to Christ effective social action? Her changed life altered the course of national events—events that would have killed and oppressed the masses.

This certainly was one of the most bizarre encounters in my ministry, but one of only scores I know of in which evangelism proved the best form of social action.

Last fall in Leningrad a Russian reporter challenged me to give him one example demonstrating how the gospel can change lives and society. I told him about Rosario Rivera, a Peruvian Marxist and one of Che Guevara's closest co-workers.

Rosario had experienced one of the saddest childhoods I've ever heard of. Later she slipped into immorality, turned to violence, and became bitter toward God.

After Guevara's death Rosario went

to Lima, Peru's capital, where I happened to be preaching. She came to the stadium angry enough to kill me, but the Lord touched her heart. Early the next morning she trusted Jesus Christ, who completely transformed her.

Instead of resorting to violence to bring about social change, Rosario began to give bread and milk to the poor and provided practical help to hundreds of families living in Lima's slums. Countless thousands have benefited from her ministry, and scores have found new life in Christ. And her story has been published now in Russian, German, and English.

Some months back I met a missionary couple in the Netherlands trying to reach prostitutes with the gospel. Working with them is a former prostitute from Uruguay, South America. She had moved to the Netherlands to minister in the red-light districts.

Several years ago, this woman attended an evangelistic rally where I was preaching. She was converted and now is sharing God's love by reaching out to other prostitutes. The social implications have been widespread.

Near the end of five weeks of evangelistic campaigns in Wales last spring, an old farmer named Peter handed me



Luis Palau's first evangelistic crusade in Bogota, Colombia, 1965.

Mass evangelism in Guatemala: "Christians have penetrated every sphere of society."

PHOTOS COURTESY LUIS PALAU EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

a card. "Thanks, Luis," it said. "I've given up drinking half a bottle of whiskey a day." Several weeks earlier Peter had been converted.

"Do you ever get tempted now when you smell alcohol?" I asked him. "Does it get to you?"

"I can't stand the smell of it," Peter replied. "You said Christ could liberate me instantly, and he did."

To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history. Slavery was abolished in Britain by a group of men who were converted to Christ in the mass evangelistic campaigns of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. Justice and freedom under the law are a direct fruit of the gospel.

In South Africa, Billy Graham's racially integrated campaigns brought whites and blacks together in large public meetings for the first time in that country's history.

Evangelism always has social implications, because it takes place in a social context. In the first century, the gospel bridged cultural barriers between man and woman, Jew and Gentile, slave and free. Paul called Onesimus, Philemon's slave, "Our faithful and dear brother." Writing to Philemon, he wrote, "He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord."

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, the corrupt tax collector's dominating desire turned to charitable giving to the poor and restitution for those he had cheated.

Evangelism is the most effective social action because it deals with the

root of the problem, not with the symptoms alone. The root is human alienation, sinfulness, and evil. Mankind's foremost need is the gospel: first to dispel spiritual darkness, but second to eradicate their utter selfishness.

Most people live for themselves. True Christians live for God and for others out of love. God implants this love within all who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Leo Tolstoy described his experience this way: "For 35 years of my life I

was ... a nihilist—not a revolutionary socialist, but a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago faith came to me ... and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation. What I had once wished for I wished for no longer, and I began to desire what I had never desired before."

Imagine a city where a million people become new creations, like Zacchaeus. The gospel can change society because it changes individuals, who then begin to change their families, which then change neighborhoods. And as those individuals live out their faith at home, in schools, in the military, in business, and in government, a quiet revolution occurs.

It is a slow process, but it is potent. It brings lasting change without hatred, murder, revenge, and class warfare.

Most societies change by coercion. The few that change by internal compulsion, without machine guns, are those that have had spiritual revivals. Many historians believe England escaped a revolution like that in France only because of the Wesleyan revival, which in turn roused concern for public health, prison reform, and public education.

This is what Latin American believers are praying for—revival that transforms their nations without bloodshed. And they trust God enough to believe he can do it.

I believe that quiet transformation already is beginning in Guatemala. In a nation of 7 million people, almost one out of every three Guatemalans claims to have been born again.

They have penetrated every sphere of society—politics, education, the military, and business. Their commitment and zeal for the Lord is impressive.

I am proud to preach the gospel, which is the power of God, because nothing helps people more than introducing them to Jesus Christ. Evangelism saves people not only from dying without Christ, but also from living without him. And as they live with him, and for him, they become salt and light in a world lost in sorrow, injustice, violence, hunger, and disease. □

Luis Palau is an evangelist who has preached the gospel to more than 8 million people in 52 countries.

IT IS
A SLOW
PROCESS,
BUT IT IS
POTENT.



An evangelistic tour in Britain: "To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history."



A CALL TO

ARMS

"Our young men, anyone with strength, abandoned us to find work in other countries," said the old man. Here's one who came back when he heard of the rice irrigation project: Abdurahman Seydou, age 22.



*Descendants
of empire-builders
in West Africa
dig in for the
fight of their lives*

EARLIER IN THE DAY, while it was too hot to talk about much of anything, I had impatiently blurted out my favorite old-man question: "Where did you come from?"

So hours later, after we'd shared a meal of goat meat and rice beneath a magnificent starry sky in Mali, in West Africa, Bagna Agleyba eased back onto the sand to tell me his story. Other, younger voices chimed in from beyond the campfire, filling in details, recalling fragments of conversation.

Almost an hour later I realized that the exciting events in his story had occurred not last week or last year, but 600 years ago. My illiterate hosts, it seems, are on a first-name basis with people 100 years older than Christopher Columbus.

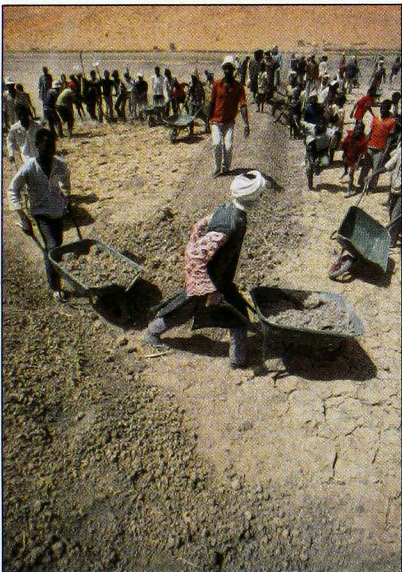
Small wonder. Those ancestors of the present-day Songhai people were really something. Empire-builders. Intercontinental traders. Founders of universities. Administrators. These days we'd call them a superpower. And until their demise about 250 years ago, Bagna's forebears ruled a vast area spanning a dozen of today's West African countries.

Gao, the commercial capital of that old domain—one of Africa's largest, wealthiest, best-organized kingdoms—lay a few miles up the river from our campsite. Just a little farther was Timbuktu, that metaphor of exotic remoteness.

How did a mighty empire emerge in this place, now an environmental and economic basket case? Simple. Food. Here on the fertile banks of the River Niger, Songhai farmers grew enough to feed most of their known world.

Today, sapped by global climate shifts and relentless environmental degradation, the life-giving river has dwindled to a scant tenth of its former size. In the early 1970s, and again in the '80s, drought fed the advancing Sahara Desert. Trees and wild grasses withered. Crops and herds perished. Scorching winds and shifting sand encircled and sometimes even buried whole villages.

"All the good things in life disappeared," Bagna told me. "Our young men, anyone with strength, aban-



doned us to find work in other countries. Here at home many people starved, especially the children and—" he coughed nervously—"the old people."

In much of Mali's Seventh Region, a New Mexico-size area with a population of about 350,000, the normally harsh conditions of Africa's Sahel (the Sahara's semi-arid southern edge) degenerated to almost hostile desert conditions. The temperature by mid-morning is often 120 degrees. There isn't any shade. With the loss of so

In 120-degree heat, the men of the village of Tacherane build earthen canals. "If this work fails," one of them said, "we are finished."

much natural vegetation, it's become one of the hottest places on earth.

The Seventh Region's unique "floating rice" cultivation, mainstay of the Songhai economy throughout history, has been all but wiped out. The rain can't be counted on to germinate the rice at the proper time. Even if it did, seasonal floodwaters don't reach most of the floodplain fields any more.

And the people, these proud descendants of conquerors, have been reduced to pathetic beggars waiting

We'd been wallowing for hours across a sea of sand. Joe DeVries, a young Floridian agronomist who came to Mali with the United Nations and later joined World Vision, sat behind the wheel of our Land Cruiser.

"The best barrier to the advancing Sahara," Joe abruptly shouted above our engine's roar, "is an army of farmers, standing in their fields, growing food for their children."



impassively for the next truckload of surplus American grain.

Similarly devastated are the Songhai's immediate neighbors, the Tuareg people: 100,000 tent-dwelling shepherds who for centuries have crisscrossed the Seventh Region in a finely tuned quest for pasture and water.

Five years ago, while the world directed its compassion toward Ethiopia, here on the opposite side of Africa, 90 percent of Tuareg camels and nearly two-thirds of the goats and sheep perished—an unimaginable catastrophe for people whose austere existence has always been intertwined with the fate of their livestock.

Now, I knew that many aid officials have all but given up on the Seventh Region. *C'mon Joe*, I thought, *I respect your zeal, but we both know that a lot of people think mass evacuation may be the only real solution here.*

Then Joe drove us up the side of a huge dune and braked in a cloud of dust. "Ever heard of flood-recession agriculture?"

I hadn't. Far below, ringed by sand dunes, lay a startlingly green field, big as any farm I'd seen in Michigan, my old home.

"Recession sorghum," he said. "Probably about two-thirds of a ton of grain per acre. Not bad for a crop that

doesn't get a single drop of rain."

Joe explained that while it never rains more than a few inches a year here, runoff water collects in certain valleys and forms temporary lakes. Forty years ago some resourceful Tuareg shepherds discovered that a particular type of sorghum can flourish in these seasonal lake beds. Planted in the sandy clay as soon as the lakes disappear, the seeds grow to maturity using only the moisture left in the soil.

The Tuareg shepherds learned to

time their migratory travels to be near a promising lake bed at sowing time, then return for harvest four months later. After the 1984 drought wiped out their herds, a bumper harvest in 1985 saved lives and convinced skeptics that recession sorghum is here to stay. Today, there are more than eight square miles of scattered fields of shoulder-high sorghum.

"We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists."



"There's still lots of water here," says Joe DeVries (right). "Learning to use it is this country's best hope."

Tuareg communities like Ag Dalintah have formed cooperatives to invest a portion of each harvest in development resources, including drought-resistant tree seedlings and an irrigation pump for their first community vegetable garden. The people of Intadeny used sorghum to finance their area's first primary school.

Although World Vision has promoted recession sorghum since 1986, it's not part of some plan to convert the wandering Tuareg shepherds into settled farmers. The fragile ecology of Seventh Region's interior could never support permanent settlements for long.

"The Tuaregs are nomads," Joe

said, "not for sentimental reasons or because it's so wonderful to be on the move. No. They follow their seasonal migration patterns because here at the edge of the Sahara it's the only way to survive. Over the centuries they've learned what it takes to be good stewards of very thinly spread resources."

Helping the riverside Songhai farming villages has required more drastic measures. "Anything short of an agricultural revolution would be a big waste of time," Joe DeVries said.

We sat in the belly of a *pirogue*, a huge dugout canoe, as two boatmen poled us across the broad, gray-green Niger. "They're absolutely desperate," Joe said. "It's impossible for these farmers to feed their children." As the opposite bank came into view, I understood.

Fields where a green carpet of floating rice once grew now stand high and dry above the shrunken river. Robbed of their annual floods, these farms might as well be on the moon.

"Sure, the Niger is down, way down, and I expect it will stay that way," Joe said. "But there's still lots of water here. Learning how to use it is this country's best hope. We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists, as good as the Chinese or Filipinos."

In the distance I spotted 40 or 50 tiny moving figures with pickaxes, shovels, and wheelbarrows. Why were all these guys out in the midday sun during the hottest month of the year, chipping away at the crusty soil?

Dripping with sweat, Ousman Samba explained. "We can't count on the rain or the floods anymore. We haven't had a good harvest since 1972. Now everyone in Tacherane agrees to build a *perimetre irrigue villageois* [village irrigation zone]."

Digging and carrying more than 15,000 cubic yards of soil to build dikes and irrigation canals may prove one of the easier tasks facing the men of Tacherane village. If modern irrigation technology is to succeed here in the desert, they must adopt new ways and learn new skills. The villagers must adapt and control their environment as never before.

When Joe DeVries started working with the people of nearby Gabero, the community was slipping rapidly toward extinction. Nearly everyone can remember how it was before a ridge of reddish sand drifted to the edge of the village. Most of the farm animals are now gone. The wild animals have vanished too, along with their wooded habi-

tat. Starvation and disease have claimed members of every family. Many others left in search of jobs.

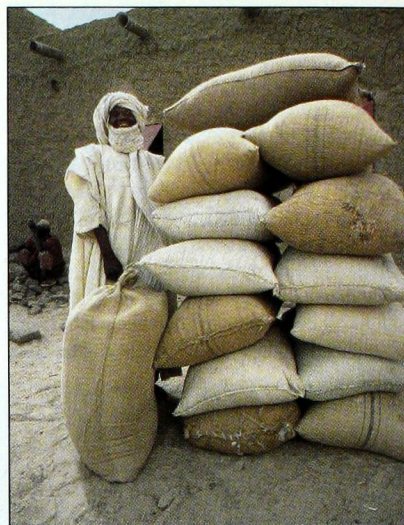
Gabero's leader, Elmaymoune Dicko, wanted to be sure I saw that not all the changes here are for the worse. We zigzagged up and down a maze of canals. A few workmen stood up to their knees in mud, weeding. In the distance a diesel irrigation pump churned.

I'd come prepared for a visual shock—a rectangular green island afloat in a sea of sand. But I hadn't expected the palpably cooler temperature inside that 43-acre *perimetre*, or the sticky mud inside my shoes. Or the

unmistakable feeling of standing on consecrated soil.

"We built it big," Elmaymoune beamed, "because we didn't want anyone to miss out on the blessings." This is the fourth year that every family in Gabero has cultivated a double crop of irrigated rice on family-size plots. Annual yields of almost 5 tons per acre are the norm, 10 times the yield of traditional floating rice.

Joe and his colleagues seem unfazed by the dismal track record of the Green Revolution elsewhere in Africa, where ambitious projects often fail because important political, social, and psychological factors are overlooked, or where



The new method allows two harvests a year, and the land yields about 10 times as much as before.

a few prosper while life for the poorest remains essentially unchanged.

"This won't be one of those colossal failures you read about," he says. "There's been too much success already for that. It's the survival instinct. It has to work. It's this, or die. Not many other development programs get such a kick in the rear.

"But even if it can't be sustained forever," Joe insists, "I guarantee that this will have been the most humane and inexpensive way to feed the people of Seventh Region in the meantime."

Although it's too soon to be sure, there are signs that even the climate may have begun to cooperate. In the past four years, rainfall consistently has been heaviest in communities with rice *perimetres*.

"When we're in our green fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else." Joe smiles. "I'm telling you, irrigated rice attracts rain."

The old men, I suspect, will always start their campfire tales in the 14th century. One can only guess how the story might unfold in this latest chapter, now being written across the sand. But a gentle old fellow gave me his personal preview, a summary of recent events too remarkable and too precious to spoil with embellishment.

"God is blessing us," he said. "My sons have returned from their undignified life in the city. We have a real home once more. My wife and my children are at my side. And I am able to look them all in the eye, knowing that I have provided well, thanks be to God." □

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

WHO'S GOT PROBLEMS?

This is sport? Every January since 1979, "The World's Longest Race" has blasted through the heart of Mali's Seventh Region on its 8,000-mile, three-week trajectory: the Paris-Dakar Rally.

Five hundred screaming cars and motorcycles, plus their support vehicles. Thirty-five private aircraft. Mobile TV satellite uplink facilities. About 2,500 foreigners.

"They raced across my backyard this year," said Joe DeVries,

World Vision agricultural engineer. "The first guys came past about noon, and stragglers were limping in at midnight. Then at dawn they all took off again. Except for all the ruts, you'd never know it happened."

Attracting an estimated \$100 million in worldwide television, advertising, and sponsorship revenues, the event uses Africa's poorest corner to showcase an array of motor-vehicle products, consumer electronics, cigarettes, you name it. It has even graced the desert with an "official beverage."

"When I see it all," remarked a bewildered Malian farmer, "I realize that we are not the only people with problems." *David Ward*

Showcasing glamorous products against Africa's poorest corner: the 1990 Paris-Dakar Rally.



BRUCE STRONG



Encountering God through prayer in solitude can be one of the most gratifying things we can experience, says author and priest Henri Nouwen. It can also be one of the most difficult.

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but also that he is actively present in our lives—healing, teaching, and guiding—we need to set aside a time and space to give him our undivided attention. Jesus says, “Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place.”

To bring some solitude into our lives is one of the most necessary but also most difficult disciplines. Even though we may have a deep desire for real solitude, we also experience a certain apprehension as we approach that solitary place and time. As soon as we are alone, without people to talk with, books to read, television to watch, or phone calls to make, an inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again.

Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings, and impulsive desires.

On the contrary, when we have removed our outer distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force. We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises. It is thus not surprising that we have a difficult time being alone. The confrontation with our inner conflicts can be too painful for us to endure.

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray that** people just now receiving Jesus Christ will weave the gospel into the fabric of their societies (pages 4-8).
- ◆ **Thank God** for the ancient wisdom of West African peoples (pages 9-12) *and* for their openness to new ways.
- ◆ **Pray for** the success of peacemakers in Central America (pages 14-15).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Bill Doulos (pages 18-21) and others who show that giving one’s life away is not just for superheroes.

PRAYER IN SOLITUDE

It is clear that what matters is faithfulness to the discipline. In the beginning, solitude seems so contrary to our desires that we are constantly tempted to run away from it. One way of running away is daydreaming or simply falling asleep.

But when we stick to our discipline, in the conviction that God is with us even when we do not yet hear him, we slowly discover that we do not want to miss our time alone with God. Although we do not experience much satisfaction in our solitude, we realize that a day without solitude is less “spiritual” than a day with it.

The discipline of solitude is one of the most

One of the things that makes God God is that he knows everything; so when I have wishes in regard to other people, I just say their names. I let him fill in the rest. ... I just keep on saying the names of people I love.

Barbara Grizutti
Harrison

powerful disciplines in developing a prayerful life. It is a simple, though not easy, way to free us from the slavery of our occupations and pre-occupations, and to begin to hear the voice that makes all things new.

Although the discipline of solitude asks us to set aside time and space, what finally

matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do.

The more we train ourselves to spend time with God and him alone, the more we will discover that God is with us at all times and in all places. Then we will be able to recognize him even in the midst of a busy and active life.

Once the solitude of time and space has become a solitude of the heart, we will never have to leave that solitude. We will be able to live the spiritual life in any place and any time. Thus the discipline of solitude enables us to live active lives in the world, while remaining always in the presence of the living God. □

Adapted from *Making All Things New—An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen. Copyright © 1981 by Henri J.M. Nouwen. By arrangement with Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

In December 1989, once again it seemed that Central America would bury itself under an avalanche of violence. Nicaragua battled the Contras and yelled at Honduras for harboring them. El Salvador, in the midst of a civil war, fought desperately against a new guerrilla offensive. Reports trickled out of Guatemala about continuing human-rights abuses. And seemingly all of Latin America was screaming at the United States for shooting it out with Gen. Manuel Noriega.

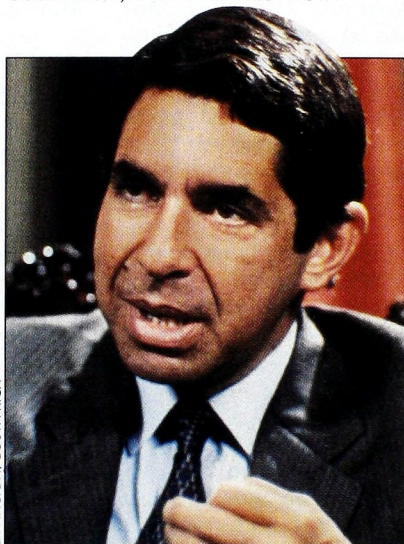
There was, however, one voice calling for peace in the region: President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, perhaps the only statesperson that everyone from the United States

to Nicaragua, and El Salvador to Argentina, respects and admires.

Arias' thoughts and plans are extremely important to North Americans. For the past four years he has presided over Costa Rica, Latin America's most thriving democracy—and the only one with no armed forces.

In 1987, Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize for his plan to end the fighting in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. In March 1988, he established the first extended cease-fire between the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the U.S.-backed Contras. And at a summit meeting of the region's presidents last December, Arias submitted another proposal to end escalating violence in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

There are so many ways of obtaining the support, affection, and gratitude of the people of Latin America through U.S. help and understanding, that I think [the United States] should concentrate on a dialogue with us—not the use of force.
—President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, in a 1988 interview.



LA NACIÓN, COSTA RICA

IN DEFENSE OF PEACEMAKING

*Can Costa Rica's blueprint
work throughout Central America?
President Oscar Arias Sánchez
suggests it can.*

This May, however, the 49-year-old president and peacemaker will step down, having served the constitutional limit of one term in office. W. Dayton Roberts of World Vision recently interviewed President Arias to discuss peacemaking and other issues he has faced during the past four years.

ROBERTS: The Nobel Prize acknowledged not only the value of your peace initiative, but also your leadership as a respected peacemaker in this troubled region. What spiritual values or experiences have launched you into this role?

ARIAS: First, when seeking peace for the region, I represent the deep Costa Rican desire to see the differences between peoples resolved and settled in a civilized way, through dialogue and negotiations, never through violence and war.

Costa Rica has made dialogue its main instrument. To negotiate, one must know how to tolerate, to give in. One must be willing to accept that one may be wrong; one must not have dogmas. There is nothing worse than being a prisoner of dogmas and ideas.

So I have interpreted some of the Costa Rican desire that these problems or conflicts that divide our peoples will be settled and solved through negotiation and dialogue.

War leaves very deep wounds that are difficult to heal. It divides people forever. Examples are the wars in Central America, and the hate and resentment that have left wounds behind. Societies have been completely divided throughout the years. Years go by and those wounds are not erased. But sooner or later, Central America will simply have to find peace.

There are also Christian feelings; that is, the love for human life. Truly, no one can be in favor of violence and of endangering human lives. There is nothing more sacred than the life of a man, woman, or child. This is altogether apart from the fact that war in Central America is damaging Costa Rica's possibilities for economic growth.

ROBERTS: Many years ago, Costa Rica abolished its army. What difference does this make to the Costa Rican people? Do they feel insecure?

ARIAS: Latin America needs to find the courage José Figueres displayed 40 years ago when he abolished the Costa Rican army. Obviously, this has provided Costa Rica with its political and social stability. Since money is not spent on arms, those resources are


used to meet the most urgent needs of our population.

We have built a nation of well-being rather than a nation of fortifications. This is what has made the big difference between Costa Rica and the rest of Latin America.

In the 40 years since we dissolved our army, all the countries of Central America have experienced military dictatorships, and some of them still do. But not Costa Rica. Our liberties have never been threatened, nor have we known the humiliation of a regime imposed on us by force.

While students, peasants, and workmen have died in the conflicts of our sister nations, in 40 years no mother in Costa Rica has wept for the death of her son at the hands of a soldier, or because of a tyrant's indifference. Nor has any Costa Rican been exiled, tortured, imprisoned, or executed by a dictator.

As I recently stated in a speech to



Sooner or later,
Central America
will simply have to
find peace.

the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is time that we honor the *comandantes* of peace, like Don José (Pepe) Figueres, who disarm their people so they can be free and can work for development, rather than the military *comandantes* who senselessly accumulate arms in the face of the hunger and submission of their citizens.

ROBERTS: Disarmament is one of your passions, and you see the production, traffic, and consumption of arms as a plague upon the continent. What have you done to dramatize these concerns and encourage other countries to follow Costa Rica's lead?

ARIAS: We have declared December 1 to be "Army Abolition Day," and we celebrate it with pride. I have also eliminated the ranks and military-type uniforms that had been used by our police.

Each country has its own responsibility in this crusade. Some will have to destroy nuclear warheads and others military uniforms, but all must work, tirelessly, for disarmament, for demili-

tarization.

The arms that were once symbols of liberty and independence have been transformed all too frequently into symbols of underdevelopment and oppression.

ROBERTS: Everything seems to circle back to the need for peacemaking.

ARIAS: War is incompatible with the welfare of the Central American people. With the exception of Costa Rica, all the other countries have been impoverished. Our prosperity, in large measure, is the result of Costa Rica's success in avoiding war.

ROBERTS: Costa Rica has also been unusually successful in involving women in public life and in influential political positions. Why are Costa Rican women generally well-qualified for such positions, and what are you doing to encourage this trend?

ARIAS: That was one of my most important campaign promises. I promised to provide more opportunities for women.


Comparing Costa Rican women's educational level with that of other Latin American women, I think that Costa Rican women have had more educational opportunities. You can see that in our universities today: Half of the students are women. Women were granted the right to vote in 1949, and from then on, their participation in this country's political life has been increasing.

Now I want to cap this process with legislation that will force all political parties and all government administrations to give women their place. This legislation also has sections covering the social and economic rights of women, and protection from sexual abuse.

In the introduction to the proposed law on women's rights is my promise: "I reaffirm our commitment to struggle tirelessly for the full involvement of women. In the same way in which the love and selflessness of Christian women have given testimony to us since Calvary, their full incorporation into our society can only be a promise of a greater Costa Rica."

ROBERTS: One final question. Are you familiar with the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"?

ARIAS: Yes, it is a sustaining thought.



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope

GETTING PERSONAL

It works both ways," says Bob Kopeny, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Placentia, Calif. "We support our sister church in Havana out of our abundance, and it helps our people realize how much of the church around the world is a suffering church.

"At the same time, they support us out of their own abundance, with their prayers and encouragement. We already sense this happening. Several of our people are already hoping to meet their sister church face to face soon."

The two churches got together

A Cuban church: ASSIST links U.S. churches with those in restricted countries.



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

through ASSIST, a ministry that links congregations in the United States with those in religiously restricted countries.

Contact ASSIST at P.O. Box 41179, Pasadena, CA 91114-8179; (818) 398-2466.

GINGER HOPE / WORLD VISION



"Now can I play Space Invaders?"

TUTORING AND TLC

It's a sort of controlled chaos. Nine terminals beep and flash. Nine keyboards rattle and click. Nine squirmy kids try to pull one over on four good-natured tutors.

"OK, I finished my spelling, can I play Space Invaders now?"

"No way, I saw how many words you missed that time."

The kid groans and squirms

some more. "This stuff is too hard. I can't get it."

"Sure you can." A playful box of the ears. "Now let's take it nice and slow from the beginning."

This is the Neighborhood Learning Center, two rooms of a tall, skinny row house less than a mile from the Capitol. When Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship, an interdenominational church, asked its neighbors what the church should be doing for the community, this was the answer. Most of the 16 center's volunteer tutors come from the church.

A nearby grade school refers children to the center for tutoring and TLC. Between the after-school homework lab, the art class, the evening tutoring program, and the occasional stray who just drops in to say hi, the center reaches about 30 kids a day.

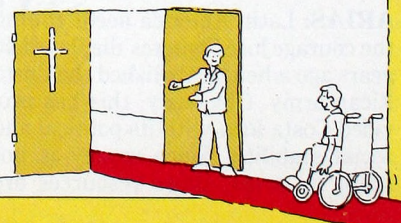
The Neighborhood Learning Center is at 907 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20002; (202) 543-2881.

A BARRIER-FREE CHURCH

Christ's Love Accessible to All" is the theme of a congress on the church and disability, beginning May 30 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.

This second annual congress, sponsored by Joni and Friends and The Christian Council on Persons With Disabilities, will be the first to include international participants. Joni Eareckson Tada, Dave Roever, and Tim Hansel are among the scheduled speakers.

For registration information contact Joni and Friends, P.O. Box 3333, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.



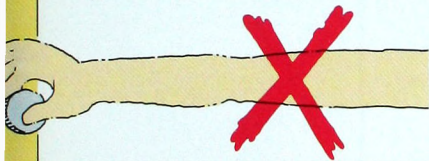
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

JOIN THE CLUB

One of the growing movements among people who work in disadvantaged communities is Christian community development (CCD). Roughly defined, CCD refers to Christians living in communities of need, working alongside the people to improve their lives—as opposed to handout-style charity.

The Christian Community Development Association will help people start or continue CCD work, supplying a forum for mutual support. In the works are five regional training centers, where fledgling CCDers can study the philosophy, techniques, and hands-on work of more mature CCD ministries.

For information contact CCDA, c/o Cynder Baptista, P.O. Box 459, Angels Camp, CA 95221; (209) 728-1485.



“I don't think there's anything in particular about being Christian that enables you to do something that someone else can't do. But I think it might move you to attempt to do something. I once read a book called *The Recovery of Life's Meaning* that spelled out a very simple theology. Creation, it said, was not just an event in time but an ongoing process. We are God's instruments for carrying forward creation. Therefore, the mission of a Christian is to be a co-creator. ... In the spirit of co-creators, we should be moved to solve the problems around us.

James Rouse in
The Other Side



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

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

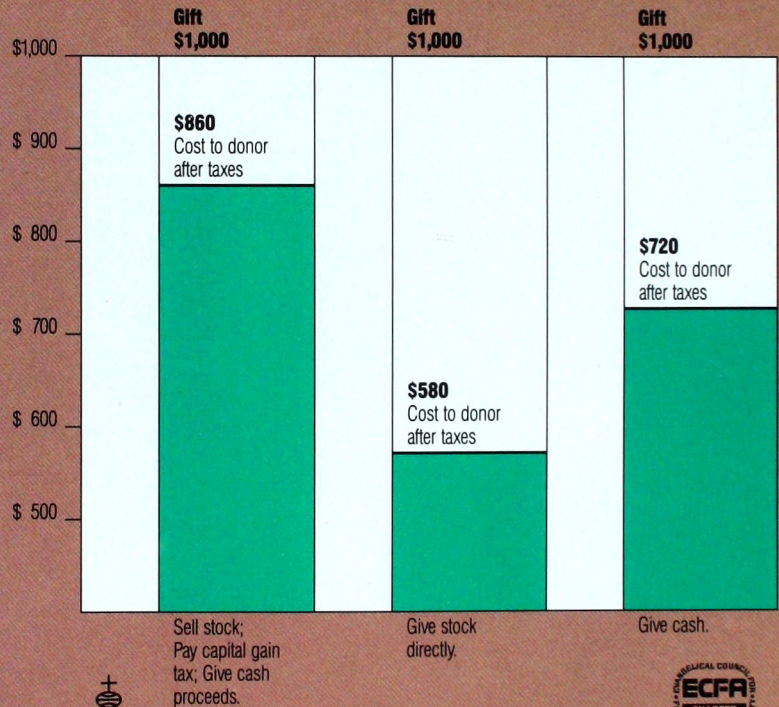
What is the plan? A wise way to give. Greater tax benefits are available to you when you give stock directly to **World Vision** rather than selling the stock and donating cash.

A Profit-Sharing Plan For Profit-Takers

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

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

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



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FMG003



Prostitutes, drug deals and muggings can be seen most any night from Bill's second-story apartment window.

BY RANDY MILLER

Something woke him up. Someone yelling down the street maybe. A car horn. Glass breaking. He's not sure. He checked the time: 4 a.m.

Bill Doulos
lives up to
his name on
Skid Row

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

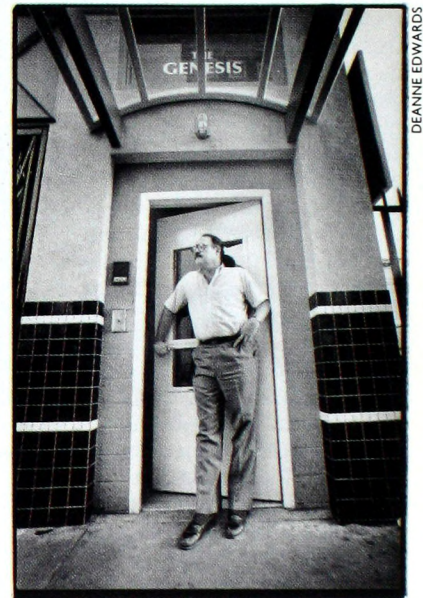


A light breeze was blowing in through the open window of his one-room apartment in the old Pennsylvania Hotel in the bowels of Los Angeles. He usually kept the window closed. But on that night, the July heat wouldn't let him.

He kicked off the sheets and walked

to the window. The street two stories below was dark and still. Whatever had woken him up had driven away, run off, or fallen asleep.

He stood at the window for a while, feeling the night air on his face and surveying his restless neighborhood in a rare moment of calm. Then a



DEANNE EDWARDS

Renamed "The Genesis" when its new occupants took over last spring, Skid Row's old Pennsylvania Hotel stands as a symbol of hope in a decayed community.

flicker of light caught his eye, like someone lighting a cigarette. He saw the orange profile of a face and the vague form of someone scrunched down on a loading dock in a trash-strewn alley nearby.

But the odd thing was that the light didn't go out. There was no click of metal on metal, no flicking the lighter shut. Just a steady burning. A minute later, it went out. Then he saw it again. A small constant flame. The

kind of steady burn you need for a hit of crack.

Bill Doulos had seen a lot from his window in the two months he had lived in the once-elegant 70-year-old hotel, now flanked by an adult bookstore to the south and a liquor store to the north. From that window, he had seen a continuous parade of prostitutes, pimps, and winos. He'd seen muggings and assaults. He'd seen homeless people warming themselves at sidewalk campfires. He'd seen their sleeping forms crammed into corners, with feet sticking out from under thin plastic sheeting and old cardboard.

"I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. What I'm doing is not heroic."

But despite everything he'd already seen in the gritty streets of Los Angeles, that lingering orange glow suddenly brought something into focus for him.

"I stood there and watched this guy who was experiencing exhilaration in such a stunningly artificial way because he was living in such desolation," Bill says. "I mean, here's this guy out in the street in the middle of the darkness, going for this artificial high that, for him, was the only thing he had that resembled hope or beauty or happiness. It was the only thing he had that could remove him, if only for a few seconds at a time, from the desperate situation that is his life. That incident, for me, is a metaphor for people living on Skid Row."

While most people might wave reality in your face and claim that you just can't save some people, Bill Doulos thinks that as long as someone is breathing, there is a flicker of hope, even if that flicker is coming from under a crack pipe in some back alley. That's part of the reason he wound up on Skid Row himself last April.

Bill has known a lot of barely breathing, bottomed-out people in the past 16 years, mostly through his work in Pasadena, Calif., where he directs Union

Station, a soup kitchen and shelter for the homeless founded by All Saints Episcopal Church in 1973. When All Saints church and Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles joined forces not long ago to purchase and renovate two run-down Skid Row hotels for low-rent apartments, they needed someone to live there as an owners' representative. Bill took the job.

What a noble thing. What a Peace Corps, roll-up-your-sleeves, hunker-down-with-poor-folks-for-a-year kind of thing to do. He knows that some of the people in the middle-class churches who pay his salary have him pegged as some kind of oddball saint.

"I don't feel deprived living in that hotel," he says. "I resist the idea that there's something special about my living there. I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. I'm not an extremist. What I'm doing is not heroic."

Maybe not. Still, some risk is involved. A well-dressed white person walking late at night anywhere in the vicinity of Fifth and Main is a heart-warming sight to a mugger. "Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised," he admits. "But that won't make me change what I'm doing."

Bill didn't lie awake nights as a child in Johnstown, Penn., dreaming of one day enjoying an alley-view apartment in a Skid Row hotel. For a while, he thought he wanted to be a preacher. One summer in his high school years he read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. What he read, he took seriously. And still does. But sitting in the com-

fortable pews of his boyhood church he began to wonder, "Where is the persecution that Christ promised? Where is the suffering? Where is the sacrifice?"

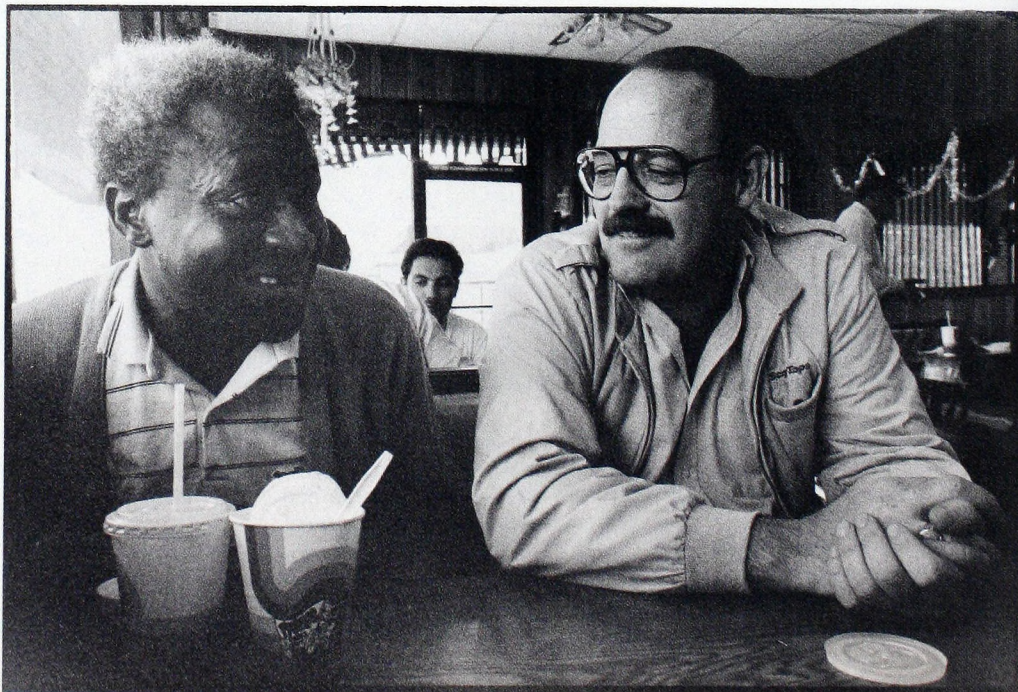
A few years later, with college behind him, he found the answers to some of his questions at Koinonia Farms in Americus, Ga., where a small community of believers were living the kind of gospel he'd found in the Bible. Their example helped shape his faith and guide him into the kind of ministry he practices today. It was during a summer visit to Koinonia that he also decided to change his name.

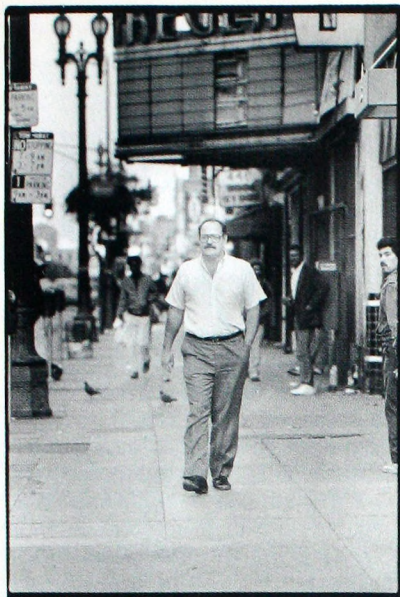
He was born William Henry Lane II in 1943, but decided to take on a name that would symbolize his deepened commitment to Christ. He chose *doulos*, the Greek word the apostle Paul used for slave, or servant, of Christ. During the summer of 1974, he legally changed his name to Bill Lane Doulos.

Bill eventually moved to Pasadena where, in 1974, he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. Shortly after that, he took a job with All Saints church's outreach program to street people. One of his main duties soon became mopping the floor at Union Station.

In those days, he had more time with the street people who wandered through Union Station. Today he spends most of his hours shuffling through stacks of paper on his desk or gnashing his teeth over administrative problems at headache-maker meetings about building codes. But he still makes time for guys like Roosevelt.

"I'd cut off my right arm for Bill Doulos," says Roosevelt, a recovering alcoholic and longtime friend of Bill's. "Can't nobody say nothin' bad about him, you understand?"





"Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised."

Roosevelt is missing several teeth, his left eye, and the birthdates of three of his five children. The iris of his remaining eye is cloudy, and in the center of it is a milky white dot the size of a match head. He is 90 percent blind, but Bill is hoping Roosevelt will stay sober long enough to qualify for a cornea transplant at the county hospital.

Roosevelt met Bill 16 years ago, shortly after Union Station opened. For most of those years he was drunk. Today he's dry and living in a board-and-care house in the predominantly poor, black section of northwest Pasadena. He is Bill's age, but looks 20 years older.

Lunch twice a week with Roosevelt helps Bill put his administrative hassles into perspective—and keep his sense of humor intact.

"My good eye jumped out on me twice," Roosevelt says, making a stab at some smog-brown mashed potatoes while seated in a booth next to Bill at Pioneer Chicken. "One time I was talking to a guy and it just fell out. I put it back in and I could see fine.

"I lost my fake eye a couple years ago. It was bothering me, so I took it out and put it in my coat pocket. Then some guy stole my coat. I bet he was surprised when he reached into that pocket."

If all goes well, Roosevelt will have both sockets full and his good eye functioning at 20/20 in a few weeks.

The Roosevelts of Skid Row and northwest Pasadena are challenging cases, but Bill finds them easier to deal with—or at least to know what to do with—than people like the well-inten-

tioned woman who wanted to know where she could donate several cardboard boxes for homeless people to sleep in.

"Those people mean well, but the dilemma I face constantly is how to channel people's good intentions into actions that really do some good," Bill says. "Actually, I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive, so that they see outreach not as just a one-shot thing or some kind of novelty, but something that they can do the rest of their lives."

"Bill is the kind of person who seems equally comfortable with either the board president or the wino with a fifth-grade education," says friend and Union Station staff member Bill Morgan. "He can communicate up and down the whole spectrum of life."

One place the whole spectrum converges is at Pasadena's Green Street Park on Christmas day, when Union Station staffers and a few hundred volunteers lay out a holiday feast for the city's street people. It's a place where homeless families, basket ladies, and toothless, grizzly-faced, gray-haired men in grimy polyester mingle with old-moned Pasadenans in their Christmas-morning ski sweaters, and acid-washed jeans.

On Christmas 1989, a balmy day under creamy gray skies, the volunteers nearly outnumber the street people. A Donna Reed look-alike in a white Snoopy sweatshirt spoons dressing onto paper plates. A teal blue Jaguar XJ6 slips up to the curb. The driver hops out, opens the trunk and drops off a ham, then makes a hasty getaway. A yuppie choir stands in a half-circle and sings carols, clapping on the downbeat to Jingle Bells, and applauding themselves when they finish. A woman hoists a video camera to her shoulder to capture the day's events.

It all rings a little, well, phony. Lots of people with too much money doing their once-a-year good deed for the poor. Isn't it a little hypocritical? Bill stops his glad-handing and hugging long enough to ponder the question as he looks over the crowd.

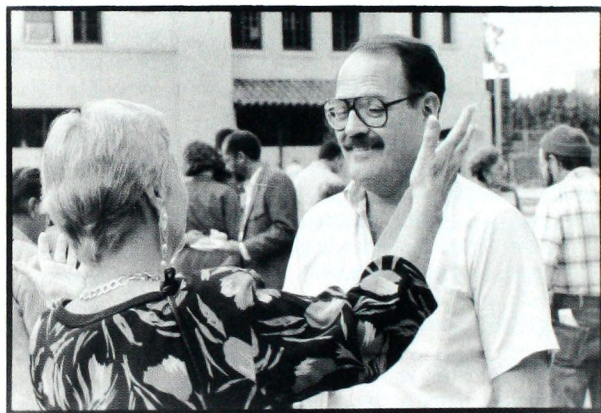
"This organization wouldn't exist if people didn't feel guilty," he says

The woman wanted to know where she could donate cardboard boxes for the homeless to sleep in.

with a half-smile. "I'd rather have people cook their turkeys, drop them off, and leave—if they don't feel they can stay—than to have them not do even that.

"I don't know how to be pure and get anything done," he muses. "I hope to bring people in, show them ways to help, and then nurture them so that they no longer operate just out of guilt.

"I'm not so uptight about how sinful somebody may be. Spiritual navel-gazing and getting all worked up about



"I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive."

guilt is immobilizing. You can't get anything done that way."

One of the half-dozen books on the nightstand next to Bill's bed in his Skid Row apartment is *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. He read it over Christmas last year. That and *The Plague*, also by Camus.

"Depressing books," Bill says, heading north on the Pasadena freeway from downtown Los Angeles for a little late-evening work. "Camus would say that the essence of reality is that bleak sense of overwhelming pessimism and despair. I say that's what we're up against, and we have to combat it."

No small feat. But possible, perhaps, for one who won't give up on the chance that even a faint orange glow in a darkened alley can be fanned into a flame of hope. □

THIS HOSTAGE NEVER MADE THE EVENING NEWS



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BOOKS

THE AGONY OF AFFLUENCE

By William W. Wells. Zondervan Publishing House, 128 pages, \$7.95. Reviewed by Rick Cordell.

Is affluence really agonizing?

Granted, it does bring its own stresses and perplexities. But agony? Many of the millions of Christians, including pastors, who have lived near or below the federal poverty level may be put off by this book's title.

Beyond the distracting title, however, there's a wealth of helpful material packed into this too-short book. It addresses a relevant issue for most American Christians: How should we rich (at least, comparatively) Christians relate to a world of people existing in genuine poverty? Are we, in fact, greedy and gluttonous? Or do we just feel guilty?

In the past 15 years, dozens of books and articles by Christian thinkers have debated such questions. Alas, information overload in yet another field. Even if one had the leisure to read all this, it's unfamiliar terrain. What are the main contours? Where does one begin? True, Larry Burkett can help with the family budget, but that still leaves the broader questions dealt with by the likes of Ron Sider, David Chilton, and Kenneth Copeland.

William Wells begins in the right direction by attempting to correct some basic misconceptions about wealth and justice, national economies and exploitation. He then offers simple descriptions of capitalist and socialist economic systems, evaluating their effectiveness in helping the poor.

Several passages are succinct and insightful, such as the sections on the rights and responsibilities of the poor and the rich. It would be better if Wells had spent another paragraph or two developing some important ideas that he mentions only in passing, such as

the concept of sacrifice.

As an introduction to the main issues, the book does all the things that a good discussion-starter ought to do. Its basic definitions and concise overviews give sufficient clarity and perspective to enable immediate interaction on a productive (if not erudite) level. Wells focuses the primary questions for us and offers his own tentative answers in a way that stimulates more questions.

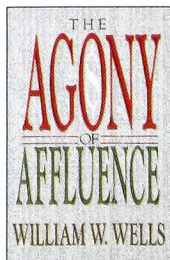
But his discussion is marred at points by generalizations (e.g. "Jesus was not an ascetic" or "The Bible does not address unjust social structures") that cry out for qualification. For example, in an otherwise sensible and balanced section on appropriate consumption for the Christian, Wells summarily dismisses the "simple lifestyle" approach with a virtual wave of the hand. It's also disappointing to find him indulging in an occasionally facile handling of Scripture, ranging from proof-texting to a sloppy allusion or two.

But back to the heart of the issue: How can a Christian know how much to consume and how much to give? Wells offers a number of apt suggestions. He also acknowledges that we depend ultimately on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but carries that crucial idea no further, leaving the reader to wonder whether the Spirit's guidance is individualistic or arbitrary. Is the church capable of discerning the general direction the Spirit provides, or are we abandoned to "unresolvable dilemmas" and "ambiguity"?

Wells succeeds in drawing readers into the thick of the discussion, which is his goal. The 20 pages following the text greatly enhance the book's usefulness: End notes and an index supplement an excellent annotated bibliography, which surveys both journal articles and books.

This short discussion guide deserves a large audience. Most of us needn't agonize over investing our wealth in it.

Rick Cordell is a free-lance writer in Portland, Ore.



GOD'S FRIGHTENING CALL

There was no reason Marley Spilman should have felt a void in her life. No reason she could see, anyway. She had achieved the American Dream. She had everything that society had always promised would insure happiness: a beautiful home in a nice neighborhood, a loving husband, and two wonderful children. She worked with Girl Scouts and was choir director at her church. It didn't make sense that she should feel such a gnawing emptiness inside.

Reading the Bible only made things worse, especially those passages where Jesus insists his disciples give up everything in order to follow him. The Old Testament didn't offer much comfort, either. Especially the part about Abraham carrying his commitment to God so far that he was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac if that was what the Lord required.

It was too much to ask. Being willing to give up material possessions was one thing. But turn her back on her family? Could God demand such a thing?

Months of wrestling with those issues left little doubt in her mind that God was calling her for something. But she wasn't ready to fully commit herself if it meant turning away from her family. Not until Pentecost Sunday in 1970, when the sermon title happened to be "Learning to Say Goodbye."

After church, she told her husband about the calling she felt. She told him that God might require her to leave. "We had been married 14 years," she says. "The thought of what might happen was devastating to him. That was the first time I'd ever seen him cry. Finally, he said, 'Honey, if God is calling you, you have to go.'"

She had taken the final step. At that moment, she realized that she was ready to go wherever God would lead. "I felt a rush of the Holy Spirit," she says. "My whole body just flooded with it. It was an incredible spiritual experience."

It may not have been the same angel who grabbed Abraham's hand as he was about to slay Isaac, but eventually Marley realized that she would not have to leave her family. Not permanently, anyway. She did spend a few quiet weeks after that Pentecost Sunday on a farm in rural Minnesota, reading, praying, trying to get a fix on what God had in mind for her. It didn't come into focus all at once, but soon enough she realized that a ministry in

some form of pastoral counseling was the direction she should go.

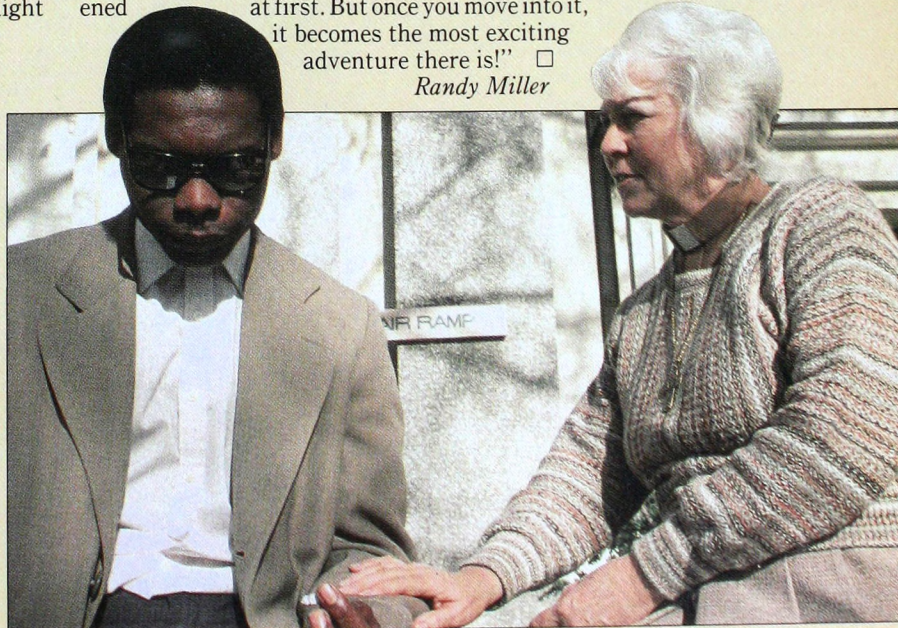
Shortly after finishing seminary, Marley took a position as associate pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Santa Clara, Calif. But her ministry goes well beyond St. Paul's parish. Today, 20 years after that wrenching, exhilarating Pentecost Sunday, her reach extends to the streets of San Jose, Santa Clara, and surrounding communities, where she is sometimes called the Mother Teresa of Silicon Valley—especially among street people and the homeless.

In 1986 she took a leave from her pastoral position at St. Paul's to devote herself full time to her ministry to the homeless, called ACTS (Acts Contributing To Solutions) for the Homeless. In some ways, ACTS is just an extension of what Marley and her husband have been doing for years on a smaller scale: opening their home to people in need of shelter. They've had as many as 15 people in sleeping bags on their living room floor at one time or another. Through ACTS, she is providing affordable housing for homeless families and individuals.

"All of this is really just an outgrowth of the love and compassion of God. That moves me to see dignity and loveliness in every child of God I encounter," Marley says. "It hasn't always been easy. But I've come to realize that God is faithful. God does not desert us.

"Initially, it can be scary. I was very frightened at first. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!" □
Randy Miller

"Initially, it can be scary. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!"

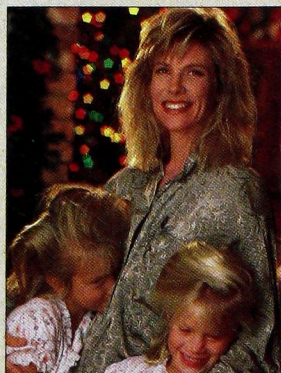


RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION

IS THERE ROOM AT YOUR TABLE FOR ONE MORE?

Published by
World Vision
Box 0
Pasadena, CA 91109

When we have big family get-togethers there are so many loved ones around the dinner table it's hard to find enough room for everybody! But it's so good to see everyone that it really doesn't matter how crowded it is...we can always find the extra space!



I've found that sponsoring a child is a worthwhile experience for my family — it teaches my children how to share and give to others.

Right now, there's a child waiting for someone like you to bring them the loving care they so desperately need.

Often, I look at my own four children sitting around the table, happy, healthy and well-fed, and I wonder how suffering children around the world can survive — children who face hunger, despair and hopelessness every day.

That's why I'm so grateful for World Vision — their Childcare Sponsorship program is providing hope for suffering children around the world.

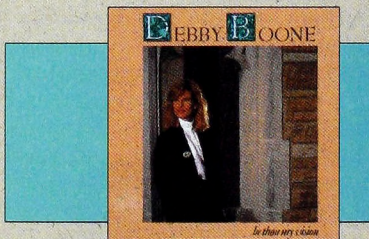
Each Childcare Sponsor gives a needy child things like food, medical care, clothing, shelter, and a Christian education. And the sponsor's support also helps the child's family and community. Best of all, a needy child is given the opportunity to know more about the love of Jesus Christ.

Childcare Sponsors also have the joy of developing personal relationships with their children by exchanging letters.

I invite you to join me in becoming a World Vision Sponsor today ... and make "room at your table" for a suffering child.

*God bless you
Debby Boone*

And as a special thank you for sponsoring a child, I'd like you to have a copy of my latest recording, "Be Thou My Vision"!



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I Want to Make Room for a Needy Child!

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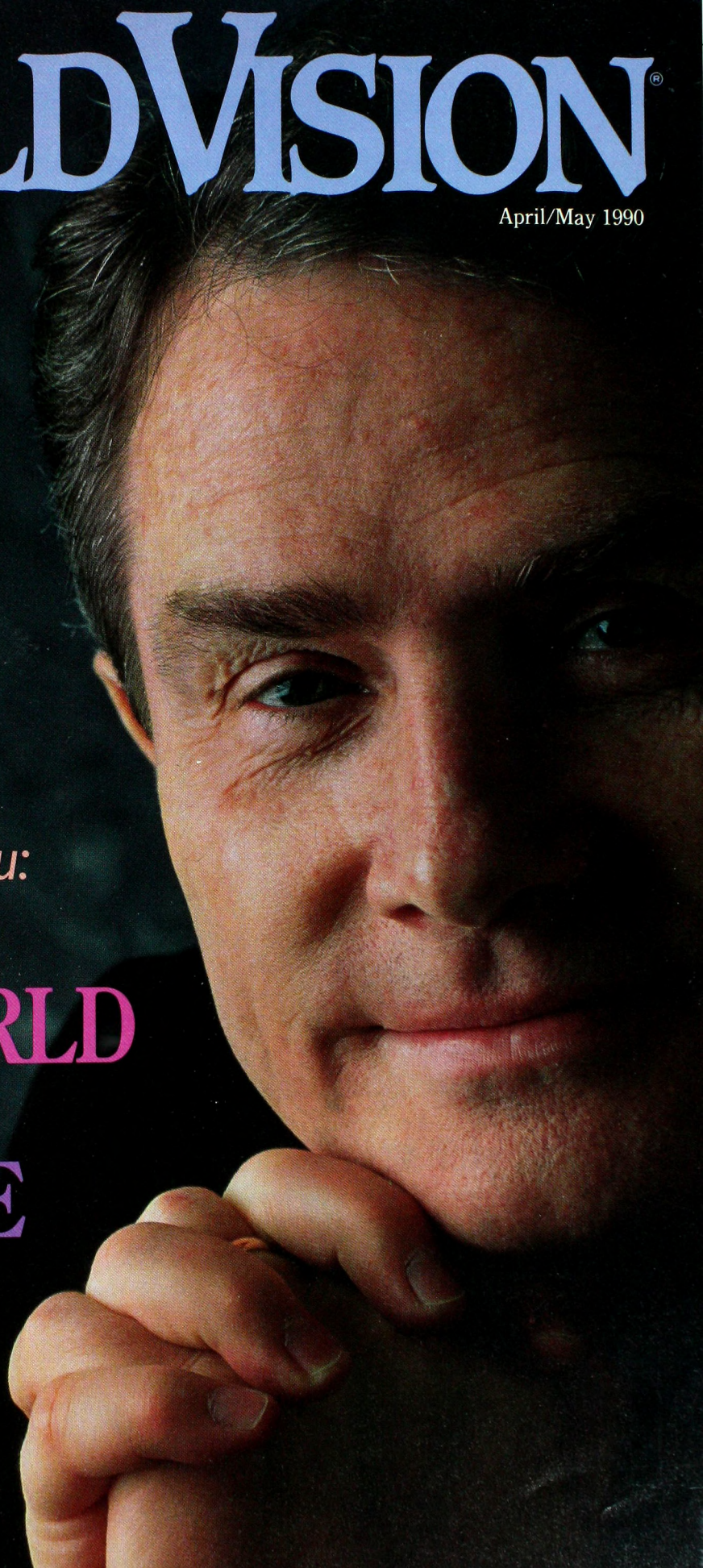
WORLD VISION®

April/May 1990

In Mali:
A CALL TO FARMS

Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias:
**STILL PUSHING
FOR PEACE**

Evangelist Luis Palau:
**CHANGING
THE WORLD
FROM
THE INSIDE
OUT**

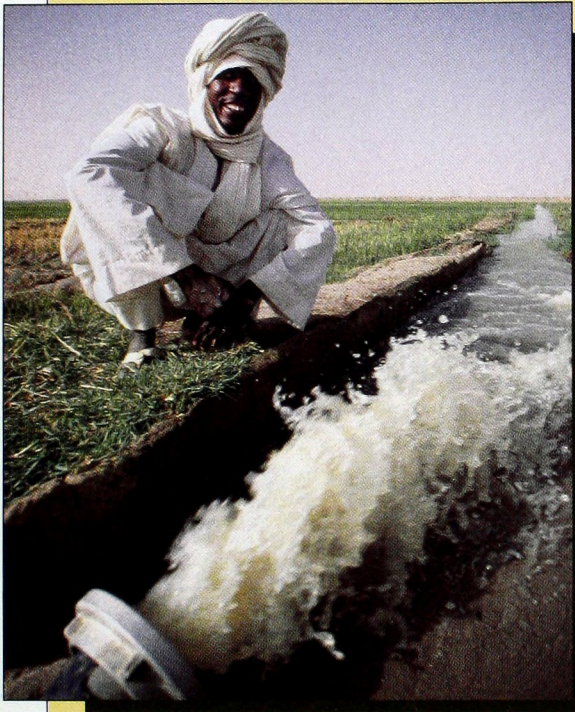


4 **Evangelism Is Social Action**

Spreading the gospel is all well and good, but why doesn't he do something about the social needs in the Third World countries where he often preaches? Evangelist Luis Palau says social change is exactly what his 25-year ministry has been about.

9 **A Call to Farms**

West African farmers in Mali's Seventh Region are relying on sweat and ingenuity to fight an advancing desert. Many aid officials say it's a losing battle. But, to everyone's surprise but their own, these tough cultivators are turning barren patches of desert into emerald oases of fertile cropland.



While Songhai farmers are in their fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else.

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION

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| God's Frightening Call | 23 |

World Vision places a priority on holistic evangelism—meeting the physical, social, and spiritual needs of individuals in an integrated approach. You'll find "evangelism" at work, in different ways, in different circumstances, in this issue. The title of Luis Palau's article cuts both ways: Evangelism is social action, and social action sensitively and prayerfully done by Christians can be powerfully evangelistic.

Terry Madison

14 **In Defense of Peacemaking**

Central America's Nobel Prize-winner has an impressive blueprint for peace that's begging to be tried. Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez looks for the day when leaders in that war-ravaged region will put down their guns and take his plan seriously.

18 **A Room With a View**

He knows he'll probably get mugged sometime in the next few years. Living on Skid Row in Los Angeles has its downside. But Bill Doulos wouldn't change what he's doing there—helping to provide low-cost housing for inner-city residents, some of whom used to make their beds out of cardboard boxes and concrete.

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REDEEMING THE DUMP

The biblical description is unnerving and unbelievable. It is called hell, “where the fire is not quenched and the worm is not consumed.” Christ can only hint at the pathos when he likens it to a garbage dump outside of a Judean city.

In Guatemala City the metaphor and the reality are one and the same. We were standing safely above the city dump on top of a building used by World Vision as a day-care center for children of parents working in the dump. The perpetual internal combustion created billows of noxious fumes and smoke, periodically hiding the hundreds of pickers working through the garbage. Maggots, those worms that, in truth, cannot be consumed, continuously carried out the work of decay.

Drivers and pickers made up the work force of the dump. They deposited, selected, and gathered again the acres upon acres of steaming refuse.

Not only do hundreds of people work in the dump, they also live there with their families. They are held hostage. The economic and living options are inextricably linked. One member of our group said it insightfully: “They were in the dump and the dump was in them.”

The dump is also a dangerous place which the Guatemalan city police refuse to enter. The turf has been staked out by strong-armed thugs who place a high value on the garbage.

Unfortunately, only the garbage appears to have value. Children are abused. Alcohol, drugs, and prostitution provide diversions to lives and income for living. In many families, the fathers are unknown. Brothers and sisters live and sleep together. And they all live for today.

Hope is not easily understood in the dump. Granted, a number of children do gather daily at the World Vision day-care center. And a school bus goes through, allowing a few children—if

their parents don’t protest—to spend part of the day outside. But these represent very, very small signs of hope.

The city’s garbage trucks constantly stream down into the pit. As they arrive, the children, who form the largest group of pickers, swarm in like fish in a tank gobbling up food.

Despair, hopelessness, overwhelming pathos, and spiritual warfare dominate the dump. The forces of darkness, death, and sin are alive and well. It is hell on earth, and I struggled with both the immensity and the intensity of it.

So what can we do? The American “can do” spirit has already gone to work on the problem. Concerned people have held discussions and considered options. They’ve talked about building a larger building to hold more children. They’ve weighed economic alternatives for the area. They’ve contemplated doing more with the health clinic 18 blocks away. They’ve appealed to the government for more help.

But the overwhelming conclusion is clear: first we must win the spiritual warfare going on in that camp. Hell is only transformed by the power of the risen Savior. We have *no* other model. We have no other success. We have no other hope than the One who transcended hell itself.

All of our can-do spirit becomes meaningless unless we win the spiritual war. This is where we need a “can’t-do” attitude. Only the greater power of the resurrection can defeat these forces of darkness.

We are humbled by the dump. But we are encouraged that the One who has overcome the world, the One who has transcended hell, the One who lives within us, can also provide the insight, energy, and perseverance to overcome hell on earth. □

**Unfortunately,
only the
garbage
appears
to have
value.**



“Can’t you do something more practical for the world than preach the resurrected Christ?”

EVANGELISM IS SOCIAL ACTION

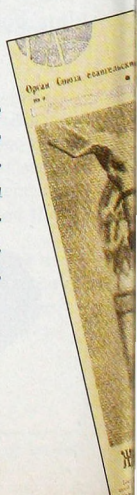
A university professor once challenged me: “Palau, how can you go to country after country, where people have so many economic and social problems, and preach about the resurrected Christ? Can’t you do something more practical for them?”

“There isn’t a better way to help them,” I replied. “The people of this world create the problems of this world. If we can lead them to Christ, we will create a climate for other positive, practical changes to take place.”

The professor was right, of course, that we live in a world full of immense problems. A world weighed down by famines, poverty, injustice, oppression, and environmental disasters.

But as Christians, we can help alleviate such misery. We are called to serve as Jesus served, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, breaking the chains of injustice—and leading

“Give me one example of the gospel changing society,” a Russian reporter challenged. So Palau did.





people to receive the gift of life in Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus is our hope that lives can change.

Conversion leads to the greatest social action. As people's lives are changed, they are different in their families, in their jobs, and in society.

I learned this early in my ministry. In November 1965, I was doing a live call-in counseling TV program in the HCJB-TV studios in Quito, Ecuador. I had just prayed with a woman who received Jesus Christ as Savior. The next call was brief. A high-pitched, squeaky voice requested an appointment the next day at 9:30.

The next morning, a small woman walked through the gates of the HCJB property, followed closely by two huge men. As she entered the office, her eyes traveled to every corner before she finally sat down.

"You pastors and priests," she began with disgust. "You are a bunch of thieves and liars and crooks. All you want is to deceive people. All you want is money!"

She went on that way for more than 20 minutes, swearing all the while and smoking every last bit from each cigarette she lit.

I prayed silently, "Lord, how shall I handle this?" Seemingly exhausted, she finally slumped in her chair. "Madam," I said, "is there anything I can do for you? How can I help you?"

She stared at me for an instant, then broke into uncontrollable sobs. When she was composed and could speak again, the edge was gone from

her voice. "You know," she said, "in the 38 years I have lived, you are the first person who has ever asked me if he could help me."

"What is your name?" I asked.

She was suddenly hard again. "Why do you want to know my name?"

"Well, you've said a lot of things here, and I don't even know you. I just want to know how to address you."

"My name is Maria Benitez-Perez," she said triumphantly. I recognized the name as that of a large family of wealth and influence. "I am the female secretary of the Communist Party in Ecuador. I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I am a materialist. I don't believe in God."

With that she took off on another breathless tirade against me, all preachers and priests, and the church.

"Why did you come here?" I broke in. "Just to insult me?"

For the next three hours, she told me her story.

Maria had left home and run away from a religious school as a rebellious teenager. The communists befriended her, and she became a party leader.

"When my mother died and the bishop came to officiate at the ceremony, I mocked him while my mother's body lay there in the casket," she said. "And I've always felt a little guilty about that, even though I don't believe in God, of course."

Every time she got onto the subject of God, she became enraged. But just as often, she would return to her mother's funeral.

"Hey, Palau," she said, "supposing there is a God—which there isn't—

but just supposing there is, do you think he would take a woman like me?"

I had read once that, when dealing with a professed atheist, the best approach is to take one truth from the Bible and stay with it. The Lord gave me Hebrews 10:17.

"Look, Maria, don't worry about what I think. Look at what God thinks." I opened to the verse and turned the Bible so she could see.

"I don't believe in the Bible ..."

"But we're just supposing there's a God, right? Let's just suppose this is his Word. He says, 'Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.'"

She waited, as if there had to be more. "But listen, I've been an adulteress, married three times, and in bed with a lot of men."

I said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"But I haven't told you half my story. I stabbed a comrade who later committed suicide."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

"I've led student riots where people were killed."

"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

Seventeen times I responded to Maria's objections and confessions with that verse. "Would you like Christ to forgive all that you've told me about, and all the rest that I don't even know?" I asked.

"He can't do it," she said.

"You want to try it?"

"It would be a miracle."

"Take a step of faith. Invite him

into your life and try him. See what will happen."

Maria stared at me for a long moment and then bowed her head. "All right," she whispered.

I led her in a simple prayer, confessing her sins, asking for forgiveness, and receiving Christ.

When I saw Maria again in January, I was not prepared for what I encountered. Her face was a mess of purple blotches and bruises. Several of her front teeth were missing.

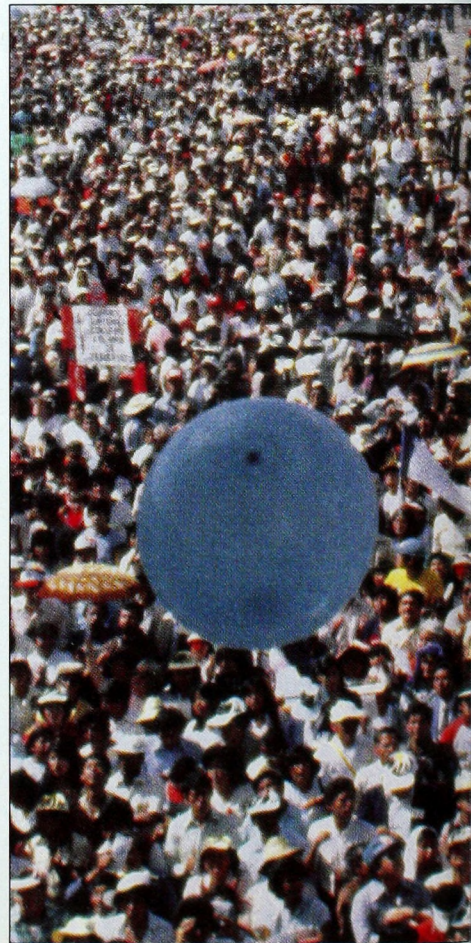
At a meeting of all the communist leaders of the country, she told them, "I am no longer an atheist. I believe in God and in Jesus Christ. I am resigning from the party. We are all a bunch of liars. We deceive people when we tell them there is no God."

A few days later, four of Maria's former comrades attacked her and smashed her face. She was forced to hide in the basements of churches and

**HER
CHANGED
LIFE
ALTERED
THE
COURSE OF
NATIONAL
EVENTS.**



Rosario Rivera's work with the poor in Lima, Peru, (above) is an about-face from the violent revolution she worked for as a young Marxist guerrilla (at right).



in the homes of missionaries.

"There's going to be a revolution in June," she told me matter-of-factly. "We've had it all planned for months."

It was to be a typical Latin American uprising: students and agitators causing a disturbance in the streets, luring out the army, which would then be attacked and overthrown. The chairman of the Communist Party for Ecuador would take over the country.

Maria remained on the run until June, when the Marxists' network of spies tracked her down. But she talked her four captors into retreating to her father's farm, where they could rest and read a few Christian books she had chosen for them.

On the morning of the revolution, the Communist Party leader came to talk to Maria, his long-time friend. "Maria, why did you become a Christian?"

"Because I believe in God and Jesus Christ, and my faith has changed my life."

"You know," he said, "I have been listening to HCJB radio on shortwave, and those Christians—they almost have me believing there is a God!"

"There is!" she said. "Why don't you become a Christian and get out of

this business? Look at all the lives we've ruined. Here, take this Bible and this book [*Peace With God*, by Billy Graham]. You can go to my father's farm and read them."

Later that morning, the disturbance that was supposed to trigger revolution fizzled into chaos, because the leaders were off on a farm, reading.

Was Maria's conversion to Christ effective social action? Her changed life altered the course of national events—events that would have killed and oppressed the masses.

This certainly was one of the most bizarre encounters in my ministry, but one of only scores I know of in which evangelism proved the best form of social action.

Last fall in Leningrad a Russian reporter challenged me to give him one example demonstrating how the gospel can change lives and society. I told him about Rosario Rivera, a Peruvian Marxist and one of Che Guevara's closest co-workers.

Rosario had experienced one of the saddest childhoods I've ever heard of. Later she slipped into immorality, turned to violence, and became bitter toward God.

After Guevara's death Rosario went

to Lima, Peru's capital, where I happened to be preaching. She came to the stadium angry enough to kill me, but the Lord touched her heart. Early the next morning she trusted Jesus Christ, who completely transformed her.

Instead of resorting to violence to bring about social change, Rosario began to give bread and milk to the poor and provided practical help to hundreds of families living in Lima's slums. Countless thousands have benefited from her ministry, and scores have found new life in Christ. And her story has been published now in Russian, German, and English.

Some months back I met a missionary couple in the Netherlands trying to reach prostitutes with the gospel. Working with them is a former prostitute from Uruguay, South America. She had moved to the Netherlands to minister in the red-light districts.

Several years ago, this woman attended an evangelistic rally where I was preaching. She was converted and now is sharing God's love by reaching out to other prostitutes. The social implications have been widespread.

Near the end of five weeks of evangelistic campaigns in Wales last spring, an old farmer named Peter handed me



Luis Palau's first evangelistic crusade in Bogota, Colombia, 1965.

Mass evangelism in Guatemala: "Christians have penetrated every sphere of society."

PHOTOS COURTESY LUIS PALAU EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

a card. "Thanks, Luis," it said. "I've given up drinking half a bottle of whiskey a day." Several weeks earlier Peter had been converted.

"Do you ever get tempted now when you smell alcohol?" I asked him. "Does it get to you?"

"I can't stand the smell of it," Peter replied. "You said Christ could liberate me instantly, and he did."

To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history. Slavery was abolished in Britain by a group of men who were converted to Christ in the mass evangelistic campaigns of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. Justice and freedom under the law are a direct fruit of the gospel.

In South Africa, Billy Graham's racially integrated campaigns brought whites and blacks together in large public meetings for the first time in that country's history.

Evangelism always has social implications, because it takes place in a social context. In the first century, the gospel bridged cultural barriers between man and woman, Jew and Gentile, slave and free. Paul called Onesimus, Philemon's slave, "Our faithful and dear brother." Writing to Philemon, he wrote, "He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord."

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, the corrupt tax collector's dominating desire turned to charitable giving to the poor and restitution for those he had cheated.

Evangelism is the most effective social action because it deals with the

root of the problem, not with the symptoms alone. The root is human alienation, sinfulness, and evil. Mankind's foremost need is the gospel: first to dispel spiritual darkness, but second to eradicate their utter selfishness.

Most people live for themselves. True Christians live for God and for others out of love. God implants this love within all who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Leo Tolstoy described his experience this way: "For 35 years of my life I was ... a nihilist—not a revolutionary socialist, but a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago faith came to me ... and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation. What I had once wished for I wished for no longer, and I began to desire what I had never desired before."

Imagine a city where a million people become new creations, like Zacchaeus. The gospel can change society because it changes individuals, who then begin to change their families, which then change neighborhoods. And as those individuals live out their faith at home, in schools, in the military, in business, and in government, a quiet revolution occurs.

It is a slow process, but it is potent. It brings lasting change without hatred, murder, revenge, and class warfare.

Most societies change by coercion. The few that change by internal compulsion, without machine guns, are those that have had spiritual revivals. Many historians believe England escaped a revolution like that in France only because of the Wesleyan revival, which in turn roused concern for public health, prison reform, and public education.

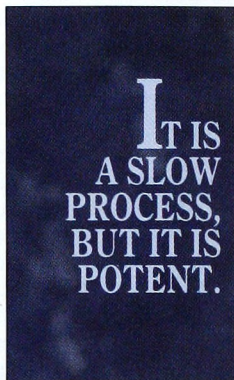
This is what Latin American believers are praying for—revival that transforms their nations without bloodshed. And they trust God enough to believe he can do it.

I believe that quiet transformation already is beginning in Guatemala. In a nation of 7 million people, almost one out of every three Guatemalans claims to have been born again.

They have penetrated every sphere of society—politics, education, the military, and business. Their commitment and zeal for the Lord is impressive.

I am proud to preach the gospel, which is the power of God, because nothing helps people more than introducing them to Jesus Christ. Evangelism saves people not only from dying without Christ, but also from living without him. And as they live with him, and for him, they become salt and light in a world lost in sorrow, injustice, violence, hunger, and disease. □

Luis Palau is an evangelist who has preached the gospel to more than 8 million people in 52 countries.



An evangelistic tour in Britain: "To suggest that evangelism makes no contribution to solving the world's problems ignores history."



A CALL TO

ARMS

"Our young men, anyone with strength, abandoned us to find work in other countries," said the old man. Here's one who came back when he heard of the rice irrigation project: Abdurahman Seydou, age 22.



EARLIER IN THE DAY, while it was too hot to talk about much of anything, I had impatiently blurted out my favorite old-man question: "Where did you come from?"

So hours later, after we'd shared a meal of goat meat and rice beneath a magnificent starry sky in Mali, in West Africa, Bagna Agleyba eased back onto the sand to tell me his story. Other, younger voices chimed in from beyond the campfire, filling in details, recalling fragments of conversation.

Almost an hour later I realized that the exciting events in his story had occurred not last week or last year, but 600 years ago. My illiterate hosts, it seems, are on a first-name basis with people 100 years older than Christopher Columbus.

Small wonder. Those ancestors of the present-day Songhai people were really something. Empire-builders. Intercontinental traders. Founders of universities. Administrators. These days we'd call them a superpower. And until their demise about 250 years ago, Bagna's forebears ruled a vast area spanning a dozen of today's West African countries.

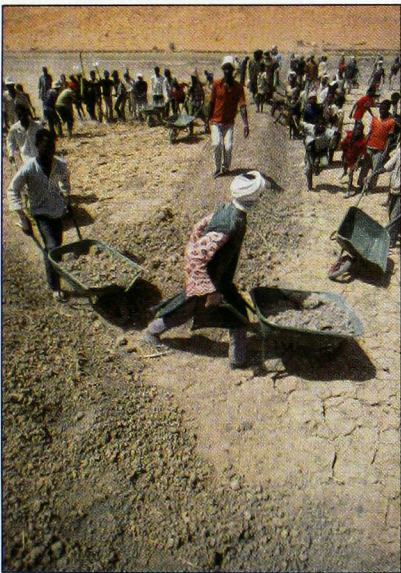
*Descendants
of empire-builders
in West Africa
dig in for the
fight of their lives*

Gao, the commercial capital of that old domain—one of Africa's largest, wealthiest, best-organized kingdoms—lay a few miles up the river from our campsite. Just a little farther was Timbuktu, that metaphor of exotic remoteness.

How did a mighty empire emerge in this place, now an environmental and economic basket case? Simple. Food. Here on the fertile banks of the River Niger, Songhai farmers grew enough to feed most of their known world.

Today, sapped by global climate shifts and relentless environmental degradation, the life-giving river has dwindled to a scant tenth of its former size. In the early 1970s, and again in the '80s, drought fed the advancing Sahara Desert. Trees and wild grasses withered. Crops and herds perished. Scorching winds and shifting sand encircled and sometimes even buried whole villages.

"All the good things in life disappeared," Bagna told me. "Our young men, anyone with strength, aban-



doned us to find work in other countries. Here at home many people starved, especially the children and—" he coughed nervously—"the old people."

In much of Mali's Seventh Region, a New Mexico-size area with a population of about 350,000, the normally harsh conditions of Africa's Sahel (the Sahara's semi-arid southern edge) degenerated to almost hostile desert conditions. The temperature by mid-morning is often 120 degrees. There isn't any shade. With the loss of so

In 120-degree heat, the men of the village of Tacherane build earthen canals. "If this work fails," one of them said, "we are finished."

much natural vegetation, it's become one of the hottest places on earth.

The Seventh Region's unique "floating rice" cultivation, mainstay of the Songhai economy throughout history, has been all but wiped out. The rain can't be counted on to germinate the rice at the proper time. Even if it did, seasonal floodwaters don't reach most of the floodplain fields any more.

And the people, these proud descendants of conquerors, have been reduced to pathetic beggars waiting



impassively for the next truckload of surplus American grain.

Similarly devastated are the Songhai's immediate neighbors, the Tuareg people: 100,000 tent-dwelling shepherds who for centuries have crisscrossed the Seventh Region in a finely tuned quest for pasture and water.

Five years ago, while the world directed its compassion toward Ethiopia, here on the opposite side of Africa, 90 percent of Tuareg camels and nearly two-thirds of the goats and sheep perished—an unimaginable catastrophe for people whose austere existence has always been intertwined with the fate of their livestock.

We'd been wallowing for hours across a sea of sand. Joe DeVries, a young Floridian agronomist who came to Mali with the United Nations and later joined World Vision, sat behind the wheel of our Land Cruiser.

"The best barrier to the advancing Sahara," Joe abruptly shouted above our engine's roar, "is an army of farmers, standing in their fields, growing food for their children."

Now, I knew that many aid officials have all but given up on the Seventh Region. *C'mon Joe*, I thought, *I respect your zeal, but we both know that a lot of people think mass evacuation may be the only real solution here.*

Then Joe drove us up the side of a huge dune and braked in a cloud of dust. "Ever heard of flood-recession agriculture?"

I hadn't. Far below, ringed by sand dunes, lay a startlingly green field, big as any farm I'd seen in Michigan, my old home.

"Recession sorghum," he said. "Probably about two-thirds of a ton of grain per acre. Not bad for a crop that

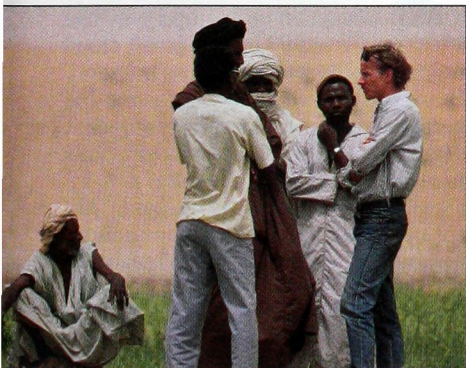
doesn't get a single drop of rain."

Joe explained that while it never rains more than a few inches a year here, runoff water collects in certain valleys and forms temporary lakes. Forty years ago some resourceful Tuareg shepherds discovered that a particular type of sorghum can flourish in these seasonal lake beds. Planted in the sandy clay as soon as the lakes disappear, the seeds grow to maturity using only the moisture left in the soil.

The Tuareg shepherds learned to

time their migratory travels to be near a promising lake bed at sowing time, then return for harvest four months later. After the 1984 drought wiped out their herds, a bumper harvest in 1985 saved lives and convinced skeptics that recession sorghum is here to stay. Today, there are more than eight square miles of scattered fields of shoulder-high sorghum.

"We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists."



"There's still lots of water here," says Joe DeVries (right). "Learning to use it is this country's best hope."

Tuareg communities like Ag Dalintah have formed cooperatives to invest a portion of each harvest in development resources, including drought-resistant tree seedlings and an irrigation pump for their first community vegetable garden. The people of Intadeny used sorghum to finance their area's first primary school.

Although World Vision has promoted recession sorghum since 1986, it's not part of some plan to convert the wandering Tuareg shepherds into settled farmers. The fragile ecology of Seventh Region's interior could never support permanent settlements for long.

"The Tuaregs are nomads," Joe

said, "not for sentimental reasons or because it's so wonderful to be on the move. No. They follow their seasonal migration patterns because here at the edge of the Sahara it's the only way to survive. Over the centuries they've learned what it takes to be good stewards of very thinly spread resources."

Helping the riverside Songhai farming villages has required more drastic measures. "Anything short of an agricultural revolution would be a big waste of time," Joe DeVries said.

We sat in the belly of a *pirogue*, a huge dugout canoe, as two boatmen poled us across the broad, gray-green Niger. "They're absolutely desperate," Joe said. "It's impossible for these farmers to feed their children." As the opposite bank came into view, I understood.

Fields where a green carpet of floating rice once grew now stand high and dry above the shrunken river. Robbed of their annual floods, these farms might as well be on the moon.

"Sure, the Niger is down, way down, and I expect it will stay that way," Joe said. "But there's still lots of water here. Learning how to use it is this country's best hope. We're challenging the Songhai to become world-class irrigation technologists, as good as the Chinese or Filipinos."

In the distance I spotted 40 or 50 tiny moving figures with pickaxes, shovels, and wheelbarrows. Why were all these guys out in the midday sun during the hottest month of the year, chipping away at the crusty soil?

Dripping with sweat, Ousman Samba explained. "We can't count on the rain or the floods anymore. We haven't had a good harvest since 1972. Now everyone in Tacherane agrees to build a *perimetre irrigue villageois* [village irrigation zone]."

Digging and carrying more than 15,000 cubic yards of soil to build dikes and irrigation canals may prove one of the easier tasks facing the men of Tacherane village. If modern irrigation technology is to succeed here in the desert, they must adopt new ways and learn new skills. The villagers must adapt and control their environment as never before.

When Joe DeVries started working with the people of nearby Gabero, the community was slipping rapidly toward extinction. Nearly everyone can remember how it was before a ridge of reddish sand drifted to the edge of the village. Most of the farm animals are now gone. The wild animals have vanished too, along with their wooded habi-

tat. Starvation and disease have claimed members of every family. Many others left in search of jobs.

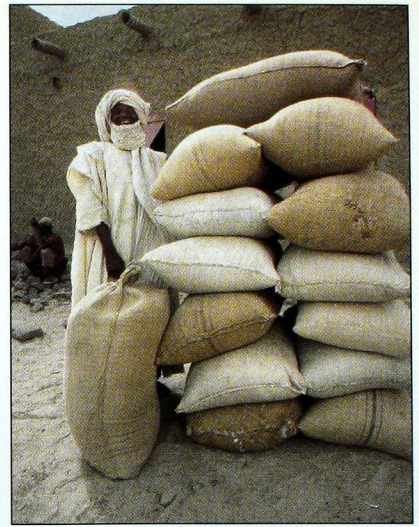
Gabero's leader, Elmaymoune Dicko, wanted to be sure I saw that not all the changes here are for the worse. We zigzagged up and down a maze of canals. A few workmen stood up to their knees in mud, weeding. In the distance a diesel irrigation pump churned.

I'd come prepared for a visual shock—a rectangular green island afloat in a sea of sand. But I hadn't expected the palpably cooler temperature inside that 43-acre *perimetre*, or the sticky mud inside my shoes. Or the

unmistakable feeling of standing on consecrated soil.

"We built it big," Elmaymoune beamed, "because we didn't want anyone to miss out on the blessings." This is the fourth year that every family in Gabero has cultivated a double crop of irrigated rice on family-size plots. Annual yields of almost 5 tons per acre are the norm, 10 times the yield of traditional floating rice.

Joe and his colleagues seem unfazed by the dismal track record of the Green Revolution elsewhere in Africa, where ambitious projects often fail because important political, social, and psychological factors are overlooked, or where



a few prosper while life for the poorest remains essentially unchanged.

"This won't be one of those colossal failures you read about," he says. "There's been too much success already for that. It's the survival instinct. It has to work. It's this, or die. Not many other development programs get such a kick in the rear.

"But even if it can't be sustained forever," Joe insists, "I guarantee that this will have been the most humane and inexpensive way to feed the people of Seventh Region in the meantime."

Although it's too soon to be sure, there are signs that even the climate may have begun to cooperate. In the past four years, rainfall consistently has been heaviest in communities with rice *perimetres*.

"When we're in our green fields, the desert does its advancing somewhere else," Joe smiles. "I'm telling you, irrigated rice attracts rain."

The old men, I suspect, will always start their campfire tales in the 14th century. One can only guess how the story might unfold in this latest chapter, now being written across the sand. But a gentle old fellow gave me his personal preview, a summary of recent events too remarkable and too precious to spoil with embellishment.

"God is blessing us," he said. "My sons have returned from their undignified life in the city. We have a real home once more. My wife and my children are at my side. And I am able to look them all in the eye, knowing that I have provided well, thanks be to God." □

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

The new method allows two harvests a year, and the land yields about 10 times as much as before.

WHO'S GOT PROBLEMS?

This is sport? Every January since 1979, "The World's Longest Race" has blasted through the heart of Mali's Seventh Region on its 8,000-mile, three-week trajectory: the Paris-Dakar Rally.

Five hundred screaming cars and motorcycles, plus their support vehicles. Thirty-five private aircraft. Mobile TV satellite uplink facilities. About 2,500 foreigners.

"They raced across my backyard this year," said Joe DeVries,

World Vision agricultural engineer. "The first guys came past about noon, and stragglers were limping in at midnight. Then at dawn they all took off again. Except for all the ruts, you'd never know it happened."

Attracting an estimated \$100 million in worldwide television, advertising, and sponsorship revenues, the event uses Africa's poorest corner to showcase an array of motor-vehicle products, consumer electronics, cigarettes, you name it. It has even graced the desert with an "official beverage."

"When I see it all," remarked a bewildered Malian farmer, "I realize that we are not the only people with problems." *David Ward*

Showcasing glamorous products against Africa's poorest corner: the 1990 Paris-Dakar Rally.



BRUCE STRONG



Encountering God through prayer in solitude can be one of the most gratifying things we can experience, says author and priest Henri Nouwen. It can also be one of the most difficult.

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but also that he is actively present in our lives—healing, teaching, and guiding—we need to set aside a time and space to give him our undivided attention. Jesus says, “Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place.”

To bring some solitude into our lives is one of the most necessary but also most difficult disciplines. Even though we may have a deep desire for real solitude, we also experience a certain apprehension as we approach that solitary place and time. As soon as we are alone, without people to talk with, books to read, television to watch, or phone calls to make, an inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again.

Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings, and impulsive desires.

On the contrary, when we have removed our outer distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force. We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises. It is thus not surprising that we have a difficult time being alone. The confrontation with our inner conflicts can be too painful for us to endure.

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray that** people just now receiving Jesus Christ will weave the gospel into the fabric of their societies (pages 4-8).
- ◆ **Thank God** for the ancient wisdom of West African peoples (pages 9-12) *and* for their openness to new ways.
- ◆ **Pray for** the success of peacemakers in Central America (pages 14-15).
- ◆ **Thank God** for Bill Doulos (pages 18-21) and others who show that giving one's life away is not just for superheroes.

PRAYER IN SOLITUDE

It is clear that what matters is faithfulness to the discipline. In the beginning, solitude seems so contrary to our desires that we are constantly tempted to run away from it. One way of running away is daydreaming or simply falling asleep.

But when we stick to our discipline, in the conviction that God is with us even when we do not yet hear him, we slowly discover that we do not want to miss our time alone with God. Although we do not experience much satisfaction in our solitude, we realize that a day without solitude is less “spiritual” than a day with it.

The discipline of solitude is one of the most

One of the things that makes God God is that he knows everything; so when I have wishes in regard to other people, I just say their names. I let him fill in the rest. ... I just keep on saying the names of people I love.

Barbara Grizutti
Harrison

powerful disciplines in developing a prayerful life. It is a simple, though not easy, way to free us from the slavery of our occupations and pre-occupations, and to begin to hear the voice that makes all things new.

Although the discipline of solitude asks us to set aside time and space, what finally

matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do.

The more we train ourselves to spend time with God and him alone, the more we will discover that God is with us at all times and in all places. Then we will be able to recognize him even in the midst of a busy and active life.

Once the solitude of time and space has become a solitude of the heart, we will never have to leave that solitude. We will be able to live the spiritual life in any place and any time. Thus the discipline of solitude enables us to live active lives in the world, while remaining always in the presence of the living God. □

Adapted from *Making All Things New—An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen. Copyright © 1981 by Henri J.M. Nouwen. By arrangement with Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

In December 1989, once again it seemed that Central America would bury itself under an avalanche of violence. Nicaragua battled the Contras and yelled at Honduras for harboring them. El Salvador, in the midst of a civil war, fought desperately against a new guerrilla offensive. Reports trickled out of Guatemala about continuing human-rights abuses. And seemingly all of Latin America was screaming at the United States for shooting it out with Gen. Manuel Noriega.

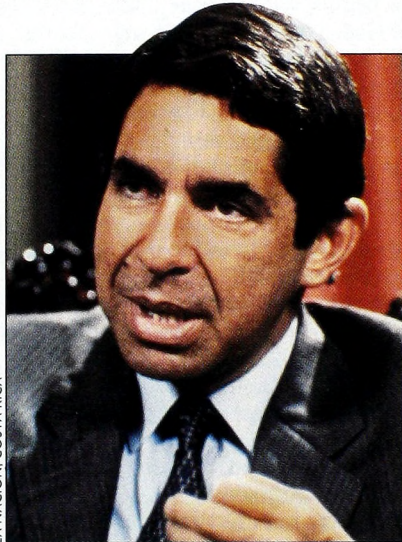
There was, however, one voice calling for peace in the region: President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, perhaps the only statesperson that everyone from the United States

to Nicaragua, and El Salvador to Argentina, respects and admires.

Arias' thoughts and plans are extremely important to North Americans. For the past four years he has presided over Costa Rica, Latin America's most thriving democracy—and the only one with no armed forces.

In 1987, Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize for his plan to end the fighting in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. In March 1988, he established the first extended cease-fire between the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the U.S.-backed Contras. And at a summit meeting of the region's presidents last December, Arias submitted another proposal to end escalating violence in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

There are so many ways of obtaining the support, affection, and gratitude of the people of Latin America through U.S. help and understanding, that I think [the United States] should concentrate on a dialogue with us—not the use of force.
—President Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica, in a 1988 interview.



IN DEFENSE OF PEACEMAKING

*Can Costa Rica's blueprint
work throughout Central America?
President Oscar Arias Sánchez
suggests it can.*

This May, however, the 49-year-old president and peacemaker will step down, having served the constitutional limit of one term in office. W. Dayton Roberts of World Vision recently interviewed President Arias to discuss peacemaking and other issues he has faced during the past four years.

ROBERTS: The Nobel Prize acknowledged not only the value of your peace initiative, but also your leadership as a respected peacemaker in this troubled region. What spiritual values or experiences have launched you into this role?

ARIAS: First, when seeking peace for the region, I represent the deep Costa Rican desire to see the differences between peoples resolved and settled in a civilized way, through dialogue and negotiations, never through violence and war.

Costa Rica has made dialogue its main instrument. To negotiate, one must know how to tolerate, to give in. One must be willing to accept that one may be wrong; one must not have dogmas. There is nothing worse than being a prisoner of dogmas and ideas.

So I have interpreted some of the Costa Rican desire that these problems or conflicts that divide our peoples will be settled and solved through negotiation and dialogue.

War leaves very deep wounds that are difficult to heal. It divides people forever. Examples are the wars in Central America, and the hate and resentment that have left wounds behind. Societies have been completely divided throughout the years. Years go by and those wounds are not erased. But sooner or later, Central America will simply have to find peace.

There are also Christian feelings; that is, the love for human life. Truly, no one can be in favor of violence and of endangering human lives. There is nothing more sacred than the life of a man, woman, or child. This is altogether apart from the fact that war in Central America is damaging Costa Rica's possibilities for economic growth.

ROBERTS: Many years ago, Costa Rica abolished its army. What difference does this make to the Costa Rican people? Do they feel insecure?

ARIAS: Latin America needs to find the courage José Figueres displayed 40 years ago when he abolished the Costa Rican army. Obviously, this has provided Costa Rica with its political and social stability. Since money is not spent on arms, those resources are


used to meet the most urgent needs of our population.

We have built a nation of well-being rather than a nation of fortifications. This is what has made the big difference between Costa Rica and the rest of Latin America.

In the 40 years since we dissolved our army, all the countries of Central America have experienced military dictatorships, and some of them still do. But not Costa Rica. Our liberties have never been threatened, nor have we known the humiliation of a regime imposed on us by force.

While students, peasants, and workmen have died in the conflicts of our sister nations, in 40 years no mother in Costa Rica has wept for the death of her son at the hands of a soldier, or because of a tyrant's indifference. Nor has any Costa Rican been exiled, tortured, imprisoned, or executed by a dictator.

As I recently stated in a speech to



Sooner or later, Central America will simply have to find peace.

the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is time that we honor the *comandantes* of peace, like Don José (Pepe) Figueres, who disarm their people so they can be free and can work for development, rather than the military *comandantes* who senselessly accumulate arms in the face of the hunger and submission of their citizens.

ROBERTS: Disarmament is one of your passions, and you see the production, traffic, and consumption of arms as a plague upon the continent. What have you done to dramatize these concerns and encourage other countries to follow Costa Rica's lead?

ARIAS: We have declared December 1 to be "Army Abolition Day," and we celebrate it with pride. I have also eliminated the ranks and military-type uniforms that had been used by our police.

Each country has its own responsibility in this crusade. Some will have to destroy nuclear warheads and others military uniforms, but all must work, tirelessly, for disarmament, for demili-

tarization.

The arms that were once symbols of liberty and independence have been transformed all too frequently into symbols of underdevelopment and oppression.

ROBERTS: Everything seems to circle back to the need for peacemaking.

ARIAS: War is incompatible with the welfare of the Central American people. With the exception of Costa Rica, all the other countries have been impoverished. Our prosperity, in large measure, is the result of Costa Rica's success in avoiding war.

ROBERTS: Costa Rica has also been unusually successful in involving women in public life and in influential political positions. Why are Costa Rican women generally well-qualified for such positions, and what are you doing to encourage this trend?

ARIAS: That was one of my most important campaign promises. I promised to provide more opportunities for women.


Comparing Costa Rican women's educational level with that of other Latin American women, I think that Costa Rican women have had more educational opportunities. You can see that in our universities today: Half of the students are women. Women were granted the right to vote in 1949, and from then on, their participation in this country's political life has been increasing.

Now I want to cap this process with legislation that will force all political parties and all government administrations to give women their place. This legislation also has sections covering the social and economic rights of women, and protection from sexual abuse.

In the introduction to the proposed law on women's rights is my promise: "I reaffirm our commitment to struggle tirelessly for the full involvement of women. In the same way in which the love and selflessness of Christian women have given testimony to us since Calvary, their full incorporation into our society can only be a promise of a greater Costa Rica."

ROBERTS: One final question. Are you familiar with the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"?

ARIAS: Yes, it is a sustaining thought.



SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope

GETTING PERSONAL

It works both ways," says Bob Kopeny, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Placentia, Calif. "We support our sister church in Havana out of our abundance, and it helps our people realize how much of the church around the world is a suffering church.

"At the same time, they support us out of their own abundance, with their prayers and encouragement. We already sense this happening. Several of our people are already hoping to meet their sister church face to face soon."

The two churches got together

A Cuban church: ASSIST links U.S. churches with those in restricted countries.



TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

through ASSIST, a ministry that links congregations in the United States with those in religiously restricted countries.

Contact ASSIST at P.O. Box 41179, Pasadena, CA 91114-8179; (818) 398-2466.

GINGER HOPE / WORLD VISION



"Now can I play Space Invaders?"

TUTORING AND TLC

It's a sort of controlled chaos. Nine terminals beep and flash. Nine keyboards rattle and click. Nine squirmy kids try to pull one over on four good-natured tutors.

"OK, I finished my spelling, can I play Space Invaders?"

"No way, I saw how many words you missed that time."

The kid groans and squirms

some more. "This stuff is too hard. I can't get it."

"Sure you can." A playful box of the ears. "Now let's take it nice and slow from the beginning."

This is the Neighborhood Learning Center, two rooms of a tall, skinny row house less than a mile from the Capitol. When Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship, an interdenominational church, asked its neighbors what the church should be doing for the community, this was the answer. Most of the 16 center's volunteer tutors come from the church.

A nearby grade school refers children to the center for tutoring and TLC. Between the after-school homework lab, the art class, the evening tutoring program, and the occasional stray who just drops in to say hi, the center reaches about 30 kids a day.

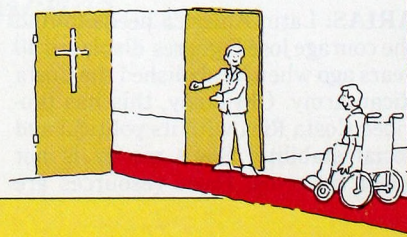
The Neighborhood Learning Center is at 907 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20002; (202) 543-2881.

A BARRIER-FREE CHURCH

Christ's Love Accessible to All" is the theme of a congress on the church and disability, beginning May 30 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.

This second annual congress, sponsored by Joni and Friends and The Christian Council on Persons With Disabilities, will be the first to include international participants. Joni Eareckson Tada, Dave Roever, and Tim Hansel are among the scheduled speakers.

For registration information contact Joni and Friends, P.O. Box 3333, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

JOIN THE CLUB

One of the growing movements among people who work in disadvantaged communities is Christian community development (CCD). Roughly defined, CCD refers to Christians living in communities of need, working alongside the people to improve their lives—as opposed to handout-style charity.

The Christian Community Development Association will help people start or continue CCD work, supplying a forum for mutual support. In the works are five regional training centers, where fledgling CCDers can study the philosophy, techniques, and hands-on work of more mature CCD ministries.

For information contact CCDA, c/o Cynder Baptista, P.O. Box 459, Angels Camp, CA 95221; (209) 728-1485.



“I don't think there's anything in particular about being Christian that enables you to do something that someone else can't do. But I think it might move you to attempt to do something. I once read a book called *The Recovery of Life's Meaning* that spelled out a very simple theology. Creation, it said, was not just an event in time but an ongoing process. We are God's instruments for carrying forward creation. Therefore, the mission of a Christian is to be a co-creator. ... In the spirit of co-creators, we should be moved to solve the problems around us.

James Rouse in
The Other Side



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

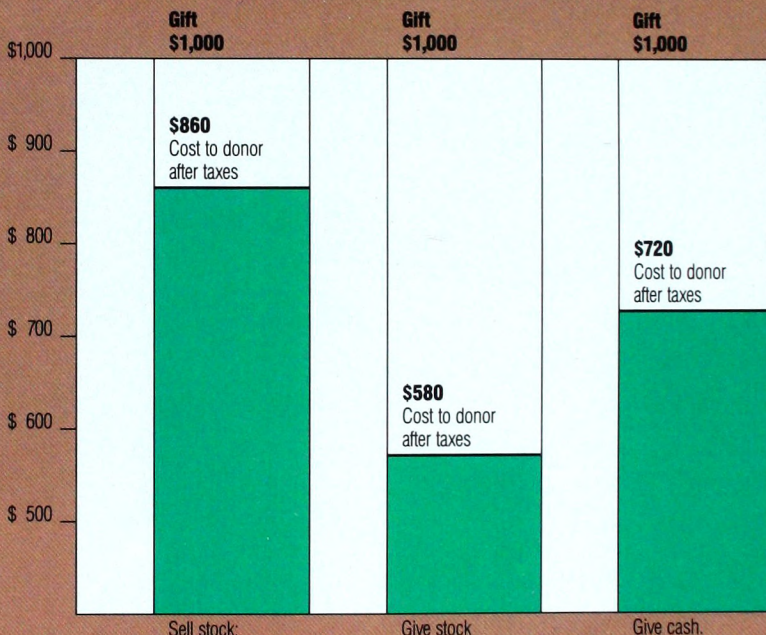
When you decide that it's time to sell off some stock you have held long-term, please consider the profit-sharing plan.

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

A Profit-Sharing Plan For Profit-Takers

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

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



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FMG003



*Prostitutes, drug deals
and muggings can be
seen most any night
from Bill's second-story
apartment window.*

BY RANDY MILLER

Something woke him up. Someone yelling down the street maybe. A car horn. Glass breaking. He's not sure. He checked the time: 4 a.m.

Bill Doulos
lives up to
his name on
Skid Row

A ROOM WITH A VIEW



A light breeze was blowing in through the open window of his one-room apartment in the old Pennsylvania Hotel in the bowels of Los Angeles. He usually kept the window closed. But on that night, the July heat wouldn't let him.

He kicked off the sheets and walked

to the window. The street two stories below was dark and still. Whatever had woken him up had driven away, run off, or fallen asleep.

He stood at the window for a while, feeling the night air on his face and surveying his restless neighborhood in a rare moment of calm. Then a



DEANNE EDWARDS

Renamed "The Genesis" when its new occupants took over last spring, Skid Row's old Pennsylvania Hotel stands as a symbol of hope in a decayed community.

flicker of light caught his eye, like someone lighting a cigarette. He saw the orange profile of a face and the vague form of someone scrunched down on a loading dock in a trash-strewn alley nearby.

But the odd thing was that the light didn't go out. There was no click of metal on metal, no flicking the lighter shut. Just a steady burning. A minute later, it went out. Then he saw it again. A small constant flame. The

kind of steady burn you need for a hit of crack.

Bill Doulos had seen a lot from his window in the two months he had lived in the once-elegant 70-year-old hotel, now flanked by an adult bookstore to the south and a liquor store to the north. From that window, he had seen a continuous parade of prostitutes, pimps, and winos. He'd seen muggings and assaults. He'd seen homeless people warming themselves at sidewalk campfires. He'd seen their sleeping forms crammed into corners, with feet sticking out from under thin plastic sheeting and old cardboard.

“I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. What I'm doing is not heroic.”

But despite everything he'd already seen in the gritty streets of Los Angeles, that lingering orange glow suddenly brought something into focus for him.

“I stood there and watched this guy who was experiencing exhilaration in such a stunningly artificial way because he was living in such desolation,” Bill says. “I mean, here's this guy out in the street in the middle of the darkness, going for this artificial high that, for him, was the only thing he had that resembled hope or beauty or happiness. It was the only thing he had that could remove him, if only for a few seconds at a time, from the desperate situation that is his life. That incident, for me, is a metaphor for people living on Skid Row.”

While most people might wave reality in your face and claim that you just can't save some people, Bill Doulos thinks that as long as someone is breathing, there is a flicker of hope, even if that flicker is coming from under a crack pipe in some back alley. That's part of the reason he wound up on Skid Row himself last April.

Bill has known a lot of barely breathing, bottomed-out people in the past 16 years, mostly through his work in Pasadena, Calif., where he directs Union

Station, a soup kitchen and shelter for the homeless founded by All Saints Episcopal Church in 1973. When All Saints church and Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles joined forces not long ago to purchase and renovate two run-down Skid Row hotels for low-rent apartments, they needed someone to live there as an owners' representative. Bill took the job.

What a noble thing. What a Peace Corps, roll-up-your-sleeves, hunker-down-with-poor-folks-for-a-year kind of thing to do. He knows that some of the people in the middle-class churches who pay his salary have him pegged as some kind of oddball saint.

“I don't feel deprived living in that hotel,” he says. “I resist the idea that there's something special about my living there. I don't feel like I have to put in my year or something. I'm not an extremist. What I'm doing is not heroic.”

Maybe not. Still, some risk is involved. A well-dressed white person walking late at night anywhere in the vicinity of Fifth and Main is a heart-warming sight to a mugger. “Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised,” he admits. “But that won't make me change what I'm doing.”

Bill didn't lie awake nights as a child in Johnstown, Penn., dreaming of one day enjoying an alley-view apartment in a Skid Row hotel. For a while, he thought he wanted to be a preacher. One summer in his high school years he read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. What he read, he took seriously. And still does. But sitting in the com-

fortable pews of his boyhood church he began to wonder, “Where is the persecution that Christ promised? Where is the suffering? Where is the sacrifice?”

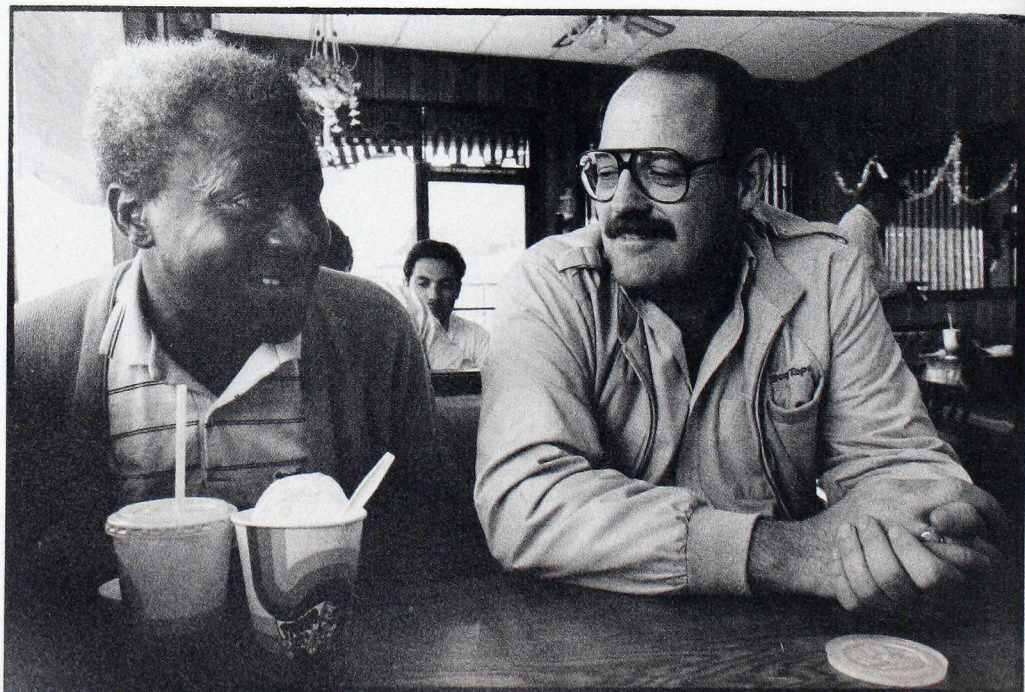
A few years later, with college behind him, he found the answers to some of his questions at Koinonia Farms in Americus, Ga., where a small community of believers were living the kind of gospel he'd found in the Bible. Their example helped shape his faith and guide him into the kind of ministry he practices today. It was during a summer visit to Koinonia that he also decided to change his name.

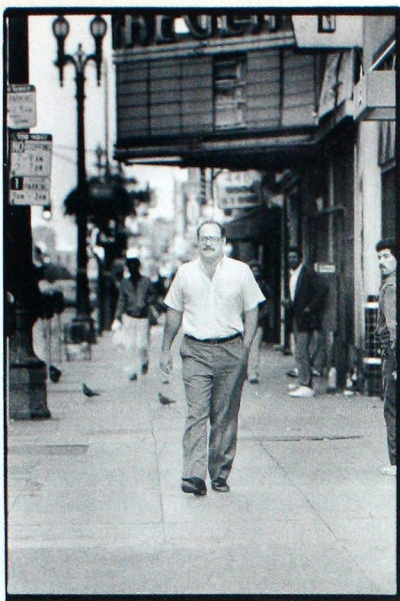
He was born William Henry Lane II in 1943, but decided to take on a name that would symbolize his deepened commitment to Christ. He chose *doulos*, the Greek word the apostle Paul used for slave, or servant, of Christ. During the summer of 1974, he legally changed his name to Bill Lane Doulos.

Bill eventually moved to Pasadena where, in 1974, he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. Shortly after that, he took a job with All Saints church's outreach program to street people. One of his main duties soon became mopping the floor at Union Station.

In those days, he had more time with the street people who wandered through Union Station. Today he spends most of his hours shuffling through stacks of paper on his desk or gnashing his teeth over administrative problems at headache-maker meetings about building codes. But he still makes time for guys like Roosevelt.

“I'd cut off my right arm for Bill Doulos,” says Roosevelt, a recovering alcoholic and long-time friend of Bill's. “Can't nobody say nothin' bad about him, you understand?”





"Five years from now, if I haven't been mugged, I'll be surprised."

Roosevelt is missing several teeth, his left eye, and the birthdates of three of his five children. The iris of his remaining eye is cloudy, and in the center of it is a milky white dot the size of a match head. He is 90 percent blind, but Bill is hoping Roosevelt will stay sober long enough to qualify for a cornea transplant at the county hospital.

Roosevelt met Bill 16 years ago, shortly after Union Station opened. For most of those years he was drunk. Today he's dry and living in a board-and-care house in the predominantly poor, black section of northwest Pasadena. He is Bill's age, but looks 20 years older.

Lunch twice a week with Roosevelt helps Bill put his administrative hassles into perspective—and keep his sense of humor intact.

"My good eye jumped out on me twice," Roosevelt says, making a stab at some smog-brown mashed potatoes while seated in a booth next to Bill at Pioneer Chicken. "One time I was talking to a guy and it just fell out. I put it back in and I could see fine.

"I lost my fake eye a couple years ago. It was bothering me, so I took it out and put it in my coat pocket. Then some guy stole my coat. I bet he was surprised when he reached into that pocket."

If all goes well, Roosevelt will have both sockets full and his good eye functioning at 20/20 in a few weeks.

The Roosevelts of Skid Row and northwest Pasadena are challenging cases, but Bill finds them easier to deal with—or at least to know what to do with—than people like the well-inten-

tioned woman who wanted to know where she could donate several cardboard boxes for homeless people to sleep in.

"Those people mean well, but the dilemma I face constantly is how to channel people's good intentions into actions that really do some good," Bill says. "Actually, I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive, so that they see outreach not as just a one-shot thing or some kind of novelty, but something that they can do the rest of their lives."

"Bill is the kind of person who seems equally comfortable with either the board president or the wino with a fifth-grade education," says friend and Union Station staff member Bill Morgan. "He can communicate up and down the whole spectrum of life."

One place the whole spectrum converges is at Pasadena's Green Street Park on Christmas day, when Union Station staffers and a few hundred volunteers lay out a holiday feast for the city's street people. It's a place where homeless families, basket ladies, and toothless, grizzled, gray-haired men in grimy polyester mingle with old-moned Pasadenans in their Christmas-morning ski sweaters, and acid-washed jeans.

On Christmas 1989, a balmy day under creamy gray skies, the volunteers nearly outnumber the street people. A Donna Reed look-alike in a white Snoopy sweatshirt spoons dressing onto paper plates. A teal blue Jaguar XJ6 slips up to the curb. The driver hops out, opens the trunk and drops off a ham, then makes a hasty getaway. A yuppie choir stands in a half-circle and sings carols, clapping on the downbeat to Jingle Bells, and applauding themselves when they finish. A woman hoists a video camera to her shoulder to capture the day's events.

It all rings a little, well, phony. Lots of people with too much money doing their once-a-year good deed for the poor. Isn't it a little hypocritical? Bill stops his glad-handing and hugging long enough to ponder the question as he looks over the crowd.

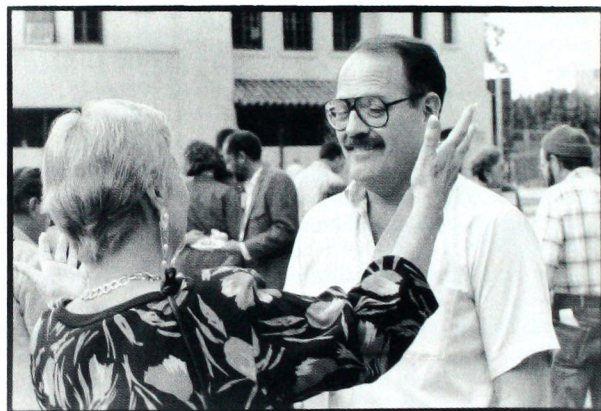
"This organization wouldn't exist if people didn't feel guilty," he says

The woman wanted to know where she could donate cardboard boxes for the homeless to sleep in.

with a half-smile. "I'd rather have people cook their turkeys, drop them off, and leave—if they don't feel they can stay—than to have them not do even that.

"I don't know how to be pure and get anything done," he muses. "I hope to bring people in, show them ways to help, and then nurture them so that they no longer operate just out of guilt.

"I'm not so uptight about how sinful somebody may be. Spiritual navel-gazing and getting all worked up about



"I've always felt that my ministry is to the rich as well as the poor—to lead the rich into opportunities that can be redemptive."

guilt is immobilizing. You can't get anything done that way."

One of the half-dozen books on the nightstand next to Bill's bed in his Skid Row apartment is *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. He read it over Christmas last year. That and *The Plague*, also by Camus.

"Depressing books," Bill says, heading north on the Pasadena freeway from downtown Los Angeles for a little late-evening work. "Camus would say that the essence of reality is that bleak sense of overwhelming pessimism and despair. I say that's what we're up against, and we have to combat it."

No small feat. But possible, perhaps, for one who won't give up on the chance that even a faint orange glow in a darkened alley can be fanned into a flame of hope. □

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BOOKS

THE AGONY OF AFFLUENCE

By William W. Wells. Zondervan Publishing House, 128 pages, \$7.95. Reviewed by Rick Cordell.

Is affluence really agonizing?

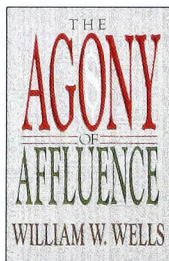
Granted, it does bring its own stresses and perplexities. But agony? Many of the millions of Christians, including pastors, who have lived near or below the federal poverty level may be put off by this book's title.

Beyond the distracting title, however, there's a wealth of helpful material packed into this too-short book. It addresses a relevant issue for most American Christians: How should we rich (at least, comparatively) Christians relate to a world of people existing in genuine poverty? Are we, in fact, greedy and gluttonous? Or do we just feel guilty?

In the past 15 years, dozens of books and articles by Christian thinkers have debated such questions. Alas, information overload in yet another field. Even if one had the leisure to read all this, it's unfamiliar terrain. What are the main contours? Where does one begin? True, Larry Burkett can help with the family budget, but that still leaves the broader questions dealt with by the likes of Ron Sider, David Chilton, and Kenneth Copeland.

William Wells begins in the right direction by attempting to correct some basic misconceptions about wealth and justice, national economies and exploitation. He then offers simple descriptions of capitalist and socialist economic systems, evaluating their effectiveness in helping the poor.

Several passages are succinct and insightful, such as the sections on the rights and responsibilities of the poor and the rich. It would be better if Wells had spent another paragraph or two developing some important ideas that he mentions only in passing, such as



the concept of sacrifice.

As an introduction to the main issues, the book does all the things that a good discussion-starter ought to do. Its basic definitions and concise overviews give sufficient clarity and perspective to enable immediate interaction on a productive (if not erudite) level. Wells focuses the primary questions for us and offers his own tentative answers in a way that stimulates more questions.

But his discussion is marred at points by generalizations (e.g. "Jesus was not an ascetic" or "The Bible does not address unjust social structures") that cry out for qualification. For example, in an otherwise sensible and balanced section on appropriate consumption for the Christian, Wells summarily dismisses the "simple lifestyle" approach with a virtual wave of the hand. It's also disappointing to find him indulging in an occasionally facile handling of Scripture, ranging from proof-texting to a sloppy allusion or two.

But back to the heart of the issue: How can a Christian know how much to consume and how much to give? Wells offers a number of apt suggestions. He also acknowledges that we depend ultimately on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but carries that crucial idea no further, leaving the reader to wonder whether the Spirit's guidance is individualistic or arbitrary. Is the church capable of discerning the general direction the Spirit provides, or are we abandoned to "unresolvable dilemmas" and "ambiguity"?

Wells succeeds in drawing readers into the thick of the discussion, which is his goal. The 20 pages following the text greatly enhance the book's usefulness: End notes and an index supplement an excellent annotated bibliography, which surveys both journal articles and books.

This short discussion guide deserves a large audience. Most of us needn't agonize over investing our wealth in it. □

Rick Cordell is a free-lance writer in Portland, Ore.

GOD'S FRIGHTENING CALL

There was no reason Marley Spilman should have felt a void in her life. No reason she could see, anyway. She had achieved the American Dream. She had everything that society had always promised would insure happiness: a beautiful home in a nice neighborhood, a loving husband, and two wonderful children. She worked with Girl Scouts and was choir director at her church. It didn't make sense that she should feel such a gnawing emptiness inside.

Reading the Bible only made things worse, especially those passages where Jesus insists his disciples give up everything in order to follow him. The Old Testament didn't offer much comfort, either. Especially the part about Abraham carrying his commitment to God so far that he was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac if that was what the Lord required.

It was too much to ask. Being willing to give up material possessions was one thing. But turn her back on her family? Could God demand such a thing?

Months of wrestling with those issues left little doubt in her mind that God was calling her for something. But she wasn't ready to fully commit herself if it meant turning away from her family. Not until Pentecost Sunday in 1970, when the sermon title happened to be "Learning to Say Goodbye."

After church, she told her husband about the calling she felt. She told him that God might require her to leave. "We had been married 14 years," she says. "The thought of what might happen was devastating to him. That was the first time I'd ever seen him cry. Finally, he said, 'Honey, if God is calling you, you have to go.'"

She had taken the final step. At that moment, she realized that she was ready to go wherever God would lead. "I felt a rush of the Holy Spirit," she says. "My whole body just flooded with it. It was an incredible spiritual experience."

It may not have been the same angel who grabbed Abraham's hand as he was about to slay Isaac, but eventually Marley realized that she would not have to leave her family. Not permanently, anyway. She did spend a few quiet weeks after that Pentecost Sunday on a farm in rural Minnesota, reading, praying, trying to get a fix on what God had in mind for her. It didn't come into focus all at once, but soon enough she realized that a ministry in

some form of pastoral counseling was the direction she should go.

Shortly after finishing seminary, Marley took a position as associate pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Santa Clara, Calif. But her ministry goes well beyond St. Paul's parish. Today, 20 years after that wrenching, exhilarating Pentecost Sunday, her reach extends to the streets of San Jose, Santa Clara, and surrounding communities, where she is sometimes called the Mother Teresa of Silicon Valley—especially among street people and the homeless.

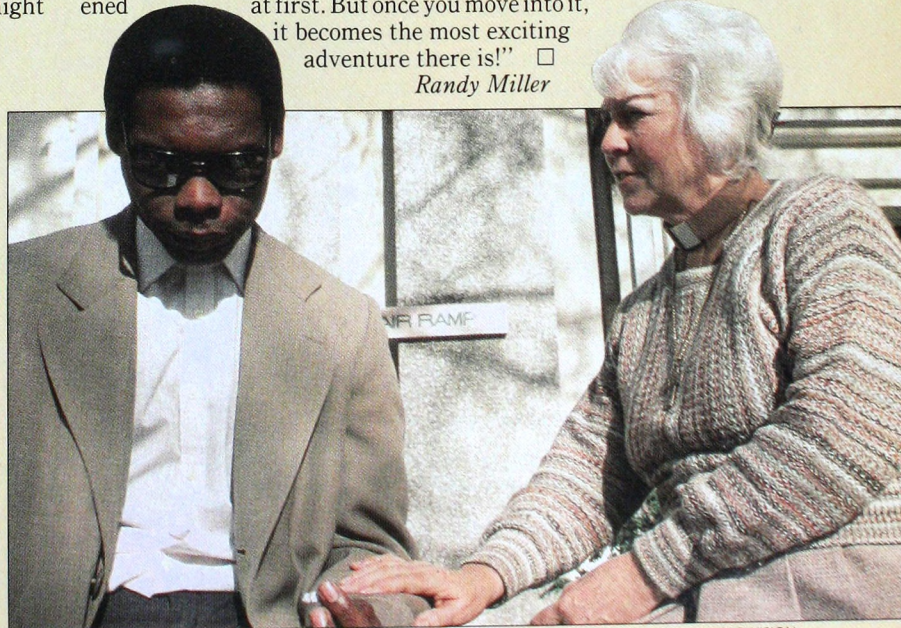
In 1986 she took a leave from her pastoral position at St. Paul's to devote herself full time to her ministry to the homeless, called ACTS (Acts Contributing To Solutions) for the Homeless. In some ways, ACTS is just an extension of what Marley and her husband have been doing for years on a smaller scale: opening their home to people in need of shelter. They've had as many as 15 people in sleeping bags on their living room floor at one time or another. Through ACTS, she is providing affordable housing for homeless families and individuals.

"All of this is really just an outgrowth of the love and compassion of God. That moves me to see dignity and loveliness in every child of God I encounter," Marley says. "It hasn't always been easy. But I've come to realize that God is faithful. God does not desert us.

"Initially, it can be scary. I was very frightened at first. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!" □

Randy Miller

"Initially, it can be scary. But once you move into it, it becomes the most exciting adventure there is!"



RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION

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***“It is not the will of
your Father who is in
heaven that one of these
little ones should perish.”***

Matthew 18:14

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