

# WORLD VISION<sup>®</sup>

April/May 1992

Street Children:

**ADDICTIVE  
FREEDOM**

In the Philippines:

**ON TOP OF  
OLD SMOKEY**

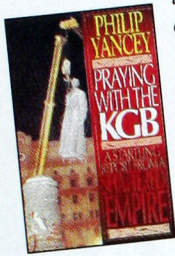
*In the former Soviet Union:*

**A RUSSIAN  
RESURRECTION**





In October 1991, Philip Yancey, the prolific writer and columnist for Christianity Today, accepted an invitation from the government of the Soviet Union to visit their country as part of a delegation called Project Christian Bridge. For almost two



weeks, Yancey met with various officials and groups, and observed firsthand the upheaval of a nation. The following is a report from Yancey's new book "Praying with the KGB." (©1992, Philip Yancey, published by Multnomah Press, Portland, Ore. Used by permission.)

It would be hard to overstate the chaos we found in the Soviet Union, a nation that was about to shed its historical identity as well as its name. One day the central bank ran out of money. A few days later the second largest republic seceded. A sense of crisis pervaded everything. Doctors announced the finest hospital in Moscow might close its doors—no more cash. Crime was increasing almost 50 percent a year. No one knew what the nation would look like in a year or even six months. Who would control the nuclear weapons? Who would print the currency?

**'SUDDENLY  
WE HAVE  
REALIZED  
SOME-  
THING IS  
MISSING.'**

# A RUSSIAN

BY PHILIP YANCEY

ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY CLIFF NIELSEN





Perhaps because of this chaos, the Supreme Soviet seemed delighted to meet with our delegation. After a full day of listening to complaints from break-away republics, an evening with 19 foreign Christians probably seemed like a recess.

When we received the government's invitation proposing Project Christian Bridge in September 1991, the Supreme Soviet was the highest governing body in the nation, comparable to the U.S. Congress. By the time we arrived in Moscow, though, barely a month later, no one seemed sure what the Supreme Soviet was supposed to be doing. Five of

the 12 republics had not bothered to send delegates. Most major decisions were being handed down as presidential decrees from Mikhail Gorbachev or, more significantly, from Boris Yeltsin of the Russian republic.

We met with 20 committee chairmen and deputies in the Grand Kremlin Palace, a huge building built in the 19th century as a residence for the czars. The palace, with its chandeliers, frescoed hallways, parquet floors, and decorative plaster moldings, still conveys a fine sense of grandeur. (On the way to the meeting we passed a park where stooped-over Russian women swept

snow from the sidewalks with crude brooms of hand-tied straw. The contrast, in an egalitarian state, was stunning.)

The two groups, Supreme Soviet deputies and North American Christians, faced each other across long wooden tables. One end of the room was dominated by a massive painting of Lenin addressing a group of workers in Red Square. His face wore a severe, clenched-jawed "we will right the world" expression.

Some of us hardly could believe the deputies' warm welcome. From these very offices in the Grand Kremlin Palace, other Soviet leaders had directed

# RESURRECTION





a campaign against God and religion unprecedented in human history. They stripped churches, mosques, and synagogues of religious ornaments, banned religious instruction to children, and imprisoned and killed priests. The government opened 44 anti-religious museums, and published a newspaper called *The Godless*.

Using government funds, first the League of Militant Atheists and then The Knowledge Society organized "unevangeliism" campaigns of lectures and personal witnessing, aiming to stamp out all religious belief. Vigilantes known as the "Godless shock brigades" went after the most stubborn believers. Until the fall of 1990, atheism had been the official doctrine of the Soviet government. Now, a year later, 19 evangelical Christians were sitting across the table from the present leaders.

Konstantin Lubenchenko, chairman of the Supreme Soviet, introduced his side of the table. Throughout the meeting, Lubenchenko was gregarious and witty, often interrupting his fellow



deputies with jokes and repartee.

Nine months before, as a newly elected deputy, Lubenchenko had visited the United States to observe democracy in action. He happened to book a room at the Washington Sheraton the week of the National Religious Broadcasters' convention. As he stood in the lobby, adrift in a foreign land whose language and customs he did not know, the wife of Alex Leonovich, an NRB delegate, overheard him speaking Russian.

The Leonoviches introduced themselves to Lubenchenko. They and Mikhail Morgulis, a Russian emigré, escorted the Soviet visitor around the capital, and invited him to the next day's Presidential Prayer Breakfast, where an awed Lubenchenko met President

George Bush and other government leaders.

A friendship developed between Lubenchenko and American Christians, and it was mainly through these contacts that Project Christian Bridge had come about. Just one week before our visit, the Supreme Soviet elected Lubenchenko as its chairman, guaranteeing us a formal reception.

Our meeting with the deputies opened with brief statements from both sides. Our group, well aware of the anti-religious policies pursued by this government for years, began tentatively. We spoke up for freedom of religion, and asked for the right to distribute Bibles and broadcast religious programs without restrictions.

Lubenchenko waved these opening remarks aside, as if to say, "You're preaching to the converted here. 'We need the Bibles very much,'" he said. "Is there a way to distribute them free instead of charging, so more people can get them?" I glanced at the mural of Lenin, wondering what he would have thought of these developments in his motherland.

After a few more comments, John Aker, a pastor from Rockford, Ill., spoke up. Earlier, our delegation members had urged each other to respect the Soviets and not offend them with direct references to the failures of their country. We should be honest about the weaknesses of the United States in general and the American church in particular. In that spirit, Aker remarked on the resurgence of the Soviet church.

"Returning home from my last visit to your country, I flew over the city of Pittsburgh just as the sun was setting to the west," he said. "It was a beautiful sunset, and I photographed it. As I did so, I realized that the sun was just then rising in the Soviet Union. Going down in America, but coming up on the Soviet Union.

"Please don't be fooled by us. I believe in many ways the sun seems to be going down on the church in America. We have taken too much for granted and we have grown complacent. But I believe the sun is rising on the church here. Re-examine your history. Examine your spiritual legacy. And I pray you will lead your people in that light."

The deputies would have none of it.

One commented wryly, "Perhaps the setting sun does not symbolize the decline of the Western church, but rather the sinking of communism in Russia!" Other deputies laughed loudly. Lubenchenko identified the speaker as a major general in charge of the Ministry of State Security.

The general continued, "In the past weeks I have been negotiating reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. I have attended many meetings with my American counterparts. The cuts we have made will make our world more secure. And yet I must say that this meeting with you Christians tonight is more important for the long-term security of our nation than the meeting between our nations' presidents on eliminating nuclear weapons. Christianity can contribute much to our security as a people."

I checked the translation with the delegate beside me, who spoke Russian. Yes, I had heard right. The general really had said our meeting was more important than the START talks. A deputy from Byelorussia jumped in with warm praise for Chris-



### Children of Chernobyl

World Vision is providing health care assistance to victims, particularly children, of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The 800,000 children living in the areas of Belarus and Ukraine exposed to the radiation are the most seriously affected because children are more susceptible to radiation poisoning. World Vision is helping these children in these ways:

- A large, mobile diagnostic clinic will travel to remote areas of Belarus to diagnose and treat children who otherwise would not receive medical care.
- Fifty children from Chernobyl are being transported to a health camp.

**WORLD VISION IN**



tians who had responded so quickly with help for the victims of the Chernobyl disaster. Other deputies nodded assent. Another Soviet asked about the possibility of opening Christian colleges in the U.S.S.R.

**O**ur group began to detect a pattern that would become increasingly evident throughout our trip. Whenever we tried to inject a note of realism, our Soviet hosts would cut us off. They looked on the United States, with all its problems, as a shining light of democracy; they saw the church as the only hope for their demoralized citizens.

The Soviet leaders feared total collapse and anarchy unless their society could find a way to change at the core, and for this reason they had turned to us for help.

One deputy asked us about the relationship between democracy and religion. "There is a direct tie," we responded. "Democracy is based on a belief in the inherent dignity of men and women that comes from their being created in the image of God. Furthermore,

we also believe that governments are given divine authority to administer justice. In that respect, you leaders are agents of God." The deputies seemed to like that thought.

As the evening grew late, Lubenchenko asked one of the youngest deputies, an attractive woman in charge of cultural affairs, to sum up the new attitude toward religion. "I am impressed with how freely you can talk about your faith," she said, softly but with deep emotion. "I envy you! We have all been raised on one religion: atheism. We were trained to believe in the material world and not God. In fact, those who believe in God were frightened. A stone wall separated these people from the rest.

"Suddenly we have realized that something was missing. Now religion is open to us, and we see the great eagerness of young people. I envy those young people growing up today who can study religion. This is a hard time for us, when our ideals have been destroyed. We must explore religion, which can give us a new life, and a new understanding about life."

When she finished, Mikhail Morgulis, the organizer of our trip, asked if we could stand and pray. Television cameramen switched on banks of lights and roamed the room, poking their cam-



eras into the faces of praying Soviet deputies, drinking in this strange sight for the benefit, and probable bewilderment, of Soviet television viewers.

On our way out we posed with our hosts for photos in the great hall, and I noticed a bookstand display featuring the film *Jesus* and copies of the Bible in Russian. What had happened to the atheistic state? The change was unfathomable. I doubted whether the U.S. Congress would have invited these same evangelical leaders to consult with them on spiritual and moral values, and I certainly couldn't remember seeing Bibles for sale in the U.S. Capitol building.

**W**e exited the Grand Kremlin Palace, and a chorus of bells rang out in the clear October air. The Revolution had silenced all church bells until a decree from Gorbachev made it legal for them to sound again. I saw an old woman wearing a babushka kneeling before a cathedral in prayer, an act that would have required immense courage a few months before. The irony struck me: Within the walls of the Kremlin—officially atheistic until 1990—stand five separate gold-domed cathedrals. Is there another seat of government in all the world so crowded with churches?

I looked at my watch, still set on Chicago time. It was Oct. 31, Reformation Day. The Reformation had not penetrated the borders of Russia, in the 16th century or any other century. Now, in the least likely of places, at the least likely of all times, there were unmistakable signs of spiritual awakening. "It's enough to make you a post-millennialist," muttered one member of our group. □

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Poland for a three-month "purification" period, during which they will receive fresh food, medical attention, and a fresh environment to strengthen their bodies.

#### Mini Christian Libraries

World Vision is providing Sunday school materials and other Christian literature to various regions. Miniature libraries (64 volumes) consisting of Bibles and Christian classics have been distributed to more than 1,000 public schools in Belarus and Kazakhstan. Another 1,000 will be distributed next fall throughout Kirghizia.

#### Spiritual Support

Spur Products of Boise, Idaho is providing, through World Vision, highly technical laser printing equipment and paper to the Bible Society of Russia to assist in the printing of children's Bibles and Christian literature.

#### Food Distribution

Through World Vision's Family Food Pak distribution program, more than 300 tons of food has been distributed to 25,000 people in Armenia, Russia, and Belarus. The 30-pound food packs contain rice, flour, powdered milk, beans, lentils, and powdered soups. These packs can supplement the diet of a family of four for three weeks. Recipients fall into three categories: 1) families with a large number of children; 2) invalids, and 3) elderly people on fixed incomes.

ON



*I, myself, do not see today any other living spiritual force except the Christian one which could take on the spiritual healing of Russia.*

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

**F**or most of this century, the great cathedrals of Moscow and St. Petersburg were desecrated, boarded up, or left to decay. But their fading splendor testified of Christianity's thousand-year reign in Russia, and of what had been lost. Although communism quelled the gospel, it could never extinguish the people's hunger for God.

Now, after almost two generations of repression, Russians—particularly scholars and intellectuals—are enthusiastically unearthing their nation's history, including their Christian heritage. "Since 1988, many congregations have doubled or tripled, with the majority of converts under 30 years of age," says John Robb, director of World Vision's unreached peoples' program. "Tens of thousands have been turning to Christ through public evangelism meetings."

Among those open to the gospel are many "teachers, doctors, and other educated professionals," Robb says. Even the country's lack of New Testaments cannot quell the Spirit of God. "Intellectuals are delving into the pre-revolutionary writings of devout Christians such as Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Pushkin, and Gogol, and are being converted by the words of these men."

Robb has visited Russia twice in the past six months. In that time, he says, "I've seen more people come to know Christ than in my 25 years of ministry." In October, in Saratov, a city of 1.3 million on the Volga River, "local Christians had booked a 7,000-seat auditorium and advertised that 'an American evangelist' was coming to speak to them. I was taken to a sports arena where 4,000 people were waiting. Hundreds had already rioted—pushing, shoving, and breaking glass to get the free Gospels that were being distributed. While everyone shivered, due to the sheet of ice left by the afternoon hockey game, we read passages of Scripture. At the invitation, 2,000 people prayed to accept Christ."

In the next few days, Robb passed out New Testaments and spoke to 120 students and faculty of the Medical Institute. Eighty were converted. He gave

newspaper, radio, and television interviews, the latter reaching an estimated audience of 1.5 to 2 million people. "The television reporter even asked me to pick my own questions, since he had never interviewed a Westerner before! It was a beautiful opportunity to share the truth of Jesus Christ."

Near the end of his visit, Robb "met with some of the old saints who suffered decades of intense persecution and had prayed throughout that time for the city of Saratov. One man, Pastor Nikolai, had been falsely accused of insanity by the KGB. They hired psychiatrists to testify against him, then shipped him off to a Siberian prison. For five years he was cooped up in a cell without his Bible or anything to read. The dramatic response we experienced in evangelism was clearly a case of having 'entered into their labor.'"

Local Christians asked Robb to return to Saratov in January to lecture on the Christian faith at their academic institutes and universities. "The intellectuals

believe in a finite universe, that matter, energy, space, and time had a beginning and will someday end.

"This argues for the existence of God," he says. "Many of these former communists and atheists have been told that science says there is no God. In that regard they're working from assumptions of 19th century science. In every meeting, especially with non-Christians, I tried to reason with them, using Scripture, science, and Christian apologetics."

The strategy worked. At one meeting, after John's invitation to discipleship, so many people came forward that the choir had to move off the stage to make room for the new converts.

"I did not hide the cost of discipleship," Robb says. "I told them it would cost them everything." Even so, the people kept coming, until more than 200 stood shoulder to shoulder in front to make a commitment to Christ.

"One bushy-haired, bushy-bearded doctor, who looked like Tolstoy himself,

BY ANNA WATERHOUSE

## A RUSSIAN HARVEST



**TENS OF THOUSANDS HAVE BEEN TURNING TO CHRIST THROUGH PUBLIC EVANGELISM MEETINGS.**

told me he had been seeking God all his life," Robb says. "Because he had no Bible, he too had been reading Tolstoy—and he was very moved by the quotes I read."

Yet there is still a vast uncollected harvest, and the workers need help. "Although nearly half the Russian people already claim to be Christians," Robb says, "the former Soviet Union also includes 60 million Muslims, with only one Christian per million among them."

Russian evangelists are also suffering economic crises. The recent monetary devaluation means the average salary equals only three or four dollars a month. Most Christians simply cannot afford to evangelize full-time without outside help.

As the harvest continues to grow, Christians are elated and concerned. At one meeting, Robb says, "a middle-aged woman in a traditional black fur hat summed it up. She stood and, with a voice full of pathos, said, 'We were forced to be atheists. We've lost all those years. How do we teach our children about God?' " □

*Anna Waterhouse is a free-lance writer in Pasadena, Calif.*

are wide open to Jesus," he says. "My only concern is the need for sound teaching for the thousands of new believers, almost all of whom have had no contact with the church and are dismally ignorant of biblical teaching."

To prepare for the second trip, Robb reviewed the Russian classics, Tolstoy in particular. "I took his book, *A Confession*," Robb says, "and quoted from that to the audiences in Saratov and Samara, another city along the Volga. It really struck a responsive chord to hear their own great author quoted to them."

Robb also explained to his audiences that modern physicists such as Einstein and Stephen Hawking now



BY RON WILSON

*Home to some 18,000 squatters, this refuse dump has become a fertile Promised Land for two missionaries and their staff.*

# ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY

**W**hen Minda met the white women she was afraid. For one thing one of them had strange red hair, which the children ran up and cautiously touched. It was the children Minda feared for. Children had disappeared from Smokey Mountain—kidnapped, some said, for sacrifices. And now the ladies wanted her son, Ronald.

Minda lived with her children on Smokey Mountain, a growing heap of garbage

from the city of Manila, Philippines. She was one of a community of some 18,000 squatters living on the fetid mound and earning their livelihood from the abandoned, rusting, and rotting refuse of Manila's 13 million citizens.

Minda lived under a piece of plastic, moving it every week as the neighbors drove her out. Sewerage ran in front of her make-shift tent, and the ground under it was mushy. Her

husband had bolted five months ago, and now, six months pregnant and with two children, Minda could hardly earn the 20 or 30



JON WARREN



pesos a day it took to buy rice and dried fish to feed them.

On top of that, her sickly 1-year-old son, Ronald, badly needed nourishment and medicine. The women had offered to take him to their house near Smokey Mountain (named for the spontaneous combustion of gasses that sends up clouds of nauseous fumes) and nurse him back to health.

Minda had seen other children from the dump waste away and die. And she knew that without help, Ronald would succumb. But if she gave him to the foreigners, would she ever see him again? For two weeks she cried and prayed, prayed and cried. Then in desperation she thrust her child into the arms of the two women.

Lorrie Anderson, the redhead, had grown up in Canada amid scenic lakes and orchards. Joke (pronounced Yo-ka) Bergink, her partner, had been born in the Netherlands, but her family moved to British Columbia when she was 5. Hard work and Christian worship emerged as core values in both their

friend of a friend asked them to start an orphanage in Manila, they both responded, "No way!"

But this friend of a friend persisted. She tracked them down in Canada, and finally, after long conversations and sharing of visions, Lorrie and Joke took on the task of starting LAMBS—Loving Abandoned, Malnourished Babies Selflessly. Two years later, their task completed, the two women went home again.

During their time in Manila, however, they noticed that too many children lingered in orphanages because families couldn't care for them. Lorrie and Joke felt drawn to helping families keep their children rather than give them up.

The decision to work with the poorest of the poor, like those on Smokey Mountain, came naturally. "There was simply no one there to give parents a second chance," Lorrie says.

This time, without the backing of an organization, they faced some formidable problems—finding a house, building a staff, overcoming cultural barriers. But at home they had a church that saw them as more than another mission organization. "We told them about every detail of the work and they covered the whole vision with prayer," Joke says.

The neighborhood near the dump is made up of low-cost housing and small factories. The streets aren't paved and often when it rains the streets run hip-high with gray sewerage. "When people heard we were looking for a house for children from the dump," Lorrie says, "they showed us some real rat traps. But we thought God had a better plan."

**A** friend suggested they talk to a woman in the area who might know of a place. When they knocked on the door the woman who opened it announced, "God is telling me that you'd like to rent this place." It was perfect for what they needed.

The next step was to build a Filipino staff that could eventually take over the work. Lorrie and Joke had no intention of staying forever. They had no timetable for leaving, but they believed God did.

First they found Grace. She had worked for an American missionary couple who offered to take her back to the States when they retired. But Grace wanted to start giving back to her own people. Soon, along with Lorrie and Joke, she was picking her way around the debris, through the narrow alleys, brushing away the flies, and getting to know the people on Smokey Mountain.

That's when they decided not to call it "the dump." They had already named their ministry "Precious Jewels," which they took from Zechariah 9:16, where God declares that his chosen people

"will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown." They looked beyond the muck and the meanness of that 500-foot high, 15-acre wasteland and into the faces of people like Minda, people wounded, in pain, and sorely in need of hope. So what others called a trash heap, they called "The Promised Land."

When they looked for a social worker for the staff, someone told them about Aida, a recent university graduate. For her first interview Aida arrived at the gate in a mini-skirt and polished boots, proper fashion for a Filipina coed but hardly attire for slogging through the Promised Land. But in Aida, the two Canadian women sensed a tender and compassionate spirit.

In Limboy, they discerned a quiet kind of leadership. They had watched while God delivered him from a drinking problem and believed his commitment to his family would add stability to the team.

Slowly the team and the ministry



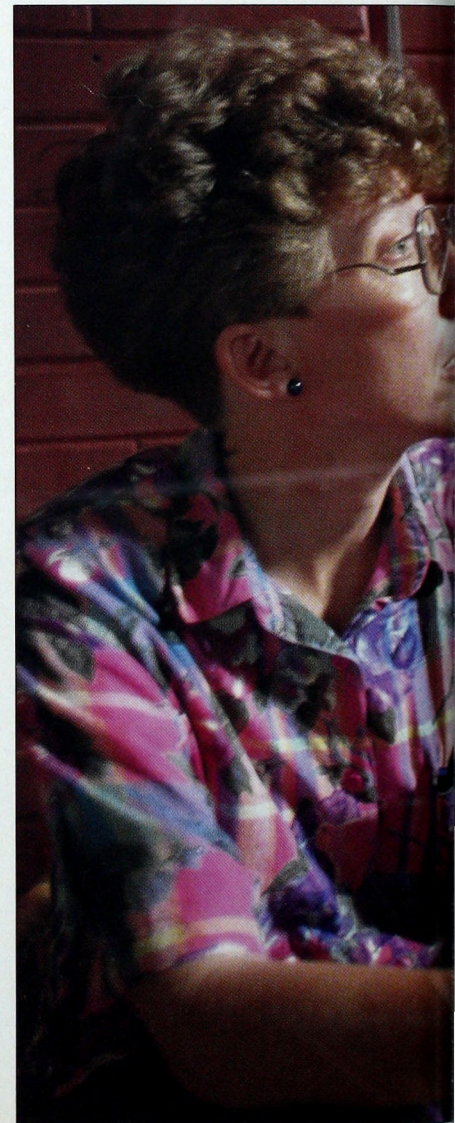
BRIAN COLE / WORLD VISION

*A mother from the dump studies the Bible with Grace, an orphanage staff member.*

lives. After the women graduated from college, those values jelled into solid Christian commitment and a conviction that God was calling them to full-time ministry.

Lorrie is a visionary, gets easily excited, and her enthusiasm carries others along with her. Joke is more practical. She's a good administrator who sees the details and knows how to get the job done. But they soon learned that their gifts complemented each other and they could work well together in ministry. So they volunteered for a year in an orphanage in India.

It was a baptism by fire. The expatriate director of the orphanage got sick and the two women found themselves running the place. At the end of the year, emotionally stretched and physically exhausted, they stopped in the Philippines on their way home. So when the



BRIAN COLE / WORLD VISION

*Lorrie (left) sits with Joke who comforts a tiny child.*



grew until they had 12 adults and 14 children living in the house. To begin passing responsibility to the Filipino staff, they formed a council of themselves and four staff members to make all the major decisions. Lorrie had already had two bouts with typhoid and another one, the doctors said, could be fatal. If they had any question about turning the ministry over to a national staff, that confirmed it.

**M**eanwhile, Minda's son Ronald had responded to both the nutrition and the love. But Joke and Lorrie shuddered at the thought of returning him to that frayed piece of plastic Minda called home. So they lent Minda a small sum to build a one-room house, and they looked for ways to help her make a living.

The two women wanted to get mothers in the dump involved in the process of helping their families, otherwise the children would revert to poor health. Some people told them it would never work. The culture is too *laissez faire*. You won't get these women to come to class-

es, they warned. But Minda went. She went faithfully to Bible study and even asked the cook at Precious Jewels to teach her to cook healthy food. And as this destitute young woman learned about Jesus, she trusted him, and became the source of hope for many other women in the dump.

Joke and Lorrie saw that the ministry on the mountain had a double edge: As they got involved with the families, they could help the children, and as they helped the children, it opened the door to the hearts of the families.

Slowly the house filled up. Daisy, a three-month premature baby, came to them at 3 months old weighing about five pounds. Two-year-old Lervic came blind in one eye, the result of measles. Little Joel, barely a year old and less than



A Precious Jewels staff member teaches the children how to read.

12 pounds, had a double cleft lip and palate, a deformed arm, and brain damage. Many of the children had tuberculosis. Soon the house had a waiting list.

At times they watched while children like 3-year-old Beverly, who weighed only 12 and a half pounds, doubled their weight in three months. Others like Reggie, a severely malnourished 3-year-old with tuberculosis of the lymph nodes, lingered in critical condition. Almost daily they visited parents who faced a painful decision: Should they use their few pesos to buy medicine, but go without food, or buy food and let a sick child suffer. They couldn't do both.

**C**risis came almost daily. The mother of one child was hit and killed by a garbage truck. Another child, Erlin, an 18-month-old, was just about ready for "graduation" when she developed a respiratory problem. They took her to the hospital, but a fire caused the hospital to lose its electrical power. The doctors told Erlin's mother they could do nothing else, so they discharged the child. The mother then rushed Erlin to the Precious Jewels house, hoping they could help. But five minutes before she arrived, Erlin gave her mother a weak wave, smiled, and died.

Crises will continue. Meanwhile Lorrie and Joke wait for God's direction. Several groups have asked them to teach others what they've learned or to replicate what they've done someplace else. When Mt. Pinatubo erupted, they helped the thousands of homeless people there, especially the children. "Upon our return," they wrote after a recent trip, "we found our team very strong but weary laborers for the Lord. They did an excellent job in our absence. ... The battle is great, the warfare intense... to God be the glory." □

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# P R E C I O U S

**A**s a staff member with the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, Calif., I worked in a Kids' Klub with about 60 children from welfare hotels and a nearby housing project. One Sunday afternoon, as I opened the bus doors to pick up a batch of kids, I noticed a new face in the crowd.

She was one of the most beautiful children I have ever seen. It wasn't just her sparkling eyes or warm smile. It was a beauty that went deeper, a spiritual air that drew me in. Her name, appropriately, was Precious. In the first- and second-grade class that day, when the leader asked for someone to pray, Precious immediately raised her hand. She prayed earnestly, praising and thanking Jesus, and had a most fervent petition for her father in prison.

Not long after that I met her beautiful mother, Tena, a woman of remarkable strength who was trying to raise Precious and her four sisters and brother in a dilapidated Skid Row hotel room.

Precious and her siblings loved to sing the Kids' Klub songs, complete with hand gestures, in the hallways of the Alexandria Hotel. Their favorite was "King Jesus."

Unfortunately, not everyone in the hotel counted singing as a favorite pas-

THE DEATH  
OF A CHILD  
FROM A  
POOR HOME  
BECOMES THE  
BREATH OF  
LIFE FOR  
MANY.

time. Drug dealers often hung around, looking for kids willing to deliver dope for spare change. One of the rooms had served as a crack laboratory. The large windows in the halls offered easy access from the street.

To keep from getting shut down, management hired security guards to patrol the grounds. I visited the families often and got to know the guards. Bob, the head guard, would tell me, "You've got to talk to Tena and get her to stop letting her kids play in the hallway." But

where do children play when they share a room with siblings and adults?

One day the Union Rescue Mission interviewed Tena and several other women for a radio program in which they recounted their lives in downtown hotels. One woman's story was extremely emotional. Money came pouring in for her family—but not for Tena's. Tena reacted bitterly to this seeming injustice: "People want to help a Spanish couple who does drugs and only has two kids, but no one wants to help a black lady who doesn't do drugs who is trying her best to raise six kids in one room of a hotel." She accused us—me included—of not understanding her plight.

She was right. I didn't understand. I was raised in a small agricultural town where everyone was white. I had attended white, middle-class churches and had never heard one of them exhort us to integrate. I had more or less fallen into urban ministry and now spent most of my time in a racially integrated neighborhood and church.

It was only in these circumstances that I began to wonder how we can remain reconciled to God, yet segregated from other races. Didn't segregation in the church mean separation of the parts and therefore brokenness in the Body of Christ?

BY DEL DEETS

# M E M O R I E S



I didn't see much of Tena after that confrontation. She went to live with her sister about 30 miles east of Los Angeles. Then, one day in April, when the temperatures reached 100 degrees several days in a row, my phone rang. "My baby drowned!" Tena said. Precious was in the hospital in a coma. She had apparently hit her head in a nearby swimming pool and was underwater for 20 minutes before anyone noticed her. She had survived the hallways of a Skid Row hotel only to fall unconscious into a suburban swimming pool.

For hours after hanging up, I was numb. Finally I called one of the volunteers from the Kids' Klub to start a prayer chain. Because Tena was spending most of her time at the hospital, several volunteers helped care for her other children. People donated money, food, and clothing. Some sent cards to the hospital and even to the father in prison.

Before long the hospital room overflowed with stuffed animals and balloons. The Kids' Klub children made a banner for the hospital wall. We even bought a tape player and played *Kids' Praise* tapes.

We did everything we could to help, but a month and several surgeries later, Precious was still in a coma. Visitors grew scarce. I had a full ministry, and going to see her became less of a priority. I even began to lose my compassion. One day I stared at a box of Tena's laundry we were to wash and thought, "What are we doing?" I felt drained to the point of exhaustion.

Still, it encouraged me to think of the volunteers from suburban churches and the hundreds who had prayed for Precious. I began to see the important relationship between urban and suburban churches.

Even as Precious lay comatose, it seemed the Body of Christ was waking up. One family even donated quite a bit of money from the sale of a house to the mission. Since Precious was stable enough for home nursing care, and Tena had nearly run out of medical benefits, we agreed to use the money to help Tena find suitable housing.

I thought money fixes everything. I was wrong. It was next to impossible to find adequate housing for a single welfare mother with six kids and no credit rating. Day after day, Tena came back with nothing. Finally, one day she called and excitedly told us she had gotten an apartment two blocks from the hospital. Apparently she had lied on her applica-

tion, admitting to only four kids. When the landlord learned from us that she really had six kids, he denied her the apartment with no further negotiations.

My eyes burned with tears at Tena's anger toward us. "You don't know what it's like," she said over and over. "If my kids were starving, I'd steal to feed them." Her hostility was more than I could handle. I wanted out.

Still, I couldn't withdraw my convictions about helping the poor. Despite the



Del (second from right) with Precious' family.

fact that the substantial financial help we had received did not get Tena the apartment, it had helped us get our foot in the door. And I continued to agree with John Perkins that "resources, redistribution, and reconciliation" must be the first step. Idealistic views were being molded by the nuts-and-bolts reality of ministry to an urban family.

I tried other venues to help Tena, including World Vision. They had a then-relatively new program called Project Home Again, which offers grants and

## PROJECT HOME AGAIN

World Vision's Project Home Again works through local churches to help homeless families find affordable housing. The church helps the family with initial needs including two month's rent, furniture, transportation, budgeting, child tutoring, and spiritual counseling.

Since 1989, Project Home Again volunteers have resettled more than 750 homeless families in 40 communities nationwide.

For more information, contact Obadiah Smith at Project Home Again, World Vision U.S. Ministries, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-7979.

trains churches to "adopt" homeless families—helping them find a physical home, as well as a home in the Body of Christ. But none of the churches in our area were ready to "adopt."

Then, finally, a breakthrough! One of Precious' former teachers told me about a program that would combine our funds with government benefits, find housing, and provide case management for the family. Within a few weeks, Tena had a four-bedroom, three-bath, two-story townhouse in a secure, clean housing facility. It even had a playground!

God had refused to fit into our nice, little ministry boxes. Instead, God took the money we had received from a white, middle-class family, led us to donate it to a parachurch organization, tipped off a public-school teacher to hand it over to a private social agency, and combined it with government resources so that an urban mother with six children would have a home. What a spectacular moment when I walked into that house with five children jumping all over me in exhilaration.

Four months later, as I sat in my new home in Philadelphia where I was pursuing graduate studies, I found out Precious had died. I pictured Precious sitting on Jesus' lap, singing him her favorite song, "King Jesus." I had learned so much through her short life.

Even her funeral taught me something about the unity which is possible in the Body of Christ. Tena's friends from the downtown hotels were there, as were children from Precious' school, volunteers from suburban churches, and agency workers. The Union Rescue Mission staff conducted the service, and a pastor from an urban church shared a special message. Then Precious' family shared. The day unified us all, according to God's design.

Precious and I will someday be reunited in heaven. But today, because of her, some of this broken body on earth might be able to overlook cultural differences and mend rather than break down. "Lowborn men are but a breath," the Psalmist wrote, and "highborn men are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing." Perhaps together, for a short time, we can be a breath of life, a breath of unity—the true Body of Christ. □

*Del Deets is the director of MetroLink in Philadelphia, Pa., where she links needs and resources in the city.*



# GLEAMS OF ETERNITY

BY REBECCA PRICE JANNEY

In 1983 I met the exiled Bishop Paulus of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He had taken refuge in a seminary where I pursued graduate work. The bishop's tested and unshakable trust in the Lord drew me and many other students to him.

We learned of his six years in an Ethiopian prison, with one more spent under house arrest after communist rebels overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie's government in 1975. In 1982 the new communist regime suddenly—mysteriously—freed the bishop. He realized that staying in his country might lead to further danger, so he escaped to the United States. He began a doctoral program and pastored a congregation of other Ethiopian exiles in New York City.

He looked extraordinary on most days. He was easily distinguishable on campus wearing a purple robe and Coptic-style hat, austere beard, and bejeweled cross against a backdrop of raven-colored skin. But on Ash Wednesday the drama intensified. When the bishop appeared in the cafeteria that morning, it seemed Darth Vader had come to campus. The Ethiopian priest wore so much black that even his cross hid discreetly in a breast pocket. He patiently explained the Coptic custom for clergy to dress totally in black throughout Lent.

Seeing him enveloped in that ominous attire made me feel gloomy at times. I reflected on the battles Christians wage daily over the powers of sin and death. But the Bishop's costume also reminded me that a Savior rescued us, bringing hope for this life and eternity.

When Easter morning dawned, I hurried across campus for a sunrise service. Suddenly I stopped in my tracks as a vision strode toward me from across the quad. As the dazzling white figure neared, I recognized it as a transfigured bishop. After seeing him in nothing but black for weeks, I gasped aloud at the change. He wore so much white that even his spats radiated the message of Jesus' awesome victory over death.

The bishop's face glowed as he lifted his voice above the campus's hushed stillness and proclaimed the ancient Easter greeting, "He is risen!"

"He is risen indeed!" I joyously echoed. □

*Rebecca Price Janney is a free-lance writer in Collegeville, Pa.*

When the bishop appeared in the cafeteria that morning, it seemed Darth Vader had come to campus.



## CAMBODIA

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Residents of this village in Srok Dongkor, southwest of Phnom Penh, replant a rice paddy devastated by floods. Rice is a Cambodian staple.

**T**wo decades of war and terrorism have ravaged Cambodia where Khmer Rouge soldiers murdered more than 1 million people between 1975 and 1979. The communist regime slaughtered religious and political leaders, doctors, and teachers. Vietnamese-backed communists ousted the Khmer Rouge in 1979, but guerilla warfare and strict religious sanctions continued.

Because of combat and land mines, Cambodia has the world's highest percentage of amputees. The country's 8 million people fear the estimated 4 million undetected mines.

But with the United Nations-sponsored peace treaty signed in October and free elections planned for 1993, Cambodia has begun to rebuild. Many of the more than 350,000 refugees who fled the violence will return to their country where they may receive food and materials to replant crops.

The World Vision-funded National Pediatric Hospital in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, trains dozens of pediatricians a year. Mothers are learning about nutrition and hygiene to prevent disease and malnutrition.

The church is also growing. Palm Sunday, about 100 people were baptized just outside the capital where there are eight churches.

Yet perhaps the greatest signs of healing are the children, who despite the devastation laugh, play, and sing. For them, Cambodia's rebuilding efforts may mean a more peaceful and promising future. □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Mothers widowed by war struggle to make money and tend to their families. A World Vision-sponsored day-care center helps feed, bathe, and educate the children while their mothers work paddy fields or tend small businesses.

STEVE REYNOLDS / WORLD VISION



Two boys play near a fish pond in Oudong District, Cambodia. Fish farming is an efficient and easy way to improve the protein intake of an area like south central Cambodia, where they get plenty of seasonal rains.



# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR  
HELPING OTHERS  
IN THE NAME  
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written  
by Tamera Marko

## HELP SELF TO SELF HELP

Looking for a hand-painted Peruvian vase, Bangladeshi Bookends, a Bolivian chess set, Thai jewelry, or baskets from the Philippines? These are just a few items marketed at low prices by SELF HELP Crafts of the World, a Mennonite Central Committee nonprofit program. SELF HELP, run almost entirely by volunteers, assists low-income people in developing countries by selling their handicrafts in North America.

The program began in 1946 when MCC worker Edna Ruth Byler visited Puerto Rico. Noticing the people's inability to work themselves out of their poverty, Byler bought several pieces of embroidery sewn by needy women in MCC volunteer classes and took them home to sell to friends and neighbors. Today the program has outgrown Byler's basement and involves more than 35,000 craftspeople and



their families who, without their handicraft jobs, would be unemployed or severely under employed.

SELF HELP crafts are available in 120 MCC-related shops in North America and hundreds of other nonprofit shops. To inquire how to stage a SELF HELP craft sale or to find SELF HELP products in your area, call or write: SELF HELP Crafts U.S. and International, 704 Main Street, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-4971.

## HAVE DESIRE TO TEACH, WILL TRAVEL?

Education Services International offers a chance to serve Christ by providing education overseas. ESI recruits and trains educators to teach at universities and secondary schools in China and Eastern Europe. Courses include English, International Business, and Law. Teachers in teams

of 2 to 6 usually work for one year and receive salaries comparable to the average teaching salary in the country.

Since 1980 ESI has sent more than 2,000 educators. Most teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and a demonstrated ability to teach while others require a more specialized education and experience in the topic field. Teachers pay for part or all of their own training and travel costs, ranging from \$2,500-\$4,000. For more information call (818) 284-7955; or evenings, (714) 596-5943.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

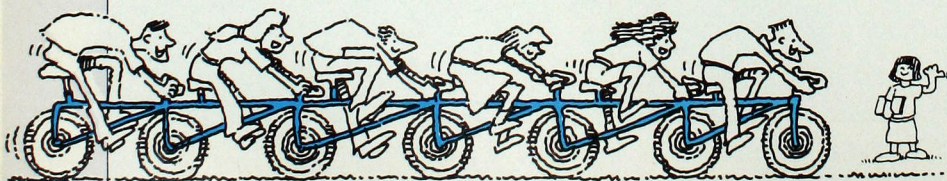
—Edmund Burke”

## HELP, MY CHILD HAS RUN AWAY

When a child runs away, parents are often unsure of where to turn. The police are overburdened with cases and legal help is expensive. But for \$2, parents can obtain a booklet by Phil Ludwig outlining the first 48 hours of step-by-step procedures for finding their runaway child. The booklet also lists warning signs that indicate a child may run away.

Three years ago, Ludwig founded Teen Rescue Family Advocate, a Christian program dedicated to assisting families of runaway children. “As a policeman, I really saw that when it comes to 13- to 17-year-olds, people back off,” says Ludwig, who worked nine years in law enforcement in Southern California. “I felt that there was a major, major gap that the Lord was convicting me to fill.”

Teen Rescue averages 60 cases a month and has assisted more than 400 families with runaway children. Charges are based on a sliding scale. Teen Rescue mainly services California and the western United States but will provide phone consultations for anyone. “I have parents crying, weeping on the phone saying, ‘I wish that you were here years ago,’” Ludwig says. Anyone interested in Teen Rescue's services can call or write Phil Ludwig at Teen Rescue, P.O. Box 1463, Corona, CA 91718; (714) 245-9292.





ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

## SUPPLYING THE SERVERS

In the market for missionary, relief, or medical supplies? The International Aid, Inc. mail-order form may be the place to look.

International Aid, Inc., a non-denominational Christian agency, provides medical, relief, and personal supplies to missionaries, and mission agencies serving the needy worldwide. Supplies such as tools, medical books, personal health care items,



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For more information about the missionary supply store or relief and medical items available, contact: International Aid, Inc., 17011 Hickory, Spring Lake, MI 49456; (616) 846-7490.

For a copy of World Vision's 1991 Annual Report, please write to Donor Services, World Vision, Pasadena, CA 91131; or call our toll free number: (800) 777-5777.

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# ADDICTIVE





**J**osé, 10, fled home because his father beat him until he bled. Adriana, 16, slipped out because she felt unimportant among her many siblings. Enrique, 14, left because it hurt to live with his mother, a prostitute. Javier, about 9, was enticed by the street's adventure in contrast to the poverty at home.

These are just a few of the more than 250,000 children living on Mexico's urban streets. Street children, however, aren't just a Mexican tragedy. About 100 million children live and work on the streets of the developing world. But whatever prompted them to seek the streets, these children share one trait: The longer they live there, the harder it becomes for them to return home.

They learn to scavenge through trash, beg, steal, sell drugs, and prostitute for food and to fight with fists and knives for their lives. They learn the street's temporary remedy for hunger, cold, fear, and loneliness: sniffing a fistful of cloth drenched with solvent.

Their bodies black with grime, they sleep in doorways, trash bins, and on park benches, huddled together for warmth. Drugs, hunger, and exhaustion

**THE LONGER  
A CHILD  
SPENDS ON  
THE STREETS,  
THE HARDER  
IT BECOMES  
TO GO HOME.**

# FREEDOM

TEXT BY TAMERA MARKO  
AND ROBERT ALVARADO  
PHOTOS BY CHRIS REDNER



A child living at the  
Tláhuac shelter  
smiles as he plays  
with his toy.

make their eyes glassy and resentful.

Their appearance and stench repulse passerbys. Police or vigilantes, intending to clean up the streets, brutally abuse street children.

These factors, combined with the painful reasons they left home, make helping street children extremely difficult. They distrust strangers, especially adults. Despite the pain, rejection, and loneliness of the streets, these children have learned how to survive without adult authority.

In addition, four walls and a strict daily regimen threaten their sense of freedom and control, their most valuable possessions. This is why traditional institutions often fail to rehabilitate street children.

The most successful programs, such as World Vision's *Niños de la Calle* project in Mexico City, first befriend children on the streets. "We must do all this slowly or we will scare them away," says Irene Vazquez, administrative assistant to the World Vision Mexico field director. "We just hang out with the children, talking and playing and letting them get to know our faces. We don't push them



**A**t the foot of a nightclub doorway, under a flimsy blanket, five children and two flea-infested dogs sleep curled up together to keep warm. Enrique stirs from beneath the blanket that reeks of urine and trash and provides feeble warmth in the January chill of Mexico City.

Groggily, he squints in the 10 a.m. sun and groans. His head still spinning from sniffing glue the night before, he staggers to his feet. Enrique, 14, begins another day of life on the streets.

When he first left home more than two years ago, he was afraid. Soon, however, older street kids showed him how to soak rags in solvent and inhale the acrid fumes. "The drugs make me forget all the problems in my mind," he says.

One of Enrique's most painful problems are memories of home, where he lived with his mother, a prostitute. "I left home because I wasn't happy there," he says. "I hated having strangers in my house. Here I don't have people yelling at me and telling me what to do. I do what I want and sleep when I want."

But his thin frame shows he doesn't always eat when he wants.

A few yards away from the doorway, an elderly man sits on a bench, drinking deeply from a bottle of Coke. Enrique stares longingly at it. The man spits toward the child's feet,

muttering *rata*, or "rat," in disgust. Enrique scowls back and shakes his fist. "I hate it when people call me a rat. It makes me want to hurt them back."

*Rata* is Mexican slang for street robber. Although sometimes he earns a few pesos shining shoes, Enrique profits most at stealing money and jewelry from intoxicated people trickling out of discos and bars.

"At first I used to be scared," Enrique says. "But now I am good at it. It's like a game." He proudly displays a black and gold watch hanging loosely on his wrist.

World Vision staff members Paco Peña and Joel Hernandez, who have been visiting Enrique on the streets for about six months, gently encourage him to visit the shelter.

"I liked being clean and having food," he says of his few visits to the shelter. "Paco is my friend—but I don't want to live with him or anyone else."

He shrugs, pulls himself to full height of about five feet, and surveys the trash-littered street with tired, bloodshot eyes. He points a grimy thumb at his shirt. "Now I am my family. I am the big man." He looks up at the doorway where the blanketed heap of children sleep. "Now I just want to go back to sleep."

—Tamera Marko







to talk about where they come from. They don't like to talk about their family because the memories hurt."

After a few months of slowly gaining the children's trust, those working with the children (the workers are called "street educators") invite them to visit a shelter where they can shower, play games, and eat a hot meal. Ideally, the children would eventually return home.

"Many street children just can't handle going back to a home environment right away," says Joel Hernandez, a street educator. "Many just go back and forth between the shelters and the streets. They have control of their lives on the street."

Joel Hernandez, a World Vision street educator, hangs out with Enrique (second from left) and other street children.



**T**en-year-old Carlos, out of breath from running to the pay phone, dials the number of his friend. He always keeps the faded, finger-worn piece of paper with the phone number written on it in his shirt pocket.

He is calling Luzmaria, a World Vision street educator who had worked with him for about a month on the streets. His face lights up. "I just called to say hi," he says with a grin. "I'm doing good in school."

A few months ago Carlos lay woozy and hot with fever on the Mexico City streets, suffering from chicken pox. A World Vision street educator found him one morning, his face covered with red blisters and his eyes almost swollen shut. The educator took Carlos to the hospital. The boy had been living on the streets for almost a year, stealing for food and inhaling glue.

As Carlos' health improved during his week at the hospital, Carlos helped the nurses bathe babies with chicken pox. "It made me miss my sisters," he says. "I wanted to see my family again and I didn't want to go back to the streets." When Carlos' mother entered the hospital room to visit, she burst into tears and hugged him, thanking God for returning her son.

"The streets are a bad place," Carlos says. "There was no one to help me when I was sick."

He didn't always hold that opinion. His parents run a dry-cleaning business, where he lives with his four younger brothers and sisters. "I left home because I felt like I was not important," Carlos says. "Everyone was always so busy. I thought the streets would be fun." So one day he left and did not return. "At first it was fun because it was new and exciting," he says. "But then I got sick."

Readjusting to the hectic life at home has not been easy for Carlos. "It was hard at first to do what other people told me to do," he says, raising his voice over the din of the dry-cleaning machine, car horns, and his sibling's laughter. "On the streets I did whatever I wanted."

Now Carlos spends his mornings studying and sweeping or taking dry-cleaning orders. After school he watches cartoons. "My favorite food is spinach because I want to be strong like Pop-eye," he says, bending his arm upward to display a tiny muscle. In a few years, his father will train Carlos how to run the business.

Carlos still has a few pock marks around his eyes and forehead, reminders of his days on the street. "The streets are bad," he says. "I thought it would be more fun but it wasn't. I don't think I'll ever want to go back."

—Tamera Marko



Problems such as drug addiction, prostitution, and stealing must also be addressed before the child can adjust to living in a family structure.

"In our project, the street educators work with the children while the social workers spend time with the families,"

Vazquez says. "This way it is likely the child and the family will better adjust to each other and work on issues that may have caused the child to leave in the first place."

Nueva Rosita, a World Vision shelter, serves as both a transitional and permanent home for about 13 boys. The streets' effects show in the dark circles under these boys' eyes and their gruff, sometimes crude responses to strangers. Despite the security of daily food and shelter, many of them return to the streets. A few, however, decide to stay.

Before coming to Nueva Rosita, Juan, 14, had lived on the streets for about six years. He was addicted to solvents and spent four months in jail for stealing shoes. He now attends school and enjoys reading the Bible.

"I think that my change is permanent because I'm sitting here and listening to what the counselors are saying



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and I'm accepting God," he says. But his eyes and conversation remain guarded when discussing his family.

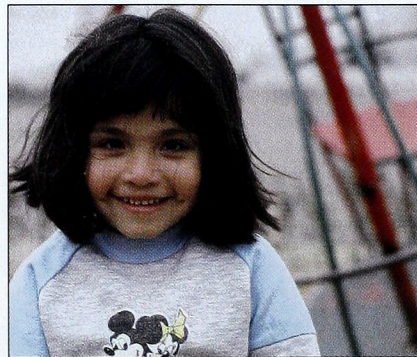
He wrote his parents a letter telling them he was OK. They replied with a letter and photos of themselves. But the friends and freedom of the streets continue to entice him. If he could not live at Nueva Rosita, he says matter of factly, "I would go back to the streets."

The children living at Tláhuac, a shelter run by a local church, with World Vision's help, provide a sharp contrast to those at Nueva Rosita.

Sickness, poverty, divorce, or death often leave parents without the means to care for their children. Rather than abandon them, they take their children to Tláhuac. Only a few have spent much time living on the streets.

Miguel's parents brought him and his younger sister Carolina to Tláhuac because they couldn't support them. Miguel, 9, says, "I miss my family and I want to go home. But I like it here. The drugs and the robbers can't get me."

Lupita, 2, an affectionate child with



*Carolina, 7.*

rosy cheeks, will probably never know the pain and addiction of the streets thanks to Tláhuac where she will receive schooling and career training.

"The difference here is that they have a roof over their heads, affection, medical attention, and they know God before the streets change them," says Rodolfo López, the Tláhuac shelter coordinator. "They do not come to us addicted to drugs, or with experiences of prostitution and stealing. But it is important not to give up on *any* of God's children. They all have a place in God's home."

Yet more and more of God's children who are abandoned, neglected, and abused believe their only refuge is the streets. □

*Robert Alvarado is pastor and founder of Victory Outreach in downtown Los Angeles. Victory Outreach is a worldwide ministry working with inner-city young people and families.*

## NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

Here's a word to the wise for those of you who start flipping and reading magazines from the back—keep going! You'll not want to miss Philip Yancey's remarkable cover story about changed attitudes and hearts in the former "evil empire." I hope it whets your appetite to read the hot-off-the-press book from which it is extracted, *Praying With the KGB*.

Just Released: The hunger pains for thousands of Armenians this long, cold winter will be blunted by a recent grant of beans, powdered milk, and oil worth \$7.5 million given to World Vision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Another item hot off the press is World Vision's latest annual report. For a free copy, check off the appropriate box on the postage paid envelope in the center of the magazine.

And while you're at it, please indicate if you're receiving duplicate copies of WORLD VISION magazine. Send us the mailing label from the extra copy and we'll handle it. Thanks. —Terry Madison

## WORLD VISION

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# "IF GOD DIDN'T EXIST, WE COULDN'T EXIST"

The room spoke of deep-seated, long-term, systemic poverty. It was depressingly simple—ceiling falling in, water dripping constantly to avoid freezing, filthy worn rug on the floor. It would be too embarrassing to use as a chicken coop in most countries.

There were two of most things. Two locks on the door, two beds, the luxury of two hot plates, two sets of knitting needles, and two old women. Actually, old before their time. They were twins, only 70 years old, but debilitated both within and without through the tragedy of Armenia.

There were two tragedies in these sister's lives. The first took place on the border where they

than 55,000 lives, and destroyed many more. They had lost everything, twice.

There was one set of faded pictures on a shelf in the room. Only one was needed. For Lucig and Tamara Shadian, the pictures were of common relatives, loved ones who were wrenched from them as human tragedy became a constant companion; faded pictures representing fading memories. Only the tears were current.

It was relatively warm in the room. The two pink coils of the hot plates could handle the small size of the room. Still, Lucig and Tamara were layered-up, wearing every article of clothing they had. They had no coats, so blankets were the final wrappings on these two ladies made frail by a land that fostered cruel disasters.

They lived on the third floor. The first had no doors or windows, just piles of refuse long picked over by marauding dogs. Broken water mains were slowly shutting down as the bitter cold froze them over. The second floor was a repeat of the first. The major difference on floor three was that people lived there, or at least existed. Most of the occupants hadn't been able to bathe in more than five weeks. Two small bathrooms handled the needs of the some 100 inhabitants. The day before, Lucig and Tamara had had a birthday. They thought of celebrating, but the electricity was turned off for 12 hours. The twin hot plates were inoperable. The inside temperature dropped to match that which was outside and, unfortunately, the day passed much like many others.

Celebrations are few. Expectations have been systematically destroyed. Predictably, self-esteem is rock-bottom. "How do you do it?" I asked quietly. "I pray three times a day," offered Lucig. "If God didn't exist, we couldn't exist," added Tamara.

Amazing. Hope is still there. Hope is what keeps them alive—virtually the only thing. But perhaps it is not so amazing. Christians who have faced death understand hope. They know that present hope is only credible if eternal hope is real. For Christians who live close to death, this is not an intellectual or theological question. It is experiential reality. It is also grace, grace that transcends the human pathos of a broken world.

They kissed our hands when we left and thanked us for coming. □

Bob Seiple comforts an elderly woman during a 1989 trip to Armenia.



became innocent victims of a centuries-old war with the Turks. The Turks won that round, a massacre followed, the two sisters barely escaped, but with loved ones and livelihood left painfully behind.

In a sad tale all too familiar to Armenia, they fled to another border town and, on Dec. 7, 1988, felt the full fury of the earthquake that claimed more

They were twins debilitated within and without by the tragedy of Armenia.

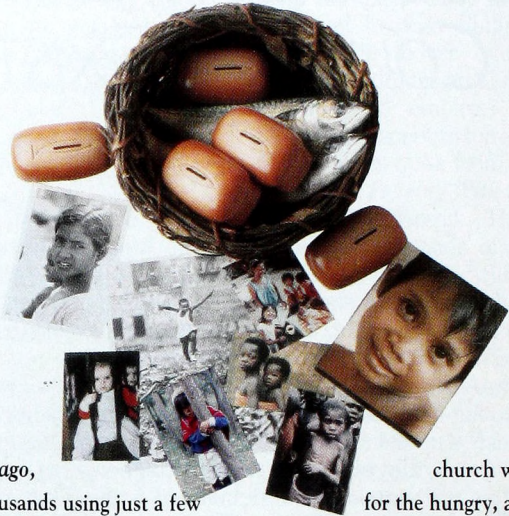


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April/May 1992

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**ON TOP OF  
OLD SMOKEY**

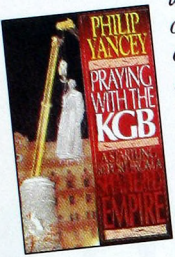
*In the former Soviet Union:*

**A RUSSIAN  
RESURRECTION**





In October 1991, Philip Yancey, the prolific writer and columnist for Christianity Today, accepted an invitation from the government of the Soviet Union to visit their country as part of a delegation called Project Christian Bridge. For almost two weeks, Yancey met with various officials and groups, and observed firsthand the upheaval of a nation. The following is a report from Yancey's new book "Praying with the KGB." (©1992, Philip Yancey, published by Multnomah Press, Portland, Ore. Used by permission.)



It would be hard to overstate the chaos we found in the Soviet Union, a nation that was about to shed its historical identity as well as its name. One day the central bank ran out of money. A few days later the second largest republic seceded. A sense of crisis pervaded everything. Doctors announced the finest hospital in Moscow might close its doors—no more cash. Crime was increasing almost 50 percent a year. No one knew what the nation would look like in a year or even six months. Who would control the nuclear weapons? Who would print the currency?

**'SUDDENLY  
WE HAVE  
REALIZED  
SOME-  
THING IS  
MISSING.'**

# A RUSSIAN

BY PHILIP YANCEY

ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY CLIFF NIELSEN





Perhaps because of this chaos, the Supreme Soviet seemed delighted to meet with our delegation. After a full day of listening to complaints from break-away republics, an evening with 19 foreign Christians probably seemed like a recess.

When we received the government's invitation proposing Project Christian Bridge in September 1991, the Supreme Soviet was the highest governing body in the nation, comparable to the U.S. Congress. By the time we arrived in Moscow, though, barely a month later, no one seemed sure what the Supreme Soviet was supposed to be doing. Five of

the 12 republics had not bothered to send delegates. Most major decisions were being handed down as presidential decrees from Mikhail Gorbachev or, more significantly, from Boris Yeltsin of the Russian republic.

We met with 20 committee chairmen and deputies in the Grand Kremlin Palace, a huge building built in the 19th century as a residence for the czars. The palace, with its chandeliers, frescoed hallways, parquet floors, and decorative plaster moldings, still conveys a fine sense of grandeur. (On the way to the meeting we passed a park where stooped-over Russian women swept

snow from the sidewalks with crude brooms of hand-tied straw. The contrast, in an egalitarian state, was stunning.)

The two groups, Supreme Soviet deputies and North American Christians, faced each other across long wooden tables. One end of the room was dominated by a massive painting of Lenin addressing a group of workers in Red Square. His face wore a severe, clenched-jawed "we will right the world" expression.

Some of us hardly could believe the deputies' warm welcome. From these very offices in the Grand Kremlin Palace, other Soviet leaders had directed

# RESURRECTION





a campaign against God and religion unprecedented in human history. They stripped churches, mosques, and synagogues of religious ornaments, banned religious instruction to children, and imprisoned and killed priests. The government opened 44 anti-religious museums, and published a newspaper called *The Godless*.

Using government funds, first the League of Militant Atheists and then The Knowledge Society organized "unevangelism" campaigns of lectures and personal witnessing, aiming to stamp out all religious belief. Vigilantes known as the "Godless shock brigades" went after the most stubborn believers. Until the fall of 1990, atheism had been the official doctrine of the Soviet government. Now, a year later, 19 evangelical Christians were sitting across the table from the present leaders.

Konstantin Lubenchenko, chairman of the Supreme Soviet, introduced his side of the table. Throughout the meeting, Lubenchenko was gregarious and witty, often interrupting his fellow



deputies with jokes and repartee.

Nine months before, as a newly elected deputy, Lubenchenko had visited the United States to observe democracy in action. He happened to book a room at the Washington Sheraton the week of the National Religious Broadcasters' convention. As he stood in the lobby, adrift in a foreign land whose language and customs he did not know, the wife of Alex Leonovich, an NRB delegate, overheard him speaking Russian.

The Leonoviches introduced themselves to Lubenchenko. They and Mikhail Morgulis, a Russian emigré, escorted the Soviet visitor around the capital, and invited him to the next day's Presidential Prayer Breakfast, where an awed Lubenchenko met President

George Bush and other government leaders.

A friendship developed between Lubenchenko and American Christians, and it was mainly through these contacts that Project Christian Bridge had come about. Just one week before our visit, the Supreme Soviet elected Lubenchenko as its chairman, guaranteeing us a formal reception.

Our meeting with the deputies opened with brief statements from both sides. Our group, well aware of the anti-religious policies pursued by this government for years, began tentatively. We spoke up for freedom of religion, and asked for the right to distribute Bibles and broadcast religious programs without restrictions.

Lubenchenko waved these opening remarks aside, as if to say, You're preaching to the converted here. "We need the Bibles very much," he said. "Is there a way to distribute them free instead of charging, so more people can get them?" I glanced at the mural of Lenin, wondering what he would have thought of these developments in his motherland.

After a few more comments, John Aker, a pastor from Rockford, Ill., spoke up. Earlier, our delegation members had urged each other to respect the Soviets and not offend them with direct references to the failures of their country. We should be honest about the weaknesses of the United States in general and the American church in particular. In that spirit, Aker remarked on the resurgence of the Soviet church.

"Returning home from my last visit to your country, I flew over the city of Pittsburgh just as the sun was setting to the west," he said. "It was a beautiful sunset, and I photographed it. As I did so, I realized that the sun was just then rising in the Soviet Union. Going down in America, but coming up on the Soviet Union.

"Please don't be fooled by us. I believe in many ways the sun seems to be going down on the church in America. We have taken too much for granted and we have grown complacent. But I believe the sun is rising on the church here. Re-examine your history. Examine your spiritual legacy. And I pray you will lead your people in that light."

The deputies would have none of it.

One commented wryly, "Perhaps the setting sun does not symbolize the decline of the Western church, but rather the sinking of communism in Russia!" Other deputies laughed loudly. Lubenchenko identified the speaker as a major general in charge of the Ministry of State Security.

The general continued, "In the past weeks I have been negotiating reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. I have attended many meetings with my American counterparts. The cuts we have made will make our world more secure. And yet I must say that this meeting with you Christians tonight is more important for the long-term security of our nation than the meeting between our nations' presidents on eliminating nuclear weapons. Christianity can contribute much to our security as a people."

I checked the translation with the delegate beside me, who spoke Russian. Yes, I had heard right. The general really had said our meeting was more important than the START talks. A deputy from Byelorussia jumped in with warm praise for Chris-



### Children of Chernobyl

World Vision is providing health care assistance to victims, particularly children, of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The 800,000 children living in the areas of Belarus and Ukraine exposed to the radiation are the most seriously affected because children are more susceptible to radiation poisoning. World Vision is helping these children these ways:

- A large, mobile diagnostic clinic will travel to remote areas of Belarus to diagnose and treat children who otherwise would not receive medical care.
- Fifty children from Chernobyl are being transported to a health care center.

**WORLD VISION**



tians who had responded so quickly with help for the victims of the Chernobyl disaster. Other deputies nodded assent. Another Soviet asked about the possibility of opening Christian colleges in the U.S.S.R.

**O**ur group began to detect a pattern that would become increasingly evident throughout our trip. Whenever we tried to inject a note of realism, our Soviet hosts would cut us off. They looked on the United States, with all its problems, as a shining light of democracy; they saw the church as the only hope for their demoralized citizens.

The Soviet leaders feared total collapse and anarchy unless their society could find a way to change at the core, and for this reason they had turned to us for help.

One deputy asked us about the relationship between democracy and religion. "There is a direct tie," we responded. "Democracy is based on a belief in the inherent dignity of men and women that comes from their being created in the image of God. Furthermore,

we also believe that governments are given divine authority to administer justice. In that respect, you leaders are agents of God." The deputies seemed to like that thought.

As the evening grew late, Lubenchenko asked one of the youngest deputies, an attractive woman in charge of cultural affairs, to sum up the new attitude toward religion. "I am impressed with how freely you can talk about your faith," she said, softly but with deep emotion. "I envy you! We have all been raised on one religion: atheism. We were trained to believe in the material world and not God. In fact, those who believe in God were frightened. A stone wall separated these people from the rest.

"Suddenly we have realized that something was missing. Now religion is open to us, and we see the great eagerness of young people. I envy those young people growing up today who can study religion. This is a hard time for us, when our ideals have been destroyed. We must explore religion, which can give us a new life, and a new understanding about life."

When she finished, Mikhail Morgulis, the organizer of our trip, asked if we could stand and pray. Television cameramen switched on banks of lights and roamed the room, poking their cam-



eras into the faces of praying Soviet deputies, drinking in this strange sight for the benefit, and probable bewilderment, of Soviet television viewers.

On our way out we posed with our hosts for photos in the great hall, and I noticed a bookstand display featuring the film *Jesus* and copies of the Bible in Russian. What had happened to the atheistic state? The change was unfathomable. I doubted whether the U.S. Congress would have invited these same evangelical leaders to consult with them on spiritual and moral values, and I certainly couldn't remember seeing Bibles for sale in the U.S. Capitol building.

**W**e exited the Grand Kremlin Palace, and a chorus of bells rang out in the clear October air. The Revolution had silenced all church bells until a decree from Gorbachev made it legal for them to sound again. I saw an old woman wearing a babushka kneeling before a cathedral in prayer, an act that would have required immense courage a few months before. The irony struck me: Within the walls of the Kremlin—officially atheistic until 1990—stand five separate gold-domed cathedrals. Is there another seat of government in all the world so crowded with churches?

I looked at my watch, still set on Chicago time. It was Oct. 31, Reformation Day. The Reformation had not penetrated the borders of Russia, in the 16th century or any other century. Now, in the least likely of places, at the least likely of all times, there were unmistakable signs of spiritual awakening. "It's enough to make you a post-millennialist," muttered one member of our group. □

*Philip Yancey is a member of WORLD VISION magazine's advisory board and lives in Chicago, Ill.*

n Poland for a three-month "purification" period, during which they will receive fresh food, medical attention, and a fresh environment to strengthen their bodies.

#### Mini Christian Libraries

World Vision is providing Sunday school materials and other Christian literature to various regions. Miniature libraries (64 volumes) consisting of Bibles and Christian classics have been distributed to more than 1,000 public schools in Belarus and Kazakhstan. Another 1,000 will be distributed next all throughout Kirghizia.

#### Spiritual Support

Spur Products of Boise, Idaho is providing, through World Vision, highly technical laser printing equipment and paper to the Bible Society of Russia to assist in the printing of children's Bibles and Christian literature.

#### Food Distribution

Through World Vision's Family Food Pak distribution program, more than 300 tons of food has been distributed to 25,000 people in Armenia, Russia, and Belarus. The 30-pound food packs contain rice, flour, powdered milk, beans, lentils, and powdered soups. These packs can supplement the diet of a family of four for three weeks. Recipients fall into three categories: 1) families with a large number of children; 2) invalids, and 3) elderly people on fixed incomes.



*I, myself, do not see today any other living spiritual force except the Christian one which could take on the spiritual healing of Russia.*

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

For most of this century, the great cathedrals of Moscow and St. Petersburg were desecrated, boarded up, or left to decay. But their fading splendor testified of Christianity's thousand-year reign in Russia, and of what had been lost. Although communism quelled the gospel, it could never extinguish the people's hunger for God.

Now, after almost two generations of repression, Russians—particularly scholars and intellectuals—are enthusiastically unearthing their nation's history, including their Christian heritage. "Since 1988, many congregations have doubled or tripled, with the majority of converts under 30 years of age," says John Robb, director of World Vision's unreached peoples' program. "Tens of thousands have been turning to Christ through public evangelism meetings."

Among those open to the gospel are many "teachers, doctors, and other educated professionals," Robb says. Even the country's lack of New Testaments cannot quell the Spirit of God. "Intellectuals are delving into the pre-revolutionary writings of devout Christians such as Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Pushkin, and Gogol, and are being converted by the words of these men."

Robb has visited Russia twice in the past six months. In that time, he says, "I've seen more people come to know Christ than in my 25 years of ministry." In October, in Saratov, a city of 1.3 million on the Volga River, "local Christians had booked a 7,000-seat auditorium and advertised that 'an American evangelist' was coming to speak to them. I was taken to a sports arena where 4,000 people were waiting. Hundreds had already rioted—pushing, shoving, and breaking glass to get the free Gospels that were being distributed. While everyone shivered, due to the sheet of ice left by the afternoon hockey game, we read passages of Scripture. At the invitation, 2,000 people prayed to accept Christ."

In the next few days, Robb passed out New Testaments and spoke to 120 students and faculty of the Medical Institute. Eighty were converted. He gave

newspaper, radio, and television interviews, the latter reaching an estimated audience of 1.5 to 2 million people. "The television reporter even asked me to pick my own questions, since he had never interviewed a Westerner before! It was a beautiful opportunity to share the truth of Jesus Christ."

Near the end of his visit, Robb "met with some of the old saints who suffered decades of intense persecution and had prayed throughout that time for the city of Saratov. One man, Pastor Nikolai, had been falsely accused of insanity by the KGB. They hired psychiatrists to testify against him, then shipped him off to a Siberian prison. For five years he was cooped up in a cell without his Bible or anything to read. The dramatic response we experienced in evangelism was clearly a case of having 'entered into their labor.'"

Local Christians asked Robb to return to Saratov in January to lecture on the Christian faith at their academic institutes and universities. "The intellectuals

believe in a finite universe, that matter, energy, space, and time had a beginning and will someday end.

"This argues for the existence of God," he says. "Many of these former communists and atheists have been told that science says there is no God. In that regard they're working from assumptions of 19th century science. In every meeting, especially with non-Christians, I tried to reason with them, using Scripture, science, and Christian apologetics."

The strategy worked. At one meeting, after John's invitation to discipleship, so many people came forward that the choir had to move off the stage to make room for the new converts.

"I did not hide the cost of discipleship," Robb says. "I told them it would cost them everything." Even so, the people kept coming, until more than 200 stood shoulder to shoulder in front to make a commitment to Christ.

"One bushy-haired, bushy-bearded doctor, who looked like Tolstoy himself,

BY ANNA WATERHOUSE

## A RUSSIAN HARVEST



**TENS OF THOUSANDS HAVE BEEN TURNING TO CHRIST THROUGH PUBLIC EVANGELISM MEETINGS.**

told me he had been seeking God all his life," Robb says. "Because he had no Bible, he too had been reading Tolstoy—and he was very moved by the quotes I read."

Yet there is still a vast uncollected harvest, and the workers need help. "Although nearly half the Russian people already claim to be Christians," Robb says, "the former Soviet Union also includes 60 million Muslims, with only one Christian per million among them."

Russian evangelists are also suffering economic crises. The recent monetary devaluation means the average salary equals only three or four dollars a month. Most Christians simply cannot afford to evangelize full-time without outside help.

As the harvest continues to grow, Christians are elated and concerned. At one meeting, Robb says, "a middle-aged woman in a traditional black fur hat summed it up. She stood and, with a voice full of pathos, said, 'We were forced to be atheists. We've lost all those years. How do we teach our children about God?' □

*Anna Waterhouse is a free-lance writer in Pasadena, Calif.*

are wide open to Jesus," he says. "My only concern is the need for sound teaching for the thousands of new believers, almost all of whom have had no contact with the church and are dismally ignorant of biblical teaching."

To prepare for the second trip, Robb reviewed the Russian classics, Tolstoy in particular. "I took his book, *A Confession*," Robb says, "and quoted from that to the audiences in Saratov and Samara, another city along the Volga. It really struck a responsive chord to hear their own great author quoted to them."

Robb also explained to his audiences that modern physicists such as Einstein and Stephen Hawking now



BY RON WILSON

*Home to some 18,000 squatters, this refuse dump has become a fertile Promised Land for two missionaries and their staff.*

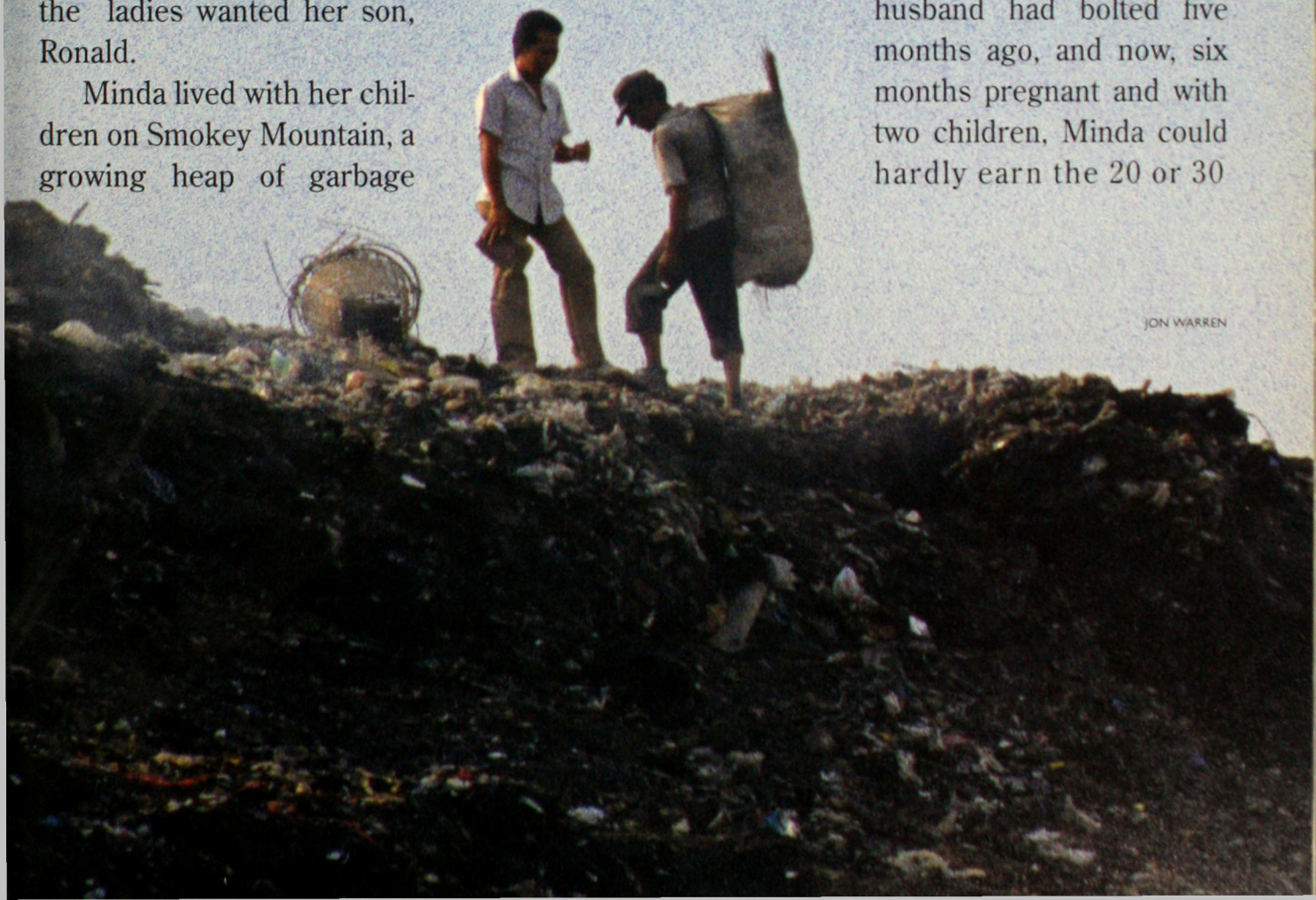
# ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY

**W**hen Minda met the white women she was afraid. For one thing one of them had strange red hair, which the children ran up and cautiously touched. It was the children Minda feared for. Children had disappeared from Smokey Mountain—kidnapped, some said, for sacrifices. And now the ladies wanted her son, Ronald.

Minda lived with her children on Smokey Mountain, a growing heap of garbage

from the city of Manila, Philippines. She was one of a community of some 18,000 squatters living on the fetid mound and earning their livelihood from the abandoned, rusting, and rotting refuse of Manila's 13 million citizens.

Minda lived under a piece of plastic, moving it every week as the neighbors drove her out. Sewerage ran in front of her make-shift tent, and the ground under it was mushy. Her husband had bolted five months ago, and now, six months pregnant and with two children, Minda could hardly earn the 20 or 30



JON WARREN



pesos a day it took to buy rice and dried fish to feed them.

On top of that, her sickly 1-year-old son, Ronald, badly needed nourishment and medicine. The women had offered to take him to their house near Smokey Mountain (named for the spontaneous combustion of gasses that sends up clouds of nauseous fumes) and nurse him back to health.

Minda had seen other children from the dump waste away and die. And she knew that without help, Ronald would succumb. But if she gave him to the foreigners, would she ever see him again? For two weeks she cried and prayed, prayed and cried. Then in desperation she thrust her child into the arms of the two women.

Lorrie Anderson, the redhead, had grown up in Canada amid scenic lakes and orchards. Joke (pronounced Yo-ka) Bergink, her partner, had been born in the Netherlands, but her family moved to British Columbia when she was 5. Hard work and Christian worship emerged as core values in both their

friend of a friend asked them to start an orphanage in Manila, they both responded, "No way!"

But this friend of a friend persisted. She tracked them down in Canada, and finally, after long conversations and sharing of visions, Lorrie and Joke took on the task of starting LAMBS—Loving Abandoned, Malnourished Babies Selflessly. Two years later, their task completed, the two women went home again.

During their time in Manila, however, they noticed that too many children lingered in orphanages because families couldn't care for them. Lorrie and Joke felt drawn to helping families keep their children rather than give them up.

The decision to work with the poorest of the poor, like those on Smokey Mountain, came naturally. "There was simply no one there to give parents a second chance," Lorrie says.

This time, without the backing of an organization, they faced some formidable problems—finding a house, building a staff, overcoming cultural barriers. But at home they had a church that saw them as more than another mission organization. "We told them about every detail of the work and they covered the whole vision with prayer," Joke says.

The neighborhood near the dump is made up of low-cost housing and small factories. The streets aren't paved and often when it rains the streets run hip-high with gray sewerage. "When people heard we were looking for a house for children from the dump," Lorrie says, "they showed us some real rat traps. But we thought God had a better plan."

**A** friend suggested they talk to a woman in the area who might know of a place. When they knocked on the door the woman who opened it announced, "God is telling me that you'd like to rent this place." It was perfect for what they needed.

The next step was to build a Filipino staff that could eventually take over the work. Lorrie and Joke had no intention of staying forever. They had no timetable for leaving, but they believed God did.

First they found Grace. She had worked for an American missionary couple who offered to take her back to the States when they retired. But Grace wanted to start giving back to her own people. Soon, along with Lorrie and Joke, she was picking her way around the debris, through the narrow alleys, brushing away the flies, and getting to know the people on Smokey Mountain.

That's when they decided not to call it "the dump." They had already named their ministry "Precious Jewels," which they took from Zechariah 9:16, where God declares that his chosen people

"will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown." They looked beyond the muck and the meanness of that 500-foot high, 15-acre wasteland and into the faces of people like Minda, people wounded, in pain, and sorely in need of hope. So what others called a trash heap, they called "The Promised Land."

When they looked for a social worker for the staff, someone told them about Aida, a recent university graduate. For her first interview Aida arrived at the gate in a mini-skirt and polished boots, proper fashion for a Filipina coed but hardly attire for slogging through the Promised Land. But in Aida, the two Canadian women sensed a tender and compassionate spirit.

In Limbo, they discerned a quiet kind of leadership. They had watched while God delivered him from a drinking problem and believed his commitment to his family would add stability to the team.

Slowly the team and the ministry

Lorrie (left) sits with Joke who comforts a tiny child

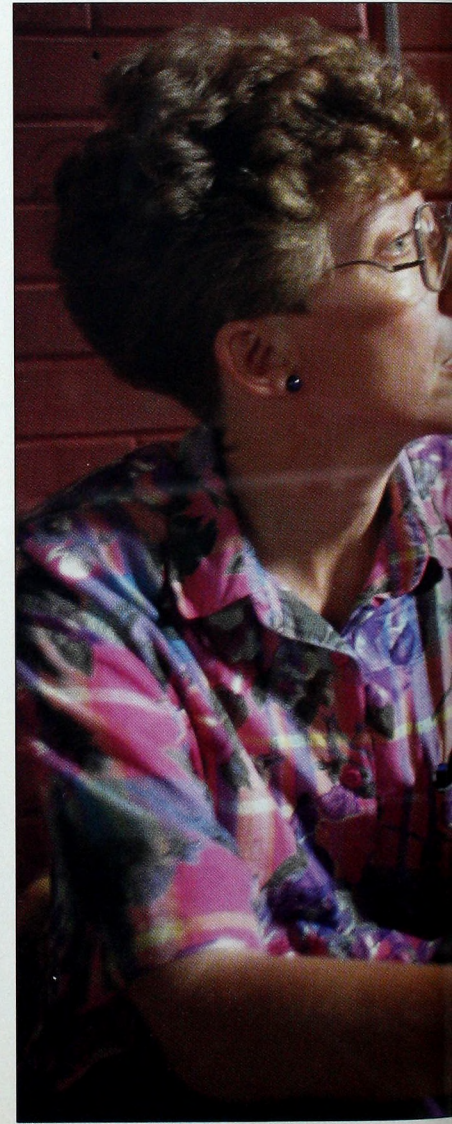


A mother from the dump studies the Bible with Grace, an orphanage staff member.

lives. After the women graduated from college, those values jelled into solid Christian commitment and a conviction that God was calling them to full-time ministry.

Lorrie is a visionary, gets easily excited, and her enthusiasm carries others along with her. Joke is more practical. She's a good administrator who sees the details and knows how to get the job done. But they soon learned that their gifts complemented each other and they could work well together in ministry. So they volunteered for a year in an orphanage in India.

It was a baptism by fire. The expatriate director of the orphanage got sick and the two women found themselves running the place. At the end of the year, emotionally stretched and physically exhausted, they stopped in the Philippines on their way home. So when the



BRIAN COLE / WORLD VISION



grew until they had 12 adults and 14 children living in the house. To begin passing responsibility to the Filipino staff, they formed a council of themselves and four staff members to make all the major decisions. Lorrie had already had two bouts with typhoid and another one, the doctors said, could be fatal. If they had any question about turning the ministry over to a national staff, that confirmed it.

**M**eanwhile, Minda's son Ronald had responded to both the nutrition and the love. But Joke and Lorrie shuddered at the thought of returning him to that frayed piece of plastic Minda called home. So they lent Minda a small sum to build a one-room house, and they looked for ways to help her make a living.

The two women wanted to get mothers in the dump involved in the process of helping their families, otherwise the children would revert to poor health. Some people told them it would never work. The culture is too *laissez faire*. You won't get these women to come to class-

es, they warned. But Minda went. She went faithfully to Bible study and even asked the cook at Precious Jewels to teach her to cook healthy food. And as this destitute young woman learned about Jesus, she trusted him, and became the source of hope for many other women in the dump.

Joke and Lorrie saw that the ministry on the mountain had a double edge: As they got involved with the families, they could help the children, and as they helped the children, it opened the door to the hearts of the families.

Slowly the house filled up. Daisy, a three-month premature baby, came to them at 3 months old weighing about five pounds. Two-year-old Lervic came blind in one eye, the result of measles. Little Joel, barely a year old and less than



A Precious Jewels staff member teaches the children how to read.

12 pounds, had a double cleft lip and palate, a deformed arm, and brain damage. Many of the children had tuberculosis. Soon the house had a waiting list.

At times they watched while children like 3-year-old Beverly, who weighed only 12 and a half pounds, doubled their weight in three months. Others like Reggie, a severely malnourished 3-year-old with tuberculosis of the lymph nodes, lingered in critical condition. Almost daily they visited parents who faced a painful decision: Should they use their few pesos to buy medicine, but go without food, or buy food and let a sick child suffer. They couldn't do both.

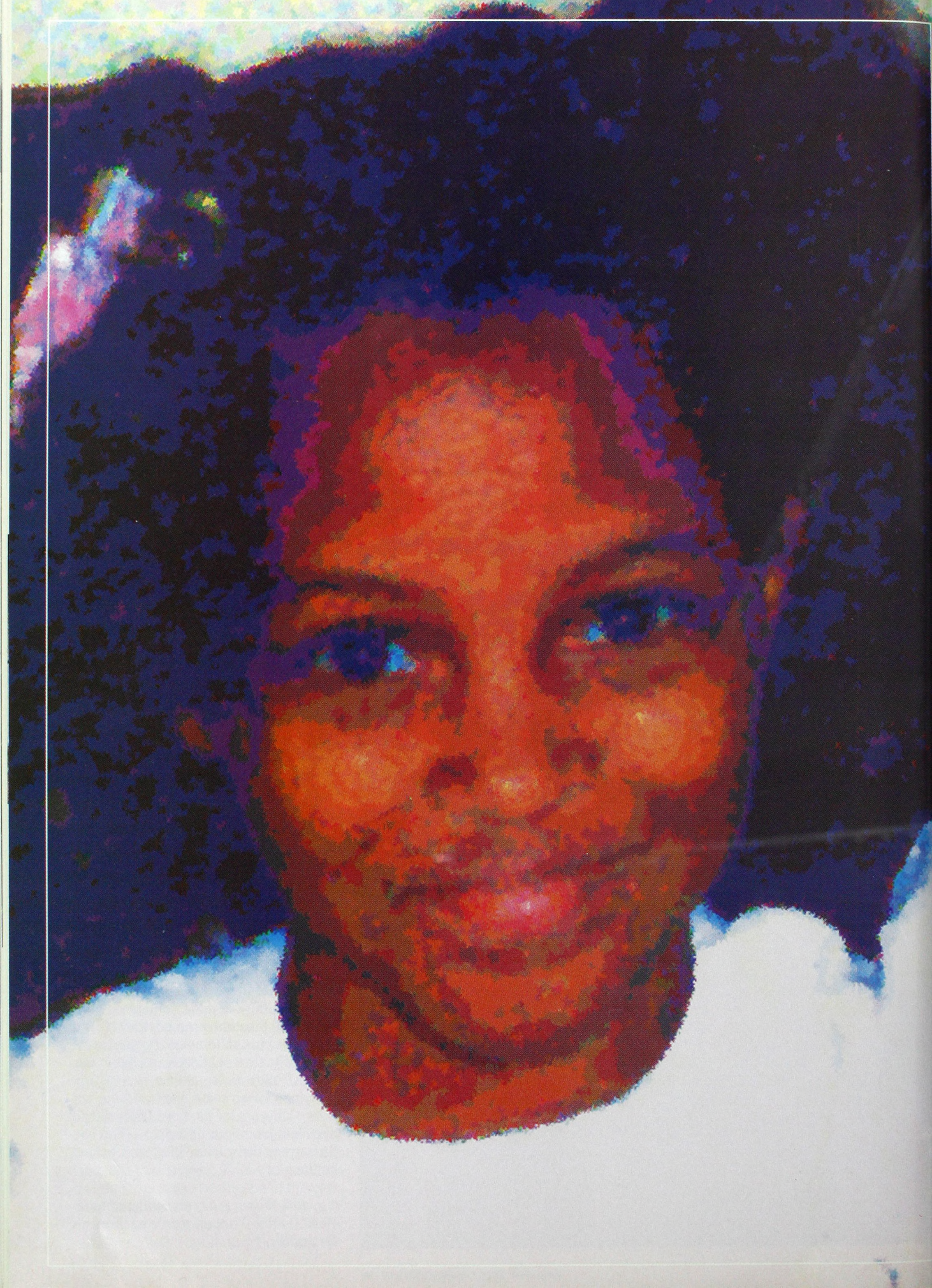
**C**risis came almost daily. The mother of one child was hit and killed by a garbage truck. Another child, Erlin, an 18-month-old, was just about ready for "graduation" when she developed a respiratory problem. They took her to the hospital, but a fire caused the hospital to lose its electrical power. The doctors told Erlin's mother they could do nothing else, so they discharged the child. The mother then rushed Erlin to the Precious Jewels house, hoping they could help. But five minutes before she arrived, Erlin gave her mother a weak wave, smiled, and died.

Crisis will continue. Meanwhile Lorrie and Joke wait for God's direction. Several groups have asked them to teach others what they've learned or to replicate what they've done someplace else. When Mt. Pinatubo erupted, they helped the thousands of homeless people there, especially the children. "Upon our return," they wrote after a recent trip, "we found our team very strong but weary laborers for the Lord. They did an excellent job in our absence. ... The battle is great, the warfare intense... to God be the glory." □

Ron Wilson is a contributing editor to WORLD VISION magazine and lives in Earlysville, Va.









# P R E C I O U S

**A**s a staff member with the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, Calif., I worked in a Kids' Klub with about 60 children from welfare hotels and a nearby housing project. One Sunday afternoon, as I opened the bus doors to pick up a batch of kids, I noticed a new face in the crowd.

She was one of the most beautiful children I have ever seen. It wasn't just her sparkling eyes or warm smile. It was a beauty that went deeper, a spiritual air that drew me in. Her name, appropriately, was Precious. In the first- and second-grade class that day, when the leader asked for someone to pray, Precious immediately raised her hand. She prayed earnestly, praising and thanking Jesus, and had a most fervent petition for her father in prison.

Not long after that I met her beautiful mother, Tena, a woman of remarkable strength who was trying to raise Precious and her four sisters and brother in a dilapidated Skid Row hotel room.

Precious and her siblings loved to sing the Kids' Klub songs, complete with hand gestures, in the hallways of the Alexandria Hotel. Their favorite was "King Jesus."

Unfortunately, not everyone in the hotel counted singing as a favorite pas-

THE DEATH  
OF A CHILD  
FROM A  
POOR HOME  
BECOMES THE  
BREATH OF  
LIFE FOR  
MANY.

time. Drug dealers often hung around, looking for kids willing to deliver dope for spare change. One of the rooms had served as a crack laboratory. The large windows in the halls offered easy access from the street.

To keep from getting shut down, management hired security guards to patrol the grounds. I visited the families often and got to know the guards. Bob, the head guard, would tell me, "You've got to talk to Tena and get her to stop letting her kids play in the hallway." But

BY DEL DEETS

where do children play when they share a room with siblings and adults?

One day the Union Rescue Mission interviewed Tena and several other women for a radio program in which they recounted their lives in downtown hotels. One woman's story was extremely emotional. Money came pouring in for her family—but not for Tena's. Tena reacted bitterly to this seeming injustice: "People want to help a Spanish couple who does drugs and only has two kids, but no one wants to help a black lady who doesn't do drugs who is trying her best to raise six kids in one room of a hotel." She accused us—me included—of not understanding her plight.

She was right. I didn't understand. I was raised in a small agricultural town where everyone was white. I had attended white, middle-class churches and had never heard one of them exhort us to integrate. I had more or less fallen into urban ministry and now spent most of my time in a racially integrated neighborhood and church.

It was only in these circumstances that I began to wonder how we can remain reconciled to God, yet segregated from other races. Didn't segregation in the church mean separation of the parts and therefore brokenness in the Body of Christ?

# M E M M O R I E S



I didn't see much of Tena after that confrontation. She went to live with her sister about 30 miles east of Los Angeles. Then, one day in April, when the temperatures reached 100 degrees several days in a row, my phone rang. "My baby drowned!" Tena said. Precious was in the hospital in a coma. She had apparently hit her head in a nearby swimming pool and was underwater for 20 minutes before anyone noticed her. She had survived the hallways of a Skid Row hotel only to fall unconscious into a suburban swimming pool.

For hours after hanging up, I was numb. Finally I called one of the volunteers from the Kids' Klub to start a prayer chain. Because Tena was spending most of her time at the hospital, several volunteers helped care for her other children. People donated money, food, and clothing. Some sent cards to the hospital and even to the father in prison.

Before long the hospital room overflowed with stuffed animals and balloons. The Kids' Klub children made a banner for the hospital wall. We even bought a tape player and played *Kids' Praise* tapes.

We did everything we could to help, but a month and several surgeries later, Precious was still in a coma. Visitors grew scarce. I had a full ministry, and going to see her became less of a priority. I even began to lose my compassion. One day I stared at a box of Tena's laundry we were to wash and thought, "What are we doing?" I felt drained to the point of exhaustion.

Still, it encouraged me to think of the volunteers from suburban churches and the hundreds who had prayed for Precious. I began to see the important relationship between urban and suburban churches.

Even as Precious lay comatose, it seemed the Body of Christ was waking up. One family even donated quite a bit of money from the sale of a house to the mission. Since Precious was stable enough for home nursing care, and Tena had nearly run out of medical benefits, we agreed to use the money to help Tena find suitable housing.

I thought money fixes everything. I was wrong. It was next to impossible to find adequate housing for a single welfare mother with six kids and no credit rating. Day after day, Tena came back with nothing. Finally, one day she called and excitedly told us she had gotten an apartment two blocks from the hospital. Apparently she had lied on her applica-

tion, admitting to only four kids. When the landlord learned from us that she really had six kids, he denied her the apartment with no further negotiations.

My eyes burned with tears at Tena's anger toward us. "You don't know what it's like," she said over and over. "If my kids were starving, I'd steal to feed them." Her hostility was more than I could handle. I wanted out.

Still, I couldn't withdraw my convictions about helping the poor. Despite the



Del (second from right) with Precious' family.

fact that the substantial financial help we had received did not get Tena the apartment, it had helped us get our foot in the door. And I continued to agree with John Perkins that "resources, redistribution, and reconciliation" must be the first step. Idealistic views were being molded by the nuts-and-bolts reality of ministry to an urban family.

I tried other venues to help Tena, including World Vision. They had a then-relatively new program called Project Home Again, which offers grants and

trains churches to "adopt" homeless families—helping them find a physical home, as well as a home in the Body of Christ. But none of the churches in our area were ready to "adopt."

Then, finally, a breakthrough! One of Precious' former teachers told me about a program that would combine our funds with government benefits, find housing, and provide case management for the family. Within a few weeks, Tena had a four-bedroom, three-bath, two-story townhouse in a secure, clean housing facility. It even had a playground!

God had refused to fit into our nice, little ministry boxes. Instead, God took the money we had received from a white, middle-class family, led us to donate it to a parachurch organization, tipped off a public-school teacher to hand it over to a private social agency, and combined it with government resources so that an urban mother with six children would have a home. What a spectacular moment when I walked into that house with five children jumping all over me in exhilaration.

Four months later, as I sat in my new home in Philadelphia where I was pursuing graduate studies, I found out Precious had died. I pictured Precious sitting on Jesus' lap, singing him her favorite song, "King Jesus." I had learned so much through her short life.

Even her funeral taught me something about the unity which is possible in the Body of Christ. Tena's friends from the downtown hotels were there, as were children from Precious' school, volunteers from suburban churches, and agency workers. The Union Rescue Mission staff conducted the service, and a pastor from an urban church shared a special message. Then Precious' family shared. The day unified us all, according to God's design.

Precious and I will someday be reunited in heaven. But today, because of her, some of this broken body on earth might be able to overlook cultural differences and mend rather than break down. "Lowborn men are but a breath," the Psalmist wrote, and "highborn men are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing." Perhaps together, for a short time, we can be a breath of life, a breath of unity—the true Body of Christ. □

*Del Deets is the director of MetroLink in Philadelphia, Pa., where she links needs and resources in the city.*

## PROJECT HOME AGAIN

World Vision's Project Home Again works through local churches to help homeless families find affordable housing. The church helps the family with initial needs including two month's rent, furniture, transportation, budgeting, child tutoring, and spiritual counseling.

Since 1989, Project Home Again volunteers have resettled more than 750 homeless families in 40 communities nationwide.

For more information, contact Obadiah Smith at Project Home Again, World Vision U.S. Ministries, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016; (818) 357-7979.



# GLEAMS OF ETERNITY

BY REBECCA PRICE JANNEY

In 1983 I met the exiled Bishop Paolus of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He had taken refuge in a seminary where I pursued graduate work. The bishop's tested and unshakable trust in the Lord drew me and many other students to him.

We learned of his six years in an Ethiopian prison, with one more spent under house arrest after communist rebels overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie's government in 1975. In 1982 the new communist regime suddenly—mysteriously—freed the bishop. He realized that staying in his country might lead to further danger, so he escaped to the United States. He began a doctoral program and pastored a congregation of other Ethiopian exiles in New York City.

He looked extraordinary on most days. He was easily distinguishable on campus wearing a purple robe and Coptic-style hat, austere beard, and bejeweled cross against a backdrop of raven-colored skin. But on Ash Wednesday the drama intensified. When the bishop appeared in the cafeteria that morning, it seemed Darth Vader had come to campus. The Ethiopian priest wore so much black that even his cross hid discreetly in a breast pocket. He patiently explained the Coptic custom for clergy to dress totally in black throughout Lent.

Seeing him enveloped in that ominous attire made me feel gloomy at times. I reflected on the battles Christians wage daily over the powers of sin and death. But the Bishop's costume also reminded me that a Savior rescued us, bringing hope for this life and eternity.

When Easter morning dawned, I hurried across campus for a sunrise service. Suddenly I stopped in my tracks as a vision strode toward me from across the quad. As the dazzling white figure neared, I recognized it as a transfigured bishop. After seeing him in nothing but black for weeks, I gasped aloud at the change. He wore so much white that even his spats radiated the message of Jesus' awesome victory over death.

The bishop's face glowed as he lifted his voice above the campus's hushed stillness and proclaimed the ancient Easter greeting, "He is risen!"

"He is risen indeed!" I joyously echoed. □

*Rebecca Price Janney is a free-lance writer in Collegeville, Pa.*

When the bishop appeared in the cafeteria that morning, it seemed Darth Vader had come to campus.



## C A M B O D I A

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Residents of this village in Srok Dongkor, southwest of Phnom Penh, replant a rice paddy devastated by floods. Rice is a Cambodian staple.

**T**wo decades of war and terrorism have ravaged Cambodia where Khmer Rouge soldiers murdered more than 1 million people between 1975 and 1979. The communist regime slaughtered religious and political leaders, doctors, and teachers. Vietnamese-backed communists ousted the Khmer Rouge in 1979, but guerilla warfare and strict religious sanctions continued.

Because of combat and land mines, Cambodia has the world's highest percentage of amputees. The country's 8 million people fear the estimated 4 million undetected mines.

But with the United Nations-sponsored peace treaty signed in October and free elections planned for 1993, Cambodia has begun to rebuild. Many of the more than 350,000 refugees who fled the violence will return to their country where they may receive food and materials to replant crops.

The World Vision-funded National Pediatric Hospital in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, trains dozens of pediatricians a year. Mothers are learning about nutrition and hygiene to prevent disease and malnutrition.

The church is also growing. Palm Sunday, about 100 people were baptized just outside the capital where there are eight churches.

Yet perhaps the greatest signs of healing are the children, who despite the devastation laugh, play, and sing. For them, Cambodia's rebuilding efforts may mean a more peaceful and promising future. □





Mothers widowed by war struggle to make money and tend to their families. A World Vision-sponsored day-care center helps feed, bathe, and educate the children while their mothers work paddy fields or tend small businesses.

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



STEVE REYNOLDS / WORLD VISION



Two boys play near a fish pond in Oudong District, Cambodia. Fish farming is an efficient and easy way to improve the protein intake of an area like south central Cambodia, where they get plenty of seasonal rains.



# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR HELPING OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Compiled and written by Tamera Marko



## HELP SELF TO SELF HELP

Looking for a hand-painted Peruvian vase, Bangladeshi Bookends, a Bolivian chess set, Thai jewelry, or baskets from the Philippines? These are just a few items marketed at low prices by SELF HELP Crafts of the World, a Mennonite Central Committee nonprofit program. SELF HELP, run almost entirely

by volunteers, assists low-income people in developing countries by selling their handicrafts in North America.

The program began in 1946 when MCC worker Edna Ruth Byler visited Puerto Rico. Noticing the people's inability to work themselves out of their poverty, Byler bought several pieces of embroidery sewn by needy women in MCC volunteer classes and took them home to sell to friends and neighbors. Today the program has outgrown Byler's basement and involves more than 35,000 craftspeople and

their families who, without their handicraft jobs, would be unemployed or severely under employed.

SELF HELP crafts are available in 120 MCC-related shops in North America and hundreds of other nonprofit shops. To inquire how to stage a SELF HELP craft sale or to find SELF HELP products in your area, call or write: SELF HELP Crafts U.S. and International, 704 Main Street, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-4971.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”  
—Edmund Burke”

## HELP, MY CHILD HAS RUN AWAY

When a child runs away, parents are often unsure of where to turn. The police are overburdened with cases and legal help is expensive. But for \$2, parents can obtain a booklet by Phil Ludwig outlining the first 48 hours of step-by-step procedures for finding their runaway child. The booklet also lists warning signs that indicate a child may run away.

Three years ago, Ludwig founded Teen Rescue Family Advocate, a Christian program dedicated to assisting families of runaway children. “As a policeman, I really saw that when it comes to 13- to 17-year-olds, people back off,” says Ludwig, who worked nine years in law enforcement in Southern California. “I felt that there was a major, major gap that the Lord was convicting me to fill.”

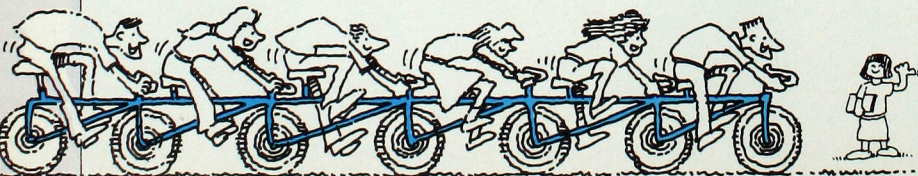
Teen Rescue averages 60 cases a month and has assisted more than 400 families with runaway children. Charges are based on a sliding scale. Teen Rescue mainly services California and the western United States but will provide phone consultations for anyone. “I have parents crying, weeping on the phone saying, ‘I wish that you were here years ago,’” Ludwig says. Anyone interested in Teen Rescue's services can call or write Phil Ludwig at Teen Rescue, P.O. Box 1463, Corona, CA 91718; (714) 245-9292.

## HAVE DESIRE TO TEACH, WILL TRAVEL?

Education Services International offers a chance to serve Christ by providing education overseas. ESI recruits and trains educators to teach at universities and secondary schools in China and Eastern Europe. Courses include English, International Business, and Law. Teachers in teams

of 2 to 6 usually work for one year and receive salaries comparable to the average teaching salary in the country.

Since 1980 ESI has sent more than 2,000 educators. Most teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and a demonstrated ability to teach while others require a more specialized education and experience in the topic field. Teachers pay for part or all of their own training and travel costs, ranging from \$2,500-\$4,000. For more information call (818) 284-7955; or evenings, (714) 596-5943.





ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

## SUPPLYING THE SERVERS

In the market for missionary, relief, or medical supplies? The International Aid, Inc. mail-order form may be the place to look.

International Aid, Inc., a non-denominational Christian agency, provides medical, relief, and personal supplies to missionaries, and mission agencies serving the needy worldwide. Supplies such as tools, medical books, personal health care items,



and over-the-counter medication are available at 10 percent of the actual cost.

For more information about the missionary supply store or relief and medical items available, contact: International Aid, Inc., 17011 Hickory, Spring Lake, MI 49456; (616) 846-7490.

For a copy of World Vision's 1991 Annual Report, please write to Donor Services, World Vision, Pasadena, CA 91131; or call our toll free number: (800) 777-5777.

# Should You Consider a World Vision Gift Annuity?

Gift Annuities Provide You Guaranteed Income for Life.

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If you are **65 years old or older**, please call or write: World Vision Gift Planning Office, 919 W. Huntington Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016, (800) 426-5753 (outside CA) or (800) 451-8024.

I want to find out more about World Vision's Gift Annuity.



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# ADDICTIVE





**J**osé, 10, fled home because his father beat him until he bled. Adriana, 16, slipped out because she felt unimportant among her many siblings. Enrique, 14, left because it hurt to live with his mother, a prostitute. Javier, about 9, was enticed by the street's adventure in contrast to the poverty at home.

These are just a few of the more than 250,000 children living on Mexico's urban streets. Street children, however, aren't just a Mexican tragedy. About 100 million children live and work on the streets of the developing world. But whatever prompted them to seek the streets, these children share one trait: The longer they live there, the harder it becomes for them to return home.

They learn to scavenge through trash, beg, steal, sell drugs, and prostitute for food and to fight with fists and knives for their lives. They learn the street's temporary remedy for hunger, cold, fear, and loneliness: sniffing a fistful of cloth drenched with solvent.

Their bodies black with grime, they sleep in doorways, trash bins, and on park benches, huddled together for warmth. Drugs, hunger, and exhaustion

**THE LONGER  
A CHILD  
SPENDS ON  
THE STREETS,  
THE HARDER  
IT BECOMES  
TO GO HOME.**

# FREEDOM

TEXT BY TAMERA MARKO  
AND ROBERT ALVARADO  
PHOTOS BY CHRIS REDNER



A child living at the  
Tláhuac shelter  
smiles as he plays  
with his toy.



make their eyes glassy and resentful.

Their appearance and stench repulse passerbys. Police or vigilantes, intending to clean up the streets, brutally abuse street children.

These factors, combined with the painful reasons they left home, make helping street children extremely difficult. They distrust strangers, especially adults. Despite the pain, rejection, and loneliness of the streets, these children have learned how to survive without adult authority.

In addition, four walls and a strict daily regimen threaten their sense of freedom and control, their most valuable possessions. This is why traditional institutions often fail to rehabilitate street children.

The most successful programs, such as World Vision's *Niños de la Calle* project in Mexico City, first befriend children on the streets. "We must do all this slowly or we will scare them away," says Irene Vazquez, administrative assistant to the World Vision Mexico field director. "We just hang out with the children, talking and playing and letting them get to know our faces. We don't push them

**A**t the foot of a nightclub doorway, under a flimsy blanket, five children and two flea-infested dogs sleep curled up together to keep warm. Enrique stirs from beneath the blanket that reeks of urine and trash and provides feeble warmth in the January chill of Mexico City.

Groggily, he squints in the 10 a.m. sun and groans. His head still spinning from sniffing glue the night before, he staggers to his feet. Enrique, 14, begins another day of life on the streets.

When he first left home more than two years ago, he was afraid. Soon, however, older street kids showed him how to soak rags in solvent and inhale the acrid fumes. "The drugs make me forget all the problems in my mind," he says.

One of Enrique's most painful problems are memories of home, where he lived with his mother, a prostitute. "I left home because I wasn't happy there," he says. "I hated having strangers in my house. Here I don't have people yelling at me and telling me what to do. I do what I want and sleep when I want."

But his thin frame shows he doesn't always eat when he wants.

A few yards away from the door way, an elderly man sits on a bench, drinking deeply from a bottle of Coke. Enrique stares longingly at it. The man spits toward the child's feet,

muttering *rata*, or "rat," in disgust. Enrique scowls back and shakes his fist. "I hate it when people call me a rat. It makes me want to hurt them back."

*Rata* is Mexican slang for street robber. Although sometimes he earns a few pesos shining shoes, Enrique profits most at stealing money and jewelry from intoxicated people trickling out of discos and bars.

"At first I used to be scared," Enrique says. "But now I am good at it. It's like a game." He proudly displays a black and gold watch hanging loosely on his wrist.

World Vision staff members Paco Peña and Joel Hernandez, who have been visiting Enrique on the streets for about six months, gently encourage him to visit the shelter.

"I liked being clean and having food," he says of his few visits to the shelter. "Paco is my friend—but I don't want to live with him or anyone else."

He shrugs, pulls himself to full height of about five feet, and surveys the trash-littered street with tired, bloodshot eyes. He points a grimy thumb at his shirt. "Now I am my family. I am the big man." He looks up at the doorway where the blanketed head of children sleep. "Now I just want to go back to sleep."

—Tamera Marko





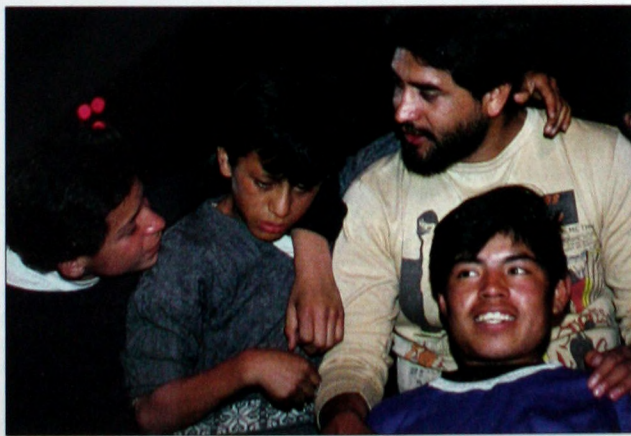


to talk about where they come from. They don't like to talk about their family because the memories hurt."

After a few months of slowly gaining the children's trust, those working with the children (the workers are called "street educators") invite them to visit a shelter where they can shower, play games, and eat a hot meal. Ideally, the children would eventually return home.

"Many street children just can't handle going back to a home environment right away," says Joel Hernandez, a street educator. "Many just go back and forth between the shelters and the streets. They have control of their lives on the street."

Joel Hernandez, a World Vision street educator, hangs out with Enrique (second from left) and other street children.



**T**en-year-old Carlos, out of breath from running to the pay phone, dials the number of his friend. He always keeps the faded, finger-worn piece of paper with the phone number written on it in his shirt pocket.

He is calling Luzmaria, a World Vision street educator who had worked with him for about a month on the streets. His face lights up. "I just called to say hi," he says with a grin. "I'm doing good in school."

A few months ago Carlos lay woozy and hot with fever on the Mexico City streets, suffering from chicken pox. A World Vision street educator found him one morning, his face covered with red blisters and his eyes almost swollen shut. The educator took Carlos to the hospital. The boy had been living on the streets for almost a year, stealing for food and inhaling glue.

As Carlos' health improved during his week at the hospital, Carlos helped the nurses bathe babies with chicken pox. "It made me miss my sisters," he says. "I wanted to see my family again and I didn't want to go back to the streets." When Carlos' mother entered the hospital room to visit, she burst into tears and hugged him, thanking God for returning her son.

"The streets are a bad place," Carlos says. "There was no one to help me when I was sick."

He didn't always hold that opinion. His parents run a dry-cleaning business, where he lives with his four younger brothers and sisters. "I left home because I felt like I was not important," Carlos says. "Everyone was always so busy. I thought the streets would be fun." So one day he left and did not return. "At first it was fun because it was new and exciting," he says. "But then I got sick."

Readjusting to the hectic life at home has not been easy for Carlos. "It was hard at first to do what other people told me to do," he says, raising his voice over the din of the dry-cleaning machine, car horns, and his sibling's laughter. "On the streets I did whatever I wanted."

Now Carlos spends his mornings studying and sweeping or taking dry-cleaning orders. After school he watches cartoons. "My favorite food is spinach because I want to be strong like Popeye," he says, bending his arm upward to display a tiny muscle. In a few years, his father will train Carlos how to run the business.

Carlos still has a few pock marks around his eyes and forehead, reminders of his days on the street. "The streets are bad," he says. "I thought it would be more fun but it wasn't. I don't think I'll ever want to go back."

—Tamera Marko



Problems such as drug addiction, prostitution, and stealing must also be addressed before the child can adjust to living in a family structure.

"In our project, the street educators work with the children while the social workers spend time with the families,"

Vazquez says. "This way it is likely the child and the family will better adjust to each other and work on issues that may have caused the child to leave in the first place."

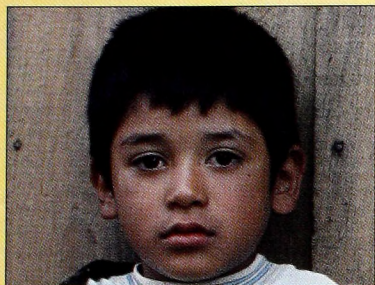
Nueva Rosita, a World Vision shelter, serves as both a transitional and permanent home for about 13 boys. The streets' effects show in the dark circles under these boys' eyes and their gruff, sometimes crude responses to strangers. Despite the security of daily food and shelter, many of them return to the streets. A few, however, decide to stay.

Before coming to Nueva Rosita, Juan, 14, had lived on the streets for about six years. He was addicted to solvents and spent four months in jail for stealing shoes. He now attends school and enjoys reading the Bible.

"I think that my change is permanent because I'm sitting here and listening to what the counselors are saying



# RECESSION THREATENS THE CHILDREN



The economic recession has reached beyond U.S. borders to threaten the most helpless victims of all – sponsored children around the world.

**More than 28,000 children are now at risk of losing their sponsorship.**

Many child sponsors have lost their jobs due to the recession, and they aren't able to continue their sponsorship at this time.

**World Vision is in urgent need of help to continue caring for these children.** Can you help us by sponsoring a child? Your monthly gift can provide food, clothing and other necessities to a child as his or her community works to become self-sufficient. Your compassion during this difficult time will literally change the course of a child's life.

## YES!

I want to sponsor a child in need.

Enclosed is my first sponsorship payment of \$20. Send my child's photo and personal information right away.

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Please make your checks payable to World Vision. Your sponsorship payments are tax deductible.

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A32WSD



and I'm accepting God," he says. But his eyes and conversation remain guarded when discussing his family.

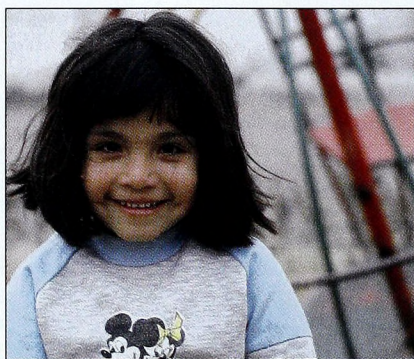
He wrote his parents a letter telling them he was OK. They replied with a letter and photos of themselves. But the friends and freedom of the streets continue to entice him. If he could not live at Nueva Rosita, he says matter of factly, "I would go back to the streets."

The children living at Tláhuac, a shelter run by a local church, with World Vision's help, provide a sharp contrast to those at Nueva Rosita.

Sickness, poverty, divorce, or death often leave parents without the means to care for their children. Rather than abandon them, they take their children to Tláhuac. Only a few have spent much time living on the streets.

Miguel's parents brought him and his younger sister Carolina to Tláhuac because they couldn't support them. Miguel, 9, says, "I miss my family and I want to go home. But I like it here. The drugs and the robbers can't get me."

Lupita, 2, an affectionate child with



Carolina, 7.

rosy cheeks, will probably never know the pain and addiction of the streets thanks to Tláhuac where she will receive schooling and career training.

"The difference here is that they have a roof over their heads, affection, medical attention, and they know God before the streets change them," says Rodolfo López, the Tláhuac shelter coordinator. "They do not come to us addicted to drugs, or with experiences of prostitution and stealing. But it is important not to give up on *any* of God's children. They all have a place in God's home."

Yet more and more of God's children who are abandoned, neglected, and abused believe their only refuge is the streets.

*Robert Alvarado is pastor and founder of Victory Outreach in downtown Los Angeles. Victory Outreach is a worldwide ministry working with inner-city young people and families.*

## NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

Here's a word to the wise for those of you who start flipping and reading magazines from the back—keep going! You'll not want to miss Philip Yancey's remarkable cover story about changed attitudes and hearts in the former "evil empire." I hope it whets your appetite to read the hot-off-the-press book from which it is extracted, *Praying With the KGB*.

Just Released: The hunger pains for thousands of Armenians this long, cold winter will be blunted by a recent grant of beans, powdered milk, and oil worth \$7.5 million given to World Vision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Another item hot off the press is World Vision's latest annual report. For a free copy, check off the appropriate box on the postage paid envelope in the center of the magazine.

And while you're at it, please indicate if you're receiving duplicate copies of WORLD VISION magazine. Send us the mailing label from the extra copy and we'll handle it. Thanks.

—Terry Madison

# WORLD VISION

Volume 36, Number 2

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World Vision, Inc.



# "IF GOD DIDN'T EXIST, WE COULDN'T EXIST"

**T**he room spoke of deep-seated, long-term, systemic poverty. It was depressingly simple—ceiling falling in, water dripping constantly to avoid freezing, filthy worn rug on the floor. It would be too embarrassing to use as a chicken coop in most countries.

There were two of most things. Two locks on the door, two beds, the luxury of two hot plates, two sets of knitting needles, and two old women. Actually, old before their time. They were twins, only 70 years old, but debilitated both within and without through the tragedy of Armenia.

There were two tragedies in these sister's lives. The first took place on the border where they

than 55,000 lives, and destroyed many more. They had lost everything, twice.

There was one set of faded pictures on a shelf in the room. Only one was needed. For Lucig and Tamara Shadian, the pictures were of common relatives, loved ones who were wrenched from them as human tragedy became a constant companion; faded pictures representing fading memories. Only the tears were current.

It was relatively warm in the room. The two pink coils of the hot plates could handle the small size of the room. Still, Lucig and Tamara were layered-up, wearing every article of clothing they had. They had no coats, so blankets were the final wrappings on these two ladies made frail by a land that fostered cruel disasters.

They lived on the third floor. The first had no doors or windows, just piles of refuse long picked over by marauding dogs. Broken water mains were slowly shutting down as the bitter cold froze them over. The second floor was a repeat of the first. The major difference on floor three was that people lived there, or at least existed. Most of the occupants hadn't been able to bathe in more than five weeks. Two small bathrooms handled the needs of the some 100 inhabitants. The day before, Lucig and Tamara had had a birthday. They thought of celebrating, but the electricity was turned off for 12 hours. The twin hot plates were inoperable. The inside temperature dropped to match that which was outside and, unfortunately, the day passed much like many others.

Celebrations are few. Expectations have been systematically destroyed. Predictably, self-esteem is rock-bottom. "How do you do it?" I asked quietly. "I pray three times a day," offered Lucig. "If God didn't exist, we couldn't exist," added Tamara.

Amazing. Hope is still there. Hope is what keeps them alive—virtually the only thing. But perhaps it is not so amazing. Christians who have faced death understand hope. They know that present hope is only credible if eternal hope is real. For Christians who live close to death, this is not an intellectual or theological question. It is experiential reality. It is also grace, grace that transcends the human pathos of a broken world.

They kissed our hands when we left and thanked us for coming. □

**Bob Seiple  
comforts an  
elderly woman  
during a 1989  
trip to  
Armenia.**



became innocent victims of a centuries-old war with the Turks. The Turks won that round, a massacre followed, the two sisters barely escaped, but with loved ones and livelihood left painfully behind.

In a sad tale all too familiar to Armenia, they fled to another border town and, on Dec. 7, 1988, felt the full fury of the earthquake that claimed more

*They were  
twins  
debilitated  
within and  
without  
by the  
tragedy of  
Armenia.*



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# CRITICAL FOOD SHORTAGE IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS



**C**old winter months only add to the harsh realities the people are facing. Faltering social systems are unable to provide even the basics needed for survival. Families struggle to buy provisions ... and find empty grocery shelves.

World Vision is responding by rushing Food Paks to needy Soviet families. Each Food Pak costs \$25 and has enough powdered milk, cooking oil,

vegetables, canned meats, soups, sugar, flour, and coffee to feed a family of four for 3 weeks. World Vision staff is in the Soviet republics making sure the Food Paks get to the most needy.

**Will you help needy Soviet families to survive the harsh winter? Your generous gift today to provide Food Paks will help make a world of difference.**

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