

August / September 1995

# WORLD VISION<sup>®</sup>

**NEW  
LINKS  
FOR A  
FRACTURED  
CITY**

# VISION CHICAGO

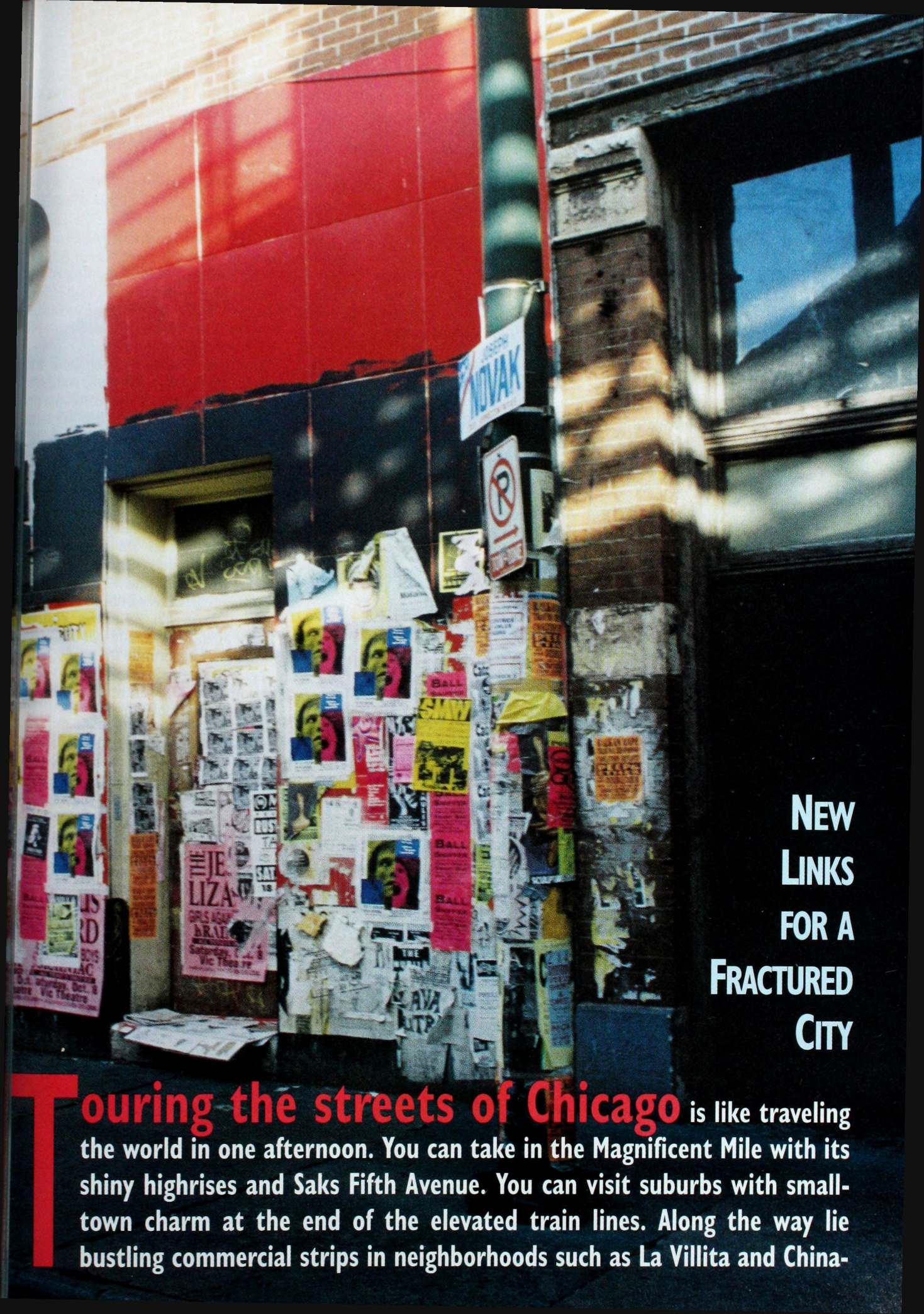
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# VISION CHICAGO

BY JANE SUTTON

PHOTOS BY JANET DAHRING



**NEW  
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**T**ouring the streets of Chicago is like traveling the world in one afternoon. You can take in the Magnificent Mile with its shiny highrises and Saks Fifth Avenue. You can visit suburbs with small-town charm at the end of the elevated train lines. Along the way lie bustling commercial strips in neighborhoods such as La Villita and China-

town where English is the foreign tongue. Some West side streets are eerie in their desolation and decay.

In Chicago and other U.S. cities, diversity also means division. Here distinct lines divide the wealthy North side from the rough South side, the impoverished West side from the suburbs beyond. The lines also separate 77 ethnic neighborhoods. Such barriers shield some and trap others. People in wealthy areas can shut out problems plaguing the inner city—unemployment, structural decay, poverty, hopelessness. The poor feel stranded and alone.

Among the many programs to help the cut-off poor is Vision Chicago, a 3-year-old ministry working in church-based community development. Sponsored by World Vision, the ministry has proved in an astonishingly short time that help, resources, and solutions for these people are readily available and waiting to be used.

The ministry has mobilized local church groups and leaders, launched

coalitions that cross ethnic and denominational lines, and organized an impressive network of resources and skills.

"Vision Chicago, as a bridging institution, brings urban and suburban communities and their unique resources together around the same table to talk and craft a new vision of what we can do together," says Mike Mantel, World Vision's Chicago representative. The result is hope in the inner city and a new citywide spirit of cooperation.

Vision Chicago began in 1992 as a joint venture between World Vision and the MidAmerica Leadership Foundation, a reputable pioneer of church-based community development in Chicago. The two organizations had similar values and goals.

"Our desire to work with and in the most economically needy communities, and the value we place on working cross-culturally, were affirmed by World Vision," says William "Bud" Ipema, MidAmerica's president. The partnership grew to include more than 70 organizations, including

churches, social service agencies, and community ministries. Then Vision Chicago began tackling some of the city's thorniest problems.

## ETHNIC TENSION

Of Chicago's 3 million inhabitants roughly 38 percent are white, 38 percent African American, 20 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent Asian. Although racial strife the likes of the Los Angeles riots hasn't flared up in Chicago during the past decade, enduring separateness is evident in the color of the faces from one neighborhood to the other.

Vision Chicago recognized three geographic quadrants: west, south, and north. Then it dug in one sector at a time.

The first effort on the West side brought together church leaders in a severely economically depressed Lawndale. "The coalition is built between African American and Latin American churches because those groups are often experiencing great tension in the city at the moment, and we think that the church can model reconciliation between them," Ipema explains.

Representatives from 15 Latin American and African American churches formed the Lawndale Coalition for Christian Leadership, then took aim at one of Lawndale's most urgent issues: unemployment. Presently, 40 percent of Lawndale's population lives below the poverty line. So far, the coalition has helped develop 10 new businesses in the community.

One of the Lawndale coalition's founding members, Pastor Lincoln Scott embodies the spirit of revitalizing the community one individual at a time. Thirty years ago he founded the House of Prayer on North Roosevelt Road, a street once coveted by gangs, drug dealers, and vandals. He recruited these groups to help him transform an old vaudeville theater into the House of Prayer sanctuary. He also opened the Good Samaritan Shelter, which takes in as many as 70 homeless men a night and began providing daily meals for up to 150 people.

"If you have a prayer life, you don't look at people and see only where they come from or what they're doing, but you think about what they can be, and their potential if they only knew God," Scott says. He has mentored nine formerly homeless men who have become pastors.

## ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Chicago's highways speed suburbanites from the Loop, the business center bounded by elevated train tracks

**"VISION CHICAGO BRINGS URBAN AND SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR UNIQUE RESOURCES TOGETHER."**

**—MIKE MANTEL**

*(shown with daughters Abigail Jean, 3, Margaret Anne, 10 months, and Elizabeth Almee, 4)*



their homes 20 or 30 minutes beyond. Many people who live in these wealthy outlying areas never see parts of the city like Lawndale.

"In their minds, that's wise," says Steve Haas, director of International Ministries for suburban Willow Creek Community Church. "Because if you read the newspapers about the inner city, there are 10- and 11-year-olds who push friends out the windows of 14-story buildings because they won't steal candy. There are shootings, gangs, drugs."

Vision Chicago's volunteer network, CityLINC (City + Love In the Name of Christ) has opened opportunities for suburbanites to find out what they can do in the inner city. The program places individuals and groups from various suburban churches and organizations in inner-city volunteer work, such as student mentoring, construction, business consulting, and secretarial work. Last year alone, CityLINC volunteers logged more than 20,000 work hours.

"CityLINC gives people the opportunity to put up or shut up," says the group's manager, Cheryl Cornelius, a resourceful woman with 10 years' experience in volunteer management. "You can't say you love the Lord and not have relationships with people of color, people from other neighborhoods."

Steve Haas explains: "As we come together we have a common purpose, and that often helps us get over the hurdles of, 'You don't look like me, you don't act like me.' But we've got this structure to build, and through working together I'm going to love you. We're going to understand what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ, because he's the only one who can pull this off."

Willow Creek, a megachurch campus which shares the hilly, almost pastoral landscape of suburban South Barrington with luxury homes, is perhaps as far away as one can get from the inner city without venturing into Wisconsin. The facilities feature a 5,000-seat theater-like sanctuary with a state-of-the-art audio-visual system, huge windows affording a view of perfectly manicured lawn outside, a cafeteria with an eating area the size of most malls' food courts, and a fitness center.

The church's 15,000 attenders can choose from a wide range of ministries to suit their gifts and interests. While many ministries serve the South Barrington community, the focus is deliberately shifting toward greater involvement in the inner city.

Potential CityLINC volunteers take "Vision Trips," led by Vision Chicago staff, to West side programs. The trips

begin or end at the House of Prayer. Volunteers can sign up for opportunities such as cleaning and rebuilding House of Prayer property on West Roosevelt strip, helping a Latino church organize a clothes sale, or sometimes less expected work.

One Willow Creek group climbed four flights of rickety wooden stairs to the belfry of old St. Matthews church in the Mexican neighborhood of La Villita to fix one of the bells. Another group showed up at Chetwyn Rogers Faith Tabernacle church expecting to move furniture, and they were asked to do street evangelism instead. Initially terrified, they all agreed, and the four volunteers witnessed to 63 people in the "foreign territory" of the West side.

"I came down to help them, but I think it was kind of like the other way around," said one of the volunteers.

Personal relationships with local people change the attitudes of many of the volunteers. When five Willow Creek members signed up to paint a house

where eight formerly homeless men try to rebuild their lives through the Victory Outreach ministry, they encountered one of the residents, Tyrone Winston.

He was sitting quietly in a corner holding a Bible. "God changed me and saved me from drugs, alcohol, stealing, and lying," he said. "I don't think the things I used to think. I don't dream the things I used to dream. I'm a new person in Jesus."

Volunteer Kathy Lovig said, "Miracles can happen; that's what I got out of it."

## HOUSING HELP

Homelessness is a special hardship in Chicago, where winds off Lake Michigan blow in some of the most vicious winters in the country. To help homeless people cope with both brutal climate and hunger, social service agencies run more than 100 shelters citywide. But placing families in permanent housing, or helping them rehabilitate their

**"IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER LIFE,  
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**—PASTOR LINCOLN  
SCOTT**



deteriorating homes or apartments, is the ultimate solution.

In 1994 Vision Chicago used grants totalling \$61,400 to create new low-income housing and rehabilitate structures so people could own and safely live in their own homes.

Vision Chicago also works with Harambee Homes, a West side organization in which owner-builders participate in constructing their own low-cost housing. Longtime Chicago resident Perry Bigelow brought to this ministry more than 30 years of local construction experience, a master's degree in business administration, and instruction in inner-city economic development from Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa. But he and the other professional builders don't do the whole job—the eventual homeowners have to put their “sweat equity” into these homes.

On Saturdays and some evenings, the eight-person Harambee crew, the majority of which are women, build homes from the ground up, learning

skills such as electrical wiring, plumbing, and roofing in the process. They use recycled building materials and all owner-builders work on all homes. Finished homes cost about \$30,000 to construct but are appraised at \$90,000 to \$100,000.

“This is the first time this is being done in an inner-city community,” Bigelow says. “It's not unusual for people to build their own homes, but it is unusual for people who are not well-resourced.”

Owner-builders Pat Herrod and Reba Charles initially found learning construction a struggle. “I didn't like building at first,” Reba confessed, operating a drill while Pat held planks steady for her. “But you learn skills as you go along,” Pat added.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

In the 1980s, many manufacturers left Chicago, causing the loss of more than 129,000 jobs. Currently a third of all Chicagoans earn an annual income of \$15,000 or less. Most affected by the lean

job market are 89,000 African American and 29,000 Latinos who are unemployed.

With funding, training, and administrative support, Vision Chicago empowered several local agencies to help the jobless learn skills and hunt for opportunities. One of these, the Allison Foundation for Better Living in West Garfield has helped more than 50 young people find full-time employment since 1993. Founded by Pastor Benny Allison and Kathy Allison of the Corinthian Temple Church of God and Christ, the organization works to restore the self-esteem of welfare recipients and those discouraged by previous employment experiences.

Nicole Harris, 22, a single mother with a high school education, recently moved from Peoria, Ill., to Chicago. Frustrated by temporary positions, she turned to the Allison Foundation.

“Pastor Allison got on it,” says Harris. “He was like, ‘Find this girl a job. And they didn't let up.’” Staff member helped her polish her resume and interviewing skills and faxed the resume to possible employers. Among the opportunities was an opening for an administrative assistant at Austin Bank on the West side.

The bank's human resources manager, Mary Boyd, picked Harris' resume out of a stack. After talking with the young woman for only five minutes, Boyd knew there was something special about her. Boyd recommended Harris to the bank's vice president this way: “She is demanding, just like you. When you bring a thing back 50 times she won't get upset. She'll work that much harder to get it right.”

Harris landed the job, moved to a better apartment, and started working toward her bachelor's degree in business management at night and on weekends.

Envisioning herself as a company chief executive someday, Harris sets her goals high not just for herself but as an example for her 2-year-old son, Sean. “I want to show my son that Mommy's going to work, and that's the exact same thing I will expect out of him.”

### HELP FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Vision Chicago's strength is building relationships, but not just between churches and large groups. It also solidifies connections with people who might seem small in the grand scope of things but who have exactly the right idea at the right time in the right place.

Pearl Willis, 33, a former drug addict living in Roseland on the West side, became a Christian four years ago. Suddenly driven by the desire to tell others about Jesus, she preached to about 150

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**—CHERYL  
CORNELIUS**



neighborhood children from the front porch of her apartment. Soon these young "students" asked her to teach their parents as well.

That's when Willis found out that many of the adults—the majority single mothers—were uneducated, having dropped out of school to have children. Willis had struggled to earn her high school diploma while raising three kids and holding down a job, so she knew that what they needed most, besides encouragement, was child care. She decided to provide both.

With her eye on a condemned building, Willis turned to MidAmerica Leadership Foundation, which she had heard helped "incubate" small ministries and businesses. The staff helped her get a grant of \$13,500 to buy a two-story house, where she holds Bible studies, runs a daycare center, and lives with her children, Torrance, 18, Kim, 16, and Octavia, 10. Currently, Willis is working with Vision Chicago to purchase the building next door to "fill with children" whose names make up a long waiting list.

Word of Willis's daycare center spread fast. When high school counselors learned about it, they sent students with children her way. "Babies just started coming from everywhere!" says Willis. "I really just got set in the middle of it. This building is what the Lord provided, so this is what I'm doing."

Willis tells the new moms, many of whom are not Christians, "I'm going to teach your children about Jesus if they stay in this daycare."

## LACK OF GOODS

Gifts-in-kind (GIK) network for Vision Chicago grew out of the realization that social service agencies in Chicago had common needs for certain items, such as disposable diapers and toys for children, hygiene products for women, and clothing. Vision Chicago formed the network to "compete within our systems for goods in Chicago," says World Vision's representative, Mike Mantel.

Vision Chicago brought together a coalition including Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Catholic Charities, the Chicago Department of Human Services, the Jewish Federation, Homeless Helpline, United Charities, the Anti-hunger Federation, the Interfaith Council for the Homeless, United Way and Vision Chicago's churches. Every week, Vision Chicago staff faxes a list of available items, usually a truckload of goods, to the network's GIK partners. Next, Vision Chicago staff line up dock space with one of the agen-

cies such as Catholic Charities or the Department of Human Services. Then they let partners know when they can pick up their items.

Partnership with World Vision is a natural fit for Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA), which helps immigrants and refugees find housing and start new lives in Chicago with their families. Some GIK goods end up in TIA's Refugee Free Store. There people participating in TIA programs get free clothes, bedding, cleaning supplies, and hygiene products.

Carol McNeill, Coordinator of Community Resources for TIA, says, "Seeing the refugees and knowing the situation in their countries, and then working with World Vision which is helping in those countries while we are helping on this end, fills out our world view."

In June 1994, Vision Chicago was nationally recognized as a "model of hope" by the Council on Foundations and the Washington National Cathedral. The program was credited for its ability to

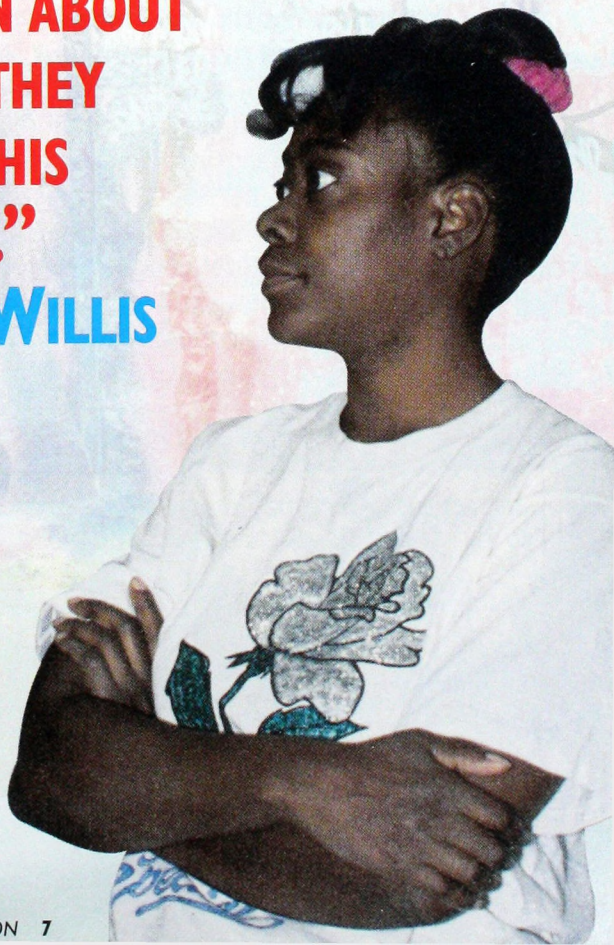
bring together religious and civic sectors to build a "just and civil society."

For Vision Chicago partners, the award confirms they're on the right track, but it by no means signifies that their work of building and developing the program is done. Pastor Scott plans to expand his ministry to include a homeless women's program and a day nursery. CityLINC increasingly attracts people and groups from states as distant as Colorado who want to see what's happening in Chicago. As for Willow Creek, Steve Haas says, "If Vision Chicago is not big enough to meet the needs of a church this size, then we need to increase the size of Vision Chicago."

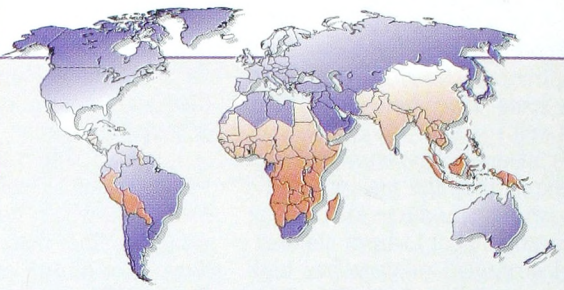
The Vision Chicago model of church-based community development, energized by the support of diverse racial, denominational, and economic groups, points to a new vision for U.S. cities. Operating on love, respect, cooperation, and faith, that vision takes its values directly from the Kingdom of God. ☉

**"I'M GOING TO  
TEACH YOUR  
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**—PEARL WILLIS**



# WORLD VISION NEWS



## WV CONTACTS "UNREACHED PEOPLES"

**C**ontinuing a program of Christian witness that began with its founding in 1950, World Vision is helping to bring the Gospel of Christ to people unfamiliar with the faith in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

John Robb, 47, director of the unreached peoples program of World Vision's International office in Monrovia, Calif., spends up to 40 percent of each year traveling the world.

Working with local churches and Christian leaders, Robb identifies their concerns for peoples neglected or forgotten in evangelistic efforts. He offers presentations and leads seminars about filling individual spiritual needs and dealing with oppressive political and spiritual aspects of society.

Joining planning discussions and prayer sessions about work with unreached peoples, Robb also is called upon to give radio and television interviews and address local audiences at churches, schools, study groups, and missions organizations.

"Our aim in this ministry is to reach out to needy people groups in a holistic way—meeting the needs of individuals in their social and cultural settings," Robb explained.

"We need to start with an informed understanding of where they are in regard to the kingdom of God. This might involve simply sharing the Gospel with people who are spiritually hungry," he said. In other areas, he added, he might encourage local churches to "deeds of love" as varied as providing needed clothing or offering literacy education.

"I share what we in World Vision have learned about the sensitivities of cross-cultural ministry so Christians can approach such people groups and work with them appropriately."

*John Robb (second from left) joins Christian leaders in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, India.*

## HUNGRY NORTH KOREANS RECEIVE WV FOOD AID

**N**orth Korea this year joined the list of countries to receive World Vision relief aid. According to news reports, hunger is widespread in the communist land of nearly 23 million people, and some areas are suffering all-out famine.

With permission from United States government authorities, World Vision arranged for 500 metric tons of corn to be purchased in China and shipped across the border to the North Korean town of Nam Yang. The corn, worth \$93,000, was marked for distribution to needy women and children in North Ham-Kyung province.

"This is an answer to prayer," said Dr. Yoon Gu-Lee, director of World Vision office in Seoul, South Korea. Lee represented the agency during three months of highly sensitive negotiations with the government of North Korea. For more than 40 years, he said, people in South Korea have been praying for such a breakthrough in relations. Many have relatives in North Korea, he added, and they have been deeply concerned about their welfare.

World Vision hopes to provide up to 100,000 metric tons of food to meet needs in North Korea where, according to South Korea's *JoongAng Daily News*, "the shortages of food and other necessities in the countryside were beyond description."

## MAJOR NATIONAL FIGURES ENDORSE WV'S WORK

**S**everal national personalities recently offered personal support for World Vision and its work in 100 countries and 5,283 projects worldwide.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush observed: "As global needs accelerate, so must our responsibility to do what we can to help others. We need to h





## WHO APPROVES SOLAR MEDICAL STERILIZER

**A** solar-powered steam sterilizer for medical equipment has gained a seal of approval for large-scale use from the United Nations World Health Organization.

Tested through World Vision project offices in Africa, the device developed by TriSolar Foundation Trust in Perth, Australia, sterilizes needles, syringes, and other medical apparatus. It uses only the heat of the sun, rather than electricity, oil, gas, or firewood, which can be expensive or unavailable in many areas of the world.

Operating like a pressure cooker, the sterilizer holds three triangular heat sinks in its base, which are connected to three solar thermal collection tubes. Sterilization times range from 30 to 50 minutes.

organizations that have the experience and expertise to go into a community anywhere in the world and bring change. World Vision is one such organization. I enthusiastically endorse their efforts on behalf of the world's poor—whether it's to give a warm meal to a hungry child or to drill water wells for an entire village."

Evangelist Billy Graham recounted, "In my travels, I've seen the tragedy that is so much a part of a child's life in the developing world. I've also obviously seen the transformation that Christ's love can bring through World Vision projects. God has mightily blessed the work of World Vision that [its founder] Bob Pierce began 44 years ago. Pray with me that God will continue to multiply their efforts ... as they touch the world's children with Christ's love."

James A. Baker 3rd, secretary of state under the administration of President George Bush, speaking for himself and his wife, Susan, said, "We have seen firsthand the needs that exist in the Third-World countries and the work that World Vision is doing to meet those needs. We have been touched by the smiles of hope on the faces of desperate people as they received World Vision assistance. Whenever there is a need—no matter how difficult the race—World Vision is there, offering help in the name of Christ."

Charles Colson, founder and chairman of Prison Fellowship of Reston, Va., said, "Since 1977 [my wife] Patty and I have been World Vision donors, with the great joy of sponsoring children in need in various parts of the world. I don't know any ministry that is

doing a more effective job of reaching people in the name of Christ than World Vision."

Currently World Vision donates and sponsors 1,083,965 children. The agency assists a total of 45,484,322 people through a broad variety of relief, rehabilitation, and development programs.

### WV TO RELOCATE TO SEATTLE AREA

**A**fter 39 years in Southern California, World Vision's United States office is moving to the Pacific Northwest this year.

The organization's president, Robert A. Seiple, said the shift in location will

ing, to care for the sick and to seek to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ," World Vision moved in 1956 to Eagle Rock in the Los Angeles area. There its founder and first president, Bob Pierce, began a national radio program on 130 stations of the American Broadcasting Co. network.

In 1965, World Vision moved to a new building in Monrovia at the northern outskirts of the greater Los Angeles area, where the agency grew in size and scope.

As World Vision transports personnel and equipment northward between April and October, the organization is hiring as many as 200 new staff members, most from the Seattle area, to replace employees who are not moving. A scattered group of buildings that has housed the agency in Monrovia and Arcadia, Calif., will be replaced with a



save more than \$5 million annually in operating costs. "We recognize that the needs of the poor are escalating in the face of limited resources," Seiple explained. "We must set the highest standard of stewardship to our donors and to people in need around the world."

Founded in Portland, Ore., in Sept. 1950 "to care for the fatherless and widows, to help the poor and the starv-

ing, to care for the sick and to seek to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ," World Vision moved in 1956 to Eagle Rock in the Los Angeles area. There its founder and first president, Bob Pierce, began a national radio program on 130 stations of the American Broadcasting Co. network.

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*Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch  
out her hands to God.*

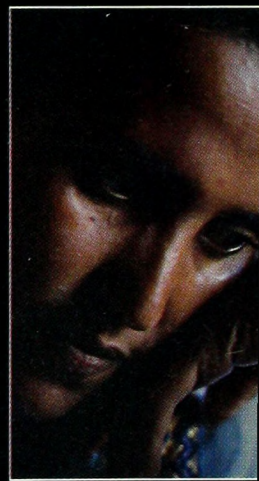
*—Psalm 68:31.*



In the torture rooms, Marxist guards forced Yezeshewall Mammo, 18, to crouch in a bathtub, naked. They demanded she denounce "her God" in the name of the revolution.

Yezeshewall, who had been a Christian in an Ethiopian evangelical church for two years, refused. She told them firmly, "Jesus is greater than all, greater than revolution, greater than Marxism, greater than anything."

Three men wearing heavy military boots kicked her legs, back, and chest and beat her with an iron ball at the end of a thick wire. Exhausted after almost 30 minutes of beating her, the men asked a swollen, bleeding Yezeshewall, "Why don't you say what we want and you can go?"



Yezeshewall Mammo

# AMAZING FAITH

BY TAMERA MARKO

PHOTOS BY SUSIE POST

# *We are dealing with one Christian who says she will not leave Christ."*

When she refused, the men cringed sadly. If they didn't continue beating her, they would be beaten for not obeying Marxist philosophy.

Finally, a woman came in. She struck Yezeshewall's head with the iron ball. Each blow made Yezeshewall's ears ring louder until the noise was unbearable. The woman also turned on the shower full blast so water pummeled Yezeshewall's eyes, nose, and ears. Yezeshewall couldn't see or breathe. Her water-slicked skin ripped more easily with each blow.

Finally, the guards gave up and dropped Yezeshewall on the prison floor, unconscious and with a broken spine. Later the guards' supervisors asked why Yezeshewall did not pledge allegiance to the revolution. They answered, "We are dealing with one Christian who says she will not leave Christ."

## **FAITH AND CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA**

Yezeshewall's torture, which happened in 1979, is echoed in the stories of thousands of Protestant evangelicals who survived Ethiopia's "Red Terror." The 17 years of communist travail began in 1974, when a military coup overthrew the government of Emperor Haile Selassie, who had ruled since 1930. At the time of the communist takeover, Ethiopia's population was something more than 50 percent Orthodox, 40 percent Muslim, and 1 percent Protestant and Catholic, while the rest practiced tribal religions.

The new communist government, however, declared all religion illegal. Prayer meetings were deemed "anti-revolutionary activity." Communist officials looted and seized church property, shut down missionary radio stations, and jailed and executed hundreds of church leaders. They also stripped the Orthodox Church of its powerful state-church status. Thousands of Muslims fled the country. Most foreign missionaries departed after receiving death threats. Local evangelicals, following the example of persecuted churches in Eastern Europe, went underground.

The government, wary of growing numbers of youths attending evangelical worship instead of revolutionary meetings, brutally oppressed Christians like Yezeshewall. Many who were not jailed or executed lost jobs and homes and were stripped of community power.

Government officials might have believed that evangelicals would be easy to silence. They represented only a minuscule portion of the population. The Orthodox Church, a derivative of Coptic Christianity dating back to ancient Egypt, had been a

major religious force in Ethiopia since the fourth century. Islam rose to prominence in the eighth century. A Lutheran missionary introduced Protestantism to Ethiopia in 1633. But only in recent decades did evangelical Protestantism show much growth in its enthusiastic, often charismatic form.

From the start, evangelicals faced severe opposition from both the traditional Christian establishment and Muslims. For 1,600 years, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has served as the educational center for clergy and statesmen, a principal source of the country's culture, and the repository of its historical records. In the eyes of many Ethiopian Christians, to stray from the Orthodox faith is to denounce the country's history and dishonor national solidarity. Among Muslims, conversion to any other faith is unthinkable, sometimes punishable by death.

Though faced with persecution from the government and suspicion or hostility from other religious groups, the evangelical church did not die, as the communist government had hoped. Instead, its numbers grew tenfold, today representing 10 percent of Ethiopia's 53 million people. The Kale Heywet Church, the largest of more than 11 Protestant denominations in Ethiopia, now has 2.2 million members.

"Normally, you expect people to turn away from their faith during persecution," says Mohammed Mussa, an Ethiopian evangelist now studying at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "But it was the opposite. Out of persecution there was growth in the church."

## **CLINGING TO FAITH**

The growth happened quietly in hundreds of homes throughout Ethiopia's populous cities, in remote highlands, in fertile valleys, and scorching desert. As persecuted Christians have done in past centuries, the evangelicals met secretly in "cell groups" of five to seven people. "Our strategy was for the church to survive and continue to grow," Mussa says.

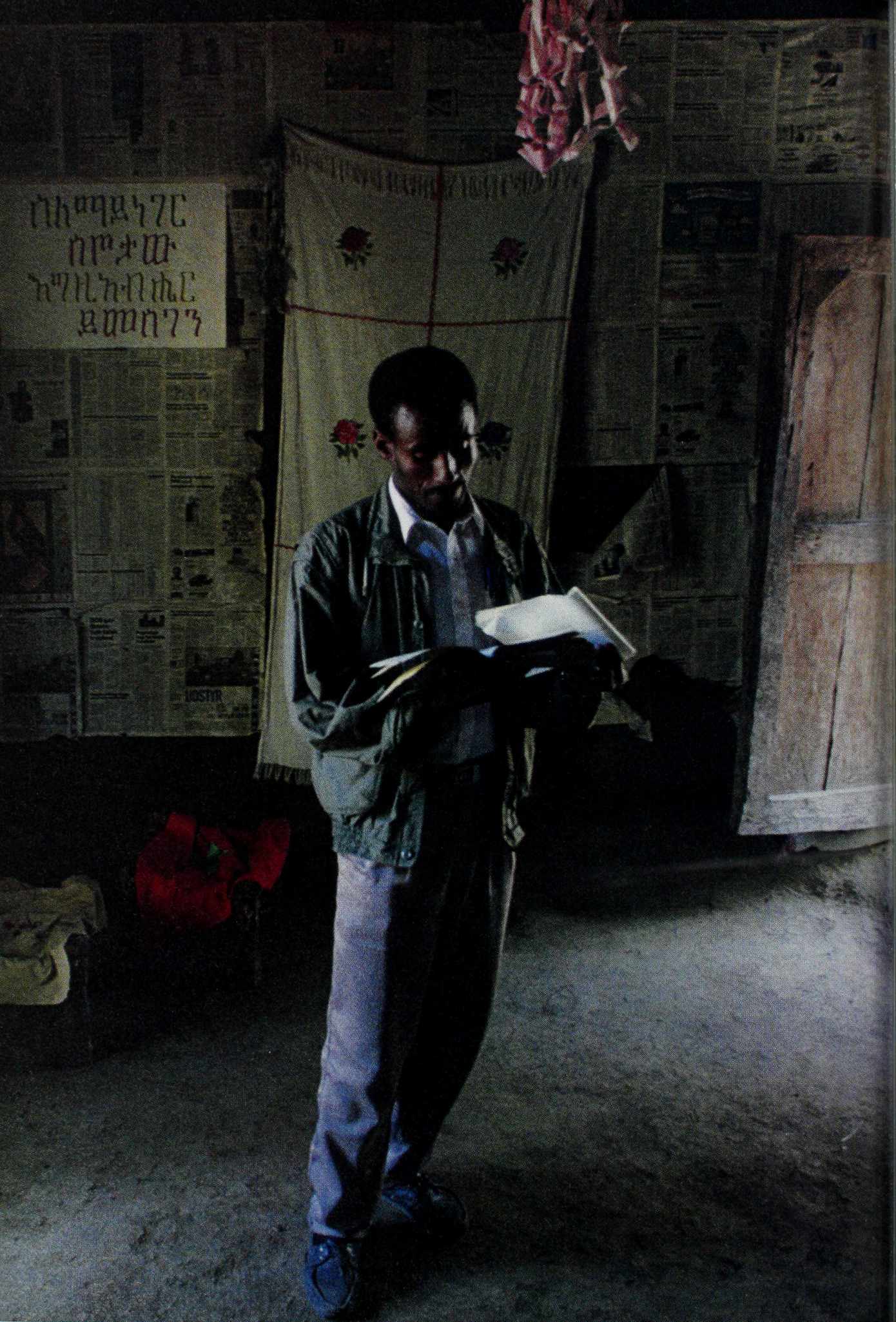
The Meserete Kristos Church, now one of the country's largest denominations with 100 local churches and 327 church planting centers, had a highly organized, intricate cell-group network. Like many underground churches, they printed their own Bible materials, sometimes stenciling pages by hand. In their zeal, members sometimes prayed all night, sleeping only an hour or so before going to work.

To avert government spying, only church members were welcome in cell groups, arriving alone or in

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# Ethiopia's youth are especially attracted to the charismatic form of worship in many evangelical churches.

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pairs from different directions at different times. New members were warily suspect.

"In the small groups," says Meserete Kristos General Secretary Bedru Hussen, "there is a closeness, fellowship, and warmth. In a large congregation, people lose their identity. It's much easier to nurture and care for people in smaller groups."

Dozens of miracles inspired the endangered Christians to cling to their faith and work harder to help the church grow. Yezeshewall, now 31 and married with two children, cites one extraordinary circumstance following her torture.

Late one night, for reasons she can attribute only to God's grace, prison guards drove her to a rural area far away and left her with friends. Yezeshewall quotes 2 Timothy 4:17 to explain not only her survival but a completely healed body: "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."

In May 1991, the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front overthrew the Marxist dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Thousands of Christians were released from prison and flooded into newly-opened churches. President Meles Zenawi's new government declared complete separation of church and state, and allowed evangelical churches to grow and flourish.

## DRAWN TO PASSION

Today, these churches are struggling to establish themselves in communities where the majority of people have centuries-old roots in Orthodox Christianity or Islam.

"Now Protestants are not afraid of the government, but of local people, the Orthodox and Muslims," says one 31-year-old evangelical.

Some Orthodox people, mostly zealous youth, have violently attacked evangelicals. In some cases, Orthodox families have reacted violently when a member has joined an evangelical group. One 18-year-old girl fled to Addis Ababa, about 200 miles from her rural home, after relatives who were Orthodox priests held her head in hot steam so long that her facial skin became permanently twisted with fiery red and purple scars.

Though most Orthodox leaders do not condone persecution of Protestants, many are angry because they believe the nontraditional churches are "stealing their sheep," particularly the youth. Ethiopia's youth are especially attracted to the charismatic form of

worship in many evangelical churches. The passionate worship contrasts starkly with Orthodox services, where priests lead ceremonial worship in Ge'ez, an ancient language few people understand.

The Orthodox Church, remaining faithful to ancient Jewish influence, follows Old Testament dietary laws and observes the Jewish Sabbath. Church leaders, who study for years to learn worship ceremonies and Ge'ez, are appalled by "noisy" charismatic worship and young, untrained born-again Christians preaching the gospel.

## BRACING FOR PERSECUTION

In a preliminary effort toward reconciliation, high-level Ethiopian Orthodox and evangelical leaders have begun meeting to discuss their concerns. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, representing 5 million people from 10 member denominations, is coordinating communication with Orthodox leaders and exploring the possibility of a national council of churches to promote unity between Orthodox and evangelical Christians.

Despite hopeful dialogue, some church leaders still are frustrated by the government's unwillingness to stop religious persecution. For example, in February 1993, in Ada Berga, a community not far west of the capital, 15 members of the Protestant Mekane Yesus church were jailed for two weeks without a court order.

Recalling the past, Protestants are bracing for future persecution. "We pray that conditions will be stable, but we are preparing cell groups just in case," says Gebremeskel G. Eqziabher, a leader in Addis Ababa's Fellowship Church.

If evangelical churches are forced underground again, most members believe they will survive as they did before. Schooled by experience to accept suffering as a normal part of Christian life, they cite 2 Timothy 3:12, which says, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Meanwhile, Yezeshewall says she learned more about faith during the persecution that broke her spine than during the "easy years" since.

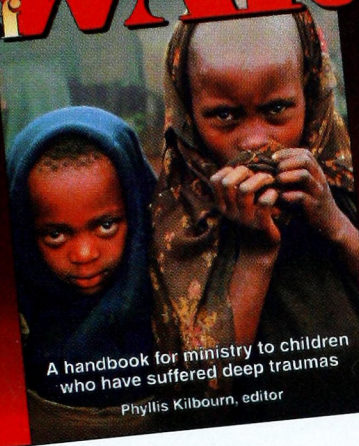
"We underestimate the power of God," she says. "Christianity is not a contract you keep for some years and then change when it becomes difficult. We expect that Jesus will come back. Until then, we remain faithful." ☉

*Tamera Marko, a former editor of World Vision magazine, is a free-lance writer in San Diego, Calif.*

# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR  
HELPING OTHER  
IN THE NAME  
OF CHRIST

## Healing the Children of WAR



A handbook for ministry to children  
who have suffered deep traumas  
Phyllis Kilbourn, editor

## CHILDREN OF WAR

Children are the most helpless victims of war. They witness atrocities that scar their lives for years. *Healing the Children of War* suggests practical ways Christians can help children whose lives have been shattered by war.

Edited by Phyllis Kilbourn, *Healing the Children of War* is a practical handbook filled with stories by men and women who have lived and worked with war-traumatized children.

To obtain a copy of the book, priced at \$21.95, call World Vision's MARC Publications at (800) 777-7752.

## GROUP WORKCAMPS

Youth leaders can start planning for the summer of 1996 with Group Workcamps, an interdenominational Christian service project that repairs homes for elderly, disabled, and needy people in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Since Group Workcamps began in 1977, 46,000 young people and their adult leaders have put faith into action by assisting more than 6,000 families in more than 170 camps. A typical camp brings as many as 400 volunteers together to paint houses, repair roofs, install insulation, and build wheelchair ramps.

For a brochure listing 1996 workcamps and information about registration, phone (800) 774-3838, or write to Group Workcamps, P.O. Box 599, Loveland, CO 80539.

## 1994 MUSTARD SEED AWARDS

Each year, World Vision honors innovative church-based ministries serving the poor. Its Mustard Seed Award program provides cash grants of \$1,000 to \$5,000 to help ministries expand their services.

The 1994 Mustard Seed Award winners include:

**Restoration Ministries Inc.** of Harvey, Ill., provides a variety of programs from prison Bible studies to low-income housing assistance, and a year-long ministry-training program for former offenders. Phone (708) 333-3370.

**Breakthrough Urban Ministries**, sponsored by the First Evangelical Church in Chicago, helps homeless men and women and drug addicts return to society. Breakthrough counsels them, helps with budgeting, trains them for employment, and places them in jobs. Phone (312) 989-8353.

**Westside C.A.R.E.S.** is a collaborative ministry of 21 Colorado churches working toward long-term independence for the poor. They provide rental housing assistance, food and clothing, and job placement assistance. Phone (719) 389-0759.

**Operation Share** of Cucamonga Church Fellowship in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., distributes food and Christmas baskets and provides emergency and transitional shelter or shelter referrals. Phone (909) 945-0091.

Each week, **Vineyard Benevolence** takes groceries, clothing, and household items to the poor as part of its emergency assistance program. The group also distributes meals and groceries in impoverished neighborhoods, in parks, and at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship church in Anaheim, Calif. Phone (714) 777-4777.

The **New Life Center** in Opelousas, La., provides parenting classes, food, clothing, and medical assistance to homeless women. Phone (318) 235-4972.

For more information or an application, contact Andy Baniak at World Vision, (818) 305-7801. Applications are due Oct. 2, 1995.

World Vision's Wanda Nolan presents the 1994 award to Dale Dumont (left), and Virgil L. Tolbert, executive director of Restoration Ministries.





led and written by Stephanie Stevenson

## PRAYING THROUGH THE WINDOW II

The United Prayer Track of AD 2000 and Beyond, a coalition of ministries committed to seeing every community on earth provided with access to the gospel, is hoping to mobilize 10,000 intercessors for prayer walks in October 1995. Interested Christians travel to "gateway cities" that are



influential spiritually, politically, and economically and pray in various locations. AD 2000 is also seeking 50 million Christians in the United States to pray for 100 strategic cities.

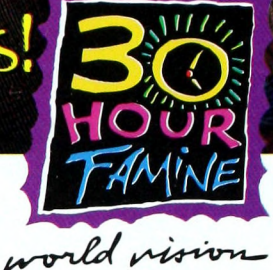
For more information about a prayer journey, or to obtain a prayer calendar, a book *Praying Through the 100 Gateway Cities*, or a video called "Light Through the Window," call (719) 522-1040. The book and video each cost \$8.99.

“Prayer is the unfolding of one's will to God that he may fulfill it.”  
—St. Thomas Aquinas



On February 23-24, 1996, groups of young people from around the nation will come together for a special event they'll never forget—the **30 Hour Famine**. ■ Tell your church youth group or a local youth organization about it. **Every day, 35,000 kids around the world die of hunger or hunger-related causes.** ■ First your young people

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starving children. ■ To learn more, call toll free **1-800-7-FAMINE** or mail the coupon today. We'll send you a free 30 Hour Famine video to share with a group of caring young people. In Canada, call 1-800-387-8080.

**Call toll free**

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I'm not ready to sign up yet. Please send me the free video.  
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INTERVIEW WITH *Mary Taylor Previte*

BY BARBARA R. THOMPSON

# *Working with the "Dead Already"*

**M**ARY TAYLOR PREVITE WAS 9 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE BECAME A PRISONER OF WAR. The great-granddaughter of J. Hudson Taylor, the 19th-century British founder of China Inland Mission, Previte spent three years during World War II in a Japanese internment camp. Here she learned from imprisoned teachers and church leaders the secrets of emotional and spiritual survival in wartime. Among her mentors was Eric Liddell, an Olympic gold-medalist



*Imprisoned as  
a child by the  
Japanese in  
World War II,  
Mary Taylor  
Previte  
draws on her  
experience  
to reach the  
children of  
war in Cam-  
den County,  
New Jersey.*

PHOTO: TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

whose profound faith was dramatized in the Academy Award-winning film *Chariots of Fire*.

Today, Mary Taylor Previte is passing on her survival secrets to another generation of children of war: inner-city kids from New Jersey. For more than 20 years, as the head of a Camden County juvenile detention center, Previte has given courage, faith, and self-esteem to children growing up amidst urban violence. She tells her compelling story in *Hungry Ghosts: One Woman's Mission to Change their World* (Zondervan, 1994). Here she is interviewed for World Vision by free-lance writer Barbara R. Thompson.

**BT: AS A CHILD OF WAR FROM 1941 TO 1945, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR EXPERIENCES WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF INNER-CITY CHILDREN IN THE 1990S?**

**MP:** Just like urban children today, we saw a lot of weapons and blood, and we witnessed and felt the effects of hunger. But I think the greatest loss was our separation from our families.

I didn't see my parents for five and a half years. War does this to children. You look at a photograph and try to imagine your daddy's voice, but living with a photograph is very different from living with a flesh-and-blood daddy. Even today, from the richest memories of my childhood, I recall only teachers and schoolmates, bayonet drills and guard dogs, but I have no memory of hugs and kisses.

Like me, many children in our youth shelter have little or no memory of their parents or the rituals that make up family life. Recently, an extremely tough 13-year-old, who lives on the street and has no idea where his mother and father are, told me that he had "borrowed" a mom. She is a woman from his neighborhood who hugs him and tells him to stay out of trouble. He told me how good it makes him feel when she says, "I love you."

Frankly, there seems to be little hope for this child who is a chronic offender and has known nothing but hardness all his life. But given his response to his borrowed mother, what might he have become had he grown up with hugs from a loving parent?

**BT: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ISOLATION AND ABANDONMENT ON CHILDREN?**

**MP:** In the concentration camp, our

teachers taught us to be brave, to have a stiff upper lip. We learned that crying and being homesick were baby stuff—and no one wanted to be a baby. So we developed the hard part of ourselves, the protective armor. The soft, gentle parts of our personalities, those that are playful and physically affectionate, we buried or let die.

Today, inner-city kids call softness "being a geek." No one wants to be one, because anything that makes you soft makes you vulnerable. Boots, bandanas, a hand in the pocket that suggests a weapon—these are all designed to create an aura of toughness. It's a matter of survival in wartime.

**BT: DESPITE THE TRAUMAS OF LIFE IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP, YOU HAVE WRITTEN POSITIVELY OF YOUR EXPERIENCES THERE. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL?**

**MP:** We were surrounded by teachers who instilled in us the profound belief that we had a future. They made us memorize Bible verses about the goodness and power of God, and they convinced us that God would protect us. I knew these teachers were completely trustworthy, and if they couldn't take care of us, then God would.

We were taught that "All things work together for good to them that love God," and that even in the concentration camp, something good was going to happen to us. God had led his people to the Promised Land and fed Elijah in the wilderness. He had closed the mouths of lions. Now, guess what? He was going to add our very own story to the miracles of the ages.

Our teachers filled our heads with these positive images, and at the same time they demanded that we study and carry on with our school work. The structure they gave us created a comforting, predictable world. It sounds contradictory, but in the middle of the violence of war, surrounded by guard dogs, bayonets, and electric wires, we felt safe.

Children in urban war zones have none of this. They live in a topsy-turvy world where nothing is the same from one day to the next. They have no idea what will happen at school, at home, or on the street. They live in chronic fear, without stories or structures to give meaning to their experience. As a result, we have a whole generation of kids with their fists up—on the insides of their souls.

**BT: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC FEAR ON CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Kids who don't feel safe put 100 percent of their energies into protecting themselves. Some become hypervigilant

and extremely aggressive and defensive. Others simply become flat human beings. When I interview children for our center newsletter, they talk to me about being raped or dodging bullets in voice devoid of emotion. I want to see them cry or ball their fists up in anger, but the real feelings of pain and rage have tiptoed into some dark recess of their soul.

Some studies show that pain, and the fear of pain, can shut down about five sixths of our brain. I believe it. Under that kind of pressure, it makes sense that our social and reasoning skills would shut down and that our "survival" brain would go into overdrive.

Endless chronic fear and confusion can turn into an all-consuming sense of rage and hate. In a child for whom all the soft parts have disappeared, this makes "fists-up" kid. We need to be afraid of the child. When he sees you and me, he doesn't see a human being, he sees an object. He thinks, *No one protected me, why should I care about you?*

**BT: HOW DOES CHRONIC FEAR AFFECT CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO WORK TOWARD AN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?**

**MP:** I've had children tell me, "I am dead already." And if I am going to die tomorrow, why should I postpone sex, or avoid dangerous play, or worry about school?

I hear 14-year-olds say, "I want to make a baby, so that someone will carry on my name." For those of us who expect to live until we are 80, this kind of risk-promiscuous behavior makes no sense. But these children are saying, "I'm going to cram everything I can into the minute I have left."

Chronic fear also affects a child's ability to focus. No child who has to negotiate guns and knives and Mace on the way to school can concentrate on reading and science. Disorder and chaos freeze the brain. People who go around patting these children on the back, using slogans like, "Just say No," "Stand Up and Be Proud," are full of hogwash.

**BT: CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE THAT "RESPECT" HAS FOR INNER-CITY CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Those of us from the wider culture have all kinds of ways to feel good about ourselves, to be respected and honored. We play the piano, grow a nice geranium, write a book. Kids on the street don't have any of these things. Their self-esteem is so low that the slightest bump on the arm, the look held just a second too long, is viewed as disrespect.

The person who has been "dissed" has got to give a "payback," and this is often done with a weapon. Guns are a sig-

ificant factor in street culture. With an, a kid feels the world change toward m. Now he has the respect and recognition he needs.

#### **BT: HOW CAN WE INSTILL AN ALTERNATIVE VISION OF REALITY IN INNER-CITY CHILDREN?**

**MP:** It has to be done one-on-one, or in small groups. But even a single grown-up can make a powerful impact on a child's life. Kids have such a need to be touched and recognized by adults. It doesn't have to be for hours and hours; they just need the trustworthy, decent person to give them some attention.

This gives adults enormous power. The beauty of that power is that we can begin to plant different images of reality in the child's head. Whether you call it hope or vision, it's actually creating a new picture of what is possible. It's helping the child see an alternative future.

#### **BT: CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE?**

**MP:** Derek is one of my boys whose mother was a drug addict. His father was killed in front of him when he was 4, and Derek was shipped off to an aunt. He seemed a kid without a future when he came through our youth center. Yet when I saw him recently he was working and studying for his G.E.D. [General Educational Development examination].

When I asked Derek if there was an adult who influenced him in a positive way, at first he said, "No." Then he said, "Well, there was Mr. Mike."

Mr. Mike was the owner of a mini-mart, where Derek bought cheese steaks when he skipped school to sell drugs. Mr. Mike constantly asked Derek what a

decent kid like him was doing out of school.

"At first I was angry," Derek told me. "Mr. Mike knew I had been locked up, but he kept saying, 'decent kid like you.' Those words stayed in my mind, and they made me want to change my life."

I went to find Mr. Mike, because I wanted to meet Derek's savior. It turned out the savior spoke Spanish and worked in a grungy mini-mart with a steel grate over the windows. He was an ordinary American who made it his mission to speak to one kid as if he were his own.

The point is: It does matter what we say to these children. Each of us can find a way to be Mr. Mike to the boys and girls in our neighborhood. At odd times of the day and night we can instill hope and a different vision of life. It doesn't have to be planned; perhaps it's even more effective unplanned.

#### **BT: WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN AT THE YOUTH CENTER TO GIVE CHILDREN A DIFFERENT VISION OF THEMSELVES?**

**MP:** We do all we can to instill in children a sense of emotional and physical safety. I used to wonder why kids here would quickly jump a grade level in their

**B**OOT, BANDANAS,  
A HAND IN THE POCKET  
THAT SUGGESTS A  
WEAPON—THESE ARE ALL  
DESIGNED TO CREATE AN  
AURA OF TOUGHNESS.

*Mary Taylor Previte poses with inner-city youth of Camden County, N.J.*



studies, but I realize now it is because they finally feel safe. Their world becomes comfortably predictable, and their minds and emotions are liberated to get on with the childhood task of emotional and intellectual development.

We also teach our kids that for every act there is a consequence, either good or bad. Whatever privileges they have, they will earn them. And we have high expectations for them, that they will meet our challenges.

#### **BT: WHAT ROLE DO ADULT EXPECTATIONS PLAY IN THE BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Kids will tell you that they know their teachers are dumbing down the work so they can succeed. But young people need high expectations. Teaching them that they are victims is the ultimate crippler. It sends the message that their lives are not governed by their own behavior but by other stuff over which they have absolutely no control.

Here at the youth shelter, we have high expectations and we reward good behavior, but even we are astonished at what we get out of our children. The reward doesn't have to be money or food or candy. It can be a pat on the back, a whisper in the ear. One of the biggest satisfactions for a kid is, "Hey, you noticed me."

At the same time, we give our kids an opportunity to be children. In some ways, they start out as 40-year-olds; in other ways, they are just little kids. When a child has made a neat bed, I put a little happy face on his or her door. People say, "You're going to put that on the door of a felon?" You bet I am. I have kids whispering to me in the hall, "Don't forget my sticker!"

#### **BT: HOW DO YOU GIVE CHILDREN A SENSE OF CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN DESTINIES?**

**MP:** Part of it is teaching them success skills. Adults often focus on the bad things kids do, without asking, "What is it that this kid can't do?" For example, a child might act aggressively because he or she doesn't know how to talk himself or herself out of a difficult situation.

We teach kids how to make an introduction, to start a conversation, to deal with someone else's anger, and to talk their way out of problems. Kids often use their fists simply because they don't know any other way to interact. If adults say, "Well, they just can't help it," the situation will go on forever.

#### **BT: WHAT ROLE CAN THE CHURCH PLAY IN GIVING CHILDREN HOPE?**

**MP:** More than anything else, it is family and commitment to a higher power that anchor a child. This is true for all children, and defi-

# HE WAS AN ORDINARY AMERICAN WHO MADE IT HIS MISSION TO SPEAK TO ONE KID AS IF HE WERE HIS OWN.

nately true for children in a violent world.

Jesus went looking for people in pain—the prostitutes, the sick, the man with the handicapped son—and that's what the church must do. Children of violence rarely go looking for the church, so the church has to go looking for them. It must first embrace these lost children and then challenge their messages of violence with love.

## BT: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR OUR INNER CITIES?

**MP:** The problems are going to get worse before things get better. Poverty is one of the worst forms of child abuse, and more than one in five of our children live in poverty. It's not just black and Hispanic children but white children too.

Poverty is not only the breeding ground for violence, but it's one of the main reasons girls find their self-esteem in having babies. It becomes their job, their income. And children who make babies because of their own poverty will also raise them in poverty.

## BT: WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING IN YOUR WORK?

**MP:** We usually have our children only for a few weeks, so I don't go for the long-term, saved, sanctified, and bound-for-glory victories. I look for small victories.

I find my reward in that look in a child's eye which says, "someone has listened to my story and found it important." I find it in a girl reaching across the hall to touch me or in a scruffy letter from a boy calling me his "main lady." These are the victories that keep me going, that let me know one human being has touched another.

## BT: LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU THINK INNER-CITY KIDS OF TODAY COULD LEARN FROM CHILDREN OF WAR IN THE 1940S?

**MP:** Weapons and violence and hate aren't the escape from war. They never are. They only create more weapons, more violence, and more hate. The answers are on the inside. Building your heart, mind, and soul are the only victories in this kind of war. 🌐

*Barbara R. Thompson is a free-lance writer in Decatur, Ga.*

## In Your Spare



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## NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

This is the second time we've visited the Windy City for an article on Vision Chicago (see "Ghetto-ing It Together," Aug.-Sept. 1993). It certainly won't be the last time, for World Vision's program in Chicago is seen as a model for what can happen elsewhere. A Vision Cities Strategy task force presently is examining how the rich learning experiences emerging from Vision Chicago can be adapted to other metropolitan areas.

*World Vision* magazine recently won the Evangelical Press Association award of excellence for the fifth time in seven years. Do you recall reading Tamera Marko's "Trip to Beautiful," Tim Stafford's "Should We Cut Off Africa?" and Brian Seller-Petersen's interview with Archbishop Desmond Tutu? Each won awards of merit from the Associated Church Press.

Staff members Don Aylard and Jan Dahring helped us win awards with their creative graphic designs. In all, *World Vision* won nine awards. Our companion publications, *Childlife* and *Partners*, won an additional three.

—Terry Madison

# WORLD VISION

Volume 39, Number 4

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PrePress **Colormation, Inc.**  
Printer **Danner Press**

WORLD VISION magazine is published bimonthly by **WORLD VISION**®

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Send all editorial correspondence and changes of address to World Vision magazine, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016. Please send address changes at least 30 days before moving and enclose the address label from a current copy. Member: Evangelical Press Association and Associated Church Press. Copyright © 1995 by World Vision Inc.





# EXCLUSIVE KING AND INCLUSIVE KINGDOM

It was a theological wake-up call.

I was having an animated discussion with a dear friend, a World Vision staff member, whose loyalty to me was being challenged by his struggle to understand an inclusive gospel. I'd been using the metaphor of circles—ever-increasing circles—as we try to find points of commonality with other folks who go by the name of Christian.

"I understand the need to draw circles larger," he remarked. Then he added with a passion befitting Luther's Reformation, "But when do we nail the theses to the door?"

Referring to the eternal verities of our faith, my friend was responding to my pronouncements on an inclusive gospel. I had been suggesting to our staff that to define our faith by our center, Jesus Christ, then draw circles outward to include others, seeking commonality as opposed to differences.

Perhaps this is a function of growing older and sensing a need to look for things held in common, rather than always arguing about differences. Perhaps it is inspired by a need for civil discourse, a need more readily evident given the static created by angry Christians in today's culture. Whatever the reason, this approach to defining faith allows us to be for things, to include people, to define ourselves by a maximum as opposed to a minimalist approach.

Some other people would start at the boundaries and come back to the center. Normally, such folks also have a litmus test as to who is included and who is excluded. Their definition of faith emerges out of what people are against, rather than what they are for.

Theological boundaries and doctrinal barriers are often designed to exclude people. Increasingly, I worry about that, and this is one of the main reasons for preaching an inclusive gospel.

There are good theological and biblical reasons for such preaching. Dr. Luke makes the point most convincingly that the Kingdom of God is inclusive. His entire gospel is written for the last, the lost, and the least. Beggars, lepers, widows, children, and women—all previously marginalized and disempowered by society—hear about a Kingdom of God in which they can have a part. That's Good News! They are included. It seems to me that we would reject the inclusivity of Christ's gospel at considerable peril.

But this is the point my friend was trying to make: It is Christ's gospel. The emphasis should never shift from Jesus Christ. Once that focus is gone, the circles can grow infinitely. As someone once said, our minds can become so open that our theological brains fall out!

The foundation of an inclusive Kingdom is a most exclusive King. Indeed, Jesus Christ is either exactly who he said he was—a one-of-a-kind, once for all, only Son of the Most High—or he had ample qualifications for the lunatic fringe.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man

cometh unto the Father except by me." No ambiguity here! This is Christ talking about his identity, with clear and clean family ties to the God of history. In fact, at Christ's trial, the only time he opened his mouth was when he was questioned about his identity.

"Are you truly the son of God?" Jesus said he was. They crucified him because of it. In terms of compromising his own identity, Christ would rather die first!

Why is this important, individually, organizationally, globally? The answer is simple:

Jesus represents the hope of the world! This is a chaotic world.

It is a world of pain and suffering, a world of depression and confusion. It is

a world desperate for hope. Hope is the feeling that tomorrow's reality will be better than today's. The follower of Christ carries within the ultimate hope: life everlasting.

Nothing else works. Indeed, nothing else comes close. The Christian experience includes faith that is tangible, hope that is real, and love that is transcendent. And they all are embodied in Jesus.

This is what the world is crying out for and is desperate to see. Ideologies have come and gone, governments are suspect, political personalities have come up short. We see growing fear as the predictability of life, in the developing world as well as here at home, is replaced by anxious malaise.

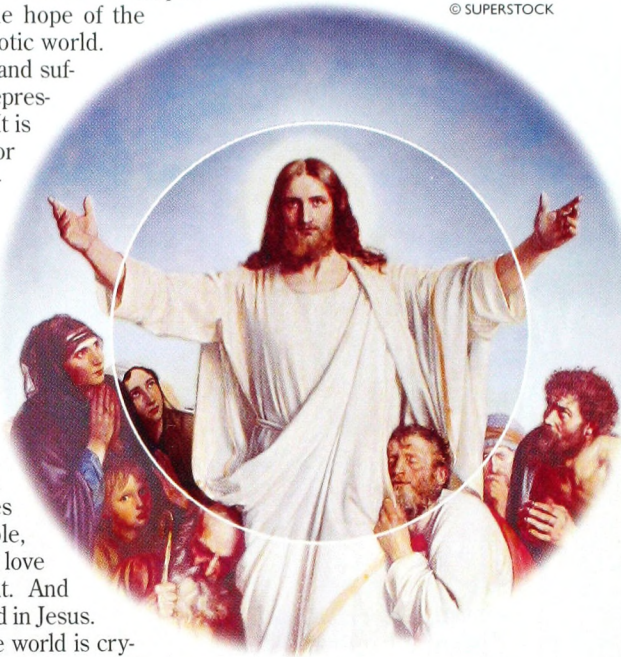
There is only one who can replace that fear. Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God, centers our lives and allows us to live from a position of profound strength. We need to be reminded of that "hope that lives within us." Our organizations need to be reminded. There has never been a timelier wake-up call!

There was a time when the teachings of Christ were so difficult to accept that many of his disciples began to fall from the ranks. Then Jesus gives Peter his choice: "Would you leave me too?" Peter responds as we must respond: "Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life."

There is no confusion here. Our circles can be drawn outward from a position of strength. The center holds. He is the Rock of Our Salvation. The emphasis is proper, "Only you, Jesus," exclusively you. There is no other. We need none other.

Now go ahead, nail it to the door! 🌐

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... we define  
our faith by  
our center,  
Jesus Christ,  
then draw  
circles  
outward ...  
seeking  
commonality.

Published by  
World Vision Inc.  
P.O. Box 1131  
Pasadena, CA  
91131-0311

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Today, with 40,000 children dying every day of hunger, *we need another miracle*. Our churches can be the place where miracles begin.

Last year, more than 2,000 churches like yours used these loaves and raised over \$600,000 to feed hungry children. That money helped thousands of families survive. It helped to change their future.

Through participating in World Vision's Love Loaf program your

church will care for the hungry, as Jesus taught. In the process, the lives of your congregation will also be changed. Members will experience God's joy in sharing. Children will learn compassion. All will share the fellowship of caring together for those who suffer.

Part of the money raised can also go to your own church projects. World Vision provides the Love Loaves at no cost to you.

Call or write today to order your Love Loaves or ask for more information.

*Miracles can begin here!*

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*Yes! I want to begin the Love Loaf program in my church.*

- Please send us \_\_\_\_\_ loaves (one per household).
- We plan to distribute them on (date) \_\_\_\_\_.
- Please send me a sample Love Loaf and more information.
- Please call me.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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August / September 1995

# WORLD VISION®

**NEW  
LINKS  
FOR A  
FRACTURED  
CITY**

# VISION CHICAGO

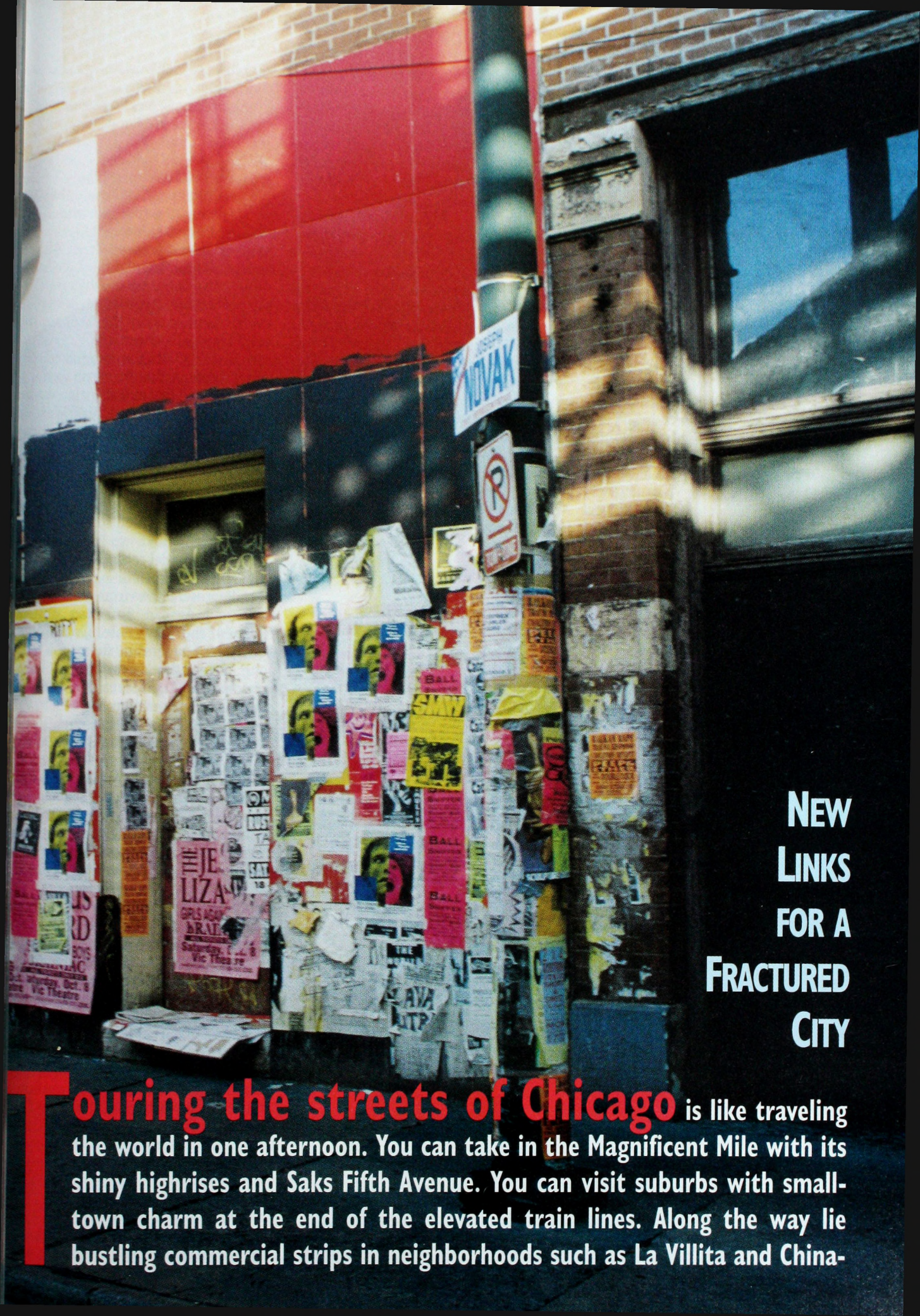
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# VISION CHICAGO

BY JANE SUTTON

PHOTOS BY JANET DAHRING



**NEW  
LINKS  
FOR A  
FRACTURED  
CITY**

**T**ouring the streets of Chicago is like traveling the world in one afternoon. You can take in the Magnificent Mile with its shiny highrises and Saks Fifth Avenue. You can visit suburbs with small-town charm at the end of the elevated train lines. Along the way lie bustling commercial strips in neighborhoods such as La Villita and China-

town where English is the foreign tongue. Some West side streets are eerie in their desolation and decay.

In Chicago and other U.S. cities, diversity also means division. Here distinct lines divide the wealthy North side from the rough South side, the impoverished West side from the suburbs beyond. The lines also separate 77 ethnic neighborhoods. Such barriers shield some and trap others. People in wealthy areas can shut out problems plaguing the inner city—unemployment, structural decay, poverty, hopelessness. The poor feel stranded and alone.

Among the many programs to help the cut-off poor is Vision Chicago, a 3-year-old ministry working in church-based community development. Sponsored by World Vision, the ministry has proved in an astonishingly short time that help, resources, and solutions for these people are readily available and waiting to be used.

The ministry has mobilized local church groups and leaders, launched

coalitions that cross ethnic and denominational lines, and organized an impressive network of resources and skills.

"Vision Chicago, as a bridging institution, brings urban and suburban communities and their unique resources together around the same table to talk and craft a new vision of what we can do together," says Mike Mantel, World Vision's Chicago representative. The result is hope in the inner city and a new citywide spirit of cooperation.

Vision Chicago began in 1992 as a joint venture between World Vision and the MidAmerica Leadership Foundation, a reputable pioneer of church-based community development in Chicago. The two organizations had similar values and goals.

"Our desire to work with and in the most economically needy communities, and the value we place on working cross-culturally, were affirmed by World Vision," says William "Bud" Ipema, MidAmerica's president. The partnership grew to include more than 70 organizations, including

churches, social service agencies, and community ministries. Then Vision Chicago began tackling some of the city's thorniest problems.

## ETHNIC TENSION

Of Chicago's 3 million inhabitants roughly 38 percent are white, 38 percent African American, 20 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent Asian. Although racial strife the likes of the Los Angeles riots hasn't flared up in Chicago during the past decade, enduring separateness is evident in the color of the faces from one neighborhood to the other.

Vision Chicago recognized three geographic quadrants: west, south, and north. Then it dug in one sector at a time.

The first effort on the West side brought together church leaders severely economically depressed Lawndale. "The coalition is built between African American and Latin American churches because those groups are often experiencing great tension in the city at the moment, and we think that the church can model reconciliation between them," Ipema explains.

Representatives from 15 Latin American and African American churches formed the Lawndale Coalition for Christian Leadership, then took aim on one of Lawndale's most urgent issues: unemployment. Presently, 40 percent of Lawndale's population lives below the poverty line. So far, the coalition has helped develop 10 new businesses in the community.

One of the Lawndale coalition founding members, Pastor Lincoln Scott embodies the spirit of revitalizing the community one individual at a time. Thirty years ago he founded the House of Prayer on North Roosevelt Road, a street once coveted by gangs, drug dealers, and vandals. He recruited these groups to help him transform an old vaudeville theater into the House of Prayer sanctuary. He also opened the Good Samaritan Shelter, which takes in as many as 70 homeless men a night and began providing daily meals for up to 150 people.

"If you have a prayer life, you don't look at people and see only where they come from or what they're doing, but you think about what they can be, and the potential if they only knew God," Scott says. He has mentored nine former homeless men who have become pastors.

## ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Chicago's highways speed suburbanites from the Loop, the business center bounded by elevated train tracks

**"VISION CHICAGO BRINGS URBAN AND SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR UNIQUE RESOURCES TOGETHER."**

**—MIKE MANTEL**

*(shown with daughters Abigail Jean, 3, Margaret Anne, 10 months, and Elizabeth Aimee, 4)*



their homes 20 or 30 minutes beyond. Any people who live in these wealthy sprawling areas never see parts of the city like Lawndale.

"In their minds, that's wise," says Steve Haas, director of International Ministries for suburban Willow Creek Community Church. "Because if you read the newspapers about the inner city, there are 10- and 11-year-olds who push friends out the windows of 14-story buildings because they won't steal candy. There are shootings, gangs, drugs."

Vision Chicago's volunteer network, CityLINC (City + Love In the Name of Christ) has opened opportunities for suburbanites to find out what they can do in the inner city. The program places individuals and groups from various suburban churches and organizations in inner-city volunteer work, such as student mentoring, construction, business consulting, and secretarial work. Last year alone, CityLINC volunteers logged more than 20,000 work hours.

"CityLINC gives people the opportunity to put up or shut up," says the group's manager, Cheryl Cornelius, a resourceful woman with 10 years' experience in volunteer management. "You can't say you love the Lord and not have relationships with people of color, people from other neighborhoods."

Steve Haas explains: "As we come together we have a common purpose, and that often helps us get over the hurdles of, 'You don't look like me, you don't act like me.' But we've got this structure to build, and through working together we're going to love you. We're going to understand what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ, because he's the only one who can pull this off."

Willow Creek, a megachurch campus which shares the hilly, almost pastoral landscape of suburban South Barrington with luxury homes, is perhaps as far away as one can get from the inner city without venturing into Wisconsin. The facilities feature a 5,000-seat theater-like sanctuary with a state-of-the-art audio-visual system, huge windows affording a view of perfectly manicured lawn outside, a cafeteria with an eating area the size of most malls' food courts, and a fitness center.

The church's 15,000 attenders can choose from a wide range of ministries to suit their gifts and interests. While many ministries serve the South Barrington community, the focus is deliberately shifting toward greater involvement in the inner city.

Potential CityLINC volunteers take "Vision Trips," led by Vision Chicago staff, to West side programs. The trips

begin or end at the House of Prayer. Volunteers can sign up for opportunities such as cleaning and rebuilding House of Prayer property on West Roosevelt strip, helping a Latino church organize a clothes sale, or sometimes less expected work.

One Willow Creek group climbed four flights of rickety wooden stairs to the belfry of old St. Matthews church in the Mexican neighborhood of La Villita to fix one of the bells. Another group showed up at Chetwyn Rogers Faith Tabernacle church expecting to move furniture, and they were asked to do street evangelism instead. Initially terrified, they all agreed, and the four volunteers witnessed to 63 people in the "foreign territory" of the West side.

"I came down to help them, but I think it was kind of like the other way around," said one of the volunteers.

Personal relationships with local people change the attitudes of many of the volunteers. When five Willow Creek members signed up to paint a house

where eight formerly homeless men try to rebuild their lives through the Victory Outreach ministry, they encountered one of the residents, Tyrone Winston.

He was sitting quietly in a corner holding a Bible. "God changed me and saved me from drugs, alcohol, stealing, and lying," he said. "I don't think the things I used to think. I don't dream the things I used to dream. I'm a new person in Jesus."

Volunteer Kathy Lovig said, "Miracles can happen; that's what I got out of it."

## HOUSING HELP

Homelessness is a special hardship in Chicago, where winds off Lake Michigan blow in some of the most vicious winters in the country. To help homeless people cope with both brutal climate and hunger, social service agencies run more than 100 shelters citywide. But placing families in permanent housing, or helping them rehabilitate their

**"IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER LIFE,  
YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT  
PEOPLE CAN BE IF THEY  
ONLY KNEW GOD."**

**—PASTOR LINCOLN  
SCOTT**



deteriorating homes or apartments, is the ultimate solution.

In 1994 Vision Chicago used grants totalling \$61,400 to create new low-income housing and rehabilitate structures so people could own and safely live in their own homes.

Vision Chicago also works with Harambee Homes, a West side organization in which owner-builders participate in constructing their own low-cost housing. Longtime Chicago resident Perry Bigelow brought to this ministry more than 30 years of local construction experience, a master's degree in business administration, and instruction in inner-city economic development from Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa. But he and the other professional builders don't do the whole job—the eventual homeowners have to put their “sweat equity” into these homes.

On Saturdays and some evenings, the eight-person Harambee crew, the majority of which are women, build homes from the ground up, learning

skills such as electrical wiring, plumbing, and roofing in the process. They use recycled building materials and all owner-builders work on all homes. Finished homes cost about \$30,000 to construct but are appraised at \$90,000 to \$100,000.

“This is the first time this is being done in an inner-city community,” Bigelow says. “It's not unusual for people to build their own homes, but it is unusual for people who are not well-resourced.”

Owner-builders Pat Herrod and Reba Charles initially found learning construction a struggle. “I didn't like building at first,” Reba confessed, operating a drill while Pat held planks steady for her. “But you learn skills as you go along,” Pat added.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

In the 1980s, many manufacturers left Chicago, causing the loss of more than 129,000 jobs. Currently a third of all Chicagoans earn an annual income of \$15,000 or less. Most affected by the lean

job market are 89,000 African American and 29,000 Latinos who are unemployed.

With funding, training, and administrative support, Vision Chicago empowered several local agencies to help the jobless learn skills and hunt for opportunities. One of these, the Allison Foundation for Better Living in West Garfield has helped more than 50 young people find full-time employment since 1991. Founded by Pastor Benny Allison and Kathy Allison of the Corinthian Temple Church of God and Christ, the organization works to restore the self-esteem of welfare recipients and those discouraged by previous employment experiences.

Nicole Harris, 22, a single mother with a high school education, recently moved from Peoria, Ill., to Chicago. Frustrated by temporary positions, she turned to the Allison Foundation.

“Pastor Allison got on it,” says Harris. “He was like, ‘Find this girl a job. And they didn't let up.’ Staff members helped her polish her resume and interviewing skills and faxed the resume to possible employers. Among the opportunities was an opening for an administrative assistant at Austin Bank on the West side.

The bank's human resources manager, Mary Boyd, picked Harris' resume out of a stack. After talking with the young woman for only five minutes, Boyd knew there was something special about her. Boyd recommended Harris to the bank's vice president this way: “She is demanding, just like you. When you bring a thing back 50 times she won't get upset. She'll work that much harder to get it right.”

Harris landed the job, moved to a better apartment, and started working toward her bachelor's degree in business management at night and on weekends.

Envisioning herself as a company chief executive someday, Harris sets her goals high not just for herself but as an example for her 2-year-old son, Sean. “I want to show my son that Mommy's going to work, and that's the exact same thing I will expect out of him.”

**“YOU CAN'T SAY YOU LOVE THE LORD AND NOT HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS.”**

**—CHERYL CORNELIUS**



### HELP FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Vision Chicago's strength is building relationships, but not just between churches and large groups. It also solidifies connections with people who might seem small in the grand scope of things but who have exactly the right idea at the right time in the right place.

Pearl Willis, 33, a former drug addict living in Roseland on the West side became a Christian four years ago. Suddenly driven by the desire to tell others about Jesus, she preached to about 150

neighborhood children from the front porch of her apartment. Soon these young "students" asked her to teach their parents as well.

That's when Willis found out that many of the adults—the majority single mothers—were uneducated, having dropped out of school to have children. Willis had struggled to earn her high school diploma while raising three kids and holding down a job, so she knew that what they needed most, besides encouragement, was child care. She decided to provide both.

With her eye on a condemned building, Willis turned to MidAmerica Leadership Foundation, which she had heard helped "incubate" small ministries and businesses. The staff helped her get a grant of \$13,500 to buy a two-story house, where she holds Bible studies, runs a daycare center, and lives with her children, Torrance, 18, Kim, 16, and Octavia, 10. Currently, Willis is working with Vision Chicago to purchase the building next door to "fill with children" whose names make up a long waiting list.

Word of Willis's daycare center spread fast. When high school counselors learned about it, they sent students with children her way. "Babies just started coming from everywhere!" says Willis. "I really just got set in the middle of it. This building is what the Lord provided, so this is what I'm doing."

Willis tells the new moms, many of whom are not Christians, "I'm going to teach your children about Jesus if they stay in this daycare."

### LACK OF GOODS

A gifts-in-kind (GIK) network for Vision Chicago grew out of the realization that social service agencies in Chicago had common needs for certain items, such as disposable diapers and toys for children, hygiene products for women, and clothing. Vision Chicago formed the network to "compete within our systems for goods in Chicago," says World Vision's representative, Mike Mantel.

Vision Chicago brought together a coalition including Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Catholic Charities, the Chicago Department of Human Services, the Jewish Federation, Homeless Helpline, United Charities, the Anti-hunger Federation, the Interfaith Council for the Homeless, United Way and Vision Chicago's churches. Every week, Vision Chicago staff faxes a list of available items, usually a truckload of goods, to the network's GIK partners. Next, Vision Chicago staff line up dock space with one of the agen-

cies such as Catholic Charities or the Department of Human Services. Then they let partners know when they can pick up their items.

Partnership with World Vision is a natural fit for Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA), which helps immigrants and refugees find housing and start new lives in Chicago with their families. Some GIK goods end up in TIA's Refugee Free Store. There people participating in TIA programs get free clothes, bedding, cleaning supplies, and hygiene products.

Carol McNeill, Coordinator of Community Resources for TIA, says, "Seeing the refugees and knowing the situation in their countries, and then working with World Vision which is helping in those countries while we are helping on this end, fills out our world view."

In June 1994, Vision Chicago was nationally recognized as a "model of hope" by the Council on Foundations and the Washington National Cathedral. The program was credited for its ability to

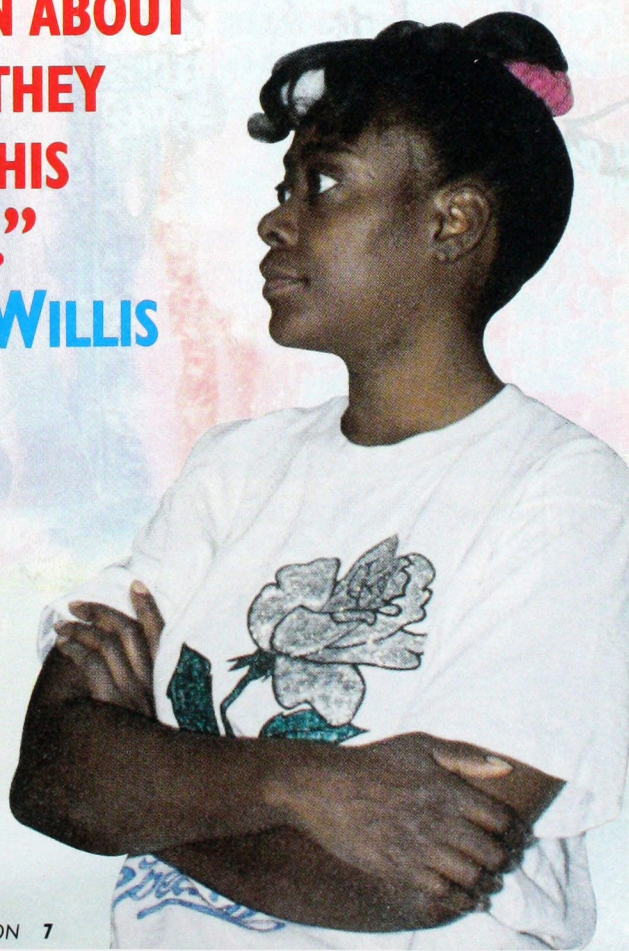
bring together religious and civic sectors to build a "just and civil society."

For Vision Chicago partners, the award confirms they're on the right track, but it by no means signifies that their work of building and developing the program is done. Pastor Scott plans to expand his ministry to include a homeless women's program and a day nursery. CityLINC increasingly attracts people and groups from states as distant as Colorado who want to see what's happening in Chicago. As for Willow Creek, Steve Haas says, "If Vision Chicago is not big enough to meet the needs of a church this size, then we need to increase the size of Vision Chicago."

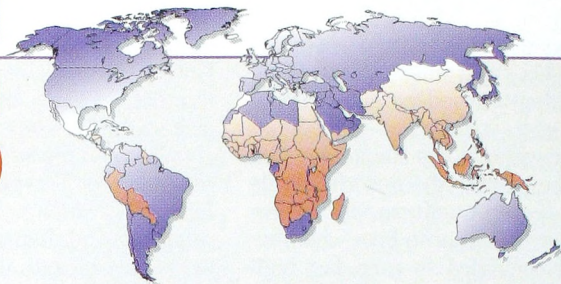
The Vision Chicago model of church-based community development, energized by the support of diverse racial, denominational, and economic groups, points to a new vision for U.S. cities. Operating on love, respect, cooperation, and faith, that vision takes its values directly from the Kingdom of God. ☉

**"I'M GOING TO  
TEACH YOUR  
CHILDREN ABOUT  
JESUS IF THEY  
STAY IN THIS  
DAYCARE."**

**—PEARL WILLIS**



# WORLD VISION NEWS



## WV CONTACTS "UNREACHED PEOPLES"

**C**ontinuing a program of Christian witness that began with its founding in 1950, World Vision is helping to bring the Gospel of Christ to people unfamiliar with the faith in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

John Robb, 47, director of the unreached peoples program of World Vision's International office in Monrovia, Calif., spends up to 40 percent of each year traveling the world.

Working with local churches and Christian leaders, Robb identifies their concerns for peoples neglected or forgotten in evangelistic efforts. He offers presentations and leads seminars about filling individual spiritual needs and dealing with oppressive political and spiritual aspects of society.

Joining planning discussions and prayer sessions about work with unreached peoples, Robb also is called upon to give radio and television interviews and address local audiences at churches, schools, study groups, and missions organizations.

"Our aim in this ministry is to reach out to needy people groups in a holistic way—meeting the needs of individuals in their social and cultural settings," Robb explained.

"We need to start with an informed understanding of where they are in regard to the kingdom of God. This might involve simply sharing the Gospel with people who are spiritually hungry," he said. In other areas, he added, he might encourage local churches to "deeds of love" as varied as providing needed clothing or offering literacy education.

"I share what we in World Vision have learned about the sensitivities of cross-cultural ministry so Christians can approach such people groups and work with them appropriately."

*John Robb (second from left) joins Christian leaders in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, India.*

## HUNGRY NORTH KOREANS RECEIVE WV FOOD AID

**N**orth Korea this year joined the list of countries to receive World Vision relief aid. According to news reports, hunger is widespread in the communist land of nearly 23 million people, and some areas are suffering all-out famine.

With permission from United States government authorities, World Vision arranged for 500 metric tons of corn to be purchased in China and shipped across the border to the North Korean town of Nam Yang. The corn, worth \$93,000, was marked for distribution to needy women and children in North Ham-Kyung province.

"This is an answer to prayer," said Dr. Yoon Gu-Lee, director of World Vision office in Seoul, South Korea. Lee represented the agency during three months of highly sensitive negotiations with the government of North Korea. For more than 40 years, he said, people in South Korea have been praying for such a breakthrough in relations. Many have relatives in North Korea, he added, and they have been deeply concerned about their welfare.

World Vision hopes to provide up to 100,000 metric tons of food to meet needs in North Korea where, according to South Korea's *Joongang Daily News*, "the shortages of food and other necessities in the countryside were beyond description."

## MAJOR NATIONAL FIGURES ENDORSE WV'S WORK

**S**everal national personalities recently offered personal support for World Vision and its work in 100 countries and 5,283 projects worldwide.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush observed: "As global needs accelerate, so must our responsibility to do what we can to help others. We need to h





## WHO APPROVES SOLAR MEDICAL STERILIZER

A solar-powered steam sterilizer for medical equipment has gained a seal of approval for large-scale use from the United Nations World Health Organization.

Tested through World Vision project offices in Africa, the device developed by TriSolar Foundation Trust in Perth, Australia, sterilizes needles, syringes, and other medical apparatus. It uses only the heat of the sun, rather than electricity, oil, gas, or firewood, which can be expensive or unavailable in many areas of the world.

Operating like a pressure cooker, the sterilizer holds three triangular heat sinks in its base, which are connected to three solar thermal collection tubes. Sterilization times range from 30 to 50 minutes.

organizations that have the experience and expertise to go into a community wherever in the world and bring change. World Vision is one such organization. I enthusiastically endorse their efforts on behalf of the world's poor—whether it's to give a warm meal to a hungry child or to drill water wells for an entire village."

Evangelist Billy Graham recounted, "In my travels, I've seen the tragedy it is so much a part of a child's life in the developing world. I've also obviously seen the transformation that Christ's love can bring through World Vision projects. God has mightily blessed the work of World Vision that [its founder] Bob Pierce began 44 years ago. Pray for me that God will continue to multiply their efforts ... as they touch the world's children with Christ's love."

James A. Baker 3rd, secretary of state under the administration of President George Bush, speaking for himself and his wife, Susan, said, "We have seen firsthand the needs that exist in the Third-World countries and the work that World Vision is doing to meet those needs. We have been touched by the smiles of hope on the faces of desperate people as they received World Vision assistance. Whenever there is a need—no matter how difficult the race—World Vision is there, offering help in the name of Christ."

Charles Colson, founder and chairman of Prison Fellowship of Reston, Va., said, "Since 1977 [my wife] Patty and I have been World Vision donors, with the great joy of sponsoring children in need in various parts of the world. I don't know any ministry that is

doing a more effective job of reaching people in the name of Christ than World Vision."

Currently World Vision donates and sponsors 1,083,965 children. The agency assists a total of 45,484,322 people through a broad variety of relief, rehabilitation, and development programs.

### WV TO RELOCATE TO SEATTLE AREA

After 39 years in Southern California, World Vision's United States office is moving to the Pacific Northwest this year.

The organization's president, Robert A. Seiple, said the shift in location will



save more than \$5 million annually in operating costs. "We recognize that the needs of the poor are escalating in the face of limited resources," Seiple explained. "We must set the highest standard of stewardship to our donors and to people in need around the world."

Founded in Portland, Ore., in Sept. 1950 "to care for the fatherless and widows, to help the poor and the starv-


ing, to care for the sick and to seek to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ," World Vision moved in 1956 to Eagle Rock in the Los Angeles area. There its founder and first president, Bob Pierce, began a national radio program on 130 stations of the American Broadcasting Co. network.

In 1965, World Vision moved to a new building in Monrovia at the northern outskirts of the greater Los Angeles area, where the agency grew in size and scope.

As World Vision transports personnel and equipment northward between April and October, the organization is hiring as many as 200 new staff members, most from the Seattle area, to replace employees who are not moving. A scattered group of buildings that has housed the agency in Monrovia and Arcadia, Calif., will be replaced with a

new four-story structure in the community of Federal Way, 25 miles south of Seattle.

World Vision will continue to maintain humanitarian projects in Southern California. These include the Los Angeles Parent Institute, which assists people with the education of their children, and Project Home Again, which provides affordable housing for homeless families in the Los Angeles area. ☉



*Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch  
out her hands to God.*

*—Psalm 68:31.*

## Evangelical Churches Grow in Ethiopia

**I**n the torture rooms, Marxist guards forced Yezeshewall Mammo, 18, to crouch in a bathtub, naked. They demanded she denounce "her God" in the name of the revolution.

Yezeshewall, who had been a Christian in an Ethiopian evangelical church for two years, refused. She told them firmly, "Jesus is greater than all, greater than revolution, greater than Marxism, greater than anything."

Three men wearing heavy military boots kicked her legs, back, and chest and beat her with an iron ball at the end of a thick wire. Exhausted after almost 30 minutes of beating her, the men asked a swollen, bleeding Yezeshewall, "Why don't you say what we want and you can go?"



*Yezeshewall Mammo*

# AMAZING FAITH

BY TAMERA MARKO    PHOTOS BY SUSIE POST

# W e are dealing with one Christian who says she will not leave Christ.”

When she refused, the men cringed sadly. If they didn't continue beating her, they would be beaten for not obeying Marxist philosophy.

Finally, a woman came in. She struck Yezeshewall's head with the iron ball. Each blow made Yezeshewall's ears ring louder until the noise was unbearable. The woman also turned on the shower full blast so water pummeled Yezeshewall's eyes, nose, and ears. Yezeshewall couldn't see or breathe. Her water-slicked skin ripped more easily with each blow.

Finally, the guards gave up and dropped Yezeshewall on the prison floor, unconscious and with a broken spine. Later the guards' supervisors asked why Yezeshewall did not pledge allegiance to the revolution. They answered, "We are dealing with one Christian who says she will not leave Christ."

## FAITH AND CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA

Yezeshewall's torture, which happened in 1979, is echoed in the stories of thousands of Protestant evangelicals who survived Ethiopia's "Red Terror." The 17 years of communist travail began in 1974, when a military coup overthrew the government of Emperor Haile Selassie, who had ruled since 1930. At the time of the communist takeover, Ethiopia's population was something more than 50 percent Orthodox, 40 percent Muslim, and 1 percent Protestant and Catholic, while the rest practiced tribal religions.

The new communist government, however, declared all religion illegal. Prayer meetings were deemed "anti-revolutionary activity." Communist officials looted and seized church property, shut down missionary radio stations, and jailed and executed hundreds of church leaders. They also stripped the Orthodox Church of its powerful state-church status. Thousands of Muslims fled the country. Most foreign missionaries departed after receiving death threats. Local evangelicals, following the example of persecuted churches in Eastern Europe, went underground.

The government, wary of growing numbers of youths attending evangelical worship instead of revolutionary meetings, brutally oppressed Christians like Yezeshewall. Many who were not jailed or executed lost jobs and homes and were stripped of community power.

Government officials might have believed that evangelicals would be easy to silence. They represented only a minuscule portion of the population. The Orthodox Church, a derivative of Coptic Christianity dating back to ancient Egypt, had been a

major religious force in Ethiopia since the fourth century. Islam rose to prominence in the eighth century. A Lutheran missionary introduced Protestantism to Ethiopia in 1633. But only in recent decades did evangelical Protestantism show much growth in its enthusiastic, often charismatic form.

From the start, evangelicals faced severe opposition from both the traditional Christian establishment and Muslims. For 1,600 years, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has served as the educational center for clergy and statesmen, a principal source of the country's culture, and the repository of its historical records. In the eyes of many Ethiopian Christians, to stray from the Orthodox faith is to denounce the country's history and dishonor national solidarity. Among Muslims, conversion to any other faith is unthinkable, sometimes punishable by death.

Though faced with persecution from the government and suspicion or hostility from other religious groups, the evangelical church did not die, as the communist government had hoped. Instead, its numbers grew tenfold, today representing 10 percent of Ethiopia's 53 million people. The Kale Heywet Church, the largest of more than 11 Protestant denominations in Ethiopia, now has 2.2 million members.

"Normally, you expect people to turn away from their faith during persecution," says Mohammed Mussa, an Ethiopian evangelist now studying at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "But it was the opposite. Out of persecution there was growth in the church."

## CLINGING TO FAITH

The growth happened quietly in hundreds of homes throughout Ethiopia's populous cities, in remote highlands, in fertile valleys, and scorching desert. As persecuted Christians have done in past centuries, the evangelicals met secretly in "cell groups" of five to seven people. "Our strategy was for the church to survive and continue to grow," Mussa says.

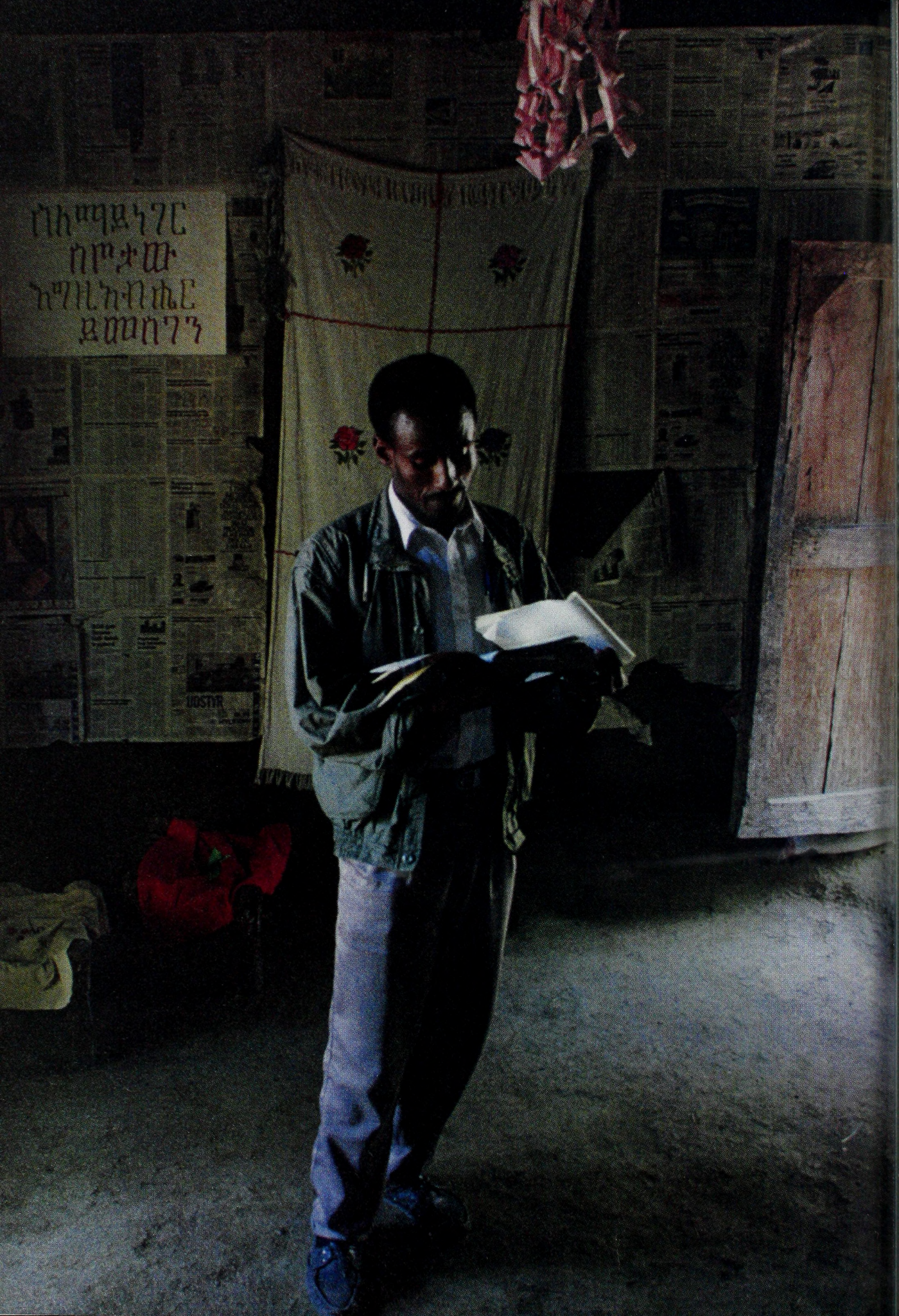
The Meserete Kristos Church, now one of the country's largest denominations with 100 local churches and 327 church planting centers, had a highly organized, intricate cell-group network. Like many underground churches, they printed their own Bible materials, sometimes stenciling pages by hand. In their zeal, members sometimes prayed all night, sleeping only an hour or so before going to work.

To avert government spying, only church members were welcome in cell groups, arriving alone or in

WEAR  
TOGA-LIKE SHAWLS  
A WORSHIPPER  
AT THE DOOR  
AN ETHIOPIAN  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN  
BUILDING  
HIGHLY TRADITIONAL  
ORTHODOX  
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DATING BACK TO  
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CHRISTIANITY WAS  
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AND MOUNTAIN  
COUNTRY IN THE  
FOURTH CENTURY



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# Ethiopia's youth are especially attracted to the charismatic form of worship in many evangelical churches.

pairs from different directions at different times. New members were warily suspect.

"In the small groups," says Meserete Kristos General Secretary Bedru Hussien, "there is a closeness, fellowship, and warmth. In a large congregation, people lose their identity. It's much easier to nurture and care for people in smaller groups."

Dozens of miracles inspired the endangered Christians to cling to their faith and work harder to help the church grow. Yezeshewall, now 31 and married with two children, cites one extraordinary circumstance following her torture.

Late one night, for reasons she can attribute only to God's grace, prison guards drove her to a rural area far away and left her with friends. Yezeshewall quotes 2 Timothy 4:17 to explain not only her survival but a completely healed body: "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."

In May 1991, the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front overthrew the Marxist dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Thousands of Christians were released from prison and flooded into newly-opened churches. President Meles Zenawi's new government declared complete separation of church and state, and allowed evangelical churches to grow and flourish.

## DRAWN TO PASSION

Today, these churches are struggling to establish themselves in communities where the majority of people have centuries-old roots in Orthodox Christianity or Islam.

"Now Protestants are not afraid of the government, but of local people, the Orthodox and Muslims," says one 31-year-old evangelical.

Some Orthodox people, mostly zealous youth, have violently attacked evangelicals. In some cases, Orthodox families have reacted violently when a member has joined an evangelical group. One 18-year-old girl fled to Addis Ababa, about 200 miles from her rural home, after relatives who were Orthodox priests held her head in hot steam so long that her facial skin became permanently twisted with fiery red and purple scars.

Though most Orthodox leaders do not condone persecution of Protestants, many are angry because they believe the nontraditional churches are "stealing their sheep," particularly the youth. Ethiopia's youth are especially attracted to the charismatic form of

worship in many evangelical churches. The passionate worship contrasts starkly with Orthodox services, where priests lead ceremonial worship in Ge'ez, an ancient language few people understand.

The Orthodox Church, remaining faithful to ancient Jewish influence, follows Old Testament dietary laws and observes the Jewish Sabbath. Church leaders, who study for years to learn worship ceremonies and Ge'ez, are appalled by "noisy" charismatic worship and young, untrained born-again Christians preaching the gospel.

## BRACING FOR PERSECUTION

In a preliminary effort toward reconciliation, high-level Ethiopian Orthodox and evangelical leaders have begun meeting to discuss their concerns. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, representing 5 million people from 10 member denominations, is coordinating communication with Orthodox leaders and exploring the possibility of a national council of churches to promote unity between Orthodox and evangelical Christians.

Despite hopeful dialogue, some church leaders still are frustrated by the government's unwillingness to stop religious persecution. For example, in February 1993, in Ada Berga, a community not far west of the capital, 15 members of the Protestant Mekane Yesus church were jailed for two weeks without a court order.

Recalling the past, Protestants are bracing for future persecution. "We pray that conditions will be stable, but we are preparing cell groups just in case," says Gebremeskel G. Eqziabher, a leader in Addis Ababa's Fellowship Church.

If evangelical churches are forced underground again, most members believe they will survive as they did before. Schooled by experience to accept suffering as a normal part of Christian life, they cite 2 Timothy 3:12, which says, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Meanwhile, Yezeshewall says she learned more about faith during the persecution that broke her spine than during the "easy years" since.

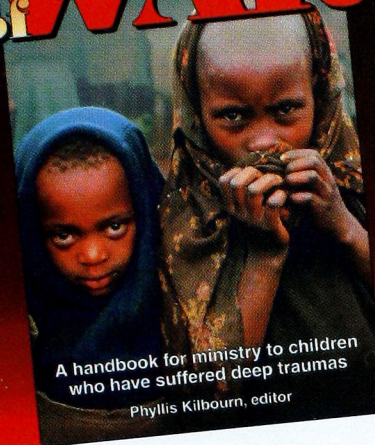
"We underestimate the power of God," she says. "Christianity is not a contract you keep for some years and then change when it becomes difficult. We expect that Jesus will come back. Until then, we remain faithful." ☉

*Tamera Marko, a former editor of World Vision magazine, is a free-lance writer in San Diego, Calif.*

# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR  
HELPING OTHERS  
IN THE NAME  
OF CHRIST

## Healing the Children of WAR



A handbook for ministry to children  
who have suffered deep traumas  
Phyllis Kilbourn, editor

## CHILDREN OF WAR

Children are the most helpless victims of war. They witness atrocities that scar their lives for years. *Healing the Children of War* suggests practical ways Christians can help children whose lives have been shattered by war.

Edited by Phyllis Kilbourn, *Healing the Children of War* is a practical handbook filled with stories by men and women who have lived and worked with war-traumatized children.

To obtain a copy of the book, priced at \$21.95, call World Vision's MARC Publications at (800) 777-7752.

## GROUP WORKCAMPS

Youth leaders can start planning for the summer of 1996 with Group Workcamps, an interdenominational Christian service project that repairs homes for elderly, disabled, and needy people in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Since Group Workcamps began in 1977, 46,000 young people and their adult leaders have put faith into action by assisting more than 6,000 families in more than 170 camps. A typical camp brings as many as 400 volunteers together to paint houses, repair roofs, install insulation, and build wheelchair ramps.

For a brochure listing 1996 workcamps and information about registration, phone (800) 774-3838, or write to Group Workcamps, P.O. Box 599, Loveland, CO 80539.

## 1994 MUSTARD SEED AWARDS

Each year, World Vision honors innovative church-based ministries serving the poor. Its Mustard Seed Award program provides cash grants of \$1,000 to \$5,000 to help ministries expand their services.

The 1994 Mustard Seed Award winners include:

**Restoration Ministries Inc.** of Harvey, Ill., provides a variety of programs from prison Bible studies to low-income housing assistance, and a year-long ministry-training program for former offenders. Phone (708) 333-3370.

**Breakthrough Urban Ministries**, sponsored by the First Evangelical Church in Chicago, helps homeless men and women and drug addicts return to society. Breakthrough counsels them, helps with budgeting, trains them for employment, and places them in jobs. Phone (312) 989-8353.

**Westside C.A.R.E.S.** is a collaborative ministry of 21 Colorado churches working toward long-term independence for the poor. They provide rental housing assistance, food and clothing, and job placement assistance. Phone (719) 389-0759.

**Operation Share** of Cucamonga Church Fellowship in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., distributes food and Christmas baskets and provides emergency and transitional shelter or shelter referrals. Phone (909) 945-0091.

Each week, **Vineyard Benevolence** takes groceries, clothing, and household items to the poor as part of its emergency assistance program. The group also distributes meals and groceries in impoverished neighborhoods, in parks, and at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship church in Anaheim, Calif. Phone (714) 777-4777.

The **New Life Center** in Opelousas, La., provides parenting classes, food, clothing, and medical assistance to homeless women. Phone (318) 235-4972.

For more information or an application, contact Andy Baniak at World Vision, (818) 305-7801. Applications are due Oct. 2, 1995.

*World Vision's Wanda Nolan presents the 1994 award to Dale Dumont (left), and Virgil L. Tolbert, executive director of Restoration Ministries.*





Compiled and written by Stephanie Stevenson

## PRAYING THROUGH THE WINDOW II

The United Prayer Track of AD 2000 and Beyond, a coalition of ministries committed to seeing every community on earth provided with access to the gospel, is hoping to mobilize 10,000 intercessors for prayer walks in October 1995. Interested Christians travel to "gateway cities" that are



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY FILIDIS

influential spiritually, politically, and economically and pray in various locations. AD 2000 is also seeking 50 million Christians in the United States to pray for 100 strategic cities.

For more information about a prayer journey, or to obtain a prayer calendar, a book *Praying Through the 100 Gateway Cities*, or a video called "Light the Window," call (719) 522-1040. The book and video each cost \$8.99.

**“Prayer is the unfolding of one’s will to God that he may fulfill it.”**  
—St. Thomas Aquinas

# If knowledge is power, World Vision has a powerful free offer for you.

In appreciation for your ongoing support to the World Vision ministry, we have a free gift for you. A series of four recent reprints from *The Wall Street Journal* on "Planning Your Estate." The information they contain can empower you to provide for your family and the hungry children of the world.

The informative series covers will, trusts, estate-planning techniques and selecting a trustee. To receive the free series, complete and mail the coupon below.



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*The Wall Street Journal*  
January 6, 1995

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FWV795

INTERVIEW WITH *Mary Taylor Previte*

BY BARBARA R. THOMPSON

# *Working with the "Dead Already"*

**M**ARY TAYLOR PREVITE WAS 9 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE BECAME A PRISONER OF WAR. The great-granddaughter of J. Hudson Taylor, the 19th-century British founder of China Inland Mission, Previte spent three years during World War II in a Japanese internment camp. Here she learned from imprisoned teachers and church leaders the secrets of emotional and spiritual survival in wartime. Among her mentors was Eric Liddell, an Olympic gold-medalist



*Imprisoned as  
a child by the  
Japanese in  
World War II,  
Mary Taylor  
Previte  
draws on her  
experience  
to reach the  
children of  
war in Cam-  
den County,  
New Jersey.*

PHOTO: TERRY MADISON / WORLD VISION

whose profound faith was dramatized in the Academy Award-winning film *Chariots of Fire*.

Today, Mary Taylor Previte is passing on her survival secrets to another generation of children of war: inner-city kids from New Jersey. For more than 20 years, as the head of a Camden County juvenile detention center, Previte has given courage, faith, and self-esteem to children growing up amidst urban violence. She tells her compelling story in *Hungry Ghosts: One Woman's Mission to Change their World* (Zondervan, 1994). Here she is interviewed for World Vision by free-lance writer Barbara R. Thompson.

**BT: AS A CHILD OF WAR FROM 1941 TO 1945, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR EXPERIENCES WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF INNER-CITY CHILDREN IN THE 1990S?**

**MP:** Just like urban children today, we saw a lot of weapons and blood, and we witnessed and felt the effects of hunger. But I think the greatest loss was our separation from our families.

I didn't see my parents for five and a half years. War does this to children. You look at a photograph and try to imagine your daddy's voice, but living with a photograph is very different from living with a flesh-and-blood daddy. Even today, from the richest memories of my childhood, I recall only teachers and schoolmates, bayonet drills and guard dogs, but I have no memory of hugs and kisses.

Like me, many children in our youth shelter have little or no memory of their parents or the rituals that make up family life. Recently, an extremely tough 13-year-old, who lives on the street and has no idea where his mother and father are, told me that he had "borrowed" a mom. She is a woman from his neighborhood who hugs him and tells him to stay out of trouble. He told me how good it makes him feel when she says, "I love you."

Frankly, there seems to be little hope for this child who is a chronic offender and has known nothing but hardness all his life. But given his response to his borrowed mother, what might he have become had he grown up with hugs from a loving parent?

**BT: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ISOLATION AND ABANDONMENT ON CHILDREN?**

**MP:** In the concentration camp, our

teachers taught us to be brave, to have a stiff upper lip. We learned that crying and being homesick were baby stuff—and no one wanted to be a baby. So we developed the hard part of ourselves, the protective armor. The soft, gentle parts of our personalities, those that are playful and physically affectionate, we buried or let die.

Today, inner-city kids call softness "being a geek." No one wants to be one, because anything that makes you soft makes you vulnerable. Boots, bandanas, a hand in the pocket that suggests a weapon—these are all designed to create an aura of toughness. It's a matter of survival in wartime.

**BT: DESPITE THE TRAUMAS OF LIFE IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP, YOU HAVE WRITTEN POSITIVELY OF YOUR EXPERIENCES THERE. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL?**

**MP:** We were surrounded by teachers who instilled in us the profound belief that we had a future. They made us memorize Bible verses about the goodness and power of God, and they convinced us that God would protect us. I knew these teachers were completely trustworthy, and if they couldn't take care of us, then God would.

We were taught that "All things work together for good to them that love God," and that even in the concentration camp, something good was going to happen to us. God had led his people to the Promised Land and fed Elijah in the wilderness. He had closed the mouths of lions. Now, guess what? He was going to add our very own story to the miracles of the ages.

Our teachers filled our heads with these positive images, and at the same time they demanded that we study and carry on with our school work. The structure they gave us created a comforting, predictable world. It sounds contradictory, but in the middle of the violence of war, surrounded by guard dogs, bayonets, and electric wires, we felt safe.

Children in urban war zones have none of this. They live in a topsy-turvy world where nothing is the same from one day to the next. They have no idea what will happen at school, at home, or on the street. They live in chronic fear, without stories or structures to give meaning to their experience. As a result, we have a whole generation of kids with their fists up—on the insides of their souls.

**BT: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC FEAR ON CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Kids who don't feel safe put 100 percent of their energies into protecting themselves. Some become hypervigilant

and extremely aggressive and defensive. Others simply become flat human beings. When I interview children for our center newsletter, they talk to me about being raped or dodging bullets in voice devoid of emotion. I want to see them cry or ball their fists up in anger, but their real feelings of pain and rage have tiptoed into some dark recess of their soul.

Some studies show that pain, and the fear of pain, can shut down about five sixths of our brain. I believe it. Under this kind of pressure, it makes sense that our social and reasoning skills would shut down and that our "survival" brain would go into overdrive.

Endless chronic fear and confusion can turn into an all-consuming sense of rage and hate. In a child for whom all the soft parts have disappeared, this makes "fists-up" kid. We need to be afraid of this child. When he sees you and me, he doesn't see a human being, he sees an object. He thinks, *No one protected me, why should I care about you?*

**BT: HOW DOES CHRONIC FEAR AFFECT CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO WORK TOWARD AN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?**

**MP:** I've had children tell me, "I am dead already." And if I am going to die tomorrow, why should I postpone sex, or avoid dangerous play, or worry about school?

I hear 14-year-olds say, "I want to make a baby, so that someone will carry on my name." For those of us who expect to live until we are 80, this kind of risky promiscuous behavior makes no sense. But these children are saying, "I'm going to cram everything I can into the minute I have left."

Chronic fear also affects a child's ability to focus. No child who has to negotiate guns and knives and Mace on the way to school can concentrate on reading and science. Disorder and chaos freeze the brain. People who go around patting these children on the back, using slogans like, "Just say No," "Stand Up and Be Proud," are full of hogwash.

**BT: CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE THAT "RESPECT" HAS FOR INNER-CITY CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Those of us from the wider culture have all kinds of ways to feel good about ourselves, to be respected and honored. We play the piano, grow a nice geranium, write a book. Kids on the street don't have any of these things. Their self-esteem is so low that the slightest bump on the arm, the look held just a second too long, is viewed as disrespect.

The person who has been "dissed" has got to give a "payback," and this is often done with a weapon. Guns are a sig

ificant factor in street culture. With a  
in, a kid feels the world change toward  
m. Now he has the respect and recogni-  
on he needs.

**BT: HOW CAN WE INSTILL AN ALTERNATIVE  
VISION OF REALITY IN INNER-CITY CHILDREN?**

**IP:** It has to be done one-on-one, or in  
small groups. But even a single grown-up  
can make a powerful impact on a child's  
life. Kids have such a need to be touched  
and recognized by adults. It doesn't have  
to be for hours and hours; they just need  
one trustworthy, decent person to give  
them some attention.

This gives adults enormous power.  
The beauty of that power is that we can  
begin to plant different images of reality in  
the child's head. Whether you call it hope  
or vision, it's actually creating a new pic-  
ture of what is possible. It's helping the  
child see an alternative future.

**BT: CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE?**

**IP:** Derek is one of my boys whose  
mother was a drug addict. His father was  
killed in front of him when he was 4, and  
Derek was shipped off to an aunt. He  
seemed a kid without a future when he  
came through our youth center. Yet when  
I saw him recently he was working and  
studying for his G.E.D. [General Educa-  
tional Development examination].

When I asked Derek if there was an  
adult who influenced him in a positive  
way, at first he said, "No." Then he said,  
"Well, there was Mr. Mike."

Mr. Mike was the owner of a mini-  
mart, where Derek bought cheese steaks  
when he skipped school to sell drugs. Mr.  
Mike constantly asked Derek what a

decent kid like him was doing out of school.

"At first I was angry," Derek told me.  
"Mr. Mike knew I had been locked up,  
but he kept saying, 'decent kid like you.'  
Those words stayed in my mind, and they  
made me want to change my life."

I went to find Mr. Mike, because I  
wanted to meet Derek's savior. It turned  
out the savior spoke Spanish and worked  
in a grungy mini-mart with a steel grate  
over the windows. He was an ordinary  
American who made it his mission to  
speak to one kid as if he were his own.

The point is: It does matter what we  
say to these children. Each of us can find a  
way to be Mr. Mike to the boys and girls in  
our neighborhood. At odd times of the  
day and night we can instill hope and a  
different vision of life. It doesn't have to be  
planned; perhaps it's even more effective  
unplanned.

**BT: WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN AT THE  
YOUTH CENTER TO GIVE CHILDREN A DIFFER-  
ENT VISION OF THEMSELVES?**

**MP:** We do all we can to instill in chil-  
dren a sense of emotional and physical  
safety. I used to wonder why kids here  
would quickly jump a grade level in their

**B**OOTS, BANDANAS,  
A HAND IN THE POCKET  
THAT SUGGESTS A  
WEAPON—THESE ARE ALL  
DESIGNED TO CREATE AN  
AURA OF TOUGHNESS.

*Mary Taylor Previte poses with inner-city youth of Camden County, N.J.*



studies, but I realize now it is because  
they finally feel safe. Their world be-  
comes comfortably predictable, and their  
minds and emotions are liberated to get  
on with the childhood task of emotional  
and intellectual development.

We also teach our kids that for every  
act there is a consequence, either good  
or bad. Whatever privileges they have,  
they will earn them. And we have high  
expectations for them, that they will meet  
our challenges.

**BT: WHAT ROLE DO ADULT EXPECTATIONS  
PLAY IN THE BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN?**

**MP:** Kids will tell you that they know  
their teachers are dumbing down the  
work so they can succeed. But young  
people need high expectations. Teaching  
them that they are victims is the ultimate  
crippler. It sends the message that their  
lives are not governed by their own  
behavior but by other stuff over which  
they have absolutely no control.

Here at the youth shelter, we have  
high expectations and we reward good  
behavior, but even we are astonished at  
what we get out of our children. The  
reward doesn't have to be money or food or  
candy. It can be a pat on the back, a whisper  
in the ear. One of the biggest satisfactions  
for a kid is, "Hey, you noticed me."

At the same time, we give our kids an  
opportunity to be children. In some ways,  
they start out as 40-year-olds; in other  
ways, they are just little kids. When a  
child has made a neat bed, I put a little happy  
face on his or her door. People say, "You're  
going to put that on the door of a felon?"  
You bet I am. I have kids whispering to me  
in the hall, "Don't forget my sticker!"

**BT: HOW DO YOU GIVE CHILDREN A SENSE  
OF CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN DESTINIES?**

**MP:** Part of it is teaching them success  
skills. Adults often focus on the bad  
things kids do, without asking, "What is it  
that this kid can't do?" For example, a  
child might act aggressively because he  
or she doesn't know how to talk himself or  
herself out of a difficult situation.

We teach kids how to make an intro-  
duction, to start a conversation, to deal  
with someone else's anger, and to talk  
their way out of problems. Kids often use  
their fists simply because they don't  
know any other way to interact. If adults  
say, "Well, they just can't help it," the situ-  
ation will go on forever.

**BT: WHAT ROLE CAN THE CHURCH PLAY IN  
GIVING CHILDREN HOPE?**

**MP:** More than anything else, it is family and  
commitment to a higher power that anchor a  
child. This is true for all children, and defi-

# HE WAS AN ORDINARY AMERICAN WHO MADE IT HIS MISSION TO SPEAK TO ONE KID AS IF HE WERE HIS OWN.

nately true for children in a violent world.

Jesus went looking for people in pain—the prostitutes, the sick, the man with the handicapped son—and that's what the church must do. Children of violence rarely go looking for the church, so the church has to go looking for them. It must first embrace these lost children and then challenge their messages of violence with love.

## BT: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR OUR INNER CITIES?

**MP:** The problems are going to get worse before things get better. Poverty is one of the worst forms of child abuse, and more than one in five of our children live in poverty. It's not just black and Hispanic children but white children too.

Poverty is not only the breeding ground for violence, but it's one of the main reasons girls find their self-esteem in having babies. It becomes their job, their income. And children who make babies because of their own poverty will also raise them in poverty.

## BT: WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING IN YOUR WORK?

**MP:** We usually have our children only for a few weeks, so I don't go for the long-term, saved, sanctified, and bound-for-glory victories. I look for small victories.

I find my reward in that look in a child's eye which says, "someone has listened to my story and found it important." I find it in a girl reaching across the hall to touch me or in a scruffy letter from a boy calling me his "main lady." These are the victories that keep me going, that let me know one human being has touched another.

## BT: LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU THINK INNER-CITY KIDS OF TODAY COULD LEARN FROM CHILDREN OF WAR IN THE 1940S?

**MP:** Weapons and violence and hate aren't the escape from war. They never are. They only create more weapons, more violence, and more hate. The answers are on the inside. Building your heart, mind, and soul are the only victories in this kind of war. 🌐

*Barbara R. Thompson is a free-lance writer in Decatur, Ga.*

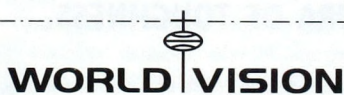


*"I saw the need, and I wanted to do more."*

*—Sandi Patty*

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This is the second time we've visited the Windy City for an article on Vision Chicago (see "Ghetto-ing It Together," Aug.-Sept. 1993). It certainly won't be the last time, for World Vision's program in Chicago is seen as a model for what can happen elsewhere. A Vision Cities Strategy task force presently is examining how the rich learning experiences emerging from Vision Chicago can be adapted to other metropolitan areas.

*World Vision* magazine recently won the Evangelical Press Association award of excellence for the fifth time in seven years. Do you recall reading Tamera Marko's "Trip to Beautiful," Tim Stafford's "Should We Cut Off Africa?" and Brian Seller-Petersen's interview with Archbishop Desmond Tutu? Each won awards of merit from the Associated Church Press.

Staff members Don Aylard and Jan Dahring helped us win awards with their creative graphic designs. In all, *World Vision* won nine awards. Our companion publications, *Childlife* and *Partners*, won an additional three.

*—Terry Madison*

# WORLD VISION

Volume 39, Number 4

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 Printer **Danner Press**

WORLD VISION magazine is published bimonthly by **WORLD VISION®**

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World Vision is a nonprofit, Christian humanitarian agency dedicated to serving God by helping people care for those in need. It ministers to children and families, provides emergency aid, fosters self-reliance, furthers evangelism, strengthens Christian leadership, and increases public awareness of poverty around the world.

Send all editorial correspondence and changes of address to *World Vision* magazine, 919 W. Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016. Please send address changes at least 30 days before moving and enclose the address label from a current copy. Member: Evangelical Press Association and Associated Church Press. Copyright © 1995 by World Vision Inc.





# EXCLUSIVE KING AND INCLUSIVE KINGDOM

It was a theological wake-up call.

I was having an animated discussion with a dear friend, a World Vision staff member, whose loyalty to me was being challenged by his struggle to understand an inclusive gospel. I'd been using the metaphor of circles—ever-increasing circles—as we try to find points of commonality with other folks who go by the name of Christian.

"I understand the need to draw circles larger," he remarked. Then he added with a passion befitting Luther's Reformation, "But when do we nail the theses to the door?"

Referring to the eternal verities of our faith, my friend was responding to my pronouncements on an inclusive gospel. I had been suggesting to our staff that to define our faith by our center, Jesus Christ, then draw circles outward to include others, seeking commonality as opposed to differences.

Perhaps this is a function of growing older and sensing a need to look for things held in common, rather than always arguing about differences. Perhaps it is inspired by a need for civil discourse, a need more and more evident given the static created by angry Christians in today's culture. Whatever the reason, this approach to defining faith allows us to be for things, to include people, to define ourselves by a maximum as opposed to a minimalist approach.

Some other people would start at the boundaries and come back to the center. Normally, such folks also have a litmus test as to who is included and who is excluded. Their definition of faith emerges out of what people are against, rather than what they are for.

Theological boundaries and doctrinal barriers seem designed to exclude people. Increasingly, I worry about that, and this is one of the main reasons for preaching an inclusive gospel.

There are good theological and biblical reasons for such preaching. Dr. Luke makes the point most convincingly that the Kingdom of God is inclusive. His entire gospel is written for the last, the lost, and the least. Beggars, lepers, widows, children, and women—all previously marginalized and disempowered by society—hear about a Kingdom of God in which they can have a part. That's Good News! They are included. It seems to me that we would reject the inclusivity of Christ's gospel at considerable peril.

But this is the point my friend was trying to make: It is Christ's gospel. The emphasis should never shift from Jesus Christ. Once that focus is gone, the circles grow infinitely. As someone once said, our minds can become so open that our theological brains fall out!

The foundation of an inclusive Kingdom is a most exclusive King. Indeed, Jesus Christ is either exactly who he said he was—a one-of-a-kind, once for all, only Son of the Most High—or he had ample qualifications for the lunatic fringe.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man

cometh unto the Father except by me." No ambiguity here! This is Christ talking about his identity, with clear and clean family ties to the God of history. In fact, at Christ's trial, the only time he opened his mouth was when he was questioned about his identity.

"Are you truly the son of God?" Jesus said he was. They crucified him because of it. In terms of compromising his own identity, Christ would rather die first!

Why is this important, individually, organizationally, globally? The answer is simple:

Jesus represents the hope of the world! This is a chaotic world.

It is a world of pain and suffering, a world of depression and confusion. It is a world desperate for hope. Hope is the feeling that tomorrow's reality will be better than today's. The follower of Christ carries within the ultimate hope: life everlasting.

Nothing else works. Indeed, nothing else comes close. The Christian experience includes faith that is tangible, hope that is real, and love that is transcendent. And they all are embodied in Jesus.

This is what the world is crying out for and is desperate to see. Ideologies have come and gone, governments are suspect, political personalities have come up short. We see growing fear as the predictability of life, in the developing world as well as here at home, is replaced by anxious malaise.

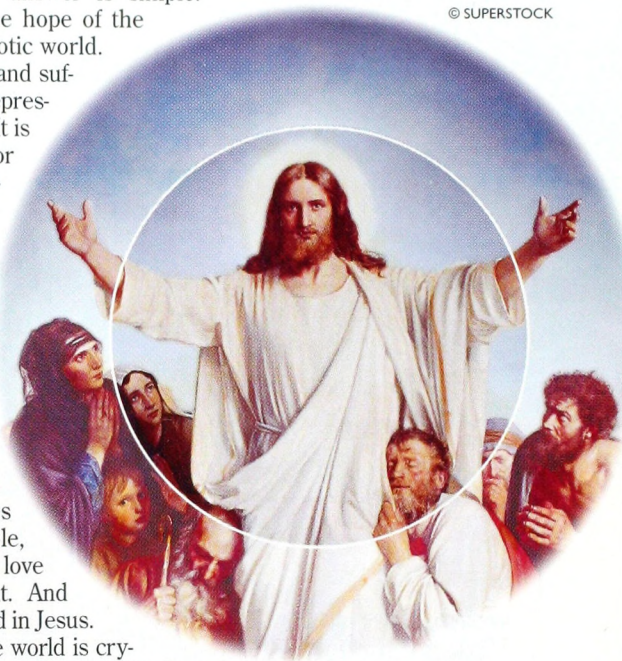
There is only one who can replace that fear. Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God, centers our lives and allows us to live from a position of profound strength. We need to be reminded of that "hope that lives within us." Our organizations need to be reminded. There has never been a timelier wake-up call!

There was a time when the teachings of Christ were so difficult to accept that many of his disciples began to fall from the ranks. Then Jesus gives Peter his choice: "Would you leave me too?" Peter responds as we must respond: "Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life."

There is no confusion here. Our circles can be drawn outward from a position of strength. The center holds. He is the Rock of Our Salvation. The emphasis is proper, "Only you, Jesus," exclusively you. There is no other. We need none other.

Now go ahead, nail it to the door! ☉

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... we define our faith by our center, Jesus Christ, then draw circles outward ... seeking commonality.

Published by  
World Vision Inc.  
P.O. Box 1131  
Pasadena, CA  
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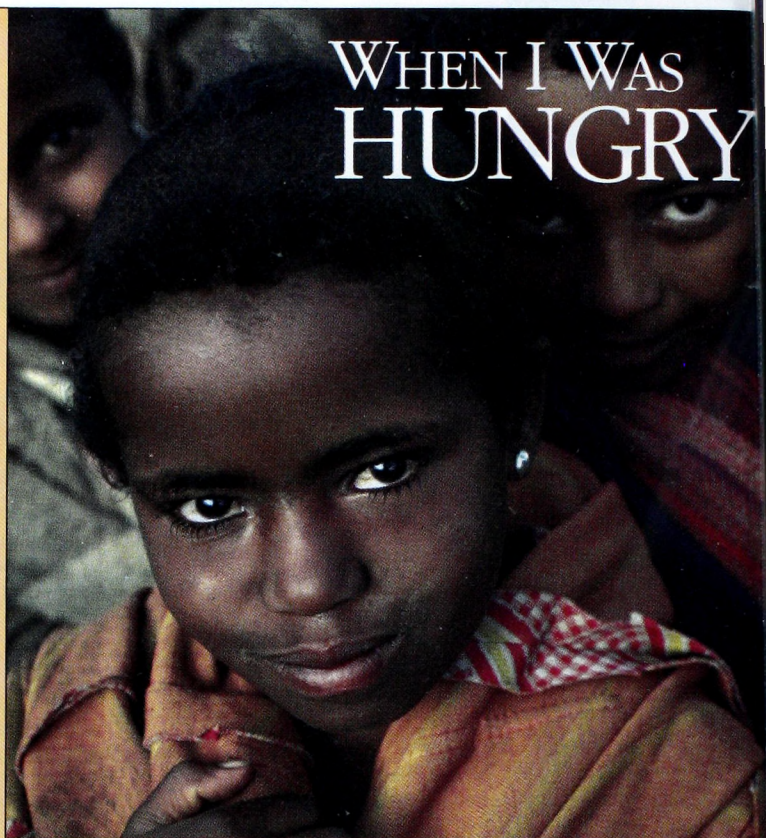
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# WHEN I WAS HUNGRY



**F**or most of the world's poor, hunger is subtle. It works slowly. Poor diet and occasional days without food cripple the body's immune system. Diarrhea and other diseases, often carried by dirty drinking water, take hold and often lead to death.

Saddest of all, the world has enough food to feed itself. Drought, war, bad government economic policies and poor distribution are the real culprits.

Is there hope? Absolutely. The hope comes from people like you, working through World Vision, who offer a cup of cold water in Jesus' name to people in need—providing emergency food, medicine and health care as tangible expressions of God's love.

Your generosity today means life for hungry people. "For when I was hungry you gave me food," Jesus said in Matthew 25.

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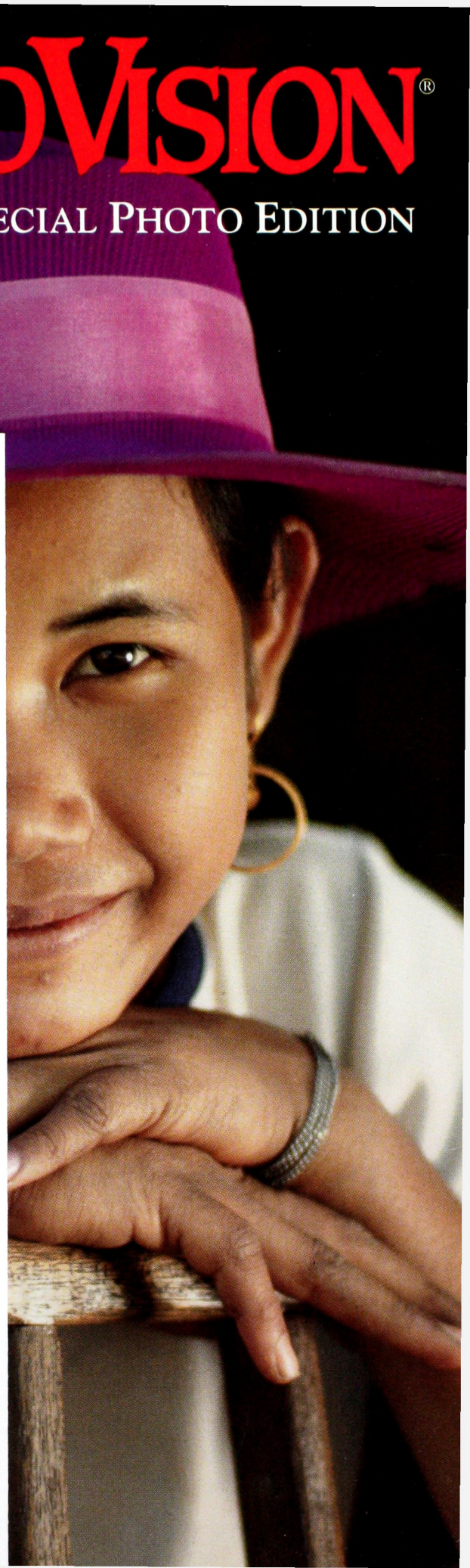
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