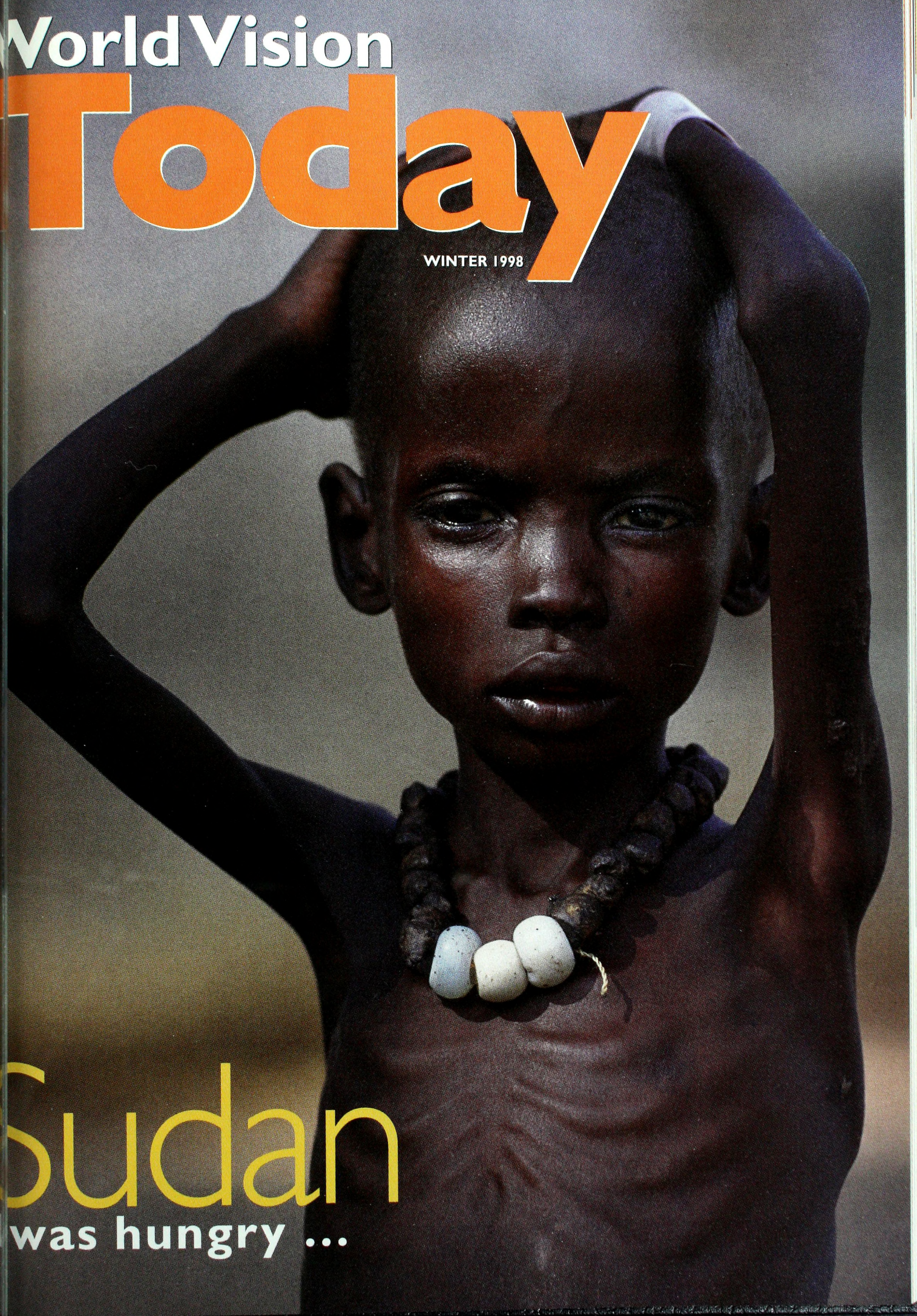


World Vision

# Today

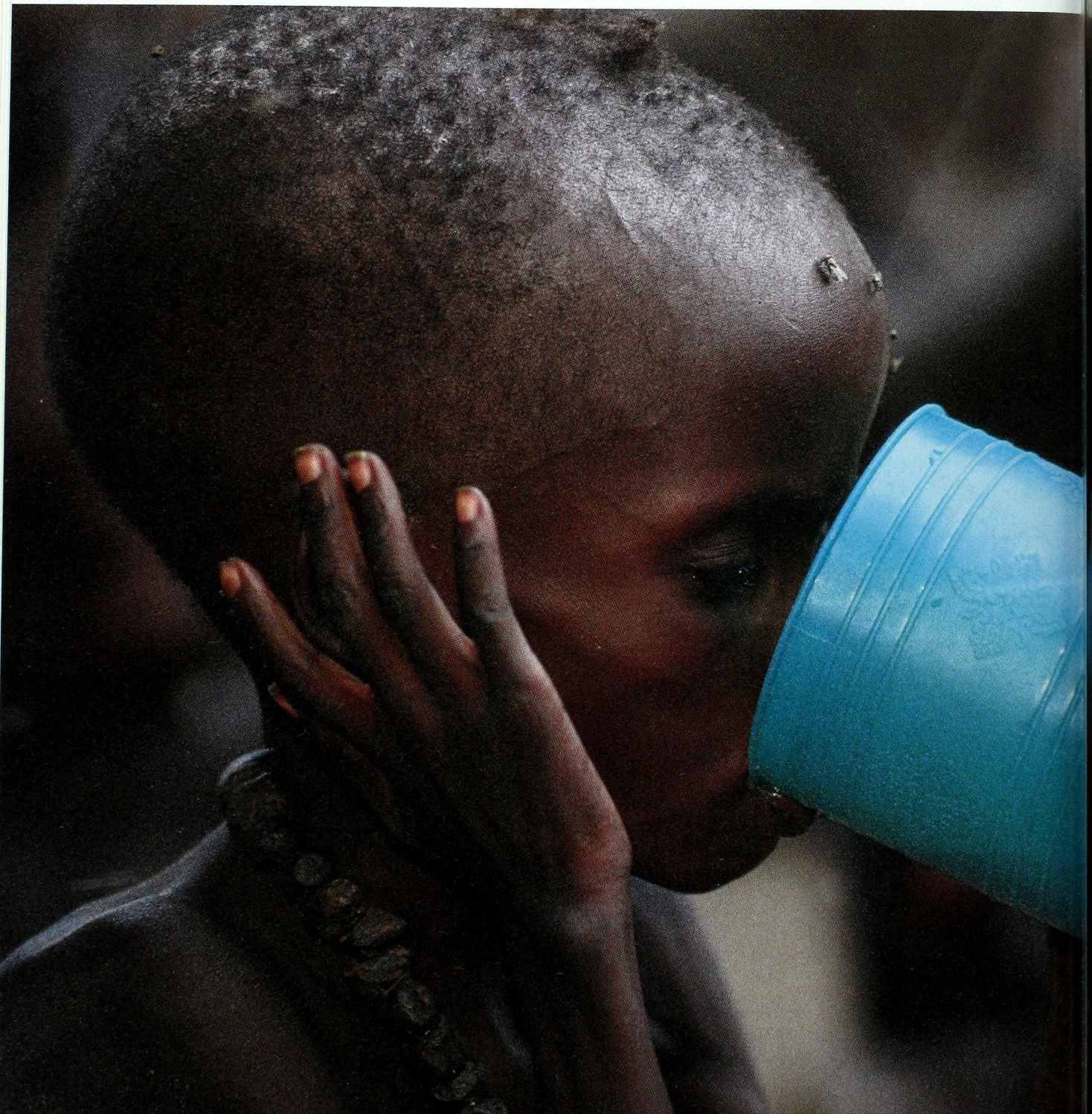
WINTER 1998

Sudan  
was hungry ...



Cover Story by **James Addis**  
Photography by **Jon Warren**

... and you

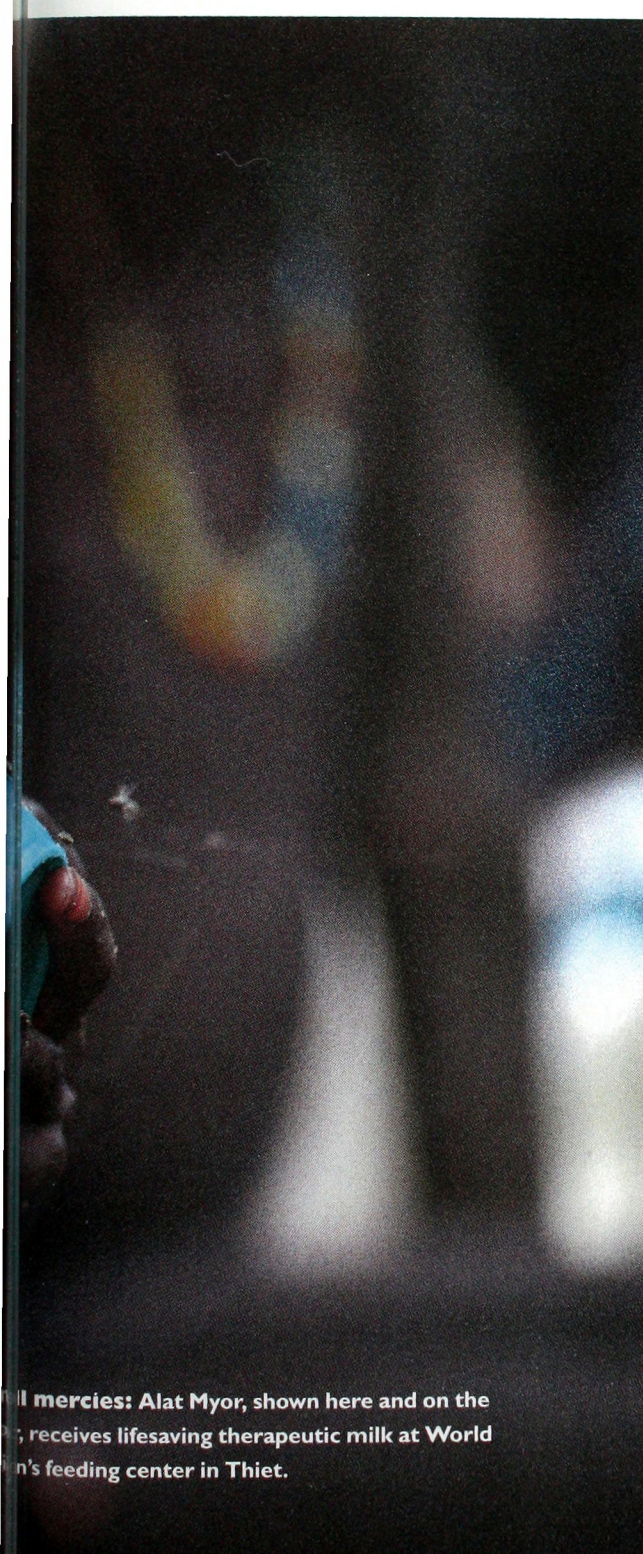


# ed me

ay at a World Vision feeding center

World Vision opened four emergency feeding centers for severely malnourished children earlier this year in war-torn southern Sudan where starvation threatened 2.4 million people in both government and rebel-controlled areas. The country's 15-year conflict between the northern Islamic government and southern rebels, coupled with months of drought, created the current catastrophe.

Journalist James Addis chronicles the tragedies and triumphs of World Vision's nursing team, struggling to care for 1,200 children and mothers in a feeding center in Thiet, an isolated town of 5,000 people at the epicenter of the famine.



mercies: Alat Myor, shown here and on the  
receives lifesaving therapeutic milk at World  
n's feeding center in Thiet.

**7:00 a.m.** American nurse Karen Easterday and her Kenyan colleagues Sophie Yaa and Pasha Perpetua gather for breakfast in the mess tent in the World Vision compound. Living conditions are basic at best. The women sleep in tents, wading through ankle-deep mud to the latrine and the shower—a suspended oil barrel dispensing cold water. They enjoy electricity for a few hours each evening when the generator is switched on. Their daily cuisine consists of goat stew and rice. Sole contact with the outside world comes via a crackling, high-frequency radio. A bomb shelter at the rear of the compound reminds them of the Sudanese government's regular attacks on southern settlements. They listen for the hum of the army's Soviet-era Antonov planes. Early in March, 16 people died during an air raid on Thiet.

**Desperate measures:** Guer Kur (left) coaxes her 18-month-old daughter, Bol Atur, to sip some rehydration solution made up of salt, sugar, and water.

**7:10 a.m.** The nurses discuss today's plans and patients. Pasha describes a desperate mother and her three sons who arrived at the center too late last week. Only one boy survived. Pasha is closely watching Manut Wek. "Will he live?" someone asks. "Oh, yes. I'm feeding him like my own son," Pasha affirms. It's difficult to keep track of individual cases. Today the nurses will treat 500 children with therapeutic feeding. More than 900 slightly stronger people will line up for weekly dry rations to carry home.





**Elixir of life:** Toiling in the 120 degree heat, Pasha Perpetua (right), Rosa Amel (left), and Aluet Ayany (center) prepare high-protein UNIMIX to feed malnourished children, mothers, and the elderly. Up to a ton of dried milk and cereal is consumed daily.



**Double duty:** “Days off are unthinkable,” says nurse Karen [name partially obscured]. “Kids are just as sick and hungry on Saturdays and Sundays as they are on weekdays.”

**7:50 a.m.** The team leaves the compound for the nearby feeding center. Rains have reduced the dirt track to a quagmire. Southern Sudan—an area the size of Texas—boasts less than 15 miles of paved road. None of it runs

through Thiet. All supplies must be shipped in by air. In the rainy season, planes often cannot land on the muddy airstrip which causes critical shortages. The feeding center needs up to a ton of dried milk and cereal every day.

**8:05 a.m.** The nurses arrive at the feeding center set up in a former school. A one-room, bombed-out building serves as a health clinic. The most critical children and their mothers are housed in four other concrete structures. Three crumbling walls of a shelled classroom comprise the kitchen. World Vision’s local Sudanese staff heat vats of water on an open fire, mixing in therapeutic milk powder for the day’s first feeding. Scores of emaciated children mill around the muddy yard. Divided into two groups according to the severity of their condition, they line up on plastic sheeting, awaiting breakfast.

**8:15 a.m.** Karen begins her morning tour in a darkened room where eight mothers nurse their frail children. It is already stiflingly hot. Flies blanket bodies too weak to brush them aside. Karen picks up Alat Myor, 4, who is 50 percent below her normal body weight. Karen says she is much improved.

**8:25 a.m.** The Sudanese staff finish mixing the first batch of vitamin-rich milk. The neediest children—those less than 70 percent of the normal weight for their height—receive five meals of milk daily which prepare their digestive systems to later tolerate solid food. Recovering children above the 70 percent mark receive three rations. Older children are served

**A mother mourns:** Despite aid workers' best efforts, Guer Kur's daughter, Bol Atur, arrived too late at the center to be saved.

**Marathon hunger:** Exhausted and emaciated, Maror Bol, 12, walked 31 miles to reach the feeding center.





**Suffer not the children:** Above, a Sudanese father cradles his child, waiting for the next feeding.

Last month he admitted 163 people. This month the figure should be lower. World Vision's food distribution to people in outlying areas is effectively stemming the tide into the feeding center. On any single day there are on average four to eight new arrivals. Things are getting better.

**8:45 a.m.** A 12-year-old boy slowly approaches the registration table, walking painfully. His name is Maror Bol. Like many Dinka people, he is tall,

but he is also extraordinarily thin. He is naked—unusual for a child his age. He speaks timidly, pointing to his protruding ribs and holding his stomach, appealing for something to eat. His mother and father are dead. Maror walked 31 miles to the feeding center. He is living under some trees nearby, he tells



**Wisdom of wisdom:** Sophie Yaa, a Kenyan nurse, stresses the importance of breastfeeding to 14-year-old Nyaror Bol holding her newborn, Madut.

two meals of UNIMIX, a high-protein porridge. Nursing mothers eat one UNIMIX meal at noon.

**8:38 a.m.** Sudanese clerk Stephen Nhial sets up his registration desk for new arrivals.

Stephen, who is unsure what to do. With a limited supply of food, the center can only care for children under 5 years old and elderly patients. Maror waits.

**8:55 a.m.** A mother enters the center with an infant and a 4-year-old boy who is close to death. Karen immediately orders an oral rehydration solution of salt, sugar, and water. "Tell the mother she needs to wash him and get him in a blanket," she urgently instructs her translator. "He is really critical. He must not get cold."

**9:25 a.m.** Sophie teaches a 14-year-old mother to breastfeed and then joins Pasha who is distributing milk. The cheery, bright plastic cups seem incongruous among the sea of suffering black faces. The children drink hungrily.

**9:40 a.m.** Karen emerges from a critical care room. Concerned about 18-month-old Bol Atur, she asks a Sudanese health worker to prepare a mixture of oral rehydration solution and milk. She worries Bol will catch pneumonia.

**9:43 a.m.** Sudanese cooks Rosa Amel and Aluet Ayany prepare the first meal of UNIMIX in the makeshift kitchen. "We must do this work to make sure our children survive," Rosa says.

**10:00 a.m.** An old man staggers into the center, collapsing in a muddy puddle. He trembles uncontrollably. Pasha and a Sudanese aid lift him out of the water. She puts a cup of milk to his lips. Pasha learns he is one of 132 elderly people registered for dry rations.

**10:18 a.m.** Maror Bol, still waiting at the registration desk, is admitted for a dry ration of UNIMIX. Pasha orders him some milk.

**10:34 a.m.** Awak Riak joins the line of mothers and children outside the health clinic. One of her three children is suffering from chest pains and diarrhea. Awak traveled 30 miles from Wanhalel when she heard that food was being air-dropped around Thiet. The situation in Wanhalel is very bad, she says. No fish and no sorghum. Too weak to cultivate, she didn't harvest a crop last season. Her

husband is dead. Awak and her children survive by foraging for wild berries and leaves.

**11:01 a.m.** Bol Atur, the toddler Karen worried about earlier, dies. The health officer confirms the child's heart has stopped beating. Bol Atur's mother, Guer Kur, weeps silently.



**11:45 a.m.** Mothers and the most seriously malnourished children—sometimes referred to as Phase One—wait patiently for their next meal.

**12:02 p.m.** Karen checks the Phase One children, sorting out problems, consoling mothers, separating the quarreling. She makes dozens of decisions on the spot. Karen dispatches a child who is still losing weight for special care. Another has lost his registration card. He must be re-weighed and issued another card. She instructs a Sudanese medical officer on treatment for a dehydrated child. Workmen building a shelter have unaccountably stopped.

**Feeding of 1,200:** Staff prepare five or more meals of milled cereal daily. "It's a better facility than we have, even round the clock feeding could save more people. We're the best with what we have," says a staff member. Easterday.



They are ordered back to work. A woman without children pleads to be admitted. She has to be turned away as she does not meet the center's criteria. There just is not enough food for everyone. An unaccompanied child cries alone. Where is the mother? She is out gathering leaves to feed the rest of her family.



**12:28 p.m.** Pasha is pleased with the progress of Manut Wek, the 8-year-old boy she mentioned at breakfast. Soon he will be off therapeutic feeding and able to take dry rations, Pasha reports proudly. Manut says his mother and two brothers walked for two days to reach Thiet. They hoped to find their father who left before them, but they never did. When they arrived at the feeding center, Manut's pregnant mother and the child she carried died during birth. His two brothers also died. "I do not know why they died," says Manut. "All I know is that they were very hungry. My parents cultivated a small field, but drought destroyed all our crops."

**1:10 p.m.** Guer Kur returns, her dead child wrapped in a blanket. Her relatives will not allow her to bury her daughter, Bol Atur. They believe if she is buried, Guer Kur's surviving sick child will also die. Staff persuade Guer to allow security personnel to bury her child.

**1:36 p.m.** The feeding halts. The center is out of water, a constant problem. A Land Cruiser is dispatched to fetch more from the pump at the World Vision compound.

**2:35 p.m.** The Land Cruiser fails to return. Staff are agitated. Already they are well behind with the day's feeding program. They hand out high-energy biscuits as an interim measure. Rain begins to fall on people squatting in the open.

**2:46 p.m.** The Land Cruiser finally arrives followed by a truck carrying fresh supplies of UNIMIX. Distribution of therapeutic milk recommences.

**4:00 p.m.** Feeding for Phase One children is complete for the day. Mothers head home. The nurses take hope in the fact that over a four-month period more than 1,420 children who came to the center needing help went home healthy. Regrettably, another 24 never left.

**4:10 p.m.** A group of children and mothers attempt to take shelter from the rain under a plastic sheet left lying on the ground. Laughter erupts as everybody tries to squash underneath. A light moment in a grim day.

**4:34 p.m.** Children in Phase Two—the less severely malnourished—scoop up the day's last meal of UNIMIX, using shells as spoons.

**5:40 p.m.** The center quiets as most patients return home. Karen, Sophie, and Pasha climb into the Land Cruiser, exhausted. Today they made hundreds of children's lives more secure. Tomorrow the struggle begins again.



*Postscript: In late September, World Vision was assisting 7,400 children, mothers, and the elderly through eight feeding centers.*

# our vision: Sudan feeding Sudan

Many fellow Americans have asked me whether World Vision's operations in southern Sudan were affected by the August bombings of United States' embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the subsequent American missile strike on a factory in Khartoum. Some feared that, in retaliation, the Sudanese government would cease all relief flights into the worst famine and war-affected areas where World Vision is serving. In God's mercy, such apprehensions were still unfounded as of early October. I am pleased to report that our extensive relief and development work in southern Sudan has continued uninterrupted.

However, the critical need in Sudan continues.

The current famine gripping southern Sudan is the result of three years of crop failure and 15 years of civil war, which has killed at least 1.5 million people and driven millions more from their homes.

Farmers and their families were forced to flee their land again this year when fighting escalated between Sudanese government forces and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army.

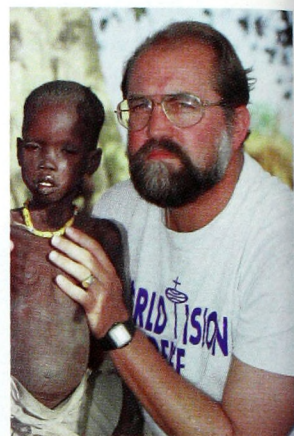
The government's subsequent ban on aid flights into the rebel-held province of Bahr el Ghazal in February and March stalled deliveries of food, seeds, and tools. Late rains produced a poor harvest, which means major food shortages will persist into next year.

Despite these setbacks, I'm still convinced, after serving with World Vision in Sudan for 10 years, that prospects are good for the country's ultimate recovery. World Vision is preparing to truck 13.2 tons of food to the neediest regions in 1999—a project funded by the U.S. government. Our agricultural training, health work, and potable water

projects are bearing fruit.

For example, this year World Vision purchased 275 tons of maize and sorghum and 19 tons of seeds produced by local farmers in Yambio, a stable, more fertile southern area, and trucked these supplies to famine-hit regions. In Tonj, one of the most desperate counties, 26,680 families each received two pounds of sorghum seeds which, weather permitting, can yield a crop of up to 550 pounds. Such a harvest could feed a family of six for nine months. We've proven that Sudan's people can feed themselves—and their neighbors.

However, peace remains the only lasting relief for this country. We are endeavoring to bring international pressure on the parties involved to end this bitter civil war. We believe and pray that peace and prosperity can and will come to this desolate land. I would like to thank you for caring for the Sudanese people, and humbly ask for your continued prayers and support.



**Bruce Menser**, program director of World Vision Sudan, with Ayal Akec, 6, at a feeding center in Panacier, southern Sudan.

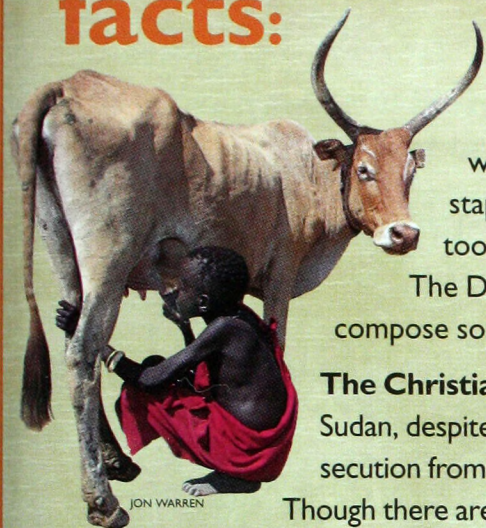
JACOB AKOL / WORLD VISION

WINNIE OGANA / WORLD VISION

**Farm life:** Maria Ramadan, 12, helps weed maize on her family's farm in Yambio, Sudan.



## little-known facts:



JON WARREN

**Sudan's Dinka** tribe has a special dependence on their cattle, which provide milk, their main dietary staple, and dung used for cooking fuel, tooth powder, and insect repellent.

The Dinka lovingly groom the animals and compose songs about them.

**The Christian church** is standing firm in southern Sudan, despite the constant threat of violence and persecution from the Islamic, Khartoum-based government.

Though there are few church structures, Christians meet under trees to worship God, their hope amid the suffering.

**Famous Sudanese:** former NBA player Manute Bol; supermodel Alek Wek.

## World Vision in Sudan

## timeline

### 1974

**WV** sponsors a pastors' conference and begins health and agriculture programs.

### 1996

**WV** assists 250,000 people in Tonj and Yambio counties with developing small businesses and agricultural cooperatives.

### 1998

**WV** operates eight feeding centers for children and 10 food distribution sites in Bahr el Ghazal; distributes survival kits, seeds, and tools to needy families; and continues health care, agricultural recovery, water, and Christian witness activities.

### 1972

**World Vision** begins channeling relief assistance to war victims through its partner, the African Committee for Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan.

### 1988

**WV** is declared non grata by the government in the predominantly Muslim north, and begins concentrating efforts in the south.

### 1997

**WV** provides health care for 200,000 people.

## staff quote:

World Vision photojournalist James Addis has made frequent trips to emergency feeding centers in southern Sudan since the crisis escalated in April 1998.

*"It's possible to see stirrings of fresh hope. On my first visit to the World Vision feeding center at Panacier, after it just opened, the children were in appalling condition—sitting listlessly; many could not walk. In a center of several hundred young children, it was deathly quiet. But after two months of therapeutic feeding, there was singing, crying, laughter. Many recognized me on my return visit and 100 still-malnourished but much-improved kids surrounded me, all clamoring to greet me and hold my hand."*



James Addis

# news

## sponsored children: agents of change

Many sponsored children grow up to be productive adults who help their communities. But in some projects, sponsored children are already learning how they can change their world.

- World Vision trained 60 children in San José Guayabal, El Salvador, to recycle solid wastes that contaminate the local river. Their efforts prompted recycling groups to use the paper, cans, and plastic to make cards, animal figures, and other handicrafts. Sponsored children also planted and care for 2,500 fruit and hardwood trees.

- Sponsored teens in World Vision projects in Guatemala are passing along the education they've received by teaching basic literacy to 600 children between the ages of 3 and 5. The World Vision-trained teens often travel great distances to reach their students, many of whom live in areas where more than 80 percent of the population is illiterate.

—Reported by Virginia Castro and Brenda Solares



**Put to good use:** A sponsored boy from El Salvador exhibits cards made out of recycled paper.

## Colombia: Nobel nominees persevere for peace

The Colombian Children's Movement for Peace, headed by Mayerly Sanchez, a 14-year-old World Vision sponsored child, was one of 25 organizations and 139 individuals nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. Although the movement was not awarded the prestigious prize, Sanchez says the 2.7 million children are undaunted in their determination to promote peace in Colombia, a country plagued by war and violence.

Sanchez helped organize a prayer service

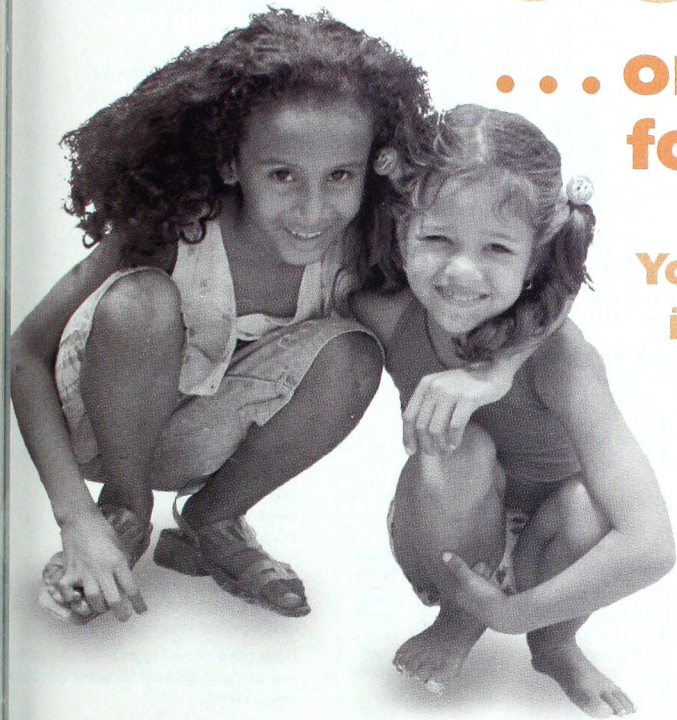
for Nobel laureates John Hume and David Trimble on Oct. 16 when these leaders of Northern Ireland's two main political parties were recognized for their efforts to end sectarian violence that plagued the British province for three decades.

Sanchez says the Colombian children's activism, and their Nobel nomination, earned them new respect. "Adults started listening to us. Now, when we want to give our opinion they don't say to us 'Child, don't talk.'"

—Reported by Pablo Carrillo

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Thank you for making the extra effort - and for  
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See your company's matching gift form  
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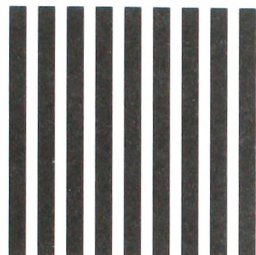
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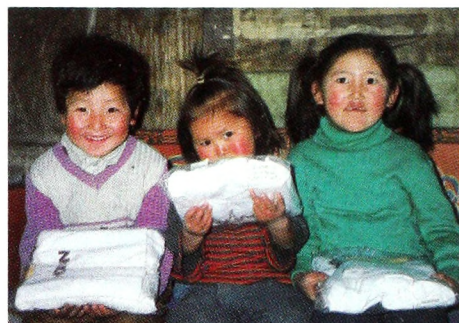
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**Ready for winter:** Mongolian children with clothing donated by American corporations.

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### girl child study

Each day millions of girl children around the world are shortchanged in health care, education, and even their God-given value in families and communities. World Vision's new curriculum, *The Girl Child*, offers an overview of this global problem that limits girls' potential and impedes their progress. Designed for adult Sunday school classes, this four-week study challenges participants to consider how they can make a difference in the lives of girls worldwide. *The Girl Child* package—including a summary of the issues, the study, and World Vision's 1998 Washington Forum book of presentations on the girl child—is \$10. To order, call toll-free (888) 511-6451.

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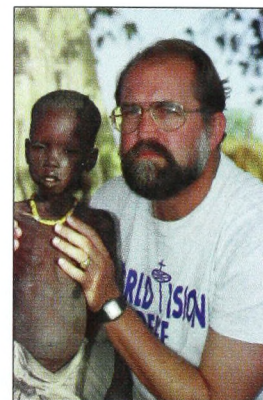
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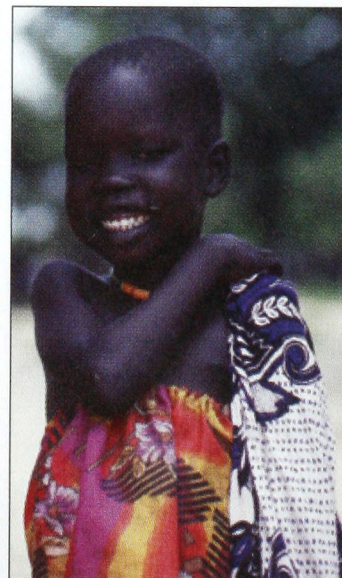
## Field report from Bruce Menser, Sudan program director



Bruce Menser with Ayal  
 Akec in April 1998.

We are seeing progress at our feeding centers with some remarkable stories of health and healing. For example, last April at the Panacier center I met a young girl named Ayal Akec. Only 6 years old, she was near death. Now she has been discharged in good health. Her recovery made my year! Yet, great needs continue to plague this war-ravaged country. Children are still at risk. Just \$35 provides a week of emergency feeding for a child like Ayal Akec.

*(From the editors: With your gift of \$35 or more for Sudan, we'll send you a free video entitled "I was hungry and you fed me," a collection of photos documenting World Vision's work in a Sudan feeding center.)*



Ayal Akec  
 August 1998



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-wico

save  
hungry  
children

Bruce, I want to help the people  
in northern Sudan!

provides a week of emergency feeding for  
a living child.

provides a family with a survival kit con-  
taining plastic sheeting and cooking utensils.

provides two months of food for a family

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a girl  a boy living in

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 Middle East  where most needed

(Sponsorship is not available in Sudan at this time.)

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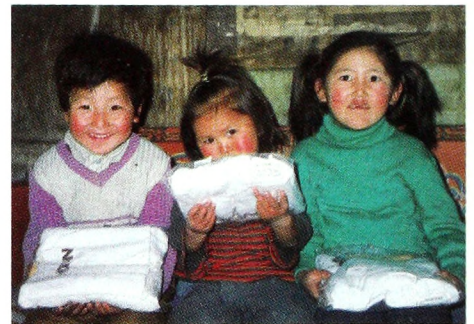
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can wins  
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Along with child  
development, World Vision also  
provides gift-in-kind  
donations such as warm  
clothing, pharmaceuti-  
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With reports from  
Jim Schmick



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girl child study

Each day millions of girl children  
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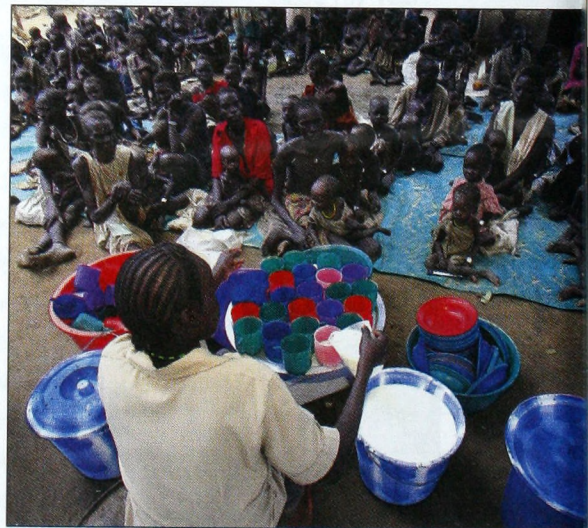
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**"A community leader  
 in a remote part of  
 southern Sudan  
 told me he had never seen  
 an agency respond  
 so quickly—within two  
 days of assessing the need**

—Bruce Menser, World Vision  
 program director in Sudan



World Vision staff in Thiet serve five or six  
 day for 1,200 starving children and

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**twice**  
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**return...**

on your  
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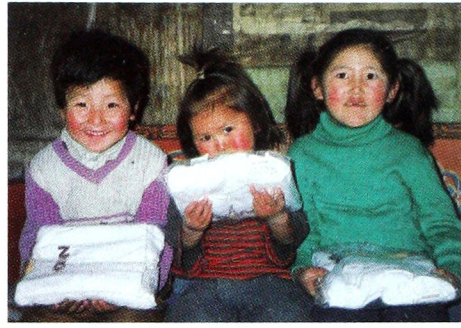
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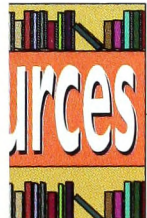
parents, teachers, and the government,” says Zook, an adoptive mother of 10 children and grandmother of 11. “I can leave Mongolia feeling that the team will continue to make a great impact on the well-being not only of the children, but their families and communities.”

Along with child care, World Vision also provides gift-in-kind items such as warm clothing, pharmaceuticals, and medical supplies donated by American corporations.

—With reports from Jim Schmick



**Ready for winter:** Mongolian children with clothing donated by American corporations.



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 questionnaire.

### girl child study

Each day millions of girl children around the world are shortchanged in health care, education, and even their God-given value in families and communities. World Vision’s new curriculum, *The Girl Child*, offers an overview of this global problem that limits girls’ potential and impedes their progress. Designed for adult Sunday school classes, this four-week study challenges participants to consider how they can make a difference in the lives of girls worldwide. *The Girl Child* package—including a summary of the issues, the study, and World Vision’s 1998 Washington Forum book of presentations on the girl child—is \$10. To order, call toll-free (888) 511-6451.

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## Mongolia: American wins award for work with children



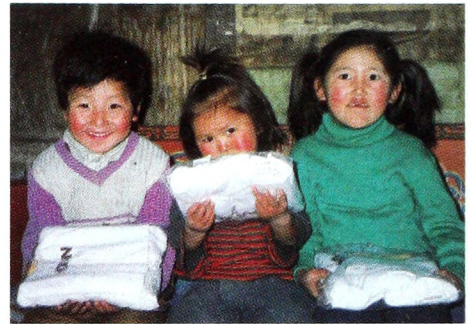
"We are able to do this work not because of our resources but because our God loves the Mongolian people," says Portland, Ore. native Joan Zook, recently honored with Mongolia's Medal of Service for her work with children. For the past two years, Zook headed World Vision's Early Childhood Care and Development project in the Bulgan province and in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar, responding to the increased social needs during the country's transition from a centrally controlled economy to a free market system.

"We have learned so much about how to enrich children's lives, working as a team with

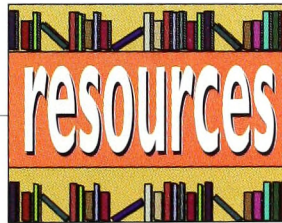
parents, teachers, and the government," says Zook, an adoptive mother of 10 children and grandmother of 11. "I can leave Mongolia feeling that the team will continue to make a great impact on the well-being not only of the children, but their families and communities."

Along with child care, World Vision also provides gift-in-kind items such as warm clothing, pharmaceuticals, and medical supplies donated by American corporations.

—With reports from Jim Schmick



**Ready for winter:** Mongolian children with clothing donated by American corporations.



### cry, the divided country

For a thorough explanation of Sudan's civil war-induced crisis, order World Vision's policy paper, *Sudan: Cry, the Divided Country*. The paper details the long conflict that has tormented the nation and

caused human rights abuses, famine, and regional tensions, and offers prospects for peace. View this publication on World Vision's website [www.worldvision.org/worldvision/prnsf/stable/sudan\\_index](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/prnsf/stable/sudan_index), or call (888) 511-6422 to order a copy.

### churches on the internet

World Vision and several Christian partners have created a place for your church on the worldwide web to profile its ministry with poor families.

**Churches At Work** highlights churches and Christian organizations throughout the United States that are meeting community needs. For free, your church can join a growing network that will enjoy international exposure to other ministries, social service agencies, and potential donors. Check out **Churches At Work** at [www.churchesatwork.org](http://www.churchesatwork.org) and add your information online, or call Evie Green at (253) 815-2078 for a printed copy of the profile questionnaire.

### girl child study


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dan  
the Divided Country





Twelve



**Once a struggling, single mother with three young children, Brenda Wilbee and her family knew poverty all too intimately. Brenda shares how their painful past ultimately affected her children in positive ways; especially her youngest son who recently traveled to Africa with World Vision.**

When my 18-year-old son, Blake, applied for World Vision's 30 Hour Famine study tour to Kenya, I was not surprised. Blake and his older sister and brother have always been concerned about world hunger, and they have sponsored children over the years through World Vision and other childcare agencies. What did surprise me was the question I was repeatedly asked when he was chosen for the tour: "Why is your son so compassionate?" I blurted out the first thing that came to mind: "Perhaps because he knows what it means to be hungry."

When my three children were growing up, we lived off food banks. As the youngest, Blake often waited in line with me, wondering what we might get. Sometimes we were disappointed. "People weren't very helpful this week, were they, Mum?" he'd say. Other times, "Wow, Mum, ravioli!" However, we were always given as much bread as we wanted. It was Blake's job to carry our bread, and he would trundle up to the car beside me clutching that bread.

Our Christmases were also courtesy of charity. The year Blake turned 5, we were inundated from all sides: the

# Baskets

food bank, the Salvation Army, a friend's church, a fourth grade class, even Safeway. The mounting presents under the tree, marked "Boy: 7," "Girl: 10," "Boy: 5," and "Mother," overwhelmed my children. Blake's brother, Phil—"Boy: 7"—sat on the sofa and sighed in bewildered dismay, "These people wasted their money. This is too much."

Charity was all Blake and Phil knew, and they accepted it as a matter of course. But when they entered school it didn't take long to figure out what their older sister, Heather, painfully understood about living in an affluent society. They stood in the food bank lines and took what they got, while other families shopped at the grocery store. They wore mismatched clothing, while their friends modeled Nordstrom's fashions. The constant disparity marked them. Would they grow bitter? Become cynical? Would they make money their god, striving after material security in order to compensate?

The generosity of strangers held the greater impact. For if the world is a harsh place, it is also a good place, and this was not lost on my children. The many kindnesses shown them

over the years bridged their schizophrenic worlds of abundance and want. Blake may be compassionate because he knows what it means to be hungry. The fuller truth is that he is this way because he has had his hunger met—and strives to emulate that same compassion.

The story of Jesus feeding the hungry multitudes with nothing more than a child's small lunch comforts me. Like that child, I learned I could trust God to take my little and somehow make it enough. What I couldn't figure out was the remaining abundance. Twelve baskets left over? What would that even look like? It was in Blake's own words—"I want to return the favor now that I'm in a position to help"—that I suddenly recognized my abundance. Blake is my 12 baskets left over. The little boy who carted home free bread and ravioli has embraced a bigger task: world hunger. Once a grateful child, he has become a compassionate man.

Brenda Wilbee is a freelance writer living in Bellingham, Wash.



## Charity with love

Drawing from her own experience, Brenda Wilbee suggests ways to share with those less fortunate.

**Give throughout the year, not just at Christmas.** Find volunteer opportunities in your community so you can build relationships with neighborhood families and give as friend to friend. Remember birthdays and the first day of school as well as Christmas.

**Give in a way that preserves one's dignity.** "Girl: 10" is painfully impersonal. "Heather" assures the child she is the same person she was when she didn't need your present.

**Give something you would enjoy receiving yourself.** Broken toys and opened perfume bottles are half-hearted attempts at true generosity.

**Give to inspire hope.** Express confidence in a parent's ability to regain a financial footing. When a friend helped me buy a computer, he said, "God leave distributing the wealth to us. When you have too much, I know you'll do the same." He was right. The year we were overwhelmed with help, we shared our abundance with another family. It was our best Christmas.





FOR KIDS TO EXPERIENCE  
 THE MANY COLORS AND PATTERNS OF GOD'S WORLD

## Your Turn

Every first Christmas cards were made by an artist from England named John Horsley in 1843. He drew happy families gathered around their dinner tables and scenes of people involved in acts of kindness\*. Make a special Christmas card for someone you love by coloring this picture. Then cut it out, glue it to construction paper with your own writing, and send it along!



ILLUSTRATION BY DIANA MOORE

## Did you know?

In many countries, people do not have shelter, health care, and education—things that might take for granted. By cutting back on some of the extra gifts and festivities we engage in at Christmas and throughout the year, we can give a family things they really need.

### the cost of . . . is the same as

- Dinner at Denny's restaurant for a family of five (\$25) ..... Three months of food for a family of five in Sierra Leone
- GameBoy and one game (\$75) ..... A dairy goat for a family of orphaned children in Rwanda
- A pair of Nike Air basketball shoes (\$100) ..... One year of reading and writing classes for a child in Bangladesh
- One day's admission to Disneyland for a family of four (\$135) ..... One year of medical care for three former street children in Mexico

**World Vision's gift catalog** contains many more ideas about how to help others. Call (888) 511-6511 for this catalog that your family can use to order unique gifts this Christmas.

\*From *A Christmas Celebration: Traditions and Customs from Around the World* by Pamela Kennedy, 1992.

# new song new

**In El Salvador, sponsorship brought together a hardworking family and members of the Christian group NewSong, building new relationships—and a new home.**

“No time for fun.” That is José Rafael Rodríguez’s matter-of-fact assessment of his life as a subsistence farmer supporting his wife, Blanca, and four children in Guazapa, outside El Salvador’s capital, San Salvador. When he is not cutting sugarcane, he collects firewood to sell, or cultivates corn on a rented plot, earning less than \$4 “on a good day.”

Rafael and Blanca both ended up in this area devoid of electricity and running water when they were children. Fighting during the 12-year civil war (1980–1992) threatened the hillsides where they once lived. Their families fled to Guazapa “with nothing,” Rafael explained. His house, little more than a tin sheet balanced on a rickety wood



For years, the Rodríguez family made the best of their makeshift home (left). But when his children’s sponsors provided materials for a sturdy, concrete house, Rafael eagerly devoted all his time to building it (above).

structure, attests that the years since have been lean.

Unexpectedly, the quiet life of this hardworking

# ife

family man changed. Rafael's children were sponsored through World Vision, making them eligible for assistance such as health care and educational support.

In March 1998, World Vision staff led five visitors down the rock-strewn, dirt path to the Rodríguez home. Rafael, just returning from the fields, was shirtless, barefoot, and covered in soot from burning sugarcane. But he graciously welcomed the members of the Christian music group NewSong:



carswell  
Arnoldo

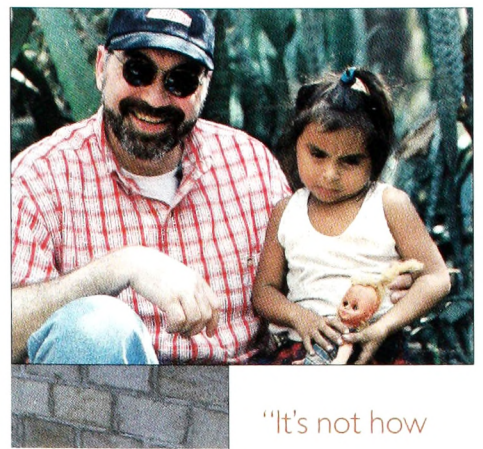
Leonard Ahlstrom, Eddie Carswell, Billy Goodwin, Russ Lee, and Scotty Wilbanks. During some 100 annual concerts across the United States, NewSong encourages fans to become World Vision sponsors, acquiring 5,000 new enrollments since 1994. Now the men had come to Guazapa to see World Vision's work and meet their sponsored children—Rafael's family.

### The best inheritance

The oldest, Arnoldo, 8, sat in Eddie's lap and shyly showed off his school notebooks in which he received A's for his neatly printed rows of letters. Only in first grade, Arnoldo is already the family's hope for a doctor or lawyer.

"The best inheritance we can give our children is a good education," said Blanca, who, like Rafael, attended school to the second grade.

"My children tell me they don't want to work like me in the fields," explained Rafael. "Without World Vision's assistance, we couldn't afford to send any of our children to school." Sponsorship will



"It's not how much or what you give, it's the fact that you're giving. Instead of wondering how to help, simply do it, and God in his sweet way will show you the what and the how much."

**Billy Goodwin**  
with Mayela

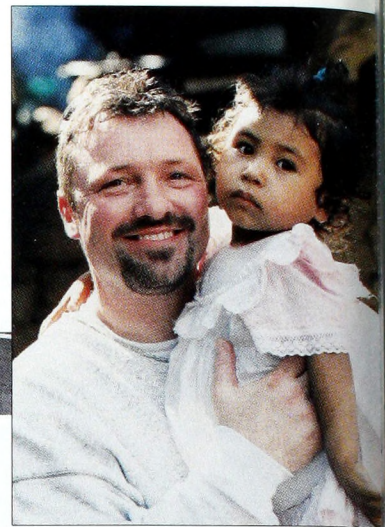
equip Arnoldo with a required uniform, shoes, and books. His siblings, as they reach school age, can expect the same, and all are guaranteed free medical care.

Rafael grinned as the guests played with his children. Leonard, holding curly-haired Marciela, 3, explained that his daughter, Melody, would pray for her. Despite Billy's tender attention, 5-year-old Mayela would not crack a smile. The youngest child, José Rafael, Jr., 22 months, fell asleep in Scotty's arms. Rafael's niece, 1-year-old Maria de los Angeles, stared wide-eyed at Russ as he cradled her and tickled her toes.

"You just want to give to [the children]," Scotty said. "It brings that part of Jesus out of you." Realizing the hardship this family faces every day, the NewSong men decided to treat them to McDonald's—a first for the

“Education has such an impact on the activities and future of children. When they get an education, they are able to build a life on that. You create hope, and you help to raise a generation of people who will supersede what they’ve come from.”

**Leonard Ahlstrom with Marciela**



Rodríguezes. Rafael and Blanca dressed up, and put the kids in their best clothes. World Vision staff drove them to the restaurant in suburban San Salvador, only 45 minutes away, but virtually a different world.

The group dined on chicken nuggets, french fries, and drinks. “The kids ate a bit and then packed up the rest of the food to take home to the others,” said Russ. After the

meal, the children ventured into McDonald’s playground. They stepped gingerly into the cage filled with brightly-colored, plastic balls, not sure what to do. Russ and Scotty climbed in to demon-

strate. Soon, the kids broke into giggles as they tossed balls at each other. “This is worth the whole trip,” enthused Billy.

### The house Jesus built

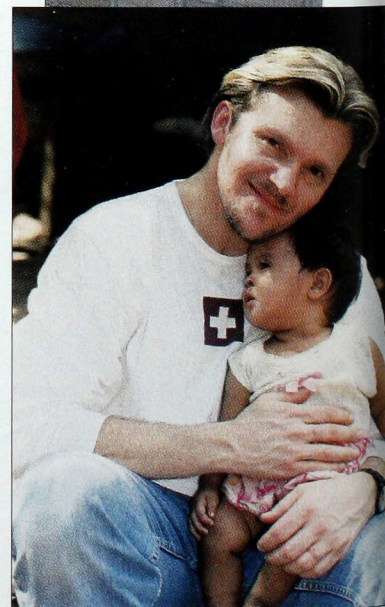
During their visit, the NewSong members were struck by the Rodríguezes’ need for a better home. “Sometimes when it rains, this roof leaks and the water flows like a river right past the door,” Blanca said. “I have to keep the children inside,” away from sewage-choked mud.

Moved by the Rodríguezes’ situation, the NewSong members provided special funds, over and above their sponsorship commitment, for the family to construct a new home. In May, the Rodríguezes started building their 20-by-20 foot home of concrete blocks and a tile roof. While Rafael devoted all his time to the project, Blanca earned money by doing laundry for neighbors.

Rafael first built a wall protecting the house from a rain-swollen stream just below the property on the

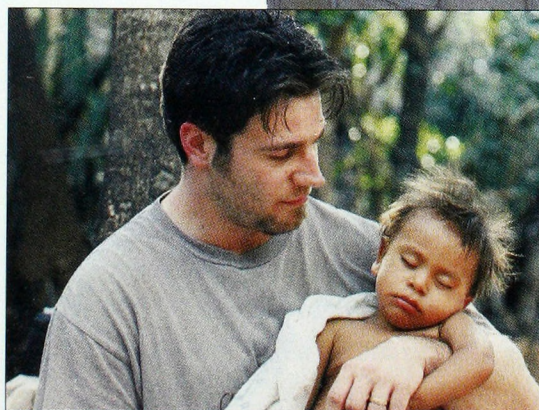
“As Christians, we want to teach our kids about missions. World Vision brings missions into our home. We pray and we give, and World Vision puts the money to good use, yielding an eternal harvest. It’s important for my children to see that.”

**Russ Lee with Maria de los Angeles**



“Giving is not only about money or objects. It’s about the gifts of touch, love, spending time—giving of ourselves, who we are as people.”

**Scotty Wilbanks with José Rafael, Jr.**





**Gift of music:** NewSong treated their sponsored children and hosts to "This One's With Me," their song about Jesus' personal, inclusive love.

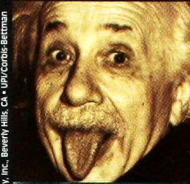
slope of a steep valley. In a few weeks, the house itself took shape. Rafael plans to add an outside oven, using tin sheeting from his old house to cover the cooking area, as well as a laundry area and steps leading to the road.

Rafael is tremendously proud of his home, marking a new beginning for his family. "The children have already chosen their corners," he smiled.



**Raising the roof:** Rafael and Blanca worked tirelessly on their home. "I think the children will be healthier in the new house," said Blanca.

# Your youth group is loaded with greatness.



Einstein wrote his first paper on the theory of relativity when he was 16.



David was anointed King of Israel at age 15.



Joan of Arc led 3,000 French Knights to victory in the Battle of Orleans when she was 17.

**make your mark**



Josh Mitchell of Silverdale, Washington, helped save an entire village in Africa when he was 15.

**save kids' lives**

**W**orld Vision's 30 Hour Famine invites your youth to achieve great things. Not for sake of greatness, but for the sake of the **33,000 kids who die every day** from hunger and hunger-related causes.

On **February 26-27, 1999**, 600,000 young people will come together in a nationwide fast. They will go without food for 30 hours and raise money to provide food and care for hungry children.

The 30 Hour Famine is a powerful group event. It's easy to organize. *And it's free!*

Call today for a free video

**1-800-7-FAMINE**

(1-800-732-6463)

In Canada, call 1-800-387-8080.

[www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org)

B939

# Showing love

is the greatest expression of our belief in Jesus Christ. That's why I sponsor a child through World Vision.

I visited my sponsored child, Helán, in Honduras and saw firsthand the power of sponsorship. With \$22 a month from me and other sponsors, the people of Helán's village benefit from improved health and nutrition, education, and community improvements. And they know that God loves them because of our support.

**Sponsor a child today by calling 1-888-511-6474 or by mailing in the coupon below.**



Christian artist Twila Paris and her sponsored child.

## I want to show a child the love of God!

I would like to sponsor a  boy  girl living in

Africa  Asia  Latin America  Middle East  where the needs are greatest

Enclosed is my first monthly payment of \$22 to help a needy child and his or her community.

Check (made payable to World Vision).

Bill me later.

Bill my monthly sponsorship payment to my credit card:

Visa  MasterCard

American Express  Discover

Card no. --- Exp. Date --

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of or in addition to my sponsorship, I would like to give a gift of \$  to help children in need. (1700)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**World Vision**

Child Sponsorship  
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On the cover: Alat Myor received food and care at World Vision's emergency feeding center in Thiet, Sudan.

**World Vision Today**, a quarterly publication, shares the stories of children, their families, communities as they experience the tangible hope of the Gospel in a world of suffering and injustice. We hope that our relationship and conversations grow deeper and increasingly meaningful. **World Vision Today** aims to exceed the highest standards in accuracy, practicality, and stewardship, and is a gift to you for your commitment to modeling Jesus' life-giving compassion.

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from President  
Richard Stearns

## AIDS orphans: W.W.J.D.?

As my family and I prepare to celebrate Christmas, I've been thinking about my new friend, Richard, a young AIDS orphan in Uganda who taught me much about Emmanuel, God with us.

During my recent trip to Africa, Richard Sseremba, 13, and his two brothers Mugera, 11, and Muzeyi, 10, welcomed me into their mud-brick home in Rakai, located 125 miles south of Uganda's capital, Kampala. In this district known as the "AIDS belt," they are among 58,000 AIDS orphans in a population of 400,000 people. Every morning, the boys are confronted afresh by this indiscriminate, merciless killer as they pass the two mounds of rocks just steps from their front door. "These are the graves of our mother and father," Richard explained to me solemnly.

The boys have fended for themselves since their mother died five years ago of AIDS, followed by their father a year later, catapulting Richard into the role of caretaker, breadwinner, and protector.

"At first we were afraid to sleep in the house alone," confided Richard. "Now we are used to it." I thought of my own five children, secure at home in Seattle. As confident and capable as they are, I can't imagine how they would manage alone.

Some 930,000 Ugandans currently suffer from AIDS, including 67,000 children under age 15. Poverty compounds the crisis. Half the population lives on less than a dollar a day. Only 42 percent of the rural people have access to health care.

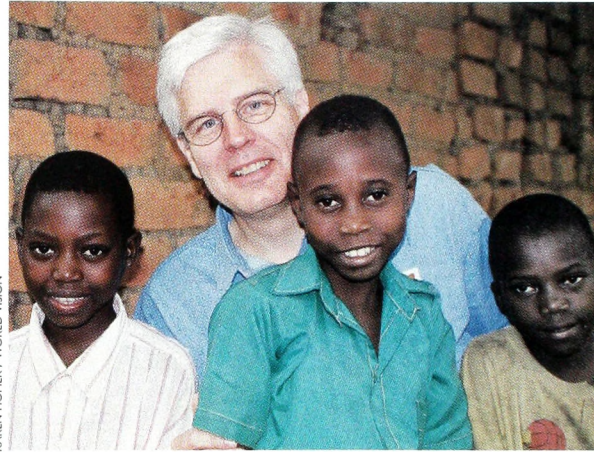
Many orphans like Richard struggle to think about the future. But despite the trauma they have endured, Richard and his brothers

plan ahead. Mugerera aims high: he aspires to be a pilot; Muzeyi is considering teaching; and Richard wants to be a doctor so he can treat AIDS victims. Their hope is based in Christ, their Comforter. Asked about his most precious possession, Richard brings out a gift from World Vision: his red, hardback Bible printed in Luganda, the local language.

"I like the book of John best. I know about Jesus, that he died for us young children," says Richard softly.

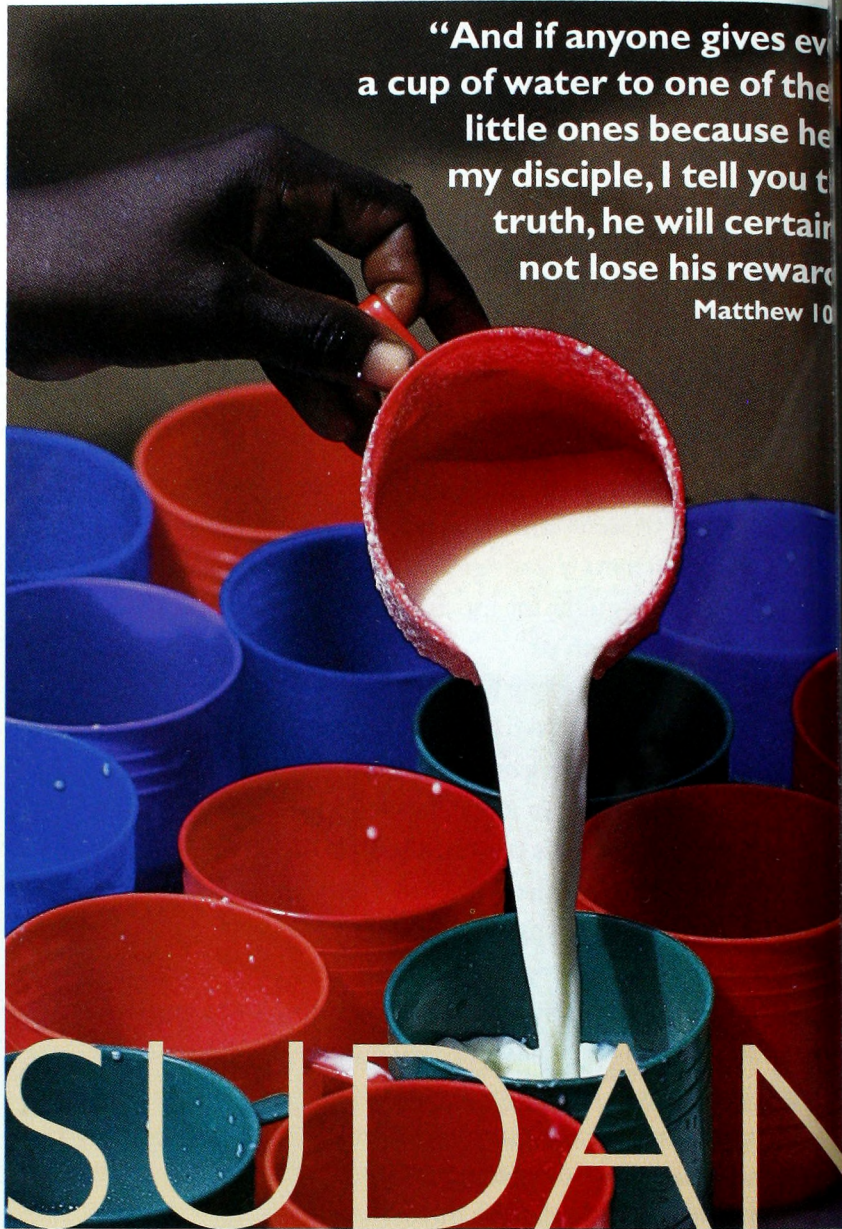
At home, my children wear cloth bracelets bearing the woven letters W.W.J.D.: What would Jesus do? Sitting in the boy's spartan hut, I asked myself that question. We can't replace their parents, but we can show them the love of Christ. I thanked God that they are among the 1,077 AIDS orphans World Vision sponsors here. Several evenings a week, a World Vision social worker visits the boys, listening to their problems, helping with their homework. Sponsorship funds also provide school fees, books, and uniforms.

Watching the boys prepare bananas for lunch on thin plastic plates, I contrasted their humble surroundings with my days as CEO of Lenox, Inc. Once responsible for manufacturing fine china, I'm now charged with something far more valuable and exceedingly fragile: helping to ensure a future for children like Richard.



**AIDS orphans:** "Jesus died for us young children," Richard (left) told me, when I met him and his brothers Muzeyi and Mugerera in Uganda.

“And if anyone gives even a cup of water to one of the little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”  
Matthew 10



# SUDAN

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