

WORLD VISION®

December 1990-January 1991

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Portrait in
Black and White

Where Would
Christ Be
on Christmas?

ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS

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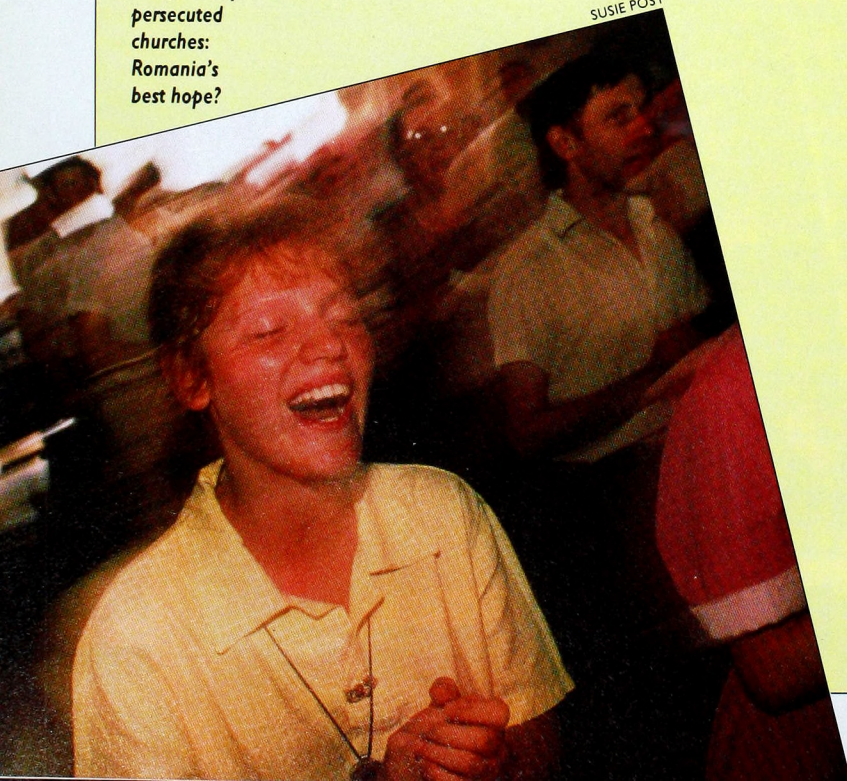
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I hope you caught a recent "20/20" television program that featured World Vision's work with orphans in Romania. Our cover story deals with Romania's saddest legacy to its children: AIDS. What an opportunity for the church to identify with the innocent victims of government policy gone awry.

Evangelist Michael Cassidy focuses readers' attention upon the difficult work of reconciliation in South Africa done by Africa Enterprise, World Vision and others.

Terry Madison

WORLDVISION

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HOLD ON TO THE SMILES

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e were driving through northeast Romania, just a few miles from the Soviet border on a brilliant fall morning. The fertile plateau that stretched before us was dotted with sheep, cattle, and small villages, and seemed to spring out of "Dr. Zhivago" or "Fiddler on the Roof." Horses pulled wagons of freshly harvested grapes. Cornstalks had been cut and were now clustered in rows across the fields. It was an idyllic visual memory, but it would be the last one we had that day. The dark side was about to begin.

"Put these white coats on," our hosts told us. "They'll protect you from the children." We were visiting an orphanage, one of hundreds in Romania, full of children for whom society had called it quits. They were officially labeled "unrecoverables." The word reeked of hopelessness, forgottenness, and condemnation.

"The children who come here are stamped for death," said one of our World Vision staff. "No one ever leaves." This was the final deposition for discarded Romanian youth, an old-age home for children already in their final years.

These children were happy to see us. We represented a diversion from the normal institutional tedium. We brought a touch of human contact to augment the daily staple of five—three meals and two diaper changes. Smiles dominated broken faces, twisted bodies and underdeveloped minds. Irrepressible smiles provided the only facade to the gloom of our environment.

The smiles were our only support. They arrested our attention when everything within us wanted to avert their stare. They gave us a way to look past the scabs, the bleeding sores, the filth, the tattered clothing, the mental derangement, and the crippling diseases.

The chatter of the children was constant, and the stench of urine filled every room, mattress, and rag of clothing. Flies were ubiquitous. Filth covered everything. But it was the visual images we couldn't escape. Ten little boys huddled in a corner of the same bed and fought for the same blanket. No one could exist alone—not the autistic children, nor the Down's syndrome children, nor the crippled children. Some rocked quietly while others engaged in more violent self-stimulation.

Then there was the cold, so cold that it slowed circulation. The fight for a blanket was a fight for life. Two children per crib created a constant struggle. The older children either had no shoes or wouldn't wear them. Their threadbare clothing didn't cover their trembling bodies. We suspected many would die before winter.

But the smiles beckoned us, as if to say, "It's all right. We know why you are here. We're glad you've come. Don't cry. If we can smile, you need not feel badly."

The emotional hurdles slowly disappeared. Some children reached out, desperate for a human touch, grasping at fingers and clothing. These were the clingers. Some, however, had obviously been abused. An open hand symbolized hurt and pain. They were the cringers.

Sadly I acknowledged my own similar behavior. I instinctively reached out to some children, but I drew away from others. I had to force myself to hug an AIDS baby. The very aggressive children tried my patience. The wet and naked longed for an arm around their shoulder, and I offered it reluctantly. It took a while for the deformed to get an appreciated massage of their twisted limbs.

I recalled the instructions our World Vision team had given me: "Focus on their smile. They will help you. Their smile will keep you from crying." But it was all so overpowering, so indescribable, so emotionally destructive.

The shock soon turned to numbness as we went from room to room. Obviously, a number of children were starving to death. The blind, the deaf, and the deformed seemed to have fewer chances at food. The smaller children were very weak and their bodies cold. Death was not far away.

One woman was recovering from an abortion. The poorly supervised facility lent itself to sexual promiscuity, and my numbed mind struggled to assimilate this into my ethics of the sanctity of human life.

"The children want to sing for you," our guide told us. The statement defied logic. But at the end of our visit, three children assembled. Nicoleta, a beautiful girl in her late teens, sat on the floor, cushioned by the stumps of her deformed legs. Very simply, they sang:

"We sing as children
but if we dance
we will develop
and grow to be big children."

They sang it over and over. They could sing, but they could not dance. Nicoleta's polio-afflicted legs would never develop. And she would never leave that place. She is an "unrecoverable." □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

The smiles were our only support. They held our attention when we wanted to look away.

*Using outdated medical techniques,
Romanian doctors unknowingly
started an epidemic.*

GRADLE TO GRAVE

BY SUSIE POST

**ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS**

technology, but also roadblocks from their government. Without help, they face a hopeless tragedy.

George lives in Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, Romania's capital city. His crib of iron bars, its white paint peeling, stands in a row of similar cribs filled with babies dying of AIDS. There are 10 to 12 of them in his room, and the hallway leads to more rooms full of AIDS babies. Most of them are orphans.

During the rule of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, which ended in December 1989, tens of thousands of children filled Romania's orphanages. The Romanian government officially estimates there are 15,000 abandoned and orphaned children in 350 to 400 institutions across the country. But according to outside agencies that have surveyed the orphanages, the most conservative estimates are around 40,000 children.

Ceausescu's population obsession, combined with the desperate poverty his government inflicted on Romania, was the formula that filled the country's orphanages. Ceausescu was obsessed with a plan to raise the population from 23 million to 30 million by the year 2000. Birth control was illegal. Married women were subjected to frequent examinations if they weren't producing children. Single women were fined for not bearing children.

Some mothers abandoned their children because the pregnancy was unwanted. Others gave their babies up because they simply couldn't care for another child. Mentally and physically handicapped children and children of dissidents and prisoners were also frequently sent to orphanages.

As "20/20" and other television programs have graphically documented, many of these children live in miserable, unsanitary conditions, lacking the most basic care, with perhaps one caretaker for 40 children.

If these "warehouses for children" are the saddest story to come out of the Ceausescu years, the AIDS epidemic among Romanian children may be the worst chapter of that story. It's impossible to pinpoint when the epidemic began in Romania, but most Romanian physicians agree on *how*.

DEADLY INJECTIONS

To pay off Romania's foreign debts, Ceausescu pushed food exports to the limit. Consequently, during the past decade, food was scarce in the country. Basic staples—flour, oil, sugar—were strictly rationed. Meat was a rare luxury. Fruits and vegetables were almost never available.

The lack of food hurt children the most. Many, both inside and outside the orphanages, were sickly and malnourished. To boost these children's immune systems, doctors routinely gave them small injections of blood, called microtransfusions.

Microtransfusions were common practice in the United States back in the 1940s, until research showed they had little or no effect. Because of Romania's enforced isolation from the rest of the world, however, medical knowledge in the country was virtually frozen at a 1940s level.

In 1980s Romania, those ineffective transfusions became a deadly vehicle for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Doctors used untested blood supplies containing HIV, passing the deadly virus to the children. (Even now, only 10 percent of Romanian blood donors are screened for HIV.) Since the transfusions were so small, one contaminated blood unit could infect several children.

Dirty needles did the rest. Basic medical supplies were in such short supply that syringes were used over and over. It was a rare hospital that had a sterilizer that worked. The virus moved from one child to the next through the very injections that were supposed to heal them.

An AIDS baby in Victor Babes Hospital, Bucharest, which has one of the largest AIDS wards in Romania.



GOVERNMENT COVER-UP

In June 1989, Dr. Ion Patrascu discovered a high incidence of HIV among children in a Bucharest hospital. He immediately sent a report to the Ministry of Health, but it was the first of many times he would be stonewalled.

"They didn't accept the report," Patrascu said. "They believed it, but they tried to cover it up. It was not possible in Romania for bad news to appear."

Not until after the December 1989 revolution did most Romanian physicians learn of the AIDS tragedy.

When government officials finally admitted the existence of AIDS in Romania, they insisted the problem was isolated to one hospital in Bucharest. But Patrascu had begun testing children across the country, and he already had alarming figures for two or three towns in southern Romania.

Patrascu planned an educational conference for Romanian physicians about AIDS in November 1989. The Ceausescu government canceled not only the conference, but all AIDS testing on children.

After the revolution, testing resumed. By June 1990 the Institute of Virology managed to test and retest more than 13,000 Romanians, about two-thirds of them under age 18. Less than 1 percent tested positive—except among children under 3 years old. There the numbers jumped off the chart. Fourteen percent tested positive.

In recent months, the government is again suppressing information about

AIDS in Romania. After the country's first democratic election, in June 1990, President Ion Iliescu called another end to the testing of children for HIV.

Patrascu continues to push for testing and research. "The government doesn't care," he said. "They like to get away from the study of the truth. They don't want to know how many people have AIDS. Their minds are in a communist system, like in the past. They don't care about one child, one family. They care about the state."

The lack of information about AIDS is even worse among the Romanian public than among medical professionals. Some Romanian children with AIDS have families who refuse to take them home because they fear they'll catch the disease.

Even if we tell the parents there is no danger from the children who have HIV, they are frightened. They consider the children contagious even if we tell them it's not so. There's a vast need for education," said Pia Popescu, director of a hospital in Vidra with many young AIDS patients.

And while Romanian physicians think of AIDS as a new disease to be treated, much of the population views the virus as a curse from God.

"We Christian physicians see that our contribution is to prevent the spread of AIDS and to educate the people," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president of the Romanian Christian Medical Association. "But in Romania, people consider this disease a plague."

Some caretakers show affection; others change diapers and prop up bottles in assembly-line fashion.

Throughout Romania's 350 to 400 orphanages, tens of thousands of children hunger to be held and loved. "I did not see one child who didn't suffer from emotional neglect," says Dr. Barbara Bascom, an American pediatrician featured on the October 6 segment of the television news program "20/20."

Bascom, who directs World Vision's work with Romanian orphans, says that most of them can recover—if they're helped soon enough.

Although a number of orphanage children were reclaimed by their families after the revolution, and others have been adopted by Romanian or foreign families, the great majority will stay right where they are, Bascom says. She says that gifts of clothing, food, medicines, and toys are not enough to reverse the damage inflicted on these children.

Starting with a few orphanages and gradually expanding, Bascom intends to affect the entire orphanage system. Her plan, called ROSES (Romanian Orphans Social, Educational Services) will offer long-term education and encouragement to the doctors and caretakers who work with the children. Her program will also recruit local women to give the children what they need most: simple mothering.

Indirectly, ROSES will help the Romanian medical profession recover from the lost decades of Romania's

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

ROSES FOR THE ORPHANS



SUSIE POST

enforced isolation.

"Romanian doctors have been cut off from the tremendous advances made in the diagnosis and treatment of developmental disabilities during the past three decades," Bascom explains. She is designing a child development curriculum for medical students—one that will bring them into the orphanages to work with the children.

Bascom's husband, Dr. Jim Bascom, oversees another World Vision program aiding Romania's crippled medical education system.

"When we went into Romania, we realized this was a disaster area of a different kind," Jim Bascom says. "It wasn't a war, it wasn't a flood, it wasn't an earthquake. It was a social disaster of equal proportions.

"And so much of it was by design. It was deliberate. We expected, to a certain extent, what we found in the

orphanages, although you can never really prepare yourself for that. But we were surprised by the appalling, dismantled state of nearly everything, including medical education."

The Medical Education Redevelopment Program will provide essential medical books and journals to Romanian medical schools. It will also link the schools with medical associations and schools in the United States.

"What's encouraging is the willingness of the Romanian people to start rebuilding their lives for themselves," Jim Bascom says. "That's what offers the most hope."

Barbara Bascom agrees. "Romanians are ashamed of the orphanages," she says. "I'd like to see them point to the homes with pride, not with shame." □

Reported by Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist.

A plague on children less than 3 years old? Dr. Dan explained, "We Christians in Romania believe the biggest problem of humanity is sin. These children in orphanages are the result of the sins of the [parents' generation]."

Dr. Ion Patrascu, however, blames the rulers of Romania for the AIDS epidemic. "When we speak about AIDS in adults, it's often a matter of prostitution, homosexuality, or drug abuse. They can take responsibility for the things they did that put them at risk.

"But the children," he said, "it's a big mistake. It's a medical mistake, it's a state mistake. The state is morally responsible. They killed, by mistake, the children."

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The doctors who treat them usually have few tools for diagnosing the so-called opportunistic diseases, the secondary ailments that penetrate AIDS patients' crippled immune systems. Dr. Adrian Streinu, director of the Colentina Hospital, said most doctors must rely on their own eyes, ears, and nose. What they cannot detect that way usually goes untreated, he said.

As with Romania's other orphans, the quality of AIDS babies' daily care

also varies from institution to institution. In some places the children rock continuously from side to side, repetitive movement to offset a lack of human contact. The squeaking of their cribs is the only sound in the room.

Some of the AIDS victims are fat, healthy-looking babies who want to play with visitors. Others stare into the distance, unaware of the flies crawling on their faces.

Some play with colorful mobiles hanging over their cribs. Others lie still with unchanged diapers.

A few have mothers who come to visit. But most of the young AIDS victims live alone, rarely touched, rarely leaving their cribs.

That is changing slowly, as Romania's doctors and orphanage workers gain the knowledge and the equipment they need to provide better care. Groups outside Romania play a vital role in this process.

A British group called Health Aid has focused on Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, where 13-month-old George lives. British medical and church volunteers swarm through the AIDS ward, unpacking supplies and playing with the babies. George is in a clean crib with a clean diaper and people nearby who pay attention to him.

Both of the hospitals in Bucharest that house AIDS babies now have bright murals on the walls. Many of the babies play with stuffed animals in their cribs. Signs on the wall read, "Remember, TLC needed here!"

At the orphanage in Constanta where nearly every child tested positive for HIV, help has flooded in from

all over Europe. But many hospitals and orphanages still lack the most basic supplies.

In Vidra, a town of 8,000 just outside Bucharest, a hospital for malnourished infants serves basically as an orphanage, because most of the babies dropped off there will never be reclaimed. Almost 100 children live there, most under a year old. About a quarter of them have AIDS. The hospital has little more than cribs, sheets, and diapers. One washing machine serves the whole hospital. NewHope, a Christian AIDS ministry based in Pittsburgh, Penn., is focusing its efforts at the Vidrea hospital.

The Romanian AIDS Association is another vehicle for people outside Romania who want to help AIDS children. Dr. Ion Patrascu heads the newly formed association, which aims to educate medical professionals and the Romanian public about AIDS. The association, made up of volunteer physicians and technicians across the country, also wants to provide social and medical support for AIDS victims and their families. Christian groups such as Youth With a Mission participate in the British branch of the Romanian AIDS Association.

Yet the Romanian government has barred the country's own Romanian Christian Medical Association from working with the AIDS epidemic.

Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president

of the association, attended an AIDS/HIV conference for Christian physicians in Wheaton, Ill. When he returned to Romania, the Ministry of Health told him that only officially appointed specialists could address the AIDS issue. None of the Christian association's 325 members qualify.

'FIRST OF ALL, PRAYER'

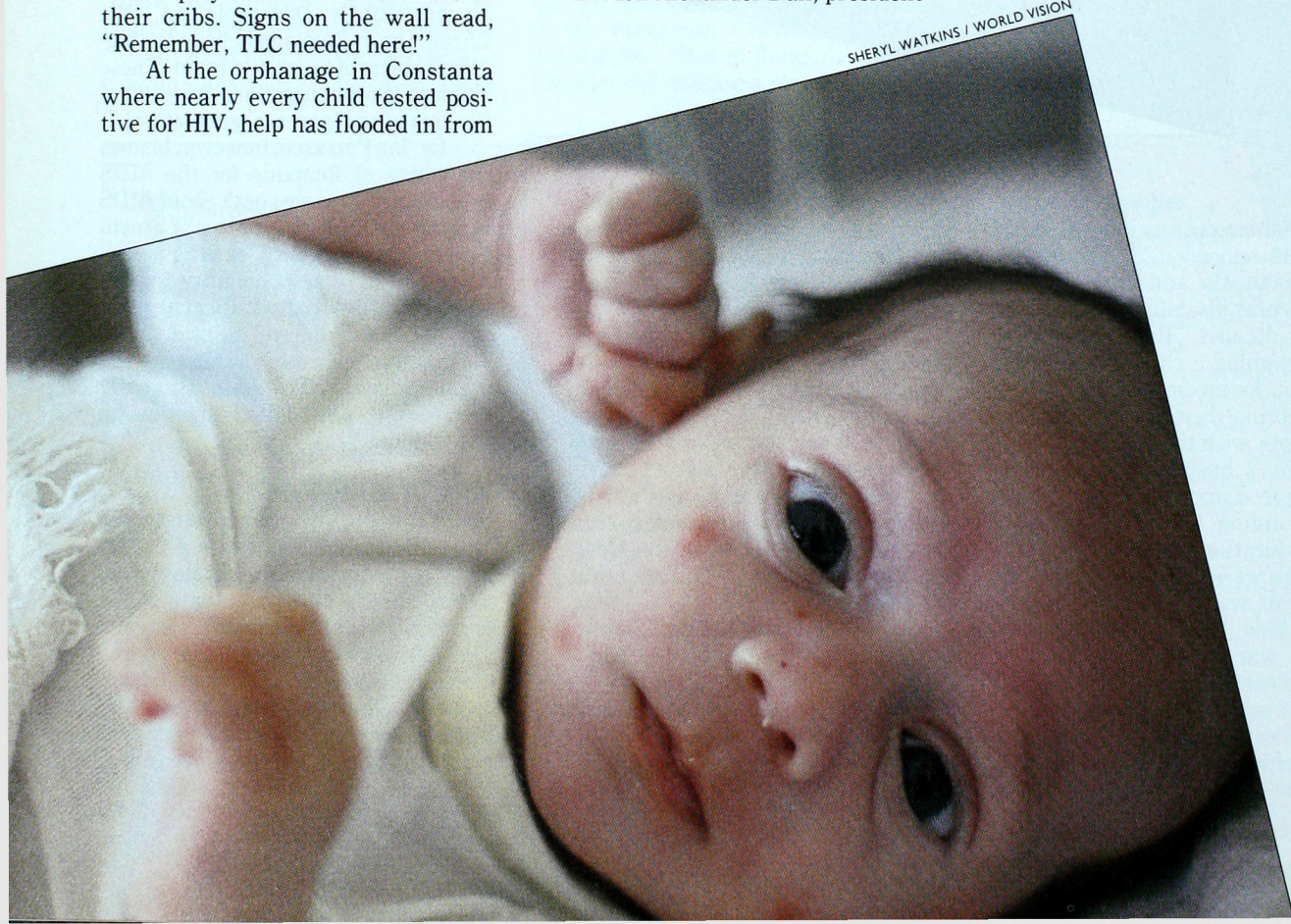
The tragedy of Romania's orphans, including the children's AIDS epidemic, has united Christians from many parts of the world around a common cause.

"I believe in Christian unity and fellowship," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan of the Romanian Christian Medical Society. "I consider first of all, prayer is most important. God is in control of all the universe and all our activity. Prayer is unity—our prayers with your prayers together."

Doctors and caretakers in the AIDS wards are, in most cases, hungry for support and knowledge. The children are hungry for affection. However, the new government's recent restrictions have shown that Romania's hard-won freedom is as tenuous as the heartbeat of those babies in the iron cribs. There is no "someday" here. The time to act is now. □

Susie Post is a free-lance photojournalist in Ambridge, Penn.

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION





One of the first things I learned in Romania is that every question has at least two answers. There's the official answer and the unofficial answer. There's the answer that was true before the December 1989 uprising and the one that's true afterwards. And then there's the doublespeak answer whose actual meaning has nothing to do with the words themselves.

—*How's the weather?* Before December 1989, there was the answer on a thermometer, and the quite different answer on the official weather report. The law required that workers be sent home if the weather turned severe. So the government would change the weather to keep people at work.

—*Do you have a double room available for tonight?* "Come back in one hour. I will know then," the hotel clerk told me. What she meant was, "A small token of your confidence—say a pack of cigarettes—might help me find one."

—*What is the name of this city?* To the ethnic Romanians, I was visiting Oradea. To the Hungarians in western Romania, I was in the ancient Hungarian city of Nagyvárad. To the German minority, I was in Grosswardein.

—*What has changed since the revolution?* "Practically everything," about half the people told me. "Practically nothing," said the other half.

After visiting Romania, I agree with both. The two contradictory answers sum up post-1989 Romania. It is here that any understanding of the challenges facing Romania's evangelical churches must begin.

In a country that is no longer ruled

There's so much to do. And finally, the churches have the freedom to do it.

ROMANIA'S UNCHAINED MELODY

by a madman, practically everything has changed. For people who were used to living on a base diet of flour, sugar, water, and whatever they could scrounge on the black market, and who can now buy food at their local grocery store, practically everything has changed. For people who can travel freely for the first time in decades, practically everything has changed.

Some things, however, haven't changed, things that simply can't change so quickly—like the comatose economy. There is also a disturbingly familiar hand visible behind the frequent ethnic violence and political harassment. Members of the old secret police still walk the streets, and they don't look unemployed. A schoolteacher's phone is still tapped for weeks after receiving a telephone call from the United States. Romania's new government too often plays by the old rule book.

"Before the revolution, we never turned on Romanian television at home," said one pastor, "because it was nothing but lies and the Ceausescu family. Then, just before the revolution, everybody was watching six or eight hours a day, just fascinated to see what was happening and to finally hear some truth. But lately we don't watch much television anymore."

Last May, the ballots had barely been counted in Romania's first democratic election when the winning National Salvation Front took back its promise of independent TV stations.

So there's a lot of the old Romania in the new. But what about the evan-

The only way to express our feelings is by crying.'

gelical churches? Without doubt, it's a new day. Josef Tson, a Romanian Baptist pastor, had spent nine years in exile before he moved back to Romania in 1990, just in time to see thousands of people receive Christ at a Luis Palau crusade in his home town.

"For decades we have had to spread the gospel in secret," he said. "And now to see a stadium packed and more than 6,000 people coming forward. The only way to express our feelings is by crying."

The formerly unregistered, or illegal, congregations that met in secret and endured raids and harassment now meet in the open. When police discovered the secret meeting place of Philadelphia Church in Oradea in the 1980s, they raided and trashed the building, levied a huge fine for the Christian literature they discovered, and scattered the congregation.

Reunited

Today the church is reunited, and for four or five hours on Sunday afternoons they worship in a public meeting hall formerly occupied by the Communist Party. They no longer look behind them to see if they're being followed. They can invite anyone they want,

without considering first whether it might be Judas.

"Anyway, the churches did survive," says Sándor Fazakas, a Hungarian Reformed pastor and secretary to the bishop. "They are even stronger than before. Under the pressure we gained strength. But it's not because of the church leaders. It's from God."

And like most Christians in Romania, he is reluctant to catalog the old wrongs, not because they are forgotten, but because they divert energy from the tasks at hand. There is so much to do, and finally there's the freedom to do it.

The churches can now educate their children openly. The Hungarian Reformed denomination was formerly allowed to offer only basic catechism and confirmation. Now, Fazakas explains, "we've already started organizing youth groups in the church, even conferences. We are planning to hold summer camps too."

The new freedom to work with young people opens up a new challenge. A whole generation has been raised to see the church as a place for sad, old women, and Christianity as a religion concerned only with the afterlife. Until now, the church wasn't allowed to



learn how to reach young people.

Fazakas told of a youth organization that, after the revolution, invited clergy of several denominations to meet and discuss Christianity. "On the third night," Fazakas said, "they suddenly asked us to hold a worship service, a special youth service. They said, 'Look, the church is right here. We don't want to go to your church building. And please, don't wear your gown, don't bring your black suit. Just do it.'"

Eventually they did it—a Roman Catholic priest, a Baptist pastor, an Adventist choir, and Fazakas. But it will take more than a special event to reach Romania's young people.

Standing room only

Another welcome change: Churches can now get building permits. Standing-room-only worship services may impress Westerners, but the Romanians find them about as inspiring as living in a small house with several families. "We have hundreds of names of people who responded at the evangelistic crusades," one pastor said, "but we have no place to put them."

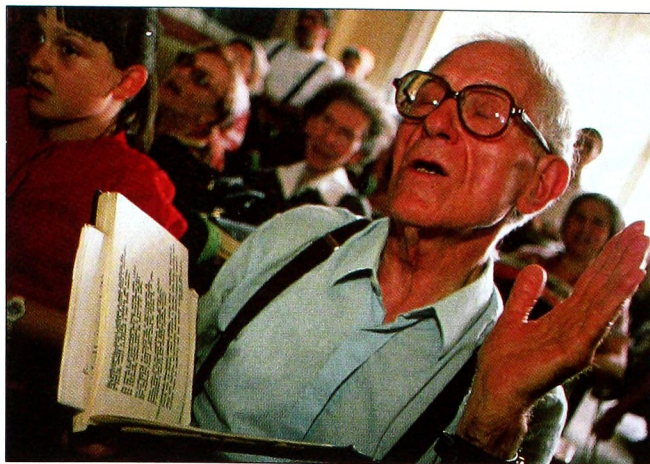
One of the most visible changes the revolution brought for many evangelical churches is the influx of visitors and aid from the West. The Second Baptist Church in Oradea, the church most often mentioned in the U.S. Christian media, has received so many Western visitors that it reserves a front-row pew for them.

The new access to the West has also bolstered the evangelical churches' image in Romania. Traditionally, evangeli-

cal churches have been considered fanatical sects on the fringes of orthodox Christianity. But all the attention and aid that poured in on evangelicals within days of the revolution started to alter that perception.

One example of this was in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, a coalition of evangelical denominations in Romania. The post-revolution government refused to grant official status to the alliance unless it would accept self-defeating conditions, such as making all its decisions subject to government approval. The evangelical leaders refused and said,

Plans, dreams, and passion: Romanian Christians hold gifts essential for healing a poisoned society.



"We will continue this dialogue in the Western media." Later the same day their charter was granted—without preconditions.

The changes in Romania have one thing in common: freedom. The liberation of speech, action, movement, choice. But freedom also liberates evil. One of the most troubling sides of the new Romania is the apparent escalation of ethnic violence and other expressions of ethnic hatred.

Its roots are deep, ancient, and tangled. There are the ill-conceived boundaries etched on the entire Balkan region after World War I. There are also ancient rivalries between the

It is the Christians who have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice.

Hungarians and the Romanians. But the Ceausescu years have left their own special poison.

Obsessed with the "Romanization" of Romania, Ceausescu sought to obliterate the cultural life of Romania's minorities. He closed their schools. He told them what they could name their children. He scattered their high school graduates to remote, isolated areas. And it was common policy to resettle Romanians from the eastern part of the country—people who had grown up hearing that the ethnic minorities were responsible for Romania's ills—in ethnically mixed western Romania.

Since December 1989 there have been more outbreaks of violence, aimed mostly at Hungarians in western Romania and Gypsies in Bucharest. During a tense time earlier this year, Second Baptist Church in Oradea held

a meeting for Romanian and Hungarian youth.

"It was packed," recalls youth pastor Petru Vidu. "We sang together, we praised God together, we said that in Jesus Christ we are one. It doesn't matter what language we are speaking. And we said that only Jesus Christ can bring peace and healing. Those people who made all those problems, they cannot be Christians. A Christian cannot oppress others."

Indeed the evangelical Christians were one group Ceausescu was unable to divide and conquer, and there has been remarkable cooperation between denominations and between ethnic groups. When the churches were attacked, they united for support.

Today it's those Christians with a living faith who can make the difference for Romania. They have the answers to what are ultimately spiritual problems. The Christians I met seemed like a remnant who offered hope for the saving of the whole. I sensed it when I walked from the street, with streetcars full of passive, impassive faces, into a small, stuffy meeting hall full of passionate faces, where there was loud singing and clapping and praying for hours.

It is in the churches that people still dare to make plans and dream. Christians have kept alive the ability to feel rather than to numb themselves. Christians have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice. These gifts will be essential for the healing of a poisoned society.

What has changed for Romania's Christians? One pastor summarized, "There is not a major change in my life because I was always free inside. I was free before and I am free after. The circumstances have changed, so I have more opportunities now and we are busier. This is a new chapter in our lives—because of the circumstances, not because of our convictions." □



SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME HOME

BY SHERYL WATKINS

Laurel Stevens sits on the floor in a Romanian orphanage and pulls a couple of kids onto her lap. She hugs them, plays with them, lets them take off her watch and listen to it tick. When her companions decide it's time to move on, someone has to go back to get Laurel. She's still with the kids.

A year ago, Romania was the last place this Canadian thought she would end up. After serving as a nurse in Canada, Thailand, and Alaska, Laurel was tired of the stress and the night shifts. She switched to landscaping, with shorter hours and daylight work. But those shorter hours also meant less income. Confused about her options, Laurel prayed.

"I really don't want to go back to nursing," she told God. "What am I supposed to do next?" She got no answer, so she kept her landscaping job and just waited. "God kept making me aware that I didn't have to worry," she recalls, "because he knew what was ahead, and he would show me at the right time."

Like millions of others, Laurel watched reports on

Romania's revolution. She kept thinking, "Maybe there's something I can do." A few days after Christmas 1989, she heard about a Vancouver doctor who was leading a medical team to Romania. They were leaving in three days. Laurel was welcome to come along, but it normally takes three

days to renew a passport. "When I got [the renewal] in one day," she says, "it was like a little voice from the Holy Spirit saying, 'This is what you've been waiting for.'"

After a few weeks in Romania, Laurel returned home just long enough to raise the support she needed to make a one-year commitment with International Teams of Canada.

Today, Laurel coordinates the distribution of millions of dollars' worth of donated medical supplies. "I don't even look at this as a job. This is something I would do as a volunteer on vacation," she says. She has shared the gospel with Romanian doctors and health officials and is amazed how eagerly they ask for Christian books and Bibles.

This past spring, Laurel took a three-week tour of Romanian orphanages and medical schools. "I had heard about the orphanages already," she recalls, "so I knew conditions were really bad. But I had no idea the problem is as huge as it is." Laurel steeled herself to act clinically rather than emotionally, but "the apathy and emptiness in the children's eyes really struck me," she says. "They were rocking and banging their heads because they had no other physical stimulus. Their eyes were void of emotion because they had never been shown any."

Laurel still can't resist picking up the kids. "What these kids need is to be loved and held," she says. "And part of me hopes that when the staff see me—playing with the kids, sitting on the floor, and pulling as many children to me as possible—they will do the same."

The woman who admits she "never had much of an interest in Eastern Europe" is now totally committed to her new ministry. She says she misses friends and family, but she's not homesick. "I don't want to go home," she says. "I want them to come here and see Romania." □

Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist

P*erhaps the obstacle is not so much God's silence as the fear that God might in fact respond.*

Ronald Goetz

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Matters for Prayer

◆ **Pray for Romania's children** with AIDS. Ask God to strengthen efforts to fight the epidemic and care for its victims (pages 4-8).

◆ **Thank God** for the new freedom of Romania's churches, and for the churches' energy and vitality. (pages 9-11).

◆ **Ask God to help you**, this holiday season, to show compassion to someone who has little to celebrate (pages 14-15).

◆ **Pray for the reconciling witness** of South African churches (pages 18-21).

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

THE LOVE DEPARTMENT

BY JEROME A. KAPLOWITZ

Beverly Hills Baptist Church

Nobody gets by James Noe without a hug. His grandfatherly presence is the gatekeeper to a steady stream of people arriving in wheelchairs, on crutches, or with a helping hand at the church door.

Noe (pronounced NO-ee) welcomes about 100 mentally and physically handicapped worshippers on a Sunday morning at Beverly Hills Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. He's the volunteer director of the Exceptional Department at the church. For more than 20 years Beverly Hills Baptist has provided what might be the only worship service specifically for the city's mentally and physically impaired people.

John Walker leads the morning devotion. He concludes by visiting each person in the audience and giving them the microphone to repeat the monthly memory verse. More than half are able to recite it. For some, like 27-year-old Deborah Ayres, who has cerebral palsy, it's a struggle. But they all enjoy their moment in the limelight.

"Deborah really brightens up every time she comes to Beverly Hills," says her mother, Emma Ayres. "She loves to get involved in everything."

"All our special people want is someone to love them," Noe says. "If Jesus accepts them, then we do too." Maybe that's why the rest of the church calls the Exceptional Department "the love department."

The message of love and acceptance is central to everything that happens on Sunday mornings in the love department. Marion Haynes, a Sunday school teacher, often uses 1 Peter 2:9-10, where Peter identifies God's people as a chosen race. "I tell my students that they *are* different, but not by the world's definition. They are different because they belong to Jesus."

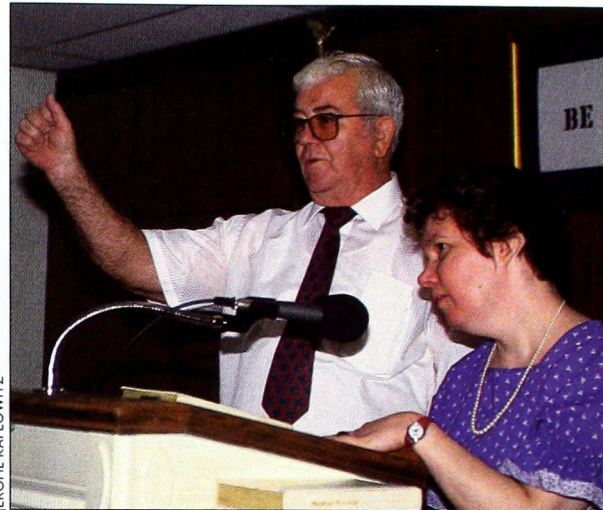
In 1961, a mother brought her young son with Down's syndrome to Sunday school at Beverly Hills Baptist. The pastor and another church member decided to do something to meet the needs of that mother and her child.

With three students, three teachers, and an improvised classroom under a stairwell, the Exceptional Department was underway. Two years later James Noe became the director, and he's been with it ever since.

Noe, unlike most of the volunteers he works with, doesn't have a handicapped person in his family.

"Most of us became involved because we have a Down's syndrome child or a family member in a wheelchair," says John Walker, the program's assistant director. "James Noe just cares."

According to volunteer Joyce Brantely, the



James Noe (left): "He just cares."

only requirement to work in the program is love. "When God sees that," she says, "He will take the rest of you and use you to touch others."

Several of the volunteers were apprehensive when they first started. "I wondered how I was going to communicate God's Word to these people," said Pepper Shelton.

John Erwin said, "It took me a while to learn that you talk to a mentally handicapped Christian the same as you would any other Christian."

But when volunteers leave, it's often to volunteer in similar ministries in other churches. "Once an impaired person touches your life," Noe says, "it's like having empty pockets that suddenly become full."

The Exceptional Department is also an informal support network for the families of the handicapped worshippers. They bowl together, take trips together, and call each other during the week. "We are like a family in so many ways," says Ethel Whitten.

Pastor John Bedford says, "The volunteers help our other members sense the need to do something worthwhile for the Lord."

John Noe recently overheard a conversation in the church parking lot that said it all. A father who doesn't attend church was picking up his handicapped son. "What did you do this morning?" he asked.

The boy answered his father, "I learned that Jesus loves me." □

Jerome Kaplowitz is a free-lance writer in Vicksburg, Miss.



JEROME KAPLOWITZ

For more
information contact
Beverly Hills
Baptist Church,
3804 Kimball,
Memphis, TN 38111.

In a downtown Sacramento park, hundreds of needy people gathered for a hot meal, a blanket, and some hope on Thanksgiving Day. Under the umbrella of Project Light, evangelists and others rendered immediate first aid to ailing bodies and minds. But long-term assistance loomed like an ugly blight on a middle-class horizon, and even the warmest of hearts despaired at the task ahead.

The reality of winter hits hard when shoes give way to bound rags and tattered clothing is the fashion of the day. Cold-reddened hands turned white at a fleeting puff of warm air blown in desperation for a moment of comfort, an impossibility when that same chill sets weary bones and hearts to aching.

As Christmas approaches, I am nagged by a different scenario than loved ones gathered warmly and happily around a Christmas tree. That familiar picture is overshadowed by the memory of the haunting eyes of an old man, crying unashamedly at the warmth and happiness he experienced on that Thanksgiving Day.

I hear again the redundant cries of a child as he tugged at his mother's torn jeans—"I'm still hungry." With two other youngsters at her side and a shopping cart filled with family valuables to guard, the mother's resigned reply was, "I'll do what I can."

Another man, in his late 30s, confessed his feelings of failure to a worker: "I'm so embarrassed to be

here. I have a son. What must he think of me?" Another person gave me a hug of thanks. For a moment, I thought he wanted a handout. Others had asked, and I was saddened that the needs were beyond one day's work.

As I think back on that day, the anticipation of special Yuletide goodies on our laden table is not so exciting.

What would Christ do on Christmas Day? I'm sure he, too, would be nagged by my vision of "outside." But I'm also sure he would not be content to sit "inside" and enjoy the festivities when so many lack the same opportunities.

In a most Christlike manner, a young man left me with a poignant reminder of the world's needs that Thanksgiving, and I cried. I was suddenly rebuked by my own conscience as his one act of faith far surpassed mine that chilly November day.

This young man, dressed in a torn jacket, jeans, and worn shoes, had happily searched through piles of clothing for a "new" pair of shoes. Hugging

a pair of nearly new athletic shoes, he gave me a thumbs up sign and a wide grin. I felt pretty good as I watched him meander through the throng of homeless and poor that had gathered. This was what the outreach was all about—helping others.

But suddenly the young man stopped next to a Middle Eastern man wearing a tunic made of potato sacks. On this man's feet were several layers of magazines held in place by rags torn from the same potato sacking. The young man quietly observed this stranger, tapped him on the shoulder, and offered him the tennis shoes he had rescued from the pile of discards. Acknowledging the young man's own need, the stranger declined the offer with dignity and a smile of thanks. My own feelings of "doing good" were a bit tarnished by his selfless act of giving.

As I think of that interchange, I know what Christ would do on Christmas Day. Many of us open our doors to strangers, and more than a few of us reach out to others in need. But perhaps we too often reach out in ways that are comfortable to us, ways that don't demand much effort.

I recently read an article about a local family who gathered scarfs, hats, and mittens to hand out to the city's indigent. Most of them were sur-

Where would Christ be on Christmas?

BY MARY OWEN

We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us.

prised by the generosity. One man stuck around until they left, just needing a friendly ear. That family's small act of love has now become a ministry. Spurred on by the need, their successful effort, and the true feeling of Christmas, they hope this year to surpass the 150 gifts they gave away.

In Isaiah 58 it is written: "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like noonday."

In that Sacramento park on Thanksgiving, a young man's "night" became "like noonday." The cure for the world's problems starts with each and every one of us. We need to let our own lights rise, with only fleeting thought to the few who manipulate the system; an over-used excuse for nonaction. We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us, then act. And the gift we receive in return will entwine the love wrapped in parcels beneath the tree with the true Christmas spirit—the spirit of giving of ourselves. □

This article was reprinted with permission of the Davis Enterprise, Davis, Calif.



THE CHRIST OF THE HOMELESS; WOOD ENGRAVING BY FRITZ EICHENBERG, © 1982

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Leslie Salisbury

HOUSE CALLS

Beth Kidd is a nurse who still makes house calls.

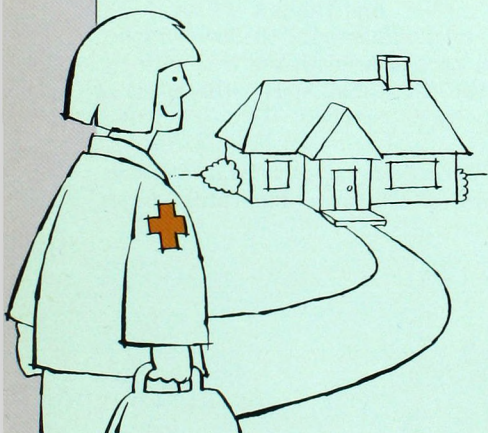
While working at Boston's City Hospital in the early 1970s, Kidd began to follow up on patients who still needed care after they left the hospital.

She now has 60 outpatients whose needs range from prenatal care to treatment for AIDS. Most of them are her neighbors.

"Some of them I see every day, some I just call every so often. I am the connection between the hospital and patient," Kidd said.

She often becomes the family her patients don't have. "I get involved with their housing problems and welfare problems," she said. "I help pregnant teenagers who don't have anyone else."

Local Boston churches are also involved in Kidd's nursing ministry. "I build a relationship with my



patients, share the gospel with them, and try to connect them with a local church. Then the church takes over," Kidd said.

For information on how to start a nursing ministry in your area, contact Beth Kidd at Emmanuel Gospel Center: (617) 262-4567.



New London Kids Club

A LONDON BRIDGE

London, Calif., is a severely impoverished community near Kingsburg, Calif. It doesn't have a police force to fight its heavy drug traffic. Most of its children don't have enough clothes or food.

Virtually the only group helping London's children is the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program. Kingsburg volunteers lead Salvation Army-sponsored programs

for 65 children in grades one through eight. Tutoring, Bible stories, and crafts are an alternative to spending afternoons in an empty house or on the streets.

"We are their only link, their only introduction to Christianity," said Sharon Melchor, director of the New London Kids Club.

For information on how to start an afternoon program for kids in your area, contact the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program, P.O. Box 384, Kingsburg, CA 92631. Telephone: (209) 897-2499.

SWEAT EQUITY

Some old-fashioned barn raising has raised \$449,500 for world hunger relief.

Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church members have built five houses using donated supplies. When the houses are sold, the proceeds go to the humanitarian work of the Mennonite Central Committee.

The house goes up in one day,

and the inside is finished in four to five months. "It's great to see people using skills and abilities, knowing it will help people around the world," said Leo Martin of the MCC.

For information, contact the Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

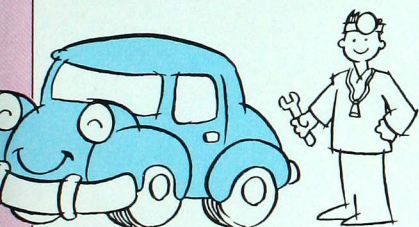
ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A car dealership in Grand Rapids, Mich., helped 13 financially needy people get back on the road at a recent free car clinic.

Duthler Ford performed simple repairs on 13 cars whose owners depended on the vehicles to get to work, yet couldn't afford the repairs.

Seventeen area churches referred people to the car clinic through the All County Churches Emergency Support System (ACCESS).

If the individual couldn't pay for the necessary parts, the referring church provided the funds.



Duthler Ford plans another repair day, collaborating with other local dealerships. "Together, more of us can make a bigger difference," said Patricia Duthler, vice president and general manager. "The best way to help is to help people support themselves."

Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person.

Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Action



Last night these young Americans came closer to starvation. And closer to God.



They were stretched by a 30-hour weekend fast. Together with planned activities. Games. Films. Discussion. Prayers. Bible study. And songs.

These young Christians felt what it's like to be hungry. And they raised money to help feed hungry families around the world.

They shared an unforgettable night and day of fellowship and fun. Hunger and joy. They shared an experience that brought them closer to each other. Closer to a starving world. And closer to God.

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☐ Please send me materials needed to organize our Planned Famine today. We are considering the date: _____
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JCOPS1

After 30 years
of separation,
white and black
youths of
South Africa
must unite
to forge a
new nation.

BY MICHAEL CASSIDY

PORTRAIT IN BLACK AND

Sometimes I even forgot I was black because nobody kept reminding me."

That's how a black South African teenager described his first friendship with a white South African. He met his new friend at a Christian camp designed to reconcile the separated youth of South Africa. For the first time in his life he saw deeper than the white skin, and saw not a natural enemy, but a fellow countryman.

I long to see all of South Africa's youth united in reconciliation and trust. But sadly, I can't even say they are "the nation's youth." Black young people and white young people don't feel they belong to each other or even to a common nation.

That must change. The new South Africa will not be built by today's aging politicians but by the young leaders, both black and white. They'll have to do it together.

Because of apartheid, interaction between South Africa's black youth and white youth has been virtually nonexistent for the past 30 to 35 years, even between church youth groups.

The 1980s was a damaging decade. It was a decade of rebellion, repression, and polarization—rebellion by black young people, repression by the authorities, and polarization of almost everyone.

Our government started drafting young whites into the army straight from school to fend off the so-called "total onslaught." The authorities told



GUY TILLIM / IMPACT VISUALS

these young soldiers to defend our white and Western civilization, to fight against the "total onslaught" of communism and agitators trying to take over our country. Ideologically innocent and politically naive, these white youths went to the border to protect our (white) country, our (white) values, and our (white) civilization.

Meanwhile, young blacks were "drafted" into the "liberation struggle." We convinced our youth, both white and black, that we were in a war that one would win and the other lose.

Young blacks met violence with violence. This, in turn, led to increased repression by internal security forces, which led to increased aggression by black political movements. Blacks who were suspected to have collaborated

with the white cause suffered torture and even death by other blacks.

Whether it was the white internal security forces or the black liberation forces, they all believed force could change attitudes. In the 1980s, we effectively created a culture of conflict and violence.

Overriding this culture of violence is the continuing debate about whether South Africa should be a single nation. The African National Congress, led by Nelson Mandela, believes it should be.

The ruling National Party, however, has insisted that South Africa's different people groups cannot live together as one nation. Only recently did they recognize that separation isn't feasible. Today they are emphasizing the protection of each group's rights and identity.

Complicating this issue, white South Africans have grown up identifying with Europe and America rather than Africa, believing our culture is alien to Africa's.

But this attitude is slowly changing. After all, most of us are fourth-generation Africans. Our grandparents, parents, and children were born in Africa. All of us, especially the young people, must move toward a new cultural identity without denying our roots. I see growing hope for this new identity as black young people force us to face key issues.

In 1976 black students rebelled against an edict that established the Dutch-descended language Afrikaans as the official language for all South African schools. The rebellion was a symbolic action. The black youth signalled that they would no longer tolerate their parents' subservience.

They cried to the world, "This is our country. We have a stake in it. We will work for change and, if necessary, we will force change. We will not sit back and accept inferior education, inferior housing, or inferior anything."

Their educational demands have evolved into a symbol of black refusal to accept second-class treatment. Their stand on this issue has helped change the attitudes of many white South Africans.

Black young people were at the forefront of this change, just as students in the past have spearheaded change in Britain, Europe, and the United States.

South African white students have also contributed to change. Through the Natal Union of South African Students, they have fought repressive laws aimed at black students. But unlike the black student protestors, white stu-

dents often backed down in the face of intimidation or bans.

The students, both white and black, have visibly changed South Africa's education system. The University of Natal (Durban), for example, now reserves 70 percent of its residence space for black students, because whites can more easily find alternative housing. Even Afrikaans universities are becoming more racially open. Though few have blacks in residence yet, the signs are encouraging.

In the midst of these changes, the church has not been silent. Despite the fact that the government took over the

WHITE



ANNA ZIEMINSKI / IMPACT VISUALS



We convinced our youth we were in a war that one side would win and the other lose.

country's church-run schools and colleges in the 1950s, the church has recently spearheaded many changes in the education system. In fact, the success of multi-racial education in private church schools has encouraged the government to take steps in that direction.

The next major challenge facing the church and South Africa's youth is the creation of a fair, effective judicial system. Most blacks perceive the present structures as serving white interests. Much of the township violence stems from a breakdown of law and order. Police action is seen as biased.

This loss of faith in the justice system has led to vigilante justice. And



The church's role in South Africa is to encourage the building of a new country based on mutual acceptance and tolerance. The key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

vigilante groups working in secret to exact community justice are often youth-led.

The challenge is to replace both the biased official system and the vigilante system with a system of authority and justice that is trustworthy and fair. The church's role is to champion justice. Injustice from both the security forces and the liberation movement must be equally condemned. We must

“Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation.”

replace our culture of violence with a culture of repentance and forgiveness, leading to a non-racist democracy.

As the church spreads the message that every African has value in the eyes of Christ, and that everyone's ideas and views are important, a new day is possible.

Christians have a distinctive message for South Africa: Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation. It is first an attitude and then a strategy.

The church's vital role is to encourage the building of a new South Africa: a place of mutual acceptance,

tolerance, and togetherness as one nation under God. Organizations like World Vision and Africa Enterprise recognize that the key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

Africa Enterprise is reconciling black, white, and colored young people through week-long Bridge-Building Encounters. Over the past 10 years, hundreds of young people of all races and from all regions of South Africa have met at our center to get to know each other personally.

After the encounters we hear comments like these:

—“I've learned more about people and the problems facing my country in the past six days than I have in the past five years of history lessons.”

—“It was the first time I mixed freely with other races.”

—“I have found that there is not too much difference between black and white.”

South Africa's challenges are immense, and nowhere are they more demanding than among our youth. Yet with Christ's help, many young blacks and whites are beginning to live out that famous dictum: “You see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask, why not?” □

Michael Cassidy is founder of Africa Enterprise.

For the past three years, Natal Province in South Africa has been the battleground of two opposing black factions. The African National Congress, the United Democratic Front, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions make up one side, and Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, president of the 1.5-million-strong Inkatha Movement, heads the other.

Earlier this year, Matt Montague, a 19-year-old American, found himself in the crossfire.



Imbali Township is a series of identical concrete block homes on small plots of land—two bedrooms and a toilet out back. Outside they're run-down and dirty. Inside they're immaculate. A home that looks even halfway prosperous from the outside might attract police attention. The family could be searched for cash or weapons, maybe even killed. So the sameness has a purpose. It keeps people safe. Many of the people work at the aluminum plant outside the township, or as taxi drivers or “garden boys.”

I lived in Imbali Township for eight months as part of an internship program with Africa Enterprise, a Christian organization whose mission is to reconcile the races through the gospel. And I ended up in a war.

At first, March 29 seemed no different than any other Thursday. Every Thursday I met with a youth reconciliation group where young whites, coloreds, Indians, and blacks could come together in peace to discuss issues that matter to them and learn more about Jesus Christ. After the meeting, my friend Antony and I went to another friend's house to play darts.

At 6 p.m., the craziness started.

We heard a lot of commotion, looked out the window, and saw 50 or more people running across the valley about a quarter of a mile away. Then we heard a few gunshots. Antony ran out the door to get a closer look. I took off for the nearest phone, since there was

no phone at our friend's house, and called the Riot Squad, South Africa's riot control team. As usual, they sounded bored, said they'd see what they could do. As usual, they didn't come.

It seems some Inkatha members were chasing the townspeople. By this time, the air was full of shots. We didn't know what to do, so we decided to head for the Imbali Support Group house a few blocks away. We were scheduled to handle the phones there that night anyway. Maybe we could find out what was going on.

By the time we got there, the phone was already ringing off the hook with requests for help and reports of people being shot or houses being shot at. Less than an hour had passed since the shooting first started, but now it sounded like a full-scale war. Antony and our friend Temba left in response to a distress call. I was alone in the house with another guy named Temba when we received another urgent call. Two black men were wounded and needed transportation to a hospital. I grabbed Temba and we drove off to pick them up.

As soon as we turned the first corner, a shot came out of a bush in our direction. I ducked under the dashboard—but then I remembered I was driving! I've never been so scared in all my life. I was actually being shot at. Still in a daze, we drove towards a

group of boys. More shots. Temba dove for the floorboard. Another shot came and missed. We were both sweating. We swerved onto a dirt road and cut across the valley. More shooting. And for the third time, we got out alive.

We finally reached the house. It was riddled with bullets. The two men inside had been shot, one in the right shoulder and one in the lower back. We figured that the nearest black hospital, Edendale, would already be full, and we didn't want to have to fight for their admission. So we drove them to Gray's, a hospital that had just opened to blacks. When we got there, I went to the admitting station and told the nurse, "I've got two guys in the car who've been shot."

"Are they black?" she asked.

When I said they were, she hesitated for a moment, then said to bring them in. No one on staff came with us. That night many blacks would be admitted to that hospital. To my knowledge, though, these were the first.

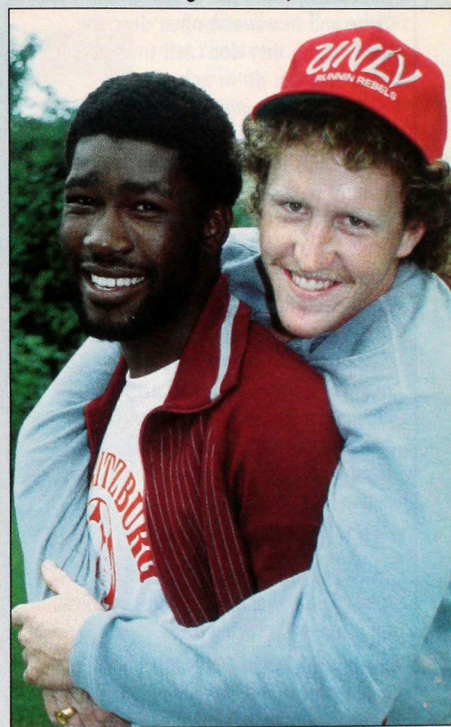
I called the Imbali Support Group house but was told they were under fire and it was unsafe to return. I was instructed to go to Africa Enterprise and answer the many distress and information calls that would come in. I did that, reluctantly. I was so worried about the ISG house and my friends that I called them over and over again. Finally, by 4:30 that morning, things had quieted down and it seemed safe to return. Temba and I made it back to

the ISG house, shaken but alive.

I couldn't wait to get back to the United States. And that's when it hit me. I had the choice to leave. I was in Imbali township as a volunteer. But what about those who have no choice? What about the people who go to sleep not knowing if their house will be burned to the ground in the middle of the night? If their children will be alive the next day? I don't know if I'd be strong enough to live under that kind of pressure.

That's why it's so important to give people hope. Hope in God, hope in a better life. I'm studying business administration so I can go back and help the people put together small businesses and run them. I may not be able to change the big picture in South Africa, but I can help a kid become something other than a garden boy—and help him know that life doesn't have to be the way it is right now in Imbali Township. □

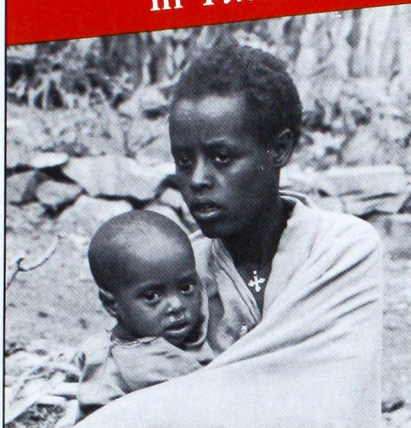
Matt Montague and his friend Temba.



DODGING BULLETS IN IMBALI

As an intern in a South African township, this American youth got more than he expected.

Your people need
to know more about
Ethiopia's famine
than what they read
in *Time*



Ethiopia's people are in crisis, and while *Time* and *Newsweek* often describe their plight, they don't tell your people what they can do to help them.

Sociologist, author and dynamic Christian speaker Tony Campolo visited Africa. And in World Vision's 16-minute color film, "Africa in Crisis," he candidly reveals the compelling truth about the situation.



To share with your people what many call Tony Campolo's greatest challenge, simply book a showing of "Africa in Crisis" right now. They will be filled with compassion — and moved to action.

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Church _____
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Area Code _____

JC0FS1

LETTERS

READERS' RIGHT

Dear Mr. Seiple,

In a recent article you called for reconciliation with Vietnam in order to relieve the pain of Vietnam War victims, both American and Vietnamese ("Undoing a Fashionable Grudge," August/September 1990).

The communist regime that has controlled Vietnam for the past 15 years has continuously imposed a hard-line and inhumane policy on its own people. Hard-labor prisons have been built all across Vietnam to imprison thousands of former South Vietnamese servicemen, government officials, opposition leaders, and American MIAs and POWs.

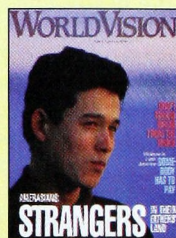
Your organization has helped relieve the famine situation in Ethiopia. However, in spite of the world's effort to help, people in Ethiopia continue to suffer and die year after year because of the inhuman and corrupt Ethiopian government. That government refused to cooperate with the free world to effectively distribute food and medical assistance to the hungry Ethiopian people.

I use Ethiopia as an example to ask you to rethink your position on reconciliation with Vietnam. That shouldn't happen until the present government agrees to give democracy a chance, and resolves the MIA/POW issue.

Americans and Vietnamese abroad owe no debt to Vietnam. The Vietnamese government owes basic human rights to all Vietnamese people. Reconciliation should begin with a democratic, internationally monitored election.

As a Vietnamese veteran I salute you, an American veteran, for your tireless effort to help my country during and after the war. I hope you will reconsider your position on reconciliation.

Jimmy Tong Nguyen
Newport Beach, Calif.



Dear Mr. Nguyen,

Thanks for taking the time to contribute to our ongoing discussion on Vietnam. I certainly realize the impact of an oppressive Marxist government on Vietnam. Would that it were not so. Our job would be so much easier and there would be considerably fewer victims who need our help in Vietnam.

But our first loyalty is toward those victims. This is why we continue to work in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola—all countries with oppressive governments in varying degrees. We do hope that some of our Christian humanitarian work will affect the governments themselves. But in the meantime, we feel an obligation to serve those who are hurting.

Speaking as a private citizen, I hope that any reconciliation with Vietnam would be accompanied by less oppression of the Vietnamese people. In particular I think of the Christian church in Vietnam. That church has experienced much persecution; it is still going on.

However, we must remove economic sanctions and press toward a normalized relationship to help victims of the war on both sides of the Pacific. If World Vision waited for a democratic government in Vietnam, we would not be able to serve the victims created by the present government. World Vision wants to alleviate the present suffering, regardless of what happens between our two governments.

I can assure you that we work on both levels. We try to help the people who suffer from oppression and injustice in Vietnam, even as we work quietly on the political level to promote positive change.

We do not feel we can withhold Christian humanitarian aid simply because we disagree with the present regime in Vietnam. As Christians, however, we continue to stand up for individual freedoms, human dignity, and the sanctity of life.

Robert Seiple
President, World Vision

WHEN TOO MUCH IS NOT ENOUGH

BY DALE
HANSON
BOURKE

First I heard the whimpering of a small child. I looked up from my grocery list and spotted him slumped in the seat of a shiny shopping cart. His hair was unkempt, his shirt dirty. His face was streaked with tears that slid down his cheeks and dripped from his chin. His little chest moved up and down as he tried to suppress his sobs.

I was about to ask him if he was all right when a woman rushed over from the nearby dairy case. "Shut up," she hissed. I stood in shock as I realized this was his mother.

He whimpered again as she glared at him and raised her hand in what seemed to be a well-practiced gesture. Moving slightly toward them, I came into view. She glared at me, then at him, but dropped her hand. He was safe for now—but her demeanor suggested that as soon as I was out of sight, she would gladly follow through with her threat.

I wanted to hug the boy, to protect him, but as she jerked the shopping cart around and wheeled toward the checkout line, I stood motionless. "Stop!" I wanted to yell. But instead I realized I too was beginning to cry, right in the middle of the gleaming supermarket. I cried for the little boy and his pain, for the woman and the frustrations that had driven her to hate her own child, for all the people in the store who were surrounded by so much—yet had so little.

I had just returned from a trip to Latin America, and the shock of re-entry into North American society was fresh. Everywhere I turned, I was amazed by our abundance of *things*. In this grocery superstore, for example, I stared at the produce department for several minutes, suppressing my desire to gather up the shiny red apples, Alar and all, and send them to the children I had seen begging on the streets of Guatemala City just a few days before.

I wondered what they would think of this store that offered more than a dozen choices of breads, milk with every variation of butterfat, and a meat department that stretched the entire length of the store. Could they even conceive of such wealth?

I looked at the rack of reduced items and realized the people I had seen living in the city dump would find the overripe fruit and dented cans to be unimaginable treasures.

But it was the little boy and his mother who shocked me the most upon my return. I had been prepared to see the poverty of Latin America; what I hadn't expected to see was the wealth. In a

week of visiting the poorest of the poor, I had never seen a child mistreated. Despite physical discomfort, hunger, and disease, there was a love of children that almost seemed reverent. Mothers beamed as they presented their children to visitors. Adults gladly shared their meager resources with the young.

Yet here, in this supermarket, surrounded by wealth, I saw a woman poorer than anyone I had met on my trip. I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala, where he might go without shoes or a meal, but chances are he would be loved. I wanted her to see what she was doing to herself and her son. Instead, I just wept.

There had been no changes in the supermarket since I went to Guatemala. But *I* was different. I had seen wealth in spirit amidst poverty, and now I saw poverty more clearly when it was disguised by wealth.

I was struggling to understand this when I picked up Henri Nouwen's book *Gracias*. "Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue," he writes. His words struck me with painful intensity.

Each day I spend back in my cozy home, driving my temperature-controlled car, eating meals that leave me more than full, takes me further

from the clarity I experienced in a land of discomfort. I know I do not need to take a vow of total poverty to experience this purity again. But I do know that the poor are truly blessed. Their vision is not blurred by the numbing abundance I experience each day. They never ask for more; they only dream of enough. I have more than I can ever use—yet talk regularly about my "needs." How Satan must rejoice over my wealth. □

Dale Hanson Bourke is president of Publishing Directions, Inc., in Washington, D.C.

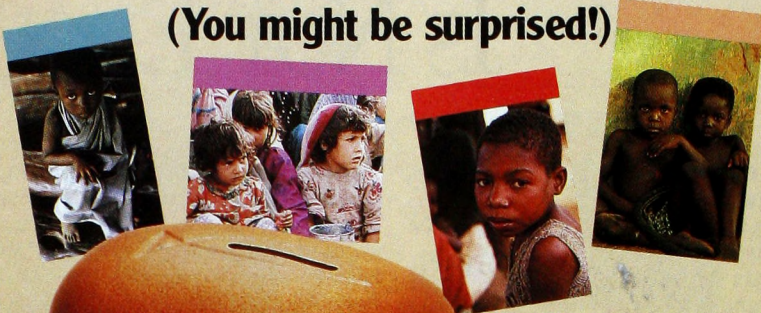


DENNIS SCHROEDER

I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala.

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December 1990-January 1991

South Africa:
Portrait in
Black and White

Where Would
Christ Be
on Christmas?

ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS

TRAGEDIES

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In the world's worst known AIDS epidemic among children, Romanians battle not only the deadly disease but their own decades-long standstill in medical progress—and continuing roadblocks from their own government.

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What's changed in Romania? Everything—and nothing. That goes for its churches too. Here's a look at the old and new challenges confronting Christians in this still-troubled land.

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A young man's simple act of grace led writer Mary Owen to reflect on Christ's love and her own ministry to the poor.

18 Portrait in Black and White

It won't be today's aging politicians who forge the new south Africa; it will be today's youth, blacks and whites together. Michael Cassidy, founder of Africa Enterprise, reveals how the 1980s shaped that youth, and offers an agenda for the 1990s.

The formerly persecuted churches: Romania's best hope?

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I hope you caught a recent "20/20" television program that featured World Vision's work with orphans in Romania. Our cover story deals with Romania's saddest legacy to its children: AIDS. What an opportunity for the church to identify with the innocent victims of government policy gone awry.

Evangelist Michael Cassidy focuses readers' attention upon the difficult work of reconciliation in South Africa done by Africa Enterprise, World Vision and others.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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HOLD ON TO THE SMILES

We were driving through northeast Romania, just a few miles from the Soviet border on a brilliant fall morning. The fertile plateau that stretched before us was dotted with sheep, cattle, and small villages, and seemed to spring out of "Dr. Zhivago" or "Fiddler on the Roof." Horses pulled wagons of freshly harvested grapes. Cornstalks had been cut and were now clustered in rows across the fields. It was an idyllic visual memory, but it would be the last one we had that day. The dark side was about to begin.

"Put these white coats on," our hosts told us. "They'll protect you from the children." We were visiting an orphanage, one of hundreds in Romania, full of children for whom society had called it quits. They were officially labeled "unrecoverables." The word reeked of hopelessness, forgottenness, and condemnation.

"The children who come here are stamped for death," said one of our World Vision staff. "No one ever leaves." This was the final deposition for discarded Romanian youth, an old-age home for children already in their final years.

These children were happy to see us. We represented a diversion from the normal institutional tedium. We brought a touch of human contact to augment the daily staple of five—three meals and two diaper changes. Smiles dominated broken faces, twisted bodies and underdeveloped minds. Irrepressible smiles provided the only facade to the gloom of our environment.

The smiles were our only support. They arrested our attention when everything within us wanted to avert their stare. They gave us a way to look past the scabs, the bleeding sores, the filth, the tattered clothing, the mental derangement, and the crippling diseases.

The chatter of the children was constant, and the stench of urine filled every room, mattress, and rag of clothing. Flies were ubiquitous. Filth covered everything. But it was the visual images we couldn't escape. Ten little boys huddled in a corner of the same bed and fought for the same blanket. No one could exist alone—not the autistic children, nor the Down's syndrome children, nor the crippled children. Some rocked quietly while others engaged in more violent self-stimulation.

Then there was the cold, so cold that it slowed circulation. The fight for a blanket was a fight for life. Two children per crib created a constant struggle. The older children either had no shoes or wouldn't wear them. Their threadbare clothing didn't cover their trembling bodies. We suspected many would die before winter.

But the smiles beckoned us, as if to say, "It's all right. We know why you are here. We're glad you've come. Don't cry. If we can smile, you need not feel badly."

The emotional hurdles slowly disappeared. Some children reached out, desperate for a human touch, grasping at fingers and clothing. These were the clingers. Some, however, had obviously been abused. An open hand symbolized hurt and pain. They were the cringers.

Sadly I acknowledged my own similar behavior. I instinctively reached out to some children, but I drew away from others. I had to force myself to hug an AIDS baby. The very aggressive children tried my patience. The wet and naked longed for an arm around their shoulder, and I offered it reluctantly. It took a while for the deformed to get an appreciated massage of their twisted limbs.

I recalled the instructions our World Vision team had given me: "Focus on their smile. They will help you. Their smile will keep you from crying." But it was all so overpowering, so indescribable, so emotionally destructive.

The shock soon turned to numbness as we went from room to room. Obviously, a number of children were starving to death. The blind, the deaf, and the deformed seemed to have fewer chances at food. The smaller children were very weak and their bodies cold. Death was not far away.

One woman was recovering from an abortion. The poorly supervised facility lent itself to sexual promiscuity, and my numbed mind struggled to assimilate this into my ethics of the sanctity of human life.

"The children want to sing for you," our guide told us. The statement defied logic. But at the end of our visit, three children assembled. Nicoleta, a beautiful girl in her late teens, sat on the floor, cushioned by the stumps of her deformed legs. Very simply, they sang:

"We sing as children
but if we dance
we will develop
and grow to be big children."

They sang it over and over. They could sing, but they could not dance. Nicoleta's polio-afflicted legs would never develop. And she would never leave that place. She is an "unrecoverable." □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

The smiles were our only support. They held our attention when we wanted to look away.

*Using outdated medical techniques,
Romanian doctors unknowingly
started an epidemic.*

CRADLE TO GRAVE

BY SUSIE POST

**ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS**

technology, but also roadblocks from their government. Without help, they face a hopeless tragedy.

George lives in Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, Romania's capital city. His crib of iron bars, its white paint peeling, stands in a row of similar cribs filled with babies dying of AIDS. There are 10 to 12 of them in his room, and the hallway leads to more rooms full of AIDS babies. Most of them are orphans.

During the rule of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, which ended in December 1989, tens of thousands of children filled Romania's orphanages. The Romanian government officially estimates there are 15,000 abandoned and orphaned children in 350 to 400 institutions across the country. But according to outside agencies that have surveyed the orphanages, the most conservative estimates are around 40,000 children.

Ceausescu's population obsession, combined with the desperate poverty his government inflicted on Romania, was the formula that filled the country's orphanages. Ceausescu was obsessed with a plan to raise the population from 23 million to 30 million by the year 2000. Birth control was illegal. Married women were subjected to frequent examinations if they weren't producing children. Single women were fined for not bearing children.

Some mothers abandoned their children because the pregnancy was unwanted. Others gave their babies up because they simply couldn't care for another child. Mentally and physically handicapped children and children of dissidents and prisoners were also frequently sent to orphanages.

As "20/20" and other television programs have graphically documented, many of these children live in miserable, unsanitary conditions, lacking the most basic care, with perhaps one caretaker for 40 children.

If these "warehouses for children" are the saddest story to come out of the Ceausescu years, the AIDS epidemic among Romanian children may be the worst chapter of that story. It's impossible to pinpoint when the epidemic began in Romania, but most Romanian physicians agree on *how*.

DEADLY INJECTIONS

To pay off Romania's foreign debts, Ceausescu pushed food exports to the limit. Consequently, during the past decade, food was scarce in the country. Basic staples—flour, oil, sugar—were strictly rationed. Meat was a rare luxury. Fruits and vegetables were almost never available.

The lack of food hurt children the most. Many, both inside and outside the orphanages, were sickly and malnourished. To boost these children's immune systems, doctors routinely gave them small injections of blood, called microtransfusions.

Microtransfusions were common practice in the United States back in the 1940s, until research showed they had little or no effect. Because of Romania's enforced isolation from the rest of the world, however, medical knowledge in the country was virtually frozen at a 1940s level.

In 1980s Romania, those ineffective transfusions became a deadly vehicle for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Doctors used untested blood supplies containing HIV, passing the deadly virus to the children. (Even now, only 10 percent of Romanian blood donors are screened for HIV.) Since the transfusions were so small, one contaminated blood unit could infect several children.

Dirty needles did the rest. Basic medical supplies were in such short supply that syringes were used over and over. It was a rare hospital that had a sterilizer that worked. The virus moved from one child to the next through the very injections that were supposed to heal them.

An AIDS baby in Victor Babes Hospital, Bucharest, which has one of the largest AIDS wards in Romania.



GOVERNMENT COVER-UP

In June 1989, Dr. Ion Patrascu discovered a high incidence of HIV among children in a Bucharest hospital. He immediately sent a report to the Ministry of Health, but it was the first of many times he would be stonewalled.

"They didn't accept the report," Patrascu said. "They believed it, but they tried to cover it up. It was not possible in Romania for bad news to appear."

Not until after the December 1989 revolution did most Romanian physicians learn of the AIDS tragedy.

When government officials finally admitted the existence of AIDS in Romania, they insisted the problem was isolated to one hospital in Bucharest. But Patrascu had begun testing children across the country, and he already had alarming figures for two or three towns in southern Romania.

Patrascu planned an educational conference for Romanian physicians about AIDS in November 1989. The Ceausescu government canceled not only the conference, but all AIDS testing on children.

After the revolution, testing resumed. By June 1990 the Institute of Virology managed to test and retest more than 13,000 Romanians, about two-thirds of them under age 18. Less than 1 percent tested positive—except among children under 3 years old. There the numbers jumped off the chart. Fourteen percent tested positive.

In recent months, the government is again suppressing information about

AIDS in Romania. After the country's first democratic election, in June 1990, President Ion Iliescu called another end to the testing of children for HIV.

Patrascu continues to push for testing and research. "The government doesn't care," he said. "They like to get away from the study of the truth. They don't want to know how many people have AIDS. Their minds are in a communist system, like in the past. They don't care about one child, one family. They care about the state."

The lack of information about AIDS is even worse among the Romanian public than among medical professionals. Some Romanian children with AIDS have families who refuse to take them home because they fear they'll catch the disease.

Even if we tell the parents there is no danger from the children who have HIV, they are frightened. They consider the children contagious even if we tell them it's not so. There's a vast need for education," said Pia Popescu, director of a hospital in Vidra with many young AIDS patients.

And while Romanian physicians think of AIDS as a new disease to be treated, much of the population views the virus as a curse from God.

"We Christian physicians see that our contribution is to prevent the spread of AIDS and to educate the people," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president of the Romanian Christian Medical Association. "But in Romania, people consider this disease a plague."

Some caretakers show affection; others change diapers and prop up bottles in assembly-line fashion.

Throughout Romania's 350 to 400 orphanages, tens of thousands of children hunger to be held and loved. "I did not see one child who didn't suffer from emotional neglect," says Dr. Barbara Bascom, an American pediatrician featured on the October 6 segment of the television news program "20/20."

Bascom, who directs World Vision's work with Romanian orphans, says that most of them can recover—if they're helped soon enough.

Although a number of orphanage children were reclaimed by their families after the revolution, and others have been adopted by Romanian or foreign families, the great majority will stay right where they are, Bascom says. She says that gifts of clothing, food, medicines, and toys are not enough to reverse the damage inflicted on these children.

Starting with a few orphanages and gradually expanding, Bascom intends to affect the entire orphanage system. Her plan, called ROSES (Romanian Orphans Social, Educational Services) will offer long-term education and encouragement to the doctors and caretakers who work with the children. Her program will also recruit local women to give the children what they need most: simple mothering.

Indirectly, ROSES will help the Romanian medical profession recover from the lost decades of Romania's

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

ROSES FOR THE ORPHANS



SUSIE POST

enforced isolation.

"Romanian doctors have been cut off from the tremendous advances made in the diagnosis and treatment of developmental disabilities during the past three decades," Bascom explains. She is designing a child development curriculum for medical students—one that will bring them into the orphanages to work with the children.

Bascom's husband, Dr. Jim Bascom, oversees another World Vision program aiding Romania's crippled medical education system.

"When we went into Romania, we realized this was a disaster area of a different kind," Jim Bascom says. "It wasn't a war, it wasn't a flood, it wasn't an earthquake. It was a social disaster of equal proportions.

"And so much of it was by design. It was deliberate. We expected, to a certain extent, what we found in the

orphanages, although you can never really prepare yourself for that. But we were surprised by the appalling, dismantled state of nearly everything, including medical education."

The Medical Education Redevelopment Program will provide essential medical books and journals to Romanian medical schools. It will also link the schools with medical associations and schools in the United States.

"What's encouraging is the willingness of the Romanian people to start rebuilding their lives for themselves," Jim Bascom says. "That's what offers the most hope."

Barbara Bascom agrees. "Romanians are ashamed of the orphanages," she says. "I'd like to see them point to the homes with pride, not with shame." □

Reported by Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist.

A plague on children less than 3 years old? Dr. Dan explained, "We Christians in Romania believe the biggest problem of humanity is sin. These children in orphanages are the result of the sins of the [parents' generation]."

Dr. Ion Patrascu, however, blames the rulers of Romania for the AIDS epidemic. "When we speak about AIDS in adults, it's often a matter of prostitution, homosexuality, or drug abuse. They can take responsibility for the things they did that put them at risk.

"But the children," he said, "it's a big mistake. It's a medical mistake, it's a state mistake. The state is morally responsible. They killed, by mistake, the children."

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The doctors who treat them usually have few tools for diagnosing the so-called opportunistic diseases, the secondary ailments that penetrate AIDS patients' crippled immune systems. Dr. Adrian Streinu, director of the Colentina Hospital, said most doctors must rely on their own eyes, ears, and nose. What they cannot detect that way usually goes untreated, he said.

As with Romania's other orphans, the quality of AIDS babies' daily care

also varies from institution to institution. In some places the children rock continuously from side to side, repetitive movement to offset a lack of human contact. The squeaking of their cribs is the only sound in the room.

Some of the AIDS victims are fat, healthy-looking babies who want to play with visitors. Others stare into the distance, unaware of the flies crawling on their faces.

Some play with colorful mobiles hanging over their cribs. Others lie still with unchanged diapers.

A few have mothers who come to visit. But most of the young AIDS victims live alone, rarely touched, rarely leaving their cribs.

That is changing slowly, as Romania's doctors and orphanage workers gain the knowledge and the equipment they need to provide better care. Groups outside Romania play a vital role in this process.

A British group called Health Aid has focused on Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, where 13-month-old George lives. British medical and church volunteers swarm through the AIDS ward, unpacking supplies and playing with the babies. George is in a clean crib with a clean diaper and people nearby who pay attention to him.

Both of the hospitals in Bucharest that house AIDS babies now have bright murals on the walls. Many of the babies play with stuffed animals in their cribs. Signs on the wall read, "Remember, TLC needed here!"

At the orphanage in Constanta where nearly every child tested positive for HIV, help has flooded in from

all over Europe. But many hospitals and orphanages still lack the most basic supplies.

In Vidra, a town of 8,000 just outside Bucharest, a hospital for malnourished infants serves basically as an orphanage, because most of the babies dropped off there will never be reclaimed. Almost 100 children live there, most under a year old. About a quarter of them have AIDS. The hospital has little more than cribs, sheets, and diapers. One washing machine serves the whole hospital. NewHope, a Christian AIDS ministry based in Pittsburgh, Penn., is focusing its efforts at the Vidrea hospital.

The Romanian AIDS Association is another vehicle for people outside Romania who want to help AIDS children. Dr. Ion Patrascu heads the newly formed association, which aims to educate medical professionals and the Romanian public about AIDS. The association, made up of volunteer physicians and technicians across the country, also wants to provide social and medical support for AIDS victims and their families. Christian groups such as Youth With a Mission participate in the British branch of the Romanian AIDS Association.

Yet the Romanian government has barred the country's own Romanian Christian Medical Association from working with the AIDS epidemic.

Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president

of the association, attended an AIDS/HIV conference for Christian physicians in Wheaton, Ill. When he returned to Romania, the Ministry of Health told him that only officially appointed specialists could address the AIDS issue. None of the Christian association's 325 members qualify.

'FIRST OF ALL, PRAYER'

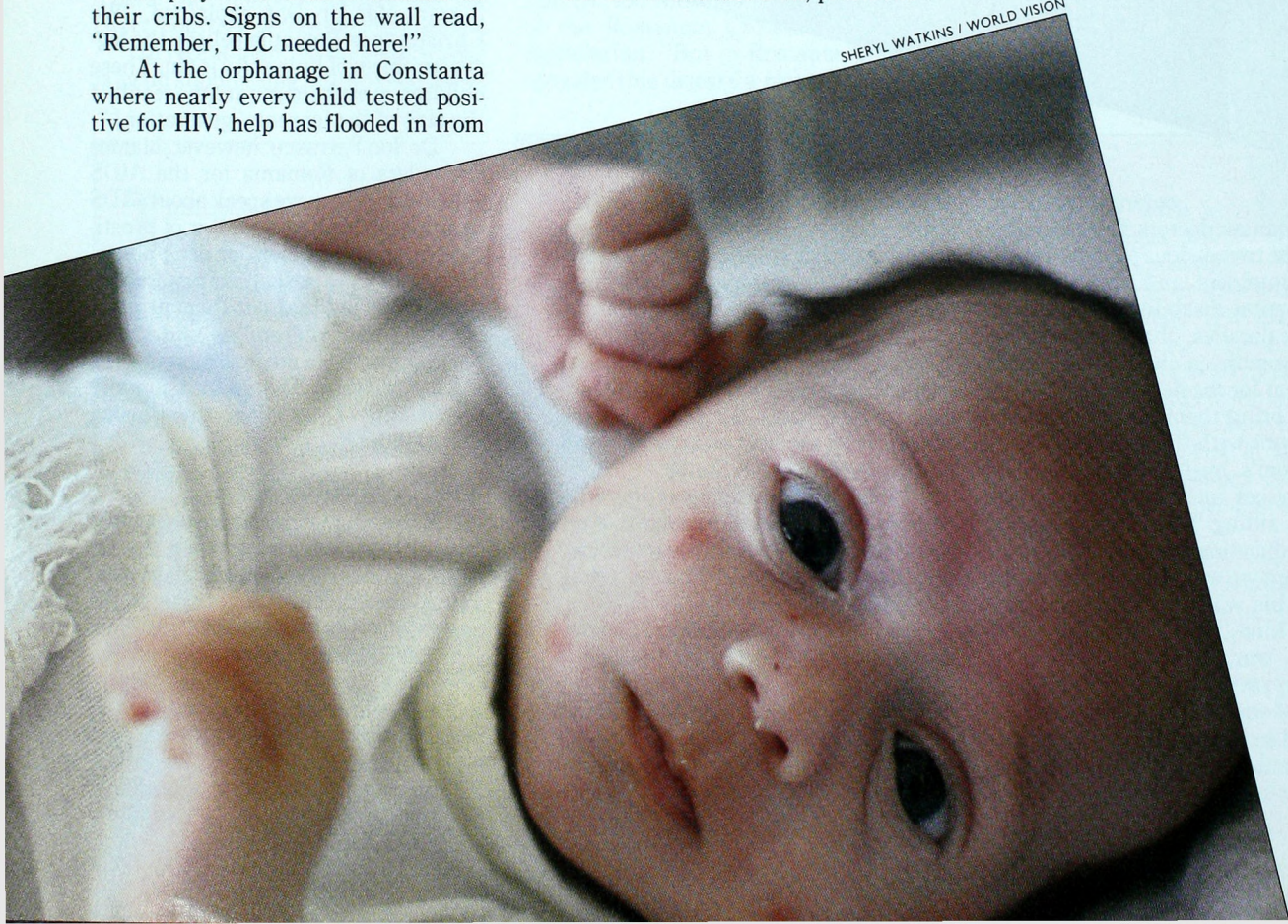
The tragedy of Romania's orphans, including the children's AIDS epidemic, has united Christians from many parts of the world around a common cause.

"I believe in Christian unity and fellowship," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan of the Romanian Christian Medical Society. "I consider first of all, prayer is most important. God is in control of all the universe and all our activity. Prayer is unity—our prayers with your prayers together."

Doctors and caretakers in the AIDS wards are, in most cases, hungry for support and knowledge. The children are hungry for affection. However, the new government's recent restrictions have shown that Romania's hard-won freedom is as tenuous as the heartbeat of those babies in the iron cribs. There is no "someday" here. The time to act is now. □

Susie Post is a free-lance photojournalist in Ambridge, Penn.

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION





One of the first things I learned in Romania is that every question has at least two answers. There's the official answer and the unofficial answer. There's the answer that was true before the December 1989 uprising and the one that's true afterwards. And then there's the doublespeak answer whose actual meaning has nothing to do with the words themselves.

—*How's the weather?* Before December 1989, there was the answer on a thermometer, and the quite different answer on the official weather report. The law required that workers be sent home if the weather turned severe. So the government would change the weather to keep people at work.

—*Do you have a double room available for tonight?* "Come back in one hour. I will know then," the hotel clerk told me. What she meant was, "A small token of your confidence—say a pack of cigarettes—might help me find one."

—*What is the name of this city?* To the ethnic Romanians, I was visiting Oradea. To the Hungarians in western Romania, I was in the ancient Hungarian city of Nagyvárad. To the German minority, I was in Grosswardein.

—*What has changed since the revolution?* "Practically everything," about half the people told me. "Practically nothing," said the other half.

After visiting Romania, I agree with both. The two contradictory answers sum up post-1989 Romania. It is here that any understanding of the challenges facing Romania's evangelical churches must begin.

In a country that is no longer ruled

There's so much to do. And finally, the churches have the freedom to do it.

ROMANIA'S UNCHAINED MELODY

by a madman, practically everything has changed. For people who were used to living on a base diet of flour, sugar, water, and whatever they could scrounge on the black market, and who can now buy food at their local grocery store, practically everything has changed. For people who can travel freely for the first time in decades, practically everything has changed.

Some things, however, haven't changed, things that simply can't change so quickly—like the comatose economy. There is also a disturbingly familiar hand visible behind the frequent ethnic violence and political harassment. Members of the old secret police still walk the streets, and they don't look unemployed. A school-teacher's phone is still tapped for weeks after receiving a telephone call from the United States. Romania's new government too often plays by the old rule book.

"Before the revolution, we never turned on Romanian television at home," said one pastor, "because it was nothing but lies and the Ceausescu family. Then, just before the revolution, everybody was watching six or eight hours a day, just fascinated to see what was happening and to finally hear some truth. But lately we don't watch much television anymore."

Last May, the ballots had barely been counted in Romania's first democratic election when the winning National Salvation Front took back its promise of independent TV stations.

So there's a lot of the old Romania in the new. But what about the evan-

T*he only way to express our feelings is by crying.'*

gelical churches? Without doubt, it's a new day. Josef Tson, a Romanian Baptist pastor, had spent nine years in exile before he moved back to Romania in 1990, just in time to see thousands of people receive Christ at a Luis Palau crusade in his home town.

"For decades we have had to spread the gospel in secret," he said. "And now to see a stadium packed and more than 6,000 people coming forward. The only way to express our feelings is by crying."

The formerly unregistered, or illegal, congregations that met in secret and endured raids and harassment now meet in the open. When police discovered the secret meeting place of Philadelphia Church in Oradea in the 1980s, they raided and trashed the building, levied a huge fine for the Christian literature they discovered, and scattered the congregation.

Reunited

Today the church is reunited, and for four or five hours on Sunday afternoons they worship in a public meeting hall formerly occupied by the Communist Party. They no longer look behind them to see if they're being followed. They can invite anyone they want,

without considering first whether it might be Judas.

"Anyway, the churches did survive," says Sándor Fazakas, a Hungarian Reformed pastor and secretary to the bishop. "They are even stronger than before. Under the pressure we gained strength. But it's not because of the church leaders. It's from God."

And like most Christians in Romania, he is reluctant to catalog the old wrongs, not because they are forgotten, but because they divert energy from the tasks at hand. There is so much to do, and finally there's the freedom to do it.

The churches can now educate their children openly. The Hungarian Reformed denomination was formerly allowed to offer only basic catechism and confirmation. Now, Fazakas explains, "we've already started organizing youth groups in the church, even conferences. We are planning to hold summer camps too."

The new freedom to work with young people opens up a new challenge. A whole generation has been raised to see the church as a place for sad, old women, and Christianity as a religion concerned only with the afterlife. Until now, the church wasn't allowed to



learn how to reach young people.

Fazakas told of a youth organization that, after the revolution, invited clergy of several denominations to meet and discuss Christianity. "On the third night," Fazakas said, "they suddenly asked us to hold a worship service, a special youth service. They said, 'Look, the church is right here. We don't want to go to your church building. And please, don't wear your gown, don't bring your black suit. Just do it.'"

Eventually they did it—a Roman Catholic priest, a Baptist pastor, an Adventist choir, and Fazakas. But it will take more than a special event to reach Romania's young people.

Standing room only

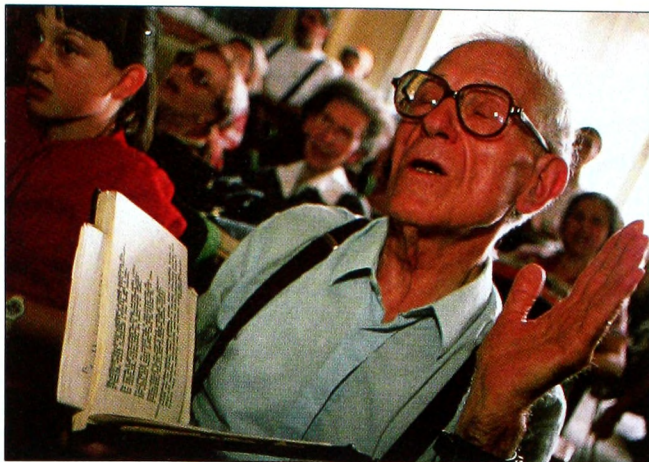
Another welcome change: Churches can now get building permits. Standing-room-only worship services may impress Westerners, but the Romanians find them about as inspiring as living in a small house with several families. "We have hundreds of names of people who responded at the evangelistic crusades," one pastor said, "but we have no place to put them."

One of the most visible changes the revolution brought for many evangelical churches is the influx of visitors and aid from the West. The Second Baptist Church in Oradea, the church most often mentioned in the U.S. Christian media, has received so many Western visitors that it reserves a front-row pew for them.

The new access to the West has also bolstered the evangelical churches' image in Romania. Traditionally, evangelical churches have been considered fanatical sects on the fringes of orthodox Christianity. But all the attention and aid that poured in on evangelicals within days of the revolution started to alter that perception.

One example of this was in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, a coalition of evangelical denominations in Romania. The post-revolution government refused to grant official status to the alliance unless it would accept self-defeating conditions, such as making all its decisions subject to government approval. The evangelical leaders refused and said,

Plans, dreams, and passion: Romanian Christians hold gifts essential for healing a poisoned society.



"We will continue this dialogue in the Western media." Later the same day their charter was granted—without preconditions.

The changes in Romania have one thing in common: freedom. The liberation of speech, action, movement, choice. But freedom also liberates evil. One of the most troubling sides of the new Romania is the apparent escalation of ethnic violence and other expressions of ethnic hatred.

Its roots are deep, ancient, and tangled. There are the ill-conceived boundaries etched on the entire Balkan region after World War I. There are also ancient rivalries between the

It is the Christians who have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice.

Hungarians and the Romanians. But the Ceausescu years have left their own special poison.

Obsessed with the "Romanization" of Romania, Ceausescu sought to obliterate the cultural life of Romania's minorities. He closed their schools. He told them what they could name their children. He scattered their high school graduates to remote, isolated areas. And it was common policy to resettle Romanians from the eastern part of the country—people who had grown up hearing that the ethnic minorities were responsible for Romania's ills—in ethnically mixed western Romania.

Since December 1989 there have been more outbreaks of violence, aimed mostly at Hungarians in western Romania and Gypsies in Bucharest. During a tense time earlier this year, Second Baptist Church in Oradea held

a meeting for Romanian and Hungarian youth.

"It was packed," recalls youth pastor Petru Vidu. "We sang together, we praised God together, we said that in Jesus Christ we are one. It doesn't matter what language we are speaking. And we said that only Jesus Christ can bring peace and healing. Those people who made all those problems, they cannot be Christians. A Christian cannot oppress others."

Indeed the evangelical Christians were one group Ceausescu was unable to divide and conquer, and there has been remarkable cooperation between denominations and between ethnic groups. When the churches were attacked, they united for support.

Today it's those Christians with a living faith who can make the difference for Romania. They have the answers to what are ultimately spiritual problems. The Christians I met seemed like a remnant who offered hope for the saving of the whole. I sensed it when I walked from the street, with streetcars full of passive, impassive faces, into a small, stuffy meeting hall full of passionate faces, where there was loud singing and clapping and praying for hours.

It is in the churches that people still dare to make plans and dream. Christians have kept alive the ability to feel rather than to numb themselves. Christians have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice. These gifts will be essential for the healing of a poisoned society.

What has changed for Romania's Christians? One pastor summarized, "There is not a major change in my life because I was always free inside. I was free before and I am free after. The circumstances have changed, so I have more opportunities now and we are busier. This is a new chapter in our lives—because of the circumstances, not because of our convictions." □

SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME HOME

BY SHERYL WATKINS

Laurel Stevens sits on the floor in a Romanian orphanage and pulls a couple of kids onto her lap. She hugs them, plays with them, lets them take off her watch and listen to it tick. When her companions decide it's time to move on, someone has to go back to get Laurel. She's still with the kids.

A year ago, Romania was the last place this Canadian thought she would end up. After serving as a nurse in Canada, Thailand, and Alaska, Laurel was tired of the stress and the night shifts. She switched to landscaping, with shorter hours and daylight work. But those shorter hours also meant less income. Confused about her options, Laurel prayed.

"I really don't want to go back to nursing," she told God. "What am I supposed to do next?" She got no answer, so she kept her landscaping job and just waited. "God kept making me aware that I didn't have to worry," she recalls, "because he knew what was ahead, and he would show me at the right time."

Like millions of others, Laurel watched reports on

Romania's revolution. She kept thinking, "Maybe there's something I can do." A few days after Christmas 1989, she heard about a Vancouver doctor who was leading a medical team to Romania. They were leaving in three days. Laurel was welcome to come along, but it normally takes three

days to renew a passport. "When I got [the renewal] in one day," she says, "it was like a little voice from the Holy Spirit saying, 'This is what you've been waiting for.'"

After a few weeks in Romania, Laurel returned home just long enough to raise the support she needed to make a one-year commitment with International Teams of Canada.

Today, Laurel coordinates the distribution of millions of dollars' worth of donated medical supplies. "I don't even look at this as a job. This is something I would do as a volunteer on vacation," she says. She has shared the gospel with Romanian doctors and health officials and is amazed how eagerly they ask for Christian books and Bibles.

This past spring, Laurel took a three-week tour of Romanian orphanages and medical schools. "I had heard about the orphanages already," she recalls, "so I knew conditions were really bad. But I had no idea the problem is as huge as it is." Laurel steeled herself to act clinically rather than emotionally, but "the apathy and emptiness in the children's eyes really struck me," she says. "They were rocking and banging their heads because they had no other physical stimulus. Their eyes were void of emotion because they had never been shown any."

Laurel still can't resist picking up the kids. "What these kids need is to be loved and held," she says. "And part of me hopes that when the staff see me—playing with the kids, sitting on the floor, and pulling as many children to me as possible—they will do the same."

The woman who admits she "never had much of an interest in Eastern Europe" is now totally committed to her new ministry. She says she misses friends and family, but she's not homesick. "I don't want to go home," she says. "I want them to come here and see Romania." □

Perhaps the obstacle is not so much God's silence as the fear that God might in fact respond.

Ronald Goetz

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray for Romania's children** with AIDS. Ask God to strengthen efforts to fight the epidemic and care for its victims (pages 4-8).
- ◆ **Thank God** for the new freedom of Romania's churches, and for the churches' energy and vitality. (pages 9-11).
- ◆ **Ask God to help you**, this holiday season, to show compassion to someone who has little to celebrate (pages 14-15).
- ◆ **Pray for the reconciling witness** of South African churches (pages 18-21).

Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

THE LOVE DEPARTMENT

BY JEROME A. KAPLOWITZ

Beverly Hills Baptist Church

Nobody gets by James Noe without a hug. His grandfatherly presence is the gatekeeper to a steady stream of people arriving in wheelchairs, on crutches, or with a helping hand at the church door.

Noe (pronounced NO-ee) welcomes about 100 mentally and physically handicapped worshippers on a Sunday morning at Beverly Hills Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. He's the volunteer director of the Exceptional Department at the church. For more than 20 years Beverly Hills Baptist has provided what might be the only worship service specifically for the city's mentally and physically impaired people.

John Walker leads the morning devotion. He concludes by visiting each person in the audience and giving them the microphone to repeat the monthly memory verse. More than half are able to recite it. For some, like 27-year-old Deborah Ayres, who has cerebral palsy, it's a struggle. But they all enjoy their moment in the limelight.

"Deborah really brightens up every time she comes to Beverly Hills," says her mother, Emma Ayres. "She loves to get involved in everything."

"All our special people want is someone to love them," Noe says. "If Jesus accepts them, then we do too." Maybe that's why the rest of the church calls the Exceptional Department "the love department."

The message of love and acceptance is central to everything that happens on Sunday mornings in the love department. Marion Haynes, a Sunday school teacher, often uses 1 Peter 2:9-10, where Peter identifies God's people as a chosen race. "I tell my students that they *are* different, but not by the world's definition. They are different because they belong to Jesus."

In 1961, a mother brought her young son with Down's syndrome to Sunday school at Beverly Hills Baptist. The pastor and another church member decided to do something to meet the needs of that mother and her child.

With three students, three teachers, and an improvised classroom under a stairwell, the Exceptional Department was underway. Two years later James Noe became the director, and he's been with it ever since.

Noe, unlike most of the volunteers he works with, doesn't have a handicapped person in his family.

"Most of us became involved because we have a Down's syndrome child or a family member in a wheelchair," says John Walker, the program's assistant director. "James Noe just cares."

According to volunteer Joyce Brantely, the



James Noe (left): "He just cares."

only requirement to work in the program is love. "When God sees that," she says, "He will take the rest of you and use you to touch others."

Several of the volunteers were apprehensive when they first started. "I wondered how I was going to communicate God's Word to these people," said Pepper Shelton.

John Erwin said, "It took me a while to learn that you talk to a mentally handicapped Christian the same as you would any other Christian."

But when volunteers leave, it's often to volunteer in similar ministries in other churches. "Once an impaired person touches your life," Noe says, "it's like having empty pockets that suddenly become full."

The Exceptional Department is also an informal support network for the families of the handicapped worshippers. They bowl together, take trips together, and call each other during the week. "We are like a family in so many ways," says Ethel Whitten.

Pastor John Bedford says, "The volunteers help our other members sense the need to do something worthwhile for the Lord."

John Noe recently overheard a conversation in the church parking lot that said it all. A father who doesn't attend church was picking up his handicapped son. "What did you do this morning?" he asked.

The boy answered his father, "I learned that Jesus loves me." □

Jerome Kaplowitz is a free-lance writer in Vicksburg, Miss.



JEROME KAPLOWITZ

For more
information contact
Beverly Hills
Baptist Church,
3804 Kimball,
Memphis, TN 38111.

In a downtown Sacramento park, hundreds of needy people gathered for a hot meal, a blanket, and some hope on Thanksgiving Day. Under the umbrella of Project Light, evangelists and others rendered immediate first aid to ailing bodies and minds. But long-term assistance loomed like an ugly blight on a middle-class horizon, and even the warmest of hearts despaired at the task ahead.

The reality of winter hits hard when shoes give way to bound rags and tattered clothing is the fashion of the day. Cold-reddened hands turned white at a fleeting puff of warm air blown in desperation for a moment of comfort, an impossibility when that same chill sets weary bones and hearts to aching.

As Christmas approaches, I am nagged by a different scenario than loved ones gathered warmly and happily around a Christmas tree. That familiar picture is overshadowed by the memory of the haunting eyes of an old man, crying unashamedly at the warmth and happiness he experienced on that Thanksgiving Day.

I hear again the redundant cries of a child as he tugged at his mother's torn jeans—"I'm still hungry." With two other youngsters at her side and a shopping cart filled with family valuables to guard, the mother's resigned reply was, "I'll do what I can."

Another man, in his late 30s, confessed his feelings of failure to a worker: "I'm so embarrassed to be

here. I have a son. What must he think of me?" Another person gave me a hug of thanks. For a moment, I thought he wanted a handout. Others had asked, and I was saddened that the needs were beyond one day's work.

As I think back on that day, the anticipation of special Yuletide goodies on our laden table is not so exciting.

What would Christ do on Christmas Day? I'm sure he, too, would be nagged by my vision of "outside." But I'm also sure he would not be content to sit "inside" and enjoy the festivities when so many lack the same opportunities.

In a most Christlike manner, a young man left me with a poignant reminder of the world's needs that Thanksgiving, and I cried. I was suddenly rebuked by my own conscience as his one act of faith far surpassed mine that chilly November day.

This young man, dressed in a torn jacket, jeans, and worn shoes, had happily searched through piles of clothing for a "new" pair of shoes. Hugging

a pair of nearly new athletic shoes, he gave me a thumbs up sign and a wide grin. I felt pretty good as I watched him meander through the throng of homeless and poor that had gathered. This was what the outreach was all about—helping others.

But suddenly the young man stopped next to a Middle Eastern man wearing a tunic made of potato sacks. On this man's feet were several layers of magazines held in place by rags torn from the same potato sacking. The young man quietly observed this stranger, tapped him on the shoulder, and offered him the tennis shoes he had rescued from the pile of discards. Acknowledging the young man's own need, the stranger declined the offer with dignity and a smile of thanks. My own feelings of "doing good" were a bit tarnished by his selfless act of giving.

As I think of that interchange, I know what Christ would do on Christmas Day. Many of us open our doors to strangers, and more than a few of us reach out to others in need. But perhaps we too often reach out in ways that are comfortable to us, ways that don't demand much effort.

I recently read an article about a local family who gathered scarfs, hats, and mittens to hand out to the city's indigent. Most of them were sur-

Where would Christ be on Christmas?

BY MARY OWEN

We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us.

prised by the generosity. One man stuck around until they left, just needing a friendly ear. That family's small act of love has now become a ministry. Spurred on by the need, their successful effort, and the true feeling of Christmas, they hope this year to surpass the 150 gifts they gave away.

In Isaiah 58 it is written: "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like noonday."

In that Sacramento park on Thanksgiving, a young man's "night" became "like noonday." The cure for the world's problems starts with each and every one of us. We need to let our own lights rise, with only fleeting thought to the few who manipulate the system; an over-used excuse for nonaction. We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us, then act. And the gift we receive in return will entwine the love wrapped in parcels beneath the tree with the true Christmas spirit—the spirit of giving of ourselves. □

This article was reprinted with permission of the Davis Enterprise, Davis, Calif.



THE CHRIST OF THE HOMELESS; WOOD ENGRAVING BY FRITZ EICHENBERG, © 1982

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Leslie Salisbury

HOUSE CALLS

Beth Kidd is a nurse who still makes house calls.

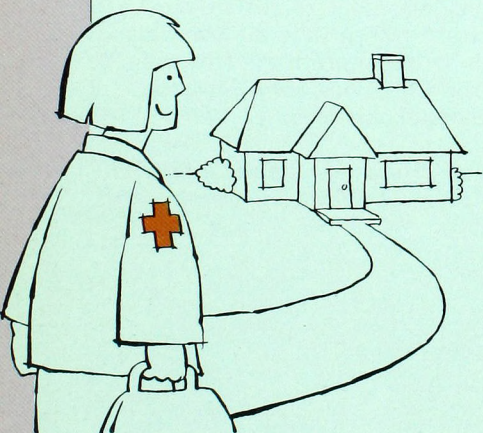
While working at Boston's City Hospital in the early 1970s, Kidd began to follow up on patients who still needed care after they left the hospital.

She now has 60 outpatients whose needs range from prenatal care to treatment for AIDS. Most of them are her neighbors.

"Some of them I see every day, some I just call every so often. I am the connection between the hospital and patient," Kidd said.

She often becomes the family her patients don't have. "I get involved with their housing problems and welfare problems," she said. "I help pregnant teenagers who don't have anyone else."

Local Boston churches are also involved in Kidd's nursing ministry. "I build a relationship with my



patients, share the gospel with them, and try to connect them with a local church. Then the church takes over," Kidd said.

For information on how to start a nursing ministry in your area, contact Beth Kidd at Emmanuel Gospel Center: (617) 262-4567.



New London Kids Club

A LONDON BRIDGE

London, Calif., is a severely impoverished community near Kingsburg, Calif. It doesn't have a police force to fight its heavy drug traffic. Most of its children don't have enough clothes or food.

Virtually the only group helping London's children is the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program. Kingsburg volunteers lead Salvation Army-sponsored programs

for 65 children in grades one through eight. Tutoring, Bible stories, and crafts are an alternative to spending afternoons in an empty house or on the streets.

"We are their only link, their only introduction to Christianity," said Sharon Melchor, director of the New London Kids Club.

For information on how to start an afternoon program for kids in your area, contact the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program, P.O. Box 384, Kingsburg, CA 92631. Telephone: (209) 897-2499.

SWEAT EQUITY

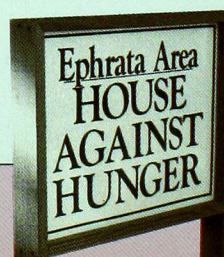
Some old-fashioned barn raising has raised \$449,500 for world hunger relief.

Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church members have built five houses using donated supplies. When the houses are sold, the proceeds go to the humanitarian work of the Mennonite Central Committee.

The house goes up in one day,

and the inside is finished in four to five months. "It's great to see people using skills and abilities, knowing it will help people around the world," said Leo Martin of the MCC.

For information, contact the Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

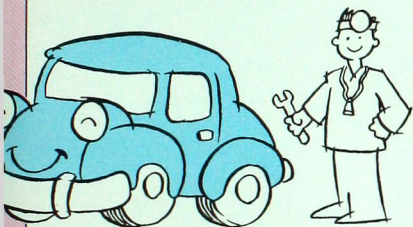
ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A car dealership in Grand Rapids, Mich., helped 13 financially needy people get back on the road at a recent free car clinic.

Duthler Ford performed simple repairs on 13 cars whose owners depended on the vehicles to get to work, yet couldn't afford the repairs.

Seventeen area churches referred people to the car clinic through the All County Churches Emergency Support System (ACCESS).

If the individual couldn't pay for the necessary parts, the referring church provided the funds.



Duthler Ford plans another repair day, collaborating with other local dealerships. "Together, more of us can make a bigger difference," said Patricia Duthler, vice president and general manager. "The best way to help is to help people support themselves."

Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person.

Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Action

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FYR010

After 30 years
of separation,
white and black
youths of
South Africa
must unite
to forge a
new nation.

BY MICHAEL CASSIDY

PORTRAIT IN BLACK AND

Sometimes I even forgot I was black because nobody kept reminding me."

That's how a black South African teenager described his first friendship with a white South African. He met his new friend at a Christian camp designed to reconcile the separated youth of South Africa. For the first time in his life he saw deeper than the white skin, and saw not a natural enemy, but a fellow countryman.

I long to see all of South Africa's youth united in reconciliation and trust. But sadly, I can't even say they are "the nation's youth." Black young people and white young people don't feel they belong to each other or even to a common nation.

That must change. The new South Africa will not be built by today's aging politicians but by the young leaders, both black and white. They'll have to do it together.

Because of apartheid, interaction between South Africa's black youth and white youth has been virtually nonexistent for the past 30 to 35 years, even between church youth groups.

The 1980s was a damaging decade. It was a decade of rebellion, repression, and polarization—rebellion by black young people, repression by the authorities, and polarization of almost everyone.

Our government started drafting young whites into the army straight from school to fend off the so-called "total onslaught." The authorities told



GUY TILLIM / IMPACT VISUALS

these young soldiers to defend our white and Western civilization, to fight against the "total onslaught" of communism and agitators trying to take over our country. Ideologically innocent and politically naive, these white youths went to the border to protect our (white) country, our (white) values, and our (white) civilization.

Meanwhile, young blacks were "drafted" into the "liberation struggle." We convinced our youth, both white and black, that we were in a war that one would win and the other lose.

Young blacks met violence with violence. This, in turn, led to increased repression by internal security forces, which led to increased aggression by black political movements. Blacks who were suspected to have collaborated

with the white cause suffered torture and even death by other blacks.

Whether it was the white internal security forces or the black liberation forces, they all believed force could change attitudes. In the 1980s, we effectively created a culture of conflict and violence.

Overriding this culture of violence is the continuing debate about whether South Africa should be a single nation. The African National Congress, led by Nelson Mandela, believes it should be.

The ruling National Party, however, has insisted that South Africa's different people groups cannot live together as one nation. Only recently did they recognize that separation isn't feasible. Today they are emphasizing the protection of each group's rights and identity.

Complicating this issue, white South Africans have grown up identifying with Europe and America rather than Africa, believing our culture is alien to Africa's.

But this attitude is slowly changing. After all, most of us are fourth-generation Africans. Our grandparents, parents, and children were born in Africa. All of us, especially the young people, must move toward a new cultural identity without denying our roots. I see growing hope for this new identity as black young people force us to face key issues.

In 1976 black students rebelled against an edict that established the Dutch-descended language Afrikaans as the official language for all South African schools. The rebellion was a symbolic action. The black youth signalled that they would no longer tolerate their parents' subservience.

They cried to the world, "This is our country. We have a stake in it. We will work for change and, if necessary, we will force change. We will not sit back and accept inferior education, inferior housing, or inferior anything."

Their educational demands have evolved into a symbol of black refusal to accept second-class treatment. Their stand on this issue has helped change the attitudes of many white South Africans.

Black young people were at the forefront of this change, just as students in the past have spearheaded change in Britain, Europe, and the United States.

South African white students have also contributed to change. Through the Natal Union of South African Students, they have fought repressive laws aimed at black students. But unlike the black student protestors, white stu-

dents often backed down in the face of intimidation or bans.

The students, both white and black, have visibly changed South Africa's education system. The University of Natal (Durban), for example, now reserves 70 percent of its residence space for black students, because whites can more easily find alternative housing. Even Afrikaans universities are becoming more racially open. Though few have blacks in residence yet, the signs are encouraging.

In the midst of these changes, the church has not been silent. Despite the fact that the government took over the

WHITE



We convinced our youth we were in a war that one side would win and the other lose.

country's church-run schools and colleges in the 1950s, the church has recently spearheaded many changes in the education system. In fact, the success of multi-racial education in private church schools has encouraged the government to take steps in that direction.

The next major challenge facing the church and South Africa's youth is the creation of a fair, effective judicial system. Most blacks perceive the present structures as serving white interests. Much of the township violence stems from a breakdown of law and order. Police action is seen as biased.

This loss of faith in the justice system has led to vigilante justice. And



The church's role in South Africa is to encourage the building of a new country based on mutual acceptance and tolerance. The key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

vigilante groups working in secret to exact community justice are often youth-led.

The challenge is to replace both the biased official system and the vigilante system with a system of authority and justice that is trustworthy and fair. The church's role is to champion justice. Injustice from both the security forces and the liberation movement must be equally condemned. We must

"Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation."

replace our culture of violence with a culture of repentance and forgiveness, leading to a non-racist democracy.

As the church spreads the message that every African has value in the eyes of Christ, and that everyone's ideas and views are important, a new day is possible.

Christians have a distinctive message for South Africa: Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation. It is first an attitude and then a strategy.

The church's vital role is to encourage the building of a new South Africa: a place of mutual acceptance,

tolerance, and togetherness as one nation under God. Organizations like World Vision and Africa Enterprise recognize that the key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

Africa Enterprise is reconciling black, white, and colored young people through week-long Bridge-Building Encounters. Over the past 10 years, hundreds of young people of all races and from all regions of South Africa have met at our center to get to know each other personally.

After the encounters we hear comments like these:

—"I've learned more about people and the problems facing my country in the past six days than I have in the past five years of history lessons."

—"It was the first time I mixed freely with other races."

—"I have found that there is not too much difference between black and white."

South Africa's challenges are immense, and nowhere are they more demanding than among our youth. Yet with Christ's help, many young blacks and whites are beginning to live out that famous dictum: "You see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask, why not?" □

Michael Cassidy is founder of Africa Enterprise.

For the past three years, Natal Province in South Africa has been the battleground of two opposing black factions. The African National Congress, the United Democratic Front, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions make up one side, and Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, president of the 1.5-million-strong Inkatha Movement, heads the other.

Earlier this year, Matt Montague, a 19-year-old American, found himself in the crossfire.



Imbali Township is a series of identical concrete block homes on small plots of land—two bedrooms and a toilet out back. Outside they're run-down and dirty. Inside they're immaculate. A home that looks even halfway prosperous from the outside might attract police attention. The family could be searched for cash or weapons, maybe even killed. So the sameness has a purpose. It keeps people safe. Many of the people work at the aluminum plant outside the township, or as taxi drivers or "garden boys."

I lived in Imbali Township for eight months as part of an internship program with Africa Enterprise, a Christian organization whose mission is to reconcile the races through the gospel. And I ended up in a war.

At first, March 29 seemed no different than any other Thursday. Every Thursday I met with a youth reconciliation group where young whites, coloreds, Indians, and blacks could come together in peace to discuss issues that matter to them and learn more about Jesus Christ. After the meeting, my friend Antony and I went to another friend's house to play darts.

At 6 p.m., the craziness started.

We heard a lot of commotion, looked out the window, and saw 50 or more people running across the valley about a quarter of a mile away. Then we heard a few gunshots. Antony ran out the door to get a closer look. I took off for the nearest phone, since there was

no phone at our friend's house, and called the Riot Squad, South Africa's riot control team. As usual, they sounded bored, said they'd see what they could do. As usual, they didn't come.

It seems some Inkatha members were chasing the townspeople. By this time, the air was full of shots. We didn't know what to do, so we decided to head for the Imbali Support Group house a few blocks away. We were scheduled to handle the phones there that night anyway. Maybe we could find out what was going on.

By the time we got there, the phone was already ringing off the hook with requests for help and reports of people being shot or houses being shot at. Less than an hour had passed since the shooting first started, but now it sounded like a full-scale war. Antony and our friend Temba left in response to a distress call. I was alone in the house with another guy named Temba when we received another urgent call. Two black men were wounded and needed transportation to a hospital. I grabbed Temba and we drove off to pick them up.

As soon as we turned the first corner, a shot came out of a bush in our direction. I ducked under the dashboard—but then I remembered I was driving! I've never been so scared in all my life. I was actually being shot at. Still in a daze, we drove towards a

group of boys. More shots. Temba dove for the floorboard. Another shot came and missed. We were both sweating. We swerved onto a dirt road and cut across the valley. More shooting. And for the third time, we got out alive.

We finally reached the house. It was riddled with bullets. The two men inside had been shot, one in the right shoulder and one in the lower back. We figured that the nearest black hospital, Edendale, would already be full, and we didn't want to have to fight for their admission. So we drove them to Gray's, a hospital that had just opened to blacks. When we got there, I went to the admitting station and told the nurse, "I've got two guys in the car who've been shot."

"Are they black?" she asked.

When I said they were, she hesitated for a moment, then said to bring them in. No one on staff came with us. That night many blacks would be admitted to that hospital. To my knowledge, though, these were the first.

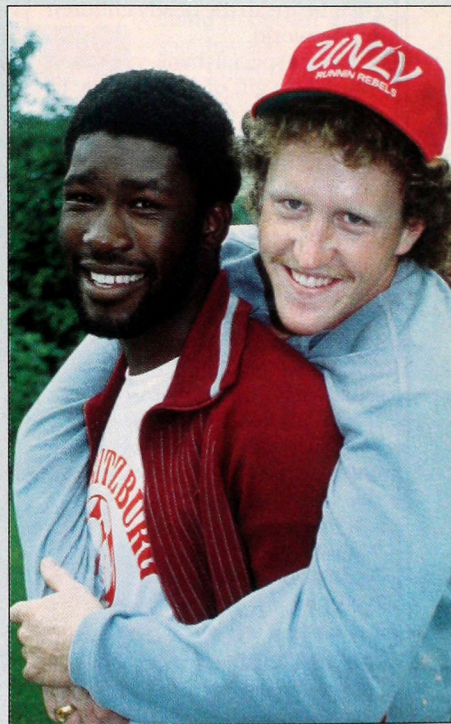
I called the Imbali Support Group house but was told they were under fire and it was unsafe to return. I was instructed to go to Africa Enterprise and answer the many distress and information calls that would come in. I did that, reluctantly. I was so worried about the ISG house and my friends that I called them over and over again. Finally, by 4:30 that morning, things had quieted down and it seemed safe to return. Temba and I made it back to

the ISG house, shaken but alive.

I couldn't wait to get back to the United States. And that's when it hit me. I had the choice to leave. I was in Imbali township as a volunteer. But what about those who have no choice? What about the people who go to sleep not knowing if their house will be burned to the ground in the middle of the night? If their children will be alive the next day? I don't know if I'd be strong enough to live under that kind of pressure.

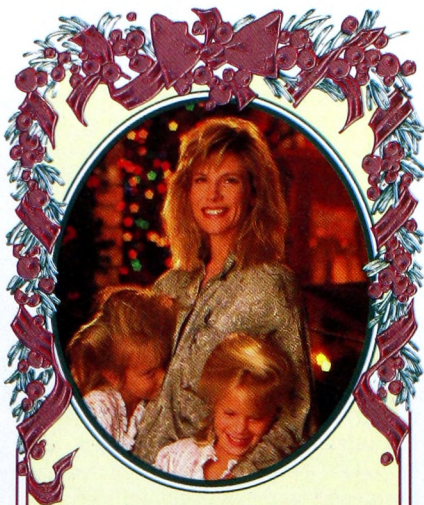
That's why it's so important to give people hope. Hope in God, hope in a better life. I'm studying business administration so I can go back and help the people put together small businesses and run them. I may not be able to change the big picture in South Africa, but I can help a kid become something other than a garden boy—and help him know that life doesn't have to be the way it is right now in Imbali Township. □

Matt Montague and his friend Temba.



DODGING BULLETS IN IMBALI

As an intern in a South African township, this American youth got more than he expected.



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ABOWAM

LETTERS

READERS' RIGHT

Dear Mr. Seiple,

In a recent article you called for reconciliation with Vietnam in order to relieve the pain of Vietnam War victims, both American and Vietnamese ("Undoing a Fashionable Grudge," August/September 1990).

The communist regime that has controlled Vietnam for the past 15 years has continuously imposed a hard-line and inhumane policy on its own people. Hard-labor prisons have been built all across Vietnam to imprison thousands of former South Vietnamese servicemen, government officials, opposition leaders, and American MIAs and POWs.

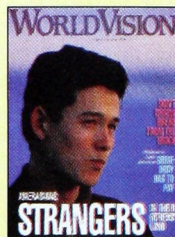
Your organization has helped relieve the famine situation in Ethiopia. However, in spite of the world's effort to help, people in Ethiopia continue to suffer and die year after year because of the inhuman and corrupt Ethiopian government. That government refused to cooperate with the free world to effectively distribute food and medical assistance to the hungry Ethiopian people.

I use Ethiopia as an example to ask you to rethink your position on reconciliation with Vietnam. That shouldn't happen until the present government agrees to give democracy a chance, and resolves the MIA/POW issue.

Americans and Vietnamese abroad owe no debt to Vietnam. The Vietnamese government owes basic human rights to all Vietnamese people. Reconciliation should begin with a democratic, internationally monitored election.

As a Vietnamese veteran I salute you, an American veteran, for your tireless effort to help my country during and after the war. I hope you will reconsider your position on reconciliation.

Jimmy Tong Nguyen
Newport Beach, Calif.



Dear Mr. Nguyen,

Thanks for taking the time to contribute to our ongoing discussion on Vietnam. I certainly realize the impact of an oppressive Marxist government on Vietnam. Would that it were not so. Our job would be so much easier and there would be considerably fewer victims who need our help in Vietnam.

But our first loyalty is toward those victims. This is why we continue to work in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola—all countries with oppressive governments in varying degrees. We do hope that some of our Christian humanitarian work will affect the governments themselves. But in the meantime, we feel an obligation to serve those who are hurting.

Speaking as a private citizen, I hope that any reconciliation with Vietnam would be accompanied by less oppression of the Vietnamese people. In particular I think of the Christian church in Vietnam. That church has experienced much persecution; it is still going on.

However, we must remove economic sanctions and press toward a normalized relationship to help victims of the war on both sides of the Pacific. If World Vision waited for a democratic government in Vietnam, we would not be able to serve the victims created by the present government. World Vision wants to alleviate the present suffering, regardless of what happens between our two governments.

I can assure you that we work on both levels. We try to help the people who suffer from oppression and injustice in Vietnam, even as we work quietly on the political level to promote positive change.

We do not feel we can withhold Christian humanitarian aid simply because we disagree with the present regime in Vietnam. As Christians, however, we continue to stand up for individual freedoms, human dignity, and the sanctity of life.

Robert Seiple
President, World Vision

WHEN TOO MUCH IS NOT ENOUGH

BY DALE
HANSON
BOURKE

First I heard the whimpering of a small child. I looked up from my grocery list and spotted him slumped in the seat of a shiny shopping cart. His hair was unkempt, his shirt dirty. His face was streaked with tears that slid down his cheeks and dripped from his chin. His little chest moved up and down as he tried to suppress his sobs.

I was about to ask him if he was all right when a woman rushed over from the nearby dairy case. "Shut up," she hissed. I stood in shock as I realized this was his mother.

He whimpered again as she glared at him and raised her hand in what seemed to be a well-practiced gesture. Moving slightly toward them, I came into view. She glared at me, then at him, but dropped her hand. He was safe for now—but her demeanor suggested that as soon as I was out of sight, she would gladly follow through with her threat.

I wanted to hug the boy, to protect him, but as she jerked the shopping cart around and wheeled toward the checkout line, I stood motionless. "Stop!" I wanted to yell. But instead I realized I too was beginning to cry, right in the middle of the gleaming supermarket. I cried for the little boy and his pain, for the woman and the frustrations that had driven her to hate her own child, for all the people in the store who were surrounded by so much—yet had so little.

I had just returned from a trip to Latin America, and the shock of re-entry into North American society was fresh. Everywhere I turned, I was amazed by our abundance of *things*. In this grocery superstore, for example, I stared at the produce department for several minutes, suppressing my desire to gather up the shiny red apples, Alar and all, and send them to the children I had seen begging on the streets of Guatemala City just a few days before.

I wondered what they would think of this store that offered more than a dozen choices of breads, milk with every variation of butterfat, and a meat department that stretched the entire length of the store. Could they even conceive of such wealth?

I looked at the rack of reduced items and realized the people I had seen living in the city dump would find the overripe fruit and dented cans to be unimaginable treasures.

But it was the little boy and his mother who shocked me the most upon my return. I had been prepared to see the poverty of Latin America; what I hadn't expected to see was the wealth. In a

week of visiting the poorest of the poor, I had never seen a child mistreated. Despite physical discomfort, hunger, and disease, there was a love of children that almost seemed reverent. Mothers beamed as they presented their children to visitors. Adults gladly shared their meager resources with the young.

Yet here, in this supermarket, surrounded by wealth, I saw a woman poorer than anyone I had met on my trip. I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala, where he might go without shoes or a meal, but chances are he would be loved. I wanted her to see what she was doing to herself and her son. Instead, I just wept.

There had been no changes in the supermarket since I went to Guatemala. But *I* was different. I had seen wealth in spirit amidst poverty, and now I saw poverty more clearly when it was disguised by wealth.

I was struggling to understand this when I picked up Henri Nouwen's book *Gracias*. "Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue," he writes. His words struck me with painful intensity.

Each day I spend back in my cozy home, driving my temperature-controlled car, eating meals that leave me more than full, takes me fur-

ther from the clarity I experienced in a land of discomfort. I know I do not need to take a vow of total poverty to experience this purity again. But I do know that the poor are truly blessed. Their vision is not blurred by the numbing abundance I experience each day. They never ask for more; they only dream of enough. I have more than I can ever use—yet talk regularly about my "needs." How Satan must rejoice over my wealth. □

Dale Hanson Bourke is president of Publishing Directions, Inc., in Washington, D.C.



DENNIS SCHROEDER

I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala.

This Christmas, Make A Friend Who Will Love You Forever.

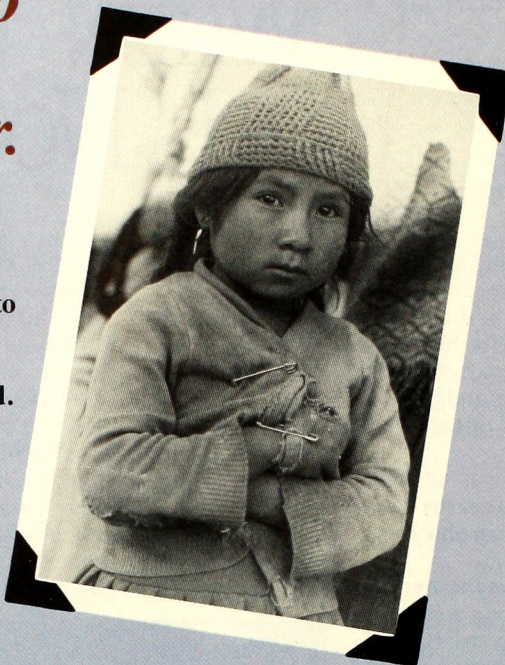
This is Maria. This Christmas, Maria and millions of children like her need caring friends to love them.

Some are orphans.

Many are malnourished.

All of them struggle with poverty.

They'll spend this Christmas like they spend most of their days—cold, hungry and afraid.



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For more than 40 years, World Vision has been finding friends for needy children. We make it possible for you to sponsor one of these children for only \$24 a month.

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You'll be able to write to your child. You'll receive letters as

well—letters full of hope and thanks and love.

This Christmas, open your heart extra wide and give a special gift.

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December 1990-January 1991

South Africa:
Portrait in
Black and White

Where Would
Christ Be
on Christmas?

ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS

TRAGEDIES

TINY



4 Cradle to Grave

In the world's worst known AIDS epidemic among children, Romanians battle not only the deadly disease but their own decades-long standstill in medical progress—and continuing roadblocks from their own government.

9 Romania's Unchained Melody

What's changed in Romania? Everything—and nothing. That goes for its churches too. Here's a look at the old and new challenges confronting Christians in this still-troubled land.

14 Where Would Christ Be on Christmas?

A young man's simple act of grace led writer Mary Owen to reflect on Christ's love and her own ministry to the poor.

18 Portrait in Black and White

It won't be today's aging politicians who forge the new south Africa; it will be today's youth, blacks and whites together. Michael Cassidy, founder of Africa Enterprise, reveals how the 1980s shaped that youth, and offers an agenda for the 1990s.

The formerly persecuted churches: Romania's best hope?

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I hope you caught a recent "20/20" television program that featured World Vision's work with orphans in Romania. Our cover story deals with Romania's saddest legacy to its children: AIDS. What an opportunity for the church to identify with the innocent victims of government policy gone awry.

Evangelist Michael Cassidy focuses readers' attention upon the difficult work of reconciliation in South Africa done by Africa Enterprise, World Vision and others.

Terry Madison

WORLDVISION

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HOLD ON TO THE SMILES

We were driving through northeast Romania, just a few miles from the Soviet border on a brilliant fall morning. The fertile plateau that stretched before us was dotted with sheep, cattle, and small villages, and seemed to spring out of "Dr. Zhivago" or "Fiddler on the Roof." Horses pulled wagons of freshly harvested grapes. Cornstalks had been cut and were now clustered in rows across the fields. It was an idyllic visual memory, but it would be the last one we had that day. The dark side was about to begin.

"Put these white coats on," our hosts told us. "They'll protect you from the children." We were visiting an orphanage, one of hundreds in Romania, full of children for whom society had called it quits. They were officially labeled "unrecoverables." The word reeked of hopelessness, forgottenness, and condemnation.

"The children who come here are stamped for death," said one of our World Vision staff. "No one ever leaves." This was the final deposition for discarded Romanian youth, an old-age home for children already in their final years.

These children were happy to see us. We represented a diversion from the normal institutional tedium. We brought a touch of human contact to augment the daily staple of five—three meals and two diaper changes. Smiles dominated broken faces, twisted bodies and underdeveloped minds. Irrepressible smiles provided the only facade to the gloom of our environment.

The smiles were our only support. They arrested our attention when everything within us wanted to avert their stare. They gave us a way to look past the scabs, the bleeding sores, the filth, the tattered clothing, the mental derangement, and the crippling diseases.

The chatter of the children was constant, and the stench of urine filled every room, mattress, and rag of clothing. Flies were ubiquitous. Filth covered everything. But it was the visual images we couldn't escape. Ten little boys huddled in a corner of the same bed and fought for the same blanket. No one could exist alone—not the autistic children, nor the Down's syndrome children, nor the crippled children. Some rocked quietly while others engaged in more violent self-stimulation.

Then there was the cold, so cold that it slowed circulation. The fight for a blanket was a fight for life. Two children per crib created a constant struggle. The older children either had no shoes or wouldn't wear them. Their threadbare clothing didn't cover their trembling bodies. We suspected many would die before winter.

But the smiles beckoned us, as if to say, "It's all right. We know why you are here. We're glad you've come. Don't cry. If we can smile, you need not feel badly."

The emotional hurdles slowly disappeared. Some children reached out, desperate for a human touch, grasping at fingers and clothing. These were the clingers. Some, however, had obviously been abused. An open hand symbolized hurt and pain. They were the cringers.

Sadly I acknowledged my own similar behavior. I instinctively reached out to some children, but I drew away from others. I had to force myself to hug an AIDS baby. The very aggressive children tried my patience. The wet and naked longed for an arm around their shoulder, and I offered it reluctantly. It took a while for the deformed to get an appreciated massage of their twisted limbs.

I recalled the instructions our World Vision team had given me: "Focus on their smile. They will help you. Their smile will keep you from crying." But it was all so overpowering, so indescribable, so emotionally destructive.

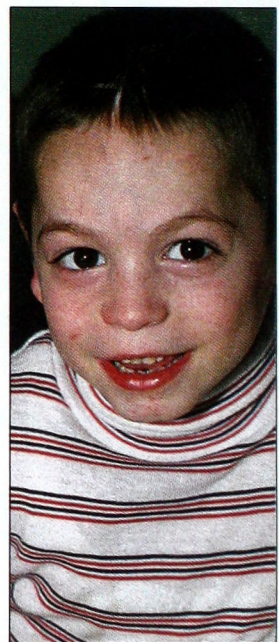
The shock soon turned to numbness as we went from room to room. Obviously, a number of children were starving to death. The blind, the deaf, and the deformed seemed to have fewer chances at food. The smaller children were very weak and their bodies cold. Death was not far away.

One woman was recovering from an abortion. The poorly supervised facility lent itself to sexual promiscuity, and my numbed mind struggled to assimilate this into my ethics of the sanctity of human life.

"The children want to sing for you," our guide told us. The statement defied logic. But at the end of our visit, three children assembled. Nicoleta, a beautiful girl in her late teens, sat on the floor, cushioned by the stumps of her deformed legs. Very simply, they sang:

"We sing as children
but if we dance
we will develop
and grow to be big children."

They sang it over and over. They could sing, but they could not dance. Nicoleta's polio-afflicted legs would never develop. And she would never leave that place. She is an "unrecoverable." □



SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

The smiles were our only support. They held our attention when we wanted to look away.

*Using outdated medical techniques,
Romanian doctors unknowingly
started an epidemic.*

GEORGE READY TO GRAVE

George's eyes search the faces approaching his crib. His hand reaches up immediately, tiny fingers grasping an adult's single finger. He knows it's a game. Laughing eyes. Wide grin. Tight grip.

George is a 13-month-old Romanian orphan. And he has AIDS.

The smell of death lingers around George. His skin folds like old leather over his bones. His knees are lumps on stick-thin legs.

Babies with AIDS lie in hospitals and orphanages across Romania. It's the worst known pediatric AIDS epidemic in the world. Romanian physicians and child-care workers fighting this plague face not only their own decades-long gap in knowledge and

BY SUSIE POST

**ROMANIA'S
CHILDREN WITH AIDS**

technology, but also roadblocks from their government. Without help, they face a hopeless tragedy.

George lives in Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, Romania's capital city. His crib of iron bars, its white paint peeling, stands in a row of similar cribs filled with babies dying of AIDS. There are 10 to 12 of them in his room, and the hallway leads to more rooms full of AIDS babies. Most of them are orphans.

During the rule of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, which ended in December 1989, tens of thousands of children filled Romania's orphanages. The Romanian government officially estimates there are 15,000 abandoned and orphaned children in 350 to 400 institutions across the country. But according to outside agencies that have surveyed the orphanages, the most conservative estimates are around 40,000 children.

Ceausescu's population obsession, combined with the desperate poverty his government inflicted on Romania, was the formula that filled the country's orphanages. Ceausescu was obsessed with a plan to raise the population from 23 million to 30 million by the year 2000. Birth control was illegal. Married women were subjected to frequent examinations if they weren't producing children. Single women were fined for not bearing children.

Some mothers abandoned their children because the pregnancy was unwanted. Others gave their babies up because they simply couldn't care for another child. Mentally and physically handicapped children and children of dissidents and prisoners were also frequently sent to orphanages.

As "20/20" and other television programs have graphically documented, many of these children live in miserable, unsanitary conditions, lacking the most basic care, with perhaps one caretaker for 40 children.

If these "warehouses for children" are the saddest story to come out of the Ceausescu years, the AIDS epidemic among Romanian children may be the worst chapter of that story. It's impossible to pinpoint when the epidemic began in Romania, but most Romanian physicians agree on *how*.

DEADLY INJECTIONS

To pay off Romania's foreign debts, Ceausescu pushed food exports to the limit. Consequently, during the past decade, food was scarce in the country. Basic staples—flour, oil, sugar—were strictly rationed. Meat was a rare luxury. Fruits and vegetables were almost never available.

The lack of food hurt children the most. Many, both inside and outside the orphanages, were sickly and malnourished. To boost these children's immune systems, doctors routinely gave them small injections of blood, called microtransfusions.

Microtransfusions were common practice in the United States back in the 1940s, until research showed they had little or no effect. Because of Romania's enforced isolation from the rest of the world, however, medical knowledge in the country was virtually frozen at a 1940s level.

In 1980s Romania, those ineffective transfusions became a deadly vehicle for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Doctors used untested blood supplies containing HIV, passing the deadly virus to the children. (Even now, only 10 percent of Romanian blood donors are screened for HIV.) Since the transfusions were so small, one contaminated blood unit could infect several children.

Dirty needles did the rest. Basic medical supplies were in such short supply that syringes were used over and over. It was a rare hospital that had a sterilizer that worked. The virus moved from one child to the next through the very injections that were supposed to heal them.

An AIDS baby in Victor Babes Hospital, Bucharest, which has one of the largest AIDS wards in Romania.



GOVERNMENT COVER-UP

In June 1989, Dr. Ion Patrascu discovered a high incidence of HIV among children in a Bucharest hospital. He immediately sent a report to the Ministry of Health, but it was the first of many times he would be stonewalled.

"They didn't accept the report," Patrascu said. "They believed it, but they tried to cover it up. It was not possible in Romania for bad news to appear."

Not until after the December 1989 revolution did most Romanian physicians learn of the AIDS tragedy.

When government officials finally admitted the existence of AIDS in Romania, they insisted the problem was isolated to one hospital in Bucharest. But Patrascu had begun testing children across the country, and he already had alarming figures for two or three towns in southern Romania.

Patrascu planned an educational conference for Romanian physicians about AIDS in November 1989. The Ceausescu government canceled not only the conference, but all AIDS testing on children.

After the revolution, testing resumed. By June 1990 the Institute of Virology managed to test and retest more than 13,000 Romanians, about two-thirds of them under age 18. Less than 1 percent tested positive—except among children under 3 years old. There the numbers jumped off the chart. Fourteen percent tested positive.

In recent months, the government is again suppressing information about

AIDS in Romania. After the country's first democratic election, in June 1990, President Ion Iliescu called another end to the testing of children for HIV.

Patrascu continues to push for testing and research. "The government doesn't care," he said. "They like to get away from the study of the truth. They don't want to know how many people have AIDS. Their minds are in a communist system, like in the past. They don't care about one child, one family. They care about the state."

The lack of information about AIDS is even worse among the Romanian public than among medical professionals. Some Romanian children with AIDS have families who refuse to take them home because they fear they'll catch the disease.

Even if we tell the parents there is no danger from the children who have HIV, they are frightened. They consider the children contagious even if we tell them it's not so. There's a vast need for education," said Pia Popescu, director of a hospital in Vidra with many young AIDS patients.

And while Romanian physicians think of AIDS as a new disease to be treated, much of the population views the virus as a curse from God.

"We Christian physicians see that our contribution is to prevent the spread of AIDS and to educate the people," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president of the Romanian Christian Medical Association. "But in Romania, people consider this disease a plague."

Some caretakers show affection; others change diapers and prop up bottles in assembly-line fashion.

Throughout Romania's 350 to 400 orphanages, tens of thousands of children hunger to be held and loved. "I did not see one child who didn't suffer from emotional neglect," says Dr. Barbara Bascom, an American pediatrician featured on the October 6 segment of the television news program "20/20."

Bascom, who directs World Vision's work with Romanian orphans, says that most of them can recover—if they're helped soon enough.

Although a number of orphanage children were reclaimed by their families after the revolution, and others have been adopted by Romanian or foreign families, the great majority will stay right where they are, Bascom says. She says that gifts of clothing, food, medicines, and toys are not enough to reverse the damage inflicted on these children.

Starting with a few orphanages and gradually expanding, Bascom intends to affect the entire orphanage system. Her plan, called ROSES (Romanian Orphans Social, Educational Services) will offer long-term education and encouragement to the doctors and caretakers who work with the children. Her program will also recruit local women to give the children what they need most: simple mothering.

Indirectly, ROSES will help the Romanian medical profession recover from the lost decades of Romania's

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION

ROSES FOR THE ORPHANS



SUSIE POST

enforced isolation.

"Romanian doctors have been cut off from the tremendous advances made in the diagnosis and treatment of developmental disabilities during the past three decades," Bascom explains. She is designing a child development curriculum for medical students—one that will bring them into the orphanages to work with the children.

Bascom's husband, Dr. Jim Bascom, oversees another World Vision program aiding Romania's crippled medical education system.

"When we went into Romania, we realized this was a disaster area of a different kind," Jim Bascom says. "It wasn't a war, it wasn't a flood, it wasn't an earthquake. It was a social disaster of equal proportions.

"And so much of it was by design. It was deliberate. We expected, to a certain extent, what we found in the

orphanages, although you can never really prepare yourself for that. But we were surprised by the appalling, dismantled state of nearly everything, including medical education."

The Medical Education Redevelopment Program will provide essential medical books and journals to Romanian medical schools. It will also link the schools with medical associations and schools in the United States.

"What's encouraging is the willingness of the Romanian people to start rebuilding their lives for themselves," Jim Bascom says. "That's what offers the most hope."

Barbara Bascom agrees. "Romanians are ashamed of the orphanages," she says. "I'd like to see them point to the homes with pride, not with shame." □

Reported by Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist.

A plague on children less than 3 years old? Dr. Dan explained, "We Christians in Romania believe the biggest problem of humanity is sin. These children in orphanages are the result of the sins of the [parents' generation]."

Dr. Ion Patrascu, however, blames the rulers of Romania for the AIDS epidemic. "When we speak about AIDS in adults, it's often a matter of prostitution, homosexuality, or drug abuse. They can take responsibility for the things they did that put them at risk.

"But the children," he said, "it's a big mistake. It's a medical mistake, it's a state mistake. The state is morally responsible. They killed, by mistake, the children."

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The doctors who treat them usually have few tools for diagnosing the so-called opportunistic diseases, the secondary ailments that penetrate AIDS patients' crippled immune systems. Dr. Adrian Streinu, director of the Colentina Hospital, said most doctors must rely on their own eyes, ears, and nose. What they cannot detect that way usually goes untreated, he said.

As with Romania's other orphans, the quality of AIDS babies' daily care

also varies from institution to institution. In some places the children rock continuously from side to side, repetitive movement to offset a lack of human contact. The squeaking of their cribs is the only sound in the room.

Some of the AIDS victims are fat, healthy-looking babies who want to play with visitors. Others stare into the distance, unaware of the flies crawling on their faces.

Some play with colorful mobiles hanging over their cribs. Others lie still with unchanged diapers.

A few have mothers who come to visit. But most of the young AIDS victims live alone, rarely touched, rarely leaving their cribs.

That is changing slowly, as Romania's doctors and orphanage workers gain the knowledge and the equipment they need to provide better care. Groups outside Romania play a vital role in this process.

A British group called Health Aid has focused on Colentina Hospital in Bucharest, where 13-month-old George lives. British medical and church volunteers swarm through the AIDS ward, unpacking supplies and playing with the babies. George is in a clean crib with a clean diaper and people nearby who pay attention to him.

Both of the hospitals in Bucharest that house AIDS babies now have bright murals on the walls. Many of the babies play with stuffed animals in their cribs. Signs on the wall read, "Remember, TLC needed here!"

At the orphanage in Constanta where nearly every child tested positive for HIV, help has flooded in from

all over Europe. But many hospitals and orphanages still lack the most basic supplies.

In Vidra, a town of 8,000 just outside Bucharest, a hospital for malnourished infants serves basically as an orphanage, because most of the babies dropped off there will never be reclaimed. Almost 100 children live there, most under a year old. About a quarter of them have AIDS. The hospital has little more than cribs, sheets, and diapers. One washing machine serves the whole hospital. NewHope, a Christian AIDS ministry based in Pittsburgh, Penn., is focusing its efforts at the Vidrea hospital.

The Romanian AIDS Association is another vehicle for people outside Romania who want to help AIDS children. Dr. Ion Patrascu heads the newly formed association, which aims to educate medical professionals and the Romanian public about AIDS. The association, made up of volunteer physicians and technicians across the country, also wants to provide social and medical support for AIDS victims and their families. Christian groups such as Youth With a Mission participate in the British branch of the Romanian AIDS Association.

Yet the Romanian government has barred the country's own Romanian Christian Medical Association from working with the AIDS epidemic.

Dr. Ion Alexander Dan, president

of the association, attended an AIDS/HIV conference for Christian physicians in Wheaton, Ill. When he returned to Romania, the Ministry of Health told him that only officially appointed specialists could address the AIDS issue. None of the Christian association's 325 members qualify.

'FIRST OF ALL, PRAYER'

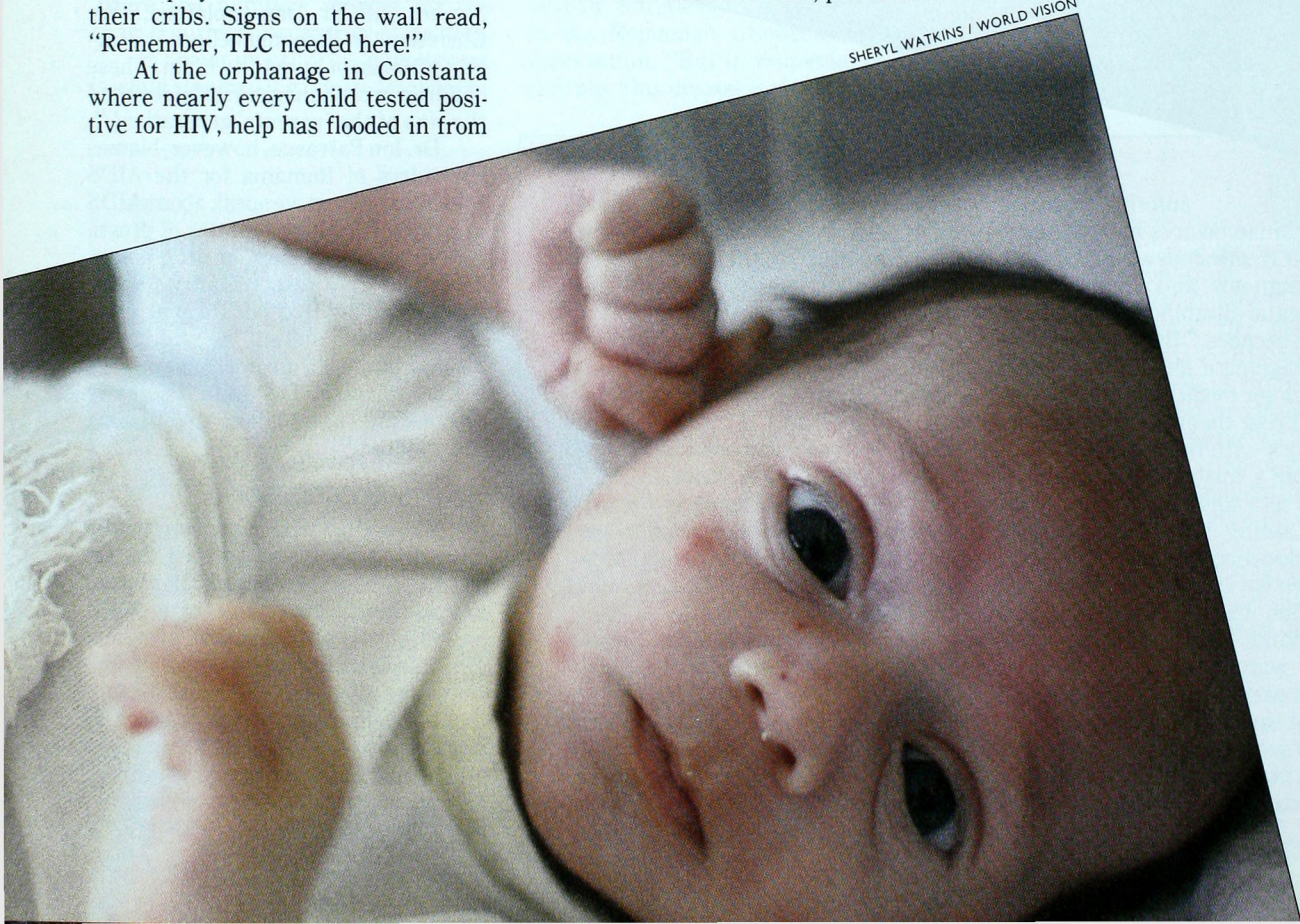
The tragedy of Romania's orphans, including the children's AIDS epidemic, has united Christians from many parts of the world around a common cause.

"I believe in Christian unity and fellowship," said Dr. Ion Alexander Dan of the Romanian Christian Medical Society. "I consider first of all, prayer is most important. God is in control of all the universe and all our activity. Prayer is unity—our prayers with your prayers together."

Doctors and caretakers in the AIDS wards are, in most cases, hungry for support and knowledge. The children are hungry for affection. However, the new government's recent restrictions have shown that Romania's hard-won freedom is as tenuous as the heartbeat of those babies in the iron cribs. There is no "someday" here. The time to act is now. □

Susie Post is a free-lance photojournalist in Ambridge, Penn.

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



BY GINGER HOPE

PHOTOS BY SUSIE POST



One of the first things I learned in Romania is that every question has at least two answers. There's the official answer and the unofficial answer. There's the answer that was true before the December 1989 uprising and the one that's true afterwards. And then there's the doublespeak answer whose actual meaning has nothing to do with the words themselves.

—*How's the weather?* Before December 1989, there was the answer on a thermometer, and the quite different answer on the official weather report. The law required that workers be sent home if the weather turned severe. So the government would change the weather to keep people at work.

—*Do you have a double room available for tonight?* "Come back in one hour. I will know then," the hotel clerk told me. What she meant was, "A small token of your confidence—say a pack of cigarettes—might help me find one."

—*What is the name of this city?* To the ethnic Romanians, I was visiting Oradea. To the Hungarians in western Romania, I was in the ancient Hungarian city of Nagyvárad. To the German minority, I was in Grosswardein.

—*What has changed since the revolution?* "Practically everything," about half the people told me. "Practically nothing," said the other half.

After visiting Romania, I agree with both. The two contradictory answers sum up post-1989 Romania. It is here that any understanding of the challenges facing Romania's evangelical churches must begin.

In a country that is no longer ruled

There's so much to do. And finally, the churches have the freedom to do it.

ROMANIA'S UNCHAINED MELODY

by a madman, practically everything has changed. For people who were used to living on a base diet of flour, sugar, water, and whatever they could scrounge on the black market, and who can now buy food at their local grocery store, practically everything has changed. For people who can travel freely for the first time in decades, practically everything has changed.

Some things, however, haven't changed, things that simply can't change so quickly—like the comatose economy. There is also a disturbingly familiar hand visible behind the frequent ethnic violence and political harassment. Members of the old secret police still walk the streets, and they don't look unemployed. A school-teacher's phone is still tapped for weeks after receiving a telephone call from the United States. Romania's new government too often plays by the old rule book.

"Before the revolution, we never turned on Romanian television at home," said one pastor, "because it was nothing but lies and the Ceausescu family. Then, just before the revolution, everybody was watching six or eight hours a day, just fascinated to see what was happening and to finally hear some truth. But lately we don't watch much television anymore."

Last May, the ballots had barely been counted in Romania's first democratic election when the winning National Salvation Front took back its promise of independent TV stations.

So there's a lot of the old Romania in the new. But what about the evan-

The only way to express our feelings is by crying.'

gelical churches? Without doubt, it's a new day. Josef Tson, a Romanian Baptist pastor, had spent nine years in exile before he moved back to Romania in 1990, just in time to see thousands of people receive Christ at a Luis Palau crusade in his home town.

"For decades we have had to spread the gospel in secret," he said. "And now to see a stadium packed and more than 6,000 people coming forward. The only way to express our feelings is by crying."

The formerly unregistered, or illegal, congregations that met in secret and endured raids and harassment now meet in the open. When police discovered the secret meeting place of Philadelphia Church in Oradea in the 1980s, they raided and trashed the building, levied a huge fine for the Christian literature they discovered, and scattered the congregation.

Reunited

Today the church is reunited, and for four or five hours on Sunday afternoons they worship in a public meeting hall formerly occupied by the Communist Party. They no longer look behind them to see if they're being followed. They can invite anyone they want,

without considering first whether it might be Judas.

"Anyway, the churches did survive," says Sándor Fazakas, a Hungarian Reformed pastor and secretary to the bishop. "They are even stronger than before. Under the pressure we gained strength. But it's not because of the church leaders. It's from God."

And like most Christians in Romania, he is reluctant to catalog the old wrongs, not because they are forgotten, but because they divert energy from the tasks at hand. There is so much to do, and finally there's the freedom to do it.

The churches can now educate their children openly. The Hungarian Reformed denomination was formerly allowed to offer only basic catechism and confirmation. Now, Fazakas explains, "we've already started organizing youth groups in the church, even conferences. We are planning to hold summer camps too."

The new freedom to work with young people opens up a new challenge. A whole generation has been raised to see the church as a place for sad, old women, and Christianity as a religion concerned only with the afterlife. Until now, the church wasn't allowed to



learn how to reach young people.

Fazakas told of a youth organization that, after the revolution, invited clergy of several denominations to meet and discuss Christianity. "On the third night," Fazakas said, "they suddenly asked us to hold a worship service, a special youth service. They said, 'Look, the church is right here. We don't want to go to your church building. And please, don't wear your gown, don't bring your black suit. Just do it.'"

Eventually they did it—a Roman Catholic priest, a Baptist pastor, an Adventist choir, and Fazakas. But it will take more than a special event to reach Romania's young people.

Standing room only

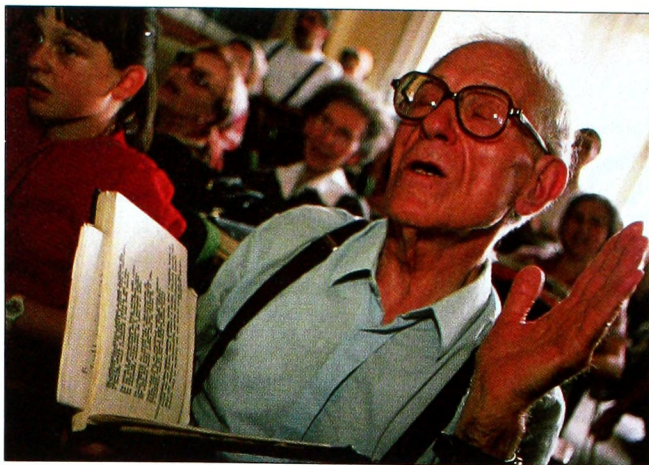
Another welcome change: Churches can now get building permits. Standing-room-only worship services may impress Westerners, but the Romanians find them about as inspiring as living in a small house with several families. "We have hundreds of names of people who responded at the evangelistic crusades," one pastor said, "but we have no place to put them."

One of the most visible changes the revolution brought for many evangelical churches is the influx of visitors and aid from the West. The Second Baptist Church in Oradea, the church most often mentioned in the U.S. Christian media, has received so many Western visitors that it reserves a front-row pew for them.

The new access to the West has also bolstered the evangelical churches' image in Romania. Traditionally, evangelical churches have been considered fanatical sects on the fringes of orthodox Christianity. But all the attention and aid that poured in on evangelicals within days of the revolution started to alter that perception.

One example of this was in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, a coalition of evangelical denominations in Romania. The post-revolution government refused to grant official status to the alliance unless it would accept self-defeating conditions, such as making all its decisions subject to government approval. The evangelical leaders refused and said,

Plans, dreams, and passion: Romanian Christians hold gifts essential for healing a poisoned society.



"We will continue this dialogue in the Western media." Later the same day their charter was granted—without preconditions.

The changes in Romania have one thing in common: freedom. The liberation of speech, action, movement, choice. But freedom also liberates evil. One of the most troubling sides of the new Romania is the apparent escalation of ethnic violence and other expressions of ethnic hatred.

Its roots are deep, ancient, and tangled. There are the ill-conceived boundaries etched on the entire Balkan region after World War I. There are also ancient rivalries between the

It is the Christians who have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice.

Hungarians and the Romanians. But the Ceausescu years have left their own special poison.

Obsessed with the "Romanization" of Romania, Ceausescu sought to obliterate the cultural life of Romania's minorities. He closed their schools. He told them what they could name their children. He scattered their high school graduates to remote, isolated areas. And it was common policy to resettle Romanians from the eastern part of the country—people who had grown up hearing that the ethnic minorities were responsible for Romania's ills—in ethnically mixed western Romania.

Since December 1989 there have been more outbreaks of violence, aimed mostly at Hungarians in western Romania and Gypsies in Bucharest. During a tense time earlier this year, Second Baptist Church in Oradea held

a meeting for Romanian and Hungarian youth.

"It was packed," recalls youth pastor Petru Vidu. "We sang together, we praised God together, we said that in Jesus Christ we are one. It doesn't matter what language we are speaking. And we said that only Jesus Christ can bring peace and healing. Those people who made all those problems, they cannot be Christians. A Christian cannot oppress others."

Indeed the evangelical Christians were one group Ceausescu was unable to divide and conquer, and there has been remarkable cooperation between denominations and between ethnic groups. When the churches were attacked, they united for support.

Today it's those Christians with a living faith who can make the difference for Romania. They have the answers to what are ultimately spiritual problems. The Christians I met seemed like a remnant who offered hope for the saving of the whole. I sensed it when I walked from the street, with streetcars full of passive, impassive faces, into a small, stuffy meeting hall full of passionate faces, where there was loud singing and clapping and praying for hours.

It is in the churches that people still dare to make plans and dream. Christians have kept alive the ability to feel rather than to numb themselves. Christians have not lost the will to risk and sacrifice. These gifts will be essential for the healing of a poisoned society.

What has changed for Romania's Christians? One pastor summarized, "There is not a major change in my life because I was always free inside. I was free before and I am free after. The circumstances have changed, so I have more opportunities now and we are busier. This is a new chapter in our lives—because of the circumstances, not because of our convictions." □

SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME HOME

BY SHERYL WATKINS

Laurel Stevens sits on the floor in a Romanian orphanage and pulls a couple of kids onto her lap. She hugs them, plays with them, lets them take off her watch and listen to it tick. When her companions decide it's time to move on, someone has to go back to get Laurel. She's still with the kids.

A year ago, Romania was the last place this Canadian thought she would end up. After serving as a nurse in Canada, Thailand, and Alaska, Laurel was tired of the stress and the night shifts. She switched to landscaping, with shorter hours and daylight work. But those shorter hours also meant less income. Confused about her options,

Laurel prayed.

"I really don't want to go back to nursing," she told God. "What am I supposed to do next?" She got no answer, so she kept her landscaping job and just waited. "God kept making me aware that I didn't have to worry," she recalls, "because he knew what was ahead, and he would show me at the right time."

Like millions of others, Laurel watched reports on

Romania's revolution. She kept thinking, "Maybe there's something I can do." A few days after Christmas 1989, she heard about a Vancouver doctor who was leading a medical team to Romania. They were leaving in three days. Laurel was welcome to come along, but it normally takes three

days to renew a passport. "When I got [the renewal] in one day," she says, "it was like a little voice from the Holy Spirit saying, 'This is what you've been waiting for.'"

After a few weeks in Romania, Laurel returned home just long enough to raise the support she needed to make a one-year commitment with International Teams of Canada.

Today, Laurel coordinates the distribution of millions of dollars' worth of donated medical supplies. "I don't even look at this as a job. This is something I would do as a volunteer on vacation," she says. She has shared the gospel with Romanian doctors and health officials and is amazed how eagerly they ask for Christian books and Bibles.

This past spring, Laurel took a three-week tour of Romanian orphanages and medical schools. "I had heard about the orphanages already," she recalls, "so I knew conditions were really bad. But I had no idea the problem is as huge as it is." Laurel steeled herself to act clinically rather than emotionally, but "the apathy and emptiness in the children's eyes really struck me," she says. "They were rocking and banging their heads because they had no other physical stimulus. Their eyes were void of emotion because they had never been shown any."

Laurel still can't resist picking up the kids. "What these kids need is to be loved and held," she says. "And part of me hopes that when the staff see me—playing with the kids, sitting on the floor, and pulling as many children to me as possible—they will do the same."

The woman who admits she "never had much of an interest in Eastern Europe" is now totally committed to her new ministry. She says she misses friends and family, but she's not homesick. "I don't want to go home," she says. "I want them to come here and see Romania." □

Sheryl Watkins, World Vision journalist

Perhaps the obstacle is not so much God's silence as the fear that God might in fact respond.

Ronald Goetz

SHERYL WATKINS / WORLD VISION



Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Pray for Romania's children** with AIDS. Ask God to strengthen efforts to fight the epidemic and care for its victims (pages 4-8).
- ♦ **Thank God** for the new freedom of Romania's churches, and for the churches' energy and vitality. (pages 9-11).
- ♦ **Ask God to help you**, this holiday season, to show compassion to someone who has little to celebrate (pages 14-15).
- ♦ **Pray for the reconciling witness** of South African churches (pages 18-21).

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

THE LOVE DEPARTMENT

BY JEROME A. KAPLOWITZ

Beverly Hills Baptist Church

Nobody gets by James Noe without a hug. His grandfatherly presence is the gatekeeper to a steady stream of people arriving in wheelchairs, on crutches, or with a helping hand at the church door.

Noe (pronounced NO-ee) welcomes about 100 mentally and physically handicapped worshippers on a Sunday morning at Beverly Hills Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. He's the volunteer director of the Exceptional Department at the church. For more than 20 years Beverly Hills Baptist has provided what might be the only worship service specifically for the city's mentally and physically impaired people.

John Walker leads the morning devotion. He concludes by visiting each person in the audience and giving them the microphone to repeat the monthly memory verse. More than half are able to recite it. For some, like 27-year-old Deborah Ayres, who has cerebral palsy, it's a struggle. But they all enjoy their moment in the limelight.

"Deborah really brightens up every time she comes to Beverly Hills," says her mother, Emma Ayres. "She loves to get involved in everything."

"All our special people want is someone to love them," Noe says. "If Jesus accepts them, then we do too." Maybe that's why the rest of the church calls the Exceptional Department "the love department."

The message of love and acceptance is central to everything that happens on Sunday mornings in the love department. Marion Haynes, a Sunday school teacher, often uses 1 Peter 2:9-10, where Peter identifies God's people as a chosen race. "I tell my students that they *are* different, but not by the world's definition. They are different because they belong to Jesus."

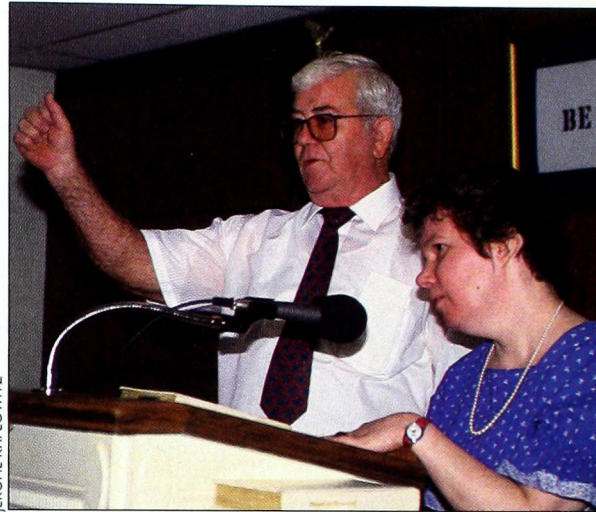
In 1961, a mother brought her young son with Down's syndrome to Sunday school at Beverly Hills Baptist. The pastor and another church member decided to do something to meet the needs of that mother and her child.

With three students, three teachers, and an improvised classroom under a stairwell, the Exceptional Department was underway. Two years later James Noe became the director, and he's been with it ever since.

Noe, unlike most of the volunteers he works with, doesn't have a handicapped person in his family.

"Most of us became involved because we have a Down's syndrome child or a family member in a wheelchair," says John Walker, the program's assistant director. "James Noe just cares."

According to volunteer Joyce Brantely, the



James Noe (left): "He just cares."

only requirement to work in the program is love. "When God sees that," she says, "He will take the rest of you and use you to touch others."

Several of the volunteers were apprehensive when they first started. "I wondered how I was going to communicate God's Word to these people," said Pepper Shelton.

John Erwin said, "It took me a while to learn that you talk to a mentally handicapped Christian the same as you would any other Christian."

But when volunteers leave, it's often to volunteer in similar ministries in other churches. "Once an impaired person touches your life," Noe says, "it's like having empty pockets that suddenly become full."

The Exceptional Department is also an informal support network for the families of the handicapped worshippers. They bowl together, take trips together, and call each other during the week. "We are like a family in so many ways," says Ethel Whitten.

Pastor John Bedford says, "The volunteers help our other members sense the need to do something worthwhile for the Lord."

John Noe recently overheard a conversation in the church parking lot that said it all. A father who doesn't attend church was picking up his handicapped son. "What did you do this morning?" he asked.

The boy answered his father, "I learned that Jesus loves me." □

Jerome Kaplowitz is a free-lance writer in Vicksburg, Miss.



JEROME KAPLOWITZ

*For more
information contact
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3804 Kimball,
Memphis, TN 38111.*

In a downtown Sacramento park, hundreds of needy people gathered for a hot meal, a blanket, and some hope on Thanksgiving Day. Under the umbrella of Project Light, evangelists and others rendered immediate first aid to ailing bodies and minds. But long-term assistance loomed like an ugly blight on a middle-class horizon, and even the warmest of hearts despaired at the task ahead.

The reality of winter hits hard when shoes give way to bound rags and tattered clothing is the fashion of the day. Cold-reddened hands turned white at a fleeting puff of warm air blown in desperation for a moment of comfort, an impossibility when that same chill sets weary bones and hearts to aching.

As Christmas approaches, I am nagged by a different scenario than loved ones gathered warmly and happily around a Christmas tree. That familiar picture is overshadowed by the memory of the haunting eyes of an old man, crying unashamedly at the warmth and happiness he experienced on that Thanksgiving Day.

I hear again the redundant cries of a child as he tugged at his mother's torn jeans—"I'm still hungry." With two other youngsters at her side and a shopping cart filled with family valuables to guard, the mother's resigned reply was, "I'll do what I can."

Another man, in his late 30s, confessed his feelings of failure to a worker: "I'm so embarrassed to be

here. I have a son. What must he think of me?" Another person gave me a hug of thanks. For a moment, I thought he wanted a handout. Others had asked, and I was saddened that the needs were beyond one day's work.

As I think back on that day, the anticipation of special Yuletide goodies on our laden table is not so exciting.

What would Christ do on Christmas Day? I'm sure he, too, would be nagged by my vision of "outside." But I'm also sure he would not be content to sit "inside" and enjoy the festivities when so many lack the same opportunities.

In a most Christlike manner, a young man left me with a poignant reminder of the world's needs that Thanksgiving, and I cried. I was suddenly rebuked by my own conscience as his one act of faith far surpassed mine that chilly November day.

This young man, dressed in a torn jacket, jeans, and worn shoes, had happily searched through piles of clothing for a "new" pair of shoes. Hugging

a pair of nearly new athletic shoes, he gave me a thumbs up sign and a wide grin. I felt pretty good as I watched him meander through the throng of homeless and poor that had gathered. This was what the outreach was all about—helping others.

But suddenly the young man stopped next to a Middle Eastern man wearing a tunic made of potato sacks. On this man's feet were several layers of magazines held in place by rags torn from the same potato sacking. The young man quietly observed this stranger, tapped him on the shoulder, and offered him the tennis shoes he had rescued from the pile of discards. Acknowledging the young man's own need, the stranger declined the offer with dignity and a smile of thanks. My own feelings of "doing good" were a bit tarnished by his selfless act of giving.

As I think of that interchange, I know what Christ would do on Christmas Day. Many of us open our doors to strangers, and more than a few of us reach out to others in need. But perhaps we too often reach out in ways that are comfortable to us, ways that don't demand much effort.

I recently read an article about a local family who gathered scarfs, hats, and mittens to hand out to the city's indigent. Most of them were sur-

Where would Christ be on Christmas?

BY MARY OWEN

We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us.

prised by the generosity. One man stuck around until they left, just needing a friendly ear. That family's small act of love has now become a ministry. Spurred on by the need, their successful effort, and the true feeling of Christmas, they hope this year to surpass the 150 gifts they gave away.

In Isaiah 58 it is written: "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like noonday."

In that Sacramento park on Thanksgiving, a young man's "night" became "like noonday." The cure for the world's problems starts with each and every one of us. We need to let our own lights rise, with only fleeting thought to the few who manipulate the system; an over-used excuse for nonaction. We need to give careful consideration to what the miracle of Christmas truly asks of us, then act. And the gift we receive in return will entwine the love wrapped in parcels beneath the tree with the true Christmas spirit—the spirit of giving of ourselves. □

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THE CHRIST OF THE HOMELESS; WOOD ENGRAVING BY FRITZ EICHENBERG, © 1982

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Leslie Salisbury

HOUSE CALLS

Beth Kidd is a nurse who still makes house calls.

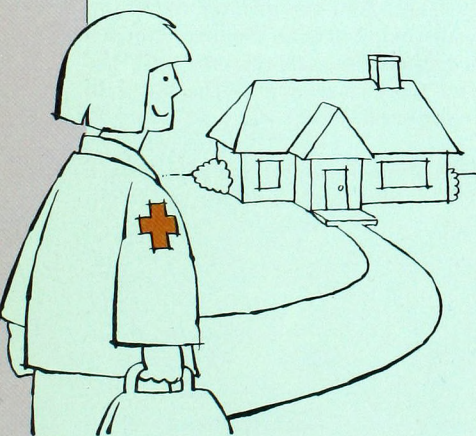
While working at Boston's City Hospital in the early 1970s, Kidd began to follow up on patients who still needed care after they left the hospital.

She now has 60 outpatients whose needs range from prenatal care to treatment for AIDS. Most of them are her neighbors.

"Some of them I see every day, some I just call every so often. I am the connection between the hospital and patient," Kidd said.

She often becomes the family her patients don't have. "I get involved with their housing problems and welfare problems," she said. "I help pregnant teenagers who don't have anyone else."

Local Boston churches are also involved in Kidd's nursing ministry. "I build a relationship with my



patients, share the gospel with them, and try to connect them with a local church. Then the church takes over," Kidd said.

For information on how to start a nursing ministry in your area, contact Beth Kidd at Emmanuel Gospel Center: (617) 262-4567.



New London Kids Club

A LONDON BRIDGE

London, Calif., is a severely impoverished community near Kingsburg, Calif. It doesn't have a police force to fight its heavy drug traffic. Most of its children don't have enough clothes or food.

Virtually the only group helping London's children is the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program. Kingsburg volunteers lead Salvation Army-sponsored programs

for 65 children in grades one through eight. Tutoring, Bible stories, and crafts are an alternative to spending afternoons in an empty house or on the streets.

"We are their only link, their only introduction to Christianity," said Sharon Melchor, director of the New London Kids Club.

For information on how to start an afternoon program for kids in your area, contact the Kingsburg Community Assistance Program, P.O. Box 384, Kingsburg, CA 92631. Telephone: (209) 897-2499.

SWEAT EQUITY

Some old-fashioned barn raising has raised \$449,500 for world hunger relief.

Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church members have built five houses using donated supplies. When the houses are sold, the proceeds go to the humanitarian work of the Mennonite Central Committee.

The house goes up in one day,

and the inside is finished in four to five months. "It's great to see people using skills and abilities, knowing it will help people around the world," said Leo Martin of the MCC.

For information, contact the Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

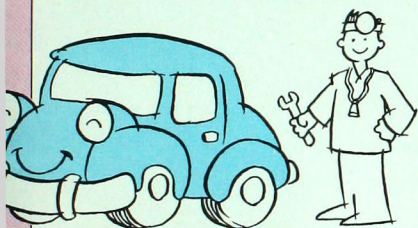
ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A car dealership in Grand Rapids, Mich., helped 13 financially needy people get back on the road at a recent free car clinic.

Duthler Ford performed simple repairs on 13 cars whose owners depended on the vehicles to get to work, yet couldn't afford the repairs.

Seventeen area churches referred people to the car clinic through the All County Churches Emergency Support System (ACCESS).

If the individual couldn't pay for the necessary parts, the referring church provided the funds.



Duthler Ford plans another repair day, collaborating with other local dealerships. "Together, more of us can make a bigger difference," said Patricia Duthler, vice president and general manager. "The best way to help is to help people support themselves."

Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person.

Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Action

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FYR010

After 30 years
of separation,
white and black
youths of
South Africa
must unite
to forge a
new nation.

BY MICHAEL CASSIDY

PORTRAIT IN BLACK AND

Sometimes I even forgot I was black because nobody kept reminding me."

That's how a black South African teenager described his first friendship with a white South African. He met his new friend at a Christian camp designed to reconcile the separated youth of South Africa. For the first time in his life he saw deeper than the white skin, and saw not a natural enemy, but a fellow countryman.

I long to see all of South Africa's youth united in reconciliation and trust. But sadly, I can't even say they are "the nation's youth." Black young people and white young people don't feel they belong to each other or even to a common nation.

That must change. The new South Africa will not be built by today's aging politicians but by the young leaders, both black and white. They'll have to do it together.

Because of apartheid, interaction between South Africa's black youth and white youth has been virtually nonexistent for the past 30 to 35 years, even between church youth groups.

The 1980s was a damaging decade. It was a decade of rebellion, repression, and polarization—rebellion by black young people, repression by the authorities, and polarization of almost everyone.

Our government started drafting young whites into the army straight from school to fend off the so-called "total onslaught." The authorities told



GUY TILLIM / IMPACT VISUALS

these young soldiers to defend our white and Western civilization, to fight against the "total onslaught" of communism and agitators trying to take over our country. Ideologically innocent and politically naive, these white youths went to the border to protect our (white) country, our (white) values, and our (white) civilization.

Meanwhile, young blacks were "drafted" into the "liberation struggle." We convinced our youth, both white and black, that we were in a war that one would win and the other lose.

Young blacks met violence with violence. This, in turn, led to increased repression by internal security forces, which led to increased aggression by black political movements. Blacks who were suspected to have collaborated

with the white cause suffered torture and even death by other blacks.

Whether it was the white internal security forces or the black liberation forces, they all believed force could change attitudes. In the 1980s, we effectively created a culture of conflict and violence.

Overriding this culture of violence is the continuing debate about whether South Africa should be a single nation. The African National Congress, led by Nelson Mandela, believes it should be.

The ruling National Party, however, has insisted that South Africa's different people groups cannot live together as one nation. Only recently did they recognize that separation isn't feasible. Today they are emphasizing the protection of each group's rights and identity.

Complicating this issue, white South Africans have grown up identifying with Europe and America rather than Africa, believing our culture is alien to Africa's.

But this attitude is slowly changing. After all, most of us are fourth-generation Africans. Our grandparents, parents, and children were born in Africa. All of us, especially the young people, must move toward a new cultural identity without denying our roots. I see growing hope for this new identity as black young people force us to face key issues.

In 1976 black students rebelled against an edict that established the Dutch-descended language Afrikaans as the official language for all South African schools. The rebellion was a symbolic action. The black youth signalled that they would no longer tolerate their parents' subservience.

They cried to the world, "This is our country. We have a stake in it. We will work for change and, if necessary, we will force change. We will not sit back and accept inferior education, inferior housing, or inferior anything."

Their educational demands have evolved into a symbol of black refusal to accept second-class treatment. Their stand on this issue has helped change the attitudes of many white South Africans.

Black young people were at the forefront of this change, just as students in the past have spearheaded change in Britain, Europe, and the United States.

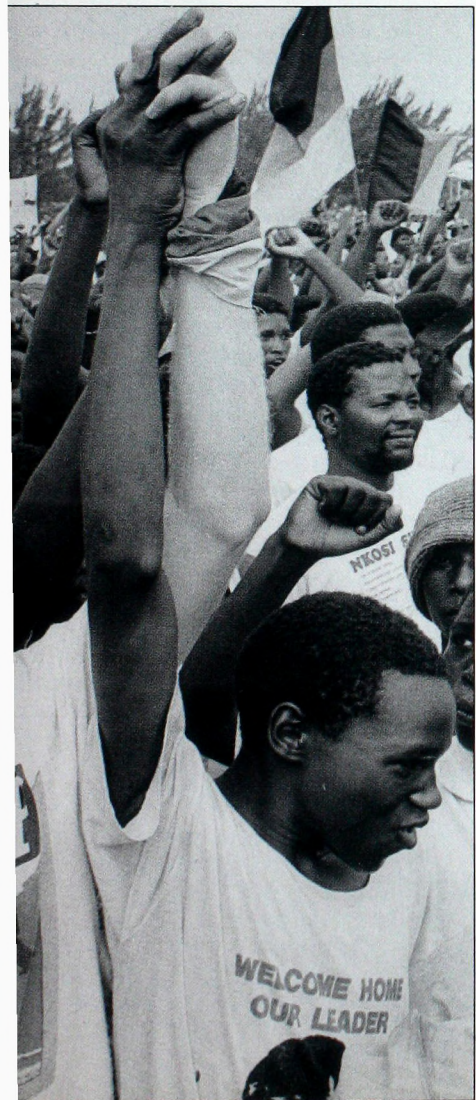
South African white students have also contributed to change. Through the Natal Union of South African Students, they have fought repressive laws aimed at black students. But unlike the black student protestors, white stu-

dents often backed down in the face of intimidation or bans.

The students, both white and black, have visibly changed South Africa's education system. The University of Natal (Durban), for example, now reserves 70 percent of its residence space for black students, because whites can more easily find alternative housing. Even Afrikaans universities are becoming more racially open. Though few have blacks in residence yet, the signs are encouraging.

In the midst of these changes, the church has not been silent. Despite the fact that the government took over the

WHITE



We convinced our youth we were in a war that one side would win and the other lose.

country's church-run schools and colleges in the 1950s, the church has recently spearheaded many changes in the education system. In fact, the success of multi-racial education in private church schools has encouraged the government to take steps in that direction.

The next major challenge facing the church and South Africa's youth is the creation of a fair, effective judicial system. Most blacks perceive the present structures as serving white interests. Much of the township violence stems from a breakdown of law and order. Police action is seen as biased.

This loss of faith in the justice system has led to vigilante justice. And



The church's role in South Africa is to encourage the building of a new country based on mutual acceptance and tolerance. The key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

vigilante groups working in secret to exact community justice are often youth-led.

The challenge is to replace both the biased official system and the vigilante system with a system of authority and justice that is trustworthy and fair. The church's role is to champion justice. Injustice from both the security forces and the liberation movement must be equally condemned. We must

"Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation."

replace our culture of violence with a culture of repentance and forgiveness, leading to a non-racist democracy.

As the church spreads the message that every African has value in the eyes of Christ, and that everyone's ideas and views are important, a new day is possible.

Christians have a distinctive message for South Africa: Reconciliation is not a means to an end, but a spiritual obligation. It is first an attitude and then a strategy.

The church's vital role is to encourage the building of a new South Africa: a place of mutual acceptance,

tolerance, and togetherness as one nation under God. Organizations like World Vision and Africa Enterprise recognize that the key to this new South Africa is the reconciliation of its young people.

Africa Enterprise is reconciling black, white, and colored young people through week-long Bridge-Building Encounters. Over the past 10 years, hundreds of young people of all races and from all regions of South Africa have met at our center to get to know each other personally.

After the encounters we hear comments like these:

—"I've learned more about people and the problems facing my country in the past six days than I have in the past five years of history lessons."

—"It was the first time I mixed freely with other races."

—"I have found that there is not too much difference between black and white."

South Africa's challenges are immense, and nowhere are they more demanding than among our youth. Yet with Christ's help, many young blacks and whites are beginning to live out that famous dictum: "You see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask, why not?" □

Michael Cassidy is founder of Africa Enterprise.

For the past three years, Natal Province in South Africa has been the battleground of two opposing black factions. The African National Congress, the United Democratic Front, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions make up one side, and Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, president of the 1.5-million-strong Inkatha Movement, heads the other.

Earlier this year, Matt Montague, a 19-year-old American, found himself in the crossfire.



Imbali Township is a series of identical concrete block homes on small plots of land—two bedrooms and a toilet out back. Outside they're run-down and dirty. Inside they're immaculate. A home that looks even halfway prosperous from the outside might attract police attention. The family could be searched for cash or weapons, maybe even killed. So the sameness has a purpose. It keeps people safe. Many of the people work at the aluminum plant outside the township, or as taxi drivers or "garden boys."

I lived in Imbali Township for eight months as part of an internship program with Africa Enterprise, a Christian organization whose mission is to reconcile the races through the gospel. And I ended up in a war.

At first, March 29 seemed no different than any other Thursday. Every Thursday I met with a youth reconciliation group where young whites, coloreds, Indians, and blacks could come together in peace to discuss issues that matter to them and learn more about Jesus Christ. After the meeting, my friend Antony and I went to another friend's house to play darts.

At 6 p.m., the craziness started.

We heard a lot of commotion, looked out the window, and saw 50 or more people running across the valley about a quarter of a mile away. Then we heard a few gunshots. Antony ran out the door to get a closer look. I took off for the nearest phone, since there was

no phone at our friend's house, and called the Riot Squad, South Africa's riot control team. As usual, they sounded bored, said they'd see what they could do. As usual, they didn't come.

It seems some Inkatha members were chasing the townspeople. By this time, the air was full of shots. We didn't know what to do, so we decided to head for the Imbali Support Group house a few blocks away. We were scheduled to handle the phones there that night anyway. Maybe we could find out what was going on.

By the time we got there, the phone was already ringing off the hook with requests for help and reports of people being shot or houses being shot at. Less than an hour had passed since the shooting first started, but now it sounded like a full-scale war. Antony and our friend Temba left in response to a distress call. I was alone in the house with another guy named Temba when we received another urgent call. Two black men were wounded and needed transportation to a hospital. I grabbed Temba and we drove off to pick them up.

As soon as we turned the first corner, a shot came out of a bush in our direction. I ducked under the dashboard—but then I remembered I was driving! I've never been so scared in all my life. I was actually being shot at. Still in a daze, we drove towards a

BY MATT MONTAGUE

group of boys. More shots. Temba dove for the floorboard. Another shot came and missed. We were both sweating. We swerved onto a dirt road and cut across the valley. More shooting. And for the third time, we got out alive.

We finally reached the house. It was riddled with bullets. The two men inside had been shot, one in the right shoulder and one in the lower back. We figured that the nearest black hospital, Edendale, would already be full, and we didn't want to have to fight for their admission. So we drove them to Gray's, a hospital that had just opened to blacks. When we got there, I went to the admitting station and told the nurse, "I've got two guys in the car who've been shot."

"Are they black?" she asked.

When I said they were, she hesitated for a moment, then said to bring them in. No one on staff came with us. That night many blacks would be admitted to that hospital. To my knowledge, though, these were the first.

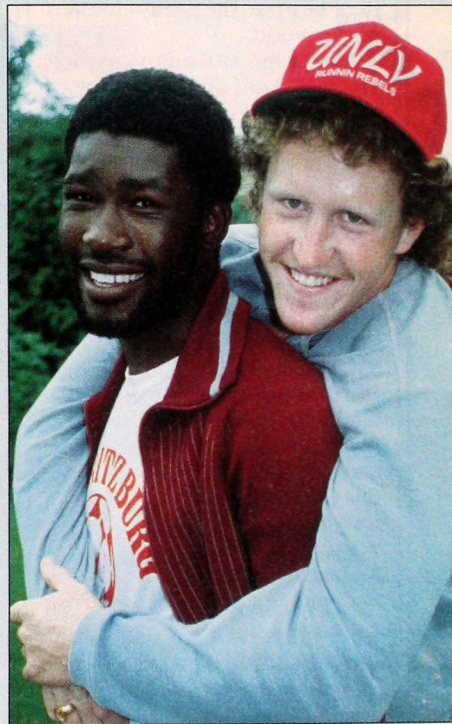
I called the Imbali Support Group house but was told they were under fire and it was unsafe to return. I was instructed to go to Africa Enterprise and answer the many distress and information calls that would come in. I did that, reluctantly. I was so worried about the ISG house and my friends that I called them over and over again. Finally, by 4:30 that morning, things had quieted down and it seemed safe to return. Temba and I made it back to

the ISG house, shaken but alive.

I couldn't wait to get back to the United States. And that's when it hit me. I had the choice to leave. I was in Imbali township as a volunteer. But what about those who have no choice? What about the people who go to sleep not knowing if their house will be burned to the ground in the middle of the night? If their children will be alive the next day? I don't know if I'd be strong enough to live under that kind of pressure.

That's why it's so important to give people hope. Hope in God, hope in a better life. I'm studying business administration so I can go back and help the people put together small businesses and run them. I may not be able to change the big picture in South Africa, but I can help a kid become something other than a garden boy—and help him know that life doesn't have to be the way it is right now in Imbali Township. □

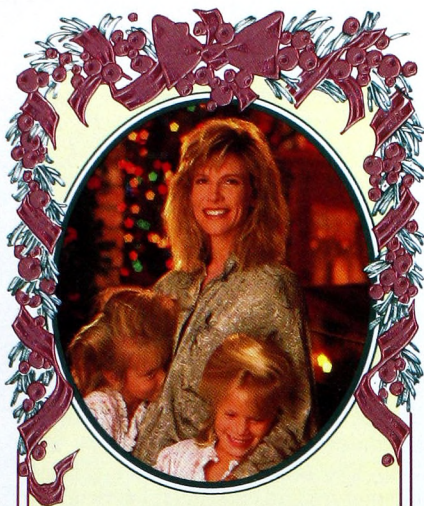
Matt Montague and his friend Temba.



DODGING BULLETS IN IMBALI

As an intern in a South African township, this American youth got more than he expected.

READERS' RIGHT



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ABOWAD

Dear Mr. Seiple,

In a recent article you called for reconciliation with Vietnam in order to relieve the pain of Vietnam War victims, both American and Vietnamese ("Undoing a Fashionable Grudge," August/September 1990).

The communist regime that has controlled Vietnam for the past 15 years has continuously imposed a hard-line and inhumane policy on its own people. Hard-labor prisons have been built all across Vietnam to imprison thousands of former South Vietnamese servicemen, government officials, opposition leaders, and American MIAs and POWs.

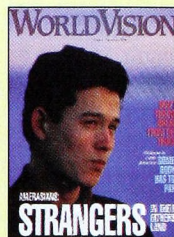
Your organization has helped relieve the famine situation in Ethiopia. However, in spite of the world's effort to help, people in Ethiopia continue to suffer and die year after year because of the inhuman and corrupt Ethiopian government. That government refused to cooperate with the free world to effectively distribute food and medical assistance to the hungry Ethiopian people.

I use Ethiopia as an example to ask you to rethink your position on reconciliation with Vietnam. That shouldn't happen until the present government agrees to give democracy a chance, and resolves the MIA/POW issue.

Americans and Vietnamese abroad owe no debt to Vietnam. The Vietnamese government owes basic human rights to all Vietnamese people. Reconciliation should begin with a democratic, internationally monitored election.

As a Vietnamese veteran I salute you, an American veteran, for your tireless effort to help my country during and after the war. I hope you will reconsider your position on reconciliation.

Jimmy Tong Nguyen
Newport Beach, Calif.



Dear Mr. Nguyen,

Thanks for taking the time to contribute to our ongoing discussion on Vietnam. I certainly realize the impact of an oppressive Marxist government on Vietnam. Would that it were not so. Our job would be so much easier and there would be considerably fewer victims who need our help in Vietnam.

But our first loyalty is toward those victims. This is why we continue to work in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola—all countries with oppressive governments in varying degrees. We do hope that some of our Christian humanitarian work will affect the governments themselves. But in the meantime, we feel an obligation to serve those who are hurting.

Speaking as a private citizen, I hope that any reconciliation with Vietnam would be accompanied by less oppression of the Vietnamese people. In particular I think of the Christian church in Vietnam. That church has experienced much persecution; it is still going on.

However, we must remove economic sanctions and press toward a normalized relationship to help victims of the war on both sides of the Pacific. If World Vision waited for a democratic government in Vietnam, we would not be able to serve the victims created by the present government. World Vision wants to alleviate the present suffering, regardless of what happens between our two governments.

I can assure you that we work on both levels. We try to help the people who suffer from oppression and injustice in Vietnam, even as we work quietly on the political level to promote positive change.

We do not feel we can withhold Christian humanitarian aid simply because we disagree with the present regime in Vietnam. As Christians, however, we continue to stand up for individual freedoms, human dignity, and the sanctity of life.

Robert Seiple
President, World Vision

WHEN TOO MUCH IS NOT ENOUGH

BY DALE
HANSON
BOURKE

First I heard the whimpering of a small child. I looked up from my grocery list and spotted him slumped in the seat of a shiny shopping cart. His hair was unkempt, his shirt dirty. His face was streaked with tears that slid down his cheeks and dripped from his chin. His little chest moved up and down as he tried to suppress his sobs.

I was about to ask him if he was all right when a woman rushed over from the nearby dairy case. "Shut up," she hissed. I stood in shock as I realized this was his mother.

He whimpered again as she glared at him and raised her hand in what seemed to be a well-practiced gesture. Moving slightly toward them, I came into view. She glared at me, then at him, but dropped her hand. He was safe for now—but her demeanor suggested that as soon as I was out of sight, she would gladly follow through with her threat.

I wanted to hug the boy, to protect him, but as she jerked the shopping cart around and wheeled toward the checkout line, I stood motionless. "Stop!" I wanted to yell. But instead I realized I too was beginning to cry, right in the middle of the gleaming supermarket. I cried for the little boy and his pain, for the woman and the frustrations that had driven her to hate her own child, for all the people in the store who were surrounded by so much—yet had so little.

I had just returned from a trip to Latin America, and the shock of re-entry into North American society was fresh. Everywhere I turned, I was amazed by our abundance of *things*. In this grocery superstore, for example, I stared at the produce department for several minutes, suppressing my desire to gather up the shiny red apples, Alar and all, and send them to the children I had seen begging on the streets of Guatemala City just a few days before.

I wondered what they would think of this store that offered more than a dozen choices of breads, milk with every variation of butterfat, and a meat department that stretched the entire length of the store. Could they even conceive of such wealth?

I looked at the rack of reduced items and realized the people I had seen living in the city dump would find the overripe fruit and dented cans to be unimaginable treasures.

But it was the little boy and his mother who shocked me the most upon my return. I had been prepared to see the poverty of Latin America; what I hadn't expected to see was the wealth. In a

week of visiting the poorest of the poor, I had never seen a child mistreated. Despite physical discomfort, hunger, and disease, there was a love of children that almost seemed reverent. Mothers beamed as they presented their children to visitors. Adults gladly shared their meager resources with the young.

Yet here, in this supermarket, surrounded by wealth, I saw a woman poorer than anyone I had met on my trip. I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala, where he might go without shoes or a meal, but chances are he would be loved. I wanted her to see what she was doing to herself and her son. Instead, I just wept.

There had been no changes in the supermarket since I went to Guatemala. But *I* was different. I had seen wealth in spirit amidst poverty, and now I saw poverty more clearly when it was disguised by wealth.

I was struggling to understand this when I picked up Henri Nouwen's book *Gracias*. "Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue," he writes. His words struck me with painful intensity.

Each day I spend back in my cozy home, driving my temperature-controlled car, eating meals that leave me more

than full, takes me further from the clarity I experienced in a land of discomfort. I know I do not need to take a vow of total poverty to experience this purity again. But I do know that the poor are truly blessed. Their vision is not blurred by the numbing abundance I experience each day. They never ask for more; they only dream of enough. I have more than I can ever use—yet talk regularly about my "needs." How Satan must rejoice over my wealth. □



DENNIS SCHROEDER

I wanted to tell her that her child would be better off in Guatemala.

Dale Hanson Bourke is president of Publishing Directions, Inc., in Washington, D.C.

Something

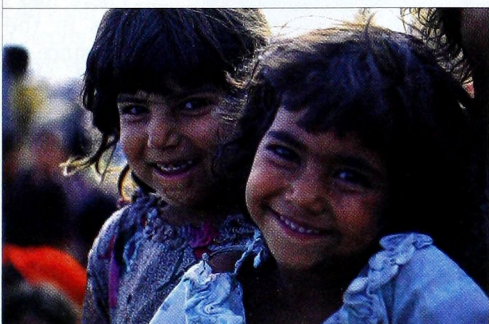
M O R E

In more than 50 locations around the world, World Vision reaches out in mercy to helpless refugee families ... providing food, shelter, clothing, medical care ... and something more.



That something more is World Vision's commitment to meeting their spiritual need—the need to experience the comforting love of One who said,

“Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The One who identified with the poor and the oppressed of



this world. The One who offers eternal hope for those with no place to go. As we look forward to Christmas, World Vision is committed to offering “room in the

*inn” to thousands of refugees and displaced people. **Whether that commitment is met depends entirely on the compassionate response of people like you.** Your generous gift can make a world of difference today.*

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