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# WORLD VISION®



SUDAN'S  
CIVIL WAR:

## SILENT CRIES TO A DEAF WORLD

MINING DIAMONDS FROM CITY STREETS, pg. 10


THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN AID, pg. 16

LIBERIA'S PRECARIOUS PEACE, pg. 20

PLEASE RESPOND TO  
READER SURVEY  
INSIDE



*Hidden in the heart of Africa, the oldest and longest war of recent times rages on virtually unnoticed by the outside world.*



Children displaced from their homes by Sudan's civil war gather at a relief agency feeding center at the town of Kongor north of Bor on the Nile River.

# SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR: SILENT CRIES



**THE CIVIL WAR IN SUDAN, WHICH HAS DEVASTATED THE SOUTHERN THIRD OF AFRICA'S LARGEST COUNTRY FOR 30 OF THE PAST 41 YEARS, IS TAKING SHAPE AS ONE OF THE GREATEST HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES SINCE WORLD WAR II. CONSIDER THE FIGURES: IN THE PAST 10 YEARS ALONE, THE CONFLICT HAS LEFT AN ESTIMATED 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE DEAD AND ANOTHER SEVERAL MILLION DISPLACED FROM HOMES AND LANDS—A TOLL APPROACHING THE HUMAN COST OF RECENT STRIFE IN SOMALIA, RWANDA, AND BOSNIA COMBINED.**

PHOTO BY JOHN SCHENK / WORLD VISION

# TO A DEAF WORLD

BY BRUCE BRANDER



Yet the turmoil and its massive price in human suffering are scandalously under-reported by the media and tragically neglected by governments throughout the world.

The odd lack of global awareness is partly explainable. Sudan's war zone is old Africa, one of the most remote and least accessible places on earth. Travel there, never substantial, now is all but impossible, with shifting battle lines, random aerial bombings, and a virtual freeze on permission to enter the region.

Yet why does the media stay away? They don't entirely. A few reporters and cameramen have ventured into the wild land to tell its tale. But newsrooms in major cities of the world cite lack of interest in their audiences—recalling the lag between disaster and attention that condemned 1 million Ethiopians to death by hunger in the mid-1980s.

Meanwhile, the world's governments shy away from interfering in the country's internal affairs. They could intervene in Sudan, and perhaps still might, as they did in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. But such commitment remains risky, costly, and unpopular. And southern Sudan seems very far away. So the war storms

## *The modern slavers of Sudan are said to find customers as far away as Libya and the Persian Gulf states.*

on, killing people by the hundreds of thousands, uprooting fully half the population of the region.

### **WAR SPLITS COUNTRY**

The conflict splits the nation of some 28 million people, which is almost as large as the United States east of the Mississippi River, into northern and southern political regions. Even in peacetime, they seem an unlikely merger. The north is Arabic in culture, Muslim in religion, largely desert in terrain. The south is black Africa as 19th-century explorers

knew it: vast savannas, malarial marshes, and roadless jungles peopled by spirit-worshipping cattle herders and mission-trained Christians.

Sudan's government, based in the dusty northern city of Khartoum, never had an easy task holding together its nation of 579 widely scattered tribal groups speaking 115 languages. Between north and south, union rarely has been more than theoretical.

In a sense, the conflict traces its roots to the days of the pharaohs, when ancient Egyptians ventured southward up the Nile River in search of slaves. Arab slavers continued raiding the region until British rulers curtailed the practice in the late 19th century.

The present phase of the north-south friction broke out in 1955, as the British prepared to turn over southern Sudan to a newly independent government in the north. Rebels with long memories reacted with fear, anger, and guns. Apart from an interval of uneasy peace between 1972 and 1983, the civil strife has continued ever since.

Khartoum wants the south for fertile land and probable underground oil reserves. Also the great Jonglai canal, long ago started by French engineers but aborted by the war, promises an abundance of water diverted from a swamp the size of England to huge state farms in the hot, dry north. For these goals and other more political aims, various regimes over the years have tried to graft upon the south Arabic culture, Islamic religion, and a revived medieval *sharia* law that punishes offenders with floggings and amputations.

Failing in their local version of ethnic and theological cleansing, they have resorted to force of arms. The present military government of Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir has drawn \$1 million a day from its depleted treasury and threatened to raise a million-man army to conquer the south by the harshest available means. So the war drags on, bogging down each May with seasonal rains, renewed every October with the onset of the dry season.

### **NORMAL LIFE TIMELESS**

In times of peace, life in southern Sudan wears on with the tempo of prehistory. Elephants, buffalos, and leopards freely roam the countryside. Crocodiles, pythons, and bushbucks own the marshes. On drier terrain, rhinos browse thornbushes, hyenas sob around villages for trash, and lions prowl coughing through the night, sometimes carrying off children.

Along the Nile River, elegantly tall tribespeople—the Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, among others—invest their existence in cattle. The size of a herd mea-

## **THE CHURCH IN SUDAN**

**T**he Christian Church is perhaps the only institution still standing firm amid the chaos of civil war in southern Sudan. Introduced by European missionaries when British colonial rulers protected the black-African south from the Arabic north, Christianity created small groups of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics among traditional nature-worshipping animists.

Bishop Nathaniel Garang of the Episcopal Church of Sudan estimates that before the war about 15 percent of southerners were Christian. Now he believes as much as three-fourths of the population has turned to Christ.

"The church is the only institution offering hope to Sudan," explains Joseph Ikalur, a worker with the New Sudan Council of Churches.

The threat of martyrdom has drawn believers of all denominations closer together and strengthened their resolve. In January, News Network International reported 32,000 people baptized around the Nile town of Bor within two weeks after government troops killed the Rev. Paul Kon Agilti at Bor's Makuac Episcopal church.

Renato Kizito Sesana, a Roman Catholic priest who teaches at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya, and has traveled through southern Sudan, tells of lay teachers trudging on foot from village to village. Tattered record books list hundreds of newly baptized adults in areas where 10 years ago only Islam and spirit-worship were practiced.

"We visited chapels deep in the bush where people from nearby villages would congregate," Sesana recounts, describing undernourished villagers in rags worshipping outdoors by moonlight. "Their faith and love for Jesus were utterly serious and unquestionable. ... People long for the healing power of Jesus, the power to restore love and community where there is hatred and division."

The church in southern Sudan lacks buildings and Bibles, but its greatest need is for leadership. Many of the country's Christian leaders were based in the north and now either are cut off from their flocks by the war or have fled Sudan. Meanwhile, southern pastors cannot be trained fast enough to meet the church's rapid growth. To cope, many churches draw upon lay members to lead and evangelize.





*Sudanese tribesmen along the Nile River make virtual pets of lyre-horned cattle, symbols of wealth and prestige. The boy wears a garment of relief-agency mosquito netting.*

sure wealth, prestige, and personal satisfaction.

Herdsmen coddle their large, lyre-horned beasts almost as pets, singing to them, lovingly rubbing them with ash to ward off mosquitoes. A person is named for the color of a favorite animal: in the language of the Dinkas, a man is Malek, or speckled bull; a boy is Nyad jok, or white calf with black spots; a woman is Yon, or brown cow.

A keeper of cattle composes songs about his beasts to the rhythm of cattle hooves. He brings his best animal courting. Later, he presents a gift of 40 or 50 cattle to his bride's family. Cattle provide milk, flavored with ash, or mixed with cattle blood in famine times. Rarely are they killed, and then only in sacrificial rites.

Human habitations are simple: flat clearings of mud-and-thatch *tukul* huts, each sheltering little more than rope beds or sleeping mats of bark or hartebeest hide. Outside the huts, women crush grain between stones or pound it with *lek* poles in deep *dong* bowls. Hunters set out with six-foot bows or nine-foot lances tipped with antelope horn after birds, marsh rats, or bushbucks. Children thrust spears into muddy ground and bring up whiskered lungfish.

*For decades, missionaries and relief workers have been straggling out of the remote region with tales of bush battles approaching genocide.*

#### WAR APPROACHES GENOCIDE

So it was in peacetime. But that was long ago. For decades, missionaries and relief workers have been straggling out of the remote region with tales of bush battles approaching genocide. Bashir's regime, known for a grisly human rights record even in the north, generates horror stories of bombed and burning villages, rape and torture, conscription of pre-teenage boys, crucifixion of children as young as 7, and capture of women

and children for northern slave markets. The U.S. State Department in 1993 verified these accounts.

Not long ago, 300 government-armed Arab militiamen thundered on horseback, camels, and foot into Nyamlell, a Dinka settlement beside the River Lol. They burned buildings, looted goods, killed 82 men, and captured 282 women and children as slaves. "We were armed with spears and they with Kalashnikov rifles," recalls Garang Amok Mou, who lost seven brothers in the battle.

"They beat me unconscious," says Akuac Amet, a 50-year-old villager. "Now my legs are paralyzed and I can only crawl. They shot my four sons who were tending cattle and abducted my 14-year-old daughter, Ajak. My husband died in famine. I am now completely destitute."

Some 200 Arab raiders stormed the village of Wud Arul, two hours from Nyamlell by canoe and trail. They looted and burned homes, stole 400 head of cattle, and kidnapped 63 women and children to be sold as farm laborers, domestics, and concubines. The modern slavers of Sudan are said to find customers as far away as Libya and the Persian Gulf states.



## REBELS SEEK RIGHTS

Fighting back, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army attacks government-held garrisons, retreats into the bush, and attacks again. The mainly Dinka force is led by a former Sudan army colonel, John Garang, who holds a doctorate degree in economics from Iowa State University. The Southern Sudan Independence Movement of Riak Machar, made up mainly of Nuer tribesmen, sometimes battles the government and sometimes fights Garang. Other, smaller rebel groups also join the conflict against the north and one another.

Their demands range from total

independence to more limited agendas including regional autonomy, religious freedom, economic equity, and continued use of English along with Arabic as an official language. Meanwhile, southern forces are not beyond conscripting, looting, and raping civilians, adding to the chaos in their territory.

By far the most numerous casualties of the war are women, children, and the elderly, deprived by the turmoil of adequate food and health care. Meanwhile, routine displacement of millions of farm families leaves hunger and malnutrition more or less constant. Serious famines struck in 1984-85, 1988, 1990, and 1992-93. In 1988 alone, at least a quarter-million southerners perished from causes related to hunger. Relief agencies delivering food assistance prevented at least one other famine.

Over the years, the war has destroyed the south's economy, education system, health services, and communications network. Few schools are left, their classes averaging 94 pupils to one teacher, the local literacy rate lagging between 10 to 20 percent. No more than three hospitals have survived the devastation. Only one doctor is available for every 125,000 people. Diseases curable by a simple prescription run rampant.

## AID AGENCIES BRING HELP

While most of the world has ignored the travail of the southern Sudanese, World Vision and other humanitarian groups have been struggling for decades to meet at least some of their needs. In 1989, the United Nations organized the relief and development groups into Opera-

## SUDAN AND THE WORLD

**T**raditionally a hospitable country with a people of moderate temperament, Sudan since 1989 has become a totalitarian nightmare.

That year the National Islamic Front overthrew an elected but feeble government in its bloodless "National Salvation Revolution." Under the military rule of Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir, the free press has disappeared and secret police are everywhere. A Truth Authentication Department watches for any challenge to political, religious, or social orthodoxy. Iranian-trained Islamic Popular Police deal out sentences in the streets to anyone failing to conform to the official version of Islam's medieval *sharia* law. Dissidents are dealt with harshly and jails hold many political prisoners.

Meanwhile, the government has roused global ire for heavy-handed international relations. The United States in 1993 accused Sudan of supporting international terrorism. Last February, the U.S. embassy staff withdrew from the Nile River capital, Khartoum, citing vulnerability to terrorist attack.

Egypt and Ethiopia have angrily charged Sudan with harboring Muslim extremists who attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Eritrea and Uganda have severed relations with Sudan, charging the country with undermining the security of the region.

By trying to export its version of Islam, Sudan's government could bring war to eastern Africa.

*His ammunition clip held together by tape, a rebel soldier north of Bor fights for food instead of pay. Uniforms and shoes mark more fortunate fighters in a land impoverished by decades of civil war.*

VIVIANE MOOS





tion Lifeline Sudan. Based in Lokichokio, a dust-choked border town in northwest Kenya, more than 40 aid agencies have transported workers all over the south.

With roads that can destroy a tough truck in a year and burn out brake pads in 48 hours, agencies depend heavily upon aircraft for transport and supplies. Their workers live in tents and tukuls, enduring withering heat and humidity to distribute food, clothing, medicines, farm tools, and seeds to hundreds of thousands of people left homeless, destitute, and ill. Dodging battle lines, they shift their camps from one region to another. Between January and November 1995, more than 40 evacuations of relief workers took place in southern Sudan. Several workers were abducted or taken hostage.

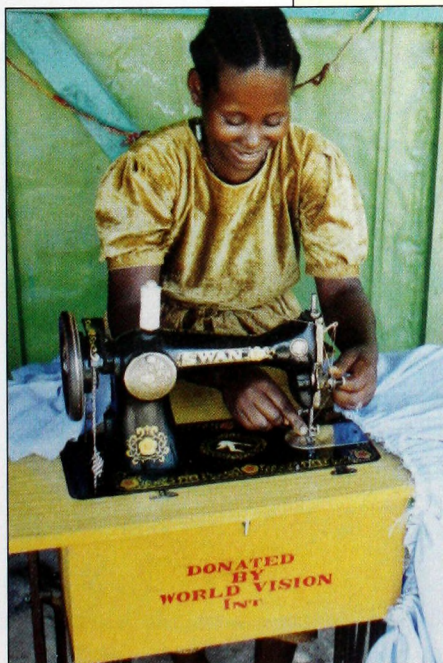
However heroic, the aid is not nearly enough. Anyone witnessing the anguish of the region can only deplore the world's neglect of southern Sudan as the war fluctuates in endless impasse.

In 1991 the SPLA had driven government soldiers out of all the south except for five garrison towns. Then the rebels fragmented and began fighting each other. By the end of 1993, northern victory seemed imminent as a divided and demoralized SPLA controlled only a few strips of the south's borderland. Then, early in 1994, Garang received new arms from furtive allies. By the end of 1995 the SPLA had taken at least 13 government-held towns, again changing the momentum of the war.

## GROUPS ORGANIZE FOR PEACE

This year World Vision is organizing humanitarian groups and churches to urge the U.S. Congress, the Clinton administration, and the United Nations to help negotiate an end to the fighting.

A woman  
barterns corn for  
cloth to make  
salable clothing  
in one of 40  
tailoring groups  
supported by  
World Vision in  
the jungled  
southwest of  
Sudan. The corn  
goes to hungry  
displaced people.



SCOTT KELLEHER / WORLD VISION

*"My people go  
around sick,  
naked, humiliated  
and starving....  
The silence of the  
media is our death."*

"This war has gone on too long and has caused more suffering than any other human emergency of recent times," says Kate Almquist, a World Vision policy analyst in Washington, D.C. "It's obstructing development in the south and destabilizing the whole of East Africa. After years of stalemate, there's still no end in sight. It mustn't continue any longer."

Yet global interest and concern probably will have the final word. Recognizing the importance of world opinion in bringing current conflicts to the tables of resolution, former President Jimmy Carter, who mediated a four-month Sudan cease-fire in March 1995, remarked, "The scale of suffering, especially of the children, exceeds anything we have ever seen, although it receives scant media attention."

Echoing his perception, the Catholic bishop of the Sudanese city of El Obeid, Monsignor Max Gassis, has pleaded for the world to take notice. "My people go around sick, naked, humiliated and starving," he said, adding, "The silence of the media is our death." 🌐

*With Bruce Menser and Sylvia Mpaanyi in Nairobi, Kenya; and Rob Jenkins and Greg Kearns in Sudan.*

## WORLD VISION IN SUDAN

- **1972:** World Vision began work in Sudan, channeling relief assistance for war victims through the African Committee for Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan, a partner agency already established there.

- **1974:** World Vision sponsored a conference for pastors normally isolated by the remoteness of the region. Programs for health care, agricultural improvement, and Christian leadership followed.

- **1986:** During severe drought and famine in Ethiopia, Sudan, and other African countries, the agency opened an office in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, to assist thousands of displaced people in famine camps in the central and western parts of the country.

- **1988:** The government of Sudan ordered World Vision and other Christian aid agencies to leave the country, with no reason given.

- **1989:** World Vision began shipping food from Kenya into southern Sudan as civil war brought famine to the region. Subsequently, World Vision led work to repair rutted dirt roads and rebuild a key bridge so truck convoys could penetrate the region.

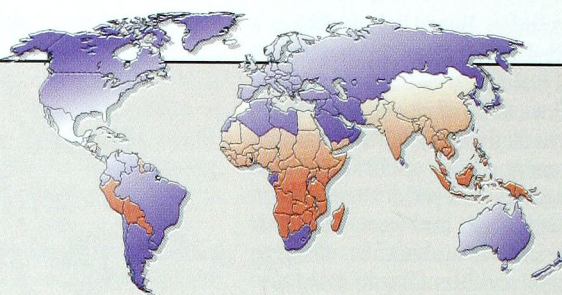
- **Early 1990s:** The agency operated food relief, agricultural recovery, and health programs in all major regions of the south for victims of war, flooding, drought, famine, and disease. Its bases moved as shifting battle lines threatened security of workers and beneficiaries.

- **1996:** World Vision presently serves 250,000 southerners in Tonj and Yambio counties. Assistance includes emergency relief, health care, water and agricultural improvement, development of small businesses, and more than 40 agricultural cooperatives that purchase corn with barter goods to help farmers, then distribute it in poorer areas to reduce the need for costly food imports.

- **A NEW WORLD VISION POLICY PAPER ON SUDAN** titled "Cry, the Divided Country" explores the difficulties of ending Sudan's civil war and proposes ways the United States can help settle the conflict. For copies, or for more information on how you can participate in World Vision's advocacy campaign for peace in Sudan, please write or telephone:

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## GLOBAL FOOD AID DECLINES AS NEEDS IN AFRICA PERSIST

**S**everal African countries are expected to need emergency food relief during 1996, yet food reserves have declined in donor countries, says a report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

In 1995, shipments of food aid dropped to their lowest levels in 20 years. The report predicts further declines in production this year. Meanwhile, a steep increase in world cereal prices will make food imports difficult for 44 African countries with food deficits and low incomes.

Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan are among the countries where shortfalls might be serious, according to the report.

*A child of southern Sudan relies on emergency food relief as civil war devastates his homeland.*

## WV PROVIDES RELIEF IN SRI LANKA WAR

**V**illagers in northern Sri Lanka displaced from their homes by civil war are receiving relief assistance from World Vision.

For 13 years, rebels known as the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam have been fighting a brutal war against the government of the island off the southern tip of India. The rebels demand a separate homeland for Tamil people. They have carried out attacks to incite violence between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamil community, which numbers 2.3 million in a total population of 18 million. Some 50,000 people have been killed during the past 10 years of the conflict. Presently, 500,000 people are displaced from their homes by the civil war.

In one recent attack, a rebel force of about 80 Tamil girls between 14 and 18 years of age attacked two Sinhalese villages with machine guns, hand grenades and gas bombs. In the early morning assault, 21 people were killed and many wounded. The girls burned the village, leaving 327 families homeless.

World Vision is helping displace victims of the fighting with food, cooking utensils, sheet metal roofing, lanterns and mats, among other needs.

## AIRSTRIPE ENDS ISOLATION FOR MOUNTAIN DWELLERS

**W**orld Vision has wiped away old tears," said a community leader at the opening of an airstrip built with the agency's assistance in the remote highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The landing field ended the isolation of the people of Kombaku in the Bismarck mountains of Madang province. Previously they traversed six hours of jungle trails and hazardous river crossings on the South Pacific island to reach the nearest airstrip. Over a period of 1



## WOMEN FIND JOBS, INCOME THROUGH WV TRAINING

World Vision project in Chile is helping women gain work and much-needed income. The Training Center for Women in the capital city, Santiago, finds areas of employment where workers are needed, then offers instructions leading to job placement. The program was initiated in October 1995. Early this year, the first class of 130 women completed training as hotel chambermaids, restaurant waitresses, nursery school attendants, hairdressers, cooks, and plumbers. Within two weeks, 70 percent of the graduates were working in jobs or their own small enterprises.

Most of the women are mothers with children in other World Vision projects, while the rest live in communities where the projects are located. Many come from the poorest sections of the capital city. The courses are free and bus fare to the training center is subsidized by the program.

Seeing the success of the project, the municipal government of Santiago is working with World Vision to bring the training into its own development programs.

years, they cleared and leveled land for the new runway with axes, shovels, and wheelbarrows as part of a project supported by World Vision.

The airfield will help the people of Kombaku market coffee, vegetables, and small amounts of gold found in nearby mountains. It also allows teachers to come to the region and start a school for local children. World Vision also is working with the community to establish a health facility for immunizations, nutrition education, and medical treatment.

## ETHIOPIA DEVELOPS SLOWLY 10 YEARS AFTER FAMINE

Ten years after global compassion lifted Ethiopia out of the worst famine in recent history, development efforts are overcoming a legacy of widespread environmental degradation and a long civil war

that ended in 1991. The development is sponsored by the government and humanitarian agencies, including World Vision.

In many areas, reforestation is blanketing mountains and valleys with millions of fast-growing trees. Terraces, check dams, and diversion ditches are halting soil erosion and bringing clean water to rural residents. Demonstration farms have introduced fruits and vegetables previously unknown to local farmers. Aid workers also have encouraged fish farming, beekeeping, poultry raising, and rice growing.

New schools are raising literacy from a previous national norm of 15 percent. Medical clinics are improving the general level of health. Vocational training centers are teaching carpentry, tailoring, weaving and knitting to help farmers earn barter and cash income.

At the same time, about half the

East African country's 57 million people remain in abject poverty. With an annual food deficit of 1.1 million tons, Ethiopia would suffer chronic hunger without regular overseas aid.

"Slowly, slowly the egg will walk," an Ethiopian proverb says, aptly describing the country's efforts over the past decade to emerge from a disaster in which 1 million people died of causes related to hunger.

## FORMER WV-AIDED CHILDREN FIND SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

Three decades of World Vision assistance for orphans and poor children on the Indonesian island of Bali are helping many grow up to lives of success, reports the agency's office in the country's capital, Jakarta.

In the early 1960s, World Vision's founder, Bob Pierce, traveled to Bali to assess the needs of victims of a major volcanic eruption on the fabled tropical island. Subsequently, World Vision helped start several orphanages and initiated a child sponsorship program there.

"Many of the first children helped by World Vision have gone on to achieve remarkable success," says Hendro Suwito of the agency's staff in Indonesia. "On Bali, former sponsored children are now working as university lecturers, doctors, church ministers, hotel and travel agency managers and owners, businessmen, and civil servants." Others hold prominent positions elsewhere in the island-nation, Suwito adds.

One former sponsored child, Ketut Putra Suarthanaare, who spent many years in an orphanage aided by World Vision, now owns hotels and a network of tourism management institutes. His institute in Bali's capital, Denpasar, currently is training some 1,200 students. Suarthanaare has provided scholarships to poor students, including 20 for children of his fellow orphans. 🌐

**A World Vision demonstration farm in Ethiopia's Ansokia Valley 220 miles north of Addis Ababa displays efficient cultivation for small plots of land.**



JANE SUTTON / WORLD VISION









JEFF COMMENT:

# MINING DIAMONDS *from* CITY STREETS

BY JEANETTE D. GARDNER

ON THE HARD CITY  
STREETS OF KANSAS CITY,  
THE CEO OF  
HELZBERG DIAMONDS  
BEFRIENDED A FORMER  
GANG MEMBER AND  
FOUND A DIAMOND OF  
A DIFFERENT SORT.

*A*t 2 o'clock Sunday morning, in an upper-class Kansas City suburb, the streets were quiet. Jeff and Martha Comment had long been asleep. After all, Sunday would be a busy day. In the morning the Comments would worship at Heartland Community Church with their kids—21-year-old Kristen and 17-year-old Ryan. That afternoon they had a family outing planned. The 52-year-old diamond merchant nestled a little snuggler into his soft, warm pillow.

In another part of town, a policeman impatiently tapped his pen as he surveyed an arrest form.



*“As the president of a business, I like to see everything organized, put together with a nice bow on top. But people’s lives don’t work that way.”*

“Got anybody you can call?” the officer asked. From the moment he stopped the car and the guy began making excuses for not having tags or a driver’s license, the policeman knew he was talking to a seasoned criminal. The guy knew all the ropes, all the questions, all the answers.

The guy lifted his head and looked into the policeman’s eyes. “Yeah, Jeff Comment.”

“Jeff Comment? I used to work for a Jeff Comment. He’s the CEO at Helzberg Diamonds,” the officer said in disbelief.

“Yeah, that’s the one,” the guy said. His wary brown eyes met skeptical green ones. “Look, he’s my friend. He’s the only one I can call.”

Jeff and Martha jumped as the shrill call of the phone split the silence. Jeff reached for the phone, trying to focus on the numbers of the bedside clock. Adrenalin pumped. Two a.m. calls always threaten emergency.

His breathless hello was answered with, “Jeff, I’ve been arrested. I don’t have tags for my car yet, but I was driving it. And when they found out I don’t have a license ...” Odies’ voice choked up.

Jeff sat up, “We’ll take care of it, Odies, calm down,” he answered. “Let me talk to the officer.”

Jeff listened to the officer’s explanation, then promised to make bail, pick up Odies, and have the car towed after daylight.

“Odies used to be a gang member,” Jeff explained to the officer. “I’m trying to help him develop a new life.”

The policeman promised, “I’ll reduce the charges as much as I can. Odies will be okay until you pick him up in the morning.”

The rest of Jeff’s night passed uninterrupted by phone calls, but frequently interrupted by thoughts, worry, anxiety, and frustration.

In the morning, Jeff picked up his protégé. As they drove to the college Jeff had enrolled Odies in, Jeff talked to him about the situation just as he’d talk to his own son.

In the college parking lot, the two bowed their heads and prayed together. Then, with a handshake, a pat on the shoulder, and encouraging words, the medium-framed, white-haired man sent

the 300-pound, 6-foot-5-inch Odies back into the ivy halls.

How did such an incongruous pair—one from the inner-city streets, and the other part of the city’s elite—join forces?

### GETTING TOGETHER

Jeff is no stranger to crime. Previously he worked in Philadelphia. His office was in the center of the city, where he began to examine inner-city problems and challenges.

“One of my best friends was an inner-city judge,” Jeff explains. “One morning every week we’d get together at his chambers and take a half-hour to pray for the city. That lasted for five or six years.

“Over time, my friend would share situations that were going on in the inner city. We started making visits together. We’d visit a food kitchen some people he knew were starting. Or we’d go to a house where prostitutes could change their lives. We rode through the streets with the police, talking about what was going on.

“All those things accumulated inside me. On one hand, delving into inner-city problems gave me a sense of despair. On the other, I found encouragement. I would see very small organizations—maybe with only one or two people—working hard in their own small way to make a difference in people’s lives. And their work was succeeding even though they didn’t have adequate financial backing or lots of help.”

The sights of Philadelphia’s streets stayed with Jeff, even after he moved to the Midwest. During seven years in Kansas City, Jeff served on boards for several organizations working in the inner city. Then officials invited him to chair the Chamber of Commerce’s Committee on Crime and Violence—no small task, since Kansas City sees a higher percentage of crimes than either New York City or Los Angeles. Jeff agreed.

“For the Committee on Crime and Violence, we interviewed people about their perception of violence in town,” Jeff says. “Then I got the brainstorm to bring in a gang member.”

Jeff turned to a church working in the inner city. The church sent Odies to the next committee meeting.

“Odies was intimidating,” Jeff recalls. “Besides his size, he started out by calling us ‘mothers.’” Odies told us what life

was like on the streets. I said, ‘You have 12 CEOs sitting here. How can we encourage you and your friends to change your lifestyle?’ He simply said, ‘Hope. Give us hope.’”

Being a diamond merchant, Jeff is used to detecting quality. And somewhere in the carbon of the 30-year-old Odies’ life, he saw a diamond—in the rough, maybe, but nevertheless a diamond.

To change inner-city problems, Jeff says, “Sometimes you just have to move alongside the people, find out who they are, and be their friend. When I met Odies, I knew I had to get to know him better. After he visited our meeting, I asked him what his dreams were. He wanted to go to college. I began to think of how I could help him.

I asked Odies, ‘If I could make your dream happen, would you turn your life around?’ Nobody had ever given him that opportunity. Now I’m trying to teach him a whole new world.”

### ABUNDANT MIRACLES

So far, that new world has included abundant miracles. With Jeff intermediating as Odies’ champion, others caught sight of the vision.

“Prosecutors for two counties both had enough warrants for Odies’ arrest to put him in prison for five to eight years. I talked to the prosecutors, to judges, to policemen. They decided just to give Odies a 120-day rehab program, with parole on its completion,” Jeff says.

“While Odies was in the rehab program, I visited him. I also looked for a college for him. Finally one said, ‘We’ll overlook his records. We like his dream of returning to the gangs to help others.’”

As Odies watched Jeff go to action on his behalf, the walls of suspicion began to fall. And the bridge of relationship slowly crossed the chasm between the men.

In his year of working with Odies, Jeff has been reminded repeatedly that when you deal with people, you’re like an actor on stage without a script—life becomes like an improvised monologue: Sometimes it flies, sometimes it doesn’t.

Like learning to walk, changing a life is full of tumbles and spills. Small successes, couched in occasional falls and failures, are both part of the process.

Jeff has seen several successes with





Diamond merchant Jeff Comment (far right) meets with the executives of Helzberg's Diamond Shops, Inc. at the company's general office in Kansas City, Mo. The firm operates 166 jewelry stores across the United States.

Odie. For instance, Jeff relates, "A couple of months ago, he helped build houses with Habitat for Humanity during his spring break from college. When he got home, he laughed and told me, 'Jeff, last year, I tore houses down. This year I built one.'"

Jeff's seen the falls, too. After nearly completing his first semester in college, and being off drugs for longer than he'd ever been clean in his life, Odies slipped. Being found with drugs was a parole violation, and Odies was sent back to prison. He will not be eligible for parole again until next year.

"All of us who have worked with Odies feel sad about this," Jeff says, "but not discouraged. As the president of a business, I like to see everything organized, put together with a nice bow on top. But people's lives don't work that way. We don't always see success. I can't fix Odies. All I can do is be his friend, offer him advice, and lead him to people who can help. I still feel Odies is different today from who he was a year ago. Maybe Odies needed to fail this time in order to gain the wisdom he needs to succeed the next time."

Indeed, since returning to prison Odies' faith in God has grown and he is counseling other prisoners to stay away from drugs and alcohol—which are readily available among them. In addition, Jeff and Odies write to each other once a week and pray for one other regularly.

Still, there are no guarantees that Odies won't fall again. "Working with Odies hurts at times," Comment admits. "I love this guy and want him to make it, and yet I can't tell you he's going to make it. But God has called me to be with this man. As a result, I, too, am learning and growing and facing new challenges. I'm learning what real ministry is, and what God's grace really means in my own life."

#### TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Now Jeff thinks this kind of outreach may be an answer for city crime problems. "I've realized that Odies and I have a

lot in common. He has joys and successes. He also has worries and failures. His emotions are no different from mine. We probably won't change our cities until more people develop partnerships with inner-city folks, mentoring them. Some of these lives will turn around only if they have someone they can count on to be committed to them.

"We can't do it with federal programs or boards or by just giving money. We have to go to soup kitchens. We have to see the black eyes of the mothers in the abuse centers. We have to care for those in drug rehab programs. As we get involved in these hurting lives, we will see God's grace and his miracles."

Regardless of the ups and downs, Jeff still plans to be there for Odies. He's committed to the man whose life is so different from his own. "I think when I walk through the pearly gates, Peter will meet me and say, 'God called you to be with Odies—were you?' And I can say, 'I was with Odies.'"

But Jeff's rewards may very well come before he reaches heaven. Who knows? Maybe some morning at 2 a.m., he'll awaken to another kind of call—from an excited Odies, telling Jeff about some gang members he's just won to Christ. After all, people who look like rough carbon can become diamonds. ☉

Jeanette D. Gardner is a free-lance writer in Roeland Park, Kan.

*"We probably won't change our cities until more people develop partnerships with inner-city folks, mentoring them."*









# A FATHER'S DREAM

TEXT AND PHOTO  
BY JON WARREN

**SON, DO YOU KNOW THAT I DREAM?** You are so small, but already my dreams are centered around you. Without a dream, what kind of future would you have? I do not believe that God blessed me with you only so that I would have to watch you wither in this resettlement camp. Surely life will hold more for you than a sweltering tent, desperate food lines, and stifling poverty.

I dream that we will have a secure shelter, a house with a thickly woven roof (better yet, metal!) and strong mud walls, cool in the heat and dry in the rain, a home among the trees above the flood waters. I dream of a strong pair of oxen and a field to plow. I dream of abundant crops and full bellies—two full meals every day from rice we harvest with our own hands.

Son, will you watch and learn as I work, until one day you lead the oxen as I guide the plow? Then, strong and healthy, will it be you who carries the heavy sheaves of rice from the field? Will you listen quietly as I pray and will you come to revere God?

When you have grown into a man, we will find you a good wife, a woman who will work hard and bear you many children. And if God wills and we do not owe too much to the money lender, I will have land to share with you. Then when your mother and I are old, you will care for us with respect and honor.

But I forget that this is a modern world. Why should you have to sweat and work with your hands as I do? You must learn to read and write. You will wear a watch and carry a pen and read the newspaper to me. After you pass your exams, you will become an important man and sit behind a big desk in the city. When you visit our village, everyone will rush to bring you a chair and offer you tea—but you will still come and touch the feet of your mother and me.

But sometimes I am afraid to dream for you. You are the son of an ignorant, landless peasant trapped in this camp. What if disease strikes? We have no money for medicine. Even if you escape from this place, what chance do you have? We have no land for you to farm and the cyclone destroyed our home. How can we afford to pay for school? If you go to the city will you have to slave as a rickshaw driver or live like an animal on the streets?

Yes, sometimes I am afraid to dream. What is a father to do? But for you, my son, I will still dare to dream. 🌐

*This photo was taken in a refugee camp outside Chittigong, Bangladesh, following a deadly hurricane in the summer of 1991.*



# U.S. FOREIGN AID: SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG IMPACT

BY TOM GETMAN

**F**OR A TIME IN 1995, CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET CUTTERS APPEARED POISED TO SLASH U.S. FOREIGN AID BY 25 PERCENT. It was the most

devastating attack on overseas development aid since 1945, when the United States committed billions of dollars to rebuild Europe through the Marshall Plan, establishing the U.S. tradition of substantially helping suffering nations.

Many in last year's Congress mistakenly believed they could balance the U.S. budget by slashing foreign aid to poor and suffering people—the so-called international affairs “150” account—a line item which actually amounts to just 1 percent of the entire federal budget. After internationally minded humanitarians organized a national campaign to condemn the cuts, however, several members of Congress saw the wisdom of continued international involvement, preserving the funding for vital child survival and food aid programs. Reductions in aid to poor and suffering people were held to just 11 percent.

But that was last year. Now the budget process is starting all over again and many people say we should curtail our global responsibility. In addition, many Americans continue to falsely believe that 25 percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid. Polls also show that 60 percent of Americans believe that our government spends more on foreign aid than on Medicare. Once again,

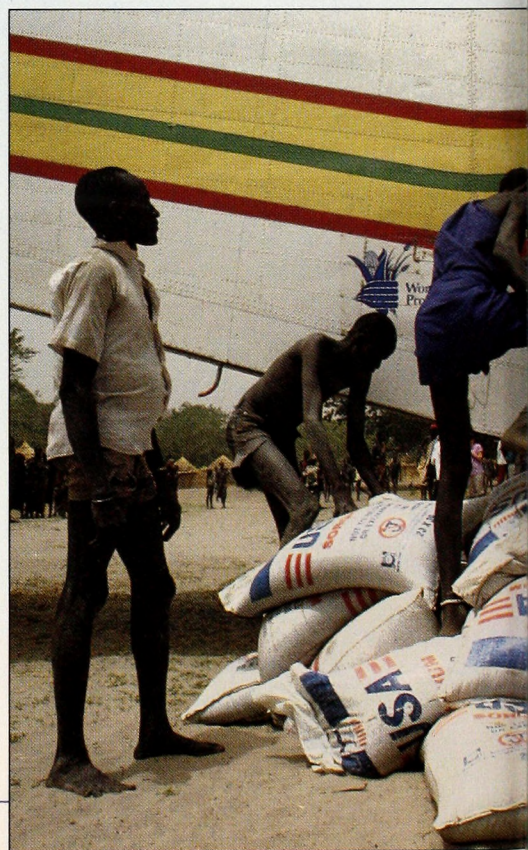
the drive is on to slash foreign aid to the poor.

Yet there are at least four good reasons to stop further reductions in the international affairs “150” account:

■ As the sole remaining superpower we have the opportunity to shape the world we live in, as well as the responsibility to respond to the dangers we face. Though the Cold War is over, formidable challenges to international peace and security remain—dangers of political and religious extremism, poverty, economic instability, disease, and the spread of nuclear weapons. Threats to U.S. interests today are linked to political and economic instability and regional conflicts. The international affairs budget provides our country with the minimal resources it needs to meet these challenges. In order for peace efforts to continue in the Middle East, Africa, and other areas in the world, we must have the resources to support the risk-takers working to make peace a reality.

*Dinka tribesmen at the community of Majok in southern Sudan's Tonj County unload sacks of sorghum and corn seed from a supply aircraft. Flown from neighboring Kenya, the seed was donated by the United States and distributed along with agricultural tools by World Vision.*

■ International aid is a cost-effective means of protecting U.S. interests abroad and of preventing and resolving international conflicts without a costly military presence. Whatever the cost of international assistance, it is always cheaper than military intervention. Unlike military aid, our aid to the poor and suffering in other countries helps bolster democracies and build economies by empowering individuals and families to care for themselves. Many World Vision agri-





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TO THE DANGERS  
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cultural, health, and microenterprise projects rely on foreign aid money to accomplish these goals.

■ International aid helps U.S. exports gain a competitive edge in countries developing a market economy. In the past 10 years, our exports to developing countries have more than doubled from \$71 billion to \$180 billion. As private voluntary organizations like World Vision use U.S. foreign aid to help developing economies, new customers are attracted to U.S. products (especially agricultural).

■ International aid is the right thing to do. We are called to help desperately poor and oppressed people worldwide. Foreign aid does this, and also demonstrates our moral and spiritual values. International aid helps others help themselves. It provides support for immunizations and schooling for children, helps in combatting the spread of diseases such as AIDS, prevents the onset of famine, and provides credit for entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. At the same time, we are helping ourselves by improving the global environment, combating terrorism, and promoting human rights.

U.S. foreign aid to developing countries is not merely charity, it is in our own national best interest—a fact that must be communicated to Congress before it slashes the aid budget again.

Last year, 18-year-old Rachel Wacker from Minnesota and 17-year-old Toby Long from Michigan won a World Vision-sponsored essay contest and were

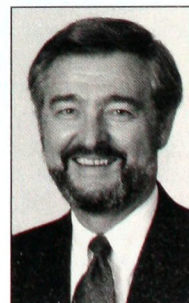
awarded the opportunity to spend two weeks touring many projects dependent on foreign aid. When they returned, they stopped in Washington, D.C., to visit the congresspersons from their home states.

Upon meeting the two youths, one Minnesota congressman said, "This is the most important appointment I have this week. Please tell me what I need to know about suffering people in Africa. I need your insight for the budget debate." Rachel and Toby were so eloquent in communicating the success of the World Vision rural development projects they witnessed that the Minnesota congressman has become one of our strongest supporters ever since.

Foreign aid invested in projects like World Vision's works. Like Rachel and Toby, those of us who know this is true, and who believe that we all benefit from this aid, must communicate this truth.

Please write or phone your congressional representatives this week and remind them of the moral, spiritual, and economic impact of this relatively small investment from the federal budget. One or two votes in the final budget resolution conference in early summer could make all the difference for millions of people trapped in famine or war. 🌐

Tom Getman is World Vision's director of government relations in Washington, D.C.



SCOTT KELLEHER / WORLD VISION



# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR  
HELPING OTHERS  
IN THE NAME  
OF CHRIST

## A TIME TO SHARE

**A** new line of wrist watches is designed to help children worldwide.

Produced by The Marketing Group, a Chicago-based manufacturer, the watches for adults and children feature artwork from children in World Vision projects in several countries including Romania, Thailand, and Peru.

Michael Gurley, president of The Marketing Group and a World Vision child sponsor, believes the "Time to



Share" line not only includes high quality and attractive watches, but even more importantly, it can help educate buyers about opportunities to sponsor children.

The Marketing Group is con-

tributing a percent of proceeds from watch sales to child sponsorship projects. "Whenever you check your wrist to see the time, you'll remember you are helping a

child in need have a better life," Gurley says. The watches are priced from \$7.99 to \$24.99 and are available in retail stores or by calling The Marketing Group at 1-800-760-0872.



## WORLD VISION ANNUAL REPORT

**W**orld Vision's 1995 annual report is not only a document of revenues and expenses, but also a story of how donor dollars have changed lives and communities through relief and development, evangelism, and child sponsorship.

For a copy of the report, call Donor Relations, World Vision: (800) 777-5777, or (800) 777-1760 for a Spanish language version.

## HANDS FOR CHRIST

**D**on't know what to do with your used books? *Hands for Christ* sends new or used Christian books, tapes, and videos to developing countries to evangelize and disciple new converts.

*Hands for Christ*, a nonprofit organization, sends books to more than 8,300 libraries in churches, Bible schools, and prisons in more than 93 countries. The ministry distributes books and tapes in English, Spanish, and Russian.

"In Russia, we don't know how long the door will be open to evangelism," says R.W. "Bob" Bowers, founder of *Hands for Christ*. "A library can touch thousands of lives by being available to a whole community." Missionaries may be sent out of the country, but the books will remain. Bob Bowers and

his wife, Joan, founded *Hands for Christ* 28 years ago. In 1995, the ministry opened 999 new libraries worldwide.

For more information, or to donate materials, call *Hands for Christ* at (540) 362-1214; fax (540) 563-8285; or write to 5720 Williamson Road, Suite 111, Roanoke, VA 24012.



*Hands for Christ staff serving through library discipleship.*



Compiled and written by Stephanie Stevenson  
and Debra Prinzing

# BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF LETTERS

**B**read for the World will seek commitments from 1996 U.S. Congressional candidates to reduce childhood hunger worldwide.

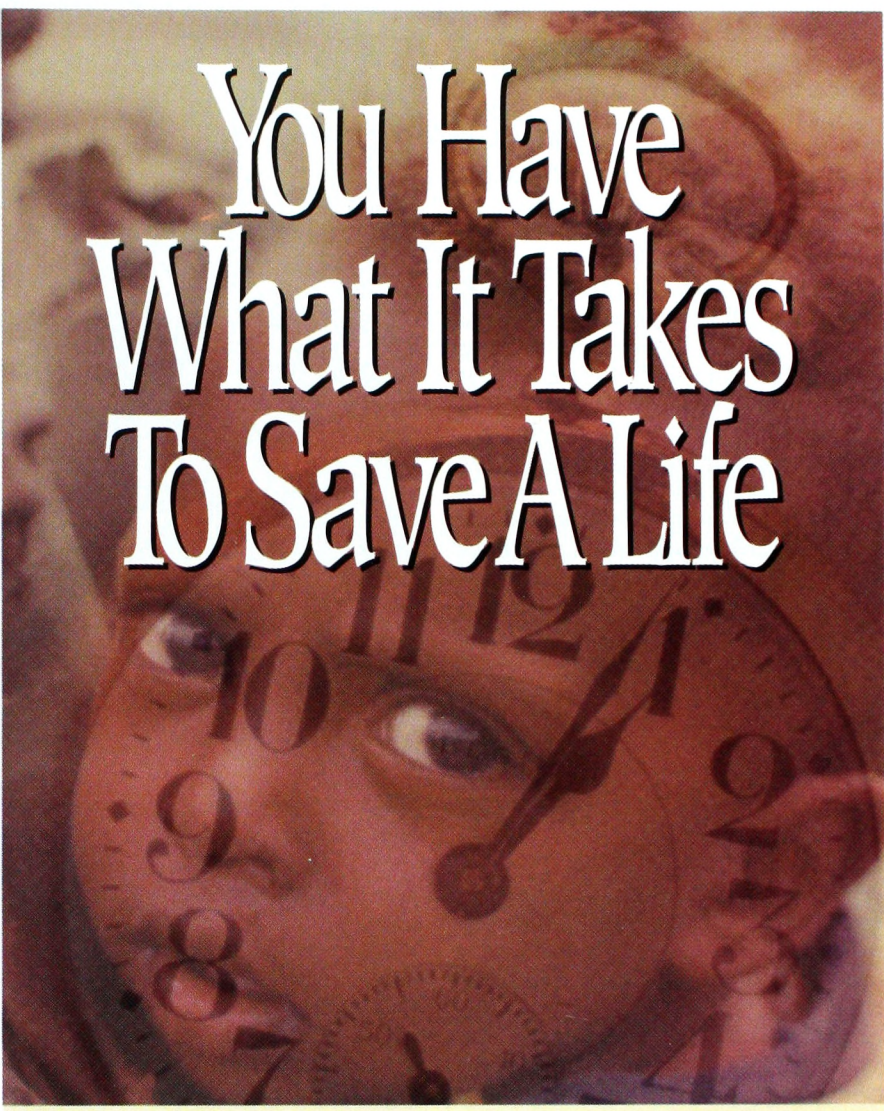
In 1995, Congress cut almost \$75 billion from planned spending on nutrition and anti-poverty programs. Bread for the World, with support from churches and partner organizations, including World Vision, will



campaign for preservation of the Women, Infants, and Children short-term supplemental nutrition program which provides food for 7 million people.

For more information or to order the "Elect to End Childhood Hunger Offering of Letters" kit, send \$5 plus \$3 for shipping and handling to Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or telephone (301) 608-2400.

**“** The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. **”**  
—A. W. Tozer



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# LIBERIA'S PRECARIOUS PEACE

BY ANDREW NATSIOS

**WHILE THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA FOCUSED ON BOSNIA'S MISERY, AN EQUALLY DEADLY TRAGEDY WAS UNFOLDING IN THE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRY OF LIBERIA.**

Since the end of 1989, a little known or understood civil war has been devastating the tropical land, uprooting almost two-thirds of the country's 2.8 million people, forcing countless families into squalid refugee camps, and killing an estimated 150,000 people. Today, this brutal conflict demands resolution.

Liberia was founded in 1821 when freed American slaves returned to Africa to start a new homeland. Over the next century and a half, the descendants of those freed slaves formed an elite class that governed the country, dominated the economy, and oppressed indigenous people. In 1980, the indigenous people overthrew the Americo-Liberians and hopes for a united country flickered briefly. But the new order under President Samuel Doe created even greater divisions, which led to the horrors of the long civil war.

In 1990, peacekeeping forces from countries making up the Economic Community of West African States sent troops to Liberia to restore order in the capital city, Monrovia. They have remained there ever since.

Liberia is the most noteworthy example of African leaders solving African

problems on their own initiative. During the six years of civil war, no government was in place to run the country. In August 1995, however, President Jerry J. Rawlings of Ghana led a coalition of African leaders from Liberia's neighboring countries and mediated a political settlement among the eight political factions dominating various parts of the country. This negotiated settlement—called the Abuja Accords—required a ceasefire, demobilization of soldiers on all sides, and the creation of an interim national government composed of all the factions that had fought in the war.

Only two of the accords have been implemented. An interim government, led by Wilton Sankawulo, a widely respected former university professor who belongs to no faction, was formed last fall, though it had no control over the countryside, few sources of tax revenue, and no functioning public services. A ceasefire was in place but collapsed in a new round of fighting in April.

**T**hreatening the peace is a lack of plans for August 1996 elections that the accords required. Worse, the militias have not been disarmed. Perhaps the most serious obstacle to peace are the 60,000 militia soldiers, a quarter of whom, according to estimates by UNICEF, are under the age of 15. Few of these children have known anything but war, brutality, and looting, and they have little or no education and fewer job skills. They now spend most of their time high on drugs.

Despite the threats to national unity,

DAVID BROWNE / WORLD VISION





however, peace seems to be taking hold in some areas. Refugees from the war are returning to reconstruct their homes and rebuild their farms.

Yet severe obstacles stand in the way of full recovery. Most returning families cannot carry enough food to sustain themselves on their way home. They arrive severely malnourished. Some, particularly small children and pregnant women, don't make it at all. In addition, much of the country's housing lies damaged or destroyed; virtually all buildings show scars from the conflict.

Other scars, far more deadly though less visible, disfigure the minds and hearts of people who carry vivid recollections of massacres and atrocities committed by the militias against the civilian population on a scale that parallels the horrors committed in Bosnia. Many humanitarian organizations, including World Vision, are setting up psychosocial therapy programs for the survivors to help them cope with their terrifying memories.

**I**n contrast to some countries coming out of war, Liberia has inherent advantages on which to rebuild. Unlike places such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Angola, where millions of land mines make large areas uninhabitable and farmland untillable, Liberia has virtually no mines. Liberia also is one of the most blessedly endowed countries in Africa, with vast unspoiled tropical rain forests, wild game roaming parts of its southern portion, and rich mineral resources and agricultural land waiting to be developed. The country abounds in rivers and lakes which are full of fish, as are the coastal waters—a bountiful source of protein for a hungry population. The fishing industry should be quickly re-established. All this can work for the country's growth if peace takes hold.

To safeguard Liberia's tenuous peace agreement, the international community must undertake three important efforts. First, West African and U.S. diplomats must press the various factions to disarm and prepare for eventual elections, though the proposed time of August is perhaps too optimistic. Second, the international community must help Liberia's refugees and internally displaced people return to their homes as soon as possible. Refugee camps are not a suitable place to bring up children or rebuild community life. Third,

*Imprisoned by chaos in a devastated land, this young inmate of a Liberian orphanage has known little beyond looting, brutality, and death during his country's long civil war.*



the country's agricultural system must be rehabilitated to give Liberians secure local sources of food. Normal life will not return to Liberia until people are back in their home villages working their farms and supporting themselves by their own labors.

As in most conflicts since the end of the Cold War, the common people are suffering most in Liberia. They are the ones who are malnourished, who die for lack of medical treatment, and are killed in violence.



KAREN HOMER / WORLD VISION

**Victoria "Ma" Young, 70, who in 1970 founded Fatima Cottage Orphanage in a suburb of Monrovia, Liberia, protected and provided for 300 children while warring factions devastated their nation.**

**R**elief and development organizations like World Vision cannot negotiate political agreements among the warlords who dominate Liberia. That must be done by governments and their diplomats. But humanitarian groups can help resettle uprooted people, rehabilitate hospitals, schools, and farms, and help restore the agricultural system. If these things happen, Liberians soon might see lasting peace return to their devastated country. 🌍

*Andrew Natsios, former assistant administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, is vice president of World Vision's Relief and Development Division.*

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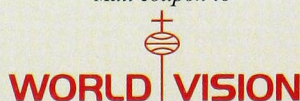
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### NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

**B**y reading our cover story on Sudan, you have become part of World Vision's international effort to stop the world's oldest and longest war. World Vision offices and concerned supporters are contacting national elected officials and United Nations offices to call for a halt to this seemingly endless war. Other volunteer agencies have been invited to join us in raising public awareness. The media are being invited to visit Sudan and report on what is happening there. Your participation in this effort is critical.

For Christians, this is particularly meaningful; tens of thousands of those displaced, captured, wounded, or killed, are brothers and sisters in Christ. Please write or call for our policy paper, "Cry, the Divided Country." See page 7 for details.

And for more hands-on involvement, see Tom Getman's editorial on U.S. foreign aid, on pages 16 and 17. A letter, phone call, or e-mail to your elected representatives in Washington, D.C., could make the difference.

—Terry Madison

## WORLD VISION

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# RECLAIMING THE WORD

**A**t a recent meeting of World Vision's international staff leadership, I began to notice evidence of a modern corporation working in an increasingly complex world. Our language gave it away.

In a series of discussions, we described the managerial impact of the Sigmoid Curve, the technical intricacies of digital imaging, and the professional implementation of development theory.

If our words were strung on a continuum between literary bard and banker, we would be miles away from poetry. I felt "layered over" by intellectual language. After a day and a half of this, I began to yearn for greater balance.

There is a "heart" word to be reclaimed, the meaning of which can restore the equilibrium necessary in today's world. The word is reconciliation. Surprisingly, and tragically, the full meaning of this word rarely is realized.

According to secular think tanks specializing in reconciliation, the discipline is quite new and our methodologies are few. But the word has been with us for 2,000 years, as has the modeling of it through the life of Jesus. The need for reconciliation is as old as Adam and Eve and the irresistibility of forbidden fruit.

For Christians, the word still rolls blithely off our tongues, but its migration from heart to head seems to have already taken place, and the power and passion of the word have been lost.

We need to remember that this so-called "soft" discipline of reconciliation compelled Christ to endure the agony of Gethsemane and the pain and humiliation of Calvary. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God became human and met us where we were! The action was a life, death, resurrection, and coming again—the centerpiece of our gospel. Reconciliation is indeed the heart of our gospel and why we properly can call it "good news."

The motive for reconciliation is love. "God so loved the world that he gave!" Incomprehensible love, freely given, is the ultimate act of grace. Reconciliation also is inseparable from love, and, like the prodigal son, we are ultimately driven back to its embrace for its meaning, its comfort, and the hope contained there.

Paul Tillich writes, "Accept the fact that you're accepted." The Apostle Paul would agree, "All things are from God, who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself."

But there's more. We then must accept the demands of the gospel, the horizontal as well as the vertical planks of Christ's cross. The great commandment leads us to the second commandment: to love our neighbor. If the prodigal son is a parable of the divine act of vertical reconciliation, then the tale of

the good samaritan is a story of reconciliation's horizontal manifestation.

To eschew the hard work of the gospel is to inoculate the world against that gospel. It is not surprising that the tragedy of Cain and Abel followed Adam and Eve's broken relationship with God. To state this more positively, our incarnational efforts to imitate Christ can point people to the one true Reconciler.

St. Francis said it best, "Preach the gospel everywhere you go. Use words if necessary."

This is never an easy exercise. Truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness—and yes, especially forgetting—are difficult but necessary prerequisites to complete reconciliation. The principals are tough! But if the Christ of Calvary and the God of history are going to be made known in the difficult corners of our world—such as our homes, communities, and racial and denominational groups, and the Bosnias and Rwandas of our time—we will need to embrace the principles and methodology of reconciliation with a new sense of passion and urgency.

Reconciliation is the heart of our gospel. We need to show the world where our heart is! We need to reclaim this vital and world-changing word in our hearts and lives. 🌐

*There is a "heart" word to be reclaimed, the meaning of which can restore the equilibrium necessary in today's world.*

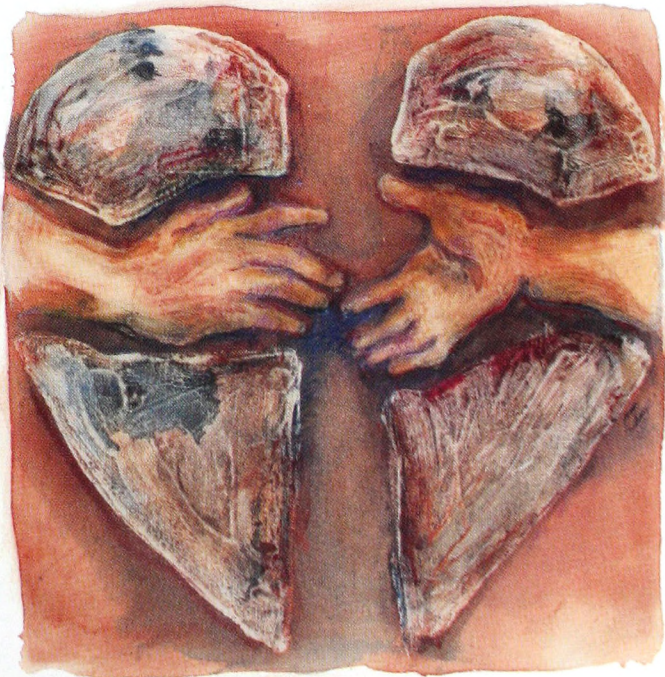


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## CONTENTS

SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR:  
Silent Cries  
to a Deaf World 2

World Vision News 8

JEFF COMMENT:  
Mining Diamonds  
on City Streets 10

PHOTO:  
A Father's Dream 14

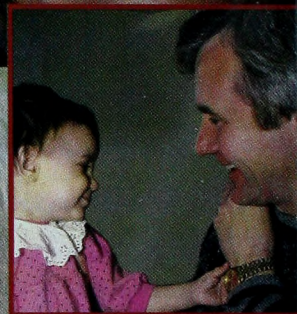
EDITORIAL:  
U.S. Foreign Aid 16

Samaritan Sampler 18

LIBERIA:  
A Precarious Peace 20

FROM THE PRESIDENT:  
Reclaiming the Word 23

# JESUS STILL MULTIPLIES LOAVES TO FEED THE HUNGRY



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is a way your congregation can make a difference in the world. I have seen World Vision feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bring the good news of Jesus to the poor. Your giving through the Love Loaf program not only allows World Vision to care for the needs of children worldwide, but that care then opens the door for Christ to be seen. This is a great ministry that makes a tremendous difference.

Gary Dennis,  
Pastor, La Cañada  
Presbyterian Church

  
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COVER: His father a soldier and his mother and younger brother recently dead of illness, Sabah, 4, lives with an uncle in Sudan. PHOTO: JAMINIE OGANIA



June / July 1996

# WORLD VISION®



SUDAN'S  
CIVIL WAR:

## SILENT CRIES TO A DEAF WORLD

MINING DIAMONDS FROM CITY STREETS, pg. 10


THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN AID, pg. 16

LIBERIA'S PRECARIOUS PEACE, pg. 20

PLEASE RESPOND TO  
READER SURVEY  
INSIDE



*Hidden in the heart of Africa, the oldest and longest war of recent times rages on virtually unnoticed by the outside world.*



Children displaced from their homes by Sudan's civil war gather at a relief agency feeding center at the town of Kongor north of Bor on the Nile River.

# SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR: SILENT CRIES



**THE CIVIL WAR IN SUDAN, WHICH HAS DEVASTATED THE SOUTHERN THIRD OF AFRICA'S LARGEST COUNTRY FOR 30 OF THE PAST 41 YEARS, IS TAKING SHAPE AS ONE OF THE GREATEST HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES SINCE WORLD WAR II. CONSIDER THE FIGURES: IN THE PAST 10 YEARS ALONE, THE CONFLICT HAS LEFT AN ESTIMATED 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE DEAD AND ANOTHER SEVERAL MILLION DISPLACED FROM HOMES AND LANDS—A TOLL APPROACHING THE HUMAN COST OF RECENT STRIFE IN SOMALIA, RWANDA, AND BOSNIA COMBINED.**

PHOTO BY JOHN SCHENK / WORLD VISION

# TO A DEAF WORLD

BY BRUCE BRANDER



Yet the turmoil and its massive price in human suffering are scandalously underreported by the media and tragically neglected by governments throughout the world.

The odd lack of global awareness is partly explainable. Sudan's war zone is old Africa, one of the most remote and least accessible places on earth. Travel there, never substantial, now is all but impossible, with shifting battle lines, random aerial bombings, and a virtual freeze on permission to enter the region.

Yet why does the media stay away? They don't entirely. A few reporters and cameramen have ventured into the wild land to tell its tale. But newsrooms in major cities of the world cite lack of interest in their audiences—recalling the lag between disaster and attention that condemned 1 million Ethiopians to death by hunger in the mid-1980s.

Meanwhile, the world's governments shy away from interfering in the country's internal affairs. They could intervene in Sudan, and perhaps still might, as they did in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. But such commitment remains risky, costly, and unpopular. And southern Sudan seems very far away. So the war storms

## *The modern slavers of Sudan are said to find customers as far away as Libya and the Persian Gulf states.*

on, killing people by the hundreds of thousands, uprooting fully half the population of the region.

### **WAR SPLITS COUNTRY**

The conflict splits the nation of some 28 million people, which is almost as large as the United States east of the Mississippi River, into northern and southern political regions. Even in peacetime, they seem an unlikely merger. The north is Arabic in culture, Muslim in religion, largely desert in terrain. The south is black Africa as 19th-century explorers

knew it: vast savannas, malarial marshes, and roadless jungles peopled by spirit-worshipping cattle herders and mission-trained Christians.

Sudan's government, based in the dusty northern city of Khartoum, never had an easy task holding together its nation of 579 widely scattered tribal groups speaking 115 languages. Between north and south, union rarely has been more than theoretical.

In a sense, the conflict traces its roots to the days of the pharaohs, when ancient Egyptians ventured southward up the Nile River in search of slaves. Arab slavers continued raiding the region until British rulers curtailed the practice in the late 19th century.

The present phase of the north-south friction broke out in 1955, as the British prepared to turn over southern Sudan to a newly independent government in the north. Rebels with long memories reacted with fear, anger, and guns. Apart from an interval of uneasy peace between 1972 and 1983, the civil strife has continued ever since.

Khartoum wants the south for fertile land and probable underground oil reserves. Also the great Jonglai canal, long ago started by French engineers but aborted by the war, promises an abundance of water diverted from a swamp the size of England to huge state farms in the hot, dry north. For these goals and other more political aims, various regimes over the years have tried to graft upon the south Arabic culture, Islamic religion, and a revived medieval *sharia* law that punishes offenders with floggings and amputations.

Failing in their local version of ethnic and theological cleansing, they have resorted to force of arms. The present military government of Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir has drawn \$1 million a day from its depleted treasury and threatened to raise a million-man army to conquer the south by the harshest available means. So the war drags on, bogging down each May with seasonal rains, renewed every October with the onset of the dry season.

### **NORMAL LIFE TIMELESS**

In times of peace, life in southern Sudan wears on with the tempo of prehistory. Elephants, buffalos, and leopards freely roam the countryside. Crocodiles, pythons, and bushbucks own the marshes. On drier terrain, rhinos browse thornbushes, hyenas sob around villages for trash, and lions prowl coughing through the night, sometimes carrying off children.

Along the Nile River, elegantly tall tribespeople—the Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, among others—invest their existence in cattle. The size of a herd mea-

## **THE CHURCH IN SUDAN**

**T**he Christian Church is perhaps the only institution still standing firm amid the chaos of civil war in southern Sudan. Introduced by European missionaries when British colonial rulers protected the black-African south from the Arabic north, Christianity created small groups of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics among traditional nature-worshipping animists.

Bishop Nathaniel Garang of the Episcopal Church of Sudan estimates that before the war about 15 percent of southerners were Christian. Now he believes as much as three-fourths of the population has turned to Christ.

"The church is the only institution offering hope to Sudan," explains Joseph Ikalur, a worker with the New Sudan Council of Churches.

The threat of martyrdom has drawn believers of all denominations closer together and strengthened their resolve. In January, News Network International reported 32,000 people baptized around the Nile town of Bor within two weeks after government troops killed the Rev. Paul Kon Agilti at Bor's Makuac Episcopal church.

Renato Kizito Sesana, a Roman Catholic priest who teaches at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya, and has traveled through southern Sudan, tells of lay teachers trudging on foot from village to village. Tattered record books list hundreds of newly baptized adults in areas where 10 years ago only Islam and spirit-worship were practiced.

"We visited chapels deep in the bush where people from nearby villages would congregate," Sesana recounts, describing undernourished villagers in rags worshipping outdoors by moonlight. "Their faith and love for Jesus were utterly serious and unquestionable. ... People long for the healing power of Jesus, the power to restore love and community where there is hatred and division."

The church in southern Sudan lacks buildings and Bibles, but its greatest need is for leadership. Many of the country's Christian leaders were based in the north and now either are cut off from their flocks by the war or have fled Sudan. Meanwhile, southern pastors cannot be trained fast enough to meet the church's rapid growth. To cope, many churches draw upon lay members to lead and evangelize.





Sudanese tribesmen along the Nile River make virtual pets of lyre-horned cattle, symbols of wealth and prestige. The boy wears a garment of relief-agency mosquito netting.

sure wealth, prestige, and personal satisfaction.

Herdsmen coddle their large, lyre-horned beasts almost as pets, singing to them, lovingly rubbing them with ash to ward off mosquitoes. A person is named for the color of a favorite animal: in the language of the Dinkas, a man is Malek, or speckled bull; a boy is Nyad jok, or white calf with black spots; a woman is Yon, or brown cow.

A keeper of cattle composes songs about his beasts to the rhythm of cattle hooves. He brings his best animal courting. Later, he presents a gift of 40 or 50 cattle to his bride's family. Cattle provide milk, flavored with ash, or mixed with cattle blood in famine times. Rarely are they killed, and then only in sacrificial rites.

Human habitations are simple: flat clearings of mud-and-thatch *tukul* huts, each sheltering little more than rope beds or sleeping mats of bark or hartebeest hide. Outside the huts, women crush grain between stones or pound it with *lek* poles in deep *dong* bowls. Hunters set out with six-foot bows or nine-foot lances tipped with antelope horn after birds, marsh rats, or bushbucks. Children thrust spears into muddy ground and bring up whiskered lungfish.

*For decades, missionaries and relief workers have been straggling out of the remote region with tales of bush battles approaching genocide.*

#### WAR APPROACHES GENOCIDE

So it was in peacetime. But that was long ago. For decades, missionaries and relief workers have been straggling out of the remote region with tales of bush battles approaching genocide. Bashir's regime, known for a grisly human rights record even in the north, generates horror stories of bombed and burning villages, rape and torture, conscription of pre-teenage boys, crucifixion of children as young as 7, and capture of women

and children for northern slave markets. The U.S. State Department in 1993 verified these accounts.

Not long ago, 300 government-armed Arab militiamen thundered on horseback, camels, and foot into Nyamlell, a Dinka settlement beside the River Lol. They burned buildings, looted goods, killed 82 men, and captured 282 women and children as slaves. "We were armed with spears and they with Kalashnikov rifles," recalls Garang Amok Mou, who lost seven brothers in the battle.

"They beat me unconscious," says Akuac Amet, a 50-year-old villager. "Now my legs are paralyzed and I can only crawl. They shot my four sons who were tending cattle and abducted my 14-year-old daughter, Ajak. My husband died in famine. I am now completely destitute."

Some 200 Arab raiders stormed the village of Wud Arul, two hours from Nyamlell by canoe and trail. They looted and burned homes, stole 400 head of cattle, and kidnapped 63 women and children to be sold as farm laborers, domestics, and concubines. The modern slavers of Sudan are said to find customers as far away as Libya and the Persian Gulf states.



## REBELS SEEK RIGHTS

Fighting back, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army attacks government-held garrisons, retreats into the bush, and attacks again. The mainly Dinka force is led by a former Sudan army colonel, John Garang, who holds a doctorate degree in economics from Iowa State University. The Southern Sudan Independence Movement of Riak Machar, made up mainly of Nuer tribesmen, sometimes battles the government and sometimes fights Garang. Other, smaller rebel groups also join the conflict against the north and one another.

Their demands range from total

independence to more limited agendas including regional autonomy, religious freedom, economic equity, and continued use of English along with Arabic as an official language. Meanwhile, southern forces are not beyond conscripting, looting, and raping civilians, adding to the chaos in their territory.

By far the most numerous casualties of the war are women, children, and the elderly, deprived by the turmoil of adequate food and health care. Meanwhile, routine displacement of millions of farm families leaves hunger and malnutrition more or less constant. Serious famines struck in 1984-85, 1988, 1990, and 1992-93. In 1988 alone, at least a quarter-million southerners perished from causes related to hunger. Relief agencies delivering food assistance prevented at least one other famine.

Over the years, the war has destroyed the south's economy, education system, health services, and communications network. Few schools are left, their classes averaging 94 pupils to one teacher, the local literacy rate lagging between 10 to 20 percent. No more than three hospitals have survived the devastation. Only one doctor is available for every 125,000 people. Diseases curable by a simple prescription run rampant.

## AID AGENCIES BRING HELP

While most of the world has ignored the travail of the southern Sudanese, World Vision and other humanitarian groups have been struggling for decades to meet at least some of their needs. In 1989, the United Nations organized the relief and development groups into Opera-

## SUDAN AND THE WORLD

**T**raditionally a hospitable country with a people of moderate temperament, Sudan since 1989 has become a totalitarian nightmare.

That year the National Islamic Front overthrew an elected but feeble government in its bloodless "National Salvation Revolution." Under the military rule of Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir, the free press has disappeared and secret police are everywhere. A Truth Authentication Department watches for any challenge to political, religious, or social orthodoxy. Iranian-trained Islamic Popular Police deal out sentences in the streets to anyone failing to conform to the official version of Islam's medieval *sharia* law. Dissidents are dealt with harshly and jails hold many political prisoners.

Meanwhile, the government has roused global ire for heavy-handed international relations. The United States in 1993 accused Sudan of supporting international terrorism. Last February, the U.S. embassy staff withdrew from the Nile River capital, Khartoum, citing vulnerability to terrorist attack.

Egypt and Ethiopia have angrily charged Sudan with harboring Muslim extremists who attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Eritrea and Uganda have severed relations with Sudan, charging the country with undermining the security of the region.

By trying to export its version of Islam, Sudan's government could bring war to eastern Africa.

*His ammunition clip held together by tape, a rebel soldier north of Bor fights for food instead of pay. Uniforms and shoes mark more fortunate fighters in a land impoverished by decades of civil war.*

VIVIANE MOOS





tion Lifeline Sudan. Based in Lokichokio, a dust-choked border town in northwest Kenya, more than 40 aid agencies have transported workers all over the south.

With roads that can destroy a tough truck in a year and burn out brake pads in 48 hours, agencies depend heavily upon aircraft for transport and supplies. Their workers live in tents and tukuls, enduring withering heat and humidity to distribute food, clothing, medicines, farm tools, and seeds to hundreds of thousands of people left homeless, destitute, and ill. Dodging battle lines, they shift their camps from one region to another. Between January and November 1995, more than 40 evacuations of relief workers took place in southern Sudan. Several workers were abducted or taken hostage.

However heroic, the aid is not nearly enough. Anyone witnessing the anguish of the region can only deplore the world's neglect of southern Sudan as the war fluctuates in endless impasse.

In 1991 the SPLA had driven government soldiers out of all the south except for five garrison towns. Then the rebels fragmented and began fighting each other. By the end of 1993, northern victory seemed imminent as a divided and demoralized SPLA controlled only a few strips of the south's borderland. Then, early in 1994, Garang received new arms from furtive allies. By the end of 1995 the SPLA had taken at least 13 government-held towns, again changing the momentum of the war.

## GROUPS ORGANIZE FOR PEACE

This year World Vision is organizing humanitarian groups and churches to urge the U.S. Congress, the Clinton administration, and the United Nations to help negotiate an end to the fighting.



A woman barter corn for cloth to make salable clothing in one of 40 tailoring groups supported by World Vision in the jungled southwest of Sudan. The corn goes to hungry displaced people.

SCOTT KELLEHER / WORLD VISION

*"My people go  
around sick,  
naked, humiliated  
and starving....  
The silence of the  
media is our death."*

"This war has gone on too long and has caused more suffering than any other human emergency of recent times," says Kate Almquist, a World Vision policy analyst in Washington, D.C. "It's obstructing development in the south and destabilizing the whole of East Africa. After years of stalemate, there's still no end in sight. It mustn't continue any longer."

Yet global interest and concern probably will have the final word. Recognizing the importance of world opinion in bringing current conflicts to the tables of resolution, former President Jimmy Carter, who mediated a four-month Sudan cease-fire in March 1995, remarked, "The scale of suffering, especially of the children, exceeds anything we have ever seen, although it receives scant media attention."

Echoing his perception, the Catholic bishop of the Sudanese city of El Obeid, Monsignor Max Gassis, has pleaded for the world to take notice. "My people go around sick, naked, humiliated and starving," he said, adding, "The silence of the media is our death." 🌐

*With Bruce Menser and Sylvia Mpaayei in Nairobi, Kenya; and Rob Jenkins and Greg Kearns in Sudan.*

## WORLD VISION IN SUDAN

- **1972:** World Vision began work in Sudan, channeling relief assistance for war victims through the African Committee for Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan, a partner agency already established there.

- **1974:** World Vision sponsored a conference for pastors normally isolated by the remoteness of the region. Programs for health care, agricultural improvement, and Christian leadership followed.

- **1986:** During severe drought and famine in Ethiopia, Sudan, and other African countries, the agency opened an office in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, to assist thousands of displaced people in famine camps in the central and western parts of the country.

- **1988:** The government of Sudan ordered World Vision and other Christian aid agencies to leave the country, with no reason given.

- **1989:** World Vision began shipping food from Kenya into southern Sudan as civil war brought famine to the region. Subsequently, World Vision led work to repair rutted dirt roads and rebuild a key bridge so truck convoys could penetrate the region.

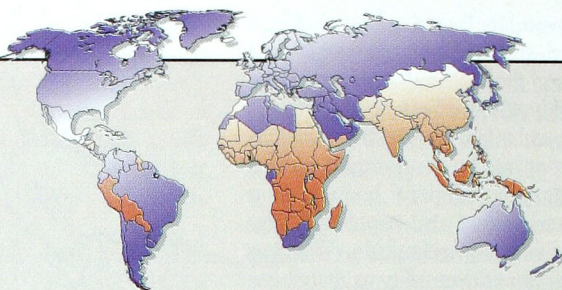
- **Early 1990s:** The agency operated food relief, agricultural recovery, and health programs in all major regions of the south for victims of war, flooding, drought, famine, and disease. Its bases moved as shifting battle lines threatened security of workers and beneficiaries.

- **1996:** World Vision presently serves 250,000 southerners in Tonj and Yambio counties. Assistance includes emergency relief, health care, water and agricultural improvement, development of small businesses, and more than 40 agricultural cooperatives that purchase corn with barter goods to help farmers, then distribute it in poorer areas to reduce the need for costly food imports.

- **A NEW WORLD VISION POLICY PAPER ON SUDAN** titled "Cry, the Divided Country" explores the difficulties of ending Sudan's civil war and proposes ways the United States can help settle the conflict. For copies, or for more information on how you can participate in World Vision's advocacy campaign for peace in Sudan, please write or telephone:

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220 I Street, N.E., Suite 270  
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## GLOBAL FOOD AID DECLINES AS NEEDS IN AFRICA PERSIST

**S**everal African countries are expected to need emergency food relief during 1996, yet food reserves have declined in donor countries, says a report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

In 1995, shipments of food aid dropped to their lowest levels in 20 years. The report predicts further declines in production this year. Meanwhile, a steep increase in world cereal prices will make food imports difficult for 44 African countries with food deficits and low incomes.

Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan are among the countries where shortfalls might be serious, according to the report.

*A child of southern Sudan relies on emergency food relief as civil war devastates his homeland.*

## WV PROVIDES RELIEF IN SRI LANKA WAR

**V**illagers in northern Sri Lanka displaced from their homes by civil war are receiving relief assistance from World Vision.

For 13 years, rebels known as the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam have been fighting a brutal war against the government of the island off the southern tip of India. The rebels demand a separate homeland for Tamil people. They have carried out attacks to incite violence between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamil community, which numbers 2.3 million in a total population of 18 million. Some 50,000 people have been killed during the past 10 years of the conflict. Presently, 500,000 people are displaced from their homes by the civil war.

In one recent attack, a rebel force of about 80 Tamil girls between 14 and 17 years of age attacked two Sinhalese villages with machine guns, hand grenades and gas bombs. In the early morning assault, 21 people were killed and many wounded. The girls burned the village leaving 327 families homeless.

World Vision is helping displaced victims of the fighting with food, cooking utensils, sheet metal roofing, lanterns and mats, among other needs.

## AIRSTRIPE ENDS ISOLATION FOR MOUNTAIN DWELLERS

**W**orld Vision has wiped away old tears," said a community leader at the opening of an airstrip built with the agency's assistance in the remote highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The landing field ended the isolation of the people of Kombaku in the Bismarck mountains of Madang province. Previously they traversed six hours of jungle trails and hazardous river crossings to reach the South Pacific island to reach the nearest airstrip. Over a period of 10



## WOMEN FIND JOBS, INCOME THROUGH WV TRAINING

World Vision project in Chile is helping women gain work and much-needed income. The Training Center for Women in the capital city, Santiago, finds areas of employment where workers are needed, then offers instructions leading to job placement. The program was initiated in October 1995. Early this year, the first class of 30 women completed training as hotel chambermaids, restaurant waitresses, nursery school attendants, hairdressers, cooks, and plumbers. Within two weeks, 70 percent of the graduates were working in jobs or their own small enterprises.

Most of the women are mothers with children in other World Vision projects, while the rest live in communities where the projects are located. Many come from the poorest sections of the capital city. The courses are free and bus fare to the training center is subsidized by the program.

Seeing the success of the project, the municipal government of Santiago is working with World Vision to bring the training into its own development programs.

years, they cleared and leveled land for the new runway with axes, shovels, and wheelbarrows as part of a project supported by World Vision.

The airfield will help the people of Kombaku market coffee, vegetables, and small amounts of gold found in nearby mountains. It also allows teachers to come to the region and start a school for local children. World Vision also is working with the community to establish a health facility for immunizations, nutrition education, and medical treatment.

## ETHIOPIA DEVELOPS SLOWLY 10 YEARS AFTER FAMINE

Ten years after global compassion lifted Ethiopia out of the worst famine in recent history, development efforts are overcoming a legacy of widespread environmental degradation and a long civil war

that ended in 1991. The development is sponsored by the government and humanitarian agencies, including World Vision.

In many areas, reforestation is blanketing mountains and valleys with millions of fast-growing trees. Terraces, check dams, and diversion ditches are halting soil erosion and bringing clean water to rural residents. Demonstration farms have introduced fruits and vegetables previously unknown to local farmers. Aid workers also have encouraged fish farming, beekeeping, poultry raising, and rice growing.

New schools are raising literacy from a previous national norm of 15 percent. Medical clinics are improving the general level of health. Vocational training centers are teaching carpentry, tailoring, weaving and knitting to help farmers earn barter and cash income.

At the same time, about half the

**A World Vision demonstration farm in Ethiopia's Ansokia Valley 220 miles north of Addis Ababa displays efficient cultivation for small plots of land.**



JANE SUTTON / WORLD VISION

East African country's 57 million people remain in abject poverty. With an annual food deficit of 1.1 million tons, Ethiopia would suffer chronic hunger without regular overseas aid.


"Slowly, slowly the egg will walk," an Ethiopian proverb says, aptly describing the country's efforts over the past decade to emerge from a disaster in which 1 million people died of causes related to hunger.

## FORMER WV-AIDED CHILDREN FIND SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

Three decades of World Vision assistance for orphans and poor children on the Indonesian island of Bali are helping many grow up to lives of success, reports the agency's office in the country's capital, Jakarta.

In the early 1960s, World Vision's founder, Bob Pierce, traveled to Bali to assess the needs of victims of a major volcanic eruption on the fabled tropical island. Subsequently, World Vision helped start several orphanages and initiated a child sponsorship program there.

"Many of the first children helped by World Vision have gone on to achieve remarkable success," says Hendro Suwito of the agency's staff in Indonesia. "On Bali, former sponsored children are now working as university lecturers, doctors, church ministers, hotel and travel agency managers and owners, businessmen, and civil servants." Others hold prominent positions elsewhere in the island-nation, Suwito adds.

One former sponsored child, Ketut Putra Suarthanaare, who spent many years in an orphanage aided by World Vision, now owns hotels and a network of tourism management institutes. His institute in Bali's capital, Denpasar, currently is training some 1,200 students. Suarthanaare has provided scholarships to poor students, including 20 for children of his fellow orphans. 









# JEFF COMMENT: MINING DIAMONDS *from* CITY STREETS

BY JEANETTE D. GARDNER

ON THE HARD CITY  
STREETS OF KANSAS CITY,  
THE CEO OF  
HELZBERG DIAMONDS  
BEFRIENDED A FORMER  
GANG MEMBER AND  
FOUND A DIAMOND OF  
A DIFFERENT SORT.

*A*t 2 o'clock Sunday morning, in an upper-class Kansas City suburb, the streets were quiet. Jeff and Martha Comment had long been asleep. After all, Sunday would be a busy day. In the morning the Comments would worship at Heartland Community Church with their kids—21-year-old Kristen and 17-year-old Ryan. That afternoon they had a family outing planned. The 52-year-old diamond merchant nestled a little snuggler into his soft, warm pillow.

In another part of town, a policeman impatiently tapped his pen as he surveyed an arrest form.



*“As the president of a business, I like to see everything organized, put together with a nice bow on top. But people’s lives don’t work that way.”*

“Got anybody you can call?” the officer asked. From the moment he stopped the car and the guy began making excuses for not having tags or a driver’s license, the policeman knew he was talking to a seasoned criminal. The guy knew all the ropes, all the questions, all the answers.

The guy lifted his head and looked into the policeman’s eyes. “Yeah, Jeff Comment.”

“Jeff Comment? I used to work for a Jeff Comment. He’s the CEO at Helzberg Diamonds,” the officer said in disbelief.

“Yeah, that’s the one,” the guy said. His wary brown eyes met skeptical green ones. “Look, he’s my friend. He’s the only one I can call.”

Jeff and Martha jumped as the shrill call of the phone split the silence. Jeff reached for the phone, trying to focus on the numbers of the bedside clock. Adrenalin pumped. Two a.m. calls always threaten emergency.

His breathless hello was answered with, “Jeff, I’ve been arrested. I don’t have tags for my car yet, but I was driving it. And when they found out I don’t have a license...” Odies’ voice choked up.

Jeff sat up, “We’ll take care of it, Odies, calm down,” he answered. “Let me talk to the officer.”

Jeff listened to the officer’s explanation, then promised to make bail, pick up Odies, and have the car towed after daylight.

“Odies used to be a gang member,” Jeff explained to the officer. “I’m trying to help him develop a new life.”

The policeman promised, “I’ll reduce the charges as much as I can. Odies will be okay until you pick him up in the morning.”

The rest of Jeff’s night passed uninterrupted by phone calls, but frequently interrupted by thoughts, worry, anxiety, and frustration.

In the morning, Jeff picked up his protégé. As they drove to the college Jeff had enrolled Odies in, Jeff talked to him about the situation just as he’d talk to his own son.

In the college parking lot, the two bowed their heads and prayed together. Then, with a handshake, a pat on the shoulder, and encouraging words, the medium-framed, white-haired man sent

the 300-pound, 6-foot-5-inch Odies back into the ivy halls.

How did such an incongruous pair—one from the inner-city streets, and the other part of the city’s elite—join forces?

### GETTING TOGETHER

Jeff is no stranger to crime. Previously he worked in Philadelphia. His office was in the center of the city, where he began to examine inner-city problems and challenges.

“One of my best friends was an inner-city judge,” Jeff explains. “One morning every week we’d get together at his chambers and take a half-hour to pray for the city. That lasted for five or six years.

“Over time, my friend would share situations that were going on in the inner city. We started making visits together. We’d visit a food kitchen some people he knew were starting. Or we’d go to a house where prostitutes could change their lives. We rode through the streets with the police, talking about what was going on.

“All those things accumulated inside me. On one hand, delving into inner-city problems gave me a sense of despair. On the other, I found encouragement. I would see very small organizations—maybe with only one or two people—working hard in their own small way to make a difference in people’s lives. And their work was succeeding even though they didn’t have adequate financial backing or lots of help.”

The sights of Philadelphia’s streets stayed with Jeff, even after he moved to the Midwest. During seven years in Kansas City, Jeff served on boards for several organizations working in the inner city. Then officials invited him to chair the Chamber of Commerce’s Committee on Crime and Violence—no small task, since Kansas City sees a higher percentage of crimes than either New York City or Los Angeles. Jeff agreed.

“For the Committee on Crime and Violence, we interviewed people about their perception of violence in town,” Jeff says. “Then I got the brainstorm to bring in a gang member.”

Jeff turned to a church working in the inner city. The church sent Odies to the next committee meeting.

“Odies was intimidating,” Jeff recalls. “Besides his size, he started out by calling us ‘mothers.’” Odies told us what life

was like on the streets. I said, ‘You have 12 CEOs sitting here. How can we encourage you and your friends to change your lifestyle?’ He simply said, ‘Hope. Give us hope.’”

Being a diamond merchant, Jeff is used to detecting quality. And somewhere in the carbon of the 30-year-old Odies’ life, he saw a diamond—in the rough, maybe, but nevertheless a diamond.

To change inner-city problems, Jeff says, “Sometimes you just have to move alongside the people, find out who they are, and be their friend. When I met Odies, I knew I had to get to know him better. After he visited our meeting, I asked him what his dreams were. He wanted to go to college. I began to think of how I could help him.

I asked Odies, ‘If I could make your dream happen, would you turn your life around?’ Nobody had ever given him that opportunity. Now I’m trying to teach him a whole new world.”

### ABUNDANT MIRACLES

So far, that new world has included abundant miracles. With Jeff intermediating as Odies’ champion, others caught sight of the vision.

“Prosecutors for two counties both had enough warrants for Odies’ arrest to put him in prison for five to eight years. I talked to the prosecutors, to judges, to policemen. They decided just to give Odies a 120-day rehab program, with parole on its completion,” Jeff says.

“While Odies was in the rehab program, I visited him. I also looked for a college for him. Finally one said, ‘We’ll overlook his records. We like his dream of returning to the gangs to help others.’”

As Odies watched Jeff go to action on his behalf, the walls of suspicion began to fall. And the bridge of relationship slowly crossed the chasm between the men.

In his year of working with Odies, Jeff has been reminded repeatedly that when you deal with people, you’re like an actor on stage without a script—life becomes like an improvised monologue: Sometimes it flies, sometimes it doesn’t.

Like learning to walk, changing a life is full of tumbles and spills. Small successes, couched in occasional falls and failures, are both part of the process.

Jeff has seen several successes with





**Diamond merchant Jeff Comment (far right) meets with the executives of Helzberg's Diamond Shops, Inc. at the company's general office in Kansas City, Mo. The firm operates 166 jewelry stores across the United States.**

Odie. For instance, Jeff relates, "A couple of months ago, he helped build houses with Habitat for Humanity during his spring break from college. When he got home, he laughed and told me, 'Jeff, last year, I tore houses down. This year I built one.'"

Jeff's seen the falls, too. After nearly completing his first semester in college, and being off drugs for longer than he'd ever been clean in his life, Odies slipped. Being found with drugs was a parole violation, and Odies was sent back to prison. He will not be eligible for parole again until next year.

"All of us who have worked with Odies feel sad about this," Jeff says, "but not discouraged. As the president of a business, I like to see everything organized, put together with a nice bow on top. But people's lives don't work that way. We don't always see success. I can't fix Odies. All I can do is be his friend, offer him advice, and lead him to people who can help. I still feel Odies is different today from who he was a year ago. Maybe Odies needed to fail this time in order to gain the wisdom he needs to succeed the next time."

Indeed, since returning to prison Odies' faith in God has grown and he is counseling other prisoners to stay away from drugs and alcohol—which are readily available among them. In addition, Jeff and Odies write to each other once a week and pray for one other regularly.

Still, there are no guarantees that Odies won't fall again. "Working with Odies hurts at times," Comment admits. "I love this guy and want him to make it, and yet I can't tell you he's going to make it. But God has called me to be with this man. As a result, I, too, am learning and growing and facing new challenges. I'm learning what real ministry is, and what God's grace really means in my own life."

### **TAKING IT TO THE STREETS**

Now Jeff thinks this kind of outreach may be an answer for city crime problems.

"I've realized that Odies and I have a

lot in common. He has joys and successes. He also has worries and failures. His emotions are no different from mine. We probably won't change our cities until more people develop partnerships with inner-city folks, mentoring them. Some of these lives will turn around only if they have someone they can count on to be committed to them.

"We can't do it with federal programs or boards or by just giving money. We have to go to soup kitchens. We have to see the black eyes of the mothers in the abuse centers. We have to care for those in drug rehab programs. As we get involved in these hurting lives, we will see God's grace and his miracles."

Regardless of the ups and downs, Jeff still plans to be there for Odies. He's committed to the man whose life is so different from his own. "I think when I walk through the pearly gates, Peter will meet me and say, 'God called you to be with Odies—were you?' And I can say, 'I was with Odies.'"

But Jeff's rewards may very well come before he reaches heaven. Who knows? Maybe some morning at 2 a.m., he'll awaken to another kind of call—from an excited Odies, telling Jeff about some gang members he's just won to Christ. After all, people who look like rough carbon can become diamonds. ☉

*“We probably won't change our cities until more people develop partnerships with inner-city folks, mentoring them.”*

*Jeanette D. Gardner is a free-lance writer in Roeland Park, Kan.*









# A FATHER'S DREAM

TEXT AND PHOTO  
BY JON WARREN

**SON, DO YOU KNOW THAT I DREAM?** You are so small, but already my dreams are centered around you. Without a dream, what kind of future would you have? I do not believe that God blessed me with you only so that I would have to watch you wither in this resettlement camp. Surely life will hold more for you than a sweltering tent, desperate food lines, and stifling poverty.

I dream that we will have a secure shelter, a house with a thickly woven roof (better yet, metal!) and strong mud walls, cool in the heat and dry in the rain, a home among the trees above the flood waters. I dream of a strong pair of oxen and a field to plow. I dream of abundant crops and full bellies—two full meals every day from rice we harvest with our own hands.

Son, will you watch and learn as I work, until one day you lead the oxen as I guide the plow? Then, strong and healthy, will it be you who carries the heavy sheaves of rice from the field? Will you listen quietly as I pray and will you come to revere God?

When you have grown into a man, we will find you a good wife, a woman who will work hard and bear you many children. And if God wills and we do not owe too much to the money lender, I will have land to share with you. Then when your mother and I are old, you will care for us with respect and honor.

But I forget that this is a modern world. Why should you have to sweat and work with your hands as I do? You must learn to read and write. You will wear a watch and carry a pen and read the newspaper to me. After you pass your exams, you will become an important man and sit behind a big desk in the city. When you visit our village, everyone will rush to bring you a chair and offer you tea—but you will still come and touch the feet of your mother and me.

But sometimes I am afraid to dream for you. You are the son of an ignorant, landless peasant trapped in this camp. What if disease strikes? We have no money for medicine. Even if you escape from this place, what chance do you have? We have no land for you to farm and the cyclone destroyed our home. How can we afford to pay for school? If you go to the city will you have to slave as a rickshaw driver or live like an animal on the streets?

Yes, sometimes I am afraid to dream. What is a father to do? But for you, my son, I will still dare to dream. 🌐

*This photo was taken in a refugee camp outside Chittigong, Bangladesh, following a deadly hurricane in the summer of 1991.*



# U.S. FOREIGN AID: SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG IMPACT

BY TOM GETMAN

**F**OR A TIME IN 1995, CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET CUTTERS APPEARED POISED TO SLASH U.S. FOREIGN AID BY 25 PERCENT. It was the most

devastating attack on overseas development aid since 1945, when the United States committed billions of dollars to rebuild Europe through the Marshall Plan, establishing the U.S. tradition of substantially helping suffering nations.

Many in last year's Congress mistakenly believed they could balance the U.S. budget by slashing foreign aid to poor and suffering people—the so-called international affairs “150” account—a line item which actually amounts to just 1 percent of the entire federal budget. After internationally minded humanitarians organized a national campaign to condemn the cuts, however, several members of Congress saw the wisdom of continued international involvement, preserving the funding for vital child survival and food aid programs. Reductions in aid to poor and suffering people were held to just 11 percent.

But that was last year. Now the budget process is starting all over again and many people say we should curtail our global responsibility. In addition, many Americans continue to falsely believe that 25 percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid. Polls also show that 60 percent of Americans believe that our government spends more on foreign aid than on Medicare. Once again,

the drive is on to slash foreign aid to the poor.

Yet there are at least four good reasons to stop further reductions in the international affairs “150” account:

■ As the sole remaining superpower we have the opportunity to shape the world we live in, as well as the responsibility to respond to the dangers we face. Though the Cold War is over, formidable challenges to international peace and security remain—dangers of political and religious extremism, poverty, economic instability, disease, and the spread of nuclear weapons. Threats to U.S. interests today are linked to political and economic instability and regional conflicts. The international affairs budget provides our country with the minimal resources it needs to meet these challenges. In order for peace efforts to continue in the Middle East, Africa, and other areas in the world, we must have the resources to support the risk-takers working to make peace a reality.

*Dinka tribesmen at the community of Majok in southern Sudan's Tonj County unload sacks of sorghum and corn seed from a supply aircraft. Flown from neighboring Kenya, the seed was donated by the United States and distributed along with agricultural tools by World Vision.*

■ International aid is a cost-effective means of protecting U.S. interests abroad and of preventing and resolving international conflicts without a costly military presence. Whatever the cost of international assistance, it is always cheaper than military intervention. Unlike military aid, our aid to the poor and suffering in other countries helps bolster democracies and build economies by empowering individuals and families to care for themselves. Many World Vision agri-





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TO THE DANGERS  
WE FACE.**

cultural, health, and microenterprise projects rely on foreign aid money to accomplish these goals.

■ International aid helps U.S. exports gain a competitive edge in countries developing a market economy. In the past 10 years, our exports to developing countries have more than doubled from \$71 billion to \$180 billion. As private voluntary organizations like World Vision use U.S. foreign aid to help developing economies, new customers are attracted to U.S. products (especially agricultural).

■ International aid is the right thing to do. We are called to help desperately poor and oppressed people worldwide. Foreign aid does this, and also demonstrates our moral and spiritual values. International aid helps others help themselves. It provides support for immunizations and schooling for children, helps in combatting the spread of diseases such as AIDS, prevents the onset of famine, and provides credit for entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. At the same time, we are helping ourselves by improving the global environment, combating terrorism, and promoting human rights.

U.S. foreign aid to developing countries is not merely charity, it is in our own national best interest—a fact that must be communicated to Congress before it slashes the aid budget again.

Last year, 18-year-old Rachel Wacker from Minnesota and 17-year-old Toby Long from Michigan won a World Vision-sponsored essay contest and were

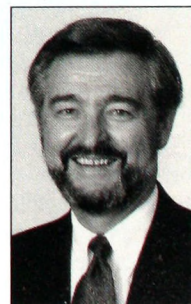
awarded the opportunity to spend two weeks touring many projects dependent on foreign aid. When they returned, they stopped in Washington, D.C., to visit the congresspersons from their home states.

Upon meeting the two youths, one Minnesota congressman said, "This is the most important appointment I have this week. Please tell me what I need to know about suffering people in Africa. I need your insight for the budget debate." Rachel and Toby were so eloquent in communicating the success of the World Vision rural development projects they witnessed that the Minnesota congressman has become one of our strongest supporters ever since.

Foreign aid invested in projects like World Vision's works. Like Rachel and Toby, those of us who know this is true, and who believe that we all benefit from this aid, must communicate this truth.

Please write or phone your congressional representatives this week and remind them of the moral, spiritual, and economic impact of this relatively small investment from the federal budget. One or two votes in the final budget resolution conference in early summer could make all the difference for millions of people trapped in famine or war. 🌐

Tom Getman is World Vision's director of government relations in Washington, D.C.



SCOTT KELLEHER / WORLD VISION





# SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR  
HELPING OTHERS  
IN THE NAME  
OF CHRIST

## A TIME TO SHARE

**A** new line of wrist watches is designed to help children worldwide.

Produced by The Marketing Group, a Chicago-based manufacturer, the watches for adults and children feature artwork from children in World Vision projects in several countries including Romania, Thailand, and Peru.

Michael Gurley, president of The Marketing Group and a World Vision child sponsor, believes the "Time to

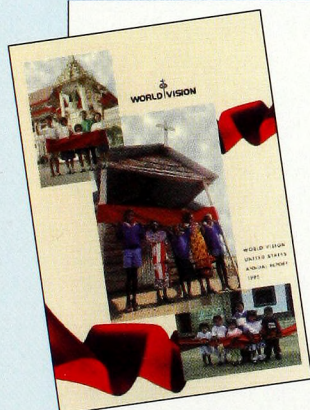


Share" line not only includes high quality and attractive watches, but even more importantly, it can help educate buyers about opportunities to sponsor children.

The Marketing Group is con-

tributing a percent of proceeds from watch sales to child sponsorship projects. "Whenever you check your wrist to see the time, you'll remember you are helping a child in need have a better life," Gurley says.

The watches are priced from \$7.99 to \$24.99 and are available in retail stores or by calling The Marketing Group at 1-800-760-0872.



## WORLD VISION ANNUAL REPORT

**W**orld Vision's 1995 annual report is not only a document of revenues and expenses, but also a story of how donor dollars have changed lives and communities through relief and development, evangelism, and child sponsorship.

For a copy of the report, call Donor Relations, World Vision: (800) 777-5777, or (800) 777-1760 for a Spanish language version.

## HANDS FOR CHRIST

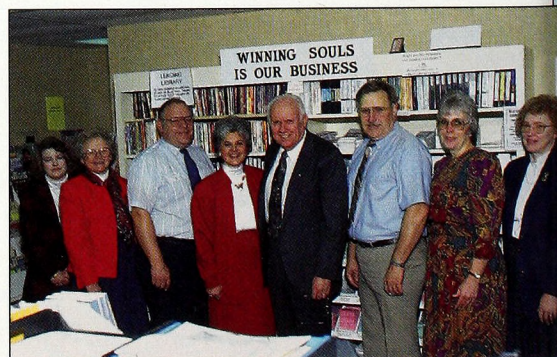
**D**on't know what to do with your used books? *Hands for Christ* sends new or used Christian books, tapes, and videos to developing countries to evangelize and disciple new converts.

*Hands for Christ*, a nonprofit organization, sends books to more than 8,300 libraries in churches, Bible schools, and prisons in more than 93 countries. The ministry distributes books and tapes in English, Spanish, and Russian.

"In Russia, we don't know how long the door will be open to evangelism," says R.W. "Bob" Bowers, founder of *Hands for Christ*. "A library can touch thousands of lives by being available to a whole community." Missionaries may be sent out of the country, but the books will remain. Bob Bowers and

his wife, Joan, founded *Hands for Christ* 28 years ago. In 1995, the ministry opened 999 new libraries worldwide.

For more information, or to donate materials, call *Hands for Christ* at (540) 362-1214; fax (540) 563-8285; or write to 5720 Williamson Road, Suite 111, Roanoke, VA 24012.



*Hands for Christ* staff serving through library discipliship.



*"I created a gift annuity because World Vision is a wonderful charity doing splendid work in the world."*

Martha Morgan Hoess  
Cincinnati, Ohio



*I* believe that every time an individual establishes a charitable gift annuity, he or she is greatly helping that charity carry on its God-given work. And World Vision does great work!

"Giving through a gift annuity is not entirely altruistic," Mrs. Hoess admits. "It benefits me too. I'm earning an excellent

rate with at least half of my earnings tax-free for 8 years. I also like that gift annuities aren't complicated.

"I try to give some type of donation on an annual basis to those organizations that I feel meet the needs of the sick and the poor," Mrs. Hoess concludes. "And World Vision certainly qualifies."

1-800-426-5753  **WORLD VISION**

**For more information about how you can help the sick and the poor through a World Vision gift annuity, please complete and mail to:**

World Vision  
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Tacoma, Washington 98481-0084

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City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Area) Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(Area) Business Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

FVW696

Compiled and written by Stephanie Stevenson  
and Debra Prinzing

## BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF LETTERS

**B**read for the World will seek commitments from 1996 U.S. Congressional candidates to reduce childhood hunger worldwide.

In 1995, Congress cut almost \$75 billion from planned spending on nutrition and anti-poverty programs. Bread for the World, with support from churches and partner organizations, including World Vision, will



campaign for preservation of the Women, Infants, and Children short-term supplemental nutrition program which provides food for 7 million people.

For more information or to order the "Elect to End Childhood Hunger Offering of Letters" kit, send \$5 plus \$3 for shipping and handling to Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or telephone (301) 608-2400.

**"The man who has  
God for his treasure  
has all things  
in One."**

—A. W. Tozer



# LIBERIA'S PRECARIOUS PEACE

BY ANDREW NATSIOS

**WHILE THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA FOCUSED ON BOSNIA'S MISERY, AN EQUALLY DEADLY TRAGEDY WAS UNFOLDING IN THE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRY OF LIBERIA.**

Since the end of 1989, a little known or understood civil war has been devastating the tropical land, uprooting almost two-thirds of the country's 2.8 million people, forcing countless families into squalid refugee camps, and killing an estimated 150,000 people. Today, this brutal conflict demands resolution.

Liberia was founded in 1821 when freed American slaves returned to Africa to start a new homeland. Over the next century and a half, the descendants of those freed slaves formed an elite class that governed the country, dominated the economy, and oppressed indigenous people. In 1980, the indigenous people overthrew the Americo-Liberians and hopes for a united country flickered briefly. But the new order under President Samuel Doe created even greater divisions, which led to the horrors of the long civil war.

In 1990, peacekeeping forces from countries making up the Economic Community of West African States sent troops to Liberia to restore order in the capital city, Monrovia. They have remained there ever since.

Liberia is the most noteworthy example of African leaders solving African

problems on their own initiative. During the six years of civil war, no government was in place to run the country. In August 1995, however, President Jerry J. Rawlings of Ghana led a coalition of African leaders from Liberia's neighboring countries and mediated a political settlement among the eight political factions dominating various parts of the country. This negotiated settlement—called the Abuja Accords—required a ceasefire, demobilization of soldiers on all sides, and the creation of an interim national government composed of all the factions that had fought in the war.

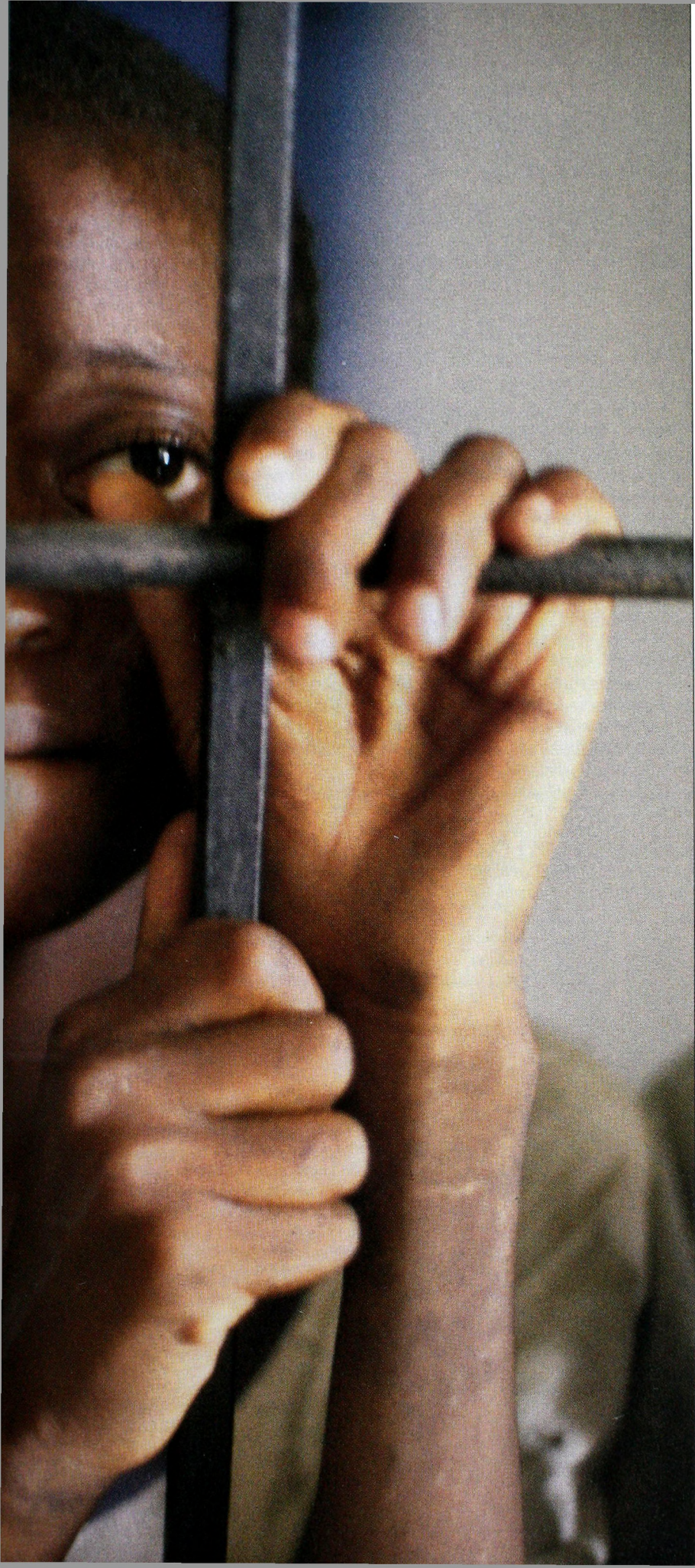
Only two of the accords have been implemented. An interim government, led by Wilton Sankawulo, a widely respected former university professor who belongs to no faction, was formed last fall, though it had no control over the countryside, few sources of tax revenue, and no functioning public services. A ceasefire was in place but collapsed in a new round of fighting in April.

**T**hreatening the peace is a lack of plans for August 1996 elections that the accords required. Worse, the militias have not been disarmed. Perhaps the most serious obstacle to peace are the 60,000 militia soldiers, a quarter of whom, according to estimates by UNICEF, are under the age of 15. Few of these children have known anything but war, brutality, and looting, and they have little or no education and fewer job skills. They now spend most of their time high on drugs.

Despite the threats to national unity,

DAVID BROWNE / WORLD VISION





however, peace seems to be taking hold in some areas. Refugees from the war are returning to reconstruct their homes and rebuild their farms.

Yet severe obstacles stand in the way of full recovery. Most returning families cannot carry enough food to sustain themselves on their way home. They arrive severely malnourished. Some, particularly small children and pregnant women, don't make it at all. In addition, much of the country's housing lies damaged or destroyed; virtually all buildings show scars from the conflict.

Other scars, far more deadly though less visible, disfigure the minds and hearts of people who carry vivid recollections of massacres and atrocities committed by the militias against the civilian population on a scale that parallels the horrors committed in Bosnia. Many humanitarian organizations, including World Vision, are setting up psychosocial therapy programs for the survivors to help them cope with their terrifying memories.

**I**n contrast to some countries coming out of war, Liberia has inherent advantages on which to rebuild. Unlike places such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Angola, where millions of land mines make large areas uninhabitable and farmland untillable, Liberia has virtually no mines. Liberia also is one of the most blessedly endowed countries in Africa, with vast unspoiled tropical rain forests, wild game roaming parts of its southern portion, and rich mineral resources and agricultural land waiting to be developed. The country abounds in rivers and lakes which are full of fish, as are the coastal waters—a bountiful source of protein for a hungry population. The fishing industry should be quickly re-established. All this can work for the country's growth if peace takes hold.

To safeguard Liberia's tenuous peace agreement, the international community must undertake three important efforts. First, West African and U.S. diplomats must press the various factions to disarm and prepare for eventual elections, though the proposed time of August is perhaps too optimistic. Second, the international community must help Liberia's refugees and internally displaced people return to their homes as soon as possible. Refugee camps are not a suitable place to bring up children or rebuild community life. Third,

*Imprisoned by chaos in a devastated land, this young inmate of a Liberian orphanage has known little beyond looting, brutality, and death during his country's long civil war.*



the country's agricultural system must be rehabilitated to give Liberians secure local sources of food. Normal life will not return to Liberia until people are back in their home villages working their farms and supporting themselves by their own labors.

As in most conflicts since the end of the Cold War, the common people are suffering most in Liberia. They are the ones who are malnourished, who die for lack of medical treatment, and are killed in violence.



KAREN HOMER / WORLD VISION

**Victoria "Ma" Young, 70, who in 1970 founded Fatima Cottage Orphanage in a suburb of Monrovia, Liberia, protected and provided for 300 children while warring factions devastated their nation.**

**R**elief and development organizations like World Vision cannot negotiate political agreements among the warlords who dominate Liberia. That must be done by governments and their diplomats. But humanitarian groups can help resettle uprooted people, rehabilitate hospitals, schools, and farms, and help restore the agricultural system. If these things happen, Liberians soon might see lasting peace return to their devastated country. ☉

*Andrew Natsios, former assistant administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, is vice president of World Vision's Relief and Development Division.*

“  
Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God.”

**W**ORLD VISION'S FOUNDER, Bob Pierce, wrote this on the flyleaf of his Bible more than 45 years ago. And today we remain compelled to respond to children's needs worldwide.

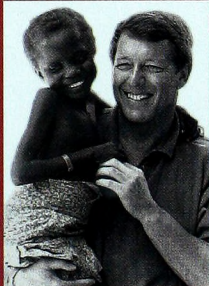
I have heard the cries of hungry and hurting children. In every child's face I sense God's call to action and compassion.

Through your gift of just \$20 a month, you can change a child's life forever with improved health, nutrition, education, and an opportunity to know God's love. Your gifts also will help your sponsored child's family and community become more self-reliant.

Currently, more than 500,000 people sponsor over 1 million children annually. **WILL YOU JOIN THEM TODAY?** To begin, call or return the coupon below. You will get information and the photo of a child who needs your help.

*Bob Seiple*

Bob Seiple  
President  
World Vision



**Yes!**

**1 800 448 6437**

I will sponsor a child for \$20/month. I prefer to sponsor a ☐ boy ☐ girl living in ☐ Africa ☐ Asia ☐ Latin America ☐ Middle East.  
☐ Enclosed is my first month gift of \$20.  
☐ Please bill me later.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY/STATE/ZIP.....

PHONE.....

CHILD SPONSORSHIP, P.O. BOX 70050, TACOMA, WA 98481-0050

**WORLD VISION**

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## NEXT TO THE LAST WORD

**B**y reading our cover story on Sudan, you have become part of World Vision's international effort to stop the world's oldest and longest war. World Vision offices and concerned supporters are contacting national elected officials and United Nations offices to call for a halt to this seemingly endless war. Other volunteer agencies have been invited to join us in raising public awareness. The media are being invited to visit Sudan and report on what is happening there. Your participation in this effort is critical.

For Christians, this is particularly meaningful; tens of thousands of those displaced, captured, wounded, or killed, are brothers and sisters in Christ. Please write or call for our policy paper, "Cry, the Divided Country." See page 7 for details.

And for more hands-on involvement, see Tom Getman's editorial on U.S. foreign aid, on pages 16 and 17. A letter, phone call, or e-mail to your elected representatives in Washington, D.C., could make the difference.

—Terry Madison

## WORLD VISION

Volume 40, Number 3

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# RECLAIMING THE WORD

**A**t a recent meeting of World Vision's international staff leadership, I began to notice evidence of a modern corporation working in an increasingly complex world. Our language gave it away.

In a series of discussions, we described the managerial impact of the Sigmond Curve, the technical intricacies of digital imaging, and the professional implementation of development theory.

If our words were strung on a continuum between literary bard and banker, we would be miles away from poetry. I felt "layered over" by intellectual language. After a day and a half of this, I began to yearn for greater balance.

There is a "heart" word to be reclaimed, the meaning of which can restore the equilibrium necessary in today's world. The word is reconciliation. Surprisingly, and tragically, the full meaning of this word rarely is realized.

According to secular think tanks specializing in reconciliation, the discipline is quite new and our methodologies are few. But the word has been with us for 2,000 years, as has the modeling of it through the life of Jesus. The need for reconciliation is as old as Adam and Eve and the irresistibility of forbidden fruit.

For Christians, the word still rolls blithely off our tongues, but its migration from heart to head seems to have already taken place, and the power and passion of the word have been lost.

We need to remember that this so-called "soft" discipline of reconciliation compelled Christ to endure the agony of Gethsemane and the pain and humiliation of Calvary. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God became human and met us where we were! The action was a life, death, resurrection, and coming again—the centerpiece of our gospel. Reconciliation is indeed the heart of our gospel and why we properly can call it "good news."

The motive for reconciliation is love. "God so loved the world that he gave!" Incomprehensible love, freely given, is the ultimate act of grace. Reconciliation also is inseparable from love, and, like the prodigal son, we are ultimately driven back to its embrace for its meaning, its comfort, and the hope contained there.

Paul Tillich writes, "Accept the fact that you're accepted." The Apostle Paul would agree, "All things are from God, who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself."

But there's more. We then must accept the demands of the gospel, the horizontal as well as the vertical planks of Christ's cross. The great commandment leads us to the second commandment: to love our neighbor. If the prodigal son is a parable of the divine act of vertical reconciliation, then the tale of

the good samaritan is a story of reconciliation's horizontal manifestation.

To eschew the hard work of the gospel is to inoculate the world against that gospel. It is not surprising that the tragedy of Cain and Abel followed Adam and Eve's broken relationship with God. To state this more positively, our incarnational efforts to imitate Christ can point people to the one true Reconciler.

St. Francis said it best, "Preach the gospel everywhere you go. Use words if necessary."

This is never an easy exercise. Truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness—and yes, especially forgetting—are difficult but necessary prerequisites to complete reconciliation. The principals are tough! But if the Christ of Calvary and the God of history are going to be made known in the difficult corners of our world—such as our homes, communities, and racial and denominational groups, and the Bosnias and Rwandas of our time—we will need to embrace the principles and methodology of reconciliation with a new sense of passion and urgency.

Reconciliation is the heart of our gospel. We need to show the world where our heart is! We need to reclaim this vital and world-changing word in our hearts and lives. 🌐

*There is a "heart" word to be reclaimed, the meaning of which can restore the equilibrium necessary in today's world.*

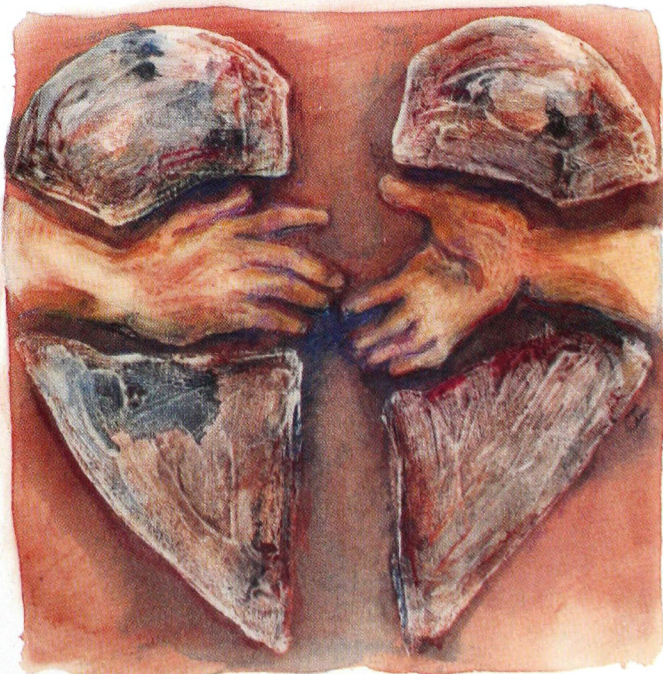


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## CONTENTS

SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR:  
Silent Cries  
to a Deaf World **2**

World Vision News **8**

JEFF COMMENT:  
Mining Diamonds  
on City Streets **10**

PHOTO:  
A Father's Dream **14**

EDITORIAL:  
U.S. Foreign Aid **16**  
Samaritan Sampler **18**

LIBERIA:  
A Precarious Peace **20**

FROM THE PRESIDENT:  
Reclaiming the Word **23**

## "I recently made a donation to World Vision from my parents' estate that will nourish the physical and spiritual needs of the world's poor."

Using estate planning techniques, Miss Kay's father, D. Reginald "Buster" Kay and her step mother Evelyn Kepple Kay created a legacy of love to nourish the physical and spiritual needs of the world's poor. Such techniques also offer many financial benefits to help you provide for the future.



Lois Kay  
Pasadena,  
California

To familiarize you with the advantages of estate planning, World Vision has a valuable, free estate planning kit available. It includes a guide on selecting financial advisors, a financial inventory form and a November, 1995, reprint from *Money* magazine on estate planning.

Miss Kay states, "*Encouraging you to make a gift and join me as a Host of Hope member is one of my ways of witnessing for the Lord.*"



**WORLD VISION**  
**1-800-426-5753**

Please complete and mail to World Vision  
Gift Planning Department  
P.O. Box 70084  
Tacoma, Washington 98481-0084

**I'd like a copy of the free estate planning kit and more information on how I can create a legacy for God's children through World Vision.**

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Area) Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(Area) Business Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

FWV696