

SPECIAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



WORLD VISION®

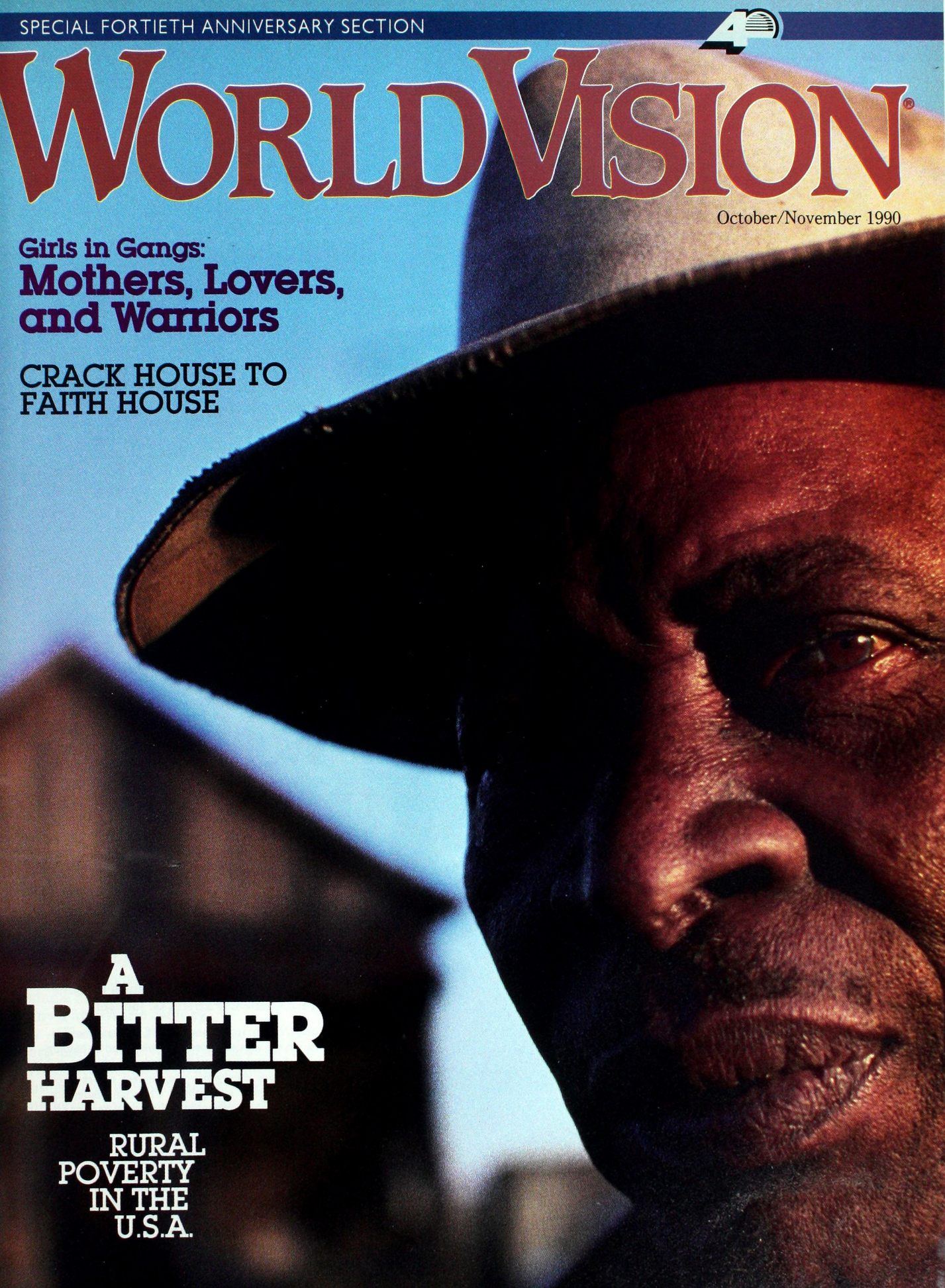
October/November 1990

Girls in Gangs:
**Mothers, Lovers,
and Warriors**

**CRACK HOUSE TO
FAITH HOUSE**

**A
BITTER
HARVEST**

**RURAL
POVERTY
IN THE
U.S.A.**



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Growing old enough to have a baby and collect welfare is a rite of passage on the Mississippi Delta. So is growing old enough to leave. The Delta's future lies with the talented, aggressive leaders emerging in nearly every community—and they know what they're up against.

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A look at gang life through the eyes of Sylvia and Darlene, two Los Angeles "homegirls" who have seen it all—and finally found Someone worthy of their life-or-death loyalty.

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Living Between Two Anniversaries

"Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday." Robert Seiple reflects on the God of anniversaries.

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Facts and figures would be one way to tell it. But World Vision is about people, not facts and figures. To represent the six main types of work World Vision does, seven individuals from around the world tell the story ... in their own words.

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A ragged band of refugee believers meets before dawn on a frigid winter day in wartime Korea. They take comfort in singing and Scripture. Then, unbelievably, they take an offering. (Excerpted from the recently released book *One Life at a Time*, by Robert Seiple.)

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Forty years ago World Vision was birthed among the horror and sorrow of the Korean War. Evangelist Bob Pierce's vision to help the innocent victims, tens of thousands of children, quickly grew beyond Korea, but never beyond the needs of children.

Since then, led by well known Christian statesmen Stan Mooneyham, Ted Engstrom, Tom Houston, Graeme Irvine and Robert Seiple, World Vision in the U.S. and abroad has invested 40 years putting faith to work in an increasingly diverse and needy world. Today, World Vision ministers in more than 5100 projects in 89 countries.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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

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North America's vast rural lands stretch on like a great yawning giant. For more than 400 years the sometimes gentle, sometimes savage U.S. backlands lured people searching for the freedom to move and live as they chose. Thriving farms and small towns were built by independent people determined to stand on their own.

But today, for almost 20 percent of the people who live there, the rural United States is a land of no exits, a prison without bars. A shocking 9.7 million Americans live in pockets of poverty not unlike the Third World.

Laredo, Texas. Twenty-five million gallons of raw sewage are pumped daily into the Rio Grande River. People aren't allowed to swim in that water, but they hoist it out by bucketfuls and drink it, bathe in it, and wash their clothes in it. It is the only water available to them.

In the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee, some families live in conditions that were marginal a century ago, with no electricity, running water, or indoor plumbing. In some areas, more than half of the high school students drop out.

In the 320 poorest counties in the United States, child mortality rates are 45 percent higher than the national average. That means 20 children out of 1,000 do not survive their first few years, a child survival rate comparable to Panama's. Of those children who survive, 25 percent live below the U.S. government's official poverty line of \$12,000 per year for a family of four.

While the numbers of poverty glide and twist in gross abstraction, the places of poverty sound picturesque, even beautiful. Wenatchee. Cameron Park. Elaine. Gilt Edge. Sugar Ditch. But names cannot hide the squalor.

From the Pacific Northwest to the Heartland, snaking through the Bible Belt and pushing north to New England, the rural poor defy regional borders and color barriers. In the Appalachias, the faces of poverty are white; in Mississippi, the majority are black; in North Dakota they are American Indian; on the Tex-Mex border they are Hispanic. Yet all are victims of circumstance and self-delusion, living and dying in rural slums as void of hope as any Third-World country.

The irony is that poverty rates in urban areas are actually declining, according to a recent *Newsweek* article. Private donations pour into inner-city projects because they are literally underfoot—more noticed, more exposed by the media, more public.

Relief offices and job training programs do not set up shop in out-of-the-way places. Indus-

tries relying on cheap labor move to more easily exploited foreign countries. Government farm subsidies are almost useless, since only 7 percent of the indigent live on farms. The rest languish in small towns across the country.

Like the urban poor, rural families are stuck in a system that withholds AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), Medicaid, and other benefits from two-parent households and people earning minimum wage—in effect penalizing couples who stay together and work full-time at menial jobs. And *unlike* the urban poor, rural families tend to stay together despite the loss of those benefits.

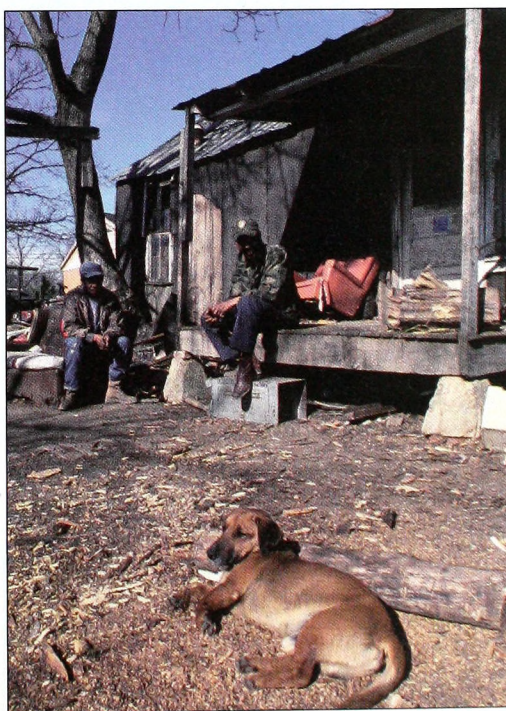
Perhaps the most poignant sign of rural America's growing poverty, however, is that the homeless are now woven into the fabric of life at the periphery of the farm. Though officials refuse to recognize them as homeless in national statistics, 25,000 Ohioans have no indoor plumbing; in the Appalachias, thousands live on dirt floors; and along the Tex-Mex border, people live in cardboard homes.

Some government aid projects are starting up. There are a few special health programs geared to Hispanic day laborers in Texas. Private charities, such as Habitat for Humanity and World Vision, are building homes and teaching job skills and literacy in places like Coahoma, Miss., and patches of the Appalachias.

But from the redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters, thousands are stuck with nothing in the land of plenty. □ *Anna Waterhouse*

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA **THE RURAL POOR**

**Close to
10 million
Americans
live in rural
pockets of
poverty.**



JON WARREN



Freddie Lee's one-room shack in Coahoma has no indoor plumbing, but he says it's better than his old one.

For the poor on the Mississippi Delta,
life is a mixture of hope and regret,
a place where dreams rise only
as high as government subsidies.

Mississippi has always been a bewitched and tragic ground, yet it's also a land of heroism and nobility; a place which has honored those of us of all our races who possess the courage and the imagination of the resources given to us on this haunted terrain.

—Willie Morris,

Mississippi writer

It is midday on the Mississippi Delta when Annie Freeman finally sits down to rest. Her three grandchildren play in the dirt yard that circles her small, sparsely furnished farmhouse. Her 23-year-old son, Anthony, lies speechless and paralyzed in a back bedroom, viewing the world from a window overlooking a cotton field. Annie pushes back her hair, and in a quiet, tentative voice talks about her life.

Annie was born on a Delta plantation, the daughter of a poor sharecropping family. That same year, a white man killed her father, leaving Annie's mother without means to feed her family. She gave Annie to a neighbor.

Annie began picking cotton as soon as she could walk. Between

crops, she attended a substandard school for black children and dreamed of becoming a nurse. Her dream died when, at 14, she dropped out of school because of her family's poverty.

Shortly afterwards, Annie had a baby and married a talented mechanic and farm worker. But over the next several years he started drinking up the family's meager income. Annie had to work double shifts in a local factory. The



THE DELTA'S BITTER HARVEST

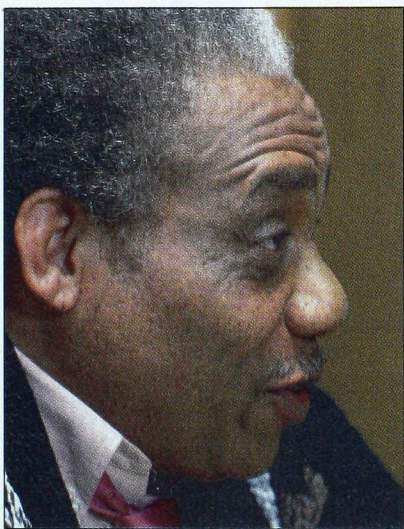
TEXT BY BARBARA THOMPSON
PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

low wages were barely enough to feed her six children and pay rent on a tumble-down shotgun house.

In the early 1980s, Annie's husband and a daughter, the family's first college student, died after long illnesses. Then her 16-year-old son, Anthony, collapsed during a basketball game and was left permanently paralyzed and speechless. Annie's life was a blur of hospital and graveside visits.

Today, at age 45 and after more than 40 years of hard work, Annie still lives in poverty on the Delta. She is a shy, gentle woman, and she speaks of the past without bitterness. "Life is okay," she says. "But there's just so much you have to go through."

Annie carefully budgets a government check to support her household of eight, and she hopes to save enough money to fix her leaking roof. She spends her days babysitting grandchildren and nursing her bedridden son, turning him every two hours and feeding him through a tracheal tube.



Rev. Carl Brown

"They wanted me to put him in an institution," Annie says. "But I wanted him home with us."

Annie's dreams for the future are tied to her children and grandchildren. An encyclopedia dominates her living room, and she strongly encourages each child to go to college. "I would like them to see life," she says. "But not like I saw it."

The mix of hope and regret with which Annie Freeman faces the future is echoed countless times among the rural poor of the Mississippi Delta. Extending from Memphis, Tenn., to Vicksburg, Miss., the Delta's flat, fertile farmland is home to some of the nation's poorest citizens. In many com-

The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers are moving out.

munities, two of every five adults are illiterate, and infant mortality rates are higher than in some Third World countries.

Many of the Delta's problems are rooted in the dark currents of its not-so-distant past. To ensure a continuous supply of cheap labor for the region's cotton economy, wealthy planters discouraged industry from locating in the region. Since education was unimportant for field work, schools for black children were few and underfunded.

By the 1960s, the Delta's traditional economy had collapsed. One mechanical cotton picker could do the work of 250 field hands, and thousands of plantation workers were left homeless, uneducated, and unemployed. Working-age men fled the state, leaving behind desperately poor communities of single mothers, children, and the elderly.

Today most young adult men still flee the Delta. Those who stay behind echo the despair of Elvis Martin, a 32-year-old unemployed laborer in Quitman County. Dressed in worn blue jeans, Martin waits to meet with a social worker in a cramped office in downtown Marks. He has been unemployed for four months and does not qualify for government assistance.

"If I could see better, I'd get out of here," he says in a flat, hopeless voice. "But you have to have something to start on, something going for yourself just to get up and leave." Before losing his last job, Martin worked three years for the same company. After two raises, he earned \$3.75 an hour—part-time.

Unemployment and underemploy-

Gloria Jean Bell
and Robert Clark
in her room along
Sugar Ditch.





ment remain the region's greatest economic problem. The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers who exploited the South's cheap labor are moving to the Third World, where wages are lower yet. The region's uneducated labor pool is now a development nightmare.

"There are few industries moving anywhere in the United States," says Vaughn Grisham, professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi. "Those that do move are looking for at least basic literacy."

Cotton Row, in the small, rural

town of Marks, is a narrow, unpaved road where Martin Luther King once marched and wept. Its edges are lined with tar-paper shacks, scrap metal, abandoned cars, and polluted ditches.

It is the middle of a cold Delta winter. Many of the homes on Cotton Row appear abandoned. Roofs sag and front porches sink to the ground. Windows are broken or boarded up.

In one house, a group of teenagers drift in and out of the living room to keep warm and catch the latest neighborhood news. Rita, a junior in high

school, bottlefeeds her week-old baby with an air of maternal contentment. Her boyfriend, an articulate high school senior, talks of heading north after graduation to find a job. Josephine, an 18-year-old junior, nods her approval.

"Young people today can do a lot with their lives," Josephine says. Then she glances at her grandmother, who spent 30 years as a sharecropper, and reconsiders. "Sometimes I think I can make something of myself," she says wistfully. "But then I think, I can't do it. I don't have what it takes."

For many teenagers on the Delta, dreams rise only as high as govern-

ment subsidies. Federal money (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Social Security, disability, etc.) accounts for 70 percent of income in many communities, and there are few role models of economic self-sufficiency. Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.

With few career opportunities or recreational outlets, alarming numbers of Delta children and teenagers turn to alcohol and illegal drugs.

"Growing up in the Delta is like being out in the middle of a river without a boat," says Rev. Carl Brown, a Baptist minister in Marks. "Kids will use any-

thing they can to get to shore." Brown estimates that 80 percent of the Delta's teenagers use drugs. Crack can be purchased even in the smallest towns.

The Delta's extreme poverty has introduced a new element in communities traditionally divided by race. "We have changed segregation from color to money," says Bobbie Walker, the mayor of Jonestown. "Twenty years ago a white person wouldn't even see me. Now, if I'm an upper class black, they will talk to me. But if I'm a poor white person, they will look the other way."

Sara Rumbaugh of Quitman

County was disabled with a crippling back injury in an automobile accident. She has yet to qualify for disability payments, and she has difficulty making ends meet.

"If you're a poor white person like me, most people don't want to help you," Rumbaugh says. She receives food from Rev. Brown's church and has found an advocate in the county's black director of social services.

The future of the Delta's rural poor—white and black—lies with the many talented, aggressive leaders who are emerging in almost every community. Mayor W.J. Jones of Coahoma (pop. 350) has spearheaded a revolutionary housing program that is dramatically improving the town's living conditions. In Tunica, disabled veteran Joe Hawkins struggles to sustain the county's first black-owned and -operated grocery store. Despite opposition, the store employs four people and has been operating for two years.

In Quitman County, the second-poorest county in Mississippi, Rev. Carl Brown leads the Valley Queen Baptist Church in ministering to the rural poor. Despite the church's own

Peggy Handy always dreamed of raising her nine children in a home of their own. For years, in Coahoma, Miss., she paid \$40 a month for a shack with only one habitable room. She had no indoor plumbing, the roof was falling in, and despite her efforts to patch the walls, the shack was never warm in winter.

Today Peggy owns a new, well-insulated home with four bedrooms and an indoor bathroom. "Everything I asked for, God has given me," she says. Peggy pays a mortgage of \$100 a month, including insurance and maintenance.

"The biggest change is in the children," she says. "They are so active now—and proud to come home."

Peggy's impossible dream, and those of many other Coahoma residents, took solid form when their mayor, W.J. Jones, joined World Vision and Habitat for Humanity in a plan to completely eliminate poverty housing within the town limits.

The interest-free, no-profit houses are built mostly by volunteers. Future owners contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity," and house payments are recycled to build new homes.

Coahoma's housing problems are as severe as anywhere in the United States. Eighty percent of the homes are substandard, and Mayor Jones estimates that every year as many as 10 houses are lost to fire or collapse. Peggy Handy's old house burned, with all her



Peggy Handy and her children in front of their new home.

possessions, in a four-home fire.

Average family income in Coahoma is \$4,000-\$5,000, and in winter months unemployment runs as high as 80 percent. Often several families are forced to live in one small house.

Today nine new houses have been occupied, six are under construction, and over 50 more are planned. Coahoma's new homes have substantially affected the town's residents.

"Even if we never built another house, our children are being transformed," says Mayor Jones, a middle-school principal. He remembers when Michael Handy moved into his new home. "Until then, Michael was a quiet, withdrawn little boy. The day his family moved, he ran into my office at school, saying 'You've got to come and see my house!'"

Coahoma's housing project is just a beginning. World Vision is helping the town develop a seedling business and a literacy program. The town is also drawing plans for a sewage system, a job training program, the development of small businesses, and girls' and boys' clubs. It's a big dream for a small town, but dreams come true in Coahoma. □ *Barbara Thompson*

PROUD TO COME HOME

Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.



poverty, it serves 40 hot meals a day and runs a shelter for the homeless. It also distributes relief supplies from churches as far away as California.

"In the past, religion for black folks was a matter of simple revival," Brown says. "Now we take a holistic approach. We say to our people, 'Come with us, and we will do you good.'"

In her small, three-room house, 85-year-old Pearl Scurlock sits in her armchair like a queen on a throne. Dressed in a bright plaid skirt, a flowered blouse, and a red headband, she holds a letter she wrote to government officials in Washington, D.C., about cuts in Social Security payments. "We worked hard and paid into the system; now they want us to starve to death," she reads. "Someone needs to come down here to Quitman County and see about us elderly people."

Pearl, who attends Rev. Brown's church, is a colorful community activist who is fast becoming a county legend. She began cooking and cleaning on a cotton plantation "when I had to stand on a block to reach the counter," and was forced to drop out of school in the third grade.

After 60 years of working six and seven days a week, Pearl retired with crippling arthritis. "When I went to collect my Social Security, I had a terrible shock," she remembers. "My employers withheld it from my paycheck, but they never paid the government."

Like many other elderly people on the Delta, Pearl barely gets by on \$360 a month from SSI, government funds provided for those without Social Security. Despite her crushing poverty and poor health, she is an energetic advocate for the elderly and the poor. She also helps with her church's food distribution program, organizes

Pearl Scurlock. "If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," says Rev. Carl Brown.



voter transportation, and makes phone calls for absentee-ballot drives.

"If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," Rev. Brown says.

Activists like Brown know that substantial change will not come soon to the Delta. Talented, ambitious young people still flee as soon as they are able, and the average worker earned less in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Schools remain almost completely segregated. Although blacks have won significant political victories, they still lack economic power.

The tension between the black community and the traditional white power structure simmers just beneath the surface of almost every conversation. Rev. Brown has been the target of numerous death threats, and for a time was forced to travel with bodyguards.

"You struggle all your life until you finally see the light at the end of the tunnel," says one black leader, who started a community-owned business.

"Then you realize it might be a bomb."

Despite intimidation and fear of reprisals, black and white leaders in the Delta are beginning to work together. "The whole of Mississippi is in a helpless situation," Rev. Brown says. "Young white people are sensing that, even if our children don't go to school together, we can't allow the Delta to continue in its present direction." Brown's emphasis on serving the poor in both white and black communities has won over some of his most vocal white opponents.

"There are deep scars for both whites and blacks," says Mayor Jones of Coahoma. "But the time for building hate walls is over. All people have wonderful qualities and all people have weaknesses. We need to pool our strengths and start working together. Otherwise we are going to lose the Delta and our country too." □

Barbara Thompson is a free-lance writer in Atlanta, Ga.



"If you're poor and white, most people don't want to help you," says Sara Rumbaugh, shown here with her son Thomas at the Social Services office.

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

FROM CRACK HOUSE TO FAITH HOUSE

BY MARILYN GARDNER

Faith Temple

When crack dealers and prostitutes took over a vacant house behind Faith Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla., members faced a serious problem: what to do with the condemned church-owned residence, which vandals, drug addicts, and termites had destroyed.

A wrecking company would cost more than the dwindling congregation could afford. Calling in the fire department to burn it down, which the city had done to other crack houses, seemed too dangerous in this case.

The church's new minister, Rev. Michael Lewis, encouraged members to search for a positive solution. "We began to pray to find a way we could get involved in the war on drugs," says Lewis. The congregation decided to mortgage the church for \$25,000, then turn the house into a foster-care placement center for babies exposed to drugs.

One year later, dozens of babies affected by cocaine have been placed in foster homes out of this three-story white building, where playpens compete for space with desks and filing cabinets.

"The Bible clearly states that the church is supposed to take care of widows and orphans," Lewis says. "Knowing that we're fulfilling that obligation is very rewarding."

"We have black babies, white babies, brown babies," says coordinator Curtis Marshall. "Our primary goal is to get the natural moms back with the children. Once we locate them, if they're on drugs, we want to give them counseling and treatment." Until then, babies are placed with licensed foster mothers.

One of the program's first foster mothers, Naneita Redrick, cares for a 12-month-old girl who tested positive for heroin at birth, and a 13-month-old girl and her 3-year-old brother, who both tested positive for cocaine.

"You have to use a lot more love and be very patient with these babies," Redrick says. "They have periods when they're irritable and extremely

nervous." Yet already she sees progress. "In the beginning, at the least little noise, they would tremble. Now it doesn't seem to bother them."

Faith House's director of counseling, Robert James, says, "I've seen some complete turn-arounds where the cocaine babies are responding marvelously."

The babies' biological mothers have progressed far less quickly. Their ages range from 19 to 31, and many do not know who their child's father is. "We're finding the natural mothers are not as concerned about their babies as I thought they would be," Lewis says.

Tracy Jordan, a supervisor at the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, says, "On some level, the mothers probably all do want their babies, but just are not able to follow through." Even if they can get through a drug rehabilitation program, they have to return to their housing project, where dealers will often give drugs out free at first to hook people. They'll even leave the drugs in mailboxes and under doors, Jordan says.

Even so, Jordan says, one mother "has licked drugs and alcohol and is almost ready to get her child back." Though Jordan emphasizes that Faith House has not been operating long enough to know how successful it will be in reuniting families, she calls it a step in the right direction.

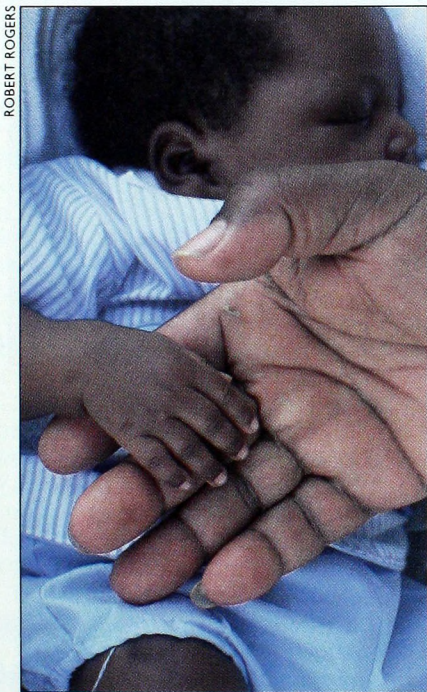
What began as the vision of one minister and one church has expanded into a cooperative effort. Last year, hearing that Faith House was running out of money, members of Bayshore Baptist Church donated materials and labor. At Christmas they made "pamper baskets" for the foster mothers, filling them with lotions and bubble bath. And recently 25 members provided an evening out for the foster mothers, caring for their children for five hours.

Across Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Faith House has been a model for a Roman Catholic foster-care program for drug-addicted babies, scheduled to start later this year.

Faith House has also helped to renew the spirit of Faith Temple. "We see the excitement in members' eyes when they get involved," says Lewis, noting that membership has risen from 40 to 300 since Faith House was established.

"No longer can we expect the world to walk through our front doors on Sunday morning," he adds. "The church needs to become very active in taking part in the healing of the total person." □

Excerpted by permission from The Christian Science Monitor, where Marilyn Gardner is a staff writer.



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Tampa, FL 33602.



LIVING BETWEEN TWO ANNIVERSARIES

BY ROBERT
A. SEIPLE,
PRESIDENT

The sign was all too telling. "Fireworks, one-half off." For two weeks I had watched the Skokomish Indians of western Washington competitively market their wares, in this case fireworks, in anticipation of the Fourth of July celebration. Fireworks are a traditional part of this anniversary, and through one of those old laws that allows for anomalies in the present, the Indians were able to sell them.

But the anniversary had come and gone. This was now the fifth of July. The symbol of the anniversary had its value reduced. You could now buy firecrackers at half price. It would be another year before they commanded a higher value. Like the half-price sales of wrapping paper the day after Christmas, our culture had unceremoniously told us that the anniversary was over and it was time to be thinking about other things.

I think we and our culture have gotten it wrong with respect to anniversaries. Certainly independence and liberty are not a one-day happening, punctuated by firecrackers that only have momentary value. As we watch liberty and independence being fought over and struggled with around the world, there is more than a suggestion that *our* freedom ought to be cause for perpetual celebration. And, if it is possible today to properly unwrap the gift of the Christ child, the event that caused the angels to sing should have us exchanging the gift of God's love every day of the year.

Something has gone wrong with anniversaries. It never used to be this way. The Israelites

had an anniversary that they celebrated every time they opened their mouth—their exodus from Egypt. They couldn't kick off an event, begin a sermon, commemorate a feast day without recalling the phrase, "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Both God and his people received a special identity on that day. It was written into the preamble to their constitution. It was part of their birthright, their passport. It linked their past with their present and gave them hope and expectation for the future.

The anniversary of the exodus stood for freedom and justice under a sovereign God. It allowed for the people of Israel to be led back to the land of promise by a God who always keeps his promises. A people were to be whole and the God of the exodus was to be made known to the nations of the world through this one nation, called out, set apart, set free to be all that God intended it to be. "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out ..." All of the hopes and dreams, as well as the expectations and obligations, for the nation of Israel flow from this anniversary.

When the Israelites finally inhabited the promised land, they built the most magnificent temple in the world for the symbols of this God. No half-price sales here. David and Solomon saw to it: the God who penetrated history through the



nation Israel would be remembered.

And God would penetrate history again, for the good and love of humankind. "The Word was made flesh," an incomprehensible gift, the most remarkable anniversary, one that could never be devalued by God. Indeed, the price that was paid for this anniversary was ultimately a life that was freely sacrificed on a cross.

Now the blessed hope of our day is that there is one more anniversary to come. The God that made himself known to Israel, the One who finally sent his Son, will one day come again. In anticipation of this anniversary, Paul instructs Titus "to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." In a sense, then, we are living between two anniversaries, our coming to the Christ of Christmas and Christ reappearing sometime in the future. Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday with the kingdom of our coming Lord. The two most significant events of history have been and are being directed at those who would seek to embrace the God of anniversaries. No half-price sales here.

In the midst of these momentous events, World Vision is having an anniversary. We are 40 years old. In and of itself, the date is not significant. As we are led back to our roots, however, and as we anticipate our future, a reflection is both legitimate and necessary. We were founded in the heart of an evangelist. May we never forget that. May we always hold to the core reason for our existence—to point people in the direction of Jesus Christ. As we live our lives in the present, may we see the world through the eyes of Jesus. May we continue to have our hearts broken by the things that break the heart of a holy God. And as we look to a challenging future, may our words and our deeds truly represent the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

The call upon each one of us from the beginning needs to be matched today with an obedient heart. The vision of founding fathers needs to be sustained today through the implementation of accountability and integrity. The dreams of those early days need to be translated into reality, a reality that is better than the past and gives us legitimate hope for future dreams. If we can do all that, this will be an anniversary worth remembering, one step along the way of God's plan for the ages, anticipating the reunion yet to come. □

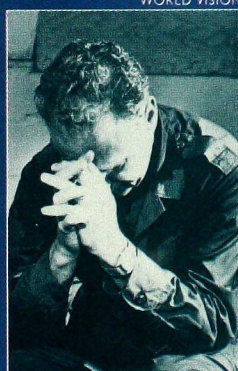
**Our lives
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ing of the
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In *their own words*

Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder, used to pray out loud in his sleep, the legend goes. It was not uncommon for his traveling companions to be wakened in the middle of the night by mutterings in the dark from the bed across the room. Prayers. They heard prayers from a man so driven by compassion for those in need that his petitions on their behalf never ceased, even in sleep.

Forty years later, the answers to those prayers still live in the hearts of thousands of people worldwide. These people are child sponsors, financial donors, countertop-donation volunteers, and prayer partners. They are emergency relief workers, development experts, doctors, nutritionists, and administrators. They are long-range planners, fund-raisers, computer experts,



Dr. Bob Pierce

mechanics, and well-diggers. With Christ's compassion, they reach out to the poor, the result of a vision that began in an evangelist's heart more than four decades ago.

Bob Pierce's "world vision" first took form with Korean War orphans. It grew into an official organization in 1950, and gradually developed into a ministry with six channels of outreach: child sponsorship, evangelism, strengthening Christian leadership, emergency relief, long-range development, and challenging people of plenty to reach out to the poor.

Facts, figures, and lists would be one way to show the scope of World Vision's outreach during its first 40 years. But the ministry is not about numbers and cold facts, it is about people. World Vision's ministry is about changed lives, transformed men and women, one at a time.

On the next few pages, a few of those people will tell you their stories in their own words.

SPECIAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



World Vision links sponsors with nearly a million needy children worldwide. Benefits to sponsored children and their families include education, health care, and community development.

Sandra Leticia Canel

Guatemala

Seamstress, age 18

BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Behind a cinder-block wall in Guatemala City, Sandra Leticia Canel climbs a splintery staircase every weekday morning at 7:30 and sits behind a sewing machine until 4:30. In the evenings she goes to school.

Sandra started sewing when she was 8. When she finishes secondary school, she plans to study accounting.

The happiest moment of my life was when I became sponsored and started attending the Carolingia Day Care Center. I love that place. I started going there when I was about 8 years old. Before then, I had no real

friends. I would just go to school in the morning and come home in the afternoon. But at the day care center I made friends quickly. It was the relationships I built, both with the other children and with my sponsor, that were most important to me.

I love math. Numbers are so important in every aspect of life. That's why I want to be an accountant. I will continue to sew while I am in school, but after I graduate, I want to be an excellent accountant, assisting people in a big factory or business.

If anyone is thinking about sponsoring a child, I would say yes, please do it. It's important for children to know that somebody is remembering them, that somebody who lives far away is thinking of them fondly, and considering their needs. It made such a difference in my life.

Short of death, Chang Tae Ho's life couldn't have gotten much worse than when his mother abandoned him under a bridge. He was a 3-year-old polio victim.

A Catholic priest rescued him and took him to an orphanage. For the next eight years, Chang suffered jeering and teasing because of his lifeless legs.

When he moved to the Song Bo Won Home for Handicapped Children, supported by World Vision sponsors, it turned his life around.

Life in the orphanage was hard. The other children made fun of me because I couldn't walk. I cried every night. When I heard about the Song Bo Won Home, I applied for a place there and was accepted.

Almost immediately after I arrived, things got much better. Nobody teased me for my handicap.

Chang Tae Ho

Korea

Watch repairman, age 29

For the first time in my life, I felt loved. I felt that I really could be something. I loved Mrs. Chea, the director. She was like the mother I never had.

I was very curious about the way watches and clocks worked. I started a five-year course in watch repair and worked hard at it. Soon I was the top student.

When I left the school, I put that training to use. I now have my own clock retail and repair shop.

Through my sponsor and Mrs. Chea, I learned that nothing is impossible. I know they prayed for me, too. They will always be welcome in my shop!



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



In 1989 World Vision assisted 1.3 million disaster victims, providing relief such as medical treatment, food, and shelter.

Tadelech Tadiesse

*Ethiopia
Farmer, age 51*

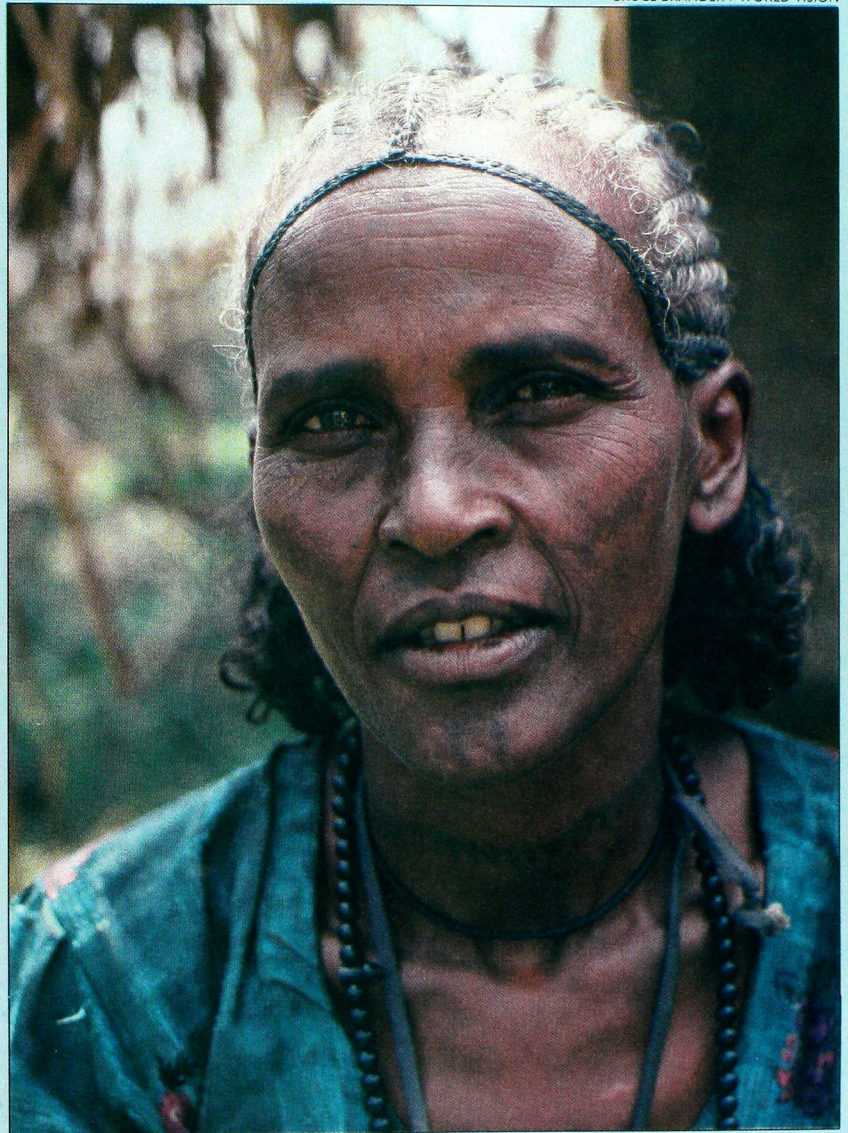
In 1984, when drought and famine gripped Ethiopia and killed almost a million people, Tadelech Tadiesse lived in the Ansokia Valley, one of the country's hardest hit areas. The 31-mile-long valley was a barren dust bowl. At the height of the famine, Tadelech Tadiesse and what was left of her family sought help at a World Vision relief camp.

Today life has dramatically improved, both for Tadiesse and for the Ansokia Valley. Emergency assistance has evolved into long-term development. Wells have been dug, trees and gardens planted, and farmers have received tools, seeds, and fertilizers. The valley is green and full of life.

Today, in addition to farming, Tadiesse is a caretaker for 55 sponsored children.

In 1984, everyone was just lying on the ground waiting for food. They didn't even have the strength to brush flies away. Then World Vision came, and helped to bury our dead. Those who died, even their bones will not forget what World Vision has done.

Now you can see where the children's bellies are flat because the drinking water is free from parasites. The children are clean. They wash their hands, eyes, and faces.



I'll care for these children before I do anything else. The benefit to the community is so great. The children are our future life. So I will always put this first, then look after my farmland.

BRUCE BRANDER / WORLD VISION

Development work enables a community to address its long-term needs, such as a safe water supply, health care, hygiene, literacy, and income generation. Nearly 1.9 million people benefited from community development work in 1989.

Benjamin Grivalba

Guatemala
Farmer, age 49

A wide, gummy grin spreads across Benjamin Grivalba's craggy face. He squats proudly in his thriving onion field in Aldea Loma Larga, a tiny Guatemalan village not far from Honduras. With a loan from World Vision last year, Grivalba bought fertilizer and a water pump for his field. That assistance helped him more than double his crop yield this year.

Half his crop went into the community's cooperative fund; he sold the other half at the market. With the profits, he repaid the loan and set aside a little extra for the next crop.

The plot of land I'm using to grow onions used to be full of rocks and old roots. Erosion had made the land poor and our crops weren't good. We needed fertilizer and better irrigation. With my loan, I was able to reclaim my section of land.

I am glad for the help we're getting with our land. But I am also grateful for the educational help. Before World Vision came here, not many people could go to school through the sixth grade. I have only a second-grade education. But now we have people who are even going on to secondary school.

I was born here. My wife, Salvadora, and I will probably live here for the rest of our lives. Life is still hard, but now we see good results from our work. We see our children learning. It is better now.



BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Pastors' conferences have offered training and encouragement to over 100,000 ministers and church leaders serving in difficult circumstances in more than 50 countries.

SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



Han Kyung Chik

Korea
Pastor, age 90

If it hadn't been for Han Kyung Chik's unexpected meeting with Bob Pierce on the streets of Pusan, Korea, in 1950, World Vision pastors' conferences might never have started.

Pastor Chik first met Pierce in the spring of 1950 when the young evangelist preached in Chik's church. The church's response was so enthusiastic that Pierce and Chik decided to hold a one-week evangelistic rally in a nearby park. But more than 5,000 people crowded under the canvas tarps each night, and the one-week crusade turned into three.

When war broke out in Korea, many members of Dr. Chik's church fled to Pusan, where Chik and Bob Pierce unexpectedly met again.

In Pusan, Dr. Pierce kept asking me, "What can I do?" He was genuinely concerned with the state of the church and the pastors.

I told him pastors had lost everything—their churches, their congregations, everything. I suggested we get them together for a meeting to encourage them, let them share their burdens with other pastors, and let them know they are not alone. Dr. Pierce said, "Let's do that." So we started planning the first World Vision pastors' conference.

For one week, Dr. Pierce preached, taught, encouraged, and admonished those pastors from morning until evening. I interpreted for him. He had a tremendous amount of stamina!

He gave us strength to face the uncertainty of the future, which at that time looked very bleak. Bob was a man of faith. When he was with us, he forgot about everything else. He gave us his whole heart.

World Vision joins local churches and partner agencies all over the world in offering personal witness, Bibles, and Christian teaching.

Nenita Ramos

*Philippines
Teacher, age 28*

Nenita Ramos grew up in a village in the highlands of Luzon Island, Philippines. She is a member of the Aeta tribe, one of the Philippines' historically pushed-around peoples.

Nenita grew up in a Christian home, where she fell in love with the Word of God. At a Bible study in World Vision's Pamitambayan Childcare Project she decided to become a missionary pastor, taking the gospel to her people.

A World Vision scholarship enabled Ramos to earn a degree in Christian education. Today she is helping establish a new church in a remote village.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have dreamed of climbing high into the mountains and preaching the gospel to others in my tribe. I used to practice preaching in my room.

As I got older, I realized that my people could not read and write, and therefore could not study the Bible. So I decided to become a teacher. I would teach my people to read and write. Then, when they needed something to read, I would give them a Bible!

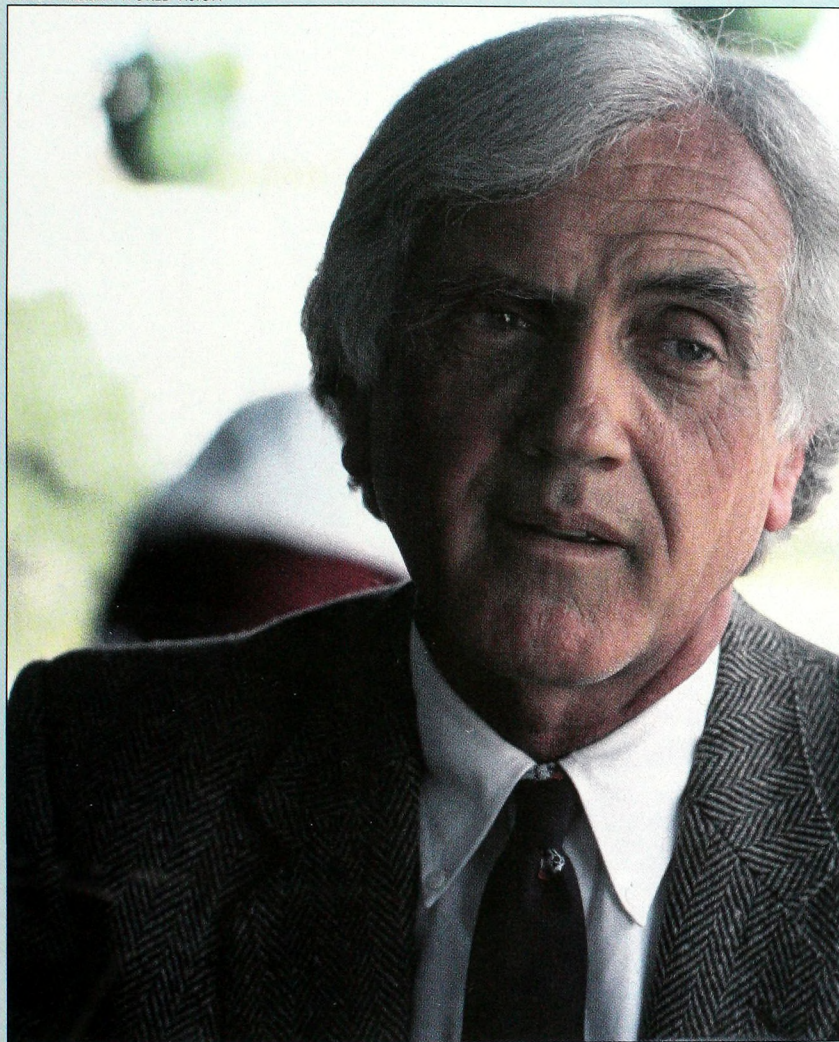
Today I'm doing what I've always dreamed of. I have my teaching certificate, and am starting a church in one of the most remote areas inhabited by my tribe. My people love to hear stories, so whenever I talk about Jesus, I tell them his parables. Afterwards, I always give an altar call. I couldn't think of missing an opportunity!



STEVE REYNOLDS / WORLD VISION

World Vision highlights worldwide political, environmental, social, and spiritual issues through television specials, videos, magazines, a curriculum for Christian schools, and a cross-cultural learning program for church groups.

RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION



Arthur Rouser

United States
Pastor, age 61

Fund-raising is only one part of World Vision's "challenge to mission." Getting people to look beyond themselves and their own churches is perhaps even more important. Getting them to see the poor as real people who yearn and grieve and laugh and sweat just like they do can turn a church on its ear.

It did that to Arthur Rouser's Colonial Congregational Church in Edina, Minn. In 1982, Rouser went to Kenya to look at some of World Vision's work. When Rouser returned, his church greeted a profoundly changed man. In time, that change swept through the entire congregation.

They didn't need another old white guy over there. I realized there was no permanent role for me in Africa soon after I returned from my first trip there, even though I was so deeply moved by what I witnessed that I considered doing some kind of long-term ministry there. It became clear to me that it would be far better if I stayed on as Colonial's pastor, to do what I could to be a bridge-builder between middle America and the heart of Africa.

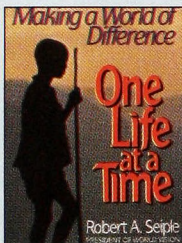
During the next few years, despite some real struggle we went through as a congregation over how much to be involved in this outreach, Colonial became a world church. We now have friends in Africa whom we pray for by name. These people, their lives and their destiny, have become very important to us.

I hate to think what my life—and the life of our congregation—would be like if we hadn't done this. It's a wonderful, risky adventure. It has created in us a new approach to life, so that now we take chances and attempt things we may have been afraid to do before. If we had turned our backs on the challenge to help in Africa, we would have started turning our backs on other things God was calling us to.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS
FEATURE: RANDY MILLER, STEVE
REYNOLDS, RON WILSON.

"People don't suffer as a group," writes Bob Seiple in One Life at a Time. "They suffer intimately, personally, and ultimately alone."

One Life at a Time, which commemorates World Vision's first 40 years, is a collection of personal stories of suffering and overcoming. The following is one of 30 stories found in the newly released book, available through Christian bookstores.



The time is 1950, six months after the start of the Korean War. One of the coldest winters on record has Korea in its icy grip. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese regulars had poured across the frozen Yalu River just weeks before, completely changing the character of the war. United Nations and American forces were being routed. Miles of territory were being lost every day.

Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula. As word of the atrocities committed by North Korean and Chinese troops got out, the civilian population was in stark terror. Christian churches throughout the country held all-night prayer vigils. Predawn services for prayer and worship were packed in an atmosphere of siege.

Picture the situation:

There is no electricity, no city services are available. This is war. It's four o'clock in the morning, and today's service is just beginning. Inside this particular church, the temperature is eight degrees above zero.

When Darkness Gave Way to Light

It's dark and unbelievably cold. There are no chairs. Welcome. Pray with us. Pull up the floor and sit down.

The city is swollen with refugees. Tension and anxiety and fear are written on every face. Many in this room trudged over 200 miles from Seoul in the dead of winter, leaving just before the city fell to the invading army. Widows who witnessed their husbands being hacked to death gather their silent children close to them. There is great, great tragedy in this room, and poverty such as few of us can conceive.

Most are dressed only in thin, cotton-padded clothes. Women hold tiny babies tucked against their breasts, with such few clothes as they have wrapped around the children while they shiver stoically.

What can they be thinking as the



service begins and they sing? The words are ones of comfort; the tears streaming down their faces declare both their need and their rejoicing in finding, in Him, the answer.

When the song service is over, the pastor begins to speak. He prepares to take an offering. What folly is this? What kind of offering could these people possibly give? They had watched their homes burn; many had lost every hope of an income of any kind. They



UPI / BETTMANN

Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula that icy winter.

to keep her warm, walked to the table in front and gave that one little sweater to keep some other child warm.

All they had were the clothes on their backs, and they were giving even these because of what was in their hearts.

John 1:5 says, "Jesus is the light of the world ... and the light shines in the darkness." That morning, darkness gave way to light. The faith that had gotten the people through thus far was rock-steady even in the midst of suffering and death—and was translated into a revolutionary demonstration of Christ's love.

The Marxist teachings that inspired so much hope in their adherents and so much fear in those they opposed have been shown to be tragically flawed since this story took place. The revolution we need is not one of political systems, but of the heart. Utopia, equality, justice—these are ideas precious to the mind of humankind but unattainable without a transformed heart and spirit.

Yet the grace of God provides us with the hope that eternal changes can be brought about by flawed human vessels. Our vision exceeds our grasp, our hopes are not yet fulfilled, the evidence of our faith is yet unseen. But stories such as what took place that bitter winter morning of 1950 remind me once again that, individually and together, we can make a world of difference. □

Excerpted with permission from One Life at a Time by Robert Seiple, ©1990, Word Inc., Dallas, Texas.

were sitting in the bitter cold in desperate need. An offering? Why?

The pastor speaks. "Our offering this morning will go to the refugees who are still streaming into our city. They arrive here, as you know, with their clothes torn, shivering in the cold. Something must be done to help them. We must share with these our friends and brethren."

What have these people left to give?

The pastor continues, "And so this morning we will give an offering of clothes."

So that was what they had to give ... the clothes from their backs!

Garment after garment after garment appeared. One man, emaciated from his suffering, took off his jacket, removed his vest and laid it on the communion table. A mother took the top sweater off her precious babe, tucked the infant inside her own clothes

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope



PENNY PINCHERS

Forget what you read in the papers. A penny *does* go a long way in today's housing market. You just have to know where to invest it.

For example, students at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn., pitched in more than 100,000 pennies for 95 of their fellow students who planned

another \$2,000 from other sources, and a matching grant from a South Carolina company brought the total to \$6,000.

Working together with Habitat for Humanity, the collegiate carpenters contributed the \$6,000 toward materials to help construct five homes in Columbia, S.C. (Habitat for Humanity is a Christian non-profit organization that provides decent, affordable housing to poor people in the United States and in Third-World countries.)

to spend their spring break building homes for the poor. The 95 students added to that chunk of change

Help Wanted—Volunteers

TEACHERS FOR CHINA

China's political and social turmoil notwithstanding, the door is still wide open for English teachers sent by Christian organizations to teach in China. English Language Institute/China and Educational Services Exchange with China are both recruiting Christians with college degrees to serve in China for terms varying from a few months to a year. The organizations provide training and orientation for the volunteers.

Contact English Language Institute/China at P.O. Box 265, San Dimas, CA 91773; (800) FON-ELIC.

Contact Educational Services Exchange With China at 1641 W. Main Street, Suite 401, Alhambra, CA 91801; (818) 284-7955.

LITTER BUGS THEM

Volunteers came from all over Dallas, Texas, to help local residents in West Dallas pick up litter in an area known mostly for high unemployment and chronic poverty. "Local churches are the backbone of West Dallas community life," says Kathy Dudley, who started the annual spring clean-up to strengthen community pride and promote reconciliation. She says church members poured themselves into the event this year. "While we had good support from all over the



city, West Dallas people have proven that they care about their environment."

Besides local residents, volunteers from Dallas businesses,

churches, and civic groups joined in the sweep of a 3-square-mile area. Donated equipment and supplies included portable toilets, trucks, work gloves, trash bags, and donuts. Other expenses were covered by individuals who "sponsored" bags of trash.

Dudley is the founder of Voice of Hope, a non-sectarian organization that operates a family-oriented outreach center in a former school building in West Dallas. It serves the local community by using Christian principles of self-help, evangelism, and renewal.

For information contact Voice of Hope, P.O. Box 5102, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 631-7027.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

“Holiness occurs in the street, not always in the temple. Wherever humanity finds itself, no matter how tattered and torn, no matter how lost and forlorn, is where liturgical acts should take place. For here there is vulnerability, here it counts.
Ray Anderson in On Being Human

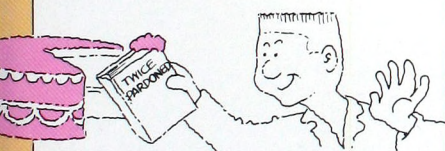
A FRIEND ON THE OUTSIDE

Part of Lynda Hutchinson's job at a Christian publishing company was to answer letters from prison inmates and chaplains requesting donated books. On her own, Lynda began to collect donated books or buy books at cost, and ship them a few at a time to the letter-writers.

Her mailing list grew by leaps and bounds, and so did the volume of mail she received from inmates. They expressed their appreciation for the fact that someone on the

“outside” took them seriously. Some told how the books had brought about Christian growth and even changed lives and healed relationships. Lynda's start-small initiative grew into her full-time occupation and took on a name: Free Behind Bars. At last count, Lynda's correspondents numbered 1,500.

For more information, write Free Behind Bars, 3875 Telegraph Rd., Suite A-296, Ventura, CA 93003.



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



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☐ Please send me materials needed to organize our Planned Famine today. We are considering the date: _____
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JAOPS1

I threw it in the wastebasket. There it lay, its beady black eye looking up at me, its cattle-horn body misshapen and awkward. It was supposed to be a bird in flight, but its base was too light, so it toppled to one side unless something held it in place.

I bought the poor thing in a Honduran prison in the mid-1970s. Some friends had planned the tour and asked me to join them. I knew nothing of Honduras' prison system and was unprepared for the experience.

In a brief orientation, an official told us about the prison's work program. No food is provided for the inmates. A prisoner can send a messenger for food (in exchange for a tip); or he can have a family member bring it to him. But most of the men have no one to provide for them and must come up with the money to buy what they eat. Each prisoner is given tools and allowed time in the prison workshop, where he can construct things to sell.

One of the men was working with cattle horns. As I passed his table, he beckoned me. I told him I had no money. Naturally he did not believe me—who had ever heard of a North American with no money? I opened my billfold to show only small change. Still he begged. Tears filled his dark eyes and his lips quivered as he said softly, "Please, lady, I haven't eaten for two days, and I'm hungry. Please!" His thin, stooped body and the poor quality of his workmanship convinced me he was telling the truth.

One of my friends came by and proudly showed me an intricate wood carving she had bought from another prisoner. I borrowed money

from her to buy the wobbly bird. She was astonished at my choice. The man's hand trembled as he took the money and thanked me again and again.

For more than 12 years the bird had been a symbol to me. It represented all those people whose best is not good enough for us. And it is not only their work that we find unacceptable, but the people themselves, as if their poor craftsmanship were somehow an extension of their vulgar humanity.

With our values so firmly fixed on production and material things, we discard those who do not fit our standards for success, or our ideas of beauty and grace. We reject peo-

ple's true identities, instead measuring them by ancestry, physical appearance, or education. In judging them, we lose sight of our own shortcomings. We become superior, perfected in their weakness.

I have no easy answers, no quick fixes. But if, in our busy day, we could see each person as an individual worthy of respect—not as someone who does not meet "our" standards—we could help each other and learn from our deficiencies.

In a fit of housecleaning, I was about to lose a valuable possession. I picked the ugly bird out of the trash and held it in my hands, remembering again the pain and pleading in the face of its creator. I propped it up on a bookshelf, in a prominent place. The poised bird that cannot be poised on its own reminds me that we all need propping up, to some extent. And I remember a man who tried to escape his prison by making a soaring bird out of cattle horns. □

Nancy Eastridge is a free-lance writer in El Paso, Texas.

BY NANCY EASTRIDGE

AN UGLY REMINDER



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



Dr. Milton Amayun knew many of the Bible verses about trusting God. It was easy trusting God back home in his office. But as he and his companion fought death under the life-sapping sun of the Sahara Desert, those verses seemed like words frozen on paper. He needed to see the face of God.

June 28, 1990, had begun as a normal day—as normal a day as can exist in a country where earth and sky blend into dusty beige and the red tongue of the thermometer pants hard at 120 degrees. Milton Amayun, a Filipino medical doctor, and Rachel Brown, a British nutritionist, were making a routine visit to a nutrition center in Mali's Seventh Region when a ragged handful of armed men waved their Land Rover to the side of the road.

The men, mostly Tuareg rebels from Chad, used their rifles to ensure Amayun's and Brown's undivided attention.

The rebels then drove off in their newly acquired Land Rover, leaving Amayun and Brown behind. They stood and watched the sand cough up from the tires until the vehicle disappeared.

The doctor and the nutritionist spent the night in the village that had been earmarked for their medical assistance. Staying longer seemed unwise, since the rebels had already murdered two doctors and several dozen other people.

The next morning, the two started walking toward Intadeny, 66 miles of desert away. In the midday blaze, that distance seemed as intangible as a mirage. Sustained by the manna of Dr. Amayun's black bag—which included, among other things, a four-day supply of food and \$60—they were able to reach an encampment where their U.S. dollars rented them a couple of donkeys and camels.

Throughout their ordeal, Amayun prayed. But after the first 24 hours, alone in the desert with his weakening companion, he was exhausted, frightened, and fighting death like a child battling

Prayer and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and your heart has turned to stone.

Thomas Merton

HIJACKED IN THE DESERT

sleep. He stepped away from Brown

to gather his scattering thoughts.

This was it. This was the abyss of the human experience. He was staring into that abyss, and there seemed to be nothing there. Still, in the sun-scorched depths of his mind, his faith remained intact. Finally he formed the words. "God, you know where my heart is. If this is my time to go, I am ready to die. But you have given me two babies and a wife. More time on this earth would benefit them, and maybe others, too."

Then he waited for the peace of life or death, and the presence of God.

At that moment he felt that people were praying for them. "I talked to God; I could feel him; I could almost embrace him." His faith had been tested and had endured. Although nothing tangible had changed—not the desert, not the heat, not the miles that separated from life—the hatch to the abyss slammed shut.

Step by painful step, they persevered. On July 1, 1990, dehydrated, fatigued, but alive, Milton Amayun, Rachel Brown, and their rented animals entered Intadeny and safety. □

Anna Waterhouse



Milton Amayun

CAROL BERG / WORLD VISION

Matters for Prayer

- ◆ **Pray for the people** whose dreams rise "only as high as government subsidies" on the Mississippi Delta (pages 4-9).
- ◆ **Thank God** for the people in poor rural areas who still fight for change, in Christ's name (pages 4-9).
- ◆ **Pray for Faith House** as it cares for babies of drug-addicted mothers in Tampa, Fla. (page 24).
- ◆ **Ask God to strengthen** and increase Christian outreach to gang members (pages 26-30).



Barrio Nuevo Estrada is Mexican slang for "new neighborhood." But there's nothing new about this neighborhood. It's just a few rows of dilapidated houses shoehorned into an old South Los Angeles court. Still, the Nuevo Estrada gang is jealous of its turf. Girls and boys with hardened faces sit next to each other on the stoops, guarding their territory. Enigmatic scrawls leave no doubts: Strangers are not welcome.

Girls are involved in every facet of gang life today. They join early, usually by age 11 or 12. Older girls of 16 or 17 disciple them. They show them how to dress, how to get high, how to do battle. These young disciples and their older "homegirls" are fiercely loyal and as essential to gang life as the better-known "homeboys."

Sylvia is a pretty woman in her early 20s. Makeup accents her delicate face. Her hands are folded quietly in her lap. A small diamond shines from her ring finger. The only incongruity in this portrait is the large, ugly rose tattooed on her wrist to hide the scars of heroin use.

Sylvia joined

the Playboys gang at age 11. Within three years she was a junkie. In a world that admires the consumption of large amounts of drugs, Sylvia had "arrived."

Homegirls like Sylvia play a dual role in gang life. They are the boys' confidants and fellow warriors, but they are also caretakers and lovers. "When you have a boyfriend in the gang, he'll treat you like a girlfriend," Sylvia says, "but he can trust you also to carry his gun and go shoot someone."

Darlene is one of the hottest members of the Lomas gang. She knows all about Nuevo Estrada's dislike of visitors. Her cousin Santos is one of their homeboys. Santos is in trouble. He is about to become a father, and he has no money, no clothes for the baby, nothing.

Despite the rivalry of their two gangs, blood ties still count for something in the barrio, and Darlene wants to help her cousin. She has a good job in the garment district downtown, so she puts together a care package for her cousin and his pregnant girlfriend.

Then she phones him. "Keep your homeboys away," she warns. "I don't want nobody there when I drop this stuff off. I mean nobody." Santos assures her there will be no trouble. So Darlene, her

*In the gang
subculture,
women
are every bit
as tough as men.*

MOTHERS, LOVERS & WARRIORS

BY ANNA WATERHOUSE



Darlene
with two
friends: "I didn't
think this was all
there was to life."

boyfriend, a girlfriend, and another cousin, Rene, climb into her lowered luxury Pontiac Le Mans, "a real show car," and take off on a mission of mercy.

Fear is a constant companion. Gangs members are marked—physically and emotionally—with the colors of their gang. Going out alone is folly. Yet the fear is coated with feelings of community, a sense of belonging seldom found outside the tribal gang life. Members know there will always be someone who cares—that they will always have a place to sleep and food to eat, no matter what the circumstances. In a society that tells people to fend for themselves, that is no small gift.

For children who feel like misfits in school, gangs provide something else: the feeling of being smart. There are special signs, secret rites, cryptic messages. It's tough to survive on the streets, and knowing how means more to these kids than A's on report cards; it keeps them alive. Their knowl-

edge of narcotics, stimulants, and hallucinogens equals any medical reference manual. They can read the labyrinth of "safe" and "unsafe" streets. They are experts with various weapons and have the last word on gang parties and hang-outs. In other words, they are authorities in everything that is vital to the turbulent streets of the inner city.

Darlene and her friends drive to her cousin's house, and the court is crawling with Nuevo Estrada gang members. Santos, eyes vacant and face blotchy from booze and dope, sits quietly on his front steps.

Angry faces encircle the car. "Where you from?" they challenge, and they start pounding on the car.

"We don't got no problem with you," Darlene shoots back, but the pounding drowns out her response.

"Where you from?" they insist, growing more menacing. Darlene's boyfriend sits quietly in the car, his head lowered. At first, her cousin Rene tries to

ignore the taunts. Finally, his honor at stake, Rene shouts out his own gang name, "Fort Maravilla!" and opens the car door into a sea of bodies. Darlene's girlfriend yells out "Lomas!" and a dozen hands grab at her. As she's dragged down, her skull cracks on the pavement.

Homeboys beat up homegirls. Husbands beat up wives. That is another reality of gang life. Girls are expected to pull their own weight, yet the homeboys make it clear that "all we're good for is having babies," Sylvia says. And have babies they do. At least 75 percent of homegirls become pregnant in their teens. It is not uncommon for a homeboy to have a wife and several girlfriends, all bearing his children. Ultimately this boys' club the girls struggle so hard to belong to is closed to them. As they grow older and less able to fight and party, they find themselves trapped with children and a boyfriend or husband who relies on them less and less.

Their mastery of night life does

"The gang expects a lot from you." (Sylvia, second from left, with current gang members.)



PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

not read well on a resume. With no future outside or inside the gang, these tough girls turn to their children. They try to shower their kids with the love that most of them have never had. The colors of gang life fade into the dream-like blur of a happy nuclear family—father, mother, and babies.

But the reality is often more brutal. The courts took one homegirl's children from her when her maternal instincts could not keep up with her drug habit. When she went to the hospital to give birth to her third daughter, "the nurses saw this pathetic hype laying there, needle marks all over my body." The staff refused to treat her. She gave birth in a hallway, alone. Before she even left the hospital, the state intervened and took her daughters.

Darlene gets tired of playing peace-maker. When one more girl yells out a challenge, Darlene tears into her. The Nuevo Estrada gang encircles the combatants. In the confusion and noise, Darlene's boyfriend backs the Le Mans out of the court and takes off. Darlene's other two companions manage to jump in at the last second, leaving her stranded.

Yet Darlene is intent on preserving the good name of the Lomas, and she is all nails and punches against her opponent. The crowd urges them on. Just as Darlene starts to win, someone hits her on the head with a brick. The last thing she sees before losing consciousness is Cousin Santos, still sitting on his stoop, crying like a baby.

THESE GIRLS DON'T HAVE TO ACT TOUGH. THEY ARE TOUGH.

A few years ago, girl gang members wore Pendletons and bandannas. They were proud of their "war paint"—eyes creased with heavy black eyeliner and cheeks gouged with crimson streaks of blush. Today, according to Sylvia, "girls in the gangs take better care of themselves. They dress up real pretty. No more false eyelashes with their hair all ratted."

But underneath the new hairdos and pristine dresses is still a seething rage. These girls don't have to act tough. They *are* tough.

Helicopters circle overhead. Police cars with dizzying red lights send the Nuevo Estrada gang scurrying to their houses. Darlene is taken to the hospital, her face smashed, her nose broken.

The Lomas plot revenge. After all, one of their own has been beaten; one of their favorite party cars has been trashed. They discuss options, including a massacre of Nuevo Estrada.

Finally they reach a compromise: Santos has to die. He is the one who blew it by letting his homeboys know that Darlene was coming. His death can atone for that wrong. To prove her loyalty, Darlene has to agree.

"The gang expects a lot from you," Sylvia says. "Say there's a riot going down and you have to go and kill somebody because they kill somebody from your gang. Then it's like, are you really going to go down for your gang? Are you gonna shoot that person or aren't you?"

Loyalty is the supreme virtue,

especially in Mexican gangs, which still ascribe to some semblance of gang tradition. The police are unsuccessful at interrogations and make fewer arrests than they might, because gang members won't talk to them. They work out their problems their own way.

Darlene is confused. Despite his "wimping out," Santos is still her cousin, and she doesn't want him killed. Yet she can't appear weak; she has a reputation to uphold. She has to come up with a solution. "I'm the one that got my face smashed in," she tells the Lomas. "If anybody's gonna kill my cousin, it's gonna be me."

The gang agrees. Darlene's logic is irrefutable. She is the perfect choice for executioner. Once again, Darlene and her friends pile into the Le Mans and head into Barrio Nuevo Estrada.

Darlene knows where her cousin hangs. They search each likely haunt. They finally spot him walking down the street. Darlene calmly aims her gun and



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fires. The bullet finds its mark in his arm—as she intends—and he takes off running. “I couldn’t let them kill him, but I had to at least shoot him,” she says. “I was bound to my neighborhood to do that.”

Some gangs let rivals enter their territory to buy drugs. Others shoot interlopers on sight, no matter what. There are neutral areas, and areas that are impossible to cross. Some gangs will form an uneasy alliance to get even with a third gang. Some gangs never make truces with anyone. In any case, the lines of loyalty can get hopelessly intertwined.

Though Santos lives, the Lomas are appeased. A hole in his arm testifies to their power and mercy. An uneasy truce envelops the two gangs. But something bothers Darlene. In the initial battle, two of her friends called out the name of their gangs and threw themselves into the fray. But her boyfriend stayed silent and then took off. Like a coward.

She gets on him. “How come you left?” she demands. He says they had a gun on him. “Didn’t you see what they did to me?” she replies. He doesn’t answer. Then the truth emerges. Nuevo Estrada was her boyfriend’s first gang. His primary loyalty will always belong to them.

Efforts to contain the gangs and stem the destruction have proved ineffective. Beyond beefing up police efforts and halfhearted attempts to provide minimum-wage jobs, society has few real solutions; no substitutes for family; no alternative common causes to rally around.

Yet many of the women caught in gangs are aching for a way out. Sylvia says, “I remember sitting alone at night at a party, getting loaded. And I kept thinking, is this it? Isn’t there something else besides getting loaded, besides getting hurt, besides hurting people? I’d look at the older people still hanging out and think, is that me in a few years?”

Darlene asked herself the same questions. “I didn’t think this was all there was to life. I didn’t wanna be nothing,” she says.

Despite the trend over the past several decades for churches to abandon the inner cities, a few have

stayed, and ministries have arisen to provide alternatives and hope to the gangs. Some gang members, including Darlene and Sylvia, have received Christ through Victory Outreach, a church in downtown Los Angeles that ministers to gang members.

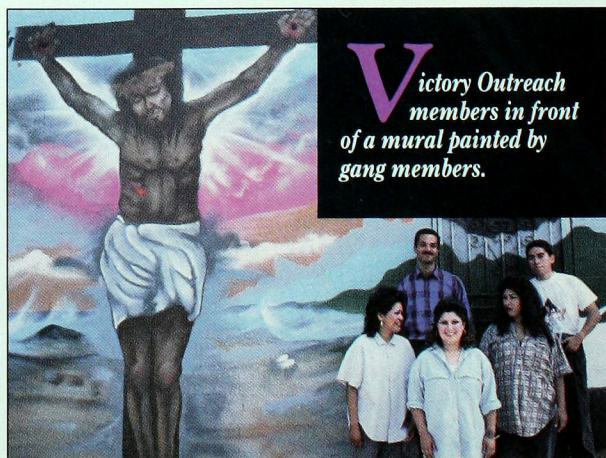
Those churches and ministries that are still operating in gang-ridden downtown Los Angeles are discovering a responsiveness and a hunger for the gospel that is almost painful. Sylvia says, “The other day, a girl from my old gang called me. Her sister had killed herself. They found her hanging from a tree. She said, ‘You’ve been serving God for four years now. I know you have the answer for me and my family. If you can make it, so can I.’”

Jesus told the story of a man freed from a demon. He likened the man’s life to a house that has been swept and put in order but left empty. The demon eventually returned with his cohorts, and “the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

A frightened and angry society can whitewash the graffiti, build more jails, and avoid the bad parts of town. But the emotional and spiritual houses of these lost, hurting kids remain empty.

“These girls are heroic in their commitment to the gang,” says Robert Alvarado, pastor of Victory Outreach. “They’ve taken up arms. If you can rechannel that heroism, which starts at the core of their existence, you can turn them into warriors for Jesus. But the church itself needs to become informed. They need to touch and feel and walk with these kids. They have to see them as spiritual creatures, not just as people with bad records or tattoos. We need the church to become their gang, their focus.”

Darlene puts it this way: “It’s the gang or it’s Jesus. It’s loyalty unto death for one or the other. The question is, which one?” □



BY TIM BASCOM

WHEN NEED HAD A FACE

My first morning back in Nairobi, Kenya, I had a hard time getting out of bed, apprehensive about leaving my hotel. I rolled back the covers and stared out the window. *Come on, Tim, I thought. Face it.* After all, I wasn't new to those streets. I had attended school there as a missionary kid, and I felt sure that not much had changed in the past decade. Con artists and beggars would still line the roadways, and it would still be hard to distinguish the crooks from the truly needy. *That's okay, I thought. I'm not planning on giving anything to anyone.*

Sure enough, I had walked scarcely a block from the hotel when a distinguished-looking African with salt-and-pepper hair approached me.

"Hello," he said. "Do you live here?"

"I used to live here."

"So you know this place?"

"Some of it," I said as I studied him. He was educated; that much was obvious from his command of English. But his suitcoat was worn.

"So after you went to school here in Kenya," he continued, "you went to university in America. What did you study there?"

"English literature."

"Aha. What are you doing now? Teaching or journalism?"

I laughed. "Journalism."

"I know these things," he said, "because I am a teacher by profession. But excuse me. Maybe I am stopping you from doing something."

"I'm only walking," I replied. We ended up at a restaurant, where a friend of his joined us. I bought them soft drinks.

Soon the two men began to open up. They were Ugandan refugees who had fled when a government official from another tribe threatened to throw them in jail. They left their wives and children behind and escaped to Sudan, where rebels and government troops demanded they fight in the civil war. They fled again, walking across the wasteland of southern Sudan to Kenya.

They had been in Nairobi for three weeks. They had no money, no jobs, and were afraid of being deported. Now they wanted to try entering Tanzania, where they had heard the immigration laws were less stringent.

Finally the pitch came. They didn't have the money to do this. Could I help?

I had been determined not to give money to anyone, but suddenly need had taken on two human faces. And those faces had names: Ashford and David.

Maybe they were lying. Yet they had spoken

warmly of missionaries. "In Uganda," they had said, "everyone is corrupt. Some doctors will make you sell your last cow to pay for a single pill. But not the missionaries. We can trust them."

If they were learning trust from Christians, I wanted them to keep learning it. They left with almost all I had. I walked back to my hotel in such a daze that I didn't even see the young man who had slipped up beside me.

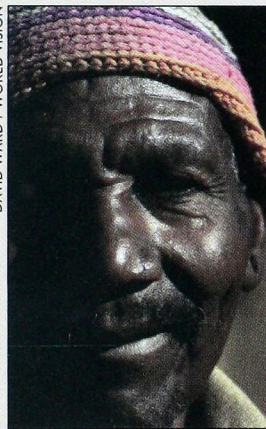
"Hello," he said shyly.

"Hello," I replied, noting his light skin and dark lashes.

"Are you from America?"

"Yes."

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



WORLD VISION



"I am from Somalia. There is much fighting there."

I nodded.

"They wanted me to fight, but I wouldn't. So I came here. But here there is no job. No food. I am always cold, and I cannot sleep."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I wish I could help, but I've already given away what I had."

"If I could just get to Uganda, I have a relative in the embassy. He could feed me ..."

His words trailed off. *My God, I thought, they shuffle from one problem area to another like people trapped in a burning building with no exits.*

I reached the hotel, still deep in thought. Our world has so many needs. I sometimes try to convince myself that those needs are fabricated, to keep from getting overwhelmed. As soon as I do that, however, I become hardened, not only to the swindlers, but also to human beings with genuine needs. I can't refuse someone simply because that person might misuse my assistance. Unless I take risks, God can't show his love through me.

So have a good journey, Ashford and David. And may God go with you. □

Tim Bascom, editor of Interlit magazine, lives in Deerfield, Ill.

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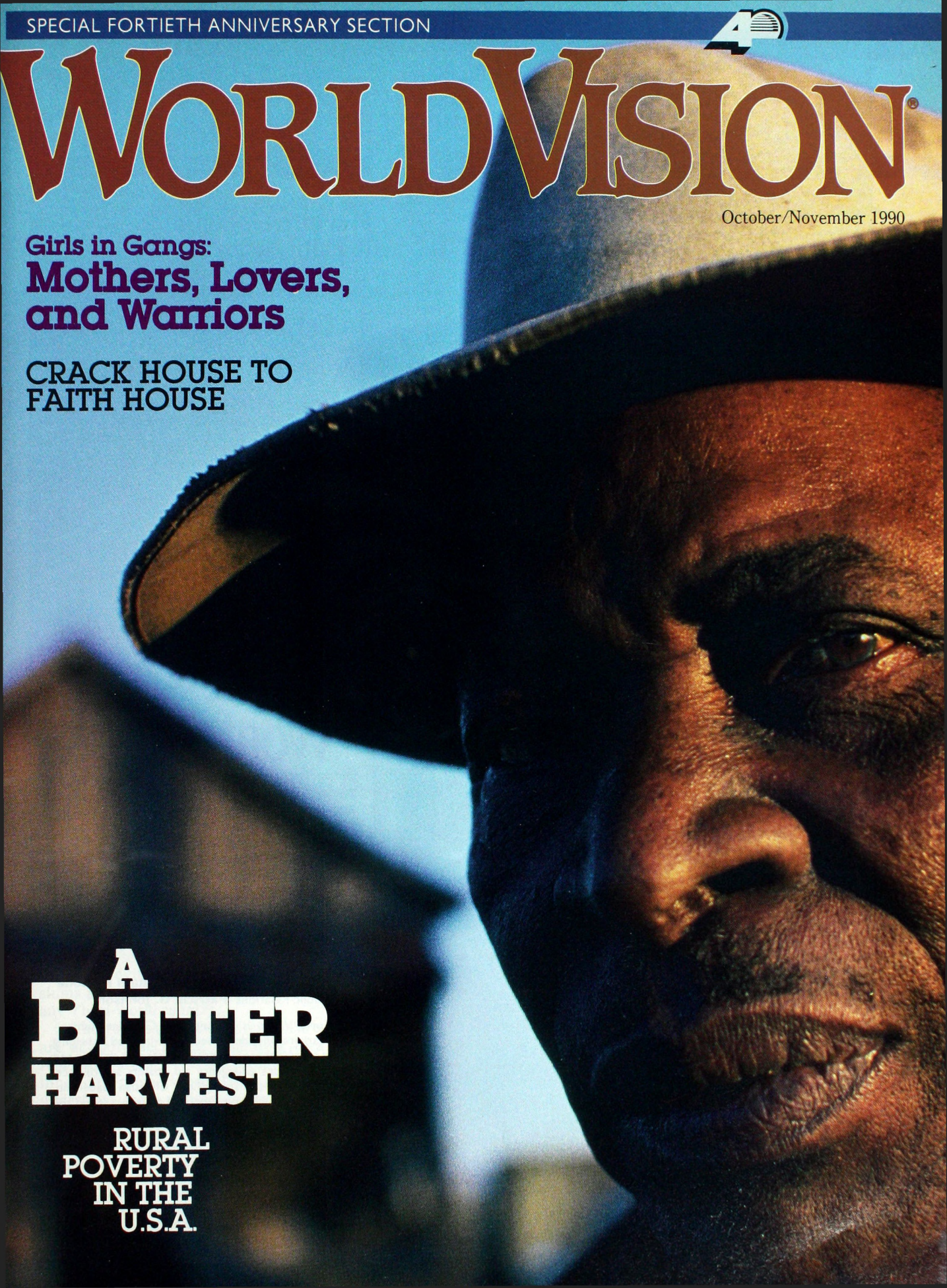
October/November 1990

Girls in Gangs:
**Mothers, Lovers,
and Warriors**

CRACK HOUSE TO
FAITH HOUSE

**A
BITTER
HARVEST**

RURAL
POVERTY
IN THE
U.S.A.



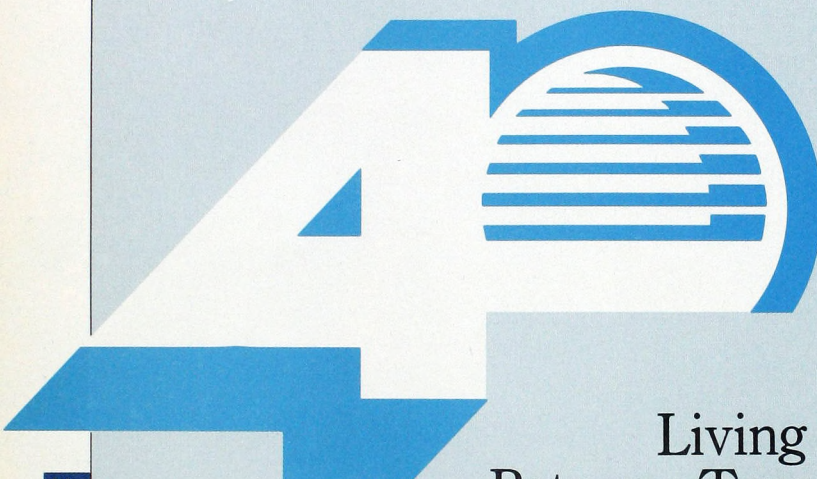
4 The Delta's Bitter Harvest

Growing old enough to have a baby and collect welfare is a rite of passage on the Mississippi Delta. So is growing old enough to leave. The Delta's future lies with the talented, aggressive leaders emerging in nearly every community—and they know what they're up against.

26 Mothers, Lovers & Warriors

A look at gang life through the eyes of Sylvia and Darlene, two Los Angeles "homegirls" who have seen it all—and finally found Someone worthy of their life-or-death loyalty.

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



Living Between Two Anniversaries

"Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday." Robert Seiple reflects on the God of anniversaries.

13 In Their Own Words

Facts and figures would be one way to tell it. But World Vision is about people, not facts and figures. To represent the six main types of work World Vision does, seven individuals from around the world tell the story ... in their own words.

20 When Darkness Turned to Light

A ragged band of refugee believers meets before dawn on a frigid winter day in wartime Korea. They take comfort in singing and Scripture. Then, unbelievably, they take an offering. (Excerpted from the recently released book *One Life at a Time*, by Robert Seiple.)

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Forty years ago World Vision was birthed among the horror and sorrow of the Korean War. Evangelist Bob Pierce's vision to help the innocent victims, tens of thousands of children, quickly grew beyond Korea, but never beyond the needs of children.

Since then, led by well known Christian statesmen Stan Mooneyham, Ted Engstrom, Tom Houston, Graeme Irvine and Robert Seiple, World Vision in the U.S. and abroad has invested 40 years putting faith to work in an increasingly diverse and needy world. Today, World Vision ministers in more than 5100 projects in 89 countries.

Terry Madison

WORLD VISION

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North America's vast rural lands stretch on like a great yawning giant. For more than 400 years the sometimes gentle, sometimes savage U.S. backlands lured people searching for the freedom to move and live as they chose. Thriving farms and small towns were built by independent people determined to stand on their own.

But today, for almost 20 percent of the people who live there, the rural United States is a land of no exits, a prison without bars. A shocking 9.7 million Americans live in pockets of poverty not unlike the Third World.

Laredo, Texas. Twenty-five million gallons of raw sewage are pumped daily into the Rio Grande River. People aren't allowed to swim in that water, but they hoist it out by bucketfuls and drink it, bathe in it, and wash their clothes in it. It is the only water available to them.

In the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee, some families live in conditions that were marginal a century ago, with no electricity, running water, or indoor plumbing. In some areas, more than half of the high school students drop out.

In the 320 poorest counties in the United States, child mortality rates are 45 percent higher than the national average. That means 20 children out of 1,000 do not survive their first few years, a child survival rate comparable to Panama's. Of those children who survive, 25 percent live below the U.S. government's official poverty line of \$12,000 per year for a family of four.

While the numbers of poverty glide and twist in gross abstraction, the places of poverty sound picturesque, even beautiful. Wenatchee. Cameron Park. Elaine. Gilt Edge. Sugar Ditch. But names cannot hide the squalor.

From the Pacific Northwest to the Heartland, snaking through the Bible Belt and pushing north to New England, the rural poor defy regional borders and color barriers. In the Appalachias, the faces of poverty are white; in Mississippi, the majority are black; in North Dakota they are American Indian; on the Tex-Mex border they are Hispanic. Yet all are victims of circumstance and self-delusion, living and dying in rural slums as void of hope as any Third-World country.

The irony is that poverty rates in urban areas are actually declining, according to a recent *Newsweek* article. Private donations pour into inner-city projects because they are literally underfoot—more noticed, more exposed by the media, more public.

Relief offices and job training programs do not set up shop in out-of-the-way places. Indus-

tries relying on cheap labor move to more easily exploited foreign countries. Government farm subsidies are almost useless, since only 7 percent of the indigent live on farms. The rest languish in small towns across the country.

Like the urban poor, rural families are stuck in a system that withholds AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), Medicaid, and other benefits from two-parent households and people earning minimum wage—in effect penalizing couples who stay together and work full-time at menial jobs. And *unlike* the urban poor, rural families tend to stay together despite the loss of those benefits.

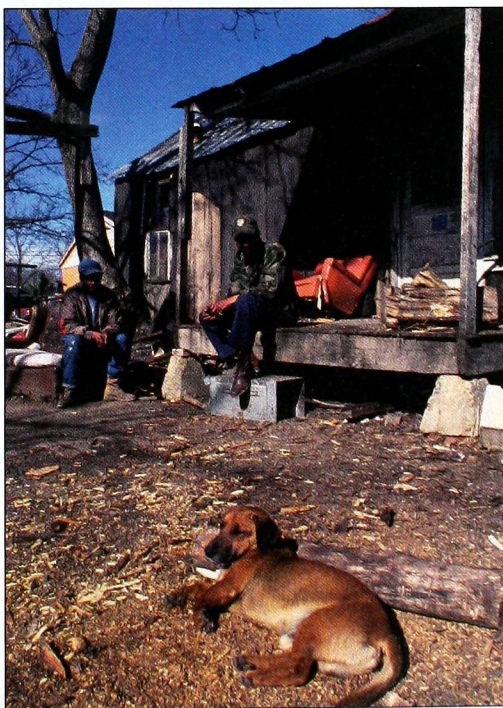
Perhaps the most poignant sign of rural America's growing poverty, however, is that the homeless are now woven into the fabric of life at the periphery of the farm. Though officials refuse to recognize them as homeless in national statistics, 25,000 Ohioans have no indoor plumbing; in the Appalachias, thousands live on dirt floors; and along the Tex-Mex border, people live in cardboard homes.

Some government aid projects are starting up. There are a few special health programs geared to Hispanic day laborers in Texas. Private charities, such as Habitat for Humanity and World Vision, are building homes and teaching job skills and literacy in places like Coahoma, Miss., and patches of the Appalachias.

But from the redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters, thousands are stuck with nothing in the land of plenty. □ *Anna Waterhouse*

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA **THE RURAL POOR**

**Close to
10 million
Americans
live in rural
pockets of
poverty.**



JON WARREN



Freddie Lee's one-room shack in Coahoma has no indoor plumbing, but he says it's better than his old one.

For the poor on the Mississippi Delta,
life is a mixture of hope and regret,
a place where dreams rise only
as high as government subsidies.

Mississippi has always been a bewitched and tragic ground, yet it's also a land of heroism and nobility; a place which has honored those of us of all our races who possess the courage and the imagination of the resources given to us on this haunted terrain.

—Willie Morris,
Mississippi writer

It is midday on the Mississippi Delta when Annie Freeman finally sits down to rest. Her three grandchildren play in the dirt yard that circles her small, sparsely furnished farmhouse. Her 23-year-old son, Anthony, lies speechless and paralyzed in a back bedroom, viewing the world from a window overlooking a cotton field. Annie pushes back her hair, and in a quiet, tentative voice talks about her life.

Annie was born on a Delta plantation, the daughter of a poor sharecropping family. That same year, a white man killed her father, leaving Annie's mother without means to feed her family. She gave Annie to a neighbor.

Annie began picking cotton as soon as she could walk. Between

crops, she attended a substandard school for black children and dreamed of becoming a nurse. Her dream died when, at 14, she dropped out of school because of her family's poverty.

Shortly afterwards, Annie had a baby and married a talented mechanic and farm worker. But over the next several years he started drinking up the family's meager income. Annie had to work double shifts in a local factory. The



THE DELTA'S BITTER HARVEST

TEXT BY BARBARA THOMPSON
PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

low wages were barely enough to feed her six children and pay rent on a tumble-down shotgun house.

In the early 1980s, Annie's husband and a daughter, the family's first college student, died after long illnesses. Then her 16-year-old son, Anthony, collapsed during a basketball game and was left permanently paralyzed and speechless. Annie's life was a blur of hospital and graveside visits.

Today, at age 45 and after more than 40 years of hard work, Annie still lives in poverty on the Delta. She is a shy, gentle woman, and she speaks of the past without bitterness. "Life is okay," she says. "But there's just so much you have to go through."

Annie carefully budgets a government check to support her household of eight, and she hopes to save enough money to fix her leaking roof. She spends her days babysitting grandchildren and nursing her bedridden son, turning him every two hours and feeding him through a tracheal tube.



Rev. Carl Brown

"They wanted me to put him in an institution," Annie says. "But I wanted him home with us."

Annie's dreams for the future are tied to her children and grandchildren. An encyclopedia dominates her living room, and she strongly encourages each child to go to college. "I would like them to see life," she says. "But not like I saw it."

The mix of hope and regret with which Annie Freeman faces the future is echoed countless times among the rural poor of the Mississippi Delta. Extending from Memphis, Tenn., to Vicksburg, Miss., the Delta's flat, fertile farmland is home to some of the nation's poorest citizens. In many com-

The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers are moving out.

munities, two of every five adults are illiterate, and infant mortality rates are higher than in some Third World countries.

Many of the Delta's problems are rooted in the dark currents of its not-so-distant past. To ensure a continuous supply of cheap labor for the region's cotton economy, wealthy planters discouraged industry from locating in the region. Since education was unimportant for field work, schools for black children were few and underfunded.

By the 1960s, the Delta's traditional economy had collapsed. One mechanical cotton picker could do the work of 250 field hands, and thousands of plantation workers were left homeless, uneducated, and unemployed. Working-age men fled the state, leaving behind desperately poor communities of single mothers, children, and the elderly.

Today most young adult men still flee the Delta. Those who stay behind echo the despair of Elvis Martin, a 32-year-old unemployed laborer in Quitman County. Dressed in worn blue jeans, Martin waits to meet with a social worker in a cramped office in downtown Marks. He has been unemployed for four months and does not qualify for government assistance.

"If I could see better, I'd get out of here," he says in a flat, hopeless voice. "But you have to have something to start on, something going for yourself just to get up and leave." Before losing his last job, Martin worked three years for the same company. After two raises, he earned \$3.75 an hour—part-time.

Unemployment and underemploy-

Gloria Jean Bell and Robert Clark in her room along Sugar Ditch.





ment remain the region's greatest economic problem. The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers who exploited the South's cheap labor are moving to the Third World, where wages are lower yet. The region's uneducated labor pool is now a development nightmare.

"There are few industries moving anywhere in the United States," says Vaughn Grisham, professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi. "Those that do move are looking for at least basic literacy."

Cotton Row, in the small, rural

town of Marks, is a narrow, unpaved road where Martin Luther King once marched and wept. Its edges are lined with tar-paper shacks, scrap metal, abandoned cars, and polluted ditches.

It is the middle of a cold Delta winter. Many of the homes on Cotton Row appear abandoned. Roofs sag and front porches sink to the ground. Windows are broken or boarded up.

In one house, a group of teenagers drift in and out of the living room to keep warm and catch the latest neighborhood news. Rita, a junior in high

school, bottlefeeds her week-old baby with an air of maternal contentment. Her boyfriend, an articulate high school senior, talks of heading north after graduation to find a job. Josephine, an 18-year-old junior, nods her approval.

"Young people today can do a lot with their lives," Josephine says. Then she glances at her grandmother, who spent 30 years as a sharecropper, and reconsiders. "Sometimes I think I can make something of myself," she says wistfully. "But then I think, I can't do it. I don't have what it takes."

For many teenagers on the Delta, dreams rise only as high as govern-

ment subsidies. Federal money (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Social Security, disability, etc.) accounts for 70 percent of income in many communities, and there are few role models of economic self-sufficiency. Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.

With few career opportunities or recreational outlets, alarming numbers of Delta children and teenagers turn to alcohol and illegal drugs.

"Growing up in the Delta is like being out in the middle of a river without a boat," says Rev. Carl Brown, a Baptist minister in Marks. "Kids will use any-

thing they can to get to shore." Brown estimates that 80 percent of the Delta's teenagers use drugs. Crack can be purchased even in the smallest towns.

The Delta's extreme poverty has introduced a new element in communities traditionally divided by race. "We have changed segregation from color to money," says Bobbie Walker, the mayor of Jonestown. "Twenty years ago a white person wouldn't even see me. Now, if I'm an upper class black, they will talk to me. But if I'm a poor white person, they will look the other way."

Sara Rumbaugh of Quitman

County was disabled with a crippling back injury in an automobile accident. She has yet to qualify for disability payments, and she has difficulty making ends meet.

"If you're a poor white person like me, most people don't want to help you," Rumbaugh says. She receives food from Rev. Brown's church and has found an advocate in the county's black director of social services.

The future of the Delta's rural poor—white and black—lies with the many talented, aggressive leaders who are emerging in almost every community. Mayor W.J. Jones of Coahoma (pop. 350) has spearheaded a revolutionary housing program that is dramatically improving the town's living conditions. In Tunica, disabled veteran Joe Hawkins struggles to sustain the county's first black-owned and -operated grocery store. Despite opposition, the store employs four people and has been operating for two years.

In Quitman County, the second-poorest county in Mississippi, Rev. Carl Brown leads the Valley Queen Baptist Church in ministering to the rural poor. Despite the church's own

Peggy Handy always dreamed of raising her nine children in a home of their own. For years, in Coahoma, Miss., she paid \$40 a month for a shack with only one habitable room. She had no indoor plumbing, the roof was falling in, and despite her efforts to patch the walls, the shack was never warm in winter.

Today Peggy owns a new, well-insulated home with four bedrooms and an indoor bathroom. "Everything I asked for, God has given me," she says. Peggy pays a mortgage of \$100 a month, including insurance and maintenance.

"The biggest change is in the children," she says. "They are so active now—and proud to come home."

Peggy's impossible dream, and those of many other Coahoma residents, took solid form when their mayor, W.J. Jones, joined World Vision and Habitat for Humanity in a plan to completely eliminate poverty housing within the town limits.

The interest-free, no-profit houses are built mostly by volunteers. Future owners contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity," and house payments are recycled to build new homes.

Coahoma's housing problems are as severe as anywhere in the United States. Eighty percent of the homes are substandard, and Mayor Jones estimates that every year as many as 10 houses are lost to fire or collapse. Peggy Handy's old house burned, with all her



Peggy Handy and her children in front of their new home.

possessions, in a four-home fire.

Average family income in Coahoma is \$4,000-\$5,000, and in winter months unemployment runs as high as 80 percent. Often several families are forced to live in one small house.

Today nine new houses have been occupied, six are under construction, and over 50 more are planned. Coahoma's new homes have substantially affected the town's residents.

"Even if we never built another house, our children are being transformed," says Mayor Jones, a middle-school principal. He remembers when Michael Handy moved into his new home. "Until then, Michael was a quiet, withdrawn little boy. The day his family moved, he ran into my office at school, saying 'You've got to come and see my house!'"

Coahoma's housing project is just a beginning. World Vision is helping the town develop a seedling business and a literacy program. The town is also drawing plans for a sewage system, a job training program, the development of small businesses, and girls' and boys' clubs. It's a big dream for a small town, but dreams come true in Coahoma. □ *Barbara Thompson*

Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.



PROUD TO COME HOME

poverty, it serves 40 hot meals a day and runs a shelter for the homeless. It also distributes relief supplies from churches as far away as California.

"In the past, religion for black folks was a matter of simple revival," Brown says. "Now we take a holistic approach. We say to our people, 'Come with us, and we will do you good.'"

In her small, three-room house, 85-year-old Pearl Scurlock sits in her armchair like a queen on a throne. Dressed in a bright plaid skirt, a flowered blouse, and a red headband, she holds a letter she wrote to government officials in Washington, D.C., about cuts in Social Security payments. "We worked hard and paid into the system; now they want us to starve to death," she reads. "Someone needs to come down here to Quitman County and see about us elderly people."

Pearl, who attends Rev. Brown's church, is a colorful community activist who is fast becoming a county legend. She began cooking and cleaning on a cotton plantation "when I had to stand on a block to reach the counter," and was forced to drop out of school in the third grade.

After 60 years of working six and seven days a week, Pearl retired with crippling arthritis. "When I went to collect my Social Security, I had a terrible shock," she remembers. "My employers withheld it from my paycheck, but they never paid the government."

Like many other elderly people on the Delta, Pearl barely gets by on \$360 a month from SSI, government funds provided for those without Social Security. Despite her crushing poverty and poor health, she is an energetic advocate for the elderly and the poor. She also helps with her church's food distribution program, organizes

"If you're poor and white, most people don't want to help you," says Sara Rumbaugh, shown here with her son Thomas at the Social Services office.



Pearl Scurlock. "If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," says Rev. Carl Brown.



voter transportation, and makes phone calls for absentee-ballot drives.

"If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," Rev. Brown says.

Activists like Brown know that substantial change will not come soon to the Delta. Talented, ambitious young people still flee as soon as they are able, and the average worker earned less in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Schools remain almost completely segregated. Although blacks have won significant political victories, they still lack economic power.

The tension between the black community and the traditional white power structure simmers just beneath the surface of almost every conversation. Rev. Brown has been the target of numerous death threats, and for a time was forced to travel with bodyguards.

"You struggle all your life until you finally see the light at the end of the tunnel," says one black leader, who started a community-owned business.

"Then you realize it might be a bomb."

Despite intimidation and fear of reprisals, black and white leaders in the Delta are beginning to work together. "The whole of Mississippi is in a helpless situation," Rev. Brown says. "Young white people are sensing that, even if our children don't go to school together, we can't allow the Delta to continue in its present direction." Brown's emphasis on serving the poor in both white and black communities has won over some of his most vocal white opponents.

"There are deep scars for both whites and blacks," says Mayor Jones of Coahoma. "But the time for building hate walls is over. All people have wonderful qualities and all people have weaknesses. We need to pool our strengths and start working together. Otherwise we are going to lose the Delta and our country too." □

Barbara Thompson is a free-lance writer in Atlanta, Ga.

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

FROM CRACK HOUSE TO FAITH HOUSE

BY MARILYN GARDNER

Faith Temple

When crack dealers and prostitutes took over a vacant house behind Faith Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla., members faced a serious problem: what to do with the condemned church-owned residence, which vandals, drug addicts, and termites had destroyed.

A wrecking company would cost more than the dwindling congregation could afford. Calling in the fire department to burn it down, which the city had done to other crack houses, seemed too dangerous in this case.

The church's new minister, Rev. Michael Lewis, encouraged members to search for a positive solution. "We began to pray to find a way we could get involved in the war on drugs," says Lewis. The congregation decided to mortgage the church for \$25,000, then turn the house into a foster-care placement center for babies exposed to drugs.

One year later, dozens of babies affected by cocaine have been placed in foster homes out of this three-story white building, where playpens compete for space with desks and filing cabinets.

"The Bible clearly states that the church is supposed to take care of widows and orphans," Lewis says. "Knowing that we're fulfilling that obligation is very rewarding."

"We have black babies, white babies, brown babies," says coordinator Curtis Marshall. "Our primary goal is to get the natural moms back with the children. Once we locate them, if they're on drugs, we want to give them counseling and treatment." Until then, babies are placed with licensed foster mothers.

One of the program's first foster mothers, Naneita Redrick, cares for a 12-month-old girl who tested positive for heroin at birth, and a 13-month-old girl and her 3-year-old brother, who both tested positive for cocaine.

"You have to use a lot more love and be very patient with these babies," Redrick says. "They have periods when they're irritable and extremely

nervous." Yet already she sees progress. "In the beginning, at the least little noise, they would tremble. Now it doesn't seem to bother them."

Faith House's director of counseling, Robert James, says, "I've seen some complete turn-arounds where the cocaine babies are responding marvelously."

The babies' biological mothers have progressed far less quickly. Their ages range from 19 to 31, and many do not know who their child's father is. "We're finding the natural mothers are not as concerned about their babies as I thought they would be," Lewis says.

Tracy Jordan, a supervisor at the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, says, "On some level, the mothers probably all do want their babies, but just are not able to follow through." Even if they can get through a drug rehabilitation program, they have to return to their housing project, where dealers will often give drugs out free at first to hook people. They'll even leave the drugs in mailboxes and under doors, Jordan says.

Even so, Jordan says, one mother "has licked drugs and alcohol and is almost ready to get her child back." Though Jordan emphasizes that Faith House has not been operating long enough to know how successful it will be in reuniting families, she calls it a step in the right direction.

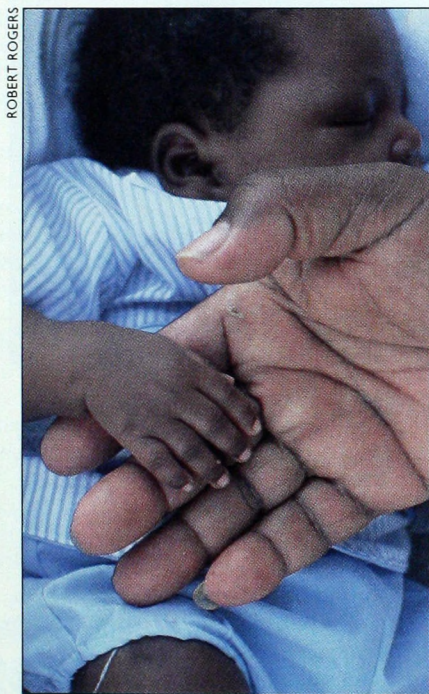
What began as the vision of one minister and one church has expanded into a cooperative effort. Last year, hearing that Faith House was running out of money, members of Bayshore Baptist Church donated materials and labor. At Christmas they made "pamper baskets" for the foster mothers, filling them with lotions and bubble bath. And recently 25 members provided an evening out for the foster mothers, caring for their children for five hours.

Across Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Faith House has been a model for a Roman Catholic foster-care program for drug-addicted babies, scheduled to start later this year.

Faith House has also helped to renew the spirit of Faith Temple. "We see the excitement in members' eyes when they get involved," says Lewis, noting that membership has risen from 40 to 300 since Faith House was established.

"No longer can we expect the world to walk through our front doors on Sunday morning," he adds. "The church needs to become very active in taking part in the healing of the total person." □

Excerpted by permission from The Christian Science Monitor, where Marilyn Gardner is a staff writer.



ROBERT ROGERS

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LIVING BETWEEN TWO ANNIVERSARIES

BY ROBERT
A. SEIPLE,
PRESIDENT

The sign was all too telling. "Fireworks, one-half off." For two weeks I had watched the Skokomish Indians of western Washington competitively market their wares, in this case fireworks, in anticipation of the Fourth of July celebration. Fireworks are a traditional part of this anniversary, and through one of those old laws that allows for anomalies in the present, the Indians were able to sell them.

But the anniversary had come and gone. This was now the fifth of July. The symbol of the anniversary had its value reduced. You could now buy firecrackers at half price. It would be another year before they commanded a higher value. Like the half-price sales of wrapping paper the day after Christmas, our culture had unceremoniously told us that the anniversary was over and it was time to be thinking about other things.

I think we and our culture have gotten it wrong with respect to anniversaries. Certainly independence and liberty are not a one-day happening, punctuated by firecrackers that only have momentary value. As we watch liberty and independence being fought over and struggled with around the world, there is more than a suggestion that *our* freedom ought to be cause for perpetual celebration. And, if it is possible today to properly unwrap the gift of the Christ child, the event that caused the angels to sing should have us exchanging the gift of God's love every day of the year.

Something has gone wrong with anniversaries. It never used to be this way. The Israelites

had an anniversary that they celebrated every time they opened their mouth—their exodus from Egypt. They couldn't kick off an event, begin a sermon, commemorate a feast day without recalling the phrase, "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Both God and his people received a special identity on that day. It was written into the preamble to their constitution. It was part of their birthright, their passport. It linked their past with their present and gave them hope and expectation for the future.

The anniversary of the exodus stood for freedom and justice under a sovereign God. It allowed for the people of Israel to be led back to the land of promise by a God who always keeps his promises. A people were to be whole and the God of the exodus was to be made known to the nations of the world through this one nation, called out, set apart, set free to be all that God intended it to be. "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out ..." All of the hopes and dreams, as well as the expectations and obligations, for the nation of Israel flow from this anniversary.

When the Israelites finally inhabited the promised land, they built the most magnificent temple in the world for the symbols of this God. No half-price sales here. David and Solomon saw to it: the God who penetrated history through the



nation Israel would be remembered.

And God would penetrate history again, for the good and love of humankind. "The Word was made flesh," an incomprehensible gift, the most remarkable anniversary, one that could never be devalued by God. Indeed, the price that was paid for this anniversary was ultimately a life that was freely sacrificed on a cross.

Now the blessed hope of our day is that there is one more anniversary to come. The God that made himself known to Israel, the One who finally sent his Son, will one day come again. In anticipation of this anniversary, Paul instructs Titus "to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." In a sense, then, we are living between two anniversaries, our coming to the Christ of Christmas and Christ reappearing sometime in the future. Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday with the kingdom of our coming Lord. The two most significant events of history have been and are being directed at those who would seek to embrace the God of anniversaries. No half-price sales here.

In the midst of these momentous events, World Vision is having an anniversary. We are 40 years old. In and of itself, the date is not significant. As we are led back to our roots, however, and as we anticipate our future, a reflection is both legitimate and necessary. We were founded in the heart of an evangelist. May we never forget that. May we always hold to the core reason for our existence—to point people in the direction of Jesus Christ. As we live our lives in the present, may we see the world through the eyes of Jesus. May we continue to have our hearts broken by the things that break the heart of a holy God. And as we look to a challenging future, may our words and our deeds truly represent the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

The call upon each one of us from the beginning needs to be matched today with an obedient heart. The vision of founding fathers needs to be sustained today through the implementation of accountability and integrity. The dreams of those early days need to be translated into reality, a reality that is better than the past and gives us legitimate hope for future dreams. If we can do all that, this will be an anniversary worth remembering, one step along the way of God's plan for the ages, anticipating the reunion yet to come. □

**Our lives
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someday.**



In their own words

Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder, used to pray out loud in his sleep, the legend goes. It was not uncommon for his traveling companions to be wakened in the middle of the night by mutterings in the dark from the bed across the room. Prayers. They heard prayers from a man so driven by compassion for those in need that his petitions on their behalf never ceased, even in sleep.

Forty years later, the answers to those prayers still live in the hearts of thousands of people worldwide. These people are child sponsors, financial donors, countertop-donation volunteers, and prayer partners. They are emergency relief workers, development experts, doctors, nutritionists, and administrators. They are long-range planners, fund-raisers, computer experts,



Dr. Bob Pierce

mechanics, and well-diggers. With Christ's compassion, they reach out to the poor, the result of a vision that began in an evangelist's heart more than four decades ago.

Bob Pierce's "world vision" first took form with Korean War orphans. It grew into an official organization in 1950, and gradually developed into a ministry with six channels of outreach: child sponsorship, evangelism, strengthening Christian leadership, emergency relief, long-range development, and challenging people of plenty to reach out to the poor.

Facts, figures, and lists would be one way to show the scope of World Vision's outreach during its first 40 years. But the ministry is not about numbers and cold facts, it is about people. World Vision's ministry is about changed lives, transformed men and women, one at a time.

On the next few pages, a few of those people will tell you their stories in their own words.

SPECIAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



World Vision links sponsors with nearly a million needy children worldwide. Benefits to sponsored children and their families include education, health care, and community development.

Sandra Leticia Canel

Guatemala
Seamstress, age 18

BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Behind a cinder-block wall in Guatemala City, Sandra Leticia Canel climbs a splintery staircase every weekday morning at 7:30 and sits behind a sewing machine until 4:30. In the evenings she goes to school.

Sandra started sewing when she was 8. When she finishes secondary school, she plans to study accounting.

The happiest moment of my life was when I became sponsored and started attending the Carolingia Day Care Center. I love that place. I started going there when I was about 8 years old. Before then, I had no real

friends. I would just go to school in the morning and come home in the afternoon. But at the day care center I made friends quickly. It was the relationships I built, both with the other children and with my sponsor, that were most important to me.

I love math. Numbers are so important in every aspect of life. That's why I want to be an accountant. I will continue to sew while I am in school, but after I graduate, I want to be an excellent accountant, assisting people in a big factory or business.

If anyone is thinking about sponsoring a child, I would say yes, please do it. It's important for children to know that somebody is remembering them, that somebody who lives far away is thinking of them fondly, and considering their needs. It made such a difference in my life.

Short of death, Chang Tae Ho's life couldn't have gotten much worse than when his mother abandoned him under a bridge. He was a 3-year-old polio victim.

A Catholic priest rescued him and took him to an orphanage. For the next eight years, Chang suffered jeering and teasing because of his lifeless legs.

When he moved to the Song Bo Won Home for Handicapped Children, supported by World Vision sponsors, it turned his life around.

Life in the orphanage was hard. The other children made fun of me because I couldn't walk. I cried every night. When I heard about the Song Bo Won Home, I applied for a place there and was accepted.

Almost immediately after I arrived, things got much better. Nobody teased me for my handicap.

Chang Tae Ho

Korea
Watch repairman, age 29

For the first time in my life, I felt loved. I felt that I really could be something. I loved Mrs. Chea, the director. She was like the mother I never had.

I was very curious about the way watches and clocks worked. I started a five-year course in watch repair and worked hard at it. Soon I was the top student.

When I left the school, I put that training to use. I now have my own clock retail and repair shop.

Through my sponsor and Mrs. Chea, I learned that nothing is impossible. I know they prayed for me, too. They will always be welcome in my shop!



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



In 1989 World Vision assisted 1.3 million disaster victims, providing relief such as medical treatment, food, and shelter.

Tadelech Tadiesse

*Ethiopia
Farmer, age 51*

In 1984, when drought and famine gripped Ethiopia and killed almost a million people, Tadelech Tadiesse lived in the Ansokia Valley, one of the country's hardest hit areas. The 31-mile-long valley was a barren dust bowl. At the height of the famine, Tadelech Tadiesse and what was left of her family sought help at a World Vision relief camp.

Today life has dramatically improved, both for Tadiesse and for the Ansokia Valley. Emergency assistance has evolved into long-term development. Wells have been dug, trees and gardens planted, and farmers have received tools, seeds, and fertilizers. The valley is green and full of life.

Today, in addition to farming, Tadiesse is a caretaker for 55 sponsored children.

In 1984, everyone was just lying on the ground waiting for food. They didn't even have the strength to brush flies away. Then World Vision came, and helped to bury our dead. Those who died, even their bones will not forget what World Vision has done.

Now you can see where the children's bellies are flat because the drinking water is free from parasites. The children are clean. They wash their hands, eyes, and faces.



I'll care for these children before I do anything else. The benefit to the community is so great. The children are our future life. So I will always put this first, then look after my farmland.

BRUCE BRANDER / WORLD VISION

Development work enables a community to address its long-term needs, such as a safe water supply, health care, hygiene, literacy, and income generation. Nearly 1.9 million people benefited from community development work in 1989.

Benjamin Grivalba

Guatemala
Farmer, age 49

A wide, gummy grin spreads across Benjamin Grivalba's craggy face. He squats proudly in his thriving onion field in Aldea Loma Larga, a tiny Guatemalan village not far from Honduras. With a loan from World Vision last year, Grivalba bought fertilizer and a water pump for his field. That assistance helped him more than double his crop yield this year.

Half his crop went into the community's cooperative fund; he sold the other half at the market. With the profits, he repaid the loan and set aside a little extra for the next crop.

The plot of land I'm using to grow onions used to be full of rocks and old roots. Erosion had made the land poor and our crops weren't good. We needed fertilizer and better irrigation. With my loan, I was able to reclaim my section of land.

I am glad for the help we're getting with our land. But I am also grateful for the educational help. Before World Vision came here, not many people could go to school through the sixth grade. I have only a second-grade education. But now we have people who are even going on to secondary school.

I was born here. My wife, Salvadora, and I will probably live here for the rest of our lives. Life is still hard, but now we see good results from our work. We see our children learning. It is better now.



BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Pastors' conferences have offered training and encouragement to over 100,000 ministers and church leaders serving in difficult circumstances in more than 50 countries.

SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



Han Kyung Chik

Korea
Pastor, age 90

If it hadn't been for Han Kyung Chik's unexpected meeting with Bob Pierce on the streets of Pusan, Korea, in 1950, World Vision pastors' conferences might never have started.

Pastor Chik first met Pierce in the spring of 1950 when the young evangelist preached in Chik's church. The church's response was so enthusiastic that Pierce and Chik decided to hold a one-week evangelistic rally in a nearby park. But more than 5,000 people crowded under the canvas tarps each night, and the one-week crusade turned into three.

When war broke out in Korea, many members of Dr. Chik's church fled to Pusan, where Chik and Bob Pierce unexpectedly met again.

In Pusan, Dr. Pierce kept asking me, "What can I do?" He was genuinely concerned with the state of the church and the pastors.

I told him pastors had lost everything—their churches, their congregations, everything. I suggested we get them together for a meeting to encourage them, let them share their burdens with other pastors, and let them know they are not alone. Dr. Pierce said, "Let's do that." So we started planning the first World Vision pastors' conference.

For one week, Dr. Pierce preached, taught, encouraged, and admonished those pastors from morning until evening. I interpreted for him. He had a tremendous amount of stamina!

He gave us strength to face the uncertainty of the future, which at that time looked very bleak. Bob was a man of faith. When he was with us, he forgot about everything else. He gave us his whole heart.

World Vision joins local churches and partner agencies all over the world in offering personal witness, Bibles, and Christian teaching.

Nenita Ramos

Philippines

Teacher, age 28

Nenita Ramos grew up in a village in the highlands of Luzon Island, Philippines. She is a member of the Aeta tribe, one of the Philippines' historically pushed-around peoples.

Nenita grew up in a Christian home, where she fell in love with the Word of God. At a Bible study in World Vision's Pamitambayan Childcare Project she decided to become a missionary pastor, taking the gospel to her people.

A World Vision scholarship enabled Ramos to earn a degree in Christian education. Today she is helping establish a new church in a remote village.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have dreamed of climbing high into the mountains and preaching the gospel to others in my tribe. I used to practice preaching in my room.

As I got older, I realized that my people could not read and write, and therefore could not study the Bible. So I decided to become a teacher. I would teach my people to read and write. Then, when they needed something to read, I would give them a Bible!

Today I'm doing what I've always dreamed of. I have my teaching certificate, and am starting a church in one of the most remote areas inhabited by my tribe. My people love to hear stories, so whenever I talk about Jesus, I tell them his parables. Afterwards, I always give an altar call. I couldn't think of missing an opportunity!

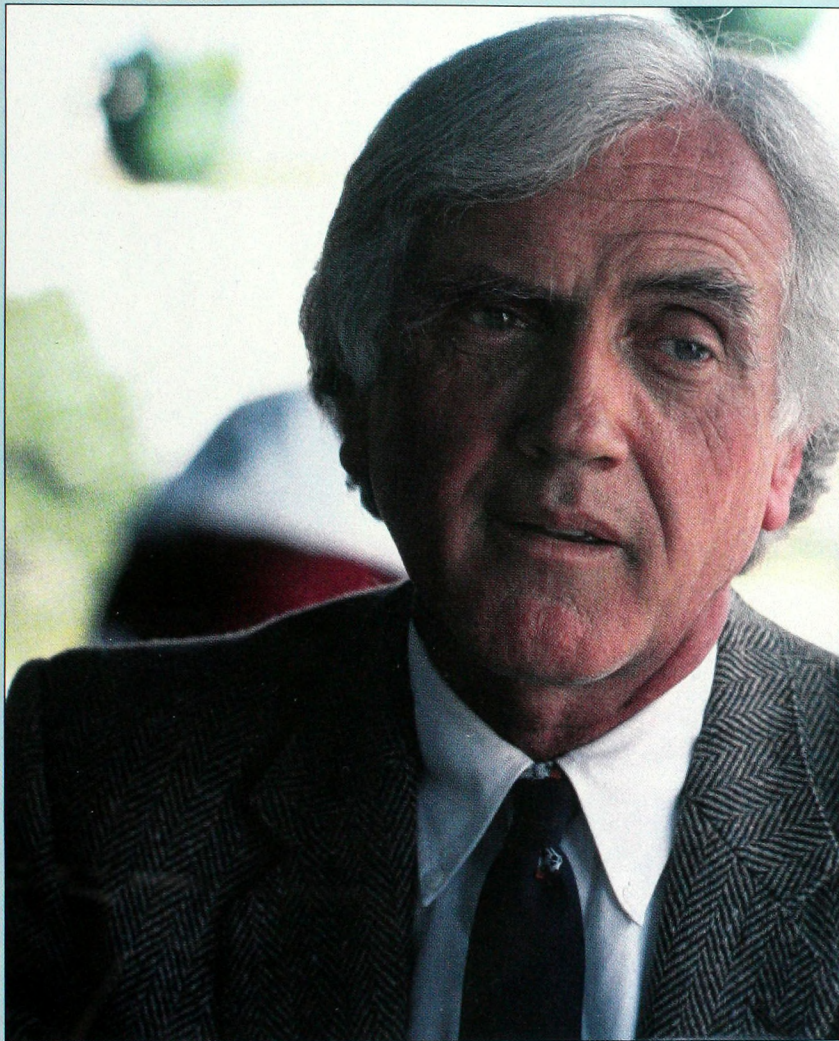


STEVE REYNOLDS / WORLD VISION



World Vision highlights worldwide political, environmental, social, and spiritual issues through television specials, videos, magazines, a curriculum for Christian schools, and a cross-cultural learning program for church groups.

RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION



Arthur Rouner

United States
Pastor, age 61

Fund-raising is only one part of World Vision's "challenge to mission." Getting people to look beyond themselves and their own churches is perhaps even more important. Getting them to see the poor as real people who yearn and grieve and laugh and sweat just like they do can turn a church on its ear.

It did that to Arthur Rouner's Colonial Congregational Church in Edina, Minn. In 1982, Rouner went to Kenya to look at some of World Vision's work. When Rouner returned, his church greeted a profoundly changed man. In time, that change swept through the entire congregation.

They didn't need another old white guy over there. I realized there was no permanent role for me in Africa soon after I returned from my first trip there, even though I was so deeply moved by what I witnessed that I considered doing some kind of long-term ministry there. It became clear to me that it would be far better if I stayed on as Colonial's pastor, to do what I could to be a bridge-builder between middle America and the heart of Africa.

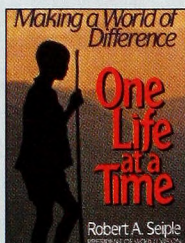
During the next few years, despite some real struggle we went through as a congregation over how much to be involved in this outreach, Colonial became a world church. We now have friends in Africa whom we pray for by name. These people, their lives and their destiny, have become very important to us.

I hate to think what my life—and the life of our congregation—would be like if we hadn't done this. It's a wonderful, risky adventure. It has created in us a new approach to life, so that now we take chances and attempt things we may have been afraid to do before. If we had turned our backs on the challenge to help in Africa, we would have started turning our backs on other things God was calling us to.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS
FEATURE: RANDY MILLER, STEVE
REYNOLDS, RON WILSON.

"People don't suffer as a group," writes Bob Seiple in One Life at a Time. "They suffer intimately, personally, and ultimately alone."

One Life at a Time, which commemorates World Vision's first 40 years, is a collection of personal stories of suffering and overcoming. The following is one of 30 stories found in the newly released book, available through Christian bookstores.



The time is 1950, six months after the start of the Korean War. One of the coldest winters on record has Korea in its icy grip. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese regulars had poured across the frozen Yalu River just weeks before, completely changing the character of the war. United Nations and American forces were being routed. Miles of territory were being lost every day.

Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula. As word of the atrocities committed by North Korean and Chinese troops got out, the civilian population was in stark terror. Christian churches throughout the country held all-night prayer vigils. Predawn services for prayer and worship were packed in an atmosphere of siege.

Picture the situation:

There is no electricity, no city services are available. This is war. It's four o'clock in the morning, and today's service is just beginning. Inside this particular church, the temperature is eight degrees above zero.

When Darkness Gave Way to Light

It's dark and unbelievably cold. There are no chairs. Welcome. Pray with us. Pull up the floor and sit down.

The city is swollen with refugees. Tension and anxiety and fear are written on every face. Many in this room trudged over 200 miles from Seoul in the dead of winter, leaving just before the city fell to the invading army. Widows who witnessed their husbands being hacked to death gather their silent children close to them. There is great, great tragedy in this room, and poverty such as few of us can conceive.

Most are dressed only in thin, cotton-padded clothes. Women hold tiny babies tucked against their breasts, with such few clothes as they have wrapped around the children while they shiver stoically.

What can they be thinking as the



service begins and they sing? The words are ones of comfort; the tears streaming down their faces declare both their need and their rejoicing in finding, in Him, the answer.

When the song service is over, the pastor begins to speak. He prepares to take an offering. What folly is this? What kind of offering could these people possibly give? They had watched their homes burn; many had lost every hope of an income of any kind. They

UPI / BETTMANN



Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula that icy winter.

to keep her warm, walked to the table in front and gave that one little sweater to keep some other child warm.

All they had were the clothes on their backs, and they were giving even these because of what was in their hearts.

John 1:5 says, "Jesus is the light of the world ... and the light shines in the darkness." That morning, darkness gave way to light. The faith that had gotten the people through thus far was rock-steady even in the midst of suffering and death—and was translated into a revolutionary demonstration of Christ's love.

The Marxist teachings that inspired so much hope in their adherents and so much fear in those they opposed have been shown to be tragically flawed since this story took place. The revolution we need is not one of political systems, but of the heart. Utopia, equality, justice—these are ideas precious to the mind of humankind but unattainable without a transformed heart and spirit.

Yet the grace of God provides us with the hope that eternal changes can be brought about by flawed human vessels. Our vision exceeds our grasp, our hopes are not yet fulfilled, the evidence of our faith is yet unseen. But stories such as what took place that bitter winter morning of 1950 remind me once again that, individually and together, we can make a world of difference. □

Excerpted with permission from One Life at a Time by Robert Seiple, ©1990, Word Inc., Dallas, Texas.

were sitting in the bitter cold in desperate need. An offering? Why?

The pastor speaks. "Our offering this morning will go to the refugees who are still streaming into our city. They arrive here, as you know, with their clothes torn, shivering in the cold. Something must be done to help them. We must share with these our friends and brethren."

What have these people left to give?

The pastor continues, "And so this morning we will give an offering of clothes."

So that was what they had to give ... the clothes from their backs!

Garment after garment after garment appeared. One man, emaciated from his suffering, took off his jacket, removed his vest and laid it on the communion table. A mother took the topsweater off her precious babe, tucked the infant inside her own clothes

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST

Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope



PENNY PINCHERS

Forget what you read in the papers. A penny *does* go a long way in today's housing market. You just have to know where to invest it.

For example, students at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn., pitched in more than 100,000 pennies for 95 of their fellow students who planned

another \$2,000 from other sources, and a matching grant from a South Carolina company brought the total to \$6,000.

Working together with Habitat for Humanity, the collegiate carpenters contributed the \$6,000 toward materials to help construct five homes in Columbia, S.C. (Habitat for Humanity is a Christian non-profit organization that provides decent, affordable housing to poor people in the United States and in Third-World countries.)

to spend their spring break building homes for the poor. The 95 students added to that chunk of change

Help Wanted—Volunteers

TEACHERS FOR CHINA

China's political and social turmoil notwithstanding, the door is still wide open for English teachers sent by Christian organizations to teach in China. English Language Institute/China and Educational Services Exchange with China are both recruiting Christians with college degrees to serve in China for terms varying from a few months to a year. The organizations provide training and orientation for the volunteers.

Contact English Language Institute/China at P.O. Box 265, San Dimas, CA 91773; (800) FON-ELIC. Contact Educational Services Exchange With China at 1641 W. Main Street, Suite 401, Alhambra, CA 91801; (818) 284-7955.

LITTER BUGS THEM

Volunteers came from all over Dallas, Texas, to help local residents in West Dallas pick up litter in an area known mostly for high unemployment and chronic poverty. "Local churches are the backbone of West Dallas community life," says Kathy Dudley, who started the annual spring clean-up to strengthen community pride and promote reconciliation. She says church members poured themselves into the event this year. "While we had good support from all over the



city, West Dallas people have proven that they care about their environment."

Besides local residents, volunteers from Dallas businesses,

churches, and civic groups joined in the sweep of a 3-square-mile area. Donated equipment and supplies included portable toilets, trucks, work gloves, trash bags, and donuts. Other expenses were covered by individuals who "sponsored" bags of trash.

Dudley is the founder of Voice of Hope, a non-sectarian organization that operates a family-oriented outreach center in a former school building in West Dallas. It serves the local community by using Christian principles of self-help, evangelism, and renewal.

For information contact Voice of Hope, P.O. Box 5102, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 631-7027.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI

“Holiness occurs in the street, not always in the temple. Wherever humanity finds itself, no matter how tattered and torn, no matter how lost and forlorn, is where liturgical acts should take place. For here there is vulnerability, here it counts.”
Ray Anderson in
On Being Human

A FRIEND ON THE OUTSIDE

Part of Lynda Hutchinson's job at a Christian publishing company was to answer letters from prison inmates and chaplains requesting donated books. On her own, Lynda began to collect donated books or buy books at cost, and ship them a few at a time to the letter-writers.

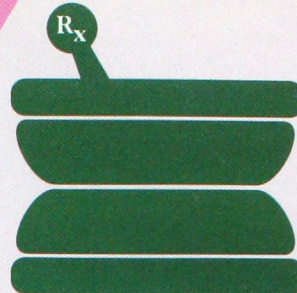
Her mailing list grew by leaps and bounds, and so did the volume of mail she received from inmates. They expressed their appreciation for the fact that someone on the



“outside” took them seriously. Some told how the books had brought about Christian growth and even changed lives and healed relationships. Lynda's start-small initiative grew into her full-time occupation and took on a name: Free Behind Bars. At last count, Lynda's correspondents numbered 1,500.

For more information, write Free Behind Bars, 3875 Telegraph Rd., Suite A-296, Ventura, CA 93003.

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FMG 007

I threw it in the wastebasket. There it lay, its beady black eye looking up at me, its cattle-horn body misshapen and awkward. It was supposed to be a bird in flight, but its base was too light, so it toppled to one side unless something held it in place.

I bought the poor thing in a Honduran prison in the mid-1970s. Some friends had planned the tour and asked me to join them. I knew nothing of Honduras' prison system and was unprepared for the experience.

In a brief orientation, an official told us about the prison's work program. No food is provided for the inmates. A prisoner can send a messenger for food (in exchange for a tip); or he can have a family member bring it to him. But most of the men have no one to provide for them and must come up with the money to buy what they eat. Each prisoner is given tools and allowed time in the prison workshop, where he can construct things to sell.

One of the men was working with cattle horns. As I passed his table, he beckoned me. I told him I had no money. Naturally he did not believe me—who had ever heard of a North American with no money? I opened my billfold to show only small change. Still he begged. Tears filled his dark eyes and his lips quivered as he said softly, "Please, lady, I haven't eaten for two days, and I'm hungry. Please!" His thin, stooped body and the poor quality of his workmanship convinced me he was telling the truth.

One of my friends came by and proudly showed me an intricate wood carving she had bought from another prisoner. I borrowed money

from her to buy the wobbly bird. She was astonished at my choice. The man's hand trembled as he took the money and thanked me again and again.

For more than 12 years the bird had been a symbol to me. It represented all those people whose best is not good enough for us. And it is not only their work that we find unacceptable, but the people themselves, as if their poor craftsmanship were somehow an extension of their vulgar humanity.

With our values so firmly fixed on production and material things, we discard those who do not fit our standards for success, or our ideas of beauty and grace. We reject peo-

ple's true identities, instead measuring them by ancestry, physical appearance, or education. In judging them, we lose sight of our own shortcomings. We become superior, perfected in their weakness.

I have no easy answers, no quick fixes. But if, in our busy day, we could see each person as an individual worthy of respect—not as someone who does not meet "our" standards—we could help each other and learn from our deficiencies.

In a fit of housecleaning, I was about to lose a valuable possession. I picked the ugly bird out of the trash and held it in my hands, remembering again the pain and pleading in the face of its creator. I propped it up on a bookshelf, in a prominent place. The poised bird that cannot be poised on its own reminds me that we all need propping up, to some extent. And I remember a man who tried to escape his prison by making a soaring bird out of cattle horns. □

Nancy Eastridge is a free-lance writer in El Paso, Texas.

BY NANCY EASTRIDGE

AN UGLY REMINDER



CAROL BERG / WORLD VISION

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



Dr. Milton Amayun knew many of the Bible verses about trusting God. It was easy trusting God back home in his office. But as he and his companion fought death under the life-sapping sun of the Sahara Desert, those verses seemed like words frozen on paper. He needed to see the face of God.

June 28, 1990, had begun as a normal day—as normal a day as can exist in a country where earth and sky blend into dusty beige and the red tongue of the thermometer pants hard at 120 degrees. Milton Amayun, a Filipino medical doctor, and Rachel Brown, a British nutritionist, were making a routine visit to a nutrition center in Mali's Seventh Region when a ragged handful of armed men waved their Land Rover to the side of the road.

The men, mostly Tuareg rebels from Chad, used their rifles to ensure Amayun's and Brown's undivided attention.

The rebels then drove off in their newly acquired Land Rover, leaving Amayun and Brown behind. They stood and watched the sand cough up from the tires until the vehicle disappeared.

The doctor and the nutritionist spent the night in the village that had been earmarked for their medical assistance. Staying longer seemed unwise, since the rebels had already murdered two doctors and several dozen other people.

The next morning, the two started walking toward Intadeny, 66 miles of desert away. In the midday blaze, that distance seemed as intangible as a mirage. Sustained by the manna of Dr. Amayun's black bag—which included, among other things, a four-day supply of food and \$60—they were able to reach an encampment where their U.S. dollars rented them a couple of donkeys and camels.

Throughout their ordeal, Amayun prayed. But after the first 24 hours, alone in the desert with his weakening companion, he was exhausted, frightened, and fighting death like a child battling

P*rayers and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and your heart has turned to stone.*

Thomas Merton

HIJACKED IN THE DESERT

sleep. He stepped away from Brown

to gather his scattering thoughts.

This was it. This was the abyss of the human experience. He was staring into that abyss, and there seemed to be nothing there. Still, in the sun-scorched depths of his mind, his faith remained intact. Finally he formed the words. "God, you know where my heart is. If this is my time to go, I am ready to die. But you have given me two babies and a wife. More time on this earth would benefit them, and maybe others, too."

Then he waited for the peace of life or death, and the presence of God.

At that moment he felt that people were praying for them. "I talked to God; I could feel him; I could almost embrace him." His faith had been tested and had endured. Although nothing tangible had changed—not the desert, not the heat, not the miles that separated from life—the hatch to the abyss slammed shut.

Step by painful step, they persevered. On July 1, 1990, dehydrated, fatigued, but alive, Milton Amayun, Rachel Brown, and their rented animals entered Intadeny and safety. □

Anna Waterhouse



Milton Amayun

CAROL BERG / WORLD VISION

Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Pray for the people** whose dreams rise "only as high as government subsidies" on the Mississippi Delta (pages 4-9).
- ♦ **Thank God for the people** in poor rural areas who still fight for change, in Christ's name (pages 4-9).
- ♦ **Pray for Faith House** as it cares for babies of drug-addicted mothers in Tampa, Fla. (page 24).
- ♦ **Ask God to strengthen** and increase Christian outreach to gang members (pages 26-30).



Barrio Nuevo Estrada is Mexican slang for "new neighborhood." But there's nothing new about this neighborhood. It's just a few rows of dilapidated houses shoehorned into an old South Los Angeles court. Still, the Nuevo Estrada gang is jealous of its turf. Girls and boys with hardened faces sit next to each other on the stoops, guarding their territory. Enigmatic scrawls leave no doubts: Strangers are not welcome.

Girls are involved in every facet of gang life today. They join early, usually by age 11 or 12. Older girls of 16 or 17 disciple them. They show them how to dress, how to get high, how to do battle. These young disciples and their older "homegirls" are fiercely loyal and as essential to gang life as the better-known "homeboys."

Sylvia is a pretty woman in her early 20s. Makeup accents her delicate face. Her hands are folded quietly in her lap. A small diamond shines from her ring finger. The only incongruity in this portrait is the large, ugly rose tattooed on her wrist to hide the scars of heroin use.

Sylvia joined

the Playboys gang at age 11. Within three years she was a junkie. In a world that admires the consumption of large amounts of drugs, Sylvia had "arrived."

Homegirls like Sylvia play a dual role in gang life. They are the boys' confidants and fellow warriors, but they are also caretakers and lovers. "When you have a boyfriend in the gang, he'll treat you like a girlfriend," Sylvia says, "but he can trust you also to carry his gun and go shoot someone."

Darlene is one of the hottest members of the Lomas gang. She knows all about Nuevo Estrada's dislike of visitors. Her cousin Santos is one of their homeboys. Santos is in trouble. He is about to become a father, and he has no money, no clothes for the baby, nothing.

Despite the rivalry of their two gangs, blood ties still count for something in the barrio, and Darlene wants to help her cousin. She has a good job in the garment district downtown, so she puts together a care package for her cousin and his pregnant girlfriend.

Then she phones him. "Keep your homeboys away," she warns. "I don't want nobody there when I drop this stuff off. I mean nobody." Santos assures her there will be no trouble. So Darlene, her

*In the gang
subculture,
women
are every bit
as tough as men.*

MOTHERS, LOVERS & WARRIORS

BY ANNA WATERHOUSE



Darlene
with two
friends: "I didn't
think this was all
there was to life."

boyfriend, a girlfriend, and another cousin, Rene, climb into her lowered luxury Pontiac Le Mans, "a real show car," and take off on a mission of mercy.

Fear is a constant companion. Gangs members are marked—physically and emotionally—with the colors of their gang. Going out alone is folly. Yet the fear is coated with feelings of community, a sense of belonging seldom found outside the tribal gang life. Members know there will always be someone who cares—that they will always have a place to sleep and food to eat, no matter what the circumstances. In a society that tells people to fend for themselves, that is no small gift.

For children who feel like misfits in school, gangs provide something else: the feeling of being smart. There are special signs, secret rites, cryptic messages. It's tough to survive on the streets, and knowing how means more to these kids than A's on report cards; it keeps them alive. Their knowl-

edge of narcotics, stimulants, and hallucinogens equals any medical reference manual. They can read the labyrinth of "safe" and "unsafe" streets. They are experts with various weapons and have the last word on gang parties and hang-outs. In other words, they are authorities in everything that is vital to the turbulent streets of the inner city.

Darlene and her friends drive to her cousin's house, and the court is crawling with Nuevo Estrada gang members. Santos, eyes vacant and face blotchy from booze and dope, sits quietly on his front steps.

Angry faces encircle the car. "Where you from?" they challenge, and they start pounding on the car.

"We don't got no problem with you," Darlene shoots back, but the pounding drowns out her response.

"Where you from?" they insist, growing more menacing. Darlene's boyfriend sits quietly in the car, his head lowered. At first, her cousin Rene tries to

ignore the taunts. Finally, his honor at stake, Rene shouts out his own gang name, "Fort Maravilla!" and opens the car door into a sea of bodies. Darlene's girlfriend yells out "Lomas!" and a dozen hands grab at her. As she's dragged down, her skull cracks on the pavement.

Homeboys beat up homegirls. Husbands beat up wives. That is another reality of gang life. Girls are expected to pull their own weight, yet the homeboys make it clear that "all we're good for is having babies," Sylvia says. And have babies they do. At least 75 percent of homegirls become pregnant in their teens. It is not uncommon for a homeboy to have a wife and several girlfriends, all bearing his children. Ultimately this boys' club the girls struggle so hard to belong to is closed to them. As they grow older and less able to fight and party, they find themselves trapped with children and a boyfriend or husband who relies on them less and less.

Their mastery of night life does

"The gang expects a lot from you." (Sylvia, second from left, with current gang members.)



PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

not read well on a resume. With no future outside or inside the gang, these tough girls turn to their children. They try to shower their kids with the love that most of them have never had. The colors of gang life fade into the dream-like blur of a happy nuclear family—father, mother, and babies.

But the reality is often more brutal. The courts took one homegirl's children from her when her maternal instincts could not keep up with her drug habit. When she went to the hospital to give birth to her third daughter, "the nurses saw this pathetic hype laying there, needle marks all over my body." The staff refused to treat her. She gave birth in a hallway, alone. Before she even left the hospital, the state intervened and took her daughters.

Darlene gets tired of playing peacemaker. When one more girl yells out a challenge, Darlene tears into her. The Nuevo Estrada gang encircles the combatants. In the confusion and noise, Darlene's boyfriend backs the Le Mans out of the court and takes off. Darlene's other two companions manage to jump in at the last second, leaving her stranded.

Yet Darlene is intent on preserving the good name of the Lomas, and she is all nails and punches against her opponent. The crowd urges them on. Just as Darlene starts to win, someone hits her on the head with a brick. The last thing she sees before losing consciousness is Cousin Santos, still sitting on his stoop, crying like a baby.

THESE GIRLS DON'T HAVE TO ACT TOUGH. THEY ARE TOUGH.

A few years ago, girl gang members wore Pendletons and bandannas. They were proud of their "war paint"—eyes creased with heavy black eyeliner and cheeks gouged with crimson streaks of blush. Today, according to Sylvia, "girls in the gangs take better care of themselves. They dress up real pretty. No more false eyelashes with their hair all ratted."

But underneath the new hairdos and pristine dresses is still a seething rage. These girls don't have to act tough. They *are* tough.

Helicopters circle overhead. Police cars with dizzying red lights send the Nuevo Estrada gang scurrying to their houses. Darlene is taken to the hospital, her face smashed, her nose broken.

The Lomas plot revenge. After all, one of their own has been beaten; one of their favorite party cars has been trashed. They discuss options, including a massacre of Nuevo Estrada.

Finally they reach a compromise: Santos has to die. He is the one who blew it by letting his homeboys know that Darlene was coming. His death can atone for that wrong. To prove her loyalty, Darlene has to agree.

"The gang expects a lot from you," Sylvia says. "Say there's a riot going down and you have to go and kill somebody because they kill somebody from your gang. Then it's like, are you really going to go down for your gang? Are you gonna shoot that person or aren't you?"

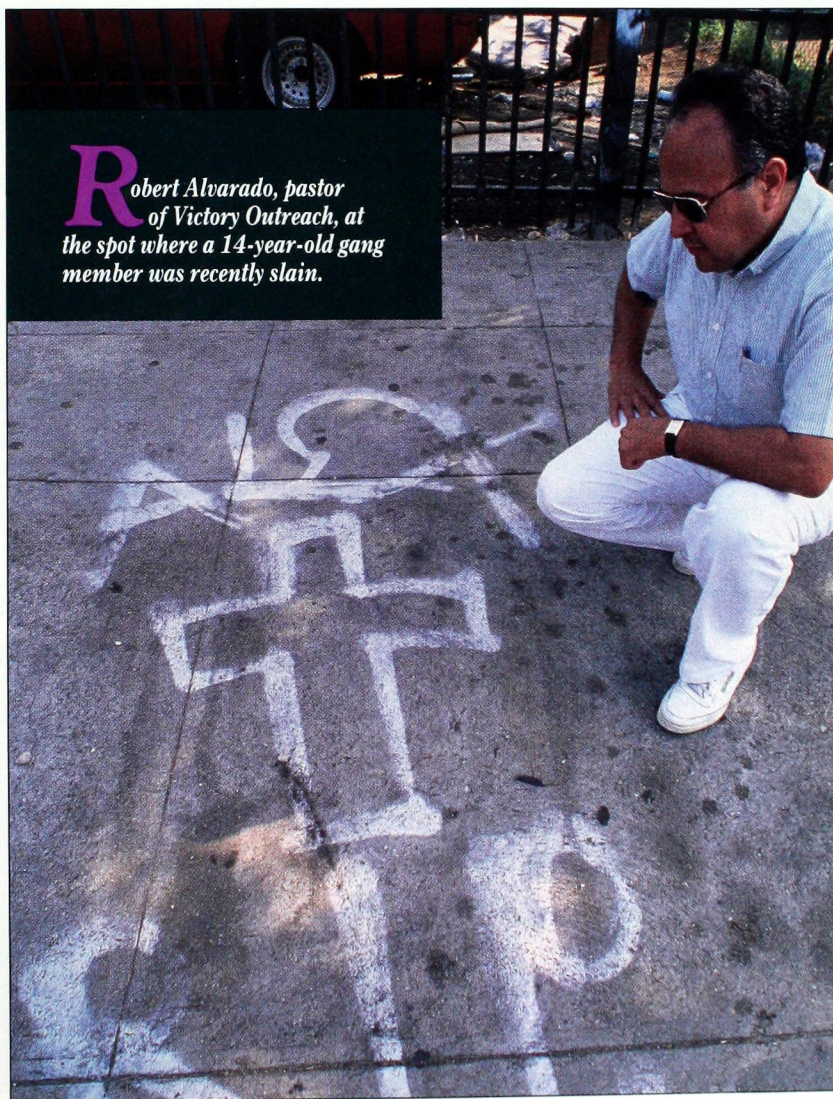
Loyalty is the supreme virtue,

especially in Mexican gangs, which still ascribe to some semblance of gang tradition. The police are unsuccessful at interrogations and make fewer arrests than they might, because gang members won't talk to them. They work out their problems their own way.

Darlene is confused. Despite his "wimping out," Santos is still her cousin, and she doesn't want him killed. Yet she can't appear weak; she has a reputation to uphold. She has to come up with a solution. "I'm the one that got my face smashed in," she tells the Lomas. "If anybody's gonna kill my cousin, it's gonna be me."

The gang agrees. Darlene's logic is irrefutable. She is the perfect choice for executioner. Once again, Darlene and her friends pile into the Le Mans and head into Barrio Nuevo Estrada.

Darlene knows where her cousin hangs. They search each likely haunt. They finally spot him walking down the street. Darlene calmly aims her gun and



Robert Alvarado, pastor of Victory Outreach, at the spot where a 14-year-old gang member was recently slain.

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fires. The bullet finds its mark in his arm—as she intends—and he takes off running. “I couldn’t let them kill him, but I had to at least shoot him,” she says. “I was bound to my neighborhood to do that.”

Some gangs let rivals enter their territory to buy drugs. Others shoot interlopers on sight, no matter what. There are neutral areas, and areas that are impossible to cross. Some gangs will form an uneasy alliance to get even with a third gang. Some gangs never make truces with anyone. In any case, the lines of loyalty can get hopelessly intertwined.

Though Santos lives, the Lomas are appeased. A hole in his arm testifies to their power and mercy. An uneasy truce envelops the two gangs. But something bothers Darlene. In the initial battle, two of her friends called out the name of their gangs and threw themselves into the fray. But her boyfriend stayed silent and then took off. Like a coward.

She gets on him. “How come you left?” she demands. He says they had a gun on him. “Didn’t you see what they did to me?” she replies. He doesn’t answer. Then the truth emerges. Nuevo Estrada was her boyfriend’s first gang. His primary loyalty will always belong to them.

Efforts to contain the gangs and stem the destruction have proved ineffective. Beyond beefing up police efforts and halfhearted attempts to provide minimum-wage jobs, society has few real solutions; no substitutes for family; no alternative common causes to rally around.

Yet many of the women caught in gangs are aching for a way out. Sylvia says, “I remember sitting alone at night at a party, getting loaded. And I kept thinking, is this it? Isn’t there something else besides getting loaded, besides getting hurt, besides hurting people? I’d look at the older people still hanging out and think, is that me in a few years?”

Darlene asked herself the same questions. “I didn’t think this was all there was to life. I didn’t wanna be nothing,” she says.

Despite the trend over the past several decades for churches to abandon the inner cities, a few have

stayed, and ministries have arisen to provide alternatives and hope to the gangs. Some gang members, including Darlene and Sylvia, have received Christ through Victory Outreach, a church in downtown Los Angeles that ministers to gang members.

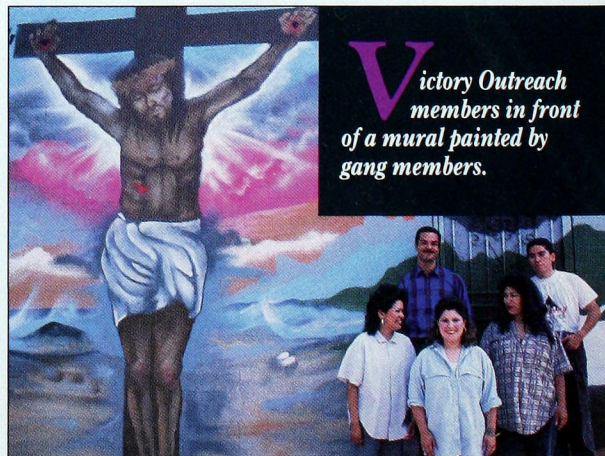
Those churches and ministries that are still operating in gang-ridden downtown Los Angeles are discovering a responsiveness and a hunger for the gospel that is almost painful. Sylvia says, “The other day, a girl from my old gang called me. Her sister had killed herself. They found her hanging from a tree. She said, ‘You’ve been serving God for four years now. I know you have the answer for me and my family. If you can make it, so can I.’”

Jesus told the story of a man freed from a demon. He likened the man’s life to a house that has been swept and put in order but left empty. The demon eventually returned with his cohorts, and “the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

A frightened and angry society can whitewash the graffiti, build more jails, and avoid the bad parts of town. But the emotional and spiritual houses of these lost, hurting kids remain empty.

“These girls are heroic in their commitment to the gang,” says Robert Alvarado, pastor of Victory Outreach. “They’ve taken up arms. If you can rechannel that heroism, which starts at the core of their existence, you can turn them into warriors for Jesus. But the church itself needs to become informed. They need to touch and feel and walk with these kids. They have to see them as spiritual creatures, not just as people with bad records or tattoos. We need the church to become their gang, their focus.”

Darlene puts it this way: “It’s the gang or it’s Jesus. It’s loyalty unto death for one or the other. The question is, which one?” □



BY TIM BASCOM

WHEN NEED HAD A FACE

My first morning back in Nairobi, Kenya, I had a hard time getting out of bed, apprehensive about leaving my hotel. I rolled back the covers and stared out the window. *Come on, Tim*, I thought. *Face it*. After all, I wasn't new to those streets. I had attended school there as a missionary kid, and I felt sure that not much had changed in the past decade. Con artists and beggars would still line the roadways, and it would still be hard to distinguish the crooks from the truly needy. *That's okay*, I thought. *I'm not planning on giving anything to anyone*.

Sure enough, I had walked scarcely a block from the hotel when a distinguished-looking African with salt-and-pepper hair approached me.

"Hello," he said. "Do you live here?"

"I used to live here."

"So you know this place?"

"Some of it," I said as I studied him. He was educated; that much was obvious from his command of English. But his suitcoat was worn.

"So after you went to school here in Kenya," he continued, "you went to university in America. What did you study there?"

"English literature."

"Aha. What are you doing now? Teaching or journalism?"

I laughed. "Journalism."

"I know these things," he said, "because I am a teacher by profession. But excuse me. Maybe I am stopping you from doing something."

"I'm only walking," I replied. We ended up at a restaurant, where a friend of his joined us. I bought them soft drinks.

Soon the two men began to open up. They were Ugandan refugees who had fled when a government official from another tribe threatened to throw them in jail. They left their wives and children behind and escaped to Sudan, where rebels and government troops demanded they fight in the civil war. They fled again, walking across the wasteland of southern Sudan to Kenya.

They had been in Nairobi for three weeks. They had no money, no jobs, and were afraid of being deported. Now they wanted to try entering Tanzania, where they had heard the immigration laws were less stringent.

Finally the pitch came. They didn't have the money to do this. Could I help?

I had been determined not to give money to anyone, but suddenly need had taken on two human faces. And those faces had names: Ashford and David.

Maybe they were lying. Yet they had spoken

warmly of missionaries. "In Uganda," they had said, "everyone is corrupt. Some doctors will make you sell your last cow to pay for a single pill. But not the missionaries. We can trust them."

If they were learning trust from Christians, I wanted them to keep learning it. They left with almost all I had. I walked back to my hotel in such a daze that I didn't even see the young man who had slipped up beside me.

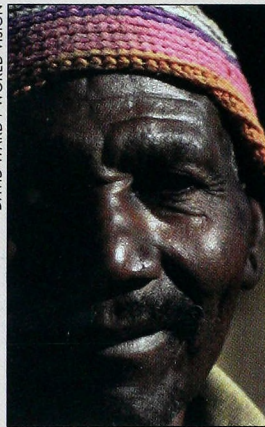
"Hello," he said shyly.

"Hello," I replied, noting his light skin and dark lashes.

"Are you from America?"

"Yes."

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



WORLD VISION



"I am from Somalia. There is much fighting there."

I nodded.

"They wanted me to fight, but I wouldn't. So I came here. But here there is no job. No food. I am always cold, and I cannot sleep."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I wish I could help, but I've already given away what I had."

"If I could just get to Uganda, I have a relative in the embassy. He could feed me ..."

His words trailed off. *My God*, I thought, *they shuffle from one problem area to another like people trapped in a burning building with no exits*.

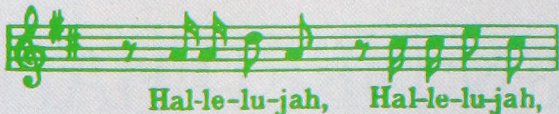
I reached the hotel, still deep in thought. Our world has so many needs. I sometimes try to convince myself that those needs are fabricated, to keep from getting overwhelmed. As soon as I do that, however, I become hardened, not only to the swindlers, but also to human beings with genuine needs. I can't refuse someone simply because that person might misuse my assistance. Unless I take risks, God can't show his love through me.

So have a good journey, Ashford and David. And may God go with you. □

Tim Bascom, editor of Interlit magazine, lives in Deerfield, Ill.

Finally the pitch came. They didn't have the money. Could I help?

Give the gift... that makes a difference!



Three people will rejoice when you send a special Christmas gift to World Vision today:

You, because your gift will be helping provide things like food, clothing, education, and medical care for a suffering and desperately needy child overseas.

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This superb recording has been provided to World Vision at a very low cost, thanks to the generosity of friends within the music industry.

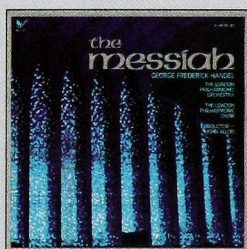
That's why we're able to make it available to you to give to your

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contribution today.

Then you will be helping three people rejoice in the wonderful spirit of Christmas!

(And don't forget you can order one for yourself, too!)

Yes, I want to help a needy child this Christmas, and also receive Handel's Messiah.

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I'm ordering _____ compact discs and _____ cassettes. Total: _____
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SPECIAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



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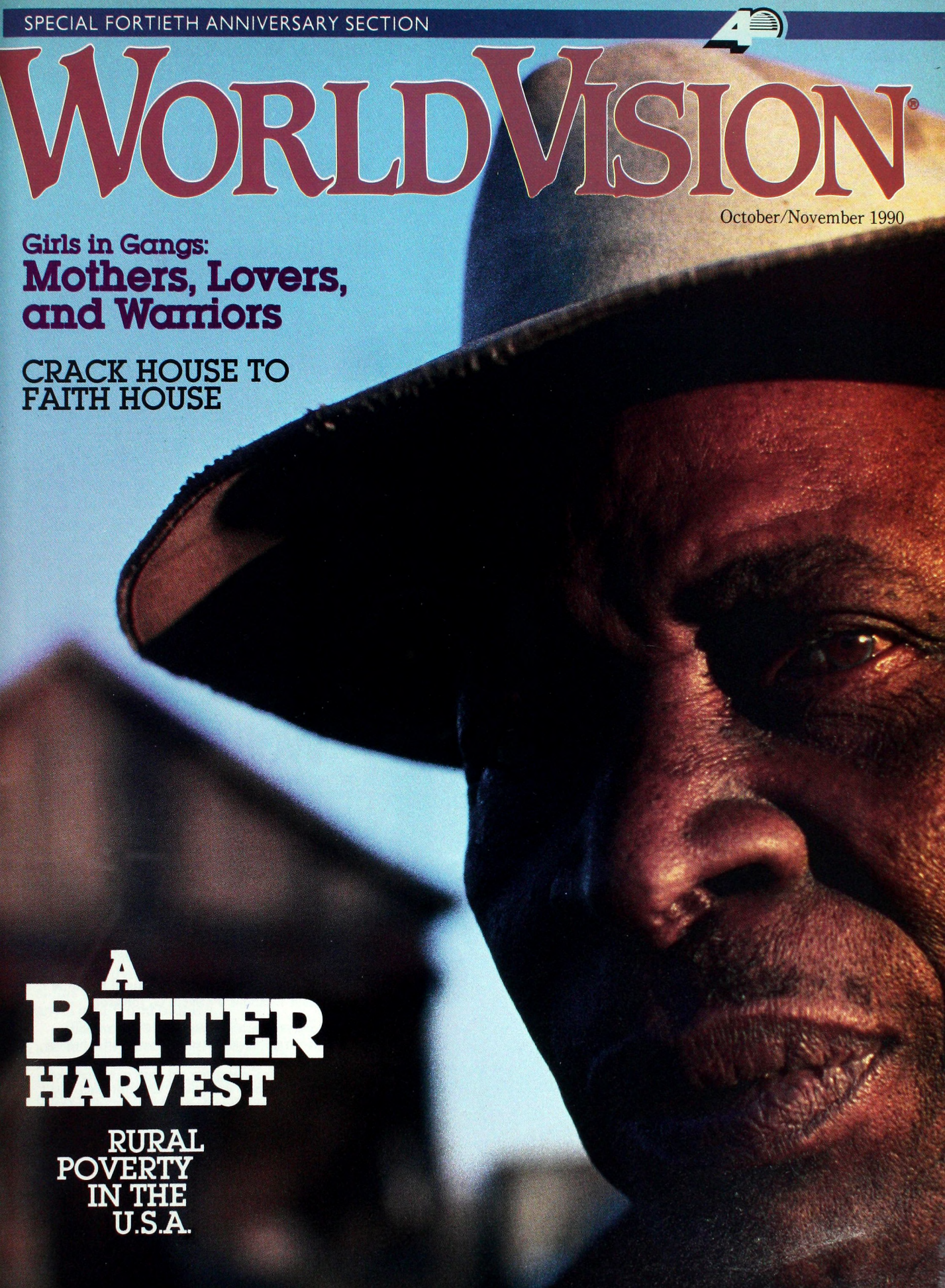
October/November 1990

Girls in Gangs:
**Mothers, Lovers,
and Warriors**

**CRACK HOUSE TO
FAITH HOUSE**

**A
BITTER
HARVEST**

**RURAL
POVERTY
IN THE
U.S.A.**



4 The Delta's Bitter Harvest

Growing old enough to have a baby and collect welfare is a rite of passage on the Mississippi Delta. So is growing old enough to leave. The Delta's future lies with the talented, aggressive leaders emerging in nearly every community—and they know what they're up against.

26 Mothers, Lovers & Warriors

A look at gang life through the eyes of Sylvia and Darlene, two Los Angeles "homegirls" who have seen it all—and finally found Someone worthy of their life-or-death loyalty.

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



11 Living Between Two Anniversaries

"Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday." Robert Seiple reflects on the God of anniversaries.

13 In Their Own Words

Facts and figures would be one way to tell it. But World Vision is about people, not facts and figures. To represent the six main types of work World Vision does, seven individuals from around the world tell the story ... in their own words.

20 When Darkness Turned to Light

A ragged band of refugee believers meets before dawn on a frigid winter day in wartime Korea. They take comfort in singing and Scripture. Then, unbelievably, they take an offering. (Excerpted from the recently released book *One Life at a Time*, by Robert Seiple.)

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Forty years ago World Vision was birthed among the horror and sorrow of the Korean War. Evangelist Bob Pierce's vision to help the innocent victims, tens of thousands of children, quickly grew beyond Korea, but never beyond the needs of children.

Since then, led by well known Christian statesmen Stan Mooneyham, Ted Engstrom, Tom Houston, Graeme Irvine and Robert Seiple, World Vision in the U.S. and abroad has invested 40 years putting faith to work in an increasingly diverse and needy world. Today, World Vision ministers in more than 5100 projects in 89 countries.

Terry Madison

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North America's vast rural lands stretch on like a great yawning giant. For more than 400 years the sometimes gentle, sometimes savage U.S. backlands lured people searching for the freedom to move and live as they chose. Thriving farms and small towns were built by independent people determined to stand on their own.

But today, for almost 20 percent of the people who live there, the rural United States is a land of no exits, a prison without bars. A shocking 9.7 million Americans live in pockets of poverty not unlike the Third World.

Laredo, Texas. Twenty-five million gallons of raw sewage are pumped daily into the Rio Grande River. People aren't allowed to swim in that water, but they hoist it out by bucketfuls and drink it, bathe in it, and wash their clothes in it. It is the only water available to them.

In the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee, some families live in conditions that were marginal a century ago, with no electricity, running water, or indoor plumbing. In some areas, more than half of the high school students drop out.

In the 320 poorest counties in the United States, child mortality rates are 45 percent higher than the national average. That means 20 children out of 1,000 do not survive their first few years, a child survival rate comparable to Panama's. Of those children who survive, 25 percent live below the U.S. government's official poverty line of \$12,000 per year for a family of four.

While the numbers of poverty glide and twist in gross abstraction, the places of poverty sound picturesque, even beautiful. Wenatchee. Cameron Park. Elaine. Gilt Edge. Sugar Ditch. But names cannot hide the squalor.

From the Pacific Northwest to the Heartland, snaking through the Bible Belt and pushing north to New England, the rural poor defy regional borders and color barriers. In the Appalachias, the faces of poverty are white; in Mississippi, the majority are black; in North Dakota they are American Indian; on the Tex-Mex border they are Hispanic. Yet all are victims of circumstance and self-delusion, living and dying in rural slums as void of hope as any Third-World country.

The irony is that poverty rates in urban areas are actually declining, according to a recent *Newsweek* article. Private donations pour into inner-city projects because they are literally underfoot—more noticed, more exposed by the media, more public.

Relief offices and job training programs do not set up shop in out-of-the-way places. Indus-

tries relying on cheap labor move to more easily exploited foreign countries. Government farm subsidies are almost useless, since only 7 percent of the indigent live on farms. The rest languish in small towns across the country.

Like the urban poor, rural families are stuck in a system that withholds AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), Medicaid, and other benefits from two-parent households and people earning minimum wage—in effect penalizing couples who stay together and work full-time at menial jobs. And *unlike* the urban poor, rural families tend to stay together despite the loss of those benefits.

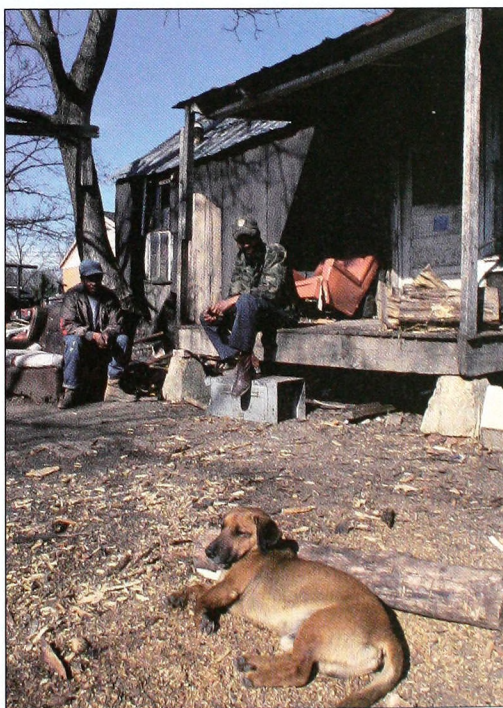
Perhaps the most poignant sign of rural America's growing poverty, however, is that the homeless are now woven into the fabric of life at the periphery of the farm. Though officials refuse to recognize them as homeless in national statistics, 25,000 Ohioans have no indoor plumbing; in the Appalachias, thousands live on dirt floors; and along the Tex-Mex border, people live in cardboard homes.

Some government aid projects are starting up. There are a few special health programs geared to Hispanic day laborers in Texas. Private charities, such as Habitat for Humanity and World Vision, are building homes and teaching job skills and literacy in places like Coahoma, Miss., and patches of the Appalachias.

But from the redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters, thousands are stuck with nothing in the land of plenty. □ *Anna Waterhouse*

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA **THE RURAL POOR**

**Close to
10 million
Americans
live in rural
pockets of
poverty.**



JON WARREN



Freddie Lee's one-room shack in Coahoma has no indoor plumbing, but he says it's better than his old one.

For the poor on the Mississippi Delta,
life is a mixture of hope and regret,
a place where dreams rise only
as high as government subsidies.

Mississippi has always been a bewitched and tragic ground, yet it's also a land of heroism and nobility; a place which has honored those of us of all our races who possess the courage and the imagination of the resources given to us on this haunted terrain.

—Willie Morris,
Mississippi writer

It is midday on the Mississippi Delta when Annie Freeman finally sits down to rest. Her three grandchildren play in the dirt yard that circles her small, sparsely furnished farmhouse. Her 23-year-old son, Anthony, lies speechless and paralyzed in a back bedroom, viewing the world from a window overlooking a cotton field. Annie pushes back her hair, and in a quiet, tentative voice talks about her life.

Annie was born on a Delta plantation, the daughter of a poor sharecropping family. That same year, a white man killed her father, leaving Annie's mother without means to feed her family. She gave Annie to a neighbor.

Annie began picking cotton as soon as she could walk. Between

crops, she attended a substandard school for black children and dreamed of becoming a nurse. Her dream died when, at 14, she dropped out of school because of her family's poverty.

Shortly afterwards, Annie had a baby and married a talented mechanic and farm worker. But over the next several years he started drinking up the family's meager income. Annie had to work double shifts in a local factory. The



THE DELTA'S BITTER HARVEST

TEXT BY BARBARA THOMPSON
PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

low wages were barely enough to feed her six children and pay rent on a tumble-down shotgun house.

In the early 1980s, Annie's husband and a daughter, the family's first college student, died after long illnesses. Then her 16-year-old son, Anthony, collapsed during a basketball game and was left permanently paralyzed and speechless. Annie's life was a blur of hospital and graveside visits.

Today, at age 45 and after more than 40 years of hard work, Annie still lives in poverty on the Delta. She is a shy, gentle woman, and she speaks of the past without bitterness. "Life is okay," she says. "But there's just so much you have to go through."

Annie carefully budgets a government check to support her household of eight, and she hopes to save enough money to fix her leaking roof. She spends her days babysitting grandchildren and nursing her bedridden son, turning him every two hours and feeding him through a tracheal tube.



Rev. Carl Brown

"They wanted me to put him in an institution," Annie says. "But I wanted him home with us."

Annie's dreams for the future are tied to her children and grandchildren. An encyclopedia dominates her living room, and she strongly encourages each child to go to college. "I would like them to see life," she says. "But not like I saw it."

The mix of hope and regret with which Annie Freeman faces the future is echoed countless times among the rural poor of the Mississippi Delta. Extending from Memphis, Tenn., to Vicksburg, Miss., the Delta's flat, fertile farmland is home to some of the nation's poorest citizens. In many com-

The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers are moving out.

munities, two of every five adults are illiterate, and infant mortality rates are higher than in some Third World countries.

Many of the Delta's problems are rooted in the dark currents of its not-so-distant past. To ensure a continuous supply of cheap labor for the region's cotton economy, wealthy planters discouraged industry from locating in the region. Since education was unimportant for field work, schools for black children were few and underfunded.

By the 1960s, the Delta's traditional economy had collapsed. One mechanical cotton picker could do the work of 250 field hands, and thousands of plantation workers were left homeless, uneducated, and unemployed. Working-age men fled the state, leaving behind desperately poor communities of single mothers, children, and the elderly.

Today most young adult men still flee the Delta. Those who stay behind echo the despair of Elvis Martin, a 32-year-old unemployed laborer in Quitman County. Dressed in worn blue jeans, Martin waits to meet with a social worker in a cramped office in downtown Marks. He has been unemployed for four months and does not qualify for government assistance.

"If I could see better, I'd get out of here," he says in a flat, hopeless voice. "But you have to have something to start on, something going for yourself just to get up and leave." Before losing his last job, Martin worked three years for the same company. After two raises, he earned \$3.75 an hour—part-time.

Unemployment and underemploy-

Gloria Jean Bell and Robert Clark in her room along Sugar Ditch.





ment remain the region's greatest economic problem. The 1980s was the Delta's worst decade since the Depression. Farm jobs continue to decline, and manufacturers who exploited the South's cheap labor are moving to the Third World, where wages are lower yet. The region's uneducated labor pool is now a development nightmare.

"There are few industries moving anywhere in the United States," says Vaughn Grisham, professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi. "Those that do move are looking for at least basic literacy."

Cotton Row, in the small, rural

town of Marks, is a narrow, unpaved road where Martin Luther King once marched and wept. Its edges are lined with tar-paper shacks, scrap metal, abandoned cars, and polluted ditches.

It is the middle of a cold Delta winter. Many of the homes on Cotton Row appear abandoned. Roofs sag and front porches sink to the ground. Windows are broken or boarded up.

In one house, a group of teenagers drift in and out of the living room to keep warm and catch the latest neighborhood news. Rita, a junior in high

school, bottlefeeds her week-old baby with an air of maternal contentment. Her boyfriend, an articulate high school senior, talks of heading north after graduation to find a job. Josephine, an 18-year-old junior, nods her approval.

"Young people today can do a lot with their lives," Josephine says. Then she glances at her grandmother, who spent 30 years as a sharecropper, and reconsiders. "Sometimes I think I can make something of myself," she says wistfully. "But then I think, I can't do it. I don't have what it takes."

For many teenagers on the Delta, dreams rise only as high as govern-

ment subsidies. Federal money (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Social Security, disability, etc.) accounts for 70 percent of income in many communities, and there are few role models of economic self-sufficiency. Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.

With few career opportunities or recreational outlets, alarming numbers of Delta children and teenagers turn to alcohol and illegal drugs.

"Growing up in the Delta is like being out in the middle of a river without a boat," says Rev. Carl Brown, a Baptist minister in Marks. "Kids will use any-

thing they can to get to shore." Brown estimates that 80 percent of the Delta's teenagers use drugs. Crack can be purchased even in the smallest towns.

The Delta's extreme poverty has introduced a new element in communities traditionally divided by race. "We have changed segregation from color to money," says Bobbie Walker, the mayor of Jonestown. "Twenty years ago a white person wouldn't even see me. Now, if I'm an upper class black, they will talk to me. But if I'm a poor white person, they will look the other way."

Sara Rumbaugh of Quitman

County was disabled with a crippling back injury in an automobile accident. She has yet to qualify for disability payments, and she has difficulty making ends meet.

"If you're a poor white person like me, most people don't want to help you," Rumbaugh says. She receives food from Rev. Brown's church and has found an advocate in the county's black director of social services.

The future of the Delta's rural poor—white and black—lies with the many talented, aggressive leaders who are emerging in almost every community. Mayor W.J. Jones of Coahoma (pop. 350) has spearheaded a revolutionary housing program that is dramatically improving the town's living conditions. In Tunica, disabled veteran Joe Hawkins struggles to sustain the county's first black-owned and -operated grocery store. Despite opposition, the store employs four people and has been operating for two years.

In Quitman County, the second-poorest county in Mississippi, Rev. Carl Brown leads the Valley Queen Baptist Church in ministering to the rural poor. Despite the church's own

Peggy Handy always dreamed of raising her nine children in a home of their own. For years, in Coahoma, Miss., she paid \$40 a month for a shack with only one habitable room. She had no indoor plumbing, the roof was falling in, and despite her efforts to patch the walls, the shack was never warm in winter.

Today Peggy owns a new, well-insulated home with four bedrooms and an indoor bathroom. "Everything I asked for, God has given me," she says. Peggy pays a mortgage of \$100 a month, including insurance and maintenance.

"The biggest change is in the children," she says. "They are so active now—and proud to come home."

Peggy's impossible dream, and those of many other Coahoma residents, took solid form when their mayor, W.J. Jones, joined World Vision and Habitat for Humanity in a plan to completely eliminate poverty housing within the town limits.

The interest-free, no-profit houses are built mostly by volunteers. Future owners contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity," and house payments are recycled to build new homes.

Coahoma's housing problems are as severe as anywhere in the United States. Eighty percent of the homes are substandard, and Mayor Jones estimates that every year as many as 10 houses are lost to fire or collapse. Peggy Handy's old house burned, with all her



Peggy Handy and her children in front of their new home.

possessions, in a four-home fire.

Average family income in Coahoma is \$4,000-\$5,000, and in winter months unemployment runs as high as 80 percent. Often several families are forced to live in one small house.

Today nine new houses have been occupied, six are under construction, and over 50 more are planned. Coahoma's new homes have substantially affected the town's residents.

"Even if we never built another house, our children are being transformed," says Mayor Jones, a middle-school principal. He remembers when Michael Handy moved into his new home. "Until then, Michael was a quiet, withdrawn little boy. The day his family moved, he ran into my office at school, saying 'You've got to come and see my house!'"

Coahoma's housing project is just a beginning. World Vision is helping the town develop a seedling business and a literacy program. The town is also drawing plans for a sewage system, a job training program, the development of small businesses, and girls' and boys' clubs. It's a big dream for a small town, but dreams come true in Coahoma. □ *Barbara Thompson*

PROUD TO COME HOME

Growing old enough to have a child and collect a welfare check represents the same rite of passage as landing a first job.



poverty, it serves 40 hot meals a day and runs a shelter for the homeless. It also distributes relief supplies from churches as far away as California.

"In the past, religion for black folks was a matter of simple revival," Brown says. "Now we take a holistic approach. We say to our people, 'Come with us, and we will do you good.'"

In her small, three-room house, 85-year-old Pearl Scurlock sits in her armchair like a queen on a throne. Dressed in a bright plaid skirt, a flowered blouse, and a red headband, she holds a letter she wrote to government officials in Washington, D.C., about cuts in Social Security payments. "We worked hard and paid into the system; now they want us to starve to death," she reads. "Someone needs to come down here to Quitman County and see about us elderly people."

Pearl, who attends Rev. Brown's church, is a colorful community activist who is fast becoming a county legend. She began cooking and cleaning on a cotton plantation "when I had to stand on a block to reach the counter," and was forced to drop out of school in the third grade.

After 60 years of working six and seven days a week, Pearl retired with crippling arthritis. "When I went to collect my Social Security, I had a terrible shock," she remembers. "My employers withheld it from my paycheck, but they never paid the government."

Like many other elderly people on the Delta, Pearl barely gets by on \$360 a month from SSI, government funds provided for those without Social Security. Despite her crushing poverty and poor health, she is an energetic advocate for the elderly and the poor. She also helps with her church's food distribution program, organizes

"If you're poor and white, most people don't want to help you," says Sara Rumbaugh, shown here with her son Thomas at the Social Services office.



Pearl Scurlock. "If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," says Rev. Carl Brown.



voter transportation, and makes phone calls for absentee-ballot drives.

"If we had a few more people like Pearl, we could change the whole South in 40 years," Rev. Brown says.

Activists like Brown know that substantial change will not come soon to the Delta. Talented, ambitious young people still flee as soon as they are able, and the average worker earned less in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Schools remain almost completely segregated. Although blacks have won significant political victories, they still lack economic power.

The tension between the black community and the traditional white power structure simmers just beneath the surface of almost every conversation. Rev. Brown has been the target of numerous death threats, and for a time was forced to travel with bodyguards.

"You struggle all your life until you finally see the light at the end of the tunnel," says one black leader, who started a community-owned business.

"Then you realize it might be a bomb."

Despite intimidation and fear of reprisals, black and white leaders in the Delta are beginning to work together. "The whole of Mississippi is in a helpless situation," Rev. Brown says. "Young white people are sensing that, even if our children don't go to school together, we can't allow the Delta to continue in its present direction." Brown's emphasis on serving the poor in both white and black communities has won over some of his most vocal white opponents.

"There are deep scars for both whites and blacks," says Mayor Jones of Coahoma. "But the time for building hate walls is over. All people have wonderful qualities and all people have weaknesses. We need to pool our strengths and start working together. Otherwise we are going to lose the Delta and our country too." □

Barbara Thompson is a free-lance writer in Atlanta, Ga.

*The church
being the church
among the poor*

FROM CRACK HOUSE TO FAITH HOUSE

BY MARILYN GARDNER

Faith Temple

When crack dealers and prostitutes took over a vacant house behind Faith Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla., members faced a serious problem: what to do with the condemned church-owned residence, which vandals, drug addicts, and termites had destroyed.

A wrecking company would cost more than the dwindling congregation could afford. Calling in the fire department to burn it down, which the city had done to other crack houses, seemed too dangerous in this case.

The church's new minister, Rev. Michael Lewis, encouraged members to search for a positive solution. "We began to pray to find a way we could get involved in the war on drugs," says Lewis. The congregation decided to mortgage the church for \$25,000, then turn the house into a foster-care placement center for babies exposed to drugs.

One year later, dozens of babies affected by cocaine have been placed in foster homes out of this three-story white building, where playpens compete for space with desks and filing cabinets.

"The Bible clearly states that the church is supposed to take care of widows and orphans," Lewis says. "Knowing that we're fulfilling that obligation is very rewarding."

"We have black babies, white babies, brown babies,"

says coordinator Curtis Marshall. "Our primary goal is to get the natural moms back with the children. Once we locate them, if they're on drugs, we want to give them counseling and treatment." Until then, babies are placed with licensed foster mothers.

One of the program's first foster mothers, Naneita Redrick, cares for a 12-month-old girl who tested positive for heroin at birth, and a 13-month-old girl and her 3-year-old brother, who both tested positive for cocaine.

"You have to use a lot more love and be very patient with these babies," Redrick says. "They have periods when they're irritable and extremely

nervous." Yet already she sees progress. "In the beginning, at the least little noise, they would tremble. Now it doesn't seem to bother them."

Faith House's director of counseling, Robert James, says, "I've seen some complete turn-arounds where the cocaine babies are responding marvelously."

The babies' biological mothers have progressed far less quickly. Their ages range from 19 to 31, and many do not know who their child's father is. "We're finding the natural mothers are not as concerned about their babies as I thought they would be," Lewis says.

Tracy Jordan, a supervisor at the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, says, "On some level, the mothers probably all do want their babies, but just are not able to follow through." Even if they can get through a drug rehabilitation program, they have to return to their housing project, where dealers will often give drugs out free at first to hook people. They'll even leave the drugs in mailboxes and under doors, Jordan says.

Even so, Jordan says, one mother "has licked drugs and alcohol and is almost ready to get her child back." Though Jordan emphasizes that Faith House has not been operating long enough to know how successful it will be in reuniting families, she calls it a step in the right direction.

What began as the vision of one minister and one church has expanded into a cooperative effort. Last year, hearing that Faith House was running out of money, members of Bayshore Baptist Church donated materials and labor. At Christmas they made "pamper baskets" for the foster mothers, filling them with lotions and bubble bath. And recently 25 members provided an evening out for the foster mothers, caring for their children for five hours.

Across Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Faith House has been a model for a Roman Catholic foster-care program for drug-addicted babies, scheduled to start later this year.

Faith House has also helped to renew the spirit of Faith Temple. "We see the excitement in members' eyes when they get involved," says Lewis, noting that membership has risen from 40 to 300 since Faith House was established.

"No longer can we expect the world to walk through our front doors on Sunday morning," he adds. "The church needs to become very active in taking part in the healing of the total person." □

Excerpted by permission from The Christian Science Monitor, where Marilyn Gardner is a staff writer.

ROBERT ROGERS



*For more information contact
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2005 Larmar St.,
Tampa, FL 33602.*



LIVING BETWEEN TWO ANNIVERSARIES

BY ROBERT
A. SEIPLE,
PRESIDENT

The sign was all too telling. "Fireworks, one-half off." For two weeks I had watched the Skokomish Indians of western Washington competitively market their wares, in this case fireworks, in anticipation of the Fourth of July celebration. Fireworks are a traditional part of this anniversary, and through one of those old laws that allows for anomalies in the present, the Indians were able to sell them.

But the anniversary had come and gone. This was now the fifth of July. The symbol of the anniversary had its value reduced. You could now buy firecrackers at half price. It would be another year before they commanded a higher value. Like the half-price sales of wrapping paper the day after Christmas, our culture had unceremoniously told us that the anniversary was over and it was time to be thinking about other things.

I think we and our culture have gotten it wrong with respect to anniversaries. Certainly independence and liberty are not a one-day happening, punctuated by firecrackers that only have momentary value. As we watch liberty and independence being fought over and struggled with around the world, there is more than a suggestion that *our* freedom ought to be cause for perpetual celebration. And, if it is possible today to properly unwrap the gift of the Christ child, the event that caused the angels to sing should have us exchanging the gift of God's love every day of the year.

Something has gone wrong with anniversaries. It never used to be this way. The Israelites

had an anniversary that they celebrated every time they opened their mouth—their exodus from Egypt. They couldn't kick off an event, begin a sermon, commemorate a feast day without recalling the phrase, "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Both God and his people received a special identity on that day. It was written into the preamble to their constitution. It was part of their birthright, their passport. It linked their past with their present and gave them hope and expectation for the future.

The anniversary of the exodus stood for freedom and justice under a sovereign God. It allowed for the people of Israel to be led back to the land of promise by a God who always keeps his promises. A people were to be whole and the God of the exodus was to be made known to the nations of the world through this one nation, called out, set apart, set free to be all that God intended it to be. "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out ..." All of the hopes and dreams, as well as the expectations and obligations, for the nation of Israel flow from this anniversary.

When the Israelites finally inhabited the promised land, they built the most magnificent temple in the world for the symbols of this God. No half-price sales here. David and Solomon saw to it: the God who penetrated history through the



nation Israel would be remembered.

And God would penetrate history again, for the good and love of humankind. "The Word was made flesh," an incomprehensible gift, the most remarkable anniversary, one that could never be devalued by God. Indeed, the price that was paid for this anniversary was ultimately a life that was freely sacrificed on a cross.

Now the blessed hope of our day is that there is one more anniversary to come. The God that made himself known to Israel, the One who finally sent his Son, will one day come again. In anticipation of this anniversary, Paul instructs Titus "to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." In a sense, then, we are living between two anniversaries, our coming to the Christ of Christmas and Christ reappearing sometime in the future. Our lives are being lived between the planting of the mustard seed and the full flowering of that tree someday with the kingdom of our coming Lord. The two most significant events of history have been and are being directed at those who would seek to embrace the God of anniversaries. No half-price sales here.

In the midst of these momentous events, World Vision is having an anniversary. We are 40 years old. In and of itself, the date is not significant. As we are led back to our roots, however, and as we anticipate our future, a reflection is both legitimate and necessary. We were founded in the heart of an evangelist. May we never forget that. May we always hold to the core reason for our existence—to point people in the direction of Jesus Christ. As we live our lives in the present, may we see the world through the eyes of Jesus. May we continue to have our hearts broken by the things that break the heart of a holy God. And as we look to a challenging future, may our words and our deeds truly represent the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

The call upon each one of us from the beginning needs to be matched today with an obedient heart. The vision of founding fathers needs to be sustained today through the implementation of accountability and integrity. The dreams of those early days need to be translated into reality, a reality that is better than the past and gives us legitimate hope for future dreams. If we can do all that, this will be an anniversary worth remembering, one step along the way of God's plan for the ages, anticipating the reunion yet to come. □

**Our lives
are being
lived
between
the plant-
ing of the
mustard
seed and
the full
flowering
of that
tree
someday.**



In *their own words*

Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder, used to pray out loud in his sleep, the legend goes. It was not uncommon for his traveling companions to be wakened in the middle of the night by mutterings in the dark from the bed across the room. Prayers. They heard prayers from a man so driven by compassion for those in need that his petitions on their behalf never ceased, even in sleep.

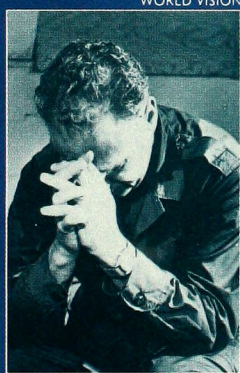
Forty years later, the answers to those prayers still live in the hearts of thousands of people worldwide. These people are child sponsors, financial donors, countertop-donation volunteers, and prayer partners. They are emergency relief workers, development experts, doctors, nutritionists, and administrators. They are long-range planners, fund-raisers, computer experts,

mechanics, and well-diggers. With Christ's compassion, they reach out to the poor, the result of a vision that began in an evangelist's heart more than four decades ago.

Bob Pierce's "world vision" first took form with Korean War orphans. It grew into an official organization in 1950, and gradually developed into a ministry with six channels of outreach: child sponsorship, evangelism, strengthening Christian leadership, emergency relief, long-range development, and challenging people of plenty to reach out to the poor.

Facts, figures, and lists would be one way to show the scope of World Vision's outreach during its first 40 years. But the ministry is not about numbers and cold facts, it is about people. World Vision's ministry is about changed lives, transformed men and women, one at a time.

On the next few pages, a few of those people will tell you their stories in their own words.



Dr. Bob Pierce

SPECIAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY SECTION



World Vision links sponsors with nearly a million needy children worldwide. Benefits to sponsored children and their families include education, health care, and community development.

Sandra Leticia Canel

Guatemala

Seamstress, age 18

BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Behind a cinder-block wall in Guatemala City, Sandra Leticia Canel climbs a splintery staircase every weekday morning at 7:30 and sits behind a sewing machine until 4:30. In the evenings she goes to school.

Sandra started sewing when she was 8. When she finishes secondary school, she plans to study accounting.

The happiest moment of my life was when I became sponsored and started attending the Carolingia Day Care Center. I love that place. I started going there when I was about 8 years old. Before then, I had no real

friends. I would just go to school in the morning and come home in the afternoon. But at the day care center I made friends quickly. It was the relationships I built, both with the other children and with my sponsor, that were most important to me.

I love math. Numbers are so important in every aspect of life. That's why I want to be an accountant. I will continue to sew while I am in school, but after I graduate, I want to be an excellent accountant, assisting people in a big factory or business.

If anyone is thinking about sponsoring a child, I would say yes, please do it. It's important for children to know that somebody is remembering them, that somebody who lives far away is thinking of them fondly, and considering their needs. It made such a difference in my life.

Short of death, Chang Tae Ho's life couldn't have gotten much worse than when his mother abandoned him under a bridge. He was a 3-year-old polio victim.

A Catholic priest rescued him and took him to an orphanage. For the next eight years, Chang suffered jeering and teasing because of his lifeless legs.

When he moved to the Song Bo Won Home for Handicapped Children, supported by World Vision sponsors, it turned his life around.

Life in the orphanage was hard. The other children made fun of me because I couldn't walk. I cried every night. When I heard about the Song Bo Won Home, I applied for a place there and was accepted.

Almost immediately after I arrived, things got much better. Nobody teased me for my handicap.

Chang Tae Ho

Korea

Watch repairman, age 29

For the first time in my life, I felt loved. I felt that I really could be something. I loved Mrs. Chea, the director. She was like the mother I never had.

I was very curious about the way watches and clocks worked. I started a five-year course in watch repair and worked hard at it. Soon I was the top student.

When I left the school, I put that training to use. I now have my own clock retail and repair shop.

Through my sponsor and Mrs. Chea, I learned that nothing is impossible. I know they prayed for me, too. They will always be welcome in my shop!



SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



In 1989 World Vision assisted 1.3 million disaster victims, providing relief such as medical treatment, food, and shelter.

Tadelech Tadiesse

*Ethiopia
Farmer, age 51*

In 1984, when drought and famine gripped Ethiopia and killed almost a million people, Tadelech Tadiesse lived in the Ansokia Valley, one of the country's hardest hit areas. The 31-mile-long valley was a barren dust bowl. At the height of the famine, Tadelech Tadiesse and what was left of her family sought help at a World Vision relief camp.

Today life has dramatically improved, both for Tadiesse and for the Ansokia Valley. Emergency assistance has evolved into long-term development. Wells have been dug, trees and gardens planted, and farmers have received tools, seeds, and fertilizers. The valley is green and full of life.

Today, in addition to farming, Tadiesse is a caretaker for 55 sponsored children.

In 1984, everyone was just lying on the ground waiting for food. They didn't even have the strength to brush flies away. Then World Vision came, and helped to bury our dead. Those who died, even their bones will not forget what World Vision has done.

Now you can see where the children's bellies are flat because the drinking water is free from parasites. The children are clean. They wash their hands, eyes, and faces.



I'll care for these children before I do anything else. The benefit to the community is so great. The children are our future life. So I will always put this first, then look after my farmland.

BRUCE BRANDER / WORLD VISION

Development work enables a community to address its long-term needs, such as a safe water supply, health care, hygiene, literacy, and income generation. Nearly 1.9 million people benefited from community development work in 1989.

Benjamin Grivalba

Guatemala
Farmer, age 49

A wide, gummy grin spreads across Benjamin Grivalba's craggy face. He squats proudly in his thriving onion field in Aldea Loma Larga, a tiny Guatemalan village not far from Honduras. With a loan from World Vision last year, Grivalba bought fertilizer and a water pump for his field. That assistance helped him more than double his crop yield this year.

Half his crop went into the community's cooperative fund; he sold the other half at the market. With the profits, he repaid the loan and set aside a little extra for the next crop.

The plot of land I'm using to grow onions used to be full of rocks and old roots. Erosion had made the land poor and our crops weren't good. We needed fertilizer and better irrigation. With my loan, I was able to reclaim my section of land.

I am glad for the help we're getting with our land. But I am also grateful for the educational help. Before World Vision came here, not many people could go to school through the sixth grade. I have only a second-grade education. But now we have people who are even going on to secondary school.

I was born here. My wife, Salvadora, and I will probably live here for the rest of our lives. Life is still hard, but now we see good results from our work. We see our children learning. It is better now.



BRUCE STRONG / WORLD VISION



Pastors' conferences have offered training and encouragement to over 100,000 ministers and church leaders serving in difficult circumstances in more than 50 countries.

SANJAY SOJWAL / WORLD VISION



Han Kyung Chik

Korea
Pastor, age 90

If it hadn't been for Han Kyung Chik's unexpected meeting with Bob Pierce on the streets of Pusan, Korea, in 1950, World Vision pastors' conferences might never have started.

Pastor Chik first met Pierce in the spring of 1950 when the young evangelist preached in Chik's church. The church's response was so enthusiastic that Pierce and Chik decided to hold a one-week evangelistic rally in a nearby park. But more than 5,000 people crowded under the canvas tarps each night, and the one-week crusade turned into three.

When war broke out in Korea, many members of Dr. Chik's church fled to Pusan, where Chik and Bob Pierce unexpectedly met again.

In Pusan, Dr. Pierce kept asking me, "What can I do?" He was genuinely concerned with the state of the church and the pastors.

I told him pastors had lost everything—their churches, their congregations, everything. I suggested we get them together for a meeting to encourage them, let them share their burdens with other pastors, and let them know they are not alone. Dr. Pierce said, "Let's do that." So we started planning the first World Vision pastors' conference.

For one week, Dr. Pierce preached, taught, encouraged, and admonished those pastors from morning until evening. I interpreted for him. He had a tremendous amount of stamina!

He gave us strength to face the uncertainty of the future, which at that time looked very bleak. Bob was a man of faith. When he was with us, he forgot about everything else. He gave us his whole heart.

World Vision joins local churches and partner agencies all over the world in offering personal witness, Bibles, and Christian teaching.

Nenita Ramos

Philippines

Teacher, age 28

Nenita Ramos grew up in a village in the highlands of Luzon Island, Philippines. She is a member of the Aeta tribe, one of the Philippines' historically pushed-around peoples.

Nenita grew up in a Christian home, where she fell in love with the Word of God. At a Bible study in World Vision's Pamitambayan Childcare Project she decided to become a missionary pastor, taking the gospel to her people.

A World Vision scholarship enabled Ramos to earn a degree in Christian education. Today she is helping establish a new church in a remote village.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have dreamed of climbing high into the mountains and preaching the gospel to others in my tribe. I used to practice preaching in my room.

As I got older, I realized that my people could not read and write, and therefore could not study the Bible. So I decided to become a teacher. I would teach my people to read and write. Then, when they needed something to read, I would give them a Bible!

Today I'm doing what I've always dreamed of. I have my teaching certificate, and am starting a church in one of the most remote areas inhabited by my tribe. My people love to hear stories, so whenever I talk about Jesus, I tell them his parables. Afterwards, I always give an altar call. I couldn't think of missing an opportunity!

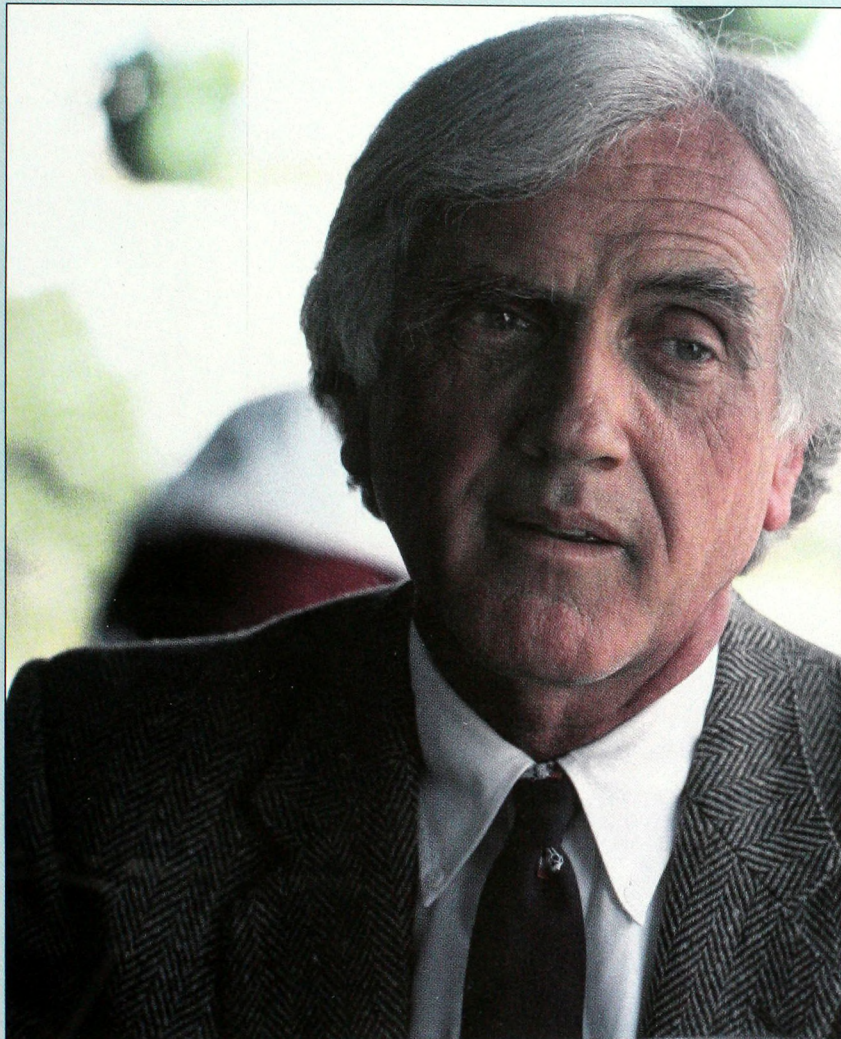


STEVE REYNOLDS / WORLD VISION



World Vision highlights worldwide political, environmental, social, and spiritual issues through television specials, videos, magazines, a curriculum for Christian schools, and a cross-cultural learning program for church groups.

RANDY MILLER / WORLD VISION



Arthur Rouner

United States
Pastor, age 61

Fund-raising is only one part of World Vision's "challenge to mission." Getting people to look beyond themselves and their own churches is perhaps even more important. Getting them to see the poor as real people who yearn and grieve and laugh and sweat just like they do can turn a church on its ear.

It did that to Arthur Rouner's Colonial Congregational Church in Edina, Minn. In 1982, Rouner went to Kenya to look at some of World Vision's work. When Rouner returned, his church greeted a profoundly changed man. In time, that change swept through the entire congregation.

They didn't need another old white guy over there. I realized there was no permanent role for me in Africa soon after I returned from my first trip there, even though I was so deeply moved by what I witnessed that I considered doing some kind of long-term ministry there. It became clear to me that it would be far better if I stayed on as Colonial's pastor, to do what I could to be a bridge-builder between middle America and the heart of Africa.

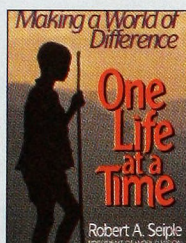
During the next few years, despite some real struggle we went through as a congregation over how much to be involved in this outreach, Colonial became a world church. We now have friends in Africa whom we pray for by name. These people, their lives and their destiny, have become very important to us.

I hate to think what my life—and the life of our congregation—would be like if we hadn't done this. It's a wonderful, risky adventure. It has created in us a new approach to life, so that now we take chances and attempt things we may have been afraid to do before. If we had turned our backs on the challenge to help in Africa, we would have started turning our backs on other things God was calling us to.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS
FEATURE: RANDY MILLER, STEVE
REYNOLDS, RON WILSON.

"People don't suffer as a group," writes Bob Seiple in *One Life at a Time*. "They suffer intimately, personally, and ultimately alone."

One Life at a Time, which commemorates World Vision's first 40 years, is a collection of personal stories of suffering and overcoming. The following is one of 30 stories found in the newly released book, available through Christian bookstores.



The time is 1950, six months after the start of the Korean War. One of the coldest winters on record has Korea in its icy grip. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese regulars had poured across the frozen Yalu River just weeks before, completely changing the character of the war. United Nations and American forces were being routed. Miles of territory were being lost every day.

Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula. As word of the atrocities committed by North Korean and Chinese troops got out, the civilian population was in stark terror. Christian churches throughout the country held all-night prayer vigils. Predawn services for prayer and worship were packed in an atmosphere of siege.

Picture the situation:

There is no electricity, no city services are available. This is war. It's four o'clock in the morning, and today's service is just beginning. Inside this particular church, the temperature is eight degrees above zero.

When Darkness Gave Way to Light

It's dark and unbelievably cold. There are no chairs. Welcome. Pray with us. Pull up the floor and sit down.

The city is swollen with refugees. Tension and anxiety and fear are written on every face. Many in this room trudged over 200 miles from Seoul in the dead of winter, leaving just before the city fell to the invading army. Widows who witnessed their husbands being hacked to death gather their silent children close to them. There is great, great tragedy in this room, and poverty such as few of us can conceive.

Most are dressed only in thin, cotton-padded clothes. Women hold tiny babies tucked against their breasts, with such few clothes as they have wrapped around the children while they shiver stoically.

What can they be thinking as the



service begins and they sing? The words are ones of comfort; the tears streaming down their faces declare both their need and their rejoicing in finding, in Him, the answer.

When the song service is over, the pastor begins to speak. He prepares to take an offering. What folly is this? What kind of offering could these people possibly give? They had watched their homes burn; many had lost every hope of an income of any kind. They

UPI / BETTMANN



Refugees by the thousands streamed south along the peninsula that icy winter.

to keep her warm, walked to the table in front and gave that one little sweater to keep some other child warm.

All they had were the clothes on their backs, and they were giving even these because of what was in their hearts.

John 1:5 says, "Jesus is the light of the world ... and the light shines in the darkness." That morning, darkness gave way to light. The faith that had gotten the people through thus far was rock-steady even in the midst of suffering and death—and was translated into a revolutionary demonstration of Christ's love.

The Marxist teachings that inspired so much hope in their adherents and so much fear in those they opposed have been shown to be tragically flawed since this story took place. The revolution we need is not one of political systems, but of the heart. Utopia, equality, justice—these are ideas precious to the mind of humankind but unattainable without a transformed heart and spirit.

Yet the grace of God provides us with the hope that eternal changes can be brought about by flawed human vessels. Our vision exceeds our grasp, our hopes are not yet fulfilled, the evidence of our faith is yet unseen. But stories such as what took place that bitter winter morning of 1950 remind me once again that, individually and together, we can make a world of difference. □

were sitting in the bitter cold in desperate need. An offering? Why?

The pastor speaks. "Our offering this morning will go to the refugees who are still streaming into our city. They arrive here, as you know, with their clothes torn, shivering in the cold. Something must be done to help them. We must share with these our friends and brethren."

What have these people left to give?

The pastor continues, "And so this morning we will give an offering of clothes."

So that was what they had to give ... the clothes from their backs!

Garment after garment after garment appeared. One man, emaciated from his suffering, took off his jacket, removed his vest and laid it on the communion table. A mother took the top sweater off her precious babe, tucked the infant inside her own clothes

Excerpted with permission from One Life at a Time by Robert Seiple, ©1990, Word Inc., Dallas, Texas.

SAMARITAN SAMPLER

RESOURCES FOR
HELPING OTHERS
IN THE NAME
OF CHRIST



Compiled and written
by Ginger Hope

PENNY PINCHERS

Forget what you read in the papers. A penny *does* go a long way in today's housing market. You just have to know where to invest it.

For example, students at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn., pitched in more than 100,000 pennies for 95 of their fellow students who planned

another \$2,000 from other sources, and a matching grant from a South Carolina company brought the total to \$6,000.

Working together with Habitat for Humanity, the collegiate carpenters contributed the \$6,000 toward materials to help construct five homes in Columbia, S.C. (Habitat for Humanity is a Christian nonprofit organization that provides decent, affordable housing to poor people in the United States and in Third-World countries.)

to spend their spring break building homes for the poor. The 95 students added to that chunk of change

Help Wanted—Volunteers

TEACHERS FOR CHINA

China's political and social turmoil notwithstanding, the door is still wide open for English teachers sent by Christian organizations to teach in China. English Language Institute/China and Educational Services Exchange with China are both recruiting Christians with college degrees to serve in China for terms varying from a few months to a year. The organizations provide training and orientation for the volunteers.

Contact English Language Institute/China at P.O. Box 265, San Dimas, CA 91773; (800) FON-ELIC. Contact Educational Services Exchange With China at 1641 W. Main Street, Suite 401, Alhambra, CA 91801; (818) 284-7955.

LITTER BUGS THEM

Volunteers came from all over Dallas, Texas, to help local residents in West Dallas pick up litter in an area known mostly for high unemployment and chronic poverty. "Local churches are the backbone of West Dallas community life," says Kathy Dudley, who started the annual spring clean-up to strengthen community pride and promote reconciliation. She says church members poured themselves into the event this year. "While we had good support from all over the



city, West Dallas people have proven that they care about their environment."

Besides local residents, volunteers from Dallas businesses,

churches, and civic groups joined in the sweep of a 3-square-mile area. Donated equipment and supplies included portable toilets, trucks, work gloves, trash bags, and donuts. Other expenses were covered by individuals who "sponsored" bags of trash.

Dudley is the founder of Voice of Hope, a non-sectarian organization that operates a family-oriented outreach center in a former school building in West Dallas. It serves the local community by using Christian principles of self-help, evangelism, and renewal.

For information contact Voice of Hope, P.O. Box 5102, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 631-7027.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN SAKAI



Holiness occurs in the street, not always in the temple. Wherever humanity finds itself, no matter how tattered and torn, no matter how lost and forlorn, is where liturgical acts should take place. For here there is vulnerability, here it counts.

Ray Anderson in On Being Human



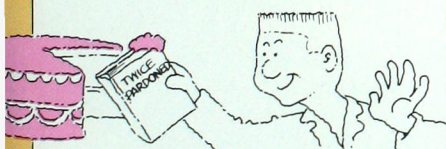
A FRIEND ON THE OUTSIDE

Part of Lynda Hutchinson's job at a Christian publishing company was to answer letters from prison inmates and chaplains requesting donated books. On her own, Lynda began to collect donated books or buy books at cost, and ship them a few at a time to the letter-writers.

Her mailing list grew by leaps and bounds, and so did the volume of mail she received from inmates. They expressed their appreciation for the fact that someone on the

"outside" took them seriously. Some told how the books had brought about Christian growth and even changed lives and healed relationships. Lynda's start-small initiative grew into her full-time occupation and took on a name: Free Behind Bars. At last count, Lynda's correspondents numbered 1,500.

For more information, write Free Behind Bars, 3875 Telegraph Rd., Suite A-296, Ventura, CA 93003.



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PMG 007

I threw it in the wastebasket. There it lay, its beady black eye looking up at me, its cattle-horn body misshapen and awkward. It was supposed to be a bird in flight, but its base was too light, so it toppled to one side unless something held it in place.

I bought the poor thing in a Honduran prison in the mid-1970s. Some friends had planned the tour and asked me to join them. I knew nothing of Honduras' prison system and was unprepared for the experience.

In a brief orientation, an official told us about the prison's work program. No food is provided for the inmates. A prisoner can send a messenger for food (in exchange for a tip); or he can have a family member bring it to him. But most of the men have no one to provide for them and must come up with the money to buy what they eat. Each prisoner is given tools and allowed time in the prison workshop, where he can construct things to sell.

One of the men was working with cattle horns. As I passed his table, he beckoned me. I told him I had no money. Naturally he did not believe me—who had ever heard of a North American with no money? I opened my billfold to show only small change. Still he begged. Tears filled his dark eyes and his lips quivered as he said softly, "Please, lady, I haven't eaten for two days, and I'm hungry. Please!" His thin, stooped body and the poor quality of his workmanship convinced me he was telling the truth.

One of my friends came by and proudly showed me an intricate wood carving she had bought from another prisoner. I borrowed money

from her to buy the wobbly bird. She was astonished at my choice. The man's hand trembled as he took the money and thanked me again and again.

For more than 12 years the bird had been a symbol to me. It represented all those people whose best is not good enough for us. And it is not only their work that we find unacceptable, but the people themselves, as if their poor craftsmanship were somehow an extension of their vulgar humanity.

With our values so firmly fixed on production and material things, we discard those who do not fit our standards for success, or our ideas of beauty and grace. We reject people's true identities, instead measuring them by ancestry, physical appearance, or education. In judging them, we lose sight of our own shortcomings. We become superior, perfected in their weakness.

I have no easy answers, no quick fixes. But if, in our busy day, we could see each person as an individual worthy of respect—not as someone who does not meet "our" standards—we could help each other and learn from our deficiencies.

In a fit of housecleaning, I was about to lose a valuable possession. I picked the ugly bird out of the trash and held it in my hands, remembering again the pain and pleading in the face of its creator. I propped it up on a bookshelf, in a prominent place. The poised bird that cannot be poised on its own reminds me that we all need propping up, to some extent. And I remember a man who tried to escape his prison by making a soaring bird out of cattle horns. □

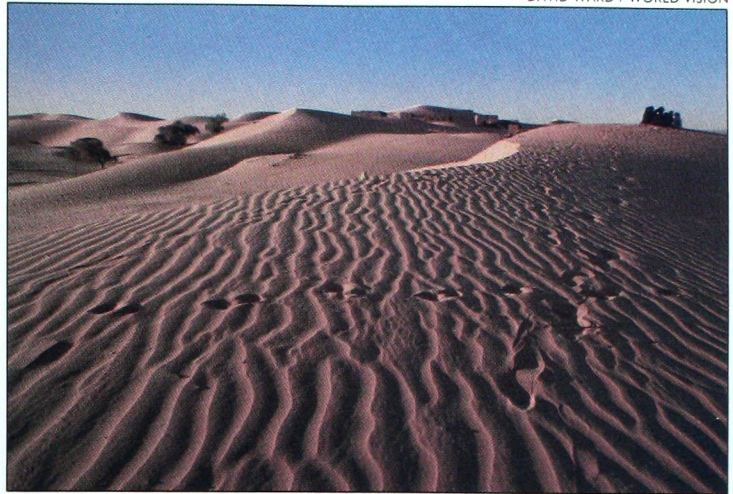
Nancy Eastridge is a free-lance writer in El Paso, Texas.

BY NANCY EASTRIDGE

AN UGLY REMINDER



DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



Dr. Milton Amayun knew many of the Bible verses about trusting God. It was easy trusting God back home in his office. But as he and his companion fought death under the life-sapping sun of the Sahara Desert, those verses seemed like words frozen on paper. He needed to see the face of God.

June 28, 1990, had begun as a normal day—as normal a day as can exist in a country where earth and sky blend into dusty beige and the red tongue of the thermometer pants hard at 120 degrees. Milton Amayun, a Filipino medical doctor, and Rachel Brown, a British nutritionist, were making a routine visit to a nutrition center in Mali's Seventh Region when a ragged handful of armed men waved their Land Rover to the side of the road.

The men, mostly Tuareg rebels from Chad, used their rifles to ensure Amayun's and Brown's undivided attention.

The rebels then drove off in their newly acquired Land Rover, leaving Amayun and Brown behind. They stood and watched the sand cough up from the tires until the vehicle disappeared.

The doctor and the nutritionist spent the night in the village that had been earmarked for their medical assistance. Staying longer seemed unwise, since the rebels had already murdered two doctors and several dozen other people.

The next morning, the two started walking toward Intadeny, 66 miles of desert away. In the midday blaze, that distance seemed as intangible as a mirage. Sustained by the manna of Dr. Amayun's black bag—which included, among other things, a four-day supply of food and \$60—they were able to reach an encampment where their U.S. dollars rented them a couple of donkeys and camels.

Throughout their ordeal, Amayun prayed. But after the first 24 hours, alone in the desert with his weakening companion, he was exhausted, frightened, and fighting death like a child battling

P*Prayer and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and your heart has turned to stone.*

Thomas Merton

HIJACKED IN THE DESERT

sleep. He stepped away from Brown

to gather his scattering thoughts.

This was it. This was the abyss of the human experience. He was staring into that abyss, and there seemed to be nothing there. Still, in the sun-scorched depths of his mind, his faith remained intact. Finally he formed the words. "God, you know where my heart is. If this is my time to go, I am ready to die. But you have given me two babies and a wife. More time on this earth would benefit them, and maybe others, too."

Then he waited for the peace of life or death, and the presence of God.

At that moment he felt that people were praying for them. "I talked to God; I could feel him; I could almost embrace him." His faith had been tested and had endured. Although nothing tangible had changed—not the desert, not the heat, not the miles that separated from life—the hatch to the abyss slammed shut.

Step by painful step, they persevered. On July 1, 1990, dehydrated, fatigued, but alive, Milton Amayun, Rachel Brown, and their rented animals entered Intadeny and safety. □

Anna Waterhouse



Milton Amayun

CAROL BERG / WORLD VISION

Matters for Prayer

- ♦ **Pray for the people** whose dreams rise "only as high as government subsidies" on the Mississippi Delta (pages 4-9).
- ♦ **Thank God for** the people in poor rural areas who still fight for change, in Christ's name (pages 4-9).
- ♦ **Pray for Faith House** as it cares for babies of drug-addicted mothers in Tampa, Fla. (page 24).
- ♦ **Ask God to strengthen** and increase Christian outreach to gang members (pages 26-30).



Barrio Nuevo Estrada is Mexican slang for "new neighborhood." But there's nothing new about this neighborhood. It's just a few rows of dilapidated houses shoehorned into an old South Los Angeles court. Still, the Nuevo Estrada gang is jealous of its turf. Girls and boys with hardened faces sit next to each other on the stoops, guarding their territory. Enigmatic scrawls leave no doubts: Strangers are not welcome.

.....

Girls are involved in every facet of gang life today. They join early, usually by age 11 or 12. Older girls of 16 or 17 disciple them. They show them how to dress, how to get high, how to do battle. These young disciples and their older "homegirls" are fiercely loyal and as essential to gang life as the better-known "homeboys."

Sylvia is a pretty woman in her early 20s. Makeup accents her delicate face. Her hands are folded quietly in her lap. A small diamond shines from her ring finger. The only incongruity in this portrait is the large, ugly rose tattooed on her wrist to hide the scars of heroin use.

Sylvia joined

the Playboys gang at age 11. Within three years she was a junkie. In a world that admires the consumption of large amounts of drugs, Sylvia had "arrived."

Homegirls like Sylvia play a dual role in gang life. They are the boys' confidants and fellow warriors, but they are also caretakers and lovers. "When you have a boyfriend in the gang, he'll treat you like a girlfriend," Sylvia says, "but he can trust you also to carry his gun and go shoot someone."

.....

Darlene is one of the hottest members of the Lomas gang. She knows all about Nuevo Estrada's dislike of visitors. Her cousin Santos is one of their homeboys. Santos is in trouble. He is about to become a father, and he has no money, no clothes for the baby, nothing.

Despite the rivalry of their two gangs, blood ties still count for something in the barrio, and Darlene wants to help her cousin. She has a good job in the garment district downtown, so she puts together a care package for her cousin and his pregnant girlfriend.

Then she phones him. "Keep your homeboys away," she warns. "I don't want nobody there when I drop this stuff off. I mean nobody." Santos assures her there will be no trouble. So Darlene, her

*In the gang
subculture,
women
are every bit
as tough as men.*

MOTHERS, LOVERS & WARRIORS

BY ANNA WATERHOUSE



Darlene
with two
friends: "I didn't
think this was all
there was to life."

boyfriend, a girlfriend, and another cousin, Rene, climb into her lowered luxury Pontiac Le Mans, "a real show car," and take off on a mission of mercy.

.....

Fear is a constant companion. Gangs members are marked—physically and emotionally—with the colors of their gang. Going out alone is folly. Yet the fear is coated with feelings of community, a sense of belonging seldom found outside the tribal gang life. Members know there will always be someone who cares—that they will always have a place to sleep and food to eat, no matter what the circumstances. In a society that tells people to fend for themselves, that is no small gift.

For children who feel like misfits in school, gangs provide something else: the feeling of being smart. There are special signs, secret rites, cryptic messages. It's tough to survive on the streets, and knowing how means more to these kids than A's on report cards; it keeps them alive. Their knowl-

edge of narcotics, stimulants, and hallucinogens equals any medical reference manual. They can read the labyrinth of "safe" and "unsafe" streets. They are experts with various weapons and have the last word on gang parties and hangouts. In other words, they are authorities in everything that is vital to the turbulent streets of the inner city.

.....

Darlene and her friends drive to her cousin's house, and the court is crawling with Nuevo Estrada gang members. Santos, eyes vacant and face blotchy from booze and dope, sits quietly on his front steps.

Angry faces encircle the car. "Where you from?" they challenge, and they start pounding on the car.

"We don't got no problem with you," Darlene shoots back, but the pounding drowns out her response.

"Where you from?" they insist, growing more menacing. Darlene's boyfriend sits quietly in the car, his head lowered. At first, her cousin Rene tries to

ignore the taunts. Finally, his honor at stake, Rene shouts out his own gang name, "Fort Maravilla!" and opens the car door into a sea of bodies. Darlene's girlfriend yells out "Lomas!" and a dozen hands grab at her. As she's dragged down, her skull cracks on the pavement.

.....

Homeboys beat up homegirls. Husbands beat up wives. That is another reality of gang life. Girls are expected to pull their own weight, yet the homeboys make it clear that "all we're good for is having babies," Sylvia says. And have babies they do. At least 75 percent of homegirls become pregnant in their teens. It is not uncommon for a homeboy to have a wife and several girlfriends, all bearing his children. Ultimately this boys' club the girls struggle so hard to belong to is closed to them. As they grow older and less able to fight and party, they find themselves trapped with children and a boyfriend or husband who relies on them less and less.

Their mastery of night life does

The gang expects a lot from you." (Sylvia, second from left, with current gang members.)



PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

not read well on a resume. With no future outside or inside the gang, these tough girls turn to their children. They try to shower their kids with the love that most of them have never had. The colors of gang life fade into the dream-like blur of a happy nuclear family—father, mother, and babies.

But the reality is often more brutal. The courts took one homegirl's children from her when her maternal instincts could not keep up with her drug habit. When she went to the hospital to give birth to her third daughter, "the nurses saw this pathetic hype laying there, needle marks all over my body." The staff refused to treat her. She gave birth in a hallway, alone. Before she even left the hospital, the state intervened and took her daughters.

Darlene gets tired of playing peace-maker. When one more girl yells out a challenge, Darlene tears into her. The Nuevo Estrada gang encircles the combatants. In the confusion and noise, Darlene's boyfriend backs the Le Mans out of the court and takes off. Darlene's other two companions manage to jump in at the last second, leaving her stranded.

Yet Darlene is intent on preserving the good name of the Lomas, and she is all nails and punches against her opponent. The crowd urges them on. Just as Darlene starts to win, someone hits her on the head with a brick. The last thing she sees before losing consciousness is Cousin Santos, still sitting on his stoop, crying like a baby.

THESE GIRLS DON'T HAVE TO ACT TOUGH. THEY ARE TOUGH.

A few years ago, girl gang members wore Pendletons and bandannas. They were proud of their "war paint"—eyes creased with heavy black eyeliner and cheeks gouged with crimson streaks of blush. Today, according to Sylvia, "girls in the gangs take better care of themselves. They dress up real pretty. No more false eyelashes with their hair all ratted."

But underneath the new hairdos and pristine dresses is still a seething rage. These girls don't have to act tough. They *are* tough.

Helicopters circle overhead. Police cars with dizzying red lights send the Nuevo Estrada gang scurrying to their houses. Darlene is taken to the hospital, her face smashed, her nose broken.

The Lomas plot revenge. After all, one of their own has been beaten; one of their favorite party cars has been trashed. They discuss options, including a masacre of Nuevo Estrada.

Finally they reach a compromise: Santos has to die. He is the one who blew it by letting his homeboys know that Darlene was coming. His death can atone for that wrong. To prove her loyalty, Darlene has to agree.

"The gang expects a lot from you," Sylvia says. "Say there's a riot going down and you have to go and kill somebody because they kill somebody from your gang. Then it's like, are you really going to go down for your gang? Are you gonna shoot that person or aren't you?"

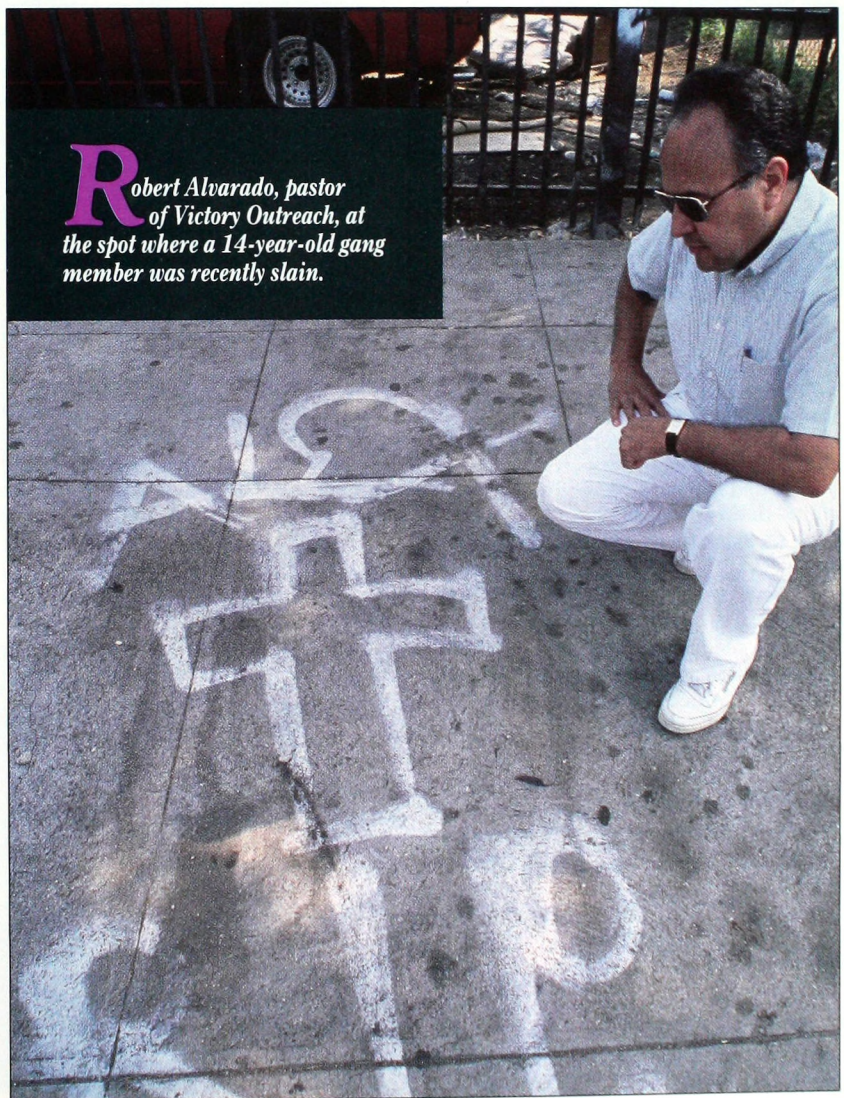
Loyalty is the supreme virtue,

especially in Mexican gangs, which still ascribe to some semblance of gang tradition. The police are unsuccessful at interrogations and make fewer arrests than they might, because gang members won't talk to them. They work out their problems their own way.

Darlene is confused. Despite his "wimping out," Santos is still her cousin, and she doesn't want him killed. Yet she can't appear weak; she has a reputation to uphold. She has to come up with a solution. "I'm the one that got my face smashed in," she tells the Lomas. "If anybody's gonna kill my cousin, it's gonna be me."

The gang agrees. Darlene's logic is irrefutable. She is the perfect choice for executioner. Once again, Darlene and her friends pile into the Le Mans and head into Barrio Nuevo Estrada.

Darlene knows where her cousin hangs. They search each likely haunt. They finally spot him walking down the street. Darlene calmly aims her gun and



Robert Alvarado, pastor of Victory Outreach, at the spot where a 14-year-old gang member was recently slain.

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She is a unique and priceless creation, lovingly crafted by the hand of God.

But she may not see herself that way. She is poor, hungry and hurting. She needs the loving care of a Childcare Sponsor.

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To take a child into your heart, clip and mail the coupon below. You'll receive the photo and story of a child who needs your investment of love...

...Love that lifts your precious child above the pain of poverty and hunger and in return, lets you feel your child's deep appreciation.

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fires. The bullet finds its mark in his arm—as she intends—and he takes off running. “I couldn’t let them kill him, but I had to at least shoot him,” she says. “I was bound to my neighborhood to do that.”

Some gangs let rivals enter their territory to buy drugs. Others shoot interlopers on sight, no matter what. There are neutral areas, and areas that are impossible to cross. Some gangs will form an uneasy alliance to get even with a third gang. Some gangs never make truces with anyone. In any case, the lines of loyalty can get hopelessly intertwined.

Though Santos lives, the Lomas are appeased. A hole in his arm testifies to their power and mercy. An uneasy truce envelops the two gangs. But something bothers Darlene. In the initial battle, two of her friends called out the name of their gangs and threw themselves into the fray. But her boyfriend stayed silent and then took off. Like a coward.

She gets on him. “How come you left?” she demands. He says they had a gun on him. “Didn’t you see what they did to me?” she replies. He doesn’t answer. Then the truth emerges. Nuevo Estrada was her boyfriend’s first gang. His primary loyalty will always belong to them.

Efforts to contain the gangs and stem the destruction have proved ineffective. Beyond beefing up police efforts and halfhearted attempts to provide minimum-wage jobs, society has few real solutions; no substitutes for family; no alternative common causes to rally around.

Yet many of the women caught in gangs are aching for a way out. Sylvia says, “I remember sitting alone at night at a party, getting loaded. And I kept thinking, is this it? Isn’t there something else besides getting loaded, besides getting hurt, besides hurting people? I’d look at the older people still hanging out and think, is that me in a few years?”

Darlene asked herself the same questions. “I didn’t think this was all there was to life. I didn’t wanna be nothing,” she says.

Despite the trend over the past several decades for churches to abandon the inner cities, a few have

stayed, and ministries have arisen to provide alternatives and hope to the gangs. Some gang members, including Darlene and Sylvia, have received Christ through Victory Outreach, a church in downtown Los Angeles that ministers to gang members.

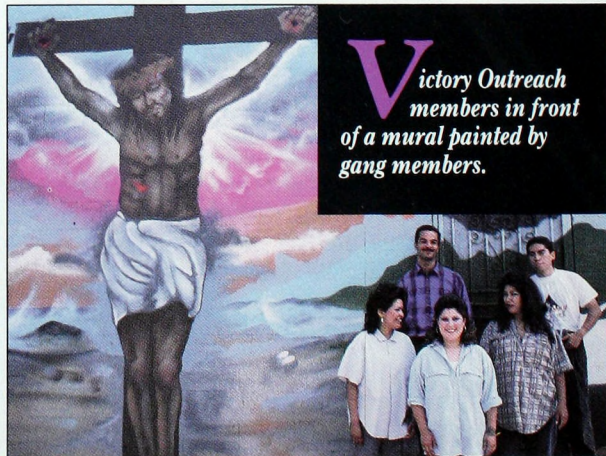
Those churches and ministries that are still operating in gang-ridden downtown Los Angeles are discovering a responsiveness and a hunger for the gospel that is almost painful. Sylvia says, “The other day, a girl from my old gang called me. Her sister had killed herself. They found her hanging from a tree. She said, ‘You’ve been serving God for four years now. I know you have the answer for me and my family. If you can make it, so can I.’”

Jesus told the story of a man freed from a demon. He likened the man’s life to a house that has been swept and put in order but left empty. The demon eventually returned with his cohorts, and “the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

A frightened and angry society can whitewash the graffiti, build more jails, and avoid the bad parts of town. But the emotional and spiritual houses of these lost, hurting kids remain empty.

“These girls are heroic in their commitment to the gang,” says Robert Alvarado, pastor of Victory Outreach. “They’ve taken up arms. If you can rechannel that heroism, which starts at the core of their existence, you can turn them into warriors for Jesus. But the church itself needs to become informed. They need to touch and feel and walk with these kids. They have to see them as spiritual creatures, not just as people with bad records or tattoos. We need the church to become their gang, their focus.”

Darlene puts it this way: “It’s the gang or it’s Jesus. It’s loyalty unto death for one or the other. The question is, which one?” □



BY TIM BASCOM

WHEN NEED HAD A FACE

My first morning back in Nairobi, Kenya, I had a hard time getting out of bed, apprehensive about leaving my hotel. I rolled back the covers and stared out the window. *Come on, Tim, I thought. Face it.* After all, I wasn't new to those streets. I had attended school there as a missionary kid, and I felt sure that not much had changed in the past decade. Con artists and beggars would still line the roadways, and it would still be hard to distinguish the crooks from the truly needy. *That's okay, I thought. I'm not planning on giving anything to anyone.*

Sure enough, I had walked scarcely a block from the hotel when a distinguished-looking African with salt-and-pepper hair approached me.

"Hello," he said. "Do you live here?"

"I used to live here."

"So you know this place?"

"Some of it," I said as I studied him. He was educated; that much was obvious from his command of English. But his suitcoat was worn.

"So after you went to school here in Kenya," he continued, "you went to university in America. What did you study there?"

"English literature."

"Aha. What are you doing now? Teaching or journalism?"

I laughed. "Journalism."

"I know these things," he said, "because I am a teacher by profession. But excuse me. Maybe I am stopping you from doing something."

"I'm only walking," I replied. We ended up at a restaurant, where a friend of his joined us. I bought them soft drinks.

Soon the two men began to open up. They were Ugandan refugees who had fled when a government official from another tribe threatened to throw them in jail. They left their wives and children behind and escaped to Sudan, where rebels and government troops demanded they fight in the civil war. They fled again, walking across the wasteland of southern Sudan to Kenya.

They had been in Nairobi for three weeks. They had no money, no jobs, and were afraid of being deported. Now they wanted to try entering Tanzania, where they had heard the immigration laws were less stringent.

Finally the pitch came. They didn't have the money to do this. Could I help?

I had been determined not to give money to anyone, but suddenly need had taken on two human faces. And those faces had names: Ashford and David.

Maybe they were lying. Yet they had spoken

warmly of missionaries. "In Uganda," they had said, "everyone is corrupt. Some doctors will make you sell your last cow to pay for a single pill. But not the missionaries. We can trust them."

If they were learning trust from Christians, I wanted them to keep learning it. They left with almost all I had. I walked back to my hotel in such a daze that I didn't even see the young man who had slipped up beside me.

"Hello," he said shyly.

"Hello," I replied, noting his light skin and dark lashes.

"Are you from America?"

"Yes."

DAVID WARD / WORLD VISION



WORLD VISION



"I am from Somalia. There is much fighting there."

I nodded.

"They wanted me to fight, but I wouldn't. So I came here. But here there is no job. No food. I am always cold, and I cannot sleep."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I wish I could help, but I've already given away what I had."

"If I could just get to Uganda, I have a relative in the embassy. He could feed me ..."

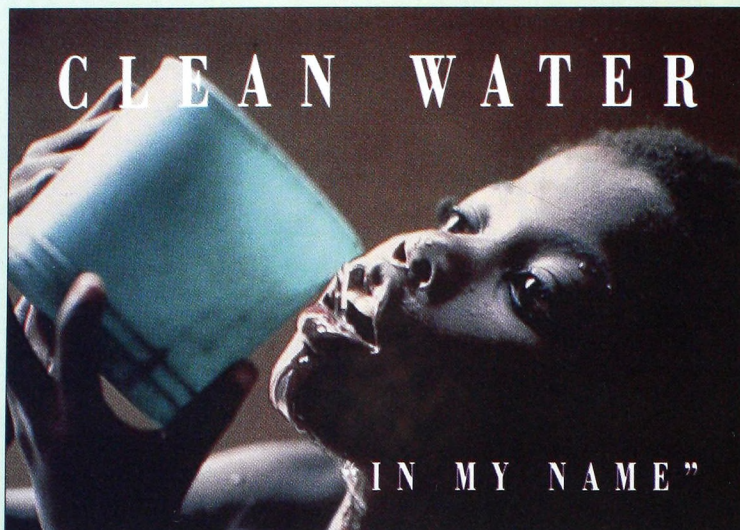
His words trailed off. *My God, I thought, they shuffle from one problem area to another like people trapped in a burning building with no exits.*

I reached the hotel, still deep in thought. Our world has so many needs. I sometimes try to convince myself that those needs are fabricated, to keep from getting overwhelmed. As soon as I do that, however, I become hardened, not only to the swindlers, but also to human beings with genuine needs. I can't refuse someone simply because that person might misuse my assistance. Unless I take risks, God can't show his love through me.

So have a good journey, Ashford and David. And may God go with you. □

Tim Bascom, editor of Interlit magazine, lives in Deerfield, Ill.

Finally the pitch came. They didn't have the money. Could I help?



"I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward."

Mark 9:41 (NIV)

An estimated 70 percent of the people of Ghana have no access to safe water and must drink from contaminated sources that foster guinea worm, schistosomiasis, and diarrhea. In some communities, up to 80 percent of the population is incapacitated by guinea worm, a painful parasite which drains both strength and morale. Safe water entirely prevents this disease.

In response to the need for clean water, teams of local people, brought together by World Vision, are digging shallow and deep wells. Through the Ghana Rural Water project, World Vision is using innovative techniques and ecologically sensitive technology to increase a safe water supply for drinking and agriculture.

Jesus recognized the value of a cup of cold water. Please help us offer hope and opportunity in His name to the suffering people of Ghana. Your support is vital.

YES, I WANT TO HELP!

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