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On the cover

Zinash Yohanes, 8, is a World Vision sponsored child living in Osheto, Ethiopia.

Photograph by Jon Warren

Corrections: The correct number for World Vision's gift planning program is (800) 426-5753. The correct address for World Vision child sponsorship is P.O. Box 70050, Tacoma, WA 98481-0050.

World Vision Today, a free quarterly publication, affirms people responding to God's call to care for the poor by providing information, inspiration, and opportunities for action, linking them with children and families in nearly 100 countries where World Vision ministers. In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, this publication costs less than 35 cents a copy to print and mail.

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Hope Restored

HOPE: To look forward to with confidence or expectation.
DESPAIR: To be overcome by a sense of futility or defeat.

LAST JULY, I EXPERIENCED A MOMENT I WILL never forget. It was my last day in Gujarat, India, surveying the rebuilding work that World Vision has been doing in the wake of the Jan. 26 earthquake. We were leaving a small village at the end of the day. As our car pulled away, I noticed a woman holding her child up to the car window, pleading with her eyes for help. When I looked at the child she was carrying, I knew why. He was a handsome little boy of about 6, but he was missing both of his feet.

All of this occurred in an instant as our car drove away. *What had happened? Why did the boy have no feet? What would happen to him?* These questions plagued me as I flew home the next morning, and continued each day thereafter as my thoughts returned to that unforgettable moment.

He was just one child out of thousands, I told myself. *We can't help everyone.* World Vision responded to the disaster within six hours, and we have been working in Gujarat ever since, building hundreds of new houses for earthquake victims. But one brief glimpse of this little boy and his despairing mother reminded me powerfully of why World Vision exists: to restore hope to the hopeless.

Hope is a small word with tremendous significance. It is used so often and so casually in our culture that we don't often stop to think of its meaning. In America, so many children can look to the future with confident expectation—confident that they can become almost anything they set out to be; confident that they will be secure tomorrow; and expectant that someday, they, too, will have children of their own.

If I had to summarize the desired outcome of World Vision's work in nearly 100 countries benefiting 1.7 million sponsored children and their communities, I would use the word hope. We provide health care, clean water, nutritious food, education, and economic opportunity for children and families. We offer relief to refugees and displaced people. We work in cities with street kids, runaways, and prostitutes, and we strive to abolish child labor and the use of children in combat. Common to all of this is the gift of hope.

Poverty has been defined as a lack of choices. The poor cannot make the choices about their lives that

most of us can. This often leads to despair, futility, and defeat. That was the look in that mother's eyes in Gujarat. She had little hope for her son. Would he get the medical attention and rehabilitation he needed? Would he attend school? Could he work someday? Would he marry, have a family, and care for his mother in her old age? Hope for her came down to the slim possibility that this stranger from across the sea, this man from the Christian organization World Vision, might somehow notice her son and change his future.



Vikas walks again.

Unable to get this boy out of my mind, I contacted World Vision staff in India and asked if they could find him and his mother. Two weeks later I learned that the boy's name is Vikas and he is 6. On the day of the earthquake, his house collapsed, trapping him and his mother in the debris. His frantic father dug through the rubble and managed to pull both of them out alive, but both of Vikas' legs had been crushed. It was several days before a relief medical team came to Gujarat. They had to amputate both of Vikas' feet to save his life.

Our staff told me that Vikas required additional surgery and would need prosthetic limbs, but he could be taught to walk again. They asked if World Vision U.S. would be able to cover the costs: \$300! Three hundred dollars to restore hope and to give Vikas back his future. Vikas has now had surgery and has been fitted with new feet and taught to walk again. Hope restored.

Hope is a priceless commodity, but sometimes it can be offered at relatively low cost. Hope must be offered to one person at a time. World Vision is in the business of hope, and your faithful gifts to our ministry create hope every single day for children and families who often have none.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). ■

How long can I sponsor my child?

THE ANSWER IS AS

unique as your sponsored child. Length of sponsorship is influenced by the child's age when sponsorship begins, the family and community's circumstances, and progress in the sponsorship project. Through sponsorship, you are working with us to help children realize their God-given potential by tackling the root causes of poverty.

World Vision addresses the needs of sponsored children and their families. We also provide ways to strengthen their communities through such work as health care and the provision of safe water, schools, and agricultural training. Your sponsorship gifts help to bring about a better life for your child, his or her community, and future generations. Our goal is to see families and communities reach a point where they no longer need outside assistance.

When a sponsorship community has met its goals, a child no longer needs to be sponsored. We rejoice with the family who says, "Thanks so much for your love and help...we can take it from here."

Circumstances may affect a child's sponsorship status. The child's family may move away from the area where World

Vision is working. Or your child may finish school and begin to earn an income, starting a new and independent life. If your sponsored child can no longer be sponsored, World Vision will notify you of the reason and you'll have the opportunity to sponsor another child who needs you.

Dr. Pierre Arty was introduced to his current sponsored child through a letter from World Vision. He had been sponsoring a 12-year-old Bangladeshi girl, Mahfusa Begum, for just over a year. The letter shared the good news that Mahfusa's family was faring much better and no longer required sponsorship. "I was pretty impressed by that letter. I thought that was honest. It spoke of integrity," commented the New York psychiatrist.

A second letter from World Vision introduced Pierre to Sazzad Hossan, 11, who lives in Bangladesh. Pierre has sponsored the boy for four years. "We can't stop thinking about the rest of the world, especially now," Pierre says, referring to the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

"I'll be a sponsor as long as God keeps me around," says Fay Fox. In the last 21 years, Fay has sponsored 28 children. When sponsorship ends for one child, he is not deterred. "If we can spend that money on someone else who needs it too, that's what it's all about."

When sponsorship of a child ends, you may feel like rejoicing, or feel disappointed, or both. When possible, you'll be encouraged to write a farewell letter to your sponsored child. We will always give you an opportunity to help another child through sponsorship, providing hope and a future. ■



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

New York psychiatrist Dr. Pierre Arty sponsored a second child through World Vision when his first sponsored child no longer needed assistance.



EDITOR'S NOTE: *In our Autumn 2001 issue, we invited you to share your views on the Middle East with us. Not surprisingly, the topic generated an unprecedented volume of mail with a wide range of opinions and intense feelings. The terrorist attacks that occurred shortly after the issue mailed only raised the emotional pitch of the discussion.*

Readers raised questions about whose side World Vision is on. World Vision's chief concern is for innocent children and their families. We stand on neither side. David Brickner of Jews for Jesus says it well: "If we're going to be like Jesus in this world, we have to rearrange our thinking on this issue. We don't have to hate Palestinians in order to support Israel. We don't have to throw a blanket condemnation over the state of Israel in order to love Palestinians."

We find no theological justification for human rights violations, whatever one's position on the Biblical role of Israel. Regardless of the decisions of political leaders, Christians cannot ignore individual suffering. Bulldozing homes and suicide bombings are not the answer to cries for justice. We pray fervently for peace. And we especially pray for our Christian brothers and sisters, both Israeli and Palestinian.

As Christians, we must learn to see the people of Palestine in the way that God sees them—as unique individuals beloved by God and therefore deserving of our own love and support. God hasn't called us to figure out a solution to the conflict, nor to weigh the relative merits and guilt of the warring parties. God calls us to support the people and programs that labor to share God's love with hurting individuals on all sides of the conflict. I commend World Vision for their efforts in this area.

—Dr. Christopher D. Stanley, Department of Theology
St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

I am deeply concerned about the naïve and unbalanced portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Autumn 2001 *World Vision Today*. Palestinians suffer today in large degree because of their leadership's moral failure to recognize the very existence of Israel. Under responsible and competent leadership, the Palestinians would be rebuilding their

economy, expanding their infrastructure, and laying the foundations for a viable statehood. Instead, they are pursuing Arafat's radical, rejectionist agenda. Shame on your magazine for encouraging this agenda.

—Russell Resnick, General Secretary
Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations,
Albuquerque, N.M.

I am sorry to hear of your organization's flawed opinion of Israel and of their God-given right to live in Israel, in peace and without fear of terrorism. Would not the United States retaliate on any group within our borders that was encouraging suicide bombers and using children as shields while rioting against the government?

—Rene Wallace, San Diego, Calif.

It was encouraging to see a periodical of your reputation and stature taking a stand on this issue. I have long been skeptical of our blind allegiance to the Israeli government, especially when it is so often defended with a religious mask. I am proud of our Jewish heritage, and I enjoy living in a predominantly Jewish community. However, [we must] not give the nation of Israel *carte blanche*. Furthermore, since when does God need America's help in fulfilling his ultimate plan for his people, whatever that may be?

—David Steen, Springfield, N. J.

It is quite clear that World Vision puts all its support toward the Palestinians and that you have cast Israel as the "bad guy." First, Israel's acquisition of land not included in the original 1948 map occurred solely as a result of wars made against Israel by her neighbors; Israel did not set out to conquer and annex the land in question. Second, Israel has offered to create a homeland for Palestine; however, Palestinian leaders do not want that—what they really want is the total extermination of Israel. Third, the violence attributed to Israel comes only in response to attacks on innocents. I feel that Israel has shown considerable restraint in going after military targets while suicide bombers have purposely focused on civilians, including children. I do not pretend that there is no suffering of Palestinians, but do you weep only for those children and not for the murdered Jewish children?

—Diana Hanson, Santa Monica, Calif.

Thank you so much for having the courage and faith to bring to light the terrible injustices being suffered by Palestinians in Israel. I do pray daily for Israel, and your coverage of this situation gives me hope that our prayers can spur the Church to become a united force for peace. I am also very grateful for Serge Duss' inspiring reminder that we serve a Lord of justice whose inaugural address in Luke 4 proclaims a Kingdom platform of bringing good news to the poor and liberty to those in captivity.

—Barbara Shiffer, Oneida, Wis.

Where Are They Now?

Story and photographs by Katia Maldonado

A REASON TO LIVE



AT THE AGE OF 12, ROSY GARCIA WANTED TO DIE. SHE'D

already had more than her share of neglect and pain growing up in Panchimalco, a community near El Salvador's capital, San Salvador. Her father had been absent from her life for years. Her mother, mentally unbalanced and influenced by the occult, beat her. One night, Rosy couldn't stand the abuse any longer. *My life has no meaning, she thought. Nobody can ever help me.* She tied a rope around her neck and tried to hang herself.

Rosy doesn't remember what happened next. When she regained consciousness the next day, she found the rope cut. There were no bruises on her neck.

Surviving suicide was just the first step in Rosy's awareness that God loved her. Afterward, she found the strength to move in with her older brother. In her new life she encountered World Vision, and she became sponsored. Her sponsor's support and the encouragement of World Vision staff guided her course toward Christ and her calling.

Today, Rosy is 26 and a teacher at a Christian school. "God touched hearts and opened doors, making my way easier," she says.

IN GOD'S HANDS

At Josue Christian School in Rosario de Mora, Rosy is always surrounded by children. She teaches science, health, language, literature, Bible, math, and social studies to four middle-school grades, 99 pupils in all. Students gravitate to her inside the classroom and out. The fondness is mutual. "I give my love to each of them," Rosy says. "I don't like to have preferences. They all have the same confidence to get close to me when they need it."



World Vision sponsorship helped Rosy Garcia overcome a dark period in her life and reach for her dreams.

Being a teacher gives Rosy plenty of opportunities to care for the children's emotional as well as educational needs. "Whenever I have a student with troubles, whether big or small, I pray for him or her, and I put him or her in God's hands."

Rosy was always in God's hands throughout her difficult childhood, although she didn't know it then. Her father moved to the United States when Rosy was 7, cutting off all contact with her. Rosy and her mother, Heriberta, struggled to survive by selling food on the street. Panchimalco is a poor community with a large indigenous population. Spiritism—magic and witchcraft—was common practice, and Heriberta dabbled in it. Eventually, Heriberta believed she could become rich through a pact with the devil—an obsession that drove her insane.

Rosy rejected her mother's twisted religion. She tried to help Heriberta get treatment for her mental problems, but the woman only became more violent. Rosy couldn't find help from teachers or school friends—she had dropped out to help her mother work—and she did not belong to any church.

But after cheating death, Rosy began to seek God. She moved in with her brother, Jaime, then a 22-year-old accountant. He cared for her and protected her. Jaime, a Christian, also gave her a Bible. Reading the New Testament brought her great comfort.

SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENED

That same year, 1989, World Vision started the Fuente de Jacob Project in Panchimalco. The project targeted more than 600 children for sponsorship, providing school fees, supplies, and uniforms and shoes. World Vision also improved the community by launching reforestation campaigns; training farmers in new agricultural technology and teaching mothers to plant vegetable gardens; and providing better housing for 274 families.

Thanks to her sponsor, Maria Cruz of Hacienda Heights, Calif., 14-year-old Rosy continued her education and received medical and dental care. "I am grateful for everything she did for me without even knowing me," Rosy says. Sponsorship made her career possible, she explains, because without finishing high school, she couldn't have gone on to college to become a teacher.

World Vision also provided the spiritual support she longed for. She participated in Bible study groups—even becoming a group leader—and attended Christian camps offered to sponsored children. Rosy found a confidante in World Vision project leader Elizabeth Flores. "All the moments I have shared with Rosy have been so special," says Elizabeth. "She has always had the confidence to tell me her problems and her joys, and luckily God has always given me the wisdom to give her advice."

Rosy grew steadily in her faith. During a service at her church, Emmanuel Church of Assemblies of God (where she is still an active member), "I felt in my heart that something won-



"I like to guide young people to make decisions according to God's word and to tell them that God loves them just as they are," Rosy says.

derful was about to happen," Rosy recalls. "When they called to accept Jesus, I was the first person who rose."

Becoming a Christian changed Rosy, enabling her to see the tragic events of her past in a new light. "When I first met Jesus, I was freed from the chains in my heart. I remember I blamed God because of the psychological problems of my mother. As I knew more about Jesus, I realized that all things happen because of God's will," she says.

In time, her feelings also softened toward her mother. "I have forgiven her from my heart, and I love her," says Rosy. "As I read the Bible I realized that I should not judge her. I understand that what she did was because of ignorance." Heriberta has been hospitalized a few times, but the doctors found her sane. Rosy believes her mother's disease is spiritual in nature. When Heriberta visits, Rosy talks to her about God.

Rosy's former sponsor, Maria, is pleased to hear what has become of Rosy. "It makes me happy that she is walking with the Lord, living an upright life," says Maria.

GOD'S TOOL

Teaching is more than a job for Rosy; it's her true calling. Recently she enrolled in a six-year theology program at a local Bible college. "I have the responsibility to teach my students not only numbers, but the word of life—God's Word," she explains. "I must be well-prepared intellectually."

Having survived the darkness of her mother's dementia, Rosy is determined to live in God's light, and to be an example to children and young people to do the same. Her commitment impresses Elizabeth Flores, who watched Rosy grow from a despondent teen to an admirable woman. "She serves others, expecting nothing in return," says Elizabeth. "Rosy is a tool in God's hands." ■

there's hope

FOR 52 YEARS, YOU HAVE FAITHFULLY shared with God's people in need. Your gifts have provided hope to millions of children and families worldwide. In the following stories and essays, *World Vision Today* focuses on Paul's words in Romans 12 to share with you how suffering, prayer, faith, and hospitality produce a vision of hope in our world today.



So why are we often surprised by suffering?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."*

—ROMANS 12:12-13

surprised

by suffering

By Tim Dearborn

▶ a group of Indian

pastors once challenged me by saying: “You

Americans are utterly unequipped for life in the real world.” ¶ “Oh really?” I said. “That’s quite a claim. What do you mean?” ¶ “You think that life is supposed to be pleasant: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and all that stuff,” one said. “When it’s not, you think something is wrong that you need to fix. Once fixed, you can get back to a normal state—pleasant. On the contrary,” he continued. “We think that life is hard. We know we will suffer. Our challenge is to learn how to trust God in the midst of suffering, find his purposes through it, and still have the courage and hope to change it.” ¶ I think they were right. We do act as if something is

wrong when sorrow strikes. Usually we seek the fastest way out—an escape. Some even suggest that our Western economy would collapse if we stopped trying to escape suffering. Much of our society seeks to provide us with medical or chemical escapes. We long for electronic diversions, whether televised, digitized, or pre-recorded. Entire industries are devoted to fantasy vacations or encouraging us to indulge in shopping sprees. These diversions aren’t in themselves bad, unless we’re tempted to believe that happiness is best found apart from the normal fabric of life: joy and sorrow, suffering and pleasure all mixed together, often existing simultaneously.

As Christians, we know that the gospel is Good News of Great Joy. We celebrate it as the proclamation of an immovable hope. We have received a Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). We are admonished in 1 Peter 3:14-15*: “Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your heart sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.”

How do we live that unshakable hope when we feel like our lives have become entangled in a hope-

less web of problems, pain, and troubles? We know God is faithful and trustworthy—and yet when storms come, we question whether the anchor will hold. When we feel snared in the trap of our circumstances, how can we keep on hoping? Furthermore, we see people all around us trusting in God, and yet suffering. How do we make sense of that, and what kind of hope can we have?

When Israel was suffering, captive in Babylon, God gave them profound words of guidance through the prophet Jeremiah. These verses have been sources of comfort to suffering people for thousands of years. “I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

HOPE STRETCHED TIGHT

Hope in Hebrew is a wonderful picture word, describing the tension placed on a spider’s web. When disconnected, it can bear no weight. When firmly anchored between two points and stretched tight, the web can bear great weight. Hope is to be stretched tight between two places—firmly anchored in both the present and the future. Rather than char-



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R U S S I A

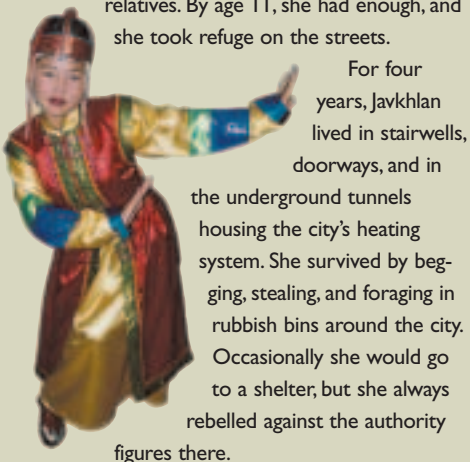


E T H I O P I A

When 16-year-old Javkhlán arrived at World Vision's Lighthouse Center, a shelter for street children in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, she was aggressive, angry, and sexually promiscuous. Now she is a "walking, talking success story of a transformed life," in the words of a World Vision project manager.

I want to be the first Mongolian woman president. I want to make a difference in my country. And if I work hard and apply myself, I believe I can," declares 18-year-old Javkhlán. It's a stunning goal coming from a girl with such an unstable past.

When Javkhlán was 2, her mother divorced her father, a violent drunkard and gambler. He refused to let Javkhlán live with her mother, so for the next nine years the girl shuttled between relatives. By age 11, she had enough, and she took refuge on the streets.



For four years, Javkhlán lived in stairwells, doorways, and in

the underground tunnels housing the city's heating system. She survived by begging, stealing, and foraging in rubbish bins around the city.

Occasionally she would go to a shelter, but she always rebelled against the authority figures there.

The Lighthouse Center was different. After 18 months of counseling, unconditional love, and gentle discipline from the staff, Javkhlán changed. "When I came to this center, despite my fears, it was the beginning of my new life," she says. "It's the best center I was ever in. The house parents work hard for us, teach us good habits, and give good advice on how to be a better person."

Javkhlán is now a talented young woman excelling in her studies and in Mongolian traditional dancing and singing. Because of her confidence and poise, she was chosen to represent World Vision Mongolia's street children project at the EXPO 2000 in Hanover, Germany. The international trip was a life-changing experience for Javkhlán. "She has now seen that the world has so much to offer, and she has a much broader vision of what her future can hold," says World Vision project manager Munkhjin Tsogt.

Now living with a supportive aunt in Ulaanbaatar, Javkhlán is light-years from the aggressive, unkempt girl who walked through the Lighthouse door. "Without World Vision, I would still be on the streets with no hope of anything better," she says.

- Munkhjin Tsogt

acterizing a web as a trap, Scripture alters the image. The strands in a web can become the pathway for hope. As Hebrews 6 says, the hope that we have in Jesus Christ is an utterly reliable anchor for our souls, fixed in the innermost shrine of heaven, where Jesus has already entered on our behalf. By the grace of God, our lives are secured with a firm hope fixed in an utterly good future.

This hope doesn't cause us merely to give in to suffering, resigning ourselves to it as our lot in life. Rather, hope frees us to live in joyous rebellion against all that keeps life from becoming what God intends it to be. A few years ago, our daughter Alison's car skidded on a patch of black ice, slid onto loose gravel at the edge of the road, flipped, and rolled down a ravine. A woman jogging past saw the accident and ran to the car. She reassured Alison who was pinned beneath the overturned car that she would call for help and asked, "Can I say a quick prayer with you?" Calmed by the jogger's prayer (and phone call), Alison waited only minutes before 14 rescue workers arrived. The team labored diligently for over an hour to cut her out of the car. One man's task was solely to hold her neck in case it was broken and to calm her while the others cut away at the car.

Our world is filled with trapped people. We have the privilege of allowing the Spirit of God to pour out the love of Christ into our hearts, giving us the creativity, compassion, competency, and commitment of a team of rescue workers, doing all that we can to get people out of situations which entrap them. Over the years, I have come to hold the 14,000 World Vision workers around the world in high regard. Specially trained for their tasks, and motivated by the love of Christ, they provide tangible care—and thus, tangible hope—for millions of people trapped in hard places.

A GREAT ENDING

The strong source of the Christian's hopefulness is that our future is certain. Our daughter illustrated this to us years ago when it was time to put down her book at bedtime. When I insisted she go to sleep, Alison replied, "I'm in the middle of an exciting part. If I stop reading,



I won't be able to sleep. I'll be crabby in the morning, I will probably fall asleep in school, and it'll be all your fault 'cause you made me stop reading!" Not persuaded, I assured her that she was a clever girl who needed to solve this problem and turn out her lights in five minutes.

In the morning, she cheerfully bounced down the stairs. "You obviously had a good night's sleep," I said. "How did you solve your problem with the book?"

"It was easy, Daddy," said Alison. "All

*All Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

DEM. REP. OF CONGO

I did was read the last chapter. After that, knowing how it ended, I slept great. I thought it would spoil the book, but instead, I can't wait to read the rest tonight to find out how the author gets the characters out of the mess they were in, into such a great ending."

God has similarly resolved our dilemma. We are the people who have read the "last chapter." We know we will one day stand in the presence of God clothed in the glory of Christ (Colossians 3:4). We also know the world's future: "...He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more... 'See, I am making all things new'" (Revelation 21:3-5).

THE LAST CHAPTER

Knowing the last chapter eases the suffering. In the early '80s, my wife and I visited the Khao I Dang refugee camp in Thailand where 100,000 Cambodians wallowed between their violent past and their uncertain future. Christian refugees gathered for hours to voice their praise at the Church of Jesus Christ for Refugees. Following one of the services, my wife spoke with one Cambodian, Samnang. His wife had been raped and killed before his eyes by the Khmer Rouge. His children had died, one by one, as they escaped with him to Thailand. Now he had no country,

family, home, possessions, or any hope of being sponsored to a third country. His future was to wait there until international politics pushed him back into Cambodia. My wife asked him, "Samnang, how do you face such a future?" With an intense passion burning in his eyes, he replied, "Jesus is my future, and he is enough." Clearly, joyous hope can be sustained in the midst of the harsh realities of pain and suffering. Now, 20 years later, World Vision is still deeply immersed in the lives of Cambodians. New schools, hospitals, and small businesses are restoring life and hope in that decimated nation.

Beyond meeting people's physical needs, World Vision's work is to reveal the last chapter to the hopeless so that they can be set free to live amidst present difficulties with boldness and confidence. Paul elaborates on this in Romans. Having proclaimed the good news that by faith we stand in grace, surrounded by the goodness and mercy of God, Paul goes on to proclaim, therefore we rejoice in hope...and not only so, we rejoice in suffering also, knowing that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us for the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:1-5). Rejoicing in hope we may understand, but rejoicing in suffering is an extraordinary gift. We rejoice because even suffering can bear good fruit in our lives, and because nothing separates us from the love of God. The Spirit of God pours into us God's assuring love, reminding us that all things will be well.

As a result, we have nothing to fear. The future holds neither terror nor mystery. Oh, the short-term is laden with the unknown—most likely filled with great joys and deep sorrows. But because the last chapter is known, we can walk through the remaining chapters with anticipatory delight, living even their pain to its fullest, wanting to experience and learn from everything as we're enroute to the glorious future that is yet to come. ■

The Rev. Tim Dearborn, Ph.D, is a professor, author, and dean of the chapel at Seattle Pacific University.



Although blind, Vestine envisions a brighter future for herself and her brother in post-war Rwanda, thanks to World Vision assistance.

Vestine Nyrahimana was 13 when she noticed pain in her eyes and deteriorating sight. She started treatment in Gikongoro, southwest Rwanda, in April 1994. Then her country exploded into genocidal rage. The last images she ever saw were scenes of horror.

A mob beat her mother, a Tutsi, to death. Her Hutu father was spared. Kind Hutu neighbors hid Vestine and her four siblings from the death squads. A month in hiding saved Vestine's life, but without treatment for her eyes, her sight completely failed. With her vision went her expectations of a normal life in rural Africa.

In 1997, Vestine's father died. Vestine and her 7-year-old brother, Claude, were left to fend for themselves while the younger children were taken in by distant relatives. "It was a very difficult time," she said. "We would ask the neighbors to help us bring in crops from the field." As conditions worsened for the whole community, however, help became harder and harder to find.

World Vision began an agricultural project in Gikongoro in 1998, providing seeds and tools to hundreds of

families. "World Vision has helped us much more than the people who live around us do," said Vestine, now 20. "They gave us seeds, and that has enabled us to have a big crop of potatoes, soya, beans, wheat, cabbage, tomatoes, and carrots."

Claude, now 11, has a World Vision sponsor, so he receives school materials and a uniform plus medical care. A World Vision social worker visits Vestine and Claude every week to check their well-being.

Vestine keeps busy by hiring the workers who harvest their crops, selling some of their vegetables at the market, and caring for Claude. "I would like to have a skill that I can use, despite my blindness, to earn money for Claude and I," said Vestine. "It is very difficult—there are many blind people around. But I have hope that in the future I can do it."

- Nigel Marsh

Living on purpose

BY TOM AND CHRISTINE SINE

▶▶ Ed spends half his life

traveling for his corporate job. At home, he's constantly on his cell phone, and he rarely takes a day off. His wife thinks he is more familiar with the inside of a plane than with their own home. Ed's drive comes from his unquestioning acceptance that the overarching

purpose of life is to get ahead in his career.

Lois is completely invested in her kids, enabling them to be high achievers in their upscale neighborhood. She has enrolled her two girls in a raft of activities, from music lessons to modeling classes. But she has never noticed that she has allowed her neighborhood's expectations about what constitutes achievement and the "good life" to define not only the direction of her family's life but to chart her daughters' futures. Nor has she noticed that, although she and her family are active in their church, their faith has almost nothing to do with the direction of their lives.

Are you like Ed or Lois? Do you feel overbooked and over-committed in your use of time and resources? Is your high-pressure lifestyle taking a toll on your family life, relationships, and spiritual life?

You may be suffering from "hurry sick-

ness," a consequence of trying to jam more activity into 24 hours than is humanly possible. It leaves you exhausted, stressed, and chronically guilty for what you haven't done. (Take a quick diagnosis—see "Do You Suffer From Hurry Sickness?") Often what causes it is the need to rush toward what we perceive is the "good life"—in

Western culture, getting ahead economically. Thanks to technological advances and globalization, there's always more to get, requiring more hours to work. You may have unwittingly allowed others to define what is best for your life. But God wants his children to live with different priorities—those that provide us with the time to care for the poor and help those in need. Find *God's* best for your life.

Jesus was born into a world like ours, dominated by two competing stories. One was a story of self-interest and commerce in an oppressive Roman world. The other was a story of an ancient Jewish faith, which Scripture teaches is the story destined to

DO YOU SUFFER FROM "HURRY SICKNESS"?

Answer these questions:

- Outline how you spent your time during the past week, and where you spent your money during the past month.
- Where are you feeling the greatest pressure on your schedule and your budget?
- Where are you paying the highest costs from hurry sickness? In your health, relationships with family and friends, involve-

ment in church, service to the poor, and relationship with God? How motivated are you to make changes?

- Based on where you spent your time and money, what are the aspirations and values that seem to drive your life, and where do they come from? Is your life driven by the expectations of your workplace, your community, the expectations of family, friends, and neighbors?

transform the world. Jesus grew up in both stories, and he made a conscious choice to embrace the second story and to make God's purposes his purposes. Many of the disciples and millions of others through the centuries also turned their backs on the dominant culture and gave their lives to the purposes of God's kingdom.

If you're committed to the story of faith, you will never be satisfied allowing the driven purposes of modern culture to define your direction or set your tempo. When you merge your story with God's, you can find a rhythm for life that is renewing instead of exhausting.

Where to start? Finding God's best doesn't start with asking, "What do I want?" but rather, "What does God want?" The prophets answer this question by inviting us to look forward to a day when "blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears unstopped, lame men and women will leap like a deer, the voiceless will break into song. Springs of water will burst out in the wilderness, streams flow in the desert" (Isaiah 35:5-6, *The Message*). Scripture makes clear our God cares very deeply about the urgent human needs that fill our world, and so should we.

The first thing Jesus did as he began his ministry was to stand up in his hometown and read his mission statement, taken directly from the book of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

You can do the same thing. Using Scripture, compose a personal or family mission statement. This requires a great deal of praying and listening to God in a quiet place—listening to God's call in your stillness, in your past, in Scripture, in the needs of others, in your gifts, in broken places, in your dreams. Biblically-based mission statements differ from other mission statements in that they focus outwardly on God's purposes to make a difference in the world instead of inwardly on satisfying your own needs. A good mission statement is inspirational, concise, and yet broad enough to influence every area of your life. We used a passage from Proverbs 31 to draft our statement: "To be a voice for those who have no voice and to bring glimpses of God's kingdom into people's lives."

The next step is to draft goals for every part of your life. These goals not only enable you to put flesh and bone on your mission statement but also to bring you closer to a "whole-life faith," a commitment to Jesus that transforms everything—your life direction, your

relationships, and how you spend your money and time. In the life God maps out, you will discover, there is time for God, for family and friends, for celebration and recreation as well as for caring for others. You will join Christians all over the world who are quietly changing our world.

They are Christians like Jeff, a managing director for an investment firm, who found his way to care for others through World Vision microenterprise projects. During a visit to Peru, he used his knowledge of banking to help World Vision's microfinance institution solve its problems. Jeff discovered that he could leverage his time and money with significant impact in the service of the poor. He learned that the good life of God is the life given away.

On your journey toward living on purpose, "keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished the race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God" (Hebrews 12:1-3, *The Message*). ■

Tom and Christine Sine are adjunct professors at Fuller Theological Seminary in Seattle, Wash. Their ministry, Mustard Seed Associates, helps Christians around the world find imaginative new ways to advance God's purposes in response to tomorrow's challenges.



To order *Living on Purpose: Finding God's Best* by Tom and Christine Sine, go to www.worldvisiongifts.org. Click on the blue "Product Store" button at the top right corner of your screen. A percentage of sales benefits World Vision.

COOKING with CARE

BY GRAHAM KERR

Graham Kerr, author, TV personality, and international food consultant, shares the benefits of setting a place for the poor at your table.

▶▶ I once saw a man on the 26th floor of a Madison Avenue office building with a view of Central Park. One day he got a World Vision envelope. He opened it up to find an article about a child dying in his mother's arms in a Calcutta garbage dump. He pulled his pen out and uncapped it, pulled out his checkbook and sat down. He looked at his little view of the park as he considered how much to give.

It was then that he saw the garbage dump before him instead of the people struggling in Central Park. He saw the mother with the child. He was deeply touched, and began to put his nib to the paper. Suddenly he imagined the dollar bills he was about to release being ripped from him. With a sigh, he put the cap back on his pen and put it back in his pocket. He put his checkbook away and put the envelope in the garbage can.

It broke my heart when I saw that. It gave me an understanding that God's heart breaks, not just for the child in the mother's arms, but also for the businessman who had to put the cap back on potential generosity. That man stood on the threshold of being blessed.

I then prayed, *Lord, how do I help that person who put the cap back on? How do I help them write the check and then experience your love flowing through them?*

Back in 1968 my wife, Treena, and I made the landmark "Galloping Gourmet" television series seen around the world.

We love to entertain, giving casual dinner parties for wonderful friends, both old and new. We wanted to find a way to experience God's love through entertaining, so in 1999, we came up with the idea of the "Seventh Chair" because we wanted to be inclusive, not exclusive. Our friends do two-thirds of the work, bringing the appetizer and dessert. We fix the main course and take care of the drinks. The table is laid for seven—six guests and a Seventh Chair. The extra chair reminds us of those who, often for no fault of their own, are left out—the sick, the homeless, victims of war or natural disaster, those subject to political, religious, or domestic abuse—the list is almost endless.

It's easy to do: We invite friends and send them our book, *The Gathering Place*. Our friends do the food preparation at home and finish the dishes in our small kitchen.

We ask them to look into a people group who has somehow been "left out" and we each try to find a non-profit agency or charity that does an excellent job of



COURTESY GRAHAM KERR

caring for these folks. When our friends arrive, the first thing we do is hold a small meeting to decide which of our researched agencies is doing the best job. When we reach a consensus, we pull out our checkbooks, and we all write checks for the total cost of our dinner (usually about \$50-60).

And that, dear friends, is how we can help to change our world, one dinner at a time. ■

Graham Kerr has been a friend of World Vision since the 1970s.

To order *The Gathering Place* by Graham Kerr, go to www.worldvisiongifts.org. Click on the blue "Product Store" button at the top right corner of your screen. A percentage of sales benefits World Vision.

World Vision's newest program, family sponsorship, allows U.S. families to share the burdens of another family overseas and help them in their time of need. The burdens are great for families like the Raitas in Cluj, Romania. Parents Iuliu and Dana are unemployed; the oldest son, 13-year-old Iuliu, earns \$1 a day selling apples. Dana can't send the four youngest to school because they don't have adequate clothes. The family lives in a one-room home with no electricity, plumbing, or heat. The nearest clean water is three miles away.

To break out of their cycle of poverty, the Raitas need a range of assistance. Family sponsorship provides training in farming, nutrition, and hygiene for parents, enabling them to improve their families' diets and health. Parents also learn skills that can boost the family income. Children receive school supplies, uni-



KAREN HOFER/WORLD VISION

poverty," says World Vision President Rich Stearns, whose family sponsors the Rostas family in Romania. Rich's daughter, Grace, enjoys writing to one of the Rostas girls.

Like Grace Stearns, sponsors can correspond with their sponsored families. They will receive at least one letter and a Christmas card each year. World Vision sends sponsors an annual progress report describing specific assistance to the

"As a sponsor, you'll help a needy family who simply cannot make it without your help," says Women of Faith's Luci Swindoll with her sponsored family in Ghana.

communities," says Luci Swindoll, Women of Faith author and speaker. Luci visited a World Vision project in Atebubu, Ghana, that cares for 1,000 families. There she met Abena Gyambee, 45, who single-

family matters

A new way to share with God's people who are in need.

forms, and other educational necessities. Family sponsorship also provides housing improvements and access to clean water and medical assistance. Initially, family sponsorship is only available in Ghana, Romania, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka.

"Family sponsorship is a wonderful way to help lift an entire family out of

family, the children's educational advancements, and the latest community improvements. Sponsors also receive a full-color newsletter featuring stories and information about how family sponsorship is helping communities thrive.

"I've seen for myself how family sponsorship programs transform entire com-

munally supports six children, a granddaughter, two nieces, her elderly mother, and a disabled uncle. Luci's sponsorship assistance eases Abena's struggle.

"We do not have the words to thank her," says Abena of her "American friend." "We pray that God will add many days to her life and bless her for her care." ■

Sponsor a family today! Here are three ways to sign up:
1. Call (888) 511-6493.
2. Sign up on the Web at www.worldvision.org/family.
3. Fill out the form attached to the envelope at left and send it in.

Dana Raita's family are from Romania's disadvantaged Roma minority group. About 60 percent of the Romas are unemployed.



VIOLETA ROMAN/WORLD VISION

pray for World Vision



SIBERIA



ROMANIA

Photographs by Jon Warren



World Vision is an organization founded, built, and sustained by prayer. Every year, World Vision staff around the world set aside a day for corporate prayer. We ask God's wisdom and blessings for our work, and we lift up specific prayer requests sent in by you, our faithful supporters.

In this first magazine issue of 2002, we invite you to pray for World Vision—for our staff and ministry, and for the children and families we assist in the world's hurting places.



INDIA



PAKISTAN

these prayer requests

and praise reports were provided by World Vision offices around the world. Please pray with your family or your church group for World Vision throughout 2002.

Pray for the safety of World Vision staff in **ANGOLA** when they travel. Public vehicles are often attacked and passengers can be injured or killed.

Pray for World Vision's work with families and communities in **BOLIVIA**, where an estimated 80 percent of children living in rural areas are forced to drop out of school and go to work before they reach age 9.

Thank God for sustaining World Vision staff in **BOSNIA** as they rebuilt homes and schools,



created jobs, and developed community-based programs. These efforts are building a sustainable future for Bosnians. Pray for continued strength and endurance for the staff.

Pray for the innocent victims of violence, kidnappings, and displacement in **COLOMBIA**. More than 300 churches have closed, and 52 pastors and church leaders have been killed in the last three years. Pray for World Vision's work in this troubled country.

Praise God for providing funding for World Vision's water development activities in the **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**.

Pray for World Vision staff in **ECUADOR** as they seek ways to relieve malnutrition among children. An estimated 60 percent of children under age 5 suffer from a lack of healthy food.

Ask God for continued peace in **EAST TIMOR**, and that he would sustain World Vision staff and give them hope for the future.

Praise God for 2001's successes in **ETHIOPIA**: sufficient rainfall, political peace, and a good spirit of cooperation



between World Vision and the government in serving families and communities.

Pray for World Vision staff in **GHANA** as World Vision's water project expands to the north. Ask God's wisdom for the staff as they seek the best possible ways to improve children's lives through this program.

Praise God for enabling World Vision **INDIA** to build 221 houses for families in a North Delhi slum.

Remember the children and families in Gujarat, **INDIA**, who suffer from psychological fears and acute depression after last year's earthquake, and pray for the World Vision staff who serve this



traumatized population.

Ask the Lord to give spiritual and physical strength to World Vision staff in **JERUSALEM, WEST BANK, and GAZA** as they seek to demonstrate God's love to both sides in this age-old conflict.

Praise God for much-needed rainfall in parts of **KENYA** last year. Thanks to God's work through World Vision's Morulem Irrigation Scheme, the Morulem community now grows enough grain for its people and does not need food assistance.

Remember World Vision staff caring for mentally disabled children in **KOSOVO** through the Lef Nosi school. World Vision supplies food—including fresh fruit that was previously unavailable—clothes, and other necessities for the children.

Praise God that the government in **MONGOLIA** provided land for World Vision's Bayankhoshuu project, for families to plant vegetables to improve their nutrition.

Thank God for the generous donors who support World Vision's Gloria Project in **PERU**, which provides surgery for children with cleft palates and other deformations.

Pray for protection for community

leaders in three World Vision projects in Ayacucho, **PERU**, where a small group of terrorists is threatening the local population.

Pray for World Vision staff in **ROMANIA** as they continue to provide comfort and hope for the suffering, including homeless children.

Pray for World Vision staff in **RWANDA** as they continue their own journey toward healing and reconciliation and encourage the same for surrounding communities.

Ask God for stability and security in **SOMALIA** so that World Vision staff can continue programs for children and families in the Middle Juba region.

Pray for World Vision's work with AIDS-affected communities in southern **AFRICA**. New research suggests that half of all 15-year-olds in the region are likely to die from the disease.

Thank God for his many blessings in **SRI LANKA** in 2001, especially for the resources enabling World Vision to assist sponsored children with heart operations.

Pray for World Vision programs serving children in **SUDAN**, where 1.8 million children go without adequate food, medical services, and education.

Praise God for delivering a World Vision worker in **UGANDA** from chronic malaria, and for several recently married staff.

Ask God's blessing on World Vision's Kids In Need program in the **UNITED STATES**, which provides school supplies for children from low-income families.

Praise God for the provision of resources in 2001 for World Vision **ZAMBIA**. Pray for staff as they launch new programs serving orphans and refugees.

Pray that World Vision can quickly respond to the food shortage in **ZIMBABWE**.

Pray for all World Vision staff serving in stressful and dangerous conditions. Ask the Lord to watch over them, encourage them, and give them joy in their efforts to help the poor and the oppressed. ■

To find out more about prayer for social transformation, read *The Peacemaking Power of Prayer* by John D. Robb and James A. Hill (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000). The book describes in depth how God heals nations through prayer, with examples from Bosnia, Cambodia, Kosovo, and Rwanda. It is available through Amazon.com or the publisher, www.broadmanholman.com.

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

BY JOHN ROBB

The Bible teaches that prayer is a relationship of delight, dependence, and intimacy. Here are some simple ways you can improve your communication with God.

- **Find a prayer partner.** Even two or three believers uniting in prayer can change history. I've had a prayer partner for 13 years, and we meet every week to lift up our work, our families, and national and international situations to God. I could probably write an entire book about all the miracles we've seen God do in response to our prayers.

- **Pray as a lifestyle.** Praying should be as natural as breathing, an essential part of our day-to-day existence. Break away from the "parachute mentality" in which you only pray when you're in trouble. Use the small, quiet moments throughout your day to focus on the Lord's presence.

- **Listen.** Praying is meant to be a relationship with God, requiring two-way communication. Don't always be the one talking. Moses was a great listener; 47 times in the early chapters of Exodus it is recorded that God spoke to him, giving him specific guidance. Only 11 times did Moses speak back to God. When we're still and waiting for God's voice, we may discover that he wants us to pray in a different way or for a different cause, and we can receive the Holy Spirit to pray through us as we ought.

- **Be childlike.** We do not need to give God a thesis on our prayer request. If we hold back from praying because we lack eloquence or education, just remember that we are God's children, and our prayers can be simple, heartfelt, and expressed in short sentences.

- **Pray through the newspaper.** Every morning as you read the day's news, lift up those situations and troubles to God. Pray for specific outcomes, for healing and reconciliation. God can and does change those headlines.

- **Fast.** When we go without food, it aids our listening and concentration in prayer. It helps our spirit become dominant over our bodies so that we can better respond to God's direction. Both the Old and New Testaments affirm the great value of fasting.

John Robb is director of prayer mobilization for World Vision International.

JOY IN ACTION



Necessity is the mother of invention: Joy Eckwood uses a roll of toilet paper to get these middle school kids to share a little about themselves.

ance. Days later, her pastor called to tell her about a World Vision venture with the church: Vision Youth. World Vision's program trains youth workers and provides financial support to help churches start outreach programs that serve struggling neighborhoods. Joy signed on.

The work can keep Joy on the phone all morning, talking to parents, teachers, and parole officers. She and five volunteer youth outreach workers offer care, mentoring, and most importantly, hope. Her ministry also includes a juvenile detention facility, and during the school year, she has an office at an alternative high school in Tacoma. She works hard to maintain relationships with the kids, often by phone. During

the summer, Joy calls, visits, and even takes some of her young friends to lunch.

Joy's strengths as an outreach worker are a strong commitment to "her kids" and a compelling call to serve, says Lina Thompson, director of Tacoma's Vision Youth. "She's a good listener. She's very real, and the kids respond to that."

When Joy talks to kids in her program, the conversation is easy, respectful, and caring—something they're not accustomed to. "Scripture tells us that to be a leader, we have to be a servant. To be a servant, we have to be humble," Joy says. This is not the time to win any arguments. "There's no place in there for 'being right.'"

Despite her own troubled youth, Joy doesn't pour out her story on them. "Adults tend to talk too much when we're around kids. I listen," she says.

Those listening skills pulled one young woman from the depths of drug addiction and despair. Joy was drawn to a 15-year-old girl at the alternative school who barely spoke and had the dull look of someone who had long ago given up on herself.



Joy gets Joshua, 6, started on a homework assignment before she leaves for her busy day. Zion, 3, looks on.

"I asked her if I could talk to her and she said, 'Yeah, sure, why not,'" in a tone so filled with ambivalence it reeked of challenge. Lara* warned that she wasn't one to talk about herself. But with Joy, she did talk. And kept talking.

The girl's drug-addicted dad was no longer in her life. His wife, who ran a methamphetamine lab out of her house, offered Lara the only home she had, as well as easy access to the life-strangling drug. Lara was addicted.

Joy helped the girl find a new home with caring family members in a nearby town and helped her get treatment for her drug problem. It took six months, but Lara kicked her addiction. She's now an A student involved in church. She feels good about herself, and it shows.

"When she was in the office the other day, someone asked, 'Is that the same girl?' She just glows now," Joy says.

Although Joy and her family (six children, ages 3 to 15) live in the same neighborhood as the teens in her ministry, their lives are starkly different. Mornings start with a whirlwind of activity, with the older kids pitching in to help out in an atmosphere of controlled chaos. But teamwork is everything, and Joy's requests for help are met with good-natured "Yes ma'ams" and quick responses. Love and respect flow both ways, and there's a flurry of kisses and hugs before Mom scoots out the door. Dinnertime is family time, when kids and adults share their day and study the Bible together.

Joy's homelife is foreign to her outreach kids. But she tries to share some sense of normalcy with them by building relationships and trying to provide something often missing in the lives of at-risk kids: consistency. Joy wants to be someone they can count on because their relationships at home can be strained or downright abusive. Her eyes water and her voice breaks as she talks about the pain she witnesses in her job.

She tells of a boy who thinks he's "getting better" because now, when his mom beats him, he doesn't just stand there and suffer the abuse – he hits back. This breaks her heart. "These are

the kids God brings me. I love 'em. I listen, I care, and sometimes, I just cry with them," she says.

Joy's day is filled with laughter as well as tears. One evening, she bounces around her living room, enthusiastically orchestrating icebreakers during an inaugural outreach for middle school kids. She's directing 13 youngsters to play video or computer games while they wait for the pizza to arrive when she realizes she's late for a meeting at church. Leaving her husband and a volunteer in charge, she dashes out. "I'm never this late," she says laughing, "but that was too much fun."

Her meeting on outreach training, retreats, and youth ministry schedules for fall wraps up around 9:30 p.m. On the way home, Joy stops by McDonald's again.

"I forgot to eat," she says, smiling. ■

*To protect her identity, the girl's name has been changed.

GUIDANCE FOR LIFE

Vision Youth is a partnership of World Vision, the Northwest Leadership Foundation, the Coalition for Community Development and Renewal, and local churches. The program is designed to provide teens and young adults with the guidance, skills, and resources they need to lead a successful life.

Vision Youth in the Northwest is a model for programs being developed across the country. In Tacoma and Seattle, caring adults are hired by churches to work with at-risk teens. They team with educational assistants, who work specifically on academics, which are key to a young person's success. World Vision supplies the extensive training and continuing education for Youth Outreach Workers (YOWs), and for several years, assists financially as well. World Vision's goal is that by the end of five years, the churches will be able to continue the programs on their own.

YOWs come from the neighborhoods they serve and have a passion for working with disadvantaged teens. They are called to develop relationships with these young people; provide a consistent, positive influence in their lives; and help them find the resources they need to reach their God-given potential. YOWs also work with and train volunteer outreach workers.

World Vision believes the success of this program lies in the local faith-based community. Studies show that churches often are the most trusted institutions in distressed neighborhoods. They provide a stable presence and present a center of spiritual and social transformation, as they often already are doing good work in the community. World Vision wants to empower the religious community to build strong, sustainable programs that will help young people break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their families.

To learn more about Vision Youth's outreach program, call (253) 815-2078 or visit www.visionyouth.org.

By Reyn Cabinte Photograph by Michael Mowery

A GIFT FOR MANSURA



Mansura Shajahan with her four children, clockwise from left: Jahnan, 6; Yusuf, 8; Laila, 3; and Shirin, 7. Her goal is to stay in the United States—that's what her husband wanted.

A houseful of children with chicken pox would be a handful for any mother. For Mansura Shajahan, it made the worst of times even worse. Then help arrived.

The events of Sept. 11 sparked an outpouring of donations and prayer from World Vision donors. The next several issues of World Vision Today will share the stories of people who received much-needed gifts through World Vision's American Families Assistance FundSM.

MANSURA SHAJAHAN'S 7-YEAR-OLD daughter Shirin climbs on the living room couch and grimaces uncomfortably. "I want to scratch all the time," she complains. Little sister Jahnan, 6, is also home from school. "Today, I just didn't feel like going," she says. Eight-year-old Yusuf points to the little girl who has curled herself around Mansura. "That's Laila," he says. "She's 3. She has the chicken pox too."

Mansura is tired, her face drawn. A closer look reveals small scabs on her forehead. She, too, has chicken pox. Mansura would normally have more than enough strength to manage the challenges of a full household. But things are far from normal. These days she is just trying to keep her family going without her husband,

Mohammed, who died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. "I think about it, then I cry," she says in her limited English. "I don't know who will take care of my children's future." She stops and starts to tear, unable to speak about it any further.

HERE TO HELP

In December, World Vision regional coordinator Linda Rudrow presented Mansura with an American Families Assistance FundSM gift of \$5,500. World Vision has made funds available for victims' families to meet basic financial needs such as transportation costs and medical expenses. Funds are given regardless of the family's race or religion. "We're here to give you a gift," Linda told Mansura. "We want you to know that we are here to help."

"Thank you very much," Mansura said shaking her hand

and managing a rare smile.

Mansura and Mohammed Shajahan had their first child eight years ago, around the time that Mohammed received a computer science degree from New York's Pace University. It had been 10 years since he moved from the village of Asdapur in Bangladesh, where he was born and raised. He was the first of his family to come to New York, and he subsequently helped two of his brothers immigrate here.

"He went out of his way to help others," says Ruby Zigrino, a relative of the Shajahans. "He helped a lot of people financially, here and back home. He prayed and fasted regularly. He was a good man and a good Muslim."

He was also a good provider. Mohammed had a well-paying job as an information technology specialist at Marsh & McLennan. The pay provided just enough money for their children to start attending a private school near their home in upstate New York. Mohammed's office was an hour away on the 96th floor of the World Trade Center.

"WHERE IS SHAJAHAN?"

Mansura, a homemaker, was at home that day in September. She didn't know about the attacks until she started to receive phone calls from relatives. "*Shajahan kothai?*" they asked. "Where is Shajahan?" As they explained what happened, Mansura started to panic.

She placed calls to her husband's pager but received no answer. Mohammed's office and cell phones were not working either. The family knew the first plane hit at 8:45 a.m. and hoped that Mohammed hadn't made it to work yet.

"The whole day we were hoping that he would somehow show up or call us," said Ruby. That call never came. "The next few days we were hoping he was in a hospital, unconscious and unidentified," she says. "We also thought maybe he was alive under the rubble. As the days went by our hope got dimmer and dimmer. We grew desperate, frustrated, and we grieved with the realization of what had happened."

LOSING THEIR BREADWINNER

Like many families, Mansura's husband was the sole breadwinner in the family. Delwar Hossein, Mansura's brother who lives in Florida, says that at first Mansura couldn't access the

couple's savings because it was held in an account under Mohammed's name. The bank said they needed to see an official death certificate for Mohammed. Unfortunately, death certificates for World Trade Center employees were not issued until one month after the attacks.

In November, Mansura started to get Social Security checks to cover some of her food and living expenses. But with no job and no income, there were thousands of dollars in outstanding medical and credit card bills that were going unpaid.

Additional debt came from having to hire babysitters and cabs so that Mansura could make funeral arrangements and apply for government aid. "Mansura only has a learner's driver's license," says Delwar. "She cannot drive anywhere. She has to pay for transportation into the city. It is hard and expensive for her, so she only goes out when it is an emergency."

HELP COMES FOR MANSURA

Sometimes Mansura didn't have enough cash to take care of her children's emergencies. Marsh & McLennan decided to continue providing the family with medical coverage until December. But when the children got chicken pox, Mansura couldn't pay for the taxi to take her children to the hospital.

"So she had no money. And still in December she had no access, even though she had a death certificate," said Delwar. "The process is slow. I helped her to get a lawyer so that she can be named the administrator of her husband's estate."

Members of the Jerrahi Mosque, where the Shajahans worship, helped as well, generously providing food and moral support. The mosque also raised money for the children's education. Mansura received some financial help from the Red Cross, but it wasn't enough for her to cover rent payments and feed her children.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

World Vision's goal through the American Families Assistance FundSM is to see that families like Mansura's still have hope. Ruby says Mansura wants to raise her children in the United States the way her husband wanted. "[Mohammed] liked living in this country, he liked the religious freedom," she says. "He liked the generosity and the attitude of the people toward the foreigners. He used to say, 'We come from all parts of the world, and we get a fair chance.'" ■

News

► Of the 40 million people who are displaced by conflict or human rights violations, more than 75 percent are women and their dependent children. (United Nations Development Fund for Women)

► Church attendance, which increased nationwide by 25 percent after the Sept. 11 attacks, is back at normal levels. (Barna Research Online)

► One billion people live in inadequate housing, mostly in slums and squatter settlements in developing countries. (The State of the World's Cities Report 2001, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements)

Good News



Children Thankful for Renovated School

Students in Sanwakyi-Afrefresco, Ghana, can sit in their classroom without fear of the walls coming down on them. Through its Atebubu sponsorship project, World Vision renovated the primary and nursery school building with \$600 worth of materials. Community members contributed the labor.

Built in 1960, the school's walls had become so cracked over time that the children could see through them. The hole-pocked roof looked as if it had been sprayed with bullets. The pillars supporting the roof had worn thin, causing the building to tilt dangerously during rains and winds. Today, the school has strong walls and pillars, a new roof, and a fresh coat of paint. "We are happy about the school now," the children sang.



The children are thankful for their newly renovated classrooms.

CRISIS UPDATES

HONDURAS

A partnership between World Vision and the World Food Programme (WFP) is helping to repair northern Honduras after Hurricane Michelle. Last autumn the storm caused damage to homes, roads, and drinking water systems, affecting 16,000 people. Immediately afterward, World Vision provided food, blankets, medical supplies, water purification tablets and other supplies to affected communities. Now World Vision is organizing the rebuilding effort, paying residents for their labor with WFP food.

"We developed a very good WFP/World Vision relationship during Hurricane Mitch [in 1998]. We've seen that World Vision works in a very serious way, and it's for this reason that we work together again to help these 3,500 who were affected by this new disgrace called Michelle," said WFP Director Claudia Von Roehl.

WFP is also planning to launch a school lunch program in World Vision communities, targeting children with low weight and height levels. The program aims to improve the diets and health of thousands of World Vision sponsored children.



Right after Hurricane Michelle, World Vision brought relief to families.

LIBERIA

Although Liberia's civil war officially ended in 1997, the West African nation continues to struggle. Cross-border conflict with its neighbors, Sierra Leone and Guinea, causes increasing instability. The country's economy and infrastructure are in shambles, and many families uprooted by violence—past and present—live in desperately poor conditions.

World Vision recently came to the aid of 2,000 internally displaced people in Gbarpolu county, northwest Liberia. Staff distributed 7,350 sacks of new shoes and clothes donated to World Vision by U.S. corporations. In partnership with UNICEF, World Vision also provided mosquito nets for 900 families. The nets are specially treated to kill mosquitoes. "Using these nets properly is one of the best ways of reducing the incidence of malaria, the main cause of sickness and death in the country," said county health officer George Boakai.

A key way World Vision helps Liberia recover is agricultural assistance—helping farmers boost food production. Since 1999 the U.S. government has given World Vision Liberia \$3 million for these efforts. The United States Ambassador Bismarck Myrick recently lauded World Vision's work, and pledged more USAID support for programs benefiting war-destitute Liberians.



World Vision's agricultural programs in Liberia have helped war-affected families start new lives.

SPONSORSHIP

"VEGGIE TALES" CONCERTS TO PROMOTE CHILD SPONSORSHIP

World Vision and Big Idea Productions, creators of the children's Christian video series "VeggieTales," are teaming up to help the world's needy children. Bob the Tomato, Larry the Cucumber, and the rest of the Veggie cast are touring the country in "VeggieTales Live!," a stage show featuring humor, music, and biblically based storytelling to promote timeless values such as self-esteem and the importance of friendship. Prior to intermission, a World Vision video introduces child sponsorship, and audience members can sign up to sponsor a child at World Vision displays in each venue.

For more information on "VeggieTales Live!," visit www.worldvision.org/veggie-etales or www.bigidea.com.



GOOD NEWS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

WEST COAST FIREFIGHTER FOUND OPEN HEARTS AT GROUND ZERO

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, Joshua Harris immediately wanted to help. The 26-year-old firefighter from Tacoma, Wash., called his friend, a New York Fire Department battalion chief, who arranged to get him on a crew at Ground Zero. Joshua rallied seven other firefighter friends from the West Coast to accompany him to New York. The group's flights and expenses were covered by donations from their churches, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and World Vision's American Families Assistance FundSM.

Joshua (pictured second from left) spent two grueling weeks sifting through the rubble for victims' remains. He found personal effects such as a child's I.D. bracelet and an unfinished letter from a man to his wife. He also helped uncover a space in which six police officers' bodies were found. Joshua met the officers' families, including a 6-year-old girl. "Her telling me, 'Thanks for finding my daddy,' just killed me," he said. "She was tougher than I was. I was crying."

Joshua broke the ice with New York firefighters at the site by bringing them food and snacks. His servant attitude opened doors to conversations with the men about God. "Everyone's kind of a tough guy—they don't need to talk to a chaplain, they don't need counseling. But they talk to a fellow believer," he said. "I thought people would be hard-hearted toward God, but it was really neat to see that people's hearts were open ... that God is moving there."



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joining *hammers* *with* hearts

BY KARI COSTANZA

In Gujarat, western India, the soft scraping of a mortar-filled trowel against brick is a sound to celebrate.



WORLD VISION INDIA

World Vision and Habitat for Humanity are rebuilding what nature demolished: hundreds of new homes for people who—in seconds—witnessed the unthinkable. At 8:46 a.m. on Jan. 26, 2001, a massive earthquake struck near Bhuj, a city of 150,000. The statistics are grim: 20,000 people died; 170,000 were injured; and 600,000 lost homes. Three hospitals and 23,000 classrooms were reduced to rubble. The total damage: \$4 billion.

Within six hours of the quake, World Vision was on the scene with life-saving supplies. Staff brought clean water, medicine, food, and basic essentials such as cooking utensils. It was the beginning of a long-term partnership—one sparked by relief and sustained through development.

Now, with Habitat for Humanity, World Vision staff and community members are building more than 650 houses in Shikra and Kumbhariya, Gujarat villages located less than 50 miles from the quake's epicenter. The \$2.5 million project will provide 1,300 family members with new homes, jobs, and community centers.

Satubhai Prablatsingh Jadeja, 50, and his grandson, Mahuabhai, 2, are thankful.

Mahuabhai was at home with his family in Shikra when the earthquake struck. Rescuers found Mahuabhai alive



DAVID WARD/WORLD VISION

Satubhai Jadeja holds his grandson, Mahuabhai. Above, the family's new home, built by World Vision and Habitat for Humanity.

in the rubble. Mahuabhai's mother had used her body to shield her small son. She was dead, along with her husband. Mahuabhai's brother's body was discovered in a collapsed school nearby.

Now Mahuabhai lives with his grandfather and an aunt and uncle. While Satubhai says he is "very grateful" for his new house, it cannot replace the sadness of losing his wife of 30 years in the quake. He lost his livelihood as well. Many buffalo and goats, used for dairy production, perished that day. Only one of Satubhai's

buffaloes survived. What little milk it gives brings the grandfather about a dollar a day at the market. "I don't know how we would have survived without World Vision," he says.

This is not the first time World Vision and Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit Christian house-building organization, have joined hammers and hearts. In Burundi, the Philippines, and Venezuela, the two organizations have built thousands of new homes for families like Satubhai's. ■

afghanistan *firsthand*

BY JAMES ADDIS

Last year on Christmas day, while American families enjoyed feasts and holiday gatherings, World Vision correspondent James Addis traveled with a World Vision food survey team through the dingy alleyways of Herat, western Afghanistan. His eyewitness report follows.



JAMES ADDIS/WORLD VISION

I'd expected them to be timid and retiring, but the women clad from top to toe in blue burkhas are anything but. They chatter and giggle loudly when I board the bus and quickly boss me about. I should sit here, not there—no, no, there. Eventually everybody settles down, and we are off. The women swap seats regularly as they gossip with one another. "You're not married?" they ask. "You're how old? 38! Maybe you can find an Afghan girl. There are lots of beautiful girls here." "But how could I possibly know?" I protest. Screams of laughter.

Perhaps one reason for the women's bonhomie is that they have a real job to do. They are part of a city-wide survey in Herat, western Afghanistan, helping World Vision determine who is in need of a food distribution. World Vision will survey every single household in a city of 360,000 people, employing 250 local women to help. It's obviously an empowering feeling. Years of Taliban rule confined the women largely to domestic service. Today they are out in the community, participating in a process to bring relief to this troubled city.

Our bus takes us to the oldest and poorest section of Herat. "There is so much misery," says Faridoon Mohammad, 18, who is responsible for surveying this district. "So many factories were destroyed in

the war, there is no place to work. Quite often the men have been killed in the fighting. Under the Taliban, women were not allowed to work with men, so they could not make much money," he explains.

The city's problems are compounded by an influx of people from the country, mostly fleeing drought. Some went to camps such as Maslakh, home to more than 200,000 refugees. Others disappeared into poorer quarters here in Herat, eking out a living, competing against thousands of others for a few cents a day.

Suddenly I am seized by the arm. "Come to my house—we have nothing," says one. "Let me show you." Then a cacophony of voices: "Our home is poor. Water pours in and we have to put straw down to soak it up." "My child is sick. We have no money for medicines." "Please, we need food. Will you help us?"

I visit their homes. Inside, a child or adult often is lying prone on the floor. There's no money to take him or her to the hospital. Another woman says she and her husband watched their fields turn to dust in the drought. I'm especially touched by an elderly couple whose only son fled from the Taliban to Iran several years ago. He has not been seen since. In their two-room home, they reserve one room for his return. The woman, Fatama, shows it to me with pride. But there is a

desperate, plaintive note in her voice—maybe they will never see their son again.

To be honest, it's a relief to clamber back on the bus and escape the stories of hardship and despair. But there is no easy exit for these poor people. Hopefully World Vision's food distributions will bring some comfort.

It's going to be a big job. As the survey results come in, it appears some 70,000 families will need food aid (estimate as of December 2001). The World Food Programme will supply it and handle the shipping from Iran. World Vision will distribute the food to each family.

I pray things will go much further for these people—that the rains will come, that they will be able to return to the land, that peace will replace decades of war. "God," I say as we make the ponderous journey home, "please give these people a break." ■

World Vision is operational in two areas of war-torn Afghanistan. In the western region of Herat, in partnership with the World Food Programme and UNICEF, World Vision launched a \$3 million project providing food and therapeutic feeding programs for the malnourished population. In Taloqan, northern Afghanistan, staff are distributing blankets, medicine, and other supplies to returning refugees.

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Children with Eyes That See

A child's eye view of the world can make everything clear.

MY CHILDREN NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT shopping carts were not camouflaged space ships or rolling cribs, waiting to be docked somewhere. So when they saw Delsinore pushing her loaded shopping cart down the street far away from any store, they admired her. They asked me: How did she get the cart? Could she get one for us too?

When I explained that she was homeless, they wanted to know where she ate, where she slept, and if her kids had shopping carts too. So we approached Dels and talked with her. That began a friendship in which we would sit on park benches talking whenever I was out running errands. We brought her goodies to eat and she dug treasures out of her cart that we prized—candy bars, socks, and candles with decals.

Before my kids pointed her out, I'd driven past Delsinore many times without noticing her, but after our conversation I began spotting her immediately. My kids' questions and gentle eagerness to be friends with Dels helped me see her for the first time. She had become a real person to me.

Seeing people this way is a skill that Jesus valued.



Jan Johnson is a journalist, retreat leader, and author of *Growing Compassionate Kids* and *When the Soul Listens*. She lives with her family in Simi Valley, Calif.

He said that someday people who were observant of the down-and-out would stand on his right and hear him say, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Surprised, these sharp-eyed folks would ask, "When did we see you . . .?" (Matt. 25:35-37). Oddly enough, the inattentive people on Jesus' left who overlooked the

hungry, thirsty, sick or imprisoned would ask the same question. Yet they'd looked right through the needy and went on. Because of the first group's observant eyes, they got to become the hands and feet of Jesus Christ here on earth.

Seeing people this way is not automatic in our hurry-driven world, but I've found that we can help each other with this. My kids helped me that day, and so did Delsinore. One time, we invited her to our home for dinner, but she didn't come. The next time we saw her, I asked (a little exasperated), "What can I do to help you?" Her answer: "Sit here and talk to me." All she wanted was for us to hang out with her. She taught me that seeing is about gazing into people's eyes and forming relationships.

As we learn to truly see people who used to be invisible to us, we also learn to launch out and build relationships with them. Our family has since served holiday meals at street missions, talking with people and urging our kids to play with the kids of the guests. We've visited elderly folks in nursing homes, asking questions and singing songs together. When we participated in a Habitat for Humanity project, the best part was listening to the woman whose home we were repairing. Hearing from her about how it had been rocked off its foundation in the Northridge earthquake helped us see her and her needs. And we began writing to our World Vision sponsored child and praying for him at dinner every night.

Volunteering this way is changing all of us. We're learning to value compassion, patience, and initiative over personality, flair, and sex appeal. We focus on giving more instead of having more. Offering cups of cold water also works against what I call "spiritual greed," in which our relationship with God is mostly about me, myself, and I. Bedtime and mealtime prayers are not only, "Bless me—bless people I love—bless folks I know," but also, "Bless Dels and her friends. Show us how to help." And now in this panicked, post-Sept. 11 world, the compassionate love of God is casting out fear as we remember to see this world God so loves. ■



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