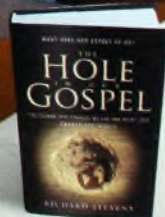


WorldVision

SPRING 2009

Small Things With Great Love

HOW A PRESIDENT, A PASTOR,
AND A PENNSYLVANIA CHURCH
ARE SERVING THE 'LEAST OF THESE'



Excerpt from Rich Stearns' new book,
"The Hole in Our Gospel," page 12

World Vision

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WorldVision

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3

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» ON THE COVER

Srey Noch, 4, at a World Vision-support rice bank in Cambodia, grasps her grandmother's hands—hands that speak of a lifetime of toil.

Photograph by Jon Warren

Cover title drawn from a quote by Mother Teresa: "There are no great things, only small things with great love."

World Vision, 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 46 cents a copy to produce.

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World Vision

Building a better world for children

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In God We Trust »

Over the past several months, it has been both astonishing and unnerving to read the daily headlines chronicling shock after shock to our economy and those across the globe. Unemployment has soared as one corporate institution after another has stumbled or fallen. The unregulated excesses that began with Wall Street's financial tycoons have trickled down to average working Americans, who have been hit hard.

If you're like most, you've seen your savings and retirement accounts dwindle. Homeowners have seen their home values shrink dramatically and some have lost their homes altogether. Yes, these are tough times for Americans.

How should we think about all of this, and what can we do? As a Christian, I know in my head that God is in control, but it's hard to believe it in my heart. When things go well, it's easy to put our faith in God. But what about when things go badly?

Twenty-one years ago, I learned a lesson I'll never forget. It was October 1987, and the stock market fell more than 22 percent in one day. As a young father of three at the time, I was in a panic, having been unemployed for most of the previous year. About a third of everything I had saved for the future—college for my kids, savings for a rainy day, and retirement—disappeared in just a few days.

Each night, I would rush from the dinner table and spread out my papers, trying to calculate my losses and determine which of my mutual-fund shares to sell the next day. "What's wrong with Daddy?" my kids asked my wife, Reneé. "Are we going to be OK?"

One late night, Reneé sat down beside me. "Honey," she said, "you've become obsessed by this, and it's not healthy. You're even

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." —Psalm 20:7

scaring the children. We have our marriage, our health, our friends, our children, and your new job—so much to be thankful for. You need to let go of this and trust God."

Don't you hate it when someone crashes your pity party? Reneé suggested that we stop and pray about it, which we did, and then suggested something quite shocking. "Right now, we need to get out our checkbook and write some big checks to support the Lord's work—to our church, the missionaries we support, and the poor," she said. "That's the best way to break the spell that all of this has put over you. This is the Lord's money, not ours."



And so we did. To my amazement, as we wrote the last checks and sealed them in envelopes, I felt free. I was no longer depending on my bank accounts; I was depending on God. Those tough times passed, the economy gradually got better and I learned a lesson about where to put my trust. Now, every time I look at a dollar bill and see the words "In God We Trust," I understand why it's there: to remind us that money is not where to put our trust. God is.

These are indeed tough times, and I know many families are suffering. But it is also a time for us to thank God for our blessings and not to become consumed with anxiety over what we lack. It's a time to remember those who are worse off than we are—a time to reach out to the homeless, the jobless, and the poor—our neighbors here in America and around the world.

Most of you reading this are doing just that. You are writing checks to help the poor even as your own financial condition

remains uncertain. Your faithfulness in these times of hardship is truly inspirational. ■



FRONTLINES

Compiled by James Addis

Child Bride

Alima waits nervously in a private room while the religious part of her wedding ceremony is conducted without her—as is the tradition in Niger. Although she is only 13, she is about to marry a man who is almost 40.

World Vision is conducting microcredit and literacy work among mothers in Niger and other countries in an effort to discourage child marriage. Girls who marry early drop out of school early, are at greater risk of contracting AIDS, and suffer complications in childbirth. A new World Vision report, "Before She's Ready: 15 Places Girls Marry by 15," says the global food crisis is causing the number of child brides to soar. Parents are tempted to marry daughters early so that there is one less mouth to feed. ■

» SEE THE FULL REPORT: www.worldvision.org/childbrides



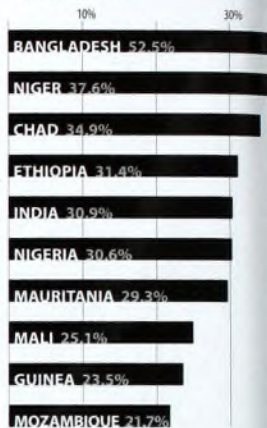
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

MICHAEL ARUNGA/WORLD VISION



MARRIED BY

Countries with the highest percentage of girls married by age 15.



SOURCE: Demographic and Health Surveys

WORLD WATCH

1 | DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



REBEL ROUT »

Thousands fled fighting in eastern DRC in October as rebel forces clashed

with government troops in a rebel advance on the provincial capital, Goma. World Vision workers evacuated to neighboring Rwanda, but two days later they returned to deliver humanitarian aid to displaced families. “The conflict has intensified the effects of poverty 10 times over,” said a local nurse.

2 | INDIA
FLOODS SWAMP BIHAR »

A breach on the eastern embankment of the Kosi River caused flooding in thousands of villages in Bihar, affecting 3 million people. World Vision relief operations reached almost 125,000 people and included the provision of food, shelter materials, and hygiene items.

3 | SUDAN
MORE BRUTALITY »

A killing and looting spree unleashed by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army in the Democratic Republic of Congo forced nearly 2,000 people to flee to southern Sudan. World Vision distributed 42 metric tons of food provided by the World Food Program to assist the displaced.

THREE STRIKES AGAINST MALARIA

World Vision is part of the global movement to fight malaria, aiming for a 75 percent reduction in infections in project areas by the end of 2015 (with 2000 as the base year). Here's how:

- » Distributing bed nets
- » Partnering with businesses
- » Advocating with governments



» **JOIN THE FIGHT** against malaria, visit www.endmalaria.org



ON THE GROUND

Michael Arunga is World Vision's emergency communications officer in Africa. He describes a recent assignment in Darfur, Sudan.

People are attacked on a daily basis. I am a constant witness to this suffering, and it often brings tears to my eyes. The children, women, and men I meet tell me the same story: 'Armed men on horseback struck our village in the wee hours of the morning and subjected us to attacks and other atrocious activities.' I have twice narrowly missed being killed with my colleagues. During the second attack, three of them were wounded when their vehicle was sprayed with bullets. I hope everybody prays unceasingly for Darfur.'

PHILIPPINES

WAR HURTS CHILDREN » A flare-up of violence in the southern and of Mindanao prompted World Vision to set up Child-Friendly Spaces to bring comfort to affected children. The organization also distributed relief items to more than 3,000 families sheltering in evacuation centers. The government is engaged in a decades-long confrontation with Muslim separatists on the island.

5 | EAST AFRICA

HUNGER IN HORN » A worsening food crisis in the Horn of Africa prompted World Vision to ramp up emergency operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda. In addition to food aid, initiatives include agricultural recovery, child nutrition, and access to clean water. About 6.4 million people are in urgent need of food aid in Ethiopia alone due to drought and rising food prices.

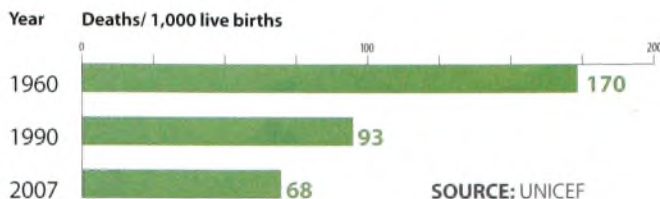


PHILIPPINES

DOWN WITH CHILD DEATH

Improvements in basic health care are steadily reducing deaths of young children.

Global under-5 mortality »



CHILE

6 | CHILE | RAIN RESPONSE » The worst rains in 30 years destroyed crops, drowned cattle, and swept away roads and bridges in southern parts of the country. World Vision responded with food, fodder for surviving animals, and charcoal to heat the damp homes of families of sponsored children.

7 | NEPAL | DAM BUST » A break in the Koshi Dam caused severe flooding in Sunsari and Saptari and forced the evacuation of 50,000 people. World Vision's initial response included provision of food, toilets, wells, and bathing facilities at shelter sites.

8 | UNITED STATES | HURRICANE HELP » World Vision worked with more than 100 church, school, and community partners to distribute emergency relief items to families from Louisiana and Texas hit by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Afterward, World Vision distributed materials to assist with clean-up operations such as shovels, face masks, and buckets. Items were dispatched from the organization's Storehouses in Dallas, Texas, and Picayune, Miss. ■



JIM HONE/GENESIS PHOTOS

Healing Testimony

A child's experience of war encourages child sponsorship.

When Emily Schmidt, 13, speaks in churches, urging congregations to sponsor children in Sierra Leone, it's common for her listeners to be moved to tears.

That's because her description of life in Sierra Leone—a country still recovering from a decade-long war where marriage struggle to find necessities such as food and clean water—are all part of her personal experience.

Those deprivations claimed the lives of nine of her brothers and sisters. When Emily also got sick, relatives placed her in an orphanage, believing the whole family was cursed. That's where she met Paul and Tina Schmidt, from Sartell, Minn., who adopted Emily and brought her to the United States.

Emily was taken to a Minneapolis children's hospital where she underwent treatment for a life-threatening liver parasite acquired through drinking dirty water.

Tina says that experience, coupled with the six weeks she spent in Sierra Leone formalizing the adoption, opened her eyes to the acute needs in the world and changed her life. "It became clear very fast that I have a responsibility to act and do something," she says.

Tina decided to become a Child Ambassador—a World Vision volunteer encouraging others to sponsor children. She says adoption almost certainly saved Emily's life. If Emily's family had benefited from the kind of help sponsorship offers, she would never have ended up in an orphanage.

Nowadays, the mother-and-daughter team (pictured left) speaks at fundraisers and in churches, specializing in securing sponsors for children in Sierra Leone.

Emily says what moves audiences most is when she relates how her family fled rebel attacks on her village. They were forced to hide in the bush, surviving on wild fruits and drinking stagnant water. "I used to feel bad about it," she says, "but now I feel good inside to tell my story. It makes me realize that there is something we can do to help my country." ■

» **TO SPONSOR A CHILD**

see the envelope between pages 16-17.

FAST FACT » More than 1 million children die every year from contaminated water. SOURCE: United Nations

Shining example

Leon McLaughlin's shoeshine stand sends clean water around the globe.

When John Wilson worked as chief of staff for executive Ron Sims in King County, Wash., he took to heart a point his boss often repeated: "Never take anyone for granted because what you perceive to be their station in life."

So when John listened to Leon McLaughlin—a man he regularly paid to shine his shoes—chatting about his plans to bring clean water to water-starved places around the world, John was less inclined to dismiss Leon's ideas. The more he listened, the more impressed he became.

It turned out that Leon had traveled extensively and the problems of those without clean water had moved him deeply. He had taken online classes in the repair and maintenance of water distribution systems, and he became an agent for First Water—the manufacturer of the Outpost filtration machine that can produce 740 gallons of clean water per hour.

John says Leon's genius lay in devising a method whereby such technology could be assembled and deployed in the developing world without an army of technicians. He suggested Leon call World Vision.

The phone call came at the right time. Leon's technology was just what was needed for World Vision to assist flooded communities in Bolivia. There was one catch: Leon would be required to donate the machine and pay for ongoing technical support.

Leon was not put off. His shoeshine stand in downtown Seattle puts him in contact with influential lawyers and business people. As he shined their shoes he shared his vision, and was able to fund his first machine for Bolivia. World Vision staff in Bolivia were so impressed, they ordered more units.

Nowadays, Leon runs his own humanitarian organization—Land and Water Maintenance—from his shoeshine stand, and John Wilson is one of his strategic advisors. Leon says it is heartwarming to see how his clients support him. "Everybody is all on board. It is such a great feeling," he says. ■

Leon McLaughlin (right) counts John Wilson (left) as a trusted advisor.



GUY LYONS/GENESIS PHOTOS

changeAGENT

Name: Laurie Kasinger

Home: Mountain Home, Ark.

Occupation: Substitute teacher

Program: Corporate Partnerships

Buzz: Laurie heard some discouraging voices when she decided to establish the Mountain Home Marathon for Kenya—an event to support the work of World Vision in Katito, an AIDS-hit community in Kenya that lacks clean water. People warned her that it would be tons of work. Laurie went ahead anyway. The marathon is now in its sixth year, attracts runners from all over the country, and has raised about \$65,000 from corporate sponsors to help fund the work in Katito. Laurie says the run gets rave reviews and has raised a lot of awareness about African poverty in her small town. ■

The Holy Spirit leads you, and you have a choice. You can either listen or not listen. I'm glad I did not turn a deaf ear.

—LAURIE KASINGER



» **LEARN ABOUT**

partnering with corporations as Leon and Laurie did. Visit www.worldvision.org/corporate.



Rwanda Rocks

When rock band Flyleaf visited World Vision projects in Rwanda, it was a strange gig. They spent time with genocide survivors and children suffering from AIDS. They also tried milking cows and opening up beehives. Singer Lacey Mosley reflects on her experiences.

Q: Tell us about the young beekeepers you met.

The stories of these young men are incredible. They lost their parents [during the genocide] and had to raise their young siblings while only children themselves. Through the beekeeping they started a successful business that sustains them and other child-headed households. The humility and appreciation of these young men is a most humbling thing to witness. You just want to crawl under a rock and ask forgiveness for ever having harbored self-pity.

Q: Did any child stand out for you?

I met a woman who is a caregiver for several people with AIDS. We got to listen to her story and meet her 10-year-old son, Eric, who stole my heart with his smile and the warmth of his embrace. I told them that my brother's name is Eric, and the mother said, "Now my Eric is your brother, too." Then his mother said something in her language, and the boy's face fell dramatically. His sadness just radiated from his body, and he would no longer make eye contact. The interpreter said, "His mother says that Eric is HIV-positive." Eric got

up to leave, keeping his head down. I stood up and took his arm and pulled him to myself to hug him tightly. His countenance lifted and he would not let go. I tried so hard not to let him know that I was crying inside. The mother went on to explain she herself had contracted AIDS when she was raped during the genocide. This is something that World Vision is working to alleviate—the stigma that comes with AIDS.

Q: What's your general impression of Rwanda's children?

The overwhelming characteristic is gratitude. And yet they might live in a dark house with no lights, sleeping on dirt floors, not owning so much as a pair of shoes. I gave a stuffed bear to my sponsored child, and she had never seen a stuffed toy before. But despite all this they are so full of creativity, making toys out of sticks and rocks.

Q: How do concert audiences react to your Rwanda experiences?

We have a mixed audience, and there is a portion of the rock audience that seems to come to shows to forget about responsibilities altogether. But there are others who have become strong people of hope. They love dark music because life is dark sometimes and rock is passionate. Most of the time these people have overcome tragic adversity and understand the call to help others going through intense suffering. ■

Why I love BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

JULES KO MYUNG

Allston, Mass.

My beloved mother passed away after fighting a tough battle with stomach cancer. As I walked through the clothing section in the department store, I realized I wouldn't be buying gifts for her anymore. I thought instead I could sponsor a child in my mom's memory. Years earlier, I had begun sponsoring a girl from Swaziland as a way of thanking God for providing me with a job when I left college.

As I scrolled through the World Vision Web site, I saw a girl from Zambia, whose name was Violet. My mother loved African violets. The last thing I bought her was a robe with a violet print. So I decided to sponsor Violet. Later, I found a picture of a little boy from Ethiopia whom my mom sponsored, and I signed up to sponsor him as well.

My mom is the greatest person I have ever known. Sponsoring these children reminds me of her loving intentions. It's just one way I can carry on her legacy. ■

» TELL US YOUR STORY

Why do you love being a child sponsor? Write the editors at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.



DAN HYUNG



PAT RHODES/WORLD VISION

STUDENTS IN A HOLE

High-school students Catherine Yuh and Paige Stephens (pictured above) got a taste of what it is like to live in a thirsty community when they descended 20 feet down a hand-dug well to fetch water in drought-stricken Swaziland, southern Africa. The girls were part of the most recent 30 Hour Famine Study Tour, which allows young people to visit communities being helped by funds raised during the 30 Hour Famine. Each year, young Americans are invited to fast for 30 hours to raise money for hungry children. In 2008, they raised a record \$12.2 million. ■

WHAT'S ON

Feb. 25 – April 11:
Lent. Prepare your heart for Easter with "A Call to Live," World Vision's Lenten study guide for church groups and individuals. To download this free study, visit www.worldvision.org/lent.

Feb. 27 – 28, April 24 – 25: 30 Hour Famine national dates. Support youth across the country as they go without food to help hungry children and change the world. Visit www.30hourfamine.org.

March – November 2009: Women of Faith, "A Grand New Day." The two-day events provide a mix of laughter, music, and stories that will touch your heart. For details, visit www.womenoffaith.com.

March 14 – April 1: Worship Together Live tour, one-day training and concerts from top worship leaders such as Tim Hughes, Brenton Brown, and Matt Maher. For tour information, visit www.worshiptogether.com/live.

KITCOUNT

175,671

Number of Caregiver Kits assembled by U.S. churches, businesses, and community groups to equip World Vision volunteers caring for those living with AIDS. Help grow this number by getting your group to assemble kits. Visit www.worldvision.org/carekits. ■

the Hole

IN OUR

Gospel



KAREN HOFER/WORLD VISION

IN THE HUMBLE HOME OF AN ORPHANED AFRICAN CHILD, RICH STEARNS DISCOVERED HIS NEIGHBOR IN NEED—AND ANSWERED GOD’S CALL ON HIS LIFE. AN EXCERPT FROM HIS UPCOMING BOOK.

Rakai, Uganda, August 1998: His name was Richard, the same as mine. I sat inside his meager thatch hut, listening to his story, told through the tears of an orphan whose parents had died of AIDS. At 13, Richard was trying to raise his two younger brothers by himself in this small shack with no running water, electricity, or even beds to sleep in. There were no adults in their lives—no one to care for them, feed them, love them, or teach them how to become men. There was no one to hug them, either, or to tuck them in at night. Other than his siblings, Richard was alone, as no child should be. I try to picture my own children abandoned in this kind of deprivation, fending for themselves without parents to protect them, and I cannot. »



Jesus calls us to bring his good news to poor communities, like this one in Mozambique. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Rich's encounter with Richard (green shirt) was life-changing.



In 10 years with World Vision, Rich has traveled more than a million miles to the world's forgotten places to meet face-to-face with people in need.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

I didn't want to be there. I wasn't *supposed* to be there, so far out of my comfort zone—not in that place where orphaned children live by themselves in their agony. There, poverty, disease, and squalor had eyes and faces that stared back, and I had to see and smell and touch the pain of the poor. That particular district, Rakai, was believed to be ground zero for the Ugandan AIDS pandemic. There the deadly virus has stalked its victims in the dark for decades. Sweat trickled down my face as I sat awkwardly with Richard and his brothers while a film crew captured every tear—mine and theirs.

I much preferred living in my bubble, the one that, until that moment, had safely contained my life, family, and career. It kept difficult things like this out, insulating me from anything too raw or upsetting. When such things intruded, as they rarely did, a channel could be changed, a newspaper page turned, or a check written, to keep the poor at a safe distance. But not in Rakai. There “such things” had faces and names—even my name, Richard.

Not 60 days earlier I had been CEO of Lenox, America's finest tableware company, producing

and selling luxury goods to those who could afford them. I lived with my wife and five children in a 10-bedroom house on five acres just outside of Philadelphia. I drove a Jaguar to work every day, and my business travel took me to places such as Paris, Tokyo, London, and Florence. I flew first-class and stayed in the best hotels. I was respected in my community, attended a venerable suburban church, and sat on the board of my kids' Christian school. I was one of the good guys—you might say a “poster child” for the successful Christian life. I had never heard of Rakai, the place where my bubble would burst. But in just 60 days, God turned my life inside out, and it would never be the same.

Quite unexpectedly, eight months earlier, I had been contacted by World Vision, the Christian relief and development organization, during their search for a new president. Why me? It wasn't something I had sought after. In fact, you might say I had been minding my own business when the phone rang that day. But it was a phone call that had been 24 years in the planning. You see, in 1974, at the age of 23, in my graduate school

dormitory, I knelt down beside my bed and dedicated my life to Christ. This was no small decision for me, and it came only after months of reading, studying, conversations with friends, and the important witness of Reneé, the woman who would later become my wife. While at the time I knew very little about the implications of that decision, I knew this: nothing would ever be quite the same again, because I had made a promise to follow Christ—no matter what.

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T BUY CHINA

Several months after becoming a Christian, I was newly engaged to Reneé. As we were planning our wedding and our life together, she suggested that we go to a department store to register for our china, crystal, and silver. My self-righteous response was an indication of just how my newfound faith was integrating into my life: "As long as there are children starving in the world, we're not going to own fine china, crystal, and silver." Perhaps you can see God's sense of irony in my becoming president of America's premier fine tableware company a couple of decades later. So when I answered that phone call from World Vision in January 1998, I knew that God was on the other end of the line. It was his voice I heard, not the recruiter's: "Rich, do you remember that idealistic young man in 1974 who was so passionate about starving children that he would not even fill out

"WHAT 'GOOD NEWS' HAVE GOD'S PEOPLE BROUGHT TO THE WORLD'S 3 BILLION POOR?"

a wedding registry? Take a good look at yourself now. Do you see what you've become? But Rich, if you still care about those children, I have a job I want you to do."

In my prayers over the weeks leading up to my appointment as World Vision's president, I begged God to "send someone else to do it," much as Moses had done. Surely this was a mistake. I was no Mother Teresa. I remember praying that God would send me anywhere else, *But, please, God, not to the poor—not into the pain and alienation of poverty and disease, not there.* I didn't want to go there.

Yet here I was, the new president of World Vision [in the United States], sent by knowing staff to get a "baptism by fire" for my new calling, with a film crew to document every moment.

Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, once prayed, "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God." But who *really* wants his heart broken? Is this something to ask of God? Don't we pray that God will *not* break our



What Others are Saying About *The Hole in Our Gospel*

ILL HYBELS, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church: "*The Hole in Our Gospel* will call you to a higher level of discipleship. I am rooting that you will allow God to take you to a new place of compassion and activism."

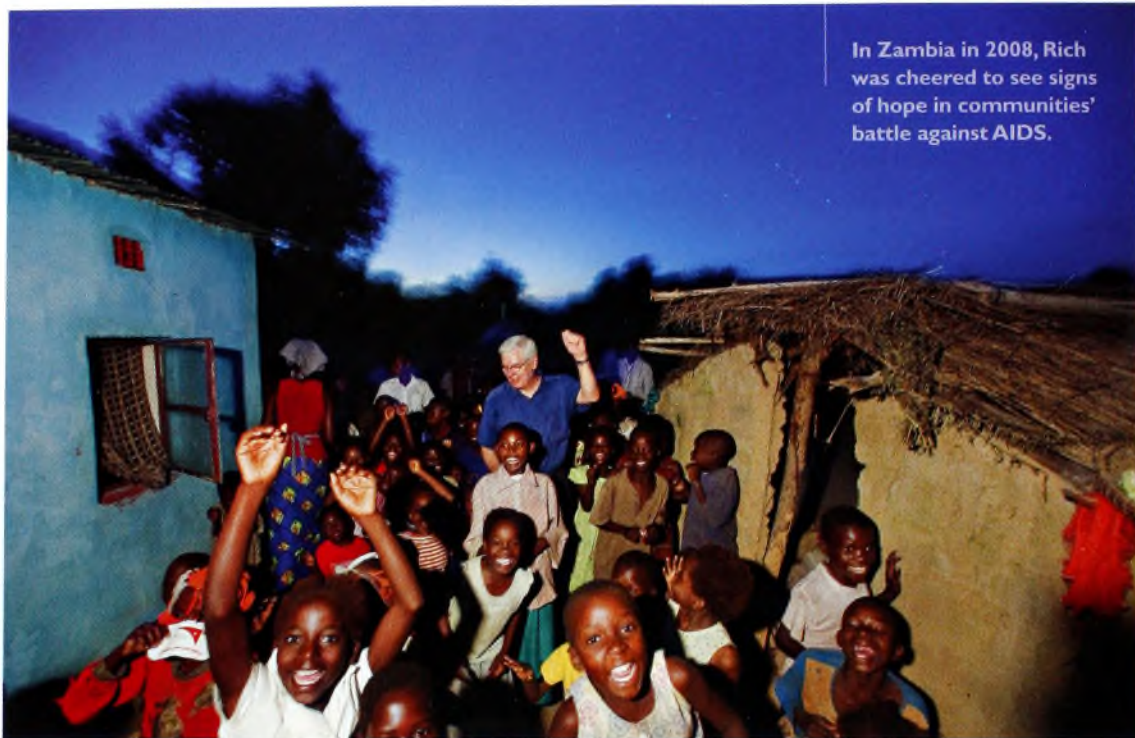
LUCI SWINDOLL, Women of Faith speaker: "In a knowledgeable, loving way, Richard Stearns carefully explains why there's a hole in our Christian belief system. He redefines words like *neighbor*,

wealth, possible, awareness ... then, with challenging directives, shows us tangible ways this hole can be repaired—even eradicated—when each of us pours hope and compassion into it."

CHUCK COLSON, founder of Prison Fellowship: "With passionate urging and earnestness, Rich Stearns challenges American Christians to embrace the whole gospel of Jesus Christ by embracing the neediest and most vulnerable among us."

BONO, musician and co-founder of the ONE Campaign: "His form of worship is to be the eyes of the blind and the feet of the lame. Rich Stearns is much more than a powerful voice in the fight against AIDS and extreme poverty, he is an action hero."

T.D. JAKES, pastor of The Potter's House: "This book is a clarion call for the church to arise and answer the question, 'Who is my neighbor?'" ■



In Zambia in 2008, Rich was cheered to see signs of hope in communities' battle against AIDS.

JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

hearts? But as I look at the life of Jesus, I see that he was, as Isaiah described him, “a man of sorrows . . . acquainted with grief” (53:3 NKJV). Jesus’ heart was continually moved to compassion as he encountered the lame, the sick, the widow, and the orphan. I try to picture God’s broken heart as he looks today upon the broken world for whom he died. Surely Richard’s story breaks his heart.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Two crude piles of stones just outside the door mark the graves of Richard’s parents. It disturbs me that he must walk past them every day. He and his brothers must have watched first their father and then their mother die a slow and horrible death. I wondered if the boys were the ones who fed them and bathed them in their last days. Whatever the case, Richard, a child himself, is now the head of household.

Child-headed household, words never meant to be strung together. I try to wrap my mind around this new phrase, one that describes not only Richard’s plight, but that of tens of thousands,

even millions more. I’m told that there are 60,000 orphans just in Rakai, 12 million orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Awkwardly I asked Richard what he hopes to be when he grows up, a ridiculous question to ask a child who has lost his childhood. “A doctor,” he said, “so I can help people who have the disease.”

“Do you have a Bible?” I asked. He ran to the other room and returned with his treasured book with gold-gilt pages. “Can you read it?”

“I love to read the book of John, because it says that Jesus loves the children.”

This overwhelmed me, and my tears started to flow. *Forgive me, Lord, forgive me. I didn’t know.* But I did know. I knew about poverty and suffering in the world. I was aware that children die daily from starvation and lack of clean water. I also knew about AIDS and the orphans it leaves behind, but I kept these things outside of my insulating bubble and looked the other way.

Yet this was to be the moment that would ever after define me. Rakai was what God wanted me to see. My sadness that day was replaced by repentance. Despite what the Bible had told me so

clearly, I had turned a blind eye to the poor. Now my heart was filled with anger, first at myself, and then toward the world. Why wasn't Richard's story being told? The media overflowed with celebrity dramas, stock market updates, and Bill Clinton's

great tragedy of these orphans get drowned out by choruses of praise music in hundreds of thousands of churches across our country? Sitting in a hut in Rakai, I remember thinking, *How have we missed it so tragically, when even rock stars and actors seem to understand?*

Later, I know. Something fundamental is missing in our understanding of the gospel. The word *gospel* literally means "good news." I remember that he had come to "preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). But what good news is the *gospel*, did the Church have for the orphans in Rakai? What "good news" did God's people brought to the world's orphans? What "gospel" have millions of orphans seen? What gospel have most of the orphans in the 21st century? The answer is found in the title of my book: a hole in it. ■



ROBERT CORONADO/WORLD VISION

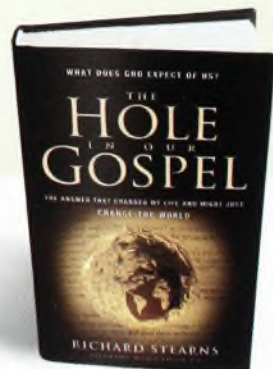
“What **‘gospel’** have **millions** of Africa’s AIDS orphans **seen?”**

— RICH STEARNS

...us decided with renewed commitment to live it through our lives—not even in big ways. Do we want to change the world?”
...Christian. That’s almost one in three. Have we failed to point out that the changes have not ended? Have we been effective ambassadors, repeated in churches the world over on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10) ...ushering in God’s kingdom—now, not later. What if 2 billion people embraced the gospel? Indeed, what if even 2,000 people

...st 12.

...be in bookstores and Christian retailers. At World Vision, we work with children and adults.





In Zambia in 2008, Rich was cheered to see signs of hope in communities' battle against AIDS.

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 GENDER: BOY GIRL
 LIVING IN: AFRICA LATIN AMERICA
- I want my one-time donation to go where it's needed most. AMOUNT: \$ _____

hearts? But as I look at the life of Jesus, I see that he was, as Isaiah described him, “a man of sorrows . . . acquainted with grief” (53:3 NKJV). My heart was continually moved to compassion as I encountered the lame, the sick, the widow, and the orphan. I try to picture God’s broken heart as it looks today upon the broken world for whom Jesus died. Surely Richard’s story breaks his heart.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Two crude piles of stones just outside the door mark the graves of Richard’s parents. It disturbs me that he and his brothers must have watched first their father and then their mother die a slow and horrible death. I wonder if the boys were the ones who fed them and bathed them in their last days. Whatever the case, Richard, a child himself, is now the head of the household.

Child-headed household, words never meant to be strung together. I try to wrap my mind around this new phrase, one that describes not only Richard’s plight, but that of tens of thousands

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clearly, I had turned a blind eye to the poor. Now my heart was filled with anger, first at myself, and then toward the world. Why wasn't Richard's story being told? The media overflowed with celebrity dramas, stock market updates, and Bill Clinton's

great tragedy of these orphans get drowned out by choruses of praise music in hundreds of thousands of churches across our country? Sitting in a hut in Rakai, I remember thinking, *How have we missed it so tragically, when even rock stars and actors seem to understand?*

Later, I know. Something fundamental is missing in our understanding of the gospel. The word *gospel* literally means "good news." I remember that he had come to "preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). But what good news to the poor? What good news to his brothers in Rakai? What good news to God's people brought to the world's poor? What good news do we have today? What good news do we have in the 21st century?

The answer is found in the title of my book: a hole in it. ■



MARGARET ALEROTEK/WORLD VISION



ROBERT CORONADO/WORLD VISION (2)

Fred Ssemanda was 8 and his brother, Emmanuel, was 3 when their parents succumbed to AIDS. Before World Vision staff found them, they were living in a shack fit for pigs in Kalongo, Uganda.

Is God calling you to reach out to children like Fred and Emmanuel?

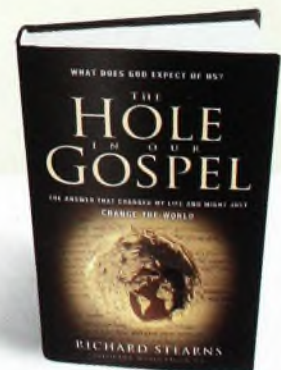
You can help children affected by HIV and AIDS. Complete the form and return it with your gift in this envelope.

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us decided with renewed commitment to live it through our lives—not even in big ways. Do we want to change the world?

Christian. That's almost one in three. Have we pointed out that the changes have not ended? Have we been effective ambassadors, repeated in churches the world over on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10) or ushering in God's kingdom—now, not then. What if 2 billion people embraced it. Indeed, what if even 2,000 people

at 12.



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In Zambia in 2008, Rich was cheered to see signs of hope in communities' battle against AIDS.

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clearly, I had turned a blind eye to the poor. Now my heart was filled with anger, first at myself, and then toward the world. Why wasn't Richard's story being told? The media overflowed with celebrity dramas, stock market updates, and Bill Clinton's impending impeachment hearings. But where were the headlines and magazine covers about Africa? Twelve million orphans, and no one noticed?

But what sickened me most was this question: Where was the Church? Indeed, where *were* the followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of perhaps the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time? Surely the Church should have been caring for these "orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27). Shouldn't the pulpits across America have flamed with exhortations to rush to the front lines of compassion? Shouldn't they be flaming today? Shouldn't churches be reaching out to care for children in such desperate need? How could the

great tragedy of these orphans get drowned out by choruses of praise music in hundreds of thousands of churches across our country? Sitting in a hut in Rakai, I remember thinking, *How have we missed it so tragically, when even rock stars and Hollywood actors seem to understand?*

Ten years later, I know. Something fundamental has been missing in our understanding of the gospel.

The word *gospel* literally means "good news." Jesus declared that he had come to "preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). But what good news, what *gospel*, did the Church have for Richard and his brothers in Rakai? What "good news" have God's people brought to the world's 3 billion poor? What "gospel" have millions of Africa's orphans seen? What gospel have most of us embraced in the 21st century?

The answer is found in the title of my book: a gospel with a *hole* in it. ■

What If?

The Hole in Our Gospel asks the question, what if? What if each of us decided with renewed commitment to truly embrace the good news, the whole gospel, and demonstrate it through our lives—not even in big ways, but in small ones? What if we each said to God, "Use me; I want to change the world"?

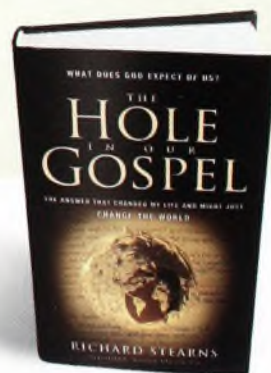
There are now 2 billion people on earth who claim to be Christian. That's almost one in three. Have we changed the world? Certainly, but our critics would be quick to point out that the changes have not always been good. So have we changed the world the way *God* intended? Have we been effective ambassadors for the good news that we call the "gospel"? The Lord's Prayer, repeated in churches the world over, contains the phrase "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10 KJV). Do we believe what we pray? The whole gospel is a vision for ushering in God's kingdom—now, not in some future time, and here, on earth, not in some distant heaven. What if 2 billion people embraced this vision of God transforming our world—through *them*? Imagine it. Indeed, what if even 2,000 people took their faith to the next level—what might God do?

Two thousand years ago, the world was changed forever by just 12.

It can happen again. ■

To Read More ...

The Hole in Our Gospel by Rich Stearns, published by Thomas Nelson, will be in bookstores on March 10. Pre-order it today through Family Christian Stores and online retailers. At the author's request, all royalties due to him will benefit World Vision's work with children in need. Go to www.theholeinourgospel.com for video, photos, and more.





Roth Ourng posed a question to World Vision. The gospel was the answer.



|| B Y D E A N O W E N ||

Pastoral Purpose

A FORMER BUDDHIST MONK IN CAMBODIA FOUND CHRIST IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY. HIS EMBRACE OF THE FAITH INSPIRED RICH STEARNS, WHO MET HIM IN 2000, TO WRITE ABOUT HIM IN *THE HOLE IN OUR GOSPEL*.

The children's singing resounds from inside the church on Sunday morning as the pastor greets members arriving for the service. He is dressed casually in a blue, short-sleeved shirt and black slacks. A wide, welcoming smile adds a few more thick creases to his tanned and weathered face. A well-worn Bible in one hand, he beckons people inside. § This pastor, like countless others, has another job as a farmer to ensure he can feed his family. Nevertheless he spends many hours each month counseling church members; he worries about their marriages and their children's needs. The demands he faces make it difficult to find time for reflection, prayer, and studying Scripture. § But unlike others, this pastor embraced Christianity late in life. Until age 51, Roth Ourng had never heard of Jesus Christ. »

|| P H O T O S B Y J O N W A R R E N ||



Pastor Ourng removes his sandals outside the small wood-slatted church. He clambers up the stairs, steps inside, and sits down, facing about 50 people ready to worship. With legs crossed, he sits back against a pillar that helps suspend the structure six feet above the ground. The service at the Methodist Samrith Church is about to begin.

The next 60 minutes—as well as the previous 64 years—comprise a story of extraordinary transformation.

Roth was born in Samrith village in central Cambodia in 1944. At 22, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk, living a monastic life in Phnom Penh, the nation's capital. For more than a decade, he devoted himself to meditating, cultivating wisdom, and denouncing worldly matters and materialism—all toward the goal of Buddhist enlightenment.

After Khmer Rouge forces captured Phnom Penh in April, 1975, the new government man-

“I was reluctant to believe the World Vision staff at first,” he says. “They always opened their meetings in prayer. Their God was new to me.”

One day, Roth went to the office of the local World Vision manager to discuss the work in Samrith. A few minutes later, while the manager was called away for a brief discussion, Roth retrieved a Bible from the manager's desk and read the first few words of Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

He heard the manager returning and quickly replaced the Bible on the desk. His next words would change his life and the lives of many in his community: “Can I get a Bible? I want to understand who is this God.”

The World Vision manager gave him a Bible.

Roth wrapped it in his scarf and walked home. “I committed to read the whole Bible,” Roth says. It took him a month and a half.

“GOD IS KIND TO ALL. HE IS HELPFUL TO ALL. HE IS THE ONE WHO GIVES US LIFE.”

dated Cambodia to be an agrarian-based, utopian society of rural communes. The subsequent genocide of millions who disagreed was justified with the simple, chilling response: “To keep you is no benefit, to destroy you is no loss.”

The Buddhist leaders of Roth's pagoda gave Roth two choices: risk the torture and death of this brutal regime or return to his community. He chose the latter and became a rice farmer in Samrith.

In 1993, World Vision came to Samrith to work with community leaders, helping people improve their lives through health and education programs and other services. One of those leaders was Roth Ourng. “I noticed World Vision staff distributing clothing and, after a few days, I wanted to meet these people,” he says.

Roth posed a question to one of the staff, “Why are you doing this work?” The simple answer: “Because we are Christians.”

“I found trust and truth in God,” Roth says. “I was inspired by God's Word.” He accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior in 1995, 20 years after he put away the deep saffron-colored robe he wore as a monk.

Over the next several weeks, World Vision staff sought to answer Roth's probing questions about Christianity and eventually referred him to a pastor in Phnom Penh, more than 120 miles away. Roth made several trips there. His insatiable desire to know God and Jesus Christ more intimately led him to Christian training sessions and seminars.

In 1997, Pastor Ourng started a church in his home. His wife, Chay Pech, and their children still were practicing Buddhists. More than 10 years later, after the conversion of his wife and four children and preaching hundreds of sermons, the pastor opens today's Sunday service with a welcome to the congregation, about two-thirds of whom are children.

—continued on page 23



Lesson from Psalm 15.
BELOW: Learning continues at
the church's kids' club.





World Vision's work in Pastor Ourng's district includes microenterprise—small loans for fishing (above) and weaving.





—continued from page 20

“We are thankful we can be serving God happily,” he says. “God is kind to all. He is helpful to all. He is the one who gives us life. We will give songs of praise to our God.”

In a corner, a man grabs a bow and begins fingering a two-stringed *tro*, a traditional Cambodian instrument. Melodic middle-range and high-pitched notes begin filling the sanctuary. The congregation starts clapping, and worship begins.

Though the congregation sings in Khmer, the refrain of one hymn is unmistakable: “Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee; How great thou art, how great thou art!”

The children sitting cross-legged in front huddle together in small groups, concentrating on the songbooks. Many attend alone, and Pastor Ourng hopes they will encourage their parents

stocks were exhausted and was facing starvation.

The pastor then invites everyone to bow their heads for a closing prayer. “Thank you, God, for giving us inspiration. We pray you would stay in our hearts and our minds. Stay with us, so we are never off-course. And that we stand on your Word alone. Amen.”

The informal—yet quite powerful—service concludes. Some children scamper down the stairs, slip into their flip-flops, and head for home. Others linger with two teenage girls who lead the Methodist Samrith Church kids’ club, a weekly time for Christian education, games, and tutoring.

Pastor Ourng stands back, observing the interactions, his gray hair reflecting in the sunlight streaming through a large open window. Tomorrow he will labor in his two-and-a-half

“WE ALL FACE DRAWBACKS. BUT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES, WE CAN SAY, ‘OUR COMPASSIONATE GOD PROVIDES FOR US.’”

and older siblings to visit the church. Some wear amulets—necklaces with simple stones or gems designed to protect them from trouble—a subtle reminder that 95 percent of this nation’s 14 million people are Buddhist. Only 1 percent is Christian.

Later, the pastor reads from Psalm 15, a five-verse poem on how to prepare physically and spiritually for worship. Members of the congregation listen intently. Adults in the back take a few notes in their Bibles. Children sit transfixed on the pastor, who sits up, hands gesturing in front of his chest.

Roth’s voice becomes louder, more emotional. “We all will face drawbacks. But everyone who believes, we can say, ‘Our compassionate God provides for us.’ Those who are isolated, we shall work together to serve them, to help them. Thank you, God, for bringing us together.” He extols the generosity of the congregation for helping a neighbor whose rice

acre rice field, painstakingly transplanting 12-inch stalks.

But now, after preaching the gospel to people much younger—some having ventured more than two miles on foot, bicycle, or motor scooter—Pastor Ourng seems quietly content. Smiling and acknowledging those thanking him, he could be a pastor anywhere: Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, or Colorado.

And like most pastors, he hopes to be remembered for this work: “As a man who, with God and this church, helped [others].” ■

Dean Owen is director of executive communications for World Vision. Bun Ying, a writer and translator for World Vision in Cambodia, contributed to this story.

» See more photos at www.worldvision.org/magazine.

A Gospel WITHOUT Holes

HOW A PENNSYLVANIA CHURCH PUT THEIR FAITH INTO ACTION TO REVITALIZE AN AIDS-DEVASTATED COMMUNITY IN KENYA.

Turn up to Lives Changed by Christ (LCBC) for its first service on Sunday morning and you may wonder if you have blundered into a rock concert. The high-energy band veers toward the heavier end of the contemporary Christian music spectrum, and the 2,300-seat auditorium is packed. At the 11 a.m. service, the place will be refilled. Each weekend the church attracts about 8,000 worshippers. § Things were a lot different 23 years ago when LCBC was called Lancaster County Bible Church and the congregation met in a garage. One of the founders, Don Hershey, was known for a sign above his front door with a single word—“Others.” It reminded him of what life should be all about. LCBC senior pastor David Ashcraft says the philosophy lives on and perhaps helps explain the church’s phenomenal growth. Nobody quibbles if the music is not to their taste. It’s not about them. Like so much of this church’s work, it’s about what speaks to the needs of others. »

This “others” mindset also led the church to Tseikuru—an AIDS-devastated community in central Kenya. In 2003, David attended a meeting where he saw the World Vision video, “The Hidden Faces of AIDS.” He struggled to hold himself together for the rest of the meeting, but when he got back to his car, he broke down and sobbed. Later he phoned his wife, Ruth, saying they must respond.

But how? David’s initial thoughts were modest. Perhaps the church could support a village school of, say, a 100 pupils in an AIDS-affected area. The key would be to make a significant impact in a specific place.

LCBC decided to host a Hope Weekend during which the congregation would be invited to sponsor children in Tseikuru, where World Vision had recently started community development.

“I said, ‘Let’s not just send 100 bucks a month to Tseikuru. Let’s get to know the work really well, and let’s get involved with them,’” David says.

During Hope Weekend services, the congregation heard the Keith Green song “Asleep in the Light”—a searing rebuke to Christian passivity in the face of dire need. “The Hidden Faces of AIDS” was shown, and David talked about how the film had left him broken. Even today, church members

recall the intensity with which he spoke.

After the first service, 150 children were sponsored. At the next service, a whopping 300. More child profiles were rushed from World Vision’s office in New York so that children would be available for sponsorship at later services. In all, 900 children were sponsored, hundreds more than expected. Overnight, the idea of helping 100 schoolchildren mushroomed into a vision to assist an entire community of 28,000 people with better schools, medical facilities, clean water, improved agriculture, and microenterprise initiatives.

Afterward, church teams set off to Tseikuru to better understand its needs. The first visits were something of a roller-coaster ride for members. Ryan Geesaman, who produces videos for the church, was shaken when he interviewed a man only a little younger than himself at a freshly dug grave in the man’s garden. The 20-year-old had just buried his mother, a victim of AIDS. His father had died some years before. Now he would be obliged to feed, clothe, and educate his younger siblings on his own. Ruth Ashcraft was dismayed to see women

 Senior Pastor David Ashcraft cast the vision for his congregation to care for orphans and widows.



KENNETH K. LAHIGENESIS PHOTOS

digging for drinking water in dry riverbeds—scooping the filthy water into buckets, then lugging it home, sometimes for miles.

On the upside, visitors were amazed by the generosity of community members who had next to nothing. David recalls being taken to one hut with only a few mats on the floor. From nowhere, a crate of warm Cokes was produced and offered to the visitors. The father of Ryan's sponsored child gave him an ornate bow-and-arrow he had hand-carved himself. Young-adults pastor Mark Ashley recalls how touched he was when, after praying for the impoverished family of his sponsored child, Martha, they turned around and asked how they might pray for Mark's family.

"You go over there expecting to pity the people and kind of swoop in and somehow save them," David says, "but then you get there and realize they have a lot to teach us."

Visitors were encouraged that support in a few critical areas could be transformational. So the church began raising additional funds for wells, oxen, plows, and school supplies. One water fundraiser had a goal of \$20,000; it brought in more than \$100,000.

The church's media production team gath-

ered footage of the transformation taking place in Tseikuru. Now, church members back home did not just hear from others about the community's excitement upon receiving clean water, a new school, or a health clinic. They saw it for themselves as the local people smiled, danced, and cheered onscreen. Hundreds more children were sponsored. Today, LCBC members sponsor more than 2,000 children in Tseikuru and contribute close to \$1 million a year to the community.

The effort led to LCBC winning last year's Courageous Leadership Award (read more on page 27). The award comes with a prize of \$100,000, which the church intends to plow back into Tseikuru. Inspired by the progress in Kenya, the church is planning a significant missions effort on every continent.

For child sponsors Erik and Jackie Schouten, such works are not a nice extra but a crucial part of their church's mission. Sitting in LCBC's Connections Café, Erik waves a dismissive hand at the extensive facilities all around him. "If we were not doing the aid work, I would not know what the point of all this would be," he says, "Christ commanded us to feed the poor."

The couple delights in the fact that sponsorship gives their children insight into how others live, reinforced by the letters and drawings from their sponsored children tacked to their refrigerator.

Their daughter Madeline, 13, set up a stand promoting sponsorship with her friends on a freezing night in her hometown of Lititz. The girls handed out hot chocolate to shoppers along with sponsorship literature. Madeline says that the needs of children in the developing world broke her heart. "I really want to help out," she says.

The same spirit is evident in LCBC's Sunday school. At "56"—a ministry for about 200 fifth- and sixth-graders—youngsters quickly exceeded the sponsorship pledges for two children and decided to purchase and assemble Caregiver Kits—basic medical kits for World Vision-trained volunteers caring for AIDS patients in Africa and around the world.

The group set up a wall where children could write their prayers for the caregivers and their patients. "Needless to say, I cried as I looked at the



COURTESY LCBC

Ruth Ashcraft traveled with LCBC to Kenya and met her sponsored child.

wall,” says “56” leader Chad Herman. “Children have the audacity to believe.”

Brady Weaver, 13, says that learning about AIDS made him feel sad. “Building the kits made me feel I could do something about it,” he says.

Kelley Hershey, 11, relates how sponsorship funds purchased donkeys to spare women water-carrying duties. She remembers how “56” members tried carrying buckets of water on their heads up a church staircase to simulate conditions in Tseikuru: “I could not make it up the stairs.”

Although LCBC’s response to the needs in Tseikuru might seem remarkable, David says many churches can do similar things. Child sponsorship allows the whole church to get involved and at the same time permits each member to have a personal connection to the work. He adds that members’ sponsorship commitments have not appeared to adversely impact general church giving. Another advantage is being able to partner with World Vision and make use of the organization’s expertise. He feels that too often churches try to go it alone and either misunderstand the true nature of a community’s problems or quickly get overwhelmed.

Today, about half a dozen Lancaster churches have joined with LCBC and between them sponsor hundreds more children in Tseikuru. In addition to vastly improving Tseikuru’s material well-being, David believes they are also making a tremendous spiritual impact—a point brought home to him after seeing World Vision’s staff in action. “Their faith just kind of oozed out of all the staff. They were not necessarily there to talk about Jesus, but it just kind of happened.”

David feels this is precisely how the gospel should be shared—a principle he once inadver-



Mark Ashley was moved when his sponsored child's family prayed for him.

tently learned as a student at Dallas Theological Seminary. He recalls failing an evangelism class after he was assigned to hand out Christian tracts and engage pedestrians in downtown Dallas. He could not bring himself to hand out a single tract.

“That professor [who failed me] would say I am not big on evangelism,” David says, “But the reality is, I’m huge on evangelism. But let me get to know you, let’s work side-by-side, and as we are doing life together, then I will share Christ with you.” ■

What You Can Do

Help children affected by AIDS—see the envelope between pages 16-17.

Find out how your church can get involved with World Vision. Visit www.worldvision.org/church.

See LCBC’s video footage from Tseikuru, Kenya, at www.worldvision.org/magazine. ■

The Courageous Leadership Award

The Courageous Leadership Award is an annual award created by the Willow Creek Association and World Vision to honor churches bringing holistic assistance to impoverished communities around the world. Any Christian church worldwide is eligible to apply, and their work does not necessarily have to be connected with World Vision. For more details, visit www.courageousleadershipaward.com. ■



LEFT: Juldor was recently ordained a pastor by Ardella Baptist Church in Lakeland, Fla. **FACING PAGE:** Juldor with his wife, Mari, and daughters (from left) Juliette, Julie, and J.

Juldor Filiace, 28, is flooded with memories as he walks through Cochochmaron, Haiti. He walks past his old elementary school, past the path to the well, and sees his childhood friends. But he also sees something new: a concrete building for the Mount Zion Baptist Church—the church he planted.

"In 2000, I was called to ministry," Juldor says. "I had a vision, and the Lord told me to go and start a church, in [my hometown] specifically."

Cochochmaron was not an easy place to grow up. When Juldor was a young boy, his day would often start at midnight when he would walk two hours to the nearest well, wait in line to draw water, and carry his load back home. After that, he would go to school or help his mother and grandmother in the family's garden.

The family was able to farm for food—usually rice and beans—but the crops did not create any income. Juldor's father left to find work in the United States and sent back some money, but it was difficult to afford things like school uniforms and books.

"School was not steady for me because we did not have enough money for it," Juldor says. "When my family couldn't afford the fees, I was sent home. Sometimes I couldn't go to school for two or three months. When I couldn't go to school and see my friends, it really hurt."

When he was 10 years old, World Vision began working in his community. Staff came to visit his school, and they took his photo, spoke with him, and enrolled him in sponsorship.

"I was happy someone would give me the money so I could go to school," he says. "My sponsor paid for school fees, uniforms and books. I didn't have anything to worry about except showing up for school and buying shoes."

MICHAEL CRAPPS/GENESIS PHOTOS (2)

A Firm Foundation»

By Ryan Smith

For this former sponsored child, building a better future means returning to his roots.

"I want to open a Christian school, where the children can attend for free."

Because he attended a Christian school, Juldor learned about the Bible each day in school and attended church every Sunday. At age 12, he came to faith. "It was the leading of the Holy Spirit," he says.

When Juldor was 16, his father brought him to the U.S. to attend high school. At first, Juldor struggled to adjust to the new culture, but he was able to build on World Vision-supported education. "Without World Vision sponsorship, I would still be in the States, and I probably wouldn't have a high-school diploma, associate degree in theology, or an associate degree in business and management," he says.

Juldor now lives in Lakeland, Fla., with his wife, Marie, and their three daughters. He works as a formulator for AOC Resins, which allows him to support his family and give back to his home community. He took out a loan to construct the church building and sends a portion of his paycheck each month to support the congregation.

He visits the church in Haiti every six months, to teach and encourage the lead-

ers. "We started with seven people, under a tent and a coconut tree," Juldor says. "As of right now, we are about 100 members."

Each time he visits, his vision for the community grows. "I want to open a Christian school, where the children can attend for free," he says.

Juldor hopes to return to Haiti to be the full-time pastor and provide the guidance he once received. "When you're a shepherd, you have to be with the sheep," he says.

"Thanks to the Lord, I got the chance, through World Vision, to get an education," Juldor says. "It gave me the chance to look forward, but also to look back and see what I can do for the next generation.

"I don't know who the person who sponsored me was, but if I could get the chance to see that person, I would thank them for what they've done for me," Juldor says. "Once somebody set a foundation, you can build a house larger than the foundation. If it wasn't for them helping me get education, I don't think I would be able to be where I am right now." ■



About World Vision

WHO WE ARE | World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to helping children, families, and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

WHOM WE SERVE | Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed—regardless of a person's religion, race, ethnicity, or gender—as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.

WHY WE SERVE | Our passion is for the world's poorest children whose suffering breaks the heart of God. To help secure a better future for each child, we focus on lasting, community-based transformation. We partner with individuals and communities, empowering them to develop sustainable access to clean water, food supplies, health care, education, and economic opportunities.

HOW WE SERVE | Since 1950, World Vision has helped millions of children and families by providing emergency assistance to those affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, developing long-term solutions within communities to alleviate poverty and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.

YOU CAN HELP | Partnering with World Vision provides tangible ways to honor God and put faith into action. By working together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families who are struggling to overcome poverty. To find out how you can help, visit www.worldvision.org. ■



Healing Powers »

As a doctor and pastor, issues of life and health have been my focus for more than 30 years. My fascination with medicine was prompted by the sudden death of my mother when I was 10. This tragic event caused me to appreciate the precious, fragile nature of life.

I became involved in the AIDS epidemic in America from the beginning. As a pediatric hematologist, I cared for children with hemophilia who were treated with blood pooled from thousands of donors. Little did we know in the early '80s that many of these supposedly life-giving products would be tainted with the AIDS virus. I recall the days when we did not know what this illness was. Later, we were able to develop tests to make a diagnosis, yet we had no means of treating the disease. Many of the children we cared for became sick, and many died.

I developed a wealth of knowledge and was considered an expert in pediatric HIV diagnosis and care. Yet even these experiences did not prepare me for what I came face-to-face with in southern Africa.

On a World Vision trip to Zambia, I saw the reality of AIDS. This jolted my memory back to the early days of the pandemic in America when we, too, had little knowledge or means to deal with the disease. My heart ached as I saw this disease made worse by widespread poverty, hunger, and lack of clean water.

I was asked to examine a young boy who was emaciated and too weak to walk. I realized he was suffering the last stages of AIDS and would soon die. His name was Enoch, and he was 7 years old. He appeared much younger due to chronic malnutrition. Our church team was overwhelmed and asked what we

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” —Psalm 139:14

could do to make his remaining days more comfortable. We were told we could provide food and other basic necessities. Enoch told us his greatest wish was to own a pair of shoes, which we gladly provided. It was humbling to be able to give some measure of comfort for this precious little boy.

This experience reminded me again how precious and fragile life is and how important every human being is in the sight of God. As Christians, we must face the fact that God expects us to make a difference in the lives of others. Each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. Each of us is made in the image of God and a



» Bishop Horace Smith is presiding bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and a World Vision United States board member.

meaningful part of his plan.

Too often we are paralyzed, overwhelmed with the immensity of the problems we see in our world. But I believe as we partner with others of like-faith, we will see the power of God unleashed to turn around the dire conditions that too many face today.

This is something I have personally witnessed. Our Zambia experience so affected me and my wife and those from our church that we endeavored to spread the word and helped to acquire sponsors for thousands of children. As a pediatrician I have marveled at the steady improvement of so many who were thought to have missed critical periods of growth and development, but because of caring sponsors their lives and health have stabilized.

As we disembarked from a bus on my last trip to Africa, my wife grabbed my arm and screamed with joy. There, running along the road, was Enoch, full of life and health. The little boy had in fact survived and was now 12 years old. We cried as he shared with us how his life was changed.

This is a testimony to the awesome love and power of God, demonstrated through the faith-commitment of his children. We believe the Church is called in this day of challenge to partner with World Vision and others to ensure the precious God-given gifts of life and health are appreciated and secured. ■

RETROSPECT



JOH WARREN/WORLD VISION

Z I M B A B W E

Ntumelo Ndlovu, 3, gives thanks for her meal—a significant blessing in food-scarce Zimbabwe. For many students at the Progressive Preschool Center in Bulawayo, this is the only meal they eat each day. World Vision provides wheat, beans, and vegetable oil for each child. “Without this food from World Vision, this preschool would have to close down,” says Mpumelelo Fuzwanwe, the widow who founded the center. In 2008, tumultuous presidential elections led the Zimbabwean government to ban all activity by humanitarian organizations, including World Vision. But World Vision continued to care for children by sending food to schools like the Progressive Preschool Center. With a government power-sharing agreement, the restrictions have been lifted, and World Vision is once again able to assist Zimbabwe’s people in need—just in time for the hungry season. ■

MAR 0

"THE HOLE IN OUR GOSPEL IS A TRUMPET CALL TO ACTION, AS THOUGHTFUL AS IT IS URGENT ... IF ENOUGH PEOPLE READ IT, THE WORLD WILL CHANGE."

—JOHN ORTBERG, PASTOR OF MENLO PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Hole in Our GOSPEL



The Hole in Our Gospel invites you on a journey of a million miles with World Vision President Rich Stearns as he experiences forgotten places and explores the heartbreaking dimensions of suffering in our world. Rich's own life story documents a different journey, from childhood poverty to corporate success and ultimate significance as he accepted God's call on his life to bring the "good news"—the whole gospel—to the poor. Rich repaired the hole in his embrace of the gospel, and he

challenges individuals and churches to do the same—to say to God, "Use me. I want to change the world." If you've ever wondered, *What does God expect of me?*, this book is for you.

Reading this book will change your life—and buying it will contribute to helping more children, because the author has requested that all royalties due to him will benefit World Vision's work with children in need.

"Read this compelling story and urgent call for change—Rich Stearns is a contemporary Amos crying, 'Let justice roll down like waters ...' "

—EUGENE PETERSON, translator of *The Message*

"This book throws open the door to every believer who longs to follow in the footsteps of Christ and make a lasting difference in the lives of men, women, and children around the world."

—SHEILA WALSH, Women of Faith speaker

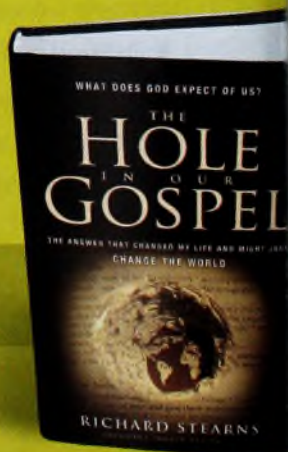


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