

WorldVision

SUMMER 2003



Amazon and Beyond

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thanks to you

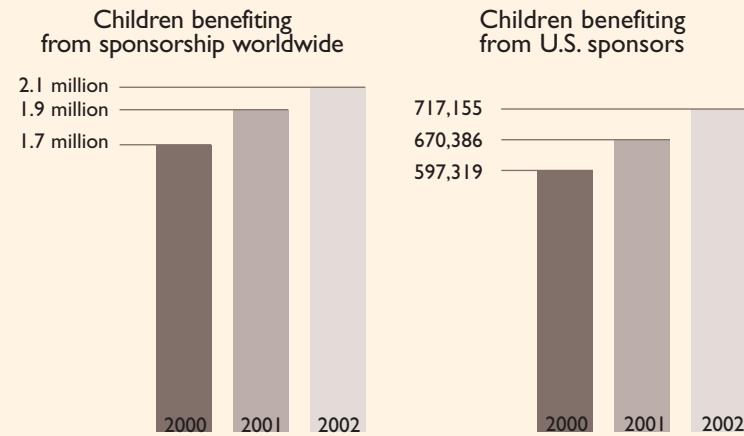
It has been a year of blessings, with God pouring out those blessings through your prayers and your gifts. Your support made so much possible in 2002. Millions of lives are being changed by the food and water, health care, education, emergency relief, and economic development that child sponsorship funds.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
—EPHESIANS 5:1,2



DAVID WARD/WORLD VISION

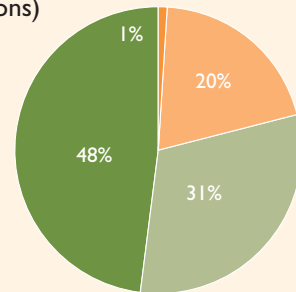
Sponsorship by the Numbers



Financial Highlights, Fiscal Year 2002

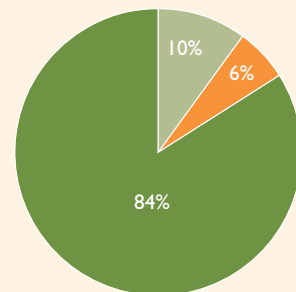
Contributions and revenue (in millions)

private contributions	\$ 265.3
private gifts-in-kind	\$ 171.8
public cash and food	\$ 110.8
other income	\$ 5.1
total income	\$553.0



Program expenditures (in millions)

program services and future commitments	\$ 464.7
fund raising	\$ 56.0
management and general	\$ 32.3
total expenses	\$553.0



For World Vision's 2002 Annual Report, call toll-free (800) 777-5777 or go to World Vision's Web site at www.worldvision.org

WorldVision

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4

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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.

World Vision magazine has a new look! Our news section—Your World Vision—includes six more pages covering World Vision projects in the United States and worldwide. What hasn't changed? Our magazine, a free subscription, continues to share stories of how your gifts are improving the lives of children and families everywhere. (Despite the changes, the publication still costs less than 35 cents to print and mail.) We welcome your comments to: The Editor, World Vision magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA, 98063-9716 or e-mail us at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

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Charter Member, Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability
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253-815-1000

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» ON THE COVER
In this Brazilian girl's Amazon community, World Vision has just started sponsorship.
Photo by Jon Warren

www.worldvision.org



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[reader services]

Find out how you can get involved with World Vision

We'd love to share more information with you about our programs and about partnering with World Vision to care for the poor. Check the boxes on the form below, and return it in the envelope provided between pages 16 and 17. For more information, call (888) 511-6518 or visit www.worldvision.org

Share World Vision with your family

1 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP World Vision's newest sponsorship program allows you to break the cycle of poverty by sponsoring an entire family in Ghana, Romania, Sri Lanka, or El Salvador.

2 WORLD VISION GIFT CATALOG On behalf of your loved ones, give unique gifts such as goats, bicycles, or medical supplies to those in need.

Bring World Vision to your church

3 30 HOUR FAMINE Get your youth group or school involved in the fight against world hunger by participating in World Vision's nationwide annual famine event. www.30hourfamine.org

4 EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE Order "Planting Seeds of Hope," a catalog of books, videos, and publications about urgent global issues.

5 LOVE LOAF Help your congregation learn more about world poverty as they collect offerings for your church and World Vision.

6 REACHING OUT TO THE POOR A World Vision staff person will call you with ways World Vision can help your church reach out to the poor.



PHILIP PAHER/WORLD VISION

Expand your world vision

7 EMERGENCY RELIEF RESPONSE Receive e-mail updates on how World Vision is responding to emergency relief situations. Must provide e-mail address to receive these updates.

8 WOMEN OF VISION Join a volunteer ministry that serves the poor, learning from and advocating for women in developing countries. www.womenofvision.org

9 WORLD VISION'S PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES Find out what World Vision is doing for U.S. children through tutoring programs, inner-city youth initiatives, and other domestic ministries.

10 WORLD VISION ADVOCACY Learn how to be an advocate for the poor and those in need around the world. Go to www.worldvision.org/globalissues.

Show World Vision to your company

11 MATCHING GIFTS Learn how your employer may match your contribution to World Vision.

12 DONATE GIFTS-IN-KIND Discover how your company can donate new, surplus inventory that can save lives in the United States and overseas.

13 DONATE SHIPPING DOLLARS Funds for shipping gifts-in-kind can leverage the value of sending products overseas.

14 CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS Your company can benefit by supporting World Vision.

Share your resources with World Vision

15 GIFT PLANNING Establish a legacy of hope by including World Vision in your will or learn about other estate-planning options.

16 KEY CONTRIBUTORS Donate your car, boat, real estate, or recreational vehicle to World Vision and receive a tax deduction for your contribution.

17 LPGA PLAYING PARTNERS Support World Vision by supporting your favorite top female golf pro, tackling poverty through her game.

Volunteer through World Vision

18 ARTIST ASSOCIATES Help Christian artists promote child sponsorship by volunteering at a local concert.

Know World Vision's reason for hope

19 WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST Simple steps to a personal and lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

WORLD VISION TODAY READER SERVICE

Clip and return in envelope provided in the center of the magazine.

Please tell me how I can:

Share World Vision with my family

1 2

Bring World Vision to my church

3 4
 5 6

Expand my world vision

7 8 9

Show World Vision to my company

11 12 13 14

Share my resources with World Vision

15 16 17

Volunteer through World Vision

18

Know World Vision's reason for hope

19

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

HSFT0C

From the President

When a Child Dies

NOT EVERY CHILD HELPED BY WORLDVISION lives "happily ever after." One of the grinding realities we face each day in our work is the appalling statistics of child suffering and mortality in the developing world.

I know the statistics by heart: 1.3 billion people live on less than a dollar a day; 2.3 billion drink water contaminated with bacteria and disease; 740 million are severely malnourished; and—most shocking of all—29,000 children die each day of preventable, poverty-related causes. That equals 1,200 children dying every single hour of every single day! Even knowing these statistics as I do, they never prepare me to come face to face with one of the millions of families who have lost a child.

Tears flowed freely on that morning when I sat in the small home of Lesbia Arana Valiente in Guatemala, listening to the story of her daughter Marcia. Marcia, 12, had died of lupus just nine days before. She was the joy of her mother's life, the eldest of three—a girl of remarkable strength with a sparkling and optimistic personality.

Through her grief, Lesbia recounted Marcia's long and painful struggle against the disease. I felt the pain of parents who had no money, no insurance, and no access to medical care for the daughter they loved so much. After being turned away by doctors and clinics because they were



BRENDA SOLARES/WORLD VISION

"World Vision helped Marcia while she was in the hospital," says Betzaida Valiente, 6. Now Betzaida's sister, Marcia, is with Jesus.

ever in vain. No triumph of the human spirit, even in death, is a failure. Marcia's life, her heroic struggle, and her unwavering faith in God allow me to rejoice and thank God, through my tears, that World Vision could play even a small part in Marcia's story.

Toward the end of this mother's story of grief, my friend and colleague Scott Jackson put his arms around Lesbia and said through his own tears: "You did everything you could. She's with the Lord now. We'll take her story back with us and tell others."

If any of us that day doubted why we had chosen to invest our lives in the work of World Vision, we had no such doubts as we said goodbye to the Valiente family. Forget Marcia's story? No, I don't think any of us will ever forget that day. ■

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. — PSALM 56:8

poor, they finally turned to World Vision.

While Marcia was not a sponsored child, her sister, 6-year-old Betzaida, is. Our commitment is to help all children in the communities we serve, not just the ones who are sponsored.

Marcia did receive the best medical treatment available thanks to World Vision Guatemala staff. Marcia even told her mother that she wanted to write a letter to leave behind, thanking World Vision for giving her hope. Sadly, she died before that letter could be written.

World Vision's goal in every community in which we work is, first, to preserve life. Only then can we implement programs that enrich children's lives and allow them to reach their full, God-given potential. Had we failed in the case of Marcia? Was our effort in vain?

If we see this story through an earthly lens, Marcia became just another number for the statisticians. But I reject any such conclusion with all my heart. No act of love and compassion done in the name of Christ is

Richard J. Strauss

News from the Field

IRAQ > Children are central in World Vision's plans to help needy Iraqis. The trauma and deprivations of conflict have compounded children's existing health problems, such as malnutrition. Through long-term programs in Iraq, World Vision aims to meet the range of children's needs—physical as well as emotional.

"It's quite a disastrous situation children face," says Dr. Doris Knoechel, senior World Vision relief officer based in Amman, Jordan. "Ten years of upheaval in Iraq has had its impact on children's health."

According to UNICEF, Iraq is among the world's worst countries for child mortality—one in eight children dies before age 5. One third of Iraqi children are malnourished, and a quarter are born underweight.

As soon as security conditions allow, Knoechel and other World Vision staff

will conduct an on-the-ground assessment in Iraq, focusing on children and other vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and the elderly.

staff can begin to care for children and families through the provision of health care, sanitation, clean water, shelter, and the reconstruction of schools and clinics—programs that will help Iraqis rebuild their lives.

Mosul, a city in the northern governate of Ninevah, is a likely location if security conditions improve; southeastern Maysan province near the Iran border is another option. Staff are also considering a relief convoy by road to Baghdad.

In the weeks leading up to the conflict, World Vision positioned staff in Jordan and amassed a large stockpile of relief supplies to help fleeing civilians.

When war broke out, World Vision was operational in refugee camps in Jordan and Syria that could collectively accommodate 70,000 people. Although the large-scale refugee outflow did not materialize, the aid is being rerouted to where it's needed most in the region.

The situation in Iraq is highly fluid. For the latest news of World Vision's response in the Middle East, please visit our Web site, www.worldvision.org. ■



World Vision donors in many countries are contributing to the effort to assist vulnerable Iraqis.



CHARLIE QUIN/WORLD VISION

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) > Despairing families on the civil war's front line received maize, oil, and salt in World Vision's largest-ever food delivery to the country. Some 67,000 people in Ankoro had been hungry for three months while fighting kept aid at bay. Families had to scavenge in the bush to survive. In March, World Vision sent more than 600 metric tons of food to remote Ankoro—a journey of seven days by rail and then boat, through rebel-controlled territory. Aid agencies have been all but shut out of this embattled region for three years. "People know World Vision is their only hope," says Philip Attwell, World Vision's relief manager in DRC.

Jordan > World Vision awarded the 2002 Robert A. Pierce Award for Christian Service to a priest in Karak, Jordan. Father Khalil Jaar launched a reconciliation project between Israeli and Arab students that teaches them to respect their neighbors of different backgrounds. Father Khalil has also worked with World Vision, including a partnership after the Gulf War to care for Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees in Jordan. "I don't expect people to thank me," he says. "It's my job to help and serve. This award was a reminder that I am a member of World Vision's family." ■

China > After a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Xinjiang, China, World Vision relief officer Meimei Leung (above) comforts women who lost their sister in a collapsed house. World Vision responded to the Feb. 27 disaster by distributing flour to 10,000 survivors and helping to rebuild schools.

Hope Update

A Moment With Alex Trebek

> "Jeopardy!" host Alex Trebek recently traveled to Uganda with his family to visit World Vision projects in a region hard-hit by HIV/AIDS.

Q. What is life like in these AIDS-affected communities?

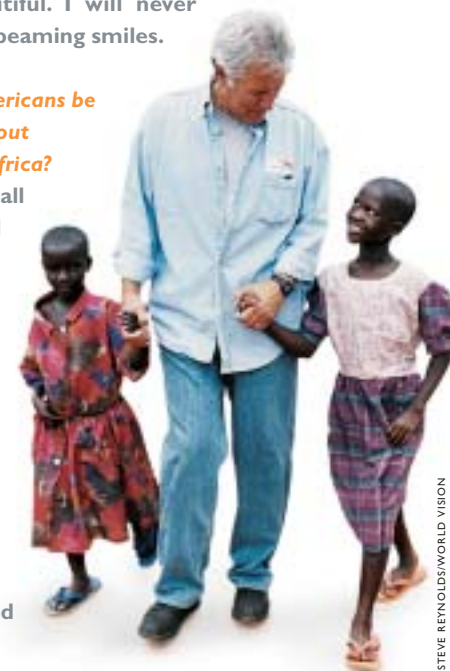
A. Grandparents are reaching a stage in their lives when they should be able to reduce their own burden, when they can be cared for themselves and have a chance to rest. Yet because of AIDS, they must care for little children. It [also] worries me that children are losing their childhoods. When you see a 10- or 11-year-old child who is now head of the household, it really touches your heart.

Q. As a parent, what went through your mind when you visited with the orphans?

A. These kids do not have an easy life. Life is reduced to the basics. But it struck me that despite the hardships, they are still happy. They sing, they dance, and they can still smile. They're just like children everywhere. They want to play, laugh, have friends. Ugandan children are so special, so beautiful. I will never forget those beaming smiles.

Q. Should Americans be concerned about HIV/AIDS in Africa?

A. We should all be concerned about the needs of orphans. We should be concerned about anyone who suffers unnecessarily. There are children here who need our help. ■



STEVE REYNOLDS/WORLD VISION

fyi

Average life expectancy in industrialized nations: **78**

Average life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa: **48** (UNICEF)

➔ Glad You Asked

How does World Vision prepare to help in Iraq and with other humanitarian crises?

World Vision supplies bound for Iraq are loaded from a warehouse in Brindisi, Italy.

About every six weeks, World Vision responds to a crisis somewhere in the world. Some make the news; some don't. Yet the victims in either case desperately need help. World Vision continually prepares to deliver an urgent, efficient response when disaster strikes.

World Vision's Global Rapid Response Team of more than 20 relief experts are ready to rush to the scene of a catastrophe within 72 hours.

The team anticipates trouble by tracking political, economic, and meteorological signs of crises. They monitor the onset of natural disasters as well as complex emergencies such as famines or civil conflicts that may simmer for years.

Responding within the first few days of a crisis can make the difference between life and death. Quickly providing food, medicine, and emergency supplies can prevent disease, exposure, and starvation.

World Vision has pre-positioned \$5 million worth of supplies in warehouses in the United States, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and soon, Dubai. The goods are packaged into ready-to-send modules such as family survival kits, water purification kits, and emergency medical kits.

Thanks to preparedness and coordinated response plans on a worldwide scale, World Vision has come to the aid of victims of more than 100 disasters in the past two years. Says Rich Moseanko, a World Vision veteran relief specialist, "Ready to go at a moment's notice, we can save lives and reduce human suffering."



STEPHEN MATTHEWS/WORLD VISION

Thank You > In Summer 2001, World Vision magazine recommended urging Congress to vote for the Clean Diamonds Act. Thousands of you responded, sending postcards to your representatives. The World Vision-supported legislation was signed into law by President Bush on April 25, 2003. The conflict diamond law stops the import of "blood diamonds" from rebel-controlled mines in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Congo.



KAREN HOMER/WORLD VISION

➔ In the Media

Edwardsburg, Mich. > About 23 years ago, Dorothy Skronski found a little blue camel figurine in a trash pit at the family cottage on Pine Lake.

She took it home, washed it and put it on her window sill. About a year later, she decided it needed company. Now, it has about 150 brothers and sisters, and the latest sibling is real.

At her surprise 70th birthday open house last Sunday, Skronski received a live camel ... well, sort of.

A camel was purchased for \$350 through the humanitarian organization, World Vision, which will deliver it to a family in a Third World country. Depending on the family's needs, the camel will be used as a work animal or for transportation.

"I thought it was a neat idea," said Gail Dohse, who employs Skronski in her H&R Block tax business during the busy season, and who saw the camel idea promoted just before Christmas on the television program "The View."

Even Skronski has no doubt that the live camel, for which she has a certificate, is the largest in her collection.

—Barbara Dempsey, reprinted from South Bend Tribune, Feb. 10, 2003

» FAST FACT In the United States, more than 400,000 children received school supplies or tutoring from World Vision and its partners.

➔ The Family Man

> Growing up, Jozsef Berki had two strikes against him: He was an orphan and a Gypsy. Dropped off at a Romanian orphanage as a toddler, he lived in institutions until age 17.

Gypsies (or Romas) make up 5 percent of the population of Romania—although unofficial figures are higher because people hide their ethnicity—and are the subject of much discrimination. Most hope just to be married one day.

But not Jozsef. The first thing he did after leaving the orphanage was finish high school. He worked as a plumber while taking night classes, saving money by eating just bread, margarine, and yogurt. When he graduated, he returned to his birthplace, Cluj.

Jozsef, now 44, is married and has three daughters—the center of his life. It was for them he built the greenhouse.

"What are you going to do with all that stuff?" neighbors asked Jozsef when, through World Vision's Family Sponsorship program, staff brought cement, tubing, metal arches, and plastic covering to Jozsef's house. "They didn't understand that a greenhouse can bring profit," Jozsef explains. "They can't see the future. Only the present."

Jozsef had been planning with World Vision for the new greenhouse for months, taking agricultural training classes and meeting weekly with an agricultural counselor. Now, more than plants are in bloom. Jozsef is also leading the way in his community.

World Vision's Family Sponsorship equips families like Jozsef's to rise out of poverty and pursue their dreams. For more information about families available for sponsorship in Romania, El Salvador, Ghana, and Sri Lanka, visit World Vision's Web site, www.worldvision.org/familysponsorship.

—Ioana Bindea



IOANA BINDEA/WORLD VISION

➔ In the Spotlight

Walking in Faith > You'll hear Steve Stirling's walk before you see him. Metal crutches and leg braces squeak lightly between heavy steps. In perfect rhythm, he swings his crutches, then his legs, as he walks down the hall. Balancing his briefcase and crutches, he opens the door for a co-worker.

Steve's life has been a journey of learning to walk gracefully—and in grace.

As vice president of marketing operations for World Vision's U.S. headquarters, he oversees efforts to ensure that every donor's contact through the call center and Internet is a positive experience.

Steve's own experience with World Vision began more than 40 years ago, on the steps of a Korean orphanage.

He was born Cho Myung Soon in 1956. At 15 months old, Steve was struck with polio. His first memories are painful visits to herbalists, faith healers, and doctors to help him regain the ability to walk. Nothing worked.

So his parents left him, at 6, outside the local orphanage.

But God had a path planned for Steve. In the late 1950s, World Vision founder Bob Pierce campaigned in the United States for people to sponsor, adopt, and help orphans

from the Korean War. One couple, Harry and Bertha Holt, felt called to open an orphanage in Korea with World Vision's support.

This was the orphanage that took in Steve. A few years later, Jim and Lynn Stirling visited the Holt Orphanage and adopted him. "He was the brightest little guy with a huge smile," Lynn recalls. "At the end of our visit, we were headed up the hill from the orphanage. Because of his trouble walking with leg braces, we offered to help Steve, but he wanted to show he could do it himself. That has been his attitude all of his life.

"And he's always been a smart businessman," Lynn adds. "When he was in elementary school, the kids were playing marbles. He'd win all the marbles, then sell them back to the kids for their lunch money. We did talk to him about not doing that." Steve gave the money back.

Steve worked hard to excel. He feared that if he didn't, he wouldn't

be loved. He won scholarships to college and later for his MBA. "I was charging forward. I was nice to people because I wanted their acceptance," Steve admits. "I wanted to use them to get ahead."



Steve's motives underwent a radical change a few years later, however. One night, his wife, Sook Hee, who was a Buddhist, was praying to Buddha to become pregnant. "She opened her eyes and saw a light in the shape of a cross in our bedroom," Steve says.

"We knew we needed to go to church.

"In that church [16 years ago] we truly heard the gospel and became Christians," he continues. "I realized I couldn't earn God's grace. Before, all the work I did was for self-gain. I got everything I thought I wanted, and it left me so unfulfilled."

Then, in 1994 at a Promise Keepers event, Steve says, "God broke my heart again. I was making more money than I ever thought possible, but God said, 'No—I want you to do something different.'"

God made the path clear when Steve was laid off as his company downsized in 2000. "I really sought the Lord. I told Jesus I'd do whatever he wanted."

That's when the hard-driving businessman put his talents to work for World Vision, the organization that helped start the orphanage that saved his life 43 years ago. He and Sook Hee now also have two teenagers, Richard and Rachael.

When Steve reflects on his walk with God, he recalls his favorite verse. "The disciples ask Jesus why a man was born blind. Jesus answers in John 9:3 that 'this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'

"I feel like that man." ■

—Carla Swanson-Gawthrop



Thanks to his sponsor, Steve received his first set of crutches at the Korean orphanage when he was 7.



Sitting height: 9.5 inches.

➔ Wishling on a Star

The World Vision Wishling is here!

> This soft, huggable, plush toy was created from the imagination of a child. Hattie Straube (right), age 8, of Kalamazoo, Mich., won a national art contest for her design of the World Vision Wishling.

For every purchase of the World Vision Wishling for \$7.99, Hasbro, Inc. will donate \$1 to World Vision to help children around the world. Available at CVS Pharmacies.



fyi On April 10, Congress passed the World Vision-endorsed PROTECT Act (Prosecuting Remedies and Tools Against the Exploitation of Children Today). The law increases penalties for child sex tourism abroad and establishes the national "Amber Alert" network to recover abducted children here in the United States.

» **FAST FACT** In 2002, World Vision assisted 3,694,509 people worldwide, including southern Africa, Afghanistan, and China.

➔ The Mailman Delivers

> I read the words on thin, yellow World Vision stationery twice, just to make sure. Then I called my 9-year-old son into the kitchen. "Nicholas," I said, "your brother in Zimbabwe—his mother has died."

"Can we go get him and bring him home?" Nicholas asked. "You can be his mother."

I wished that I could. But I explained that our sponsored child, also named Nicholas, still has a family—a father and brothers and sisters at his home in Mudzi, Zimbabwe. What could we do for the little boy to show him that we cared?

The answer came to me. The mailman was going to Mudzi. I would send a package with him.

Art Bittner, World Vision's mail courier, was leading a small team of employees on a vision trip to Mudzi. For the last few years, World Vision employees have been raising money for this community battered by the HIV/AIDS virus and drought. They also sponsor 67 children in Mudzi and contribute to Mudzi's Community-Based Home Care program.

Nick and I got a card for Nicholas' father, and signed our names, including the message that we would be praying for him. Then we found a 6x9 envelope and tried to stuff in as much as we could—pens, pencils, stickers, and a picture of our family—so Nicholas would know that his family extends around the world.

Art took the package to Nicholas' hut in Zimbabwe and placed it in the boy's small hands.

"Nicholas seemed profoundly affected by his mother's death," Art said. "Still—one of our group members got a teeny smile out of him before we left."

That's first-class delivery. ■

—Kari Costanza



WAYNE LANPHEL/WORLD VISION

➔ U.S. Scene

Coast-to-Coast Compassion

World Vision helps families and communities pull themselves out of crisis. In major urban centers such as Chicago, New York, and Seattle/Tacoma, World Vision also links Americans with needs overseas.



SANDY HESS/WORLD VISION

➔ Get Involved

> **Women of Vision** is a volunteer ministry committed to demonstrating tangible evidence of God's love to oppressed and impoverished women throughout the world. Participants are women who want to make a difference and who are willing to use their resources to improve the quality of life for women and children living in poverty and despair.



Women of Vision in Honduras

Mark your calendar for the sixth-annual national conference for Women of Vision: "A Child is Waiting ... Plant the Seed of Hope." The conference, focusing on child and family sponsorship, will be held at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront hotel Oct. 9-12. Join Rich Stearns; his wife, Renee; Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Women of Vision from across the nation. For more information, go to www.womenofvision.org.

WORLD VISION PROGRAMS SERVING U.S. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- KidREACH** offers hope and demonstrates God's love by providing adult and young-adult tutors and mentors for students facing academic or social obstacles to learning.
- Vision Youth** trains youth outreach workers based in churches to mentor at-risk teens to make good decisions and set healthy goals for life. They also coordinate tutoring programs and mobilize volunteers for community outreach.
- The Storehouse** is a network of warehouses that distribute products—ranging from clothing, toys, toiletries, and household items—donated by U.S. merchants and manufacturers to churches and organizations, which give them to needy children and families.
- Kids In Need** is a joint project between World Vision and the School and Home Office Products Association. SHOPA donates excess school supplies to World Vision for distribution to teachers in low-income public-school districts.
- Tools for Transformation** provides community networking and leadership training for local leaders, giving them the skills to develop visions and pull together the resources that make a lasting difference in people's lives.
- Emergency response** programs mobilize churches and send aid to victims of storms, floods, and other U.S. disasters.

» You can help provide school supplies to needy U.S. children for the start of the school year through World Vision's Operation Backpack. For information, call toll-free (800) 393-7775, or go to www.worldvision.org.

WOMEN OF VISION CHAPTERS

- Southern California: Orange County, Mt. Baldy View, San Gabriel Valley
- Evergreen/Denver, Colo.
- Fairfield County, Conn.
- Atlanta, Ga.
- DuPage County, Ill.
- Long Island, N.Y.
- Charlotte, N.C.
- Miami Valley, Ohio
- Columbia/Williamette, Ore.
- Dallas, Texas
- Puget Sound region, Wash.

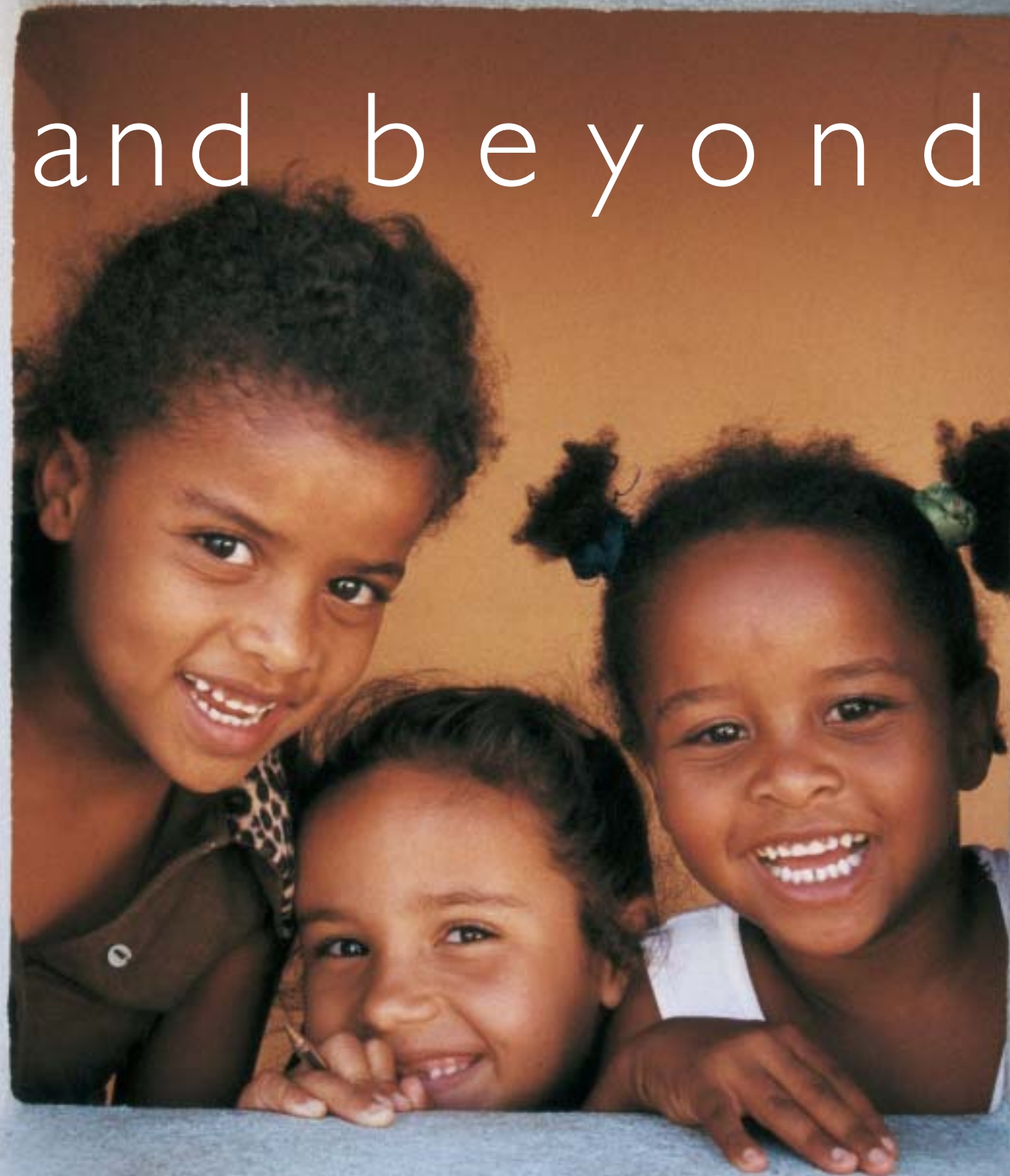
amazon and beyond



*Sponsorship starts with
helping children. But
it leads to so much more.*

BY JANE SUTTON-REDNER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN





World Vision's Dorothea Luz (above, at right) tells Amazon families: "We're just the support. You must make the decisions."



World Vision began working in Brazil in the 1960s through child sponsorship and pastors' conferences. Today, World Vision Brazil—headquartered in the city of Belo Horizonte—operates child-focused programs that benefit more than 3 million people. U.S. sponsors support 27,470 children in 21 projects.

THE WOODEN DOORS AND shutters of the ramshackle school are open wide, but there's not enough breeze to relieve the stifling, damp afternoon heat. Inside, members of a tiny Amazon riverside community persevere to discuss the school itself—how to fix it up or rebuild it before the place falls on their children's heads. World Vision's project manager, Dorothea Luz, hands out blank pieces of paper and directs everyone to draw their ideas for a new school. The minutes pass; no one draws. A few people fan themselves with the paper.

It's not that they don't care. It's not even that they can't do it, although most of these adults probably never studied beyond the fourth grade. One man explains, "We don't want to feed a dream that might not come true."

To Dorothea, this is precisely the reason World Vision works in the Amazon: to help people fight for their dreams. "Don't believe people who say they can't help because they can't read, or say they have a pain in their leg so they're useless," stresses Dorothea, a petite, tough woman who never minces words. "There's always something you can do."

"You have a partner," she concludes. "World Vision is your partner. But I will not carry you on my back. When you break your leg, you use a cane until it's better. That's what I am: a support until you don't need me anymore."

A support, not a carrier; a partner, not a parent—these are key ways to describe World Vision's role in communities not just in Brazil, but across the globe. The process can take decades.

World Vision begins by helping families meet basic needs through sponsorship, focusing on children. In time, as sponsorship continues to cover children's education and health care, parents learn how to improve their economic circumstances, with World Vision staff playing a consulting role. Eventually, communities can continue their progress on their own. It's World Vision's ultimate goal to reach this stage when, in Dorothea's words, people don't need the organization anymore.

Brazil proves an interesting case study in this process. This vast country is an



Sponsorship helps children like Elizera da Silva feel valued.

economic powerhouse, ranking eighth in the world's top 10 economies. Yet one in three people live in poverty; 32 million are chronically malnourished. The divide between rich and poor is such that Brazil might as well be two places—a developed country alongside a developing one.

Travel with us to three places in Brazil where World Vision sponsorship and development programs are transforming communities at beginning, middle, and phasing-out stages.

THE WORK BEGINS IN THE AMAZON

The Amazon region, while remote, has its advantages: plentiful fish and fruit, good rainfall, and the ability to live simply in a wooden house with a small plot of land and a canoe. The spectacular ecosystem of the river and rainforest enchants everyone, young and old. "In the Amazon, everything is so natural," explains Shirley Sequeira Oliveira, 10, a World Vision-sponsored child. "You can touch the river, feel the wind, and see the trees. You can do anything in the river. That makes it very special."

What's missing are better educational opportunities; jobs, other than small farming; health services; and amenities such as electricity and phones. In pursuit

Water Is Life

A powerful partner helps World Vision combat chronic water shortages.

The horse-drawn wagon moves slowly down the unpaved road, kicking up reddish dust. It's carrying precious cargo: wooden barrels filled with water from rivers miles away. This is how families get water here in São José da Tapera—a town in Alagoas state, northeast Brazil.

Water is a constant deprivation in the populous, arid northeast—where it rains, on average, only 18 days annually. Some years are worse than others. Drought in 1998-1999 affected 10 million people in Alagoas—especially small children, who suffered from deepening malnutrition and contamination from dirty water.

Today, another drought is looming. But now World Vision has a powerful partner in fighting water shortages in several regions in Brazil. Swiss Re, one of the world's largest reinsurance companies, teamed up with World Vision in 2002 to launch *Água é Vida*, the Water Is Life project. The goal: to give rural communities low-cost, appropriate technology to access clean water even during drought.

The results are already visible in São José da Tapera. White, cylindrical cement cisterns stand out against the drab landscape, attached by pipes to the roofs of modest houses. Families can keep more than 4,000 gallons of rainfall in these cisterns for drinking and farming.

Few families needed a cistern more than Maria and Natalio de Sousa's. Ten of their 20 children never made it to their first birthdays. Contaminated water was a likely cause. "They would have diarrhea and they would die," Maria recalls.

The Sousas live on the beans and corn they grow in their rocky soil, with no other source of income. Before receiving a cistern last year, they would often pay for water or draw it from an open pond.

The cistern is a rare source of hope for Maria. "I never thought I could get something like that," she says. "It's like a dream. I think it's going to change our lives."

Water Is Life project teams continue to build family and community cisterns, rehabilitate artesian wells, and search for new water sources for farm irrigation—giving hundreds of families like Maria's a fighting chance against the next deadly drought.



Above, Maria de Souza's children pull up water from their new cistern, provided by World Vision and Swiss Re.

of those things, thousands of families have already moved to the closest city, Manaus, only to end up in shantytowns lining the hillsides—trading rural frustrations for drugs and violence.

Amazon riverside residents are beginning to realize they can have a better life, with World Vision's help. They already know World Vision because of its medical boat, a partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Manaus. This boat has carried doctors and dentists to the region since 1992, serving more than 4,000 people a year with health care, agricultural assistance, and Christian witness. A donor gift

of three more boats in 2000 opened the way to expand World Vision's relationships with these families, targeting 1,700 children for sponsorship.

Shirley's mom, Neuri Sequeira, 33, recalls the day a staff member emerged from the boat and talked to the community about sponsorship. "It was wonderful. She woke up something in our hearts."

Neuri, who is president of her community, observes, "People here don't



World Vision started working in the Amazon through medical boat missions, reaching rural families who had no nearby health services. Since the 1990s, medical staff such as nurse Edevanete Oliviera (above right) and dentist Joel Hayashi (opposite page, lower left) have extended a healing touch to children and adults. Today, World Vision has expanded the boat ministry to provide sponsorship as well.

have any perspective of improvement. They get used to poverty and bad conditions. But when Regina came, people really bit into what she was saying. When she talked about sponsorship, hope was raised in us. Parents could have dreams for their children."

Which is exactly where World Vision starts. Parents' most-cherished hopes are not for themselves, but for their children—for education and a better life. Sponsorship fulfills these hopes, and eventually the spirit of improvement encompasses the entire community.

Dreaming has given way to action. World Vision taps local leaders like Neuri to fill in for staff between boat visits—making the rounds of all the sponsored children in their communities. World Vision trained Neuri in basic health care so she can help people with simple illnesses. She regularly teaches classes on hygiene



Edeni Menezes, below right, tells children in Terra Santa village a Bible story. On every visit, boat staff conduct community Christian witness activities such as Bible study, singing, and prayer.

and every month leads meetings to discuss the community's most urgent problems and how to solve them.

She also teaches at the preschool World Vision started. Dorothea calls her "the best return on my investment."

Neuri, in turn, feels empowered by World Vision's support. "I believe God cares for us," she says. "That's what I thought when World Vision came. The government people only come at election time. World Vision came because they cared about us—that's proof of God's love."

ALAGOAS: MOVING FROM SUBSISTENCE TO SUCCESS

"The northeast is our Africa," explains one World Vision Brazil staff member about this arid region where World Vision is in the middle of its development phase.

This region has the lowest life expectancy and the highest infant



The Oliviera sisters (right) are daughters of an Amazon community leader and are sponsored children: Shirley, 10, Giovana, 5, and Barbara, 11. Below left, a World Vision reading program in Alagoas ignites children's imaginations. Nearby, embroidery (below right) has turned into an industry for mothers of sponsored children.



farm sprawled between two hills. Twenty-five families (parents of sponsored children) farm here year-round, raising organic fruits and vegetables for meals plus selling more than 3,000 pounds of produce a month to local supermarkets.

Islanders say the land lay fallow a decade ago, when a hydroelectric plant lowered the river level and dried out the rice paddies. "There was nothing for us," says Gilvania Teixeira Dias, 46, mother



mortality rates in the country. *Nordestinos* are mostly subsistence farmers, waging a constant battle with the elements to coax enough food out of the ground for their families. The window for planting and harvesting is slight, just about three months. In between, life is lean.

World Vision started sponsorship projects in Alagoas state in 1985. Staff first focused on these small farmers and their often-malnourished children. Slowly, nutrition education and agricultural assistance enabled the population to move beyond mere survival. Today, an energetic community association works alongside World Vision to reach to the next level: exploring income-generating innovations such as organic farming and free-range chicken raising.

One of those most impressive displays is on *Ilha do Ferro* (Iron Island), located on the San Francisco River—a lush, 30-acre

of two sponsored children, whose husband, Aberaldo, is a farmer. In 1999, World Vision set up an irrigation system to draw water from the river, mix it with natural fertilizers, and pipe it throughout the farm. Staff taught farmers how to raise crops with organic methods.

Now farmers are starting to outgrow the rural marketplace. They must soon decide whether they can ramp up their yields to accommodate the city supermarket chains, which demand 13,000 pounds of produce a week.

The organic farm isn't the only island landmark. A short walk away, Gilvania and a few dozen other women gather in a crowded patio, embroidering on linen stretched across round wooden frames. They sew intricate designs—techniques passed down mother-to-daughter for generations. Their murmuring mingles with the breeze from the river.

"I usually work here from very early in the morning until late," says farmer Joao de Farias Filho, 58 (above), of the organic farm that World Vision supports in rural Alagoas. "I'm putting all of myself into it." Joao's motivation is his four children, all sponsored by World Vision.



Eliedson Machado da Silva, 16, works in a recycling center outside Recife. The project is a new income source for the community, as World Vision is phasing out in a few years. Eliedson, sponsored by World Vision, is a key member of the recycling team. He has been chosen for special training. "Eliedson is a good investment," says community organizer Antonia Bezerra.

The calm industriousness of these women *bordadeiras* is fairly new. Before they organized into a cooperative to sell their products, the embroidery trade resembled a feeding frenzy. Co-op president Reginia Souza Rodrigues, 36, explains, "When a tourist would show up, we would all run after that person, trying to sell our things for just 1 *real* [about 30 cents]." Working together, 48 women improved the quality—and the purchase price—of their tablecloths, handkerchiefs, bedding, and other items. Then World Vision helped them market their embroidery beyond the region. Now the women's handiwork can be found in

dining rooms and bedrooms as far away as Germany and the United States. "World Vision made us famous," Reginia smiles. Organic farmers still rely on World Vision's technical help, and the women's co-op members, intimidated by technology, need staff to place their long-distance calls and operate their computer. But these are mere details in the realization of their dream—economic security unimaginable less than a decade ago. World Vision may still be their "cane," but not for much longer.

RECIFE: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Near Recife, a city on Brazil's northeast coast, communities are getting ready for 2005, when World Vision will phase out of the area. Though this is World Vision's goal everywhere it works, the communities themselves have much to do with the timetable for this transition.

The residents of the Jardim Uchôa community are meeting this challenge as they have many others—with everyone pitching in. Since 1980, when many of the families first moved here, they've tackled community problems with help from World Vision and a local Presbyterian church. "World Vision motivated us to improve ourselves," says Antonio Bezerra, a community organizer. While sponsorship funds helped their children, adults formed a program to combat alcohol abuse and worked with the government to improve services such as water and electricity.

A decade later, hundreds of children were in school and healthy. A loan program helped adults expand businesses, which led to more jobs for the community. But local leaders worried about the generation in between—teens who were dropping out of school, joining gangs, using drugs, and getting pregnant.

In 1992 they started vocational training for youth. Kids learned skills such as sewing, maintaining computers, photography, electrical work, and construction. Two of the courses—carpentry and broom-making—evolved naturally into actual businesses, employing former students. The youth earn a portion of the income, and the rest of the profits



benefit community programs.

This gave community leaders an idea with even greater promise: a plastic recycling business. When fully operational, the recycling center will sort, clean, and grind empty plastic containers into pellets that fetch four to five times more money from recycling companies than the original items. The potential income, says Antonio Bezerra, will sustain the communities after World Vision phases out.

Eliedson Machado da Silva, 16, sponsored by World Vision, was chosen to represent the community at a professional recycling training course. The gregarious seventh-grader seems on track to be a local leader. He's everywhere on his bicycle, chatting with everybody, unafraid to practice his classroom English on visitors.

One night he joins a group of youth performing the *capoeira*, a martial-arts inspired dance originating with African slaves brought over by Dutch colonists in the 1600s. The boys pair off in the center of a circle of chanting dancers. They lunge, kick, and pivot with orchestrated grace and agility. The most limber boys turn back-flips, to cheers from the crowd. World Vision promotes capoeira to keep kids from street activity. But it's also a powerful connection to the past that resonates with these kids, many of them descendants of African slaves. It gives them pride in their identity, belief in themselves.

These are important messages for the poor in Brazil—or anywhere. When people start to value themselves apart



Recife youth are prone to problems such as drugs, gangs, and pregnancy. World Vision's programs—including traditional capoeira dancing (above left), clothing art, and carpentry—help keep kids out of trouble and encourage them to use their gifts.



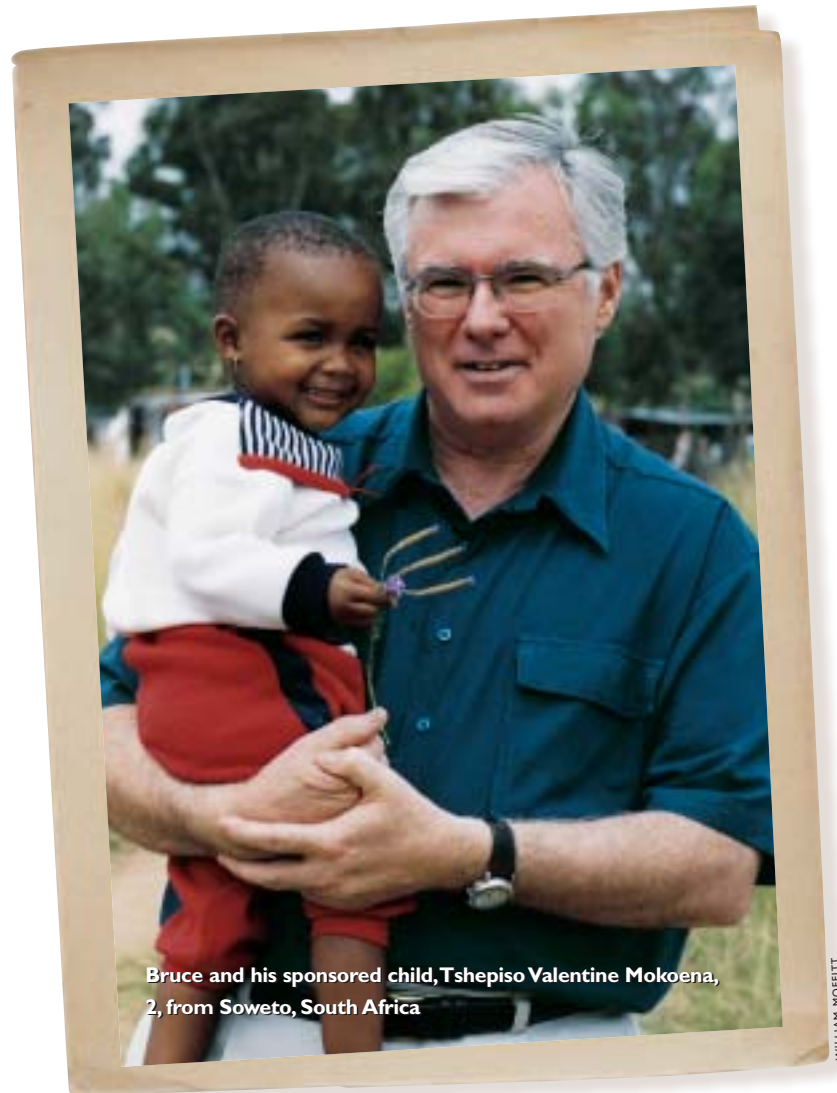
from their circumstances, it transforms the self-image that poverty has distorted. In the words of Jairo Gomes Silva, 22, a young man sponsored by World Vision for 14 years, "There's a purpose. We are not just here because we are born. We have a right to do something."

World Vision helps people find this purpose—the potential God intends for everyone. Starting with the helping hand of sponsorship, the support continues until communities are ready to walk on their own and reach for their dreams. ■

For more photos and information about World Vision's work in Brazil, see our special feature on the Web at www.worldvision.org/magazine

Bruce Wilkinson

from Jabez to Johannesburg



Bruce and his sponsored child, Tshepiso Valentine Mokoena, 2, from Soweto, South Africa

WILLIAM MOFFITT

Even for the best-selling author of The Prayer of Jabez, the prayer to “enlarge my territory” can initiate an amazing journey.

INTERVIEW BY KARI COSTANZA

for Bruce and Darlene Marie Wilkinson, the journey began with a closed door. ¶ After 25 years as president and founder of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, Bruce Wilkinson sensed God’s call to something different. Convinced that God was about to enlarge his territory of influence through television and motion pictures, he decided to make the Los Angeles area his home base. So he and Darlene Marie flew to California to look for a house in April 2002. ¶ What should have been a routine trip took an unexpected turn when they couldn’t find the right house. If God was leading, why was nothing working out? ¶ The Wilkinsons temporarily called off the search that month to take a scheduled ministry trip to Africa. Bruce booked a flight back to California for June. ¶ But God had other plans.

BW: The major newspaper in Johannesburg, South Africa, had big block letters for the headline: “Four million people dying of hunger.” It told stories of people dying of hunger and the traumatic devastation of AIDS. Well, like everybody in America, we’ve heard these things. But for some reason, it’s like God reached down and grabbed both of our hearts and squeezed them and then broke them, right there in our hotel room, totally unexpectedly.

Not Hollywood, but Africa? Bruce needed confirmation.

I asked the Lord: “Is that really what you want me to do?” Because if you open your heart in the least to all the pain and trauma in Africa, it will break. I asked the Lord, “Would you please confirm through the nationals in Nigeria that your call to my life is going to be here in Africa; and secondly, would you let me meet with the president of Nigeria and ask him a specific question—and will you have him answer yes to that question?”

From South Africa, Bruce traveled to Nigeria to talk to 10,000 Christian leaders for a week. He learned that pastors were fleeing from the north—their lives in danger, their churches being torched. Bruce asked the pastors to return north to preach—even if it meant death. Then he invited pastors to come forward

to signal their willingness to go. More than 500 people moved forward. Afterward, Bruce talked to a bishop over 1,500 churches, asking him to interpret what had just happened.

He said, “If you’d have said you were going to give a public invitation for people to move back north and had asked how many I thought would go, I’d have said, maybe five. If you’d have asked, ‘What would a miracle be?’ I would have told you 50. What happened in this room is unexplainable. Only God does this, and God used you in our nation as a turning point.”

When Bruce met with the president of Nigeria, he asked him if he would visit South Africa to discuss what the Bible says about HIV/AIDS in Africa. The president’s answer: “Yes.” Bruce had his confirmation. They would move to Africa. He called Darlene Marie.

“Are you sitting down?” I asked. “I believe God is calling us to Africa.”

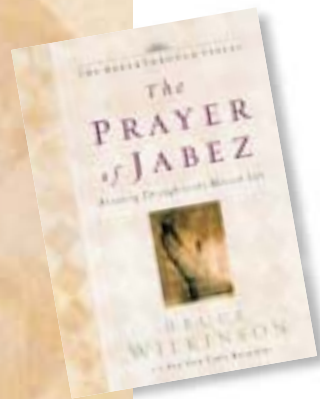
“What? Africa? I thought we were moving to California!”

“I did too,” I said. And then I told her what had happened in Nigeria. “Will you follow me to Africa?”

“When I married you,” she said, “I pledged I would follow you to the ends of the earth, and it’s never changed in my heart.”

So that was the end of that. There was no argument.

As we asked God to please expand our territory, little did we know that he would say, “Well, the territory I have in mind is Africa.”



There was no arm-twisting. Of course, we prayed and discussed it a lot, but ultimately we came as one person.

And God had prepared their teenage daughter as well.

We have three children—two married and one in her teens—and Jessica had come with us to Kenya and Uganda last year. In Uganda, God got ahold of her deeply, and she fell in love with the people of Africa. On the way home she said, “You know, I left a part of my heart in Africa. It wouldn’t surprise me someday if I came back.”

Bruce knew that praying the prayer of Jabez would not guarantee an easy life.

You know, Darlene Marie and I are not in our 20s, our 30s, or our 40s, and changing cultures has been a challenge. It’s been stressful. Praying the prayer of Jabez and living the prayer of Jabez is an extremely difficult way to live, because you need to follow God wherever he asks you to go. He doesn’t ask us—as we proceed down the road of maturity—for just a little bit more of our life. If we keep pursuing him, and we get closer and closer to walking his footsteps for us, he asks for more and more.

And that prayer obviously isn’t magical. It’s just a way of putting into words the attitude God wants us to have. It’s a matter of praying day after day, week after week, month after month, “Please let me do more for you. Please increase my influence for you. Do whatever you need to for me and in our family so that we do not hinder you answering that prayer.”

Bruce knew that when you receive God’s answer to those prayers, you must follow.

As we asked God to please expand our territory, little did we know that he would say, “Well, the territory I have in mind is Africa.” You can’t be praying, *Please expand my territory*, and then get in an argument about the location.

One man said to me, “It must have taken tremendous courage to move to Africa.” And I said, “No, sir, it didn’t take any courage at all. What would have taken courage would have been saying no to God. When you are doing what God wants, you are in the safest place in the universe. You are in the center of his will. You are in the center of his pleasure.”

And you are, at times, surrounded by danger. Bruce’s son, David, had moved to Africa as well. He called his father one afternoon with an incredible story.

A man [told David], “I went to the airport to kill your dad when he came in. But there was a disruption and I got distracted and I couldn’t get to your dad.” Then the man turned and walked away.

So, yes, God keeps you from evil. Sometimes you must fight it. Sometimes you’re wounded by it. And sometimes, like those pastors in Nigeria moving north, it can cost you your life. But no other person can touch you unless God Almighty says, “This is for my glory—and it will be, eventually, for your good.”

But as Bruce learned, there would be no protection from the pain.

Most people turn back from following Christ at one level or another because it is so painful. Unfortunately, many of us in Christian leadership haven’t been truthful with the followers of Christ in telling them how difficult this is to do. Being sold out to the Lord is the most painfully exhilarating life there is. When you truly abandon yourself to him, he just has to whisper or turn you in a little direction, and you realize that’s where he wants you to go. You never know, from one day to the next, where that will be. You live by faith each day. It moves you forward and you keep asking for more. It overwhelms you. The needs of Africa overwhelm our family.

When we leave our home in Africa and go to the corner and turn right, we come to a red light. At the red light there’s a mother with her little child begging for food. Every single day. If I turn to the left and go to the next light, there are about 12 different people begging for food. If you go straight at the light, you reach another group.

Isaiah 58—the passage God has given to me for this season of our life in Africa—says to extend your soul to the poor, extend your soul to the hungry. I’ve traveled into



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

In Senzani, Malawi, World Vision supports Toto (No to AIDS) clubs—using songs and skits to educate villagers about HIV/AIDS prevention.

villages where there is no food, where I see little children everywhere without parents, who can’t find work, who can’t find food. Your heart overloads with the pain.

It is through this pain that Bruce learned his greatest lesson.

In America we hear the numbers about AIDS, but we don’t connect them with people. People are dying—and they’re dying to know what the Bible says about it. “What should I do? How should I feel? I’m dying of AIDS and I was never unfaithful to my husband. I never did anything wrong, and because my husband was with a prostitute while on the road, now I’m dying. Where is God in all this?” It wasn’t their immoral act that caused them to get AIDS. It was the immoral act of someone else.

That brought Bruce to a new realization—and made him see himself in a new light.

For my whole life I’ve been out of touch with the depth of the pain. When I came here and experienced it, I began to read the Scriptures with new eyes. And it almost knocked the breath out of me because I saw—on almost every page of Scripture—God’s heart. His heart about the suffering. About the poor. About exploitation. And I began to repent: *Lord, where have I been? How could I have missed this? How could I have missed your heart so much?*

But you know, in the churches and schools I attended, those topics were priority No. 83. It wasn’t until I ran into the pain that I went to the Word and found out what God was saying. I realized that, in this area, I had lived my whole life in disobedience.

Bruce’s message for American Christians? We must feel the pain of Africa.

So many people are looking for meaning in life. So many people have been successful, and yet they know they are called to something eternally significant. So many say to me, “I don’t know what to do. I want to connect, but I can’t.” I want to encourage them to realize: There are millions of connections waiting for you in Africa. You can pray. You can give. But what Africa really needs is you, even on a short-term visit. Just go down and help and open your heart. Your life will never be the same. ■

So many say to me, “I don’t know what to do. I want to connect, but I can’t.”

Where Are They Now?



Balinese Hero

His life was touched by sponsorship. Now this man of faith saves lives.

by Sanjay Sojwal and Andrea Swinburne-Jones

WHEN A TERRORIST'S BOMB EXPLODED in a nightclub on the Indonesian island of Bali in October 2002, the local medical community scrambled to help. They set up a center at Sanglah Hospital in Denpasar, Bali's capital. Victims with horrific wounds and burns started arriving at 1 a.m.

"I treated scores of victims from dawn until noon," says Steven Christian, 47, a Balinese surgeon. "One of them was from Australia, a young man about 20 who had burns to his back and a shrapnel wound to the neck."

Steven touched many lives that day. But without World Vision sponsorship, he believes he wouldn't have been in a position to help. His sponsor's support was critical in his journey from rural poverty to a successful career and a life of faith.

"Without my sponsor, I don't know what I would be doing today," he muses. "My ancestors used to climb coconut trees and gather the juice to make alcohol. Maybe I would be doing that instead."

Born as I Nangah Wiadjana to a high-caste Hindu family in Bali in 1956, Steven could have expected a life as a community leader. But when he was 10, his mother left his father. His new stepmother mistreated Steven and his five siblings, who were eventually sent to live with other relatives.

The family breakdown could not have come at a worse time. Three years earlier, in 1963, Mount Agung had erupted, spreading lava and ash over the sparse farmland and devastating the island's already tenuous economy. Food and other commodities were scarce.

Steven recalls going to the forest to gather fruit, then struggling to sleep on an empty stomach because he had given his portion to a younger sister.

When Steven was 13, his uncle sent him to a Christian children's home, one of many providing food, clothing, and shelter for poor or orphaned children. At the time, World Vision did not work in the community, but sponsors provided education and care for poor children.

A Canadian, John Bonar, supported part of Steven's lodging as well as his tuition fees and notebooks for school. Although they never met in person, John had a great impact on Steven. "My heart is still with my sponsor," he says.

The other influential person in Steven's childhood was the director at the children's home, George Pili Robo, who modeled Christian

During difficult medical procedures, Steven (at left with stethoscope) prays, "Give me wisdom like Solomon's."



SANJAY SOJWAL (3)/WORLD VISION



Steven and Carmela first met as doctor and patient.

values. It was from him that Steven first heard the gospel. In 1970, he accepted Jesus and was baptized, adding a non-Balinese name to reflect this new direction in his life.

Steven also found career inspiration at the children's home. A doctor used to visit to give the children medical check-ups. Steven watched intently. "It looked special," he says, "and I wanted to follow in his footsteps."

His aptitude for medicine was never in question; Steven scored the highest marks in an admission test to the island's finest high school. But medical school costs were a tremendous obstacle. He prayed to the Lord: *Help me. . . Only you can show me the way out of this.*

As the end of high school approached, Steven knew that under normal circumstances his sponsorship would end. He wrote to his sponsor and shared his dream.

John responded promptly, saying that he wished to continue supporting Steven. "I would like you to become a good Christian doctor," John wrote.

"I believe those words came from God, so I keep them in my heart," Steven says. "They are always at the back of my mind when I am seeing my patients."

In 1975, Steven enrolled in medical school at Bali's best university, Udayana. After graduating in 1982, he served his internship on a neighboring island. That year, he also married Carmela, whom he had been dating for several years.

Steven later returned to Udayana to specialize in general surgery. In 1993 he was the first surgeon to graduate from the university. Eight years later, Steven became an oncology specialist after intensive study in the Netherlands. Now he works in hospitals and in his own practice.

"Before every surgery," he says, "I pray to God that he would bless my hands."

Today, Steven and Carmela have three children, Dewi, 19; David, 17; and Jasmine, 13. All of Steven's brothers and sisters are also well-established professionals and devout Christians. His parents have even reunited—another of many answered prayers.



Steven keeps a photo of his sponsor in his Bible.

"By the grace of God I am a surgeon," says Steven, adding, "I am thankful for my sponsor." John's prayerful obedience enabled Steven to be at the right place at a terrible time—one of Bali's best doctors responding to the bombing tragedy. ■

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A Cookie for J.P.

MY MOM AND I WERE RUNNING ERRANDS THE OTHER DAY with my 2-year-old son. I stopped in to Starbucks™ for a coffee and got a chocolate cookie for J.P. Chocolate is his favorite thing. When I got back to the car with that cookie, Mom said, “Isn’t it just wonderful that you can do that? Think about how much the Lord has blessed you. When you want to, you can get your little boy a treat. And yet, so many people in the world can’t.”

I immediately thought of my experiences with World Vision in Honduras, and meeting my sponsored child, Élan. Through World Vision, Élan’s house has improved and his life is better, but the day I was there, I certainly didn’t see any chocolate cookies. Élan’s mother told me that sometimes there was barely enough rice and beans to survive. Chocolate cookies were the furthest things from their minds.

The Lord has blessed us in our country. I know we feel at times that we have to stretch things to make it, but I also know that God has blessed us. I look at J.P.’s little nursery with stuffed animals and probably too many toys and think, *How can I help him understand that every little boy in the world doesn’t live like this?* It’s not some God-given right because he’s special.

God has blessed J.P. immensely. As a mother, I want my son to be obedient to the Lord and bless others in any way he can. But how?

The answer for our family is a no-brainer. It’s through child spon-

The Lord has blessed us in our country. I know we feel at times that we have to stretch things to make it, but I also know that God has blessed us.

sorship. I want to find ways, as J.P. gets older, to involve him. It may involve picking out a Christmas present from World Vision’s gift catalog or earning money from chores to sponsor another child. I want J.P. to offer his own chocolate cookie to the world.

Jesus showered us with treats. By his example he showed us the kind of people he wanted us to be. People who serve. People who are generous. John, in his Gospel, writes the precious story of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Peter is indignant at first, telling Jesus not to wash his feet. But Jesus prevails, kneeling before them and washing their feet in a basin, one by one.

At the end of this beautiful story, Jesus tells his disciples the meaning of his actions: “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done



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for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them” (John 13: 15-17).

We are blessed when we kneel at our neighbor’s feet and wash them. Or reach out to a child, offering hope. We are blessed when our giving is sacrificial, whether it’s to World Vision or another mission’s project. We are blessed when we give generously of our time to someone who may not be all that fun, but who needs a friend. As my dad is fond of saying, “Blessings sneak up on us when we’re not looking and overtake us.”

Proverbs 22:9 tells us, “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” The beautiful paradox is that when we choose sacrifice for the sake of obedience, it doesn’t feel like sacrifice.

It feels good. And warm. And sweet. Kind of like a chocolate cookie. ■

Twila Paris (pictured above, with her sponsored child, Élan) is a mother, singer, songwriter, and author.

AIDS, My Friend, AIDS

by Edward Thomson

AIDS, my friend, AIDS

Is very dangerous.

AIDS, my friend, AIDS

Is very dangerous.

Look how naked

The world has become—

Empty houses all around,

Children without parents

Crying day and night

But with no answer.

AIDS, my friend, AIDS

Is very dangerous.

People with good papers

Have gone completely.

Please, teachers,

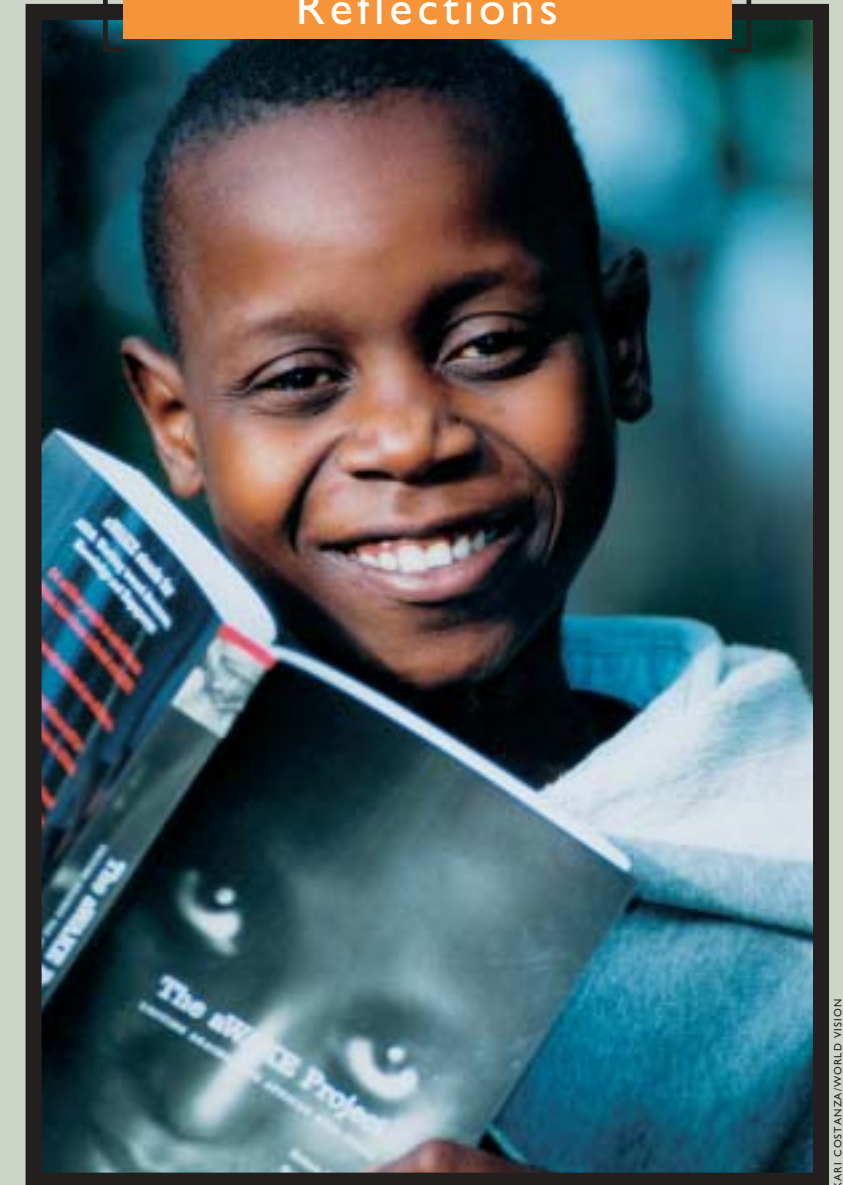
Government officials,

Nurses, and the clergy,

Teach the nation about AIDS.

AIDS, my friend, AIDS

Is very dangerous.



KARI COSTANZA/WORLD VISION

M A L A W I

Edward Thomson is a one-boy army battling AIDS. His weapon: a pencil. Edward’s late father encouraged him to write poetry to improve his English. When Edward’s aunt died of AIDS, he began to write poems about the disease. “AIDS, My Friend, AIDS” is featured in *The aWAKE Project: Uniting Against the African AIDS Crisis*, alongside essays by George W. Bush, Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, and Bono.

A sponsored child, Edward lives in Senzani, Malawi, along with some 3,000 other sponsored children.

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You can share the joy of soccer and give these children hope by being a Get A Kick Out of Sharing teammate. Cash gifts enable the purchase of new balls and cover the costs of transporting the balls to needy children worldwide. **In fact, a gift of just \$50 will provide soccer balls for five children.**

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Published by
World Vision Inc.
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