

# WorldVision

WINTER 2004

## Joy Made Full

SERVING GOD,  
BLESSING OTHERS

Page 12





we're  
philanthropists

No, we're not  
financial geniuses or  
independently wealthy.  
We've simply  
discovered how we  
can do more.

We were already committed to helping the poor through World Vision, doing what we felt we could to make a difference. We never realized we could do even more to bring hope to children in need and at the same time receive benefits ourselves.

World Vision's Gift Planning team opened the door to enormous possibilities. They showed us tax-wise ways to plan our estate and charitable giving to make a bigger impact than we ever imagined. Ways that benefit ourselves, our loved ones, AND poor children and families around the world.

Discover your possibilities. Start by contacting World Vision's Gift Planning team today:

call: 1.888.852.4453

e-mail: [giftplanning@worldvision.org](mailto:giftplanning@worldvision.org)

visit: [www.worldvision.org/giftplanning](http://www.worldvision.org/giftplanning)



gift planning

**President** Richard E. Stearns  
**Executive Editor** Shelly Ngo

**Editor-in-Chief** Milana McLead  
**Senior Editor** Jane Sutton-Redner  
**Contributing Editor** Kari Costanza  
**Photo Editor** Jon Warren  
**Design & Production** Journey Group, Inc.

### ON THE COVER

**Zamtan, World Vision's project in northwestern Zambia, children benefit from the community response to hunger, economic hardship, and HIV/AIDS. Digitally enhanced photograph by Jon Warren.**



12

**The Joy of Blessedness**

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 10 cents a copy to print and mail.

We welcome your comments and/or address changes. Send them to: The Editor, World Vision magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716 or email us: wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. © Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

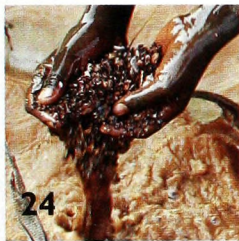
Charter Member, Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability  
Member, Evangelical Press Association

 COPYRIGHT © 2004 BY WORLD VISION INC. 888-852-4453

For employment opportunities at World Vision, visit our Web site at [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org).



10



24



28



6

## → Features

### 12 On the Cover The Joy of Blessedness

In this celebration of the Beatitudes, meet World Vision people who bless others by joyfully serving God.

### 24 Mining for Hope in Congo's Broken Hearts

Child sponsorship brings a sense of security to Kolwezi, a former mining town in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## → Your World Vision

### 6 News From the Field

Updates on crises in Sudan, Russia, and Kenya; World Vision disburses its 1 millionth micro-loan.

### 8 In the Spotlight

A girl in war-torn Kosovo leads the way in changing children's hearts toward former enemies.

### 10 U.S. Scene

In New York, youth outreach workers break through to troubled teens.

## → In Every Issue

### 5 From the President

Rich Stearns honors the quiet servants he has met around the world.

### 28 Where Are They Now?

Child sponsorship was an early influence for this South African gospel singer's outreach to children.

### 30 Inspiration

World Vision Canada's president promotes the "power of generosity."

### 31 Reflections

Children in a poor Haitian community discover they can be victorious.

# [reader services]

Find out how you can get involved with World Vision.

## Share World Vision with your family

### 1 FAMILY

#### SPONSORSHIP

This sponsorship program allows you to break the cycle of poverty by sponsoring an entire family in Ghana, Romania, Sri Lanka, or El Salvador.

### 2 WORLDVISION 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 A CHILD IS WAITING

Show your church family how they can make a difference through child sponsorship.

### 4 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](http://www.30hourfamine.org)

### 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.

### 7 ONE LIFE

**REVOLUTION** Give your youth group a tangible way to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by providing practical, life-sustaining items.

[www.oneliferevolution.org](http://www.oneliferevolution.org)

## Expand your world vision

### 8 E-MAIL UPDATES

Receive the latest news on World Vision's work throughout the world.

*Must provide e-mail address to receive these updates.*

### 9 WOMEN OF VISION

Join a volunteer ministry that serves the poor, learning from and advocating for women in developing countries. [www.womenofvision.org](http://www.womenofvision.org)

### 10 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.

### 11 WORLD VISION ADVOCACY

Expand your vision for justice, speak on behalf of the poor and powerless. [www.seekjustice.org](http://www.seekjustice.org)

### 12 WORLD VISION REPORT

Listen to World Vision's weekly newsmagazine on the radio or online. [www.worldvisionradio.org](http://www.worldvisionradio.org)

## Show World Vision to your company

### 13 MATCHING GIFTS

Learn how your employer may match your contribution to World Vision.

### 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 SCHOOLTOOLS

Practical ways your group can provide essential school supplies to children around the world.

### 18 GET A KICK OUT OF SHARING

Donate new or gently used soccer balls for children in need.

## Volunteer through World Vision

### 19 ARTIST ASSOCIATES

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

## Know World Vision's reason for hope

### 20 WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW

**CHRIST** Simple steps to a personal and lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.



## WORLD VISION READER SERVICES

Please check the boxes below to learn more about partnering with World Vision to care for the poor. Clip this coupon and return it in the envelope found between pages 8 and 9 or mail to World Vision, P. O. Box 9716, MS 321, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716. Thank you.

### Please tell me how I can:

Share World Vision with my family

1  2

Bring World Vision to my church

3  4  5  6  7

Expand my world vision

8  9  10  11  12

Show World Vision to my company

13  14

Share my resources with World Vision

15  16  17  18

Volunteer through World Vision

19

Know World Vision's reason for hope

20

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

# Blessed Are the Merciful

IN 1998, WHEN WORLD VISION'S board of directors interviewed me in their search for a new president, I took pains to make sure they knew about my many shortcomings. "I have no international experience; I am not a fund raiser; I don't have a degree in theology; and I don't really enjoy public speaking," I told them. It seemed to me that these limitations would surely discourage them from hiring me.

But I was certain I would be disqualified by my answer to one question. I was asked about the very real prospect that as president of World Vision, I would be exposed to human suffering—children dying of malnutrition, mothers suffering with AIDS, families devastated by catastrophes like earthquakes and floods, and children living in garbage dumps. The question was, how comfortable was I with this?

I'll never forget my answer. "Comfortable? Are you serious? I am so uncomfortable I can't find words to express it. I am not Mother Teresa. My heart breaks for suffering people, but I am just not the right person to minister to them in their time of need."

"That's OK," they said. "We have many people at World Vision who are gifted in working closely with those who are poor and suffering."

After traveling to 35 countries where World Vision works and meeting many of our staff, I have come to learn that the board members were right. World Vision has such "Mother Teresas" all over the world, serving quietly, courageously, and usually anonymously in



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

World Vision's Essau Mwendo (left, in orange shirt) surveys fish ponds, a sustainable program for rural families in Chingale, Malawi.

sleeping on the ground. She comes back to her small apartment for a day or two and then heads out again.

Flavia, whom I met in India in 2001, had lost her husband and small son to AIDS. HIV-positive herself, she would go from house to house in Mumbai, comforting other "widows in their distress." Essau, in Malawi, gave up his government job with the Ministry of Agriculture to serve Chingale, one of Malawi's poorest regions. Six years later, Chingale has 280 fish ponds that provide protein and income as well as a seed bank that exports seeds to other parts of the country. Essau told me that he is much more satisfied now, knowing that he is bringing hope and joy into people's lives.

Saint Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the gospel always. Use words if necessary." I know that each person these "Mother Teresas" encounter sees the face of Jesus. I know because I have met them, too. These inspiring servants are the heart and soul of World Vision. I am delighted that you will get to meet a few more of them in this issue (see "The Joy of Blessedness" on page 12). ■

*...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven." —Matthew 5:16*

some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

These are the people who represent the face of Christ to those served by World Vision. Many have left their homes to serve in a place less comfortable. Some have left lucrative jobs, and some have even left family behind to follow their call to serve with the poorest of the poor—"the least of these" in our world.

Joel was the joyful dentist I met on a World Vision medical boat serving communities up and down the Amazon River in Brazil. He quit his practice to help children who have never received dental care and to tell them about Jesus. Virginia, in Peru, told me that her life is her sacrifice to God. This young nurse fills her backpack each week with medical supplies and treks on foot 14,000 feet into the Andes to bring health care to the children who live in the mountain villages. She is sometimes gone for 10 days, facing the elements, fording rivers, and

# News From the Field



Sudan

STEPHEN MATTHEWS/WORLD VISION

World Vision staff hand out blankets and plastic sheeting in Kalma camp, southern Darfur, so that families can protect themselves from the elements.

**Sudan** > World Vision relief efforts accelerated over the summer in Darfur, the province affected by conflict. Staff distributed 2,000 metric tons of World Food Programme food to Sudanese families living in temporary camps. World Vision's new health clinic in the Otash camp has been deluged with patients, the majority are children suffering from malaria and malnutrition.

**Russia** > After the hostage siege at a Beslan school that claimed more than 300 lives in September, World Vision provided medical equipment and supplies to five local



WORLD VISION STAFF

Russia

hospitals. Their own stocks were quickly depleted in caring for the sheer number of wounded. World Vision's supplies, including scalpels, plastic mattress covers, blood pressure gauges, and lung ventilation equipment, arrived two days after the crisis ended, enabling doctors to continue their frantic, round-the-clock efforts to save victims. A later shipment to Beslan included toys and creative

materials to help children traumatized by the tragedy, and World Vision staff plan to contribute to ongoing psychosocial care for survivors.

**Kenya** > Drought-induced food shortages reached a crisis point after July rains failed. In August, five of Kenya's seven provinces reported an average crop failure of 60 percent. An estimated 2.3 million people—including 500,000 children—now require food assistance. World Vision, which operates 39 sponsorship projects in Kenya, expects to meet the food needs of some 459,000 people in eight drought-affected areas.

**El Salvador** > Six sponsored children were killed in a bus accident that claimed 41 lives on Aug. 14. The bus crashed into a ravine in San Miguel after its brakes failed on a 90-degree bend in the road. Passengers from the Assemblies of God Church were en route to conduct baptisms. Among the 19 people hospitalized were four sponsored children and the wife and 1-year-old son of World Vision staff member Johny Aviles.

**Sri Lanka** > "Perennial crop" farming is catching on, thanks to four enterprising farmers in Kebethigollewa. Four years ago, World Vision staff convinced them to try a new variation of high-yielding seeds, the result of breakthrough research by the Sri Lankan Agriculture Department. The farmers planted during the dry months to prove that the crops could grow despite poor rainfall. Through farmer-to-farmer training,



Kenya

MARGARET IRUNGU-GICHOBU/WORLD VISION

others in 21 villages are now using the seeds. World Vision plans to expand the program to 33 more villages in Kebethigollewa.

**Kenya** > Hundreds of people in Grand Cape Mount County celebrated the reopening of two World Vision health clinics. Two years ago, fighting between rebels and government soldiers forced World Vision to close the clinics. A UNICEF grant in August enabled staff to reopen 10 facilities in two counties affected by the conflict. Villagers in Mith and Madina clapped, danced, and sang at the reopening ceremonies. "We are celebrating because World Vision, who is our good friend, has brought back relief to us in the midst of diseases," said Imam Jahn Kiawen.

**United States** > The U.S. Congress signed the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act in August, signaling greater U.S. attention to violence in several northern provinces afflicted by anti-government rebels called the Lord's Resistance Army. Children are the conflict's greatest victims. World Vision and other organizations played an important role in passing the bill by educating Congress members and assisting congressional staff in drafting the legislation.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

**fyi** In August, World Vision handed out its 1 millionth

loan to an entrepreneur living in a poor community. Starting with the first loan in 1993, today World Vision operates micro-finance institutions in 45 countries, serving nearly 250,000 clients. World Vision has loaned more than \$360 million to borrowers with good business ideas who lack access to capital. These loans have created or sustained about 1.7 million jobs, raising living standards for nearly 3.5 million children.



## Hope Update

**News from World Vision's HIV/AIDS work around the globe**

**Uganda** > World Vision's Kasangombe project gives HIV-positive parents a chance to capture knowledge for their children through "memory books." In the pages of the books provided by World Vision, parents note important information such as names of relatives as well as stories about the child's birth and early years. When parents die, children lose a sense of identity and history. Memory books give children a personal, lasting way to remember their mothers and fathers.

**Burundi** > A World Vision workshop sparked attitude changes toward HIV/AIDS. One man who used to believe that all HIV-positive people should be eliminated became heart-broken by the testimony of a female pastor. Afterward, he packed a 110-pound bag of groundnuts and presented it to her publicly, saying, "Please, my daughter, forgive me, and let these groundnuts help bring nutrition to your life."

**Chile** > Sponsored children who learned about HIV/AIDS prevention are passing the lifesaving information on to their peers. One student, 13-year-old Diego Aravena, held an HIV/AIDS prevention workshop for his eighth-grade class at Nuevo Amanecer School in Santiago. Diego spent several weeks preparing the material to present in three two-hour meetings.



PATRICIO CUEVAS/WORLD VISION

**World AIDS Day** > On Dec. 1, 2004, 2 million children around the world will participate in a "Lesson For Life"—activities and discussions about HIV/AIDS and its effects on children. The campaign is organized by the Global Movement for Children, a worldwide effort to build a better future for children. U.S. schools and youth groups can participate. Go to [www.gmfc.org/hiv aids](http://www.gmfc.org/hiv aids).



# In the Spotlight



**Fatmire Feka** breaks down ethnic barriers between kids in Kosovo, where the absence of war hasn't yet assured peace.

**Girl for Peace** > *Fatmire Feka grew up in Kosovo, where tensions between ethnic Albanians and Serbs exploded into war in 1998-99. Serbs abducted her older sister and brother and burned down her house, leaving the 10-year-old seething with hate. But when her parents and remaining siblings sought refuge at a World Vision transit shelter in 1999, Fatmire met someone who introduced her to a new concept: peace.*

*A quick study, Fatmire suggested starting "Kids For Peace" clubs where Albanian and Serb children could mix and make friends. World Vision brought her idea to life, and today there are 14 clubs across Kosovo involving 350 children. Now 16, Fatmire is internationally famous after representing the clubs at a children's conference in Barcelona, Spain. She shares her story:*

I love to talk about peace. It's so important.

For years, I didn't know what peace was—until I met a World

Vision worker [Rudy Scholae, former World Vision peace-building manager]. The first time we met was in the transit shelter. We became friends. [We] kids would go into his office and bug him: "What's this? What's that?"

I began asking him about peace. I can't remember that I'd ever heard the word before. He talked about how difficult it was to work for peace, how there were walls, but you had to knock them down—never stop.

He told me peace was to be calm, free, close to others, respectful of the people around you, tolerant. He gave me an example I will never forget. He asked me what I'd do if a friend of mine was saying things I didn't like. I said right away that I'd hit her or make her stop. I thought you had to be cold-blooded. Rudy said, "No. You listen."

People aren't all bad or all good. We have been learning this in the Kids for Peace clubs I help run a club for children here in [Koshtova] village in the second, third, and fourth grades. We call ourselves "The Angels of the Golden Minds."

I never thought I'd meet Serb kids like this—talking normally, shaking hands. I guess I thought they'd never talk to me. It was confusing, looking at them and thinking about the war. My heart was split in two. One half of me was remembering my sister and brother and the pain. The other half was asking myself how to go and greet them.

JOHN SCHENK/WORLD VISION



I thought about how the other Albanian kids would be saying, "Look at her, she lost her sister and brother, and she's going to talk to those Serb kids." It was difficult to make a decision. But by the time I walked over to talk to them, I knew this was the better thing to do for all of us. Something good would come from it.

God gave me a sign. He gave me strength to accept [the Serb children]. I felt I needed to say yes. And now, here I am.



## Upcoming Events

### DECEMBER 2004

- > World AIDS Day, Dec. 1.

### JANUARY 2005

- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Jan. 9-15, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)

### FEBRUARY 2005

- > Pastor's Vision Trip to southern Africa, Feb. 1-10, [www.worldvision.org/c2c](http://www.worldvision.org/c2c)
- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Feb. 5-11, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)
- > Women of Faith National Conferences: Feb 17-19 in Las Vegas, Nev.; Feb. 24-26 in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., [www.womenoffaith.com](http://www.womenoffaith.com)
- > 30 Hour Famine national observance, Feb. 25-26, [www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org)



### MARCH 2005

- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Mar. 12-18, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)

### APRIL 2005

- > Pastor's Vision Trip to the Dominican Republic, Apr. 12-21, [www.worldvision.org/c2c](http://www.worldvision.org/c2c)
- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Apr. 23-29, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)
- > 30 Hour Famine national observance, Apr. 29-30, [www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org)

### MAY 2005

- > National Day of Prayer, May 5, [www.nationaldayofprayer.org](http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org)
- > A Child is Waiting: weekend to present sponsorship to your church, May 7-8, [www.worldvision.org/achildiswaiting](http://www.worldvision.org/achildiswaiting)

**>> FAST FACT** With savings from debt relief, Mozambique has spent \$13.9 million on health improvements, \$10 million on providing electricity to rural schools and hospitals, and \$3.4 million on a program increasing the number of girls attending school. (World Bank Group)

NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



1314061

## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 568 TACOMA WA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

WORLD VISION  
PO BOX 7008 I  
TACOMA WA 98471-0081



**Your gift in  
this envelope  
can help a child.**  
See details on the insert  
between pages 24 & 25.



# In the Spot

World Vision



LISA BERGLUND/WORLD VISION

## It's the thought that counts

Show a child you care.  
Sponsor a child today.

Sponsorship offers tremendous benefits to a child living in poverty—education, health care, and better opportunities for her community. But it's just as important for the child to know that someone far away cares enough to give, write letters, and pray.

See the insert between  
pages 24 and 25 for details.

**Fatmire Feka** breaks down ethnic barriers between kids in Kosovo, where the absence of war hasn't yet assured peace.

**Girl for Peace** > Fatmire Feka grew up in a village where ethnic Albanians and Serbs exploded in violence. She was abducted, her older sister and brother were killed, and she was burned. But when her siblings sought refuge at a World Vision transit shelter, she met someone who introduced her to a new concept: peace.

A quick study, Fatmire suggested starting "Kids for Peace" clubs where Albanian and Serb children could mix and make friends. She brought her idea to life, and today there are 14 clubs in Kosovo involving 350 children. Now 16, Fatmire is an intern representing the clubs at a children's conference. She shares her story:

I love to talk about peace. It's so important. For years, I didn't know what peace was—

I thought about how the other Albanian kids would be saying, "Look at her, she lost her sister and brother, and she's going to talk to those Serb kids." It was difficult to make a decision. But by the time I walked over to talk to them, I knew this was the better thing to do for all of us. Something good would come from it.

God gave me a sign. He gave me strength to accept [the Serb children]. I felt I needed to say yes. And now, here I am.

The clubs will be much better in the future. We will realize the dreams of the children. It's very hard, but when you see all the kids with their dreams and wishes, you know you have to act. ■

—as told to John Schenk



## Upcoming Events

### DECEMBER 2004

- > World AIDS Day, Dec. 1.

### JANUARY 2005

- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Jan. 9-15, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)

### FEBRUARY 2005

- > Pastor's Vision Trip to southern Africa, Feb. 1-10, [www.worldvision.org/c2c](http://www.worldvision.org/c2c)
- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Feb. 5-11, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)
- > Women of Faith National Conferences: Feb. 17-19 in Las Vegas, Nev.; Feb. 24-26 in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., [www.womenoffaith.com](http://www.womenoffaith.com)
- > 30 Hour Famine national observance, Feb. 25-26, [www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org)



### MARCH 2005

- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Mar. 12-18, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)

### APRIL 2005

- > Pastor's Vision Trip to the Dominican Republic, Apr. 12-21, [www.worldvision.org/c2c](http://www.worldvision.org/c2c)
- > Vision Villages trip to Honduras, Apr. 23-29, [www.worldvision.org/visionvillages](http://www.worldvision.org/visionvillages)
- > 30 Hour Famine national observance, Apr. 29-30, [www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org)

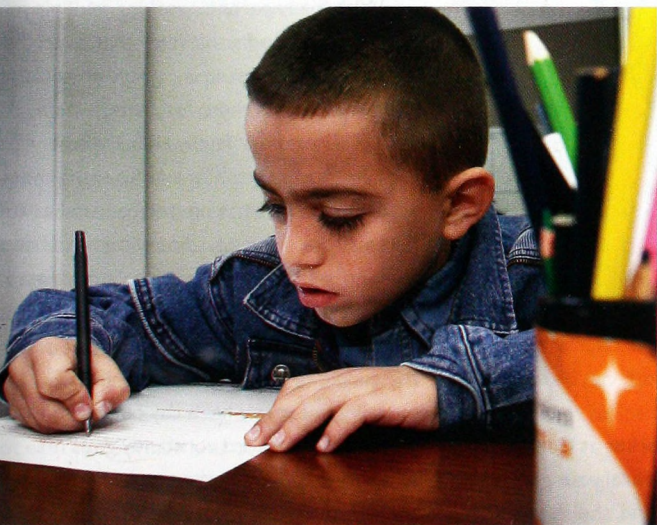
### MAY 2005

- > National Day of Prayer, May 5, [www.nationaldayofprayer.org](http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org)
- > A Child is Waiting: weekend to present sponsorship to your church, May 7-8, [www.worldvision.org/achildiswaiting](http://www.worldvision.org/achildiswaiting)

» **FAST FACT** With savings from debt relief, Mozambique has spent \$13.9 million on health improvements, \$10 million on providing electricity to rural schools and hospitals, and \$3.4 million on a program increasing the number of girls attending school. (World Bank Group)

## Glad You Asked

*Can I write to my sponsored child by e-mail?*



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

**YES!** Keeping in touch with your sponsored child is now just a click away.

Sending letters by e-mail to your sponsored child is simple. It also saves you postage. Just log on to [www.worldvision.org/emailmychild](http://www.worldvision.org/emailmychild)—have your child's full name and ID number handy. Write your message and click "submit." It will arrive at World Vision's national office in your sponsored child's country. There, our staff will translate and deliver your message to your sponsored child. Your child can respond via standard mail, which requires the usual length of time for writing, translating, and mailing the letter.

Children love to hear from their sponsors. World Vision invites you to write your sponsored child via letter or e-mail. ■

## ➔ U.S. Scene

### Someone to Believe in Them

In New York, World Vision youth outreach workers help at-risk teens discover their potential. *by Rachel Wolff*



PAUL PECK (D)/WORLD VISION

**Because Rodreshia Russaw (left) meets with kids wherever they are, she often finds herself on the basketball court.**

**RODRESHIA RUSSAW'S "OFFICE"** spans basketball courts, local schools, and street corners—anywhere at-risk youth can be found in this Upper West Side neighborhood of Manhattan.

In her third year as a Vision Youth outreach worker at Central Baptist Church, Rodreshia, 22, has built trust with local young people. Reaching out as a mentor, tutor, counselor, and friend, she shows troubled teenagers that she believes in their potential. "Kids come to me now," she explains.

Rodreshia moved from Washington state to New York City, committed to helping youth overcome the kinds of struggles she faced as a teenager. Raised by a single mother after her parents divorced, Rodreshia struggled with homework and got into trouble at school. "I see the lives of kids now and think, 'I used to be that person.'"

Dedicated advocates like Rodreshia make all the difference for young people on the edge, helping them set goals for their future and develop their God-given potential. In New York, World Vision's Vision Youth program partners with local churches to provide ongoing training and full-time salaries for youth outreach workers like Rodreshia—a luxury few inner-city churches can afford.

Rodreshia adjusted quickly to her new hometown. "The kids aren't insecure—they think they're superstars," she observes.

"Maybe it's the strong media influence, but teens here want to be just like the people in the magazines, and they want to have wealth."

But Rodreshia knows the realities these disadvantaged youth struggle against every day in their mixed-income community—poor education, drug use, gang activity, and lack of job opportunities.

With many parents working multiple jobs to stay afloat, Rodreshia finds that often the biggest need for youth is to have an adult in their lives who is there for them.

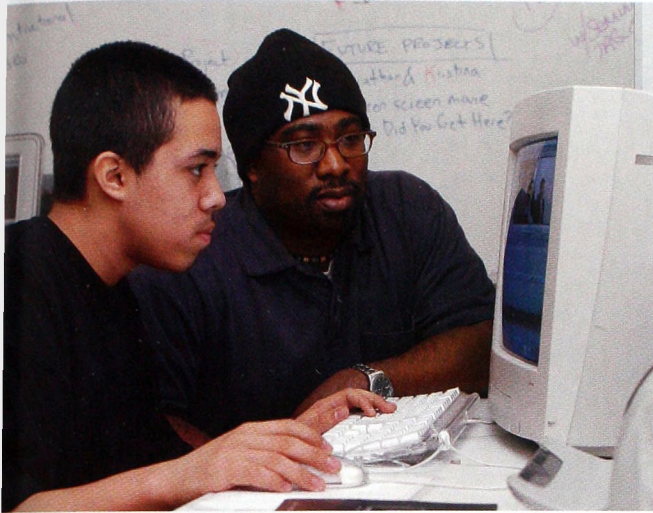
"Their sense of family stability is gone," explains Rodreshia. "Carmen\*, a high school student I mentor, has no one to help her with homework or to cook dinner because her mother has to work overtime. Sometimes I go make a meal for her and we talk."

Youth often call Rodreshia for counsel in the middle of the night and early in the morning. She rarely has a day off. But she loves her work. "The Lord constantly gives me strength to empower the youth and help them through the crises they face," Rodreshia says.

One boy's recent crisis exemplifies the complicated problem-solving required for her job. "Elijah\* was kicked out of his aunt's home and then his brother's home," Rodreshia says. "I finally had to take him to a homeless shelter."

Elijah lost his mother when he was young and has always had a hard life, explains Rodreshia. The teen struggles with mental illness, which makes family relationships difficult. But after he started coming to the Friday night youth program at Central Baptist Church, Rodreshia saw progress.

Watching Elijah take two steps backward



Youth outreach worker Marcus Smalls helps Michael Acevedo, 13, work on a video.

With every step forward is not easy for Rodreshia. But she refuses to give up on his future. "We are trying to find him medical help and a stable home," she says.

In the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York native and youth minister Marcus Smalls guides his own group of youth at Primitive Christian Church. When Rodreshia started working with youth in New York, Marcus gave her some advice based on his own experience: build meaningful relationships.

"After 9/11, my purpose became so clear," Marcus says. "Kids were scared of what might happen next and had lost hope. My job was to help young people believe tomorrow was worth living for, so they wouldn't fall into sex, drugs, or gangs."

World Vision's partnership with Primitive Christian Church allows Marcus to continue reaching out to youth full time, and he sees changes in his neighborhood. Earlier this year, Samantha\*—a high school senior he mentors—received thunderous applause from the congregation for her acceptance into Harvard.

"Our younger teens see Samantha and say, 'If she did it, we can do it.' Now they believe they can do anything they put their minds to. It's not easy to convince kids of that," says Marcus.

Even so, Rodreshia and Marcus are trying—by showing young people that they believe in them. ■

—Rachel Wolff and Sue Nolan, who contributed to this article, are writers for World Vision.

\*The names of youth have been changed to protect their identity.

**FAST FACT** The number of people living below the poverty line in the United States rose in 2003 to 35.8 million, up from 34.5 million in 2002. There are also even more children living in poverty—800,000 more than in 2002. (U.S. Census Bureau)

## ➔ Get Involved

**30 Hour Famine** > How did Kelsi Schaefer spend her summer vacation? In July, she spent a week in Brazil's Amazon region, cruising the Rio Negro on World Vision's medical boat and visiting impoverished villages where she played with local children.

"Coming on this trip, I've really experienced how to be God's hands and feet," says Kelsi, 15. "I've also been able to feel the power of a smile."

Kelsi and members of her youth group at the Evangelical Free Church of Winfield, Kan., were selected for the Amazon trip after participating in World Vision's 30 Hour Famine, an international youth movement to fight world hunger and poverty.

In 2004, 16,000 youth groups across the



United States—approximately half a million kids—went without food for 30 hours. While experiencing a small measure of hunger's sting, the teens learned about the grim realities that impoverished children face in the developing world. They also discovered

the value of the money they raised during the event: About a dollar a day can feed a child.

Participants who raised at least \$360—a whole year's worth of care for a child—qualified for the World Vision Study Tour, an opportunity to see World Vision's ministry firsthand. Kelsi traveled to the Amazon with 10 other teens and six youth leaders to see how sponsorship, health care, and agricultural assistance are changing the lives of people in remote riverside communities.

The 30 Hour Famine is an eye-opening experience for kids even if they don't leave their hometowns. Laurie Turner, the volunteer youth leader at Kelsi's church and a member of the Amazon group, says, "You will never be the same. If you don't want to change, don't do it. But if you want to grow, you need to do the 30 Hour Famine."

National 2005 dates for the 30 Hour Famine are Feb. 25-26, Apr. 29-30, and Oct. 28-29—but teens can do it anytime. For more information, call toll free (888) 852-4453 or go to [www.30hourfamine.org](http://www.30hourfamine.org). ■

# the *Blessings* of

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

*“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”*

*“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”*

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

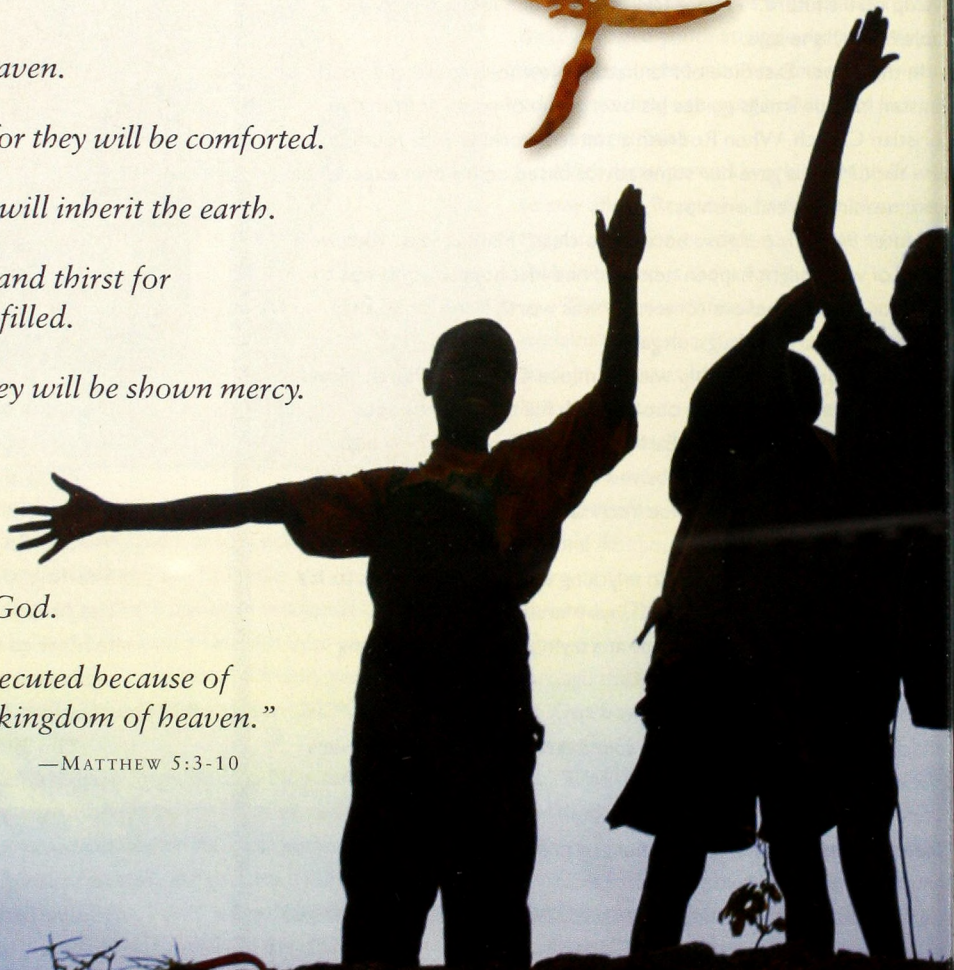
*“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”*

*“Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.”*

*“Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called sons of God.”*

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of  
righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

—MATTHEW 5:3-10



At Christmas we sing "Joy to the World," for joy rests at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus' birth was accompanied by the angels singing of "good news of great joy." Jesus said, "These things have I spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full" (John 15:11). Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, the gift of living our lives in God's presence.

But what is the good news of great joy for those who suffer this Christmas?

In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a radical response. He proclaims God's blessing—not a happiness that depends on nice circumstances, but the delight that comes from living God's way. And the people who receive this blessing are exactly the opposite of those viewed as living blessed lives.

God's grace in Jesus Christ is so strong that it can penetrate life's worst circumstances. This gracious joy propels us to enter into the lives of those who suffer; that with them we might more fully encounter God's blessing. The Beatitudes are not commands for how to live. Nor do they promise that one day, those who suffer will be blessed. Instead, they boldly proclaim, "blessed are."

The wonder of Christmas is that God has given us two gifts—the gift of blessedness in Jesus Christ and the gift of bringing that blessing to others. The following pages portray the blessed and blessing-bearing lives of people involved in World Vision's ministry. They would perceive themselves to be ordinary. But God brings extraordinary blessings through those who trust in him.

—The Rev. Tim Dearborn, Ph.D., is associate director for World Vision International's Christian Impact program.

# ness

es by Jane Sutton-Redner

ductory text by the Rev. Tim Dearborn



# Blessed are the poor in spirit

*Our experience of life in Christ begins as we recognize our need. We cannot turn to our material successes, our personal accomplishments, or our spiritual piety. The Gospel proclaims that this recognition can lead us through the doorway to blessedness, where joy and suffering can exist simultaneously.*

## Shining Her Light

### ANGIE DIALE

Six years ago, Angie Diale found out that her infant son was HIV-positive. Absorbing the news that Tshepa probably wouldn't live past age 2 was difficult enough, but Angie, a nurse in Soweto, South Africa, knew there was more. She had the virus, too.

Angie had already survived a tough childhood during the apartheid era. Her father was abusive. "[For] a man who doesn't have the power to decide what he wants and doesn't want, home is the only place he can be in control and release aggression," she explains. When the marriage fell apart, the family scattered.

Angie struggled up from poverty to become a married mother of three with a good job. The day she realized that her husband had infected her with HIV, all that she'd gained seemed lost.

But through the lens of faith—modeled by her devout mother and grandmother—Angie began to see God's hand in her circumstances. "God knew that living with that man was depriving me of the life I'm supposed to live, being able to serve and live for him," she says.

The first step was to face facts. She tested positive for HIV—she still has the crumpled paper bearing the results. Then she focused on survival, hers and Tshepa's. She soaked up information and wrote down what she learned, creating a manual for living with HIV. Angie also left her nursing job to start a wellness center for women and children in Soweto, a township where 59 percent of the population is unemployed and HIV/AIDS rates are high.

In fighting AIDS, Angie found her mission. "I believe very strongly that God's plan for my life is for me to be a



NAASHON ZALK

sun," she says. "People will come and source the light, and the light will continue to shine. I believe that is what God is doing; he has prepared me to move in every sphere, every corner, to make [people] aware that he is the best."

In August 2003 Angie joined World Vision as the HIV/AIDS coordinator for a project in Soweto. Today, she's in demand around the clock, providing counseling, medical advice, or help with funeral arrangements. AIDS sufferers and their families embrace her as someone who knows what they're going through. In the evenings she spends time with her children, who live with her



other. (Son Lesigo, 21, and daughter Olerato, 13, are not affected. Tshepa, now 6, is doing well.) Angie sleeps at the wellness center, to be there for patients during the night.

To keep this grueling schedule, Angie depends on God completely. “My breathing is God; my walking is God; my thinking is God,” she says with a smile. “He is carrying me. He’s doing everything. Everything I need, I ask of him.”

This year has been eventful for Angie, who traveled to Australia, attended the Global AIDS Conference in Thailand, gave an interview to the BBC—and even carried the Olympic torch when it passed through Cape Town. Everywhere she goes, she’s asked to speak. Joyfully, she does, sharing the faith and hope with which she fights a killer disease, day by precious day.

—with reporting by Leigh-Anne Havemann

## Blessed are those who mourn

*Normally we view grief and joy as opposites, yet in the Gospel, grief is the doorway to the house of joy. Grieving proclaims that life is not as it should be. The Lord of the kingdom weeps—Jesus wept over Lazarus’ death and the deadness of Jerusalem. God is able to comfort us in our mourning because he has shared in our grief.*

## A Different Faith

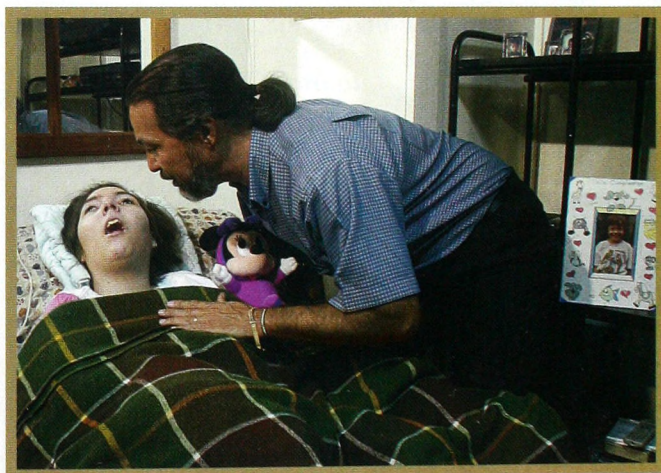
### DEHUEL PÉREZ

Among Dehuel Pérez’s accomplishments over 16 years with World Vision was saving a child’s life. A Nicaraguan girl had a heart valve obstruction and needed surgery. “Her lips were purple because she didn’t have any oxygen in her body,” recalls Dehuel, 46, who was then based in Costa Rica but working with communities over the border in Nicaragua.

Dehuel went to a doctor in Costa Rica. “God touched his heart. He offered his help,” the World Vision operations director says. After a successful operation funded by World Vision, the girl has grown up healthy.

The happy outcome provides satisfaction for a man who has endured more than his share of loss. First there was the devastating death of his wife, Ana, in 1987. During the birth of their son, Dehuel, now 17, a doctor’s mistake cost Ana her life.

Shortly after, Dehuel joined World Vision, starting a succession of jobs in the operations area, including stints where he commuted more than 200 miles from his home in San José, Costa Rica’s capital, to Nicaragua. He implemented programs providing clean water, health care, and agriculture. “When I work with people, the starting point is my trust in God,” he explains. “It is [my job to make] the people see that God is there, just waiting to extend his hand.”



Dehuel Pérez tends to his 15-year-old daughter, Sara, who suffers from a rare genetic disease. To the right is a photo of his son, Gabriel, who died of the same disorder.

At World Vision, Dehuel found meaningful work—and a new wife, Sari Jimenez. Within a few years, his family grew: Sara Isabel was born in 1989 and Gabriel in 1991. But before the children reached school age, both began to exhibit symptoms of a rare genetic disorder, Batten’s disease, that causes neuron deterioration. One after the other, the children suffered convulsions. Soon they could no longer grasp objects or speak. Dehuel and Sari, supported by their

World Vision family, prayed for a miracle.

Gradually the prayer changed, says Dehuel, to: "OK, Lord, these are your children whom you loaned to us, but I prefer you take them so that we do not see them suffer more." Gabriel died in 2001 with Dehuel and Sari at his side—a blessing given that one parent usually needed to stay with Sara, but on that day she happened to be in the care of doctors at the same hospital. Fifteen-year-old Sara's condition remains serious, and Dehuel and Sari treasure each moment with her.

Today, Dehuel focuses on the good in his life, including the ways his losses have helped him in his work. "Going through these

tests that have caused so much pain has sensitized me to be able to understand the pain of others," he says. "Sometimes not having anything to feed one's children can be as painful for a family as losing children."

As inexplicable as Dehuel's tragedies have been, they have shaped and strengthened him as a child of God. "I learned a different faith, a faith that was not a function of what God gives me in exchange for who I am," he says. "God gives me much more than I deserve—the hope of eternal life where I am sure I am going to rejoice with those I have lost."

—with reporting by Kevin Cooney

# Blessed are the meek

*Meekness is one of the most misunderstood moral qualities. In our society, a meek person is a spineless weakling. Actually, Jesus uses a word that expresses the relinquishment of all illusion of control. Those who know their utter dependence on God, and are trained to trust God in all things, know that they have nothing to lose.*



## God's Instrument

### DR. PUNITHA VICTOR

In India, many people see AIDS patients as lost causes. Even doctors might regard them as merely bodies attached to medical charts—or, perhaps understandably in a country where HIV rates are escalating, as part of a troubling national problem. Not Dr. Punitha Victor.

To her, these neglected members of society are special to God and therefore precious to her. In a quiet way, this Christian woman working with the poor in Chennai expresses the hope and light of salvation to those who need it most. Her reward is seeing patients die joyfully. One woman asked those in World Vision's HIV/AIDS care home to sing hymns and pray in her final hour; she passed away with the words, "Jesus is calling to me," on her lips.

"That was a great testimony for all the other women in the care home," Punitha says. "They saw her and asked, 'Can death be so good?'"

CALEB MPAME/WORLD VISION