

World Vision

Today

AUTUMN 2001

hurricane mitch

1,000 days after

page 8



Anjelica in 1998.
Her life then—and now.

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World Vision Today

VOL. 5, NUMBER 1

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On the cover

Hurricane Mitch survivor Anjelica López, 5, of La Barranca, Honduras, has a new home and attends a new kindergarten, thanks to World Vision. (Inset: Anjelica in 1998.)
Photographs by Jon Warren

World Vision Today received the following awards from the Evangelical Press Association, which annually recognizes the best in Christian publishing:

First Place, Photo Feature: "Child Labor Close-Up" by Jon Warren, Summer 2000.

Second Place, Publication Design: By Journey Communications, Spring, Summer, and Autumn 2000.

Third Place, Single Photo/Candid: "Child Labor Close-Up" by Jon Warren, Summer 2000.

Third Place, General Article: "Each One Teach One" by Karen Homer, Spring 2000.

Fourth Place, Single Theme Issue: "50 Years By Faith," by Shelly Ngo, Jane Sutton-Redner, and Jon Warren, Winter 2000.

The magazine also received the highest overall award in its category, the Award of Excellence.

World Vision Today, a free quarterly publication, affirms people responding to God's call to care for the poor by providing information, inspiration, and opportunities for action, linking them with children and families in nearly 90 countries where World Vision ministers. In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, this publication costs less than 35 cents a copy to print and mail.

We welcome your comments and feedback. Letters to the editor must include the writer's full name, home address, and daytime telephone number, and should be sent to: The Editor, **World Vision Today**, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, Washington 98063-9716, e-mailed to WVToday@worldvision.org or faxed to (253) 815-3445. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Submitted photos will not be returned. Please send address changes at least 30 days before moving and enclose the address label clipped from a current copy or return envelope.

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World Vision

From the President | Richard E. Stearns

Good Guys and Bad Guys?

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.

—DEUTERONOMY 10:17-19

I GREW UP IN THE 1950S ON A STEADY DIET

of movies and TV shows featuring cowboys and Indians. I always rooted for "the good guys," the cowboys, as they valiantly fought "the bad guys," the Indians. There were no shades of gray, only black and white, as the good guys defended helpless settlers and fought for American sovereignty over the land. The bad guys were lawless and godless in their savage attacks on helpless men, women, and children.

I never really thought twice about this view of American history until my college years, when I read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Alexander Brown. In this account, Native Americans had flourished for centuries before the arrival of European colonists, who helped themselves to the land with little or no regard for the rights of the people already living there. Many tribes sought peaceful coexistence with the settlers, but the treaties they signed were broken as new demands for land and expansion arose. While tribes indeed committed violent acts, they were often provoked by the colonists' actions. We know that this story ultimately ended in the near extinction of Native Americans as they were forced onto reservations, their lands stolen, their homes and herds destroyed.

Recently, I had a similar adjustment to my belief system when I met a remarkable community of Christians living in another land. These people are suffering great persecution. They must carry I.D. cards with them at all times. Their license plates must be a certain color. They can be imprisoned without cause. They cannot vote or travel freely. Their land can be confiscated, their homes bulldozed without warning or compensation. They are denied even the most basic human rights—not because they are Christian, but because they are Palestinian.

I was shocked by what I saw as I traveled to Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank a few months ago with 12 pastors from the United States (read their reflections on pages 26-29). We worshiped with Palestinian believers and even stayed in their homes, listening to their stories of suffering and injustice. They asked,

"Why don't our Christian brothers and sisters in America care about us?"

I found this hard to answer. I said, "Most do not know that these things are happening, or that Palestinian Christians are suffering. Most of us support Israel without question because of past atrocities against Jews and because of our interpretation of biblical prophecies about Israel."

Although only a small percentage of Palestinians are Christians, they help us see that human rights abuses are wrong, no matter who—Christian or Muslim—is injured by them. The United States has denounced such abuses in other contexts, such as South African apartheid and the persecution of Muslims in Kosovo. But the Palestinians' plight has been consistently overlooked. We must not look the other way when our friends violate basic human rights, letting the ends justify the means.

Let me state clearly that neither side in this immensely complex situation is without fault. Both parties have committed unthinkable atrocities over the past 50 years. I do not claim to know the solution to this exceedingly tragic situation, but I have learned that there is another side to this modern-day story of "good guys and bad guys."

My heart was broken by what I saw in Israel, not because I favor the Palestinian cause over that of the Israelis, but because I am to love all my neighbors—especially the downtrodden—regardless of race, religion, or politics. Let us pray for a solution to this conflict—a moral solution, not just a political one—that sees both parties living together peacefully in this sacred land. ■



Richard E. Stearns

How does World Vision share Christian faith?

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

is key to every World Vision program. We are an interdenominational outreach of Christians concerned about people's physical and spiritual well-being. God's love is the inspiring force behind our efforts throughout the world.

Christian witness is more than what we say. It is the essence of who we are: our attitudes, thoughts, and actions. World Vision staff desire to model Christ-like behavior at all times, so that people will be drawn to place their personal faith in Jesus.

Being spiritually equipped prepares our staff to share the gospel in their communities. We encourage our staff through opportunities for prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other Christians. We aim to use language and methods that are truthful, God-honoring, and unifying. We communicate our faith in ways that are sensitive and appropriate for the cultural context in which we work.

World Vision's projects often are in nations that do not allow the open expression of Christian faith. "The fact that we cannot speak publicly does not render God speechless," explains Bryant Myers, World Vision International vice president of ministry. Eduardo Gumbua, a World Vision health officer in Mozambique, says, "I have heard people that we assist say there is a difference between World Vision health workers and others. It is the way we treat them; the way we approach them. I have many opportunities to witness through my work, even though we are not allowed to do anything directly."

Some predominantly non-Christian countries have invited World Vision to provide urgently needed relief and long-term development assistance. For example, World Vision has demonstrated God's love by drilling 500 wells to serve 170,000

people in northern Senegal, and by providing clean water, education, and agricultural assistance in Niger and China.

"Simply being where it is hard to serve and loving those who do not expect to be loved by Christians is a transforming witness. When World Vision trained village Muslims in community-based health care, a Muslim asked: 'Why are you training Muslims? Muslims wouldn't train Christians.' This is a question to which the gospel is the answer," notes Bryant.

Many countries do allow us to openly share the Good News. In Guatemala, one project provides a day care center for 110 children whose parents live and work in a garbage dump. Every day the children receive a balanced diet and clean clothing, and learn about Jesus' unconditional love.

In Ethiopia, a father of a World Vision-sponsored girl gradually became interested in Christianity through his interaction with World Vision workers. He asked if they could give him a Bible. "The Bible teaches me about God and the Holy Spirit. I love Jesus and I wanted to learn more about him," he said.

Innovative programs such as Just For Kids are another way World Vision shares the gospel. "The goal is to reach children with the message of Christ's love in a fun-filled way," said Rola Bassous, a Just For Kids team member in Lebanon. After presenting a Christian musical drama to children, the team distributed kits containing Bible stories, colored pencils, a pencil sharpener, a coloring book, and a tape of Arabic Christian music and stories. "Now I understand that Jesus is the only way to God," said recipient Giselle Kabboushi.

Where possible, World Vision supports local churches through training programs that equip pastors and church leaders to be more effective in their communities. These programs include providing Bibles and other Christian materials to believers, prayer initiatives, pastors' conferences, and training in peace-building and reconciliation.

Through mutual acceptance and respect, World Vision continues to establish good relations in the communities we assist, enabling us to offer powerful witness to Christ through ministry efforts.

Asoke Kumar, a World Vision staff member in south India, leads devotions with his family.



ION WARREN / WORLD VISION

Cheers for Chonda

I attended Chonda Pierce's concert in Charlotte this spring. While her show was fabulous, the truly meaningful part for me was her endorsement of World Vision. I have been sponsoring a girl in Thailand for eight years. I stood up when Chonda asked people to stand who knew about World Vision.



I just got my magazine [Summer 2001] with Chonda's article, "Hanky-Waving Mission Work." Thanks to Chonda for encouraging more than 4,600 new sponsorships through her concerts. Keep up the good work!

Joanie Hunt, Charlotte, N.C.

A Perfect Match

In February, people in India and El Salvador suffered loss due to earthquakes. At the same time, we suffered the loss of my mother. It seems a perfect match that some of the money from the sale of Mother's house would go to build a new home for a family in either India or El Salvador. We know that as you minister to the physical needs of the people, you are sharing God's love with them.

Clyde and Kathy Stickney, West Lebanon, N.H.



Chart Accuracy Questioned

Your Spring 2001 issue contains a listing of low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). I have just returned from mission work in Papua New Guinea (PNG), one of the countries listed. While the people do have low incomes, I question whether there is a food deficit. My long-term missionary acquaintances there stated that few in PNG suffer from lack of food or are malnourished.

Fruits and vegetables are in good supply, as well as protein from hogs, chickens, and fish.

Bruce McCartney, via e-mail

Editor's response:

Since the 1970s, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has devised lists of LIFDCs based on countries' poverty levels and how much food they import. Its Web site (<http://www.fao.org>) contains more information.

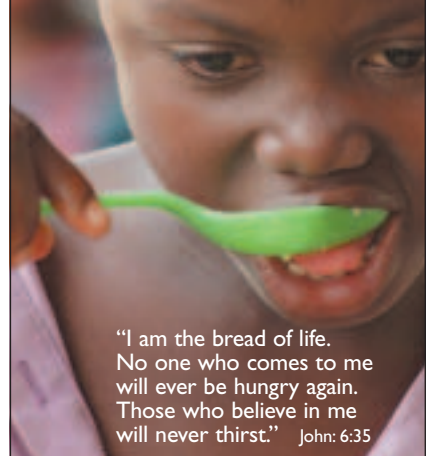
We included the FAO map for its overall impact, to show that many countries suffer from a food deficit. We agree that materials based primarily on statistical sources do not always tell the whole story. What you observed in Papua New Guinea is certainly true, but the country likely ranks on the FAO's list because of the combination of its poverty and food import status.

"A Child Shall Lead..."

I read with interest the story about Shannon Cantwell in the Spring 2001 issue. When I see what Jesus can do in the life of an 11-year-old girl, it reinforces my faith in humanity. Sometimes it takes a child to show us. I have been a World Vision sponsor for 18 years, sponsoring 16 children. Enclosed is my check to sponsor four more children.

Andy Williams, Pompano Beach, Fla.

Giving more than food and water



"I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst." John: 6:35

Life's essential elements for survival seem so simple: food, water, and shelter. Yet in many communities worldwide, children and their families suffer from a severe lack of such basic resources.

By participating in World Vision's Love Loaf program, your church families will be inspired to step out in faith to do what they can to make a difference in the lives of others.

Please call 1.877.4LOAVES or visit our website at www.worldvision.org



making it possible with LOVE LOAF

Story and Photographs by Jennifer Heslop

PROVE HIM WRONG



Every gate Mdeliseni makes bears his company sign. "Most of my business comes from this advertising," he says.

Former sponsored child Mdeliseni

Gqaza faced down many challenges to achieve security and success in a poor, violent South African township.

MANDISA GQAZA, 5, ARRIVES HOME FROM SCHOOL IN Mpumalanga township, South Africa. She slips off her brand-new, brightly colored backpack and her white sandals and strolls sassily out into the courtyard behind her house. Grinning from ear to ear, she swings on the security gate and intently watches her father, Mdeliseni Gqaza, as he confers with one of his employees in his welding workshop. When Mdeliseni notices the girl, she goes to him. Placing her small feet squarely on his, Mandisa clings to his legs as he walks into the kitchen to fetch a glass of water.

"I'd like both my children to become engineers," says Mdeliseni. "I want them to be self-employed and to be able to create their own futures."

In other words, to be like their dad. Mdeliseni owns M & G Gates and Fences, a welding business that thrives on the demand for security gates in his high-crime township. He employs six people and earns about \$300 a month, enough to afford good schools for Mandisa and his 11-year-old son, Zipho.

While Mdeliseni's entrepreneurial spirit has much to do with his success, he also thanks World Vision. "Because of sponsorship, I was able to go to school, then technical college, to get trained in a skill," he says. "And we survived."

The odds were against kids like him growing up in Mpumalanga in the 1980s. The township was a microcosm of South Africa's apartheid era. International sanctions—imposed to persuade the ruling party to hold free and fair elections—forced the closure of businesses, leaving families in abject poverty. Political violence was rampant.

Both of Mdeliseni's parents were blind due to childhood illnesses. Nevertheless, his father, Amos, worked at an assembly plant in nearby Durban, South Africa's third-largest city. His mother, Legina, knitted jerseys and blankets and sold them out of their home. Life was difficult, but their parents' combined



income kept Mdeliseni and his older brother, Vusumuzi, fed, clothed, and in school.

Then Amos' company shut down under sanctions pressure. He spent months looking for another job, but no one would hire a blind black man. Finally, all he could do was peddle cigarettes. Mdeliseni says, "I remember going the whole day without food. I couldn't concentrate in school. I would fall asleep because I never had anything to eat at lunchtime."

Often unable to pay school fees, both boys went to school intermittently. Amos and Legina grew sick with worry about their boys' future. The area was rife with rival gang fighting and the factions were recruiting their young fighters from the streets. Vusumuzi was soon enlisted.

In 1984, World Vision started a project in the township. Reverend Bhengu, a Lutheran pastor who managed the project, visited the Gqaza family and told Legina about child sponsorship. "We prayed together," recalls Legina, sitting in the house she shares with Mdeliseni's family. "The Reverend made sure that both boys could continue attending school, and he came by with food parcels to supplement the little we were able to manage."

"Before World Vision, things were really hard. There was no hope of anything better," adds Mdeliseni, lingering in the doorway. "I remember the Reverend coming to our house. He gave me a Bible and told me that God loved me."

Thanks to sponsorship, 13-year-old Mdeliseni returned to school and excelled in his studies. A year before Mdeliseni com-

pleted high school, however, Vusumuzi was killed in faction fighting, and everything changed. Mdeliseni not only lost the brother he looked up to, but he inherited the burden of caring for his parents—single-handedly.

Continuing his story in his workshop, Mdeliseni says, "I left school and began wandering through the industrial sections of nearby towns, trying desperately to find work." He pulls a tape measure across the length of steel held firmly in a vise on his work bench. "Soon I realized that there *was* no work. I would have to create work because there simply was nothing available."

Mdeliseni's name means "prove him wrong." From that point on, no one would. He convinced a friend to loan him a camera, and soon he was being paid to photograph local weddings and parties. Meanwhile, he confided in Reverend Bhengu that he wanted to learn a skill that would lead to steady work. He'd noticed security gates going up around homes and businesses in the area, giving him an idea for a profitable profession: welding. Again, the Reverend and World Vision sponsorship assisted Mdeliseni, providing tuition for a technical college.

Until he graduated, he supported his parents and his wife, Lindiwe, through his photography business, and painstakingly saved anything extra to buy welding machines. Once he had the equipment, M & G Gates and Fences was born.

Today, the company has a steady stream of orders for gates and burglar bars—good news for Mdeliseni and his team. "Before this, I wasn't working," says employee Sthembiso Zuma. "Now I'm making money and keeping busy."

Mdeliseni hopes to establish a center in Mpumalanga to train and motivate more people like Sthembiso. "I get tired of hearing, 'No one will give me a job.' We need to be entrepreneurial," he says. "If everyone could just think about creating jobs for themselves and others, we wouldn't have such a huge unemployment problem."

Leaving work aside, Mdeliseni sits with Mandisa, stroking the girl's head as she wriggles with laughter. "Sponsorship helped me get where I am today. I never lost that feeling that there was more out there, more I could do and be.

"I plan to sponsor a child, maybe two," he adds. "So he or she can have the chances I had." ■

WORLD VISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

1965-1979: Provided child sponsorship and feeding, clothing, and immunization programs for children.

1980-1989: Continued sponsorship, and began emergency relief, water development, and evangelism.

1990-1998: More than 100 projects provided clean water, childcare, education, and Christian witness.

Today: More than 26,600 children are sponsored, nearly 12,000 by Americans. World Vision South Africa also provides disaster relief, Christian witness, and microenterprise.

hurricane mitch 1,000 days after



Step by step, Honduras recovers from the storm of the century.



Thousands of homes have been rebuilt.



Seeds are in the ground.



Schools used for homeless shelters serve as busy classrooms again.



But when the rains come, the children sob, the mothers fret, and the fathers wonder if it is happening again.



One thousand days after Hurricane Mitch, nothing is the same.

BY KARI COSTANZA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN



THE WORLD WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS HURRICANE MITCH MOVED INTO ATTACK position off the coast of Central America on Oct. 26, 1998. Forecasters called it a killer storm, a Category 5, with wind gusts of 200 miles an hour.

The hurricane zeroed in on Honduras, moving on a slow and murderous westward path from the north coast through the central mountains, finally reaching Guatemala on Oct. 31.

Mitch killed more than 5,000 people in Honduras. In hours, the storm wiped out decades of economic development. Three thousand people died in Nicaragua, most the victims of a mudslide that obliterated two villages. Guatemala and El Salvador lost hundreds.

A thousand days after Hurricane Mitch, Central America remains marked by its menace, especially Honduras. The memories of Mitch are still vivid and painful. Setbacks from the storm continue to batter the country's economy and psyche. Those setbacks have created new problems—and new opportunities. For World Vision Honduras, Mitch became a chance to implement a new vision for the country, centering on its most treasured resource: the family.

"Mitch changed our vision for the future," says José Luis Figeroa, World Vision's manager of organizational development. "Before Mitch, we focused on being the best we could be. Now our focus is on the family. We want to change lives and hearts with Christian transformation at the center and economic development as a major element. Changing lives starts from the inside, from the heart. It is hard work. We work one by one, trying to reach every family, and, in turn, to raise the level of the community."

ROUND-THE-CLOCK RELIEF

Hurricane Mitch left World Vision Honduras with a whirlwind of work. During the crisis, staff ran on adrenaline as they operated a massive emergency relief program from Tegucigalpa, the capital. José Luis would get home at

11 every night and "jump out of bed at 6 the next morning, I was so eager to get to work."

Sponsorship staff conducted an exhaustive child count, organizing community volunteers to find every sponsored child and assess his or her condition. Because of the damaged roads and social upheaval, the count took several months to complete. Seven of the 38,000 sponsored children had died during the storm. Staff telephoned sponsors immediately with the sad news.

Medical brigades led by Romauldo Rodriguez crisscrossed Honduras for three months, taking medical supplies and health care to the most vulnerable populations. (Read more about Romauldo on page 15.)

Nearly 50,000 people joined in a food-for-work program in the countryside, receiving corn, rice, beans, cooking oil, and fish in exchange for repairing roads and rebuilding homes. With the generous donations that poured in, World Vision built 3,500 new homes, and new water systems and schools as well. "In many cases," says World Vision Honduras' Ralph Merriam, "people actually ended up in better living conditions than they had pre-Mitch."

World Vision provided seeds, tools, and fertilizers for farmers left with nothing. Staff also gave families baby chicks or piglets to raise for food or profit. Some families received goats, as their milk supplies extra nutrition for undernourished children.

Staff counseled and comforted hurricane victims at storm shelters. Providing spiritual and emotional support during a

crisis is an essential part of World Vision's Christian witness.

AFTER THE STORM

The staff emerged from months of stress and turmoil stronger and focused. Since Mitch, World Vision Honduras has grown in size and technical expertise. Before the hurricane, 50 staff worked with a \$4.5 million budget. Today, the budget has doubled, with 80 new staff. Child sponsorship has increased from 38,000 children before Mitch to 45,000 after the hurricane. Nearly 400 staff serve families in World Vision's 23 project areas. One staff member smiles, "Mitch has left us over-worked and over-stressed." It's no wonder.

One thousand days after Hurricane Mitch:

⊕ Up to 40 percent of the population still has no access to quality medicine.

⊕ People are flooding into the cities, further burdening municipal health-care systems and social services already stretched to their limits. "They're looking for jobs, education, and health care," says Dr. Edmundo Orsono,

A quiet morning in Limón de la Cerca, in southern Honduras. World Vision built 35 new houses here.

who heads World Vision's health programs in Honduras. They're not finding it.

⊕ Agriculture, responsible for the majority of exports, is making a slow comeback. Seventy percent of Mitch's damage affected the agricultural sector, as the hurricane ripped topsoil, crops, and even entire farms from the ground.

⊕ An economic recession looms. Gas prices rise every other week, increasing the cost of doing business. As much as 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, up 10 percent since Mitch.

⊕ Many are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Depression is said to affect 30 percent of the entire population.

The complex relationship between a sputtering economy, a nationwide depression, and deep-rooted poverty is leading to a new, dangerous urban phenomenon: violent, organized gangs. Fifteen years ago, the word for gangs—*mara*—was not even in Hondurans' common vocabulary. Now, fear of gangs has some people afraid to leave their homes at night. World Vision's Ernesto Galvez, coordi-

nator of community organization, says a recent study of gang members in Tegucigalpa found that 70 percent come from broken homes.

FAMILY COMES FIRST

It is in this new Honduras that World Vision conducts full-scale operations to revitalize communities and reconnect families. In two urban centers, World Vision worked with a group from Harvard University on Youth in Action, a project aimed at helping teens stay off drugs, keep out of gangs, and avoid pregnancies.

Families have basic needs, too. In rural areas, World Vision supports stability by strongly encouraging parents to buy silos to store surplus crops. Women learn to increase food security by planting home gardens.

The new family focus is at the heart of every action World Vision takes in Honduras. José Luis says, "We have to change longtime practices, to help people understand why their children die, why dirt floors are bad, why an open fire for

cooking inside a house makes a child cough, and why keeping farm animals inside is not good."

World Vision Honduras is mobilizing a network of partners—the government, churches, and motivated community members—to tackle deep-rooted national problems that the storm made more difficult to solve. But it is mainly through the church that World Vision's national director, Milagro de Castro, hopes to make significant inroads into poverty. "The challenge we share with other non-governmental organizations," Milagro says, "is how to motivate the church to help Honduras. Along the way we hope to make them feel that being a Christian is not just being faithful—but showing our love and commitment to others."

One thousand days after Hurricane Mitch, there is a storm of activity in Honduras, spearheaded by organizations like World Vision, designed to move families permanently toward a more stable future. "It will take time," José Luis says, "but we're on the path to get there. We feel lucky to be on that path."



HOW YOU HELPED

World Vision donors' response to Hurricane Mitch was astonishing. You reached out with donations, prayer, telephone calls, and supportive e-mails. At the Federal Way, Wash., headquarters, cars lined up in the parking lot to leave checks and specially requested hygiene items for Central America. More than 20,000 personal care kits were shipped to families. The customer call center took more calls from donors asking how they could volunteer and pray for the victims of Mitch than for any disaster before or since. The special November 1998 issue of **World Vision Today** magazine, with stories of hurricane survivors, resulted in more than \$300,000. In all, World Vision's United States donors gave \$24 million in cash and gifts-in-kind to aid the victims of Hurricane Mitch—every dollar, a gift of love.

Five-year-old Anjelica López (pictured on the cover) still has her Raggedy Ann doll, a gift from her American sponsor and the only thing her family was able to save from their mud-filled house after Hurricane Mitch. When she heard that World Vision photographer Jon Warren was on his way to La Barranca, 100 miles south of Tegucigalpa, Anjelica squealed, "I'm going to show him my doll!" She ran to retrieve it from her new home, built by World Vision.



Jon met Anjelica in November 1998 while on assignment for a special Hurricane Mitch issue of World Vision Today. Like most in La Barranca, Anjelica's family had lost everything. They were hungry and homeless. Anjelica had terrible diarrhea. "The first help came from World Vision," says Anjelica's mother, Maria. Today, Anjelica attends a World Vision-built kindergarten. She is a happy little chatterbox who loves to draw. Her favorite toy is still her doll.

In the next few pages, see how other families documented by World Vision Today in 1998 are faring—1,000 days after Hurricane Mitch.

MARIO CASTILLO OSORTO

Few stories touch hearts like that of 8-year-old Mario Castillo Osorto, who happened to step outside minutes before a mudslide sent a car-sized boulder crashing down the mountain-side, crushing his house and all inside. Mario clung to a small tree all night with a river of water rushing underneath him. He was still screaming when rescuers found him the next morning. His father, mother,



and one sister were dead.

Today, Mario lives with his grandmother, Paula, and his grandfather, Segundo, in La Picota, a small village outside Choluteca. Mario's brother, Julio Cesar, 10, also survived; he had been staying with his grandparents the night of the hurricane. So did Mario's other sister, Juana Paula, 3, the miracle child found in her dead mother's arms. "Mario's mother



had two fingers sticking out of the mud as if to say 'Here I am,'" explains Segundo tearfully. They dug with shovels to get to the body, then carefully with their hands as they got closer. It looked as though Juana Paula had died while feeding at her mother's breast. Then, Segundo says, rescuers threw water on the two bodies, and "it was as if God blew breath on her."

Juana Paula has grown into an independent child whom her grandfather describes as "very tough," but she carries her teddy bear—a gift from World Vision President Rich Stearns in 1998—everywhere. Segundo says Julio Cesar is doing well, too. "We have to keep him busy with chores or he could be very naughty. He has changed," the boy's grandfather adds. "He prays the Lord's Prayer every night without anyone even asking."

And Mario? "He's a different boy," Segundo says. "He forgets easily. I send him to put the donkey in the pen, and he comes back with something else. He got 'air in his brain' during Mitch." Mario is repeating first grade. According to his teacher, Diana del Carmen Herrera, "He's a good student who misses too much school." He's not alone. Before Mitch, children went to school daily. Now, basic issues such as food, water, and sickness keep them away.

"World Vision has not let us suffer," Segundo says. Staff built a new bedroom for the children, complete with three new beds. They re-cemented the floor of the house. Segundo has received agricultural training and has learned about terracing and fertilizers. He purchased a silo through the World Vision co-op in which he stores surplus crops.

Sponsorship enables the older children to go to school, after which they play soccer with friends or collect water for cooking and cleaning. Every night, Mario tells Julio Cesar the heartbreaking story of their mother. And Julio Cesar prays.

In his school notebook, Mario (left) draws the same house over and over, with a mountain behind it and a river flowing in the foreground. "No one lives in this house," he says.



RUDY JOEL LÓPEZ

Rudy López, 9, has eyes that are impossible to forget: sea-green, black-rimmed, and sparkling with mischief. His mother, María Anastasia López, sees the world through the same arresting eyes, hers unblinking and tranquil. Rudy is one of 16 children María cares for alone. Four years ago, her husband, Secundino, died of a heart attack while working in the fields. A few months later, Hurricane Mitch compounded the tragedy, overwhelming the new widow, who had just given birth to a girl, Eilyn.

Today, Eilyn is almost 3, and doesn't venture far from her mother. The child's eyes follow María as she sits for a moment in their new home in La Barranca, a community south of Tegucigalpa, completely rebuilt with help from World Vision. Like most of the people here, she lost everything in the storm, almost losing Rudy as well. María tells the story from the comfort of the hammock, Eilyn pressing up against her, caressing her neck. "It took three trips to get all the kids out of the house because there were so many. Rudy almost drowned. He was being taken to safety by his brother, and he ran away," she says.

For months afterward, four families crowded into María's mother's house until their new home was completed. She remembers one of those first trying days—before the World Vision relief airlifts



Rudy's mother, María, says, "Nobody knows what we've been through in Honduras. Through World Vision, people find out what happened to us."

sponsored children, they get regular medical and dental checkups. Those checkups are particularly critical for María's son Luís Enrique, 7, who has epilepsy.

As for Rudy, he's spending another year in first grade. The mischievous twinkle in those sea-green eyes sometimes plays out in behavior that lands him in the classroom corner. Still, his confidence seems unfazed. Hands in his pockets, Rudy swaggers through the new La Barranca, his brilliant eyes taking it all in.

FRANCISCO AND BELLA VICTORIA ALVARADO

Francisco Alvarado's crops run up a steep hill, reaching into the blue skies of San Miguelito, in southern Honduras. It is peaceful here; the only sound is the wind moving through the leaves and



Since the tragedy, Francisco (far right) says, "All I can do is stand on my feet, walk straight ahead, and keep going forward." Bella and baby Angie (pictured left).



an occasional rooster crowing. On this plot, Francisco, 44, grows corn, sorghum, sweet potatoes, yucca, and squash to feed his family. It is a five-minute walk to the farm, a journey Francisco takes, he says, "against my will." Three of his children died here during Mitch, crushed by the same soil he now cultivates. Tender bean plants fill a square plot where their home used to stand. The foundation pokes through the dirt.

His wife, Bella Victoria, also 44, no longer works alongside him. "This place gives me a headache," she says. Bella has a permanent headache since Hurricane Mitch, and, on rainy nights, "it gets worse. I can hear the sound of the landslide coming down," she says. Since Mitch, she sleeps with the light on and picks at the skin on her face. "It's a nervous habit," she admits. The rain also affects her children. "They run to me, des-

perately crying, 'Mama, this house is going to fall down!'"

The 1998 mudslide killed their daughters Sandra, 14, and Kelyn, 11, their son, Juan Baptista, 20, and his pregnant wife, Lesle. The surviving family moved into the village school for four months. They moved out briefly while the school was used as a temporary funeral home for their children. Sandra and Kelyn lay in the same coffin, their heads sharing a pillow like two girls at a sleepover.

Oldest daughter Cania, 18, has moved to Tegucigalpa with hopes of supporting the family. "We couldn't provide for her,"

says Bella, who worries about her daughter. With no phone, no car, and a hundred miles between them, Cania and the family communicate infrequently. They do know that Cania recently quit her job at a bakery because the salary wasn't enough to live on. Bella frowns, "I don't know where she's working or if she's working."

There is one spot of joy in the Alvarados' lives. Angie Abigail is 9 months old, with a perfectly round face and a remarkable bob of jet-black hair. "When I am very sad, I pick up my baby, and I feel better," Bella says. "I thank God for giving me this baby. He had compassion on me." Bella will soon register Angie for sponsorship. Her daughter, Sindy, 9, and son, Jimmy, 11, already receive sponsorship benefits. In addition, World Vision donated construction materials for their new home and a wheelbarrow for farming. Francisco recently attended a World Vision training session in emergency response, learning CPR. The training brought comfort to Bella, who says, "The World Vision staff really know how to treat people."

One thousand days after Mitch, Leocadio says, "We are well, praise God!"



LEOCADIO MOTIÑO, MARÍA PASTRANA, AND ADIS CORITZA

Not even a hurricane could end the love story of a very special couple, Leocadio Motiño and María Pastrana. Before Mitch, they lived in El Divisadero, in southern Honduras, with their granddaughter, Adis, then 9, by the banks of the Choluteca River.

The night the river devoured their house, they awoke to neck-high water. Two pastors rescued them from death. All over town, similar rescues were taking place. The community made sure not one life was lost.

Their troubles had just begun. Five days after the storm, Leocadio was out at night, with a flashlight to guide him. A friend on horseback approached. Blinded by the light, the horse ran over Leocadio, putting him in the hospital with a broken



One thousand days after Mitch, Adis (right) can smile again. She loves everything about her school, especially music class.

hip that has never quite healed. Meanwhile, María and Adis stayed in a kindergarten classroom converted into a shelter. "Lots of people were there," remembers Adis. "World Vision brought us water, food, blankets, medicine, and even toys."

A more permanent solution was needed for El Divisadero, and World Vision staff knew that meant moving a 300-member community a safe distance

activities. At the top of the list: building a house for Leocadio and María. Why? The couple "symbolizes love for the community," says Jose Santos Mejia, president of the local board.

Leocadio, now 80, and María, 67, live in a beautiful new home built by World Vision and the neighbors, just across the street from one of the pastors who rescued them. Life is good, except for one

thing: Adis had to move.

Mitch was hard on Adis. She was sick for a year with severe convulsions. Her aunt, Gloria Pastrana, 50, stepped in, taking the girl to her home in Tegucigalpa. Gloria got Adis health care and enrolled her in a vocational school. The convulsions have stopped. She's adjusting to school, getting solid B's. "For such a change, coming from a rural area, she is doing very well," says her school counselor, Oneida Barahona.

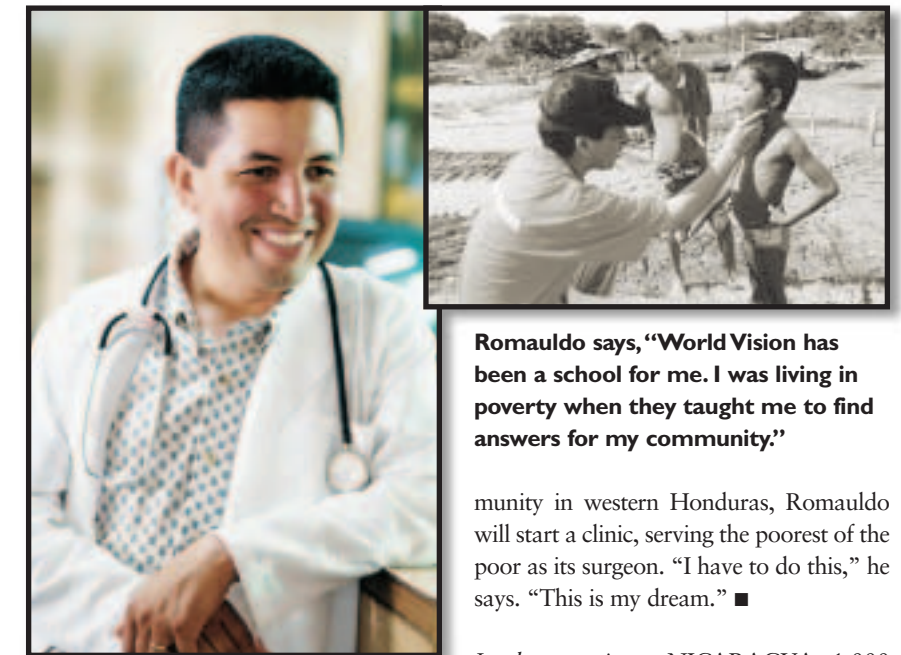
But she misses her grandparents—Leocadio, who speaks with his gnarled but graceful hands, and María, whose eyes nearly disappear when a smile spreads across her wizened face. She misses El Divisadero, a special community that one World Vision staff member describes by saying, "People think differently here. They'd rather have a Bible than a bed." But in Tegucigalpa, Adis is no longer sick. She has a best friend, Elayna, and is excelling in school. For now, this is home.

ROMAULDO RODRIGUEZ

In 1998, Romauldo Rodriguez was the medical student who drove a big yellow school bus packed with doctors and nurses to fight diseases after Hurricane Mitch. World Vision Honduras Health Director Dr. Edmundo Osorno hand-picked him for the high-stress, high-impact position leading the medical brigades. It took a special kind of person to inspire fellow students to volunteer for three months on the road, sleeping in buses, crossing dangerous rivers, and battling diseases. "They were heroes," Dr. Osorno says. "They went because they wanted to go, not because they were pressed. They got no money, no awards. In other countries, heroes get medals. These doctors got a nice dinner."

Romauldo, now 34, says many brigade volunteers came away with changed hearts. "Mitch was a great experience for them," he says. Many, now doctors, volunteer or work at organizations like World Vision. For Romauldo, Mitch "only confirmed my vocation."

Since the hurricane, Romauldo has



Romauldo says, "World Vision has been a school for me. I was living in poverty when they taught me to find answers for my community."

community in western Honduras, Romauldo will start a clinic, serving the poorest of the poor as its surgeon. "I have to do this," he says. "This is my dream." ■

In the next issue: NICARAGUA: 1,000 DAYS AFTER HURRICANE MITCH. World Vision is ministering in an area where a mudslide wiped out two communities, killing 2,500 residents. Find out what it means to be "First in and last out"—and why that commitment is so important to the people of Nicaragua.

the eye of the storm

IT IS A SATURDAY MORNING 1,000 DAYS AGO. THE WORLD VISION HONDURAS OFFICE is flooded. Phone lines are dead. Electricity is out. The toilets won't flush. In the damp and the dark, staff members begin an assault on the chaos left behind by

From birth, Milagro de Castro was a miracle. Now she serves in a place where nothing short of a miracle will do.

BY KARI COSTANZA

Hurricane Mitch. At the eye of the storm: Milagro de Castro, the new national director of World Vision Honduras.

José Luis Figeroa, manager of organizational development, remembers the scene: "Milagro was one of the first ones here. Volunteers started coming in to ask what they could do. We sent a radio message asking people to bring food or clothing to the World Vision office. Bags, boxes, bread began arriving."

It was the greatest challenge for World Vision Honduras. And no one felt it more than Milagro de Castro.

Milagro started with World Vision in 1982 as a secretary. Over the next 16 years, she worked her way to the position of

national director—the head of World Vision Honduras. She had taken office just 47 days before Hurricane Mitch. Now she was in charge of pandemonium.

José Luis witnessed the moment things changed. It was the first week, and everyone had his own ideas for what to do. "I saw Milagro just click and come to life," he remembers. "She said, 'Hold it. That's not what we're going to do.' She grabbed a marker, went to the board, and started devising a plan. Once that happened, everything started rotating around her. That was the key point. She didn't go with the old mind set. In Honduras, we used to do as

much as we could with the resources we had. She said, 'We're going to do what we need to do—no matter what it costs.' We believed in her, and we made that happen."

Other World Vision staff agree. "She is an inspiration to everyone," says Jessica Cruz. "Everyone respects her direction. And she's a team player. She doesn't do anything by herself."

"She is a leader who carried us," says Fanny Velásquez, sponsorship coordinator. "It was hard to see what happened here. Sometimes she cried. But she was courageous."

It *still* takes courage to live in post-Mitch Honduras. Earlier this year, a carjacker followed Milagro home. She saw him following in her rearview mirror and began honking frantically when she reached her driveway. The noise alerted her 13-year-old son, who ran to get his father. With a shotgun aimed at her head, Milagro kept honking. Her husband came running and the carjacker fired at him, narrowly missing. Milagro saw her chance and jumped from the car, threw her keys at the attacker, and hid behind a parked car. The carjacker opened fire on her too. When neighbors appeared, alerted by the honking and gunfire, the carjacker fled. It was only by the grace of God, she says, that no one was hurt.

Milagro is a courageous leader, but above all, she is a team leader. Her eyes well with tears when she speaks of the hard-working people who surround her. What she loves most about her job is seeing the results of World Vision's work in Honduras. "I love being in the field, watching a community inaugurate a new home. I love sharing with the people who will live there, finding out where they come from. I hear stories filled with anguish. I see a lot of tears. But there is so much joy."

She was her parents' joy when she was born 46 years ago in Choluteca, in southern Honduras. Her mother had almost given up on having children, thinking she was barren. When a baby was born, they called her Milagro, the Spanish word for miracle.

Her father, who died several years ago, raised her as he would a son. "I talked to a psychologist who said that a lot of men who want to have a boy and end up with a girl raise them as men. It was definitely true in my case," says Milagro. "Instead of growing up wanting dresses and girl talk, I was geared toward the intellectual side."

In high school, Milagro was recognized as the best student in Choluteca, and after graduation was offered a lucrative job as an accountant with a Swedish company. To please her father, she turned the job down. It was his wish that she move to Tegucigalpa and attend the University of Honduras.

Milagro lived with her sister in Tegucigalpa while studying for her bachelor's degree in business administration. When her sister began talking about becoming a Christian, "I laughed at

her," she admits. "I thought she was crazy." Then their uncle, a pastor, shared the gospel with Milagro. This time she listened. Now, Milagro lives out her faith, putting God first in everything.

Milagro juggled a university teaching career while working at a company that exported kitchen utensils all over Central America. There, a young man named Hubener Castro began telling co-workers that he was going to marry her. Milagro's response: "No way." When the "party animal" became a Christian, Milagro began to take Hubener's proposal seriously, one day saying, "Yes."

The two make a powerful team. "I am where I am because of the support of my husband," Milagro says. "When I was getting my master's degree, my family barely saw me at home. Now I

travel so much that Hubener has to be Mom and Dad. He cleans, cooks, and takes care of the house." And he does something even more essential—he prays. "Hubener is the pastor of our family. He prays in the morning and at night, looking after our spiritual well-being."

On weekends, Milagro is a full-throttle mom. "I share time with my kids," she explains. "We eat out, we go places outside the city, we go to church. We like to be together as a family." They won't be together much longer. Claudia, 17, a recent high-school grad, plans to work in computer engineering in Canada after college. Nadia, age 14, dreams of practicing medicine in Australia. Son Hubener, 13, loves the idea of aeronautical engineering and going to school in Miami.

While distance may soon divide them, this family is bound by love and respect, with God at the center. "Mom always finds a way to treat people right," Nadia says. "I want to be just like her—just not so busy." ■

"It was hard to see what happened here. Sometimes she cried. But she was courageous."

WORDS OF FAITH THEY LIVED BY

For Milagro de Castro, Isaiah 29:6 was especially meaningful during Hurricane Mitch. "In an instant, I, the Lord Almighty, will come against them with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and storm and consuming fire."

Romauldo Rodriguez drew strength from Luke 7:22: "Then He told John's disciples, 'Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.'"

Maria Pastrana in El Divisadero clung to Psalms 133:1: "How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live together in harmony!"



JON WARREN / WORLD VISION

breaking new ground *emergency response today*

For the Christian, it isn't safe to play it safe," former World Vision President Stan Mooneyham once said. "Jesus Christ calls us down into the arena where the hot breath of danger hits you full in the face, where the nerves tingle and the blood races, where the adrenaline surges because the game is no longer 'let's pretend.'" For more than four decades, World Vision staff has entered the heady arena of natural disasters, human-made crises, and wars to bring life-saving aid in Christ's

name. What's changed isn't why we do it, but *how*. Through prayer, experience, and growing expertise, World Vision's response to global emergencies has advanced over the years. Today's relief operation is marked by preparedness, sophisticated use of technology, coordination of staff worldwide, and rapid, focused aid—the right goods and programs at the right time. We didn't get there overnight. See how trends and tools have advanced.

BY JANE SUTTON-REDNER | ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER SPACEK

TODAY: LIVING THE VISION

All year round, teams analyze global hotspots and help staff prepare for crises.

World Vision warehouses in three locations pre-position relief goods.



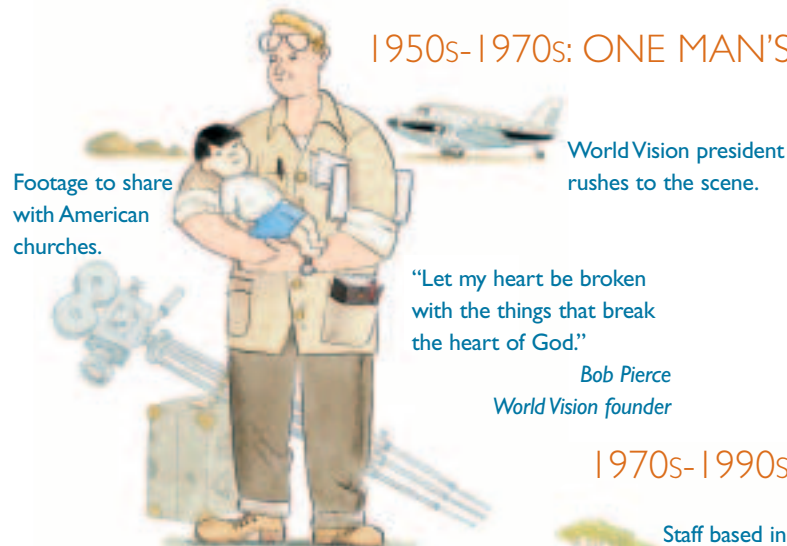
Staff help families rebuild their lives in the months and years after a crisis.

Local staff trained in emergency response leap into action.

Information and images sent electronically appear on Web sites within hours.

Assessing children's welfare is a priority.

1950s-1970s: ONE MAN'S VISION



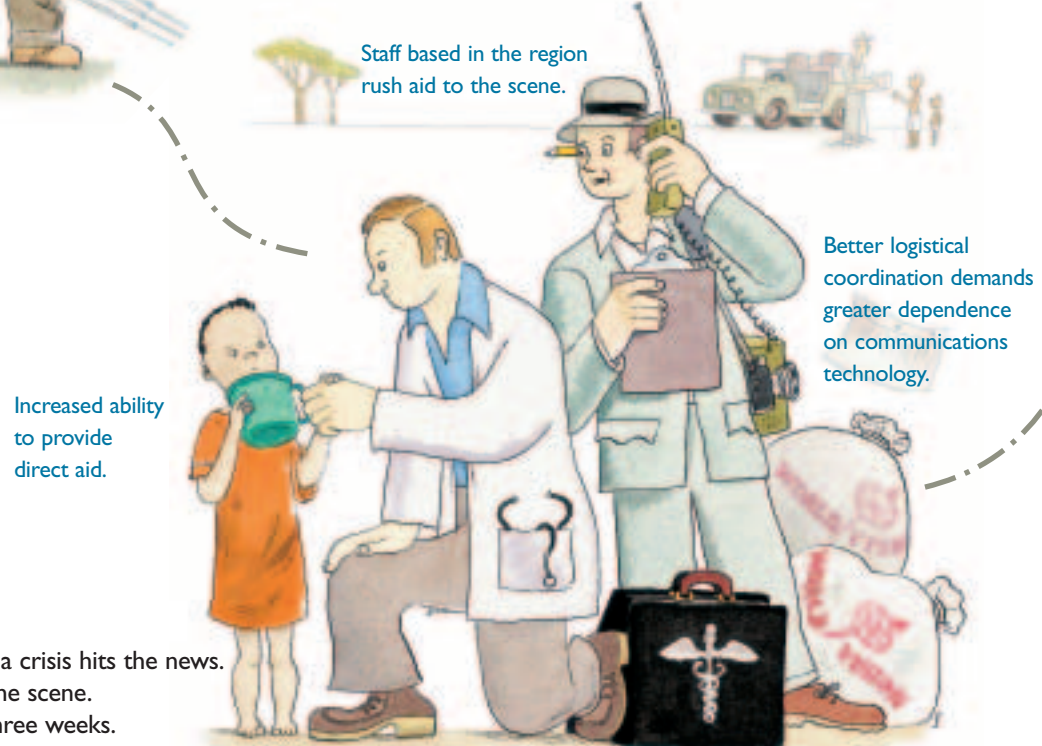
Footage to share with American churches.

World Vision president rushes to the scene.

"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

Bob Pierce
World Vision founder

1970s-1990s: GROWING THE VISION



Staff based in the region rush aid to the scene.

Better logistical coordination demands greater dependence on communications technology.

Increased ability to provide direct aid.

THEN

- Reactive: Respond when a crisis hits the news.
- Expatriate staff rush to the scene.
- Response time: one to three weeks.

NOW

- Strategic: Early warning systems improve preparedness for crisis.
- Global network of staff support local teams on the ground.
- Response time: 24 to 72 hours.

motivating teens to action

How can we get today's teens more involved in serving those in need? Joan Williamson, a full-time youth minister for more than 15 years, has plenty of ideas. She has motivated Christian youth in Minnesota and Washington state to live out their faith through local service activities, mission trips, or by simply reaching out to neglected classmates. This year, as director of Christian education for St. Michael's Church in Snohomish, Wash., she organized a 30 Hour Famine event for 10 local churches.



BY JANE SUTTON-REDNER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD BARTEL

Q: Do teens serve because they have to, or because they want to?

A: Service has become a popular fad. Everybody has to volunteer to graduate from high school. Those hours look good on college applications or on résumés. I think the excitement of volunteerism happened in the 1990s, and now kids are getting burned out. The challenge is to help them understand that service is an extension of our relationship with Christ: We are motivated because of a deep love and passion for him—and hopefully we will become more like God. Service is the fruit of that relationship. One who does not serve, as the apostle James says, has a dead faith.

In America, we're into success, independence, and instant gratification. All those things are about "me." Jesus and service are about community and "us."

Q: Are teens afraid to come face-to-face with people in need?

A: It's easier for them to love the homeless or the poor in Mexico—you can go to a soup kitchen, or collect clothes and drop them off. The greater challenge is,

"Can I love those people at school whom nobody loves? How about that person who eats lunch alone every day? Can I sit with her and engage her in a conversation? When somebody's getting bullied, can I step in and help that person?" My encouragement to the kids is: If you can serve at home, you can serve anywhere.

Q: How has World Vision helped you reach out to teens?

A: In the early 1990s, a local church [in Edina, Minn.] was doing World Vision's 30 Hour Famine. I talked to their youth minister, and it sounded so good, I thought, *Next year we're going to do that*. That first year, we had six kids, but it was an incredible 30 hours. I was sold on it right away because it's such a strong educational package—not just about head stuff, but also heart stuff.

Q: Why is the 30 Hour Famine a good tool for reaching teens?

A: It's 30 hours of intense reflection, a time to think about the needs of the broader world and how we're called as

people with gifts to help others. The kids begin to put it together that there are needs out there and that in the United States we have amazing resources. We shouldn't feel guilty about that; rather, we should find out how God wants us to use our resources to help others. In return, we're blessed.

Q: Which activities have been especially motivational for the kids?

A: Going door-to-door to collect food [for food banks] has been powerful. We don't leave notes out a week before saying we're going to do this. It's almost as if the kids are begging. Sometimes they're turned down, and sometimes people give what they have, but it isn't very much, like an opened jar of peanut butter. The stories they come back with ... they love it.

We also send kids out for about an hour and tell them, "Figure out how to serve someone." When we get back together we talk about what they did. One kid in Minnesota wrote in the snow, "Jesus loves you," and people in cars on the freeway saw it and waved and

honked. Others carried bags of groceries for people or shoveled snow. Those are neat experiences for the kids because they can see how, day-to-day, they can bless somebody.

Q: How do you encourage their enthusiasm the rest of the year?

A: Always I'm encouraging them—they say *harping on them*—to relate to kids who are not accepted. Or, if there's an elderly person in the community who has become ill and can't take care of his or her home, we'll go in on every other week to help. Things like that.

Q: How does service help teens grow?

A: They realize they have the power to make a difference in both large and small ways and that it comes through God. They walk away knowing that their gifts are gifts for the community.

Many kids encourage their friends to join them in service. And quite a few have thought about working in the mission field. While planning for college, they look for studies that would be helpful, like civil engineering or medicine.

Q: There's so much in the news about school shootings and other alarming youth problems. Is there hope for the next generation?

A: We can be very hopeful. They have an enthusiasm to know God and to be real with God. Because of their faith, they become very solid in their moral choices. Down the road they will call our nation to accountability—to have moral leadership, to open our hearts to all people, not just those with money. They have so many gifts and so much talent...They're going to bless this world in a big way.

Q: What's your greatest challenge in working with kids?

A: Knowing that change and growth in kids takes time. Sometimes you want to see it happen more quickly. But you know that God will work in them over time, and that will bring change. Romans 8:28 says, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him." He brings the good out of the junk.

Q: And what's the best part?

A: Hanging out with the kids and seeing God alive in their lives. Because of that, my own faith has increased. ■

WORLD VISION'S 30 HOUR FAMINE

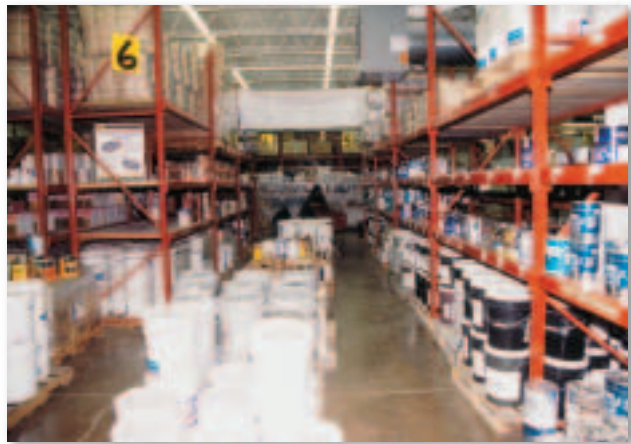
What is it? Young people pledge to go without food for 30 hours to raise awareness for world hunger and raise funds to alleviate the problem. During the 30 hours, groups engage in activities and community-service projects that give them a sense of poverty overseas and here at home. Last year, more than 600,000 young people across the United States raised more than \$8 million for World Vision projects serving needy families.

When is it? The next national event is Feb. 22-23, 2002, but you can do it anytime.

How to sign up: Call toll-free (800) 7-FAMINE or visit www.30hourfamine.org. World Vision provides everything you need—free—to hold a meaningful and successful event that will change lives within your group and around the world.

BUILDING UP CHICAGO

The Storehouse, a World Vision ministry in Chicago, removes obstacles between people in disadvantaged neighborhoods and the products they need to build up their communities.



The Storehouse—a nonprofit building supply warehouse for low-income communities.

Story and Photographs by
Amber L. Anderson

WHEN KIM AND PHIL JACKSON FIRST STEPPED INSIDE the door of their new home in Lawndale, on Chicago's west side, they found themselves standing in a waist-high pile of trash. The building had survived three fires, water damage, and five years of abandonment. But this didn't keep the Jacksons from seeing its potential. They purchased the home through Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, a ministry serving this disadvantaged neighborhood, and began the renovation process.

After five months of intensive work, elbow grease, and donated products from The Storehouse, the place was transformed. The couple and their three children moved from their cramped rental apartment into the first home that Phil, a youth pastor, and Kim, a community development worker, have ever owned. "This is a dream that has become a reality," says Kim. "I tell everybody about The Storehouse."

Part of World Vision's ministry in Chicago, The Storehouse is a nonprofit program that collects donated building materials from manufacturers and distributes them to qualifying agencies, churches, and families like the Jacksons who live in low-income neighborhoods. Members of The Storehouse can visit World Vision's 40,000-square-foot warehouse and select the materials they need to repair or renovate their homes and community centers. All Storehouse materials are available for a nominal handling fee—usually one-third to one-fifth the retail value of the product.

The Jacksons' home features new windows, skylights, plumbing fixtures, wall trim, light fixtures, and a bathtub from The Storehouse. "We found so many good buys," Kim says. Raising their three children on their limited salaries, Phil and Kim could not have afforded such quality products otherwise.

In its six-year history, The Storehouse has distributed nearly \$10 million in building materials to help rebuild Chicago's communities. Extra products such as sinks, toilets, paint, and tile formerly taking space in a manufacturer's warehouse or destined for landfill, are now being used to make homes and community centers safer and more functional.

Improving structures can go a long way toward improving people's opportunities. Read on to see how others have used materials from The Storehouse to enhance their visions for a stronger Chicago.

COLORFUL KIDS' SPACE

Silence is hard to come by at McCann's Day Care, which serves primarily low-income families on the south side. With

60 children under the age of 6 playing in two large rooms, the children's voices are matched in vibrancy only by the colorful alphabet posters and construction-paper kites hanging from ceilings and walls. The walls are covered with vivid paint from The Storehouse. The floor tile, bathroom fixtures, and other items also come from The Storehouse.

Director Yvonne McCann started the center 25 years ago with her mother. "There were years where I didn't get paid," she admits. "There are still some shaky times." But their hard work has paid off. "Parents come back and tell us that their kids are doing well," says Yvonne. "That's what makes this work so great."

Now the McCanns are extending their work by partnering with community member Stella Howard to build a new resource center. Yvonne's friend since high school, Stella sent her three children through McCann's Day Care and volunteered there part-time for more than a decade. Stella, who also works for a non-profit agency that assists small businesses, came up with the idea of turning an uninhabited, three-flat building into an assisted-living home for senior citizens and an infant day-care center.

Although funding has been hard to come by, the tight budget for building renovations is supplemented with quality products from The Storehouse. The project is closer to completion, thanks to new kitchen cabinets for the senior home provided through The Storehouse.

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Because of her limited budget and poor health, Laverne Davis could not repair the damages to her rental property. Without repairs, the building was uninhabitable, with falling plaster and



Kim and Phil Jackson had to use their imaginations to see a home in this gutted west-side building (left). With materials from The Storehouse, they transformed the building (below) and now live there with their children.



faulty wiring making it too hazardous to continue renting. An elderly woman on a fixed budget, Laverne

needed the rent income each month to pay her bills. A neighbor, Albert Melton Jr., noticed Laverne's situation and volunteered to oversee the repairs, using materials from The Storehouse to make the project more affordable.

They purchased plumbing supplies and ceramic tile for the bathrooms, paint for the interior walls, and carpeting for 10 rooms and two hallways. "At a store, this much carpet would have cost \$2,500," Albert says. At The Storehouse, the handling fee for the carpet was one-fifth that amount. "The Storehouse has helped me stretch dollars way beyond what we could have attempted."

Albert is glad to help Laverne. "She's like a mother to me, and I want her to have a lot of the good things I can give to my own mother," he says.

Thanks to Albert's help and products from The Storehouse, the building is entirely renovated, and Laverne rents the three apartments to families needing low-income housing.

In some of Chicago's most challenging neighborhoods, people like Albert, Stella, the McCanns, and the Jacksons are quietly helping each other and working for the good of the community. The Storehouse and other World Vision ministries exist to support these selfless servants. ■

For more information on The Storehouse and other World Vision ministries in Chicago, please call (800) 279-6209.

News

► According to a recent poll, only about 1 in 10 Americans names poverty or welfare as one of the top two issues for the government to address. (“Survey About Poverty in America,” National Public Radio/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University’s Kennedy School)

► Five years ago, only five sub-Saharan African countries had Internet access. This year all the region’s countries are connected. (World Bank’s World Development Indicators 2001)

► Of the 2,373,841 loan recipients of Grameen Bank, which provides credit to poor families in rural Bangladesh, 2,251,052 are women. (Grameen Bank)

► In fiscal year 2001, the United States spent less than one-fourth of 1 percent of the total federal budget on development aid, placing the country last among developed nations for percentage of gross national product devoted to poverty-focused foreign aid. (Bread for the World)

Good News



ROBERT MICHEL/WORLD VISION

CYCLING FOR LIFE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Cyclists from around the world participated in World Vision’s AIDS Cycle Relay this summer, riding through six southern African countries to mobilize political and public action against the pandemic.

The relay started in Malawi and traversed 1,860 miles through Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Swaziland, finishing in Mozambique. Nearly a quarter of 15- to 19-year-olds in all these countries are HIV-positive. Along the route, World Vision provided educational material on HIV/AIDS in local languages and staged drama and music productions that drove home how AIDS affects families, especially children.

“Africa is already late in the battle against AIDS, where the disease has claimed 15 million lives and orphaned 10 million children, and the worst is yet to come,” said Wilfred Mlay, World Vision’s vice president for Africa. “The relay hopes to shatter the silence that has kept AIDS information from millions of people, especially those in rural Africa.”

The event, the first of its kind for World Vision, was inspired by Zambian staff member Cyrus Phiri, who in 1996 ran almost 500 miles across Zambia to raise AIDS awareness just days after losing his sister to the disease.

CRISIS UPDATES

MONGOLIA

World Vision was the only organization to distribute food and fuel to 17,900 people placed under quarantine following an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, and three remote provinces last spring. The country’s agriculture-based economy could not withstand the wholesale slaughter of livestock—the solution to foot-and-mouth outbreaks in Europe—so officials fought the disease with vaccinations and quarantines. People could not leave the affected areas for weeks, cutting them off from families, schools, and social services. The few shops within the quarantine areas inflated their food prices up to 200 percent.



SUE BRYAN/WORLD VISION

World Vision’s relief distributions encouraged Mongolian families who were cut off from food and supplies.

World Vision supplied emergency food rations and coal to families who were already poor before the quarantine. One relief shipment to the remote north-eastern province of Dornod required a treacherous, three-day, 400-mile journey across isolated steppes and muddy roads.

One beneficiary thanked World Vision by quoting a Mongolian proverb. “The true character of a person is revealed in hard times,” he said. “This situation is showing the people of Mongolia World Vision’s true character. You are showing us the quality of your organization by bringing us the help we need in times of trouble.”

EARTHQUAKE UPDATES

In El Salvador, just ahead of summer rains, World Vision provided shelter for people left homeless by February’s earthquakes. Working with a local agency, World Vision helped construct transitional, wood-and-tin houses for 3,000 people in Tacuba, one of the worst-affected communities. “I am very grateful. We were sleeping practically in the street,” said recipient Adilia Garcia. By summer’s end, World Vision also completed construction on 130 permanent homes in Tacuba.

World Vision responded to southern Peru’s 7.9-magnitude earthquake in June. Staff provided blankets, hygiene kits, and other emergency supplies for families in hard-hit areas, including Moquegua, in southernmost Peru, where 80 percent of the houses were flattened.



CARLOS MARTIN/WORLD VISION

Building back to normal in El Salvador.

SPONSORSHIP

CHILDREN LOG ON TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

World Vision hopes to help sponsored children span the “digital divide” through computer training. Programs in several countries equip young people with skills that will help them compete in a technology-driven world.

Forgers of Hope, World Vision’s computer school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, offers a six-week course in Windows Executive programs. Sponsored children can sign up for a discounted fee. Forgers of Hope also provides spiritual guidance through Bible lessons, prayer, and instructors’ testimonies. “In addition to computer basics, [students] also learn how to respect each other, how to dress for a work environment, and how to relate to God,” said director José Cabrera.

One hundred sponsored youth in Sri Lanka recently earned diplomas in computer studies through a World Vision computer training institute in the Hambantota district. Since 1998, the institute has provided rural youth and adults unprecedented access to information technology skills. An



JOHN SCHENK/WORLD VISION

Giving children in developing countries access to computers gives them a key to the digital world.

additional facility now serves Anamaduwa.

In South Africa, World Vision just opened a computer training center in Mpofu, a region with high unemployment and few opportunities for high school grad-

uates. “The computers will help children catch up with their peers in advantaged communities,” said District Mayor Sakhumzi Somyo. “The Internet is so vital because it is a window to the world.”



ONLINE OPPORTUNITY: GLOBAL HOTSPOTS

World Vision’s new Web feature, Global Hotspots, allows you to keep up with World Vision’s response to emergencies around the globe. An interactive map takes you to more than a dozen crisis reports with information about World Vision’s involvement and ongoing programs in those areas, updated weekly. Look for the “Global Hotspots” link on World Vision’s homepage at www.worldvision.org.

pray for peace

IN MARCH, A GROUP OF AMERICAN PASTORS TRAVELED with World Vision President Rich Stearns to Israel. Many returned from the pilgrimage heartbroken but with an intensified desire to advocate and pray for peace for all people in the Holy Land.

YOU CAN GO TO THE HOLY LAND AND NEVER SEE WHAT I SAW LAST MARCH. I've done it. This time was different because I met Palestinians and heard and saw disturbing things that rarely, if ever, make the headlines in the United States. It was a hard trip, because I've always been pro-Israel. I still am. I believe Israel has the right to exist in peace and security. But so do the Palestinians.

I've traveled four times to Senegal, West Africa, and I've witnessed grinding poverty. But this trip affected me more deeply than any developing-world travel I've undertaken before. Material poverty is bad enough, but there was also a poverty of freedom among Palestinians, leading to frustration and sometimes despair. The stories of the great suffering among common people got me in a half nelson and wouldn't let me go. I saw Jesus *everywhere*.

American Christians should care about the Palestinians because many are our brothers and sisters in Christ. But the geographic cradle of Christianity has become a deathtrap, and Palestinian Christians are fleeing for their lives. In 1980 there were 25,000 Christians in Jerusalem alone; now only 5,000 remain.

We should also care because Palestinians are among the poorest of the poor. Some Christians might protest that the majority are Muslim. Even still, are they not our responsibility? "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you something to drink, naked and clothe you, sick or in prison and visit you? 'When you did it to the least of these ...'"

—Heidi Husted, Columbia Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, Wash.

I WENT TO THE HOLY LAND LOOKING FOR A GOOD DOSE OF HOLY GOOSE-PIMPLES. I got my dose ... it just came differently than I expected.

On Sunday I worshiped with Palestinian Christians in Aboud, in the West Bank. They sang, preached, and prayed in Arabic. The church was packed. I lis-



ION WARREN/WORLD VISION

tened to Father Aktham Hijazin, a youthful, passionate, and caring priest, as he preached to God's flock. Although I didn't understand a single word, I understood his message. It was a message of hope and resilience. It had to be. A block away from the church, roads were cut up by Israeli troops so that Aboud residents could not drive in or out of their own city to work, to school, or even to the hospital.

When Aboud was shut down, the entire community was immediately transformed into a prison, its residents to prisoners—except for the people worshipping that morning. Certainly, those folks are shut off from the outside world, their choices now extremely limited. Nevertheless, these brothers and sisters are not prisoners, not in their spirits.

In the West Bank village of Zebabde, each of us was paired with a Palestinian family. Yaser, 13, and his older brother Samer, 17, met me with great enthusiasm. As we walked to their home, they gave me a lesson in Arabic 101. Husam and

Hanan, the boys' parents, treated me like royalty. The family ate together and talked. I was privileged to have a close-up view of their intimacy. Their strong Christian faith helped them function in an environment that could have fostered dysfunction. What a testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit granting us peace in the midst of our storms!

I got a good dose of holy goose-pimples on this trip, all right. It wasn't at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Mount Zion, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, or in the Old City of Jerusalem. It was not in the places where Jesus used to walk. I got goose-pimples in the places where he is still walking ... and in the presence of the people in whom he still walks. I saw him in Aboud, in the West Bank, in Zebabde. In a priest. In a child. In a song. In a tear. In a meal. In a prayer. And in the hope that peace would eventually come to those who wait upon the Lord.

—Alex Gee, *Fountain of Life Church, Madison, Wis.*

I CAME AWAY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST with the simple realization that the Palestinians want exactly the same thing the Jews wanted before Israel was founded in 1948: "the right to life, liberty, and security of person, and the right to nationality" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948). The tragedy is that Israel—and here we must distinguish between the state of Israel and the Jewish people—refuses to recognize this desire in another people. In 1948, the displaced and wandering Palestinian replaced the displaced and wandering Jew.

As Christians, our history with Jews, our "elder brothers in faith," is not admirable, and as Americans, we're terrified that if we say anything against the state of Israel, we'll be called anti-Semitic. So we're afraid to talk about it. But we shouldn't be. Recognizing and deploring the human rights violations of the Israeli government against the Palestinian people does not call into question the rights of the



Front row (l to r): Alex Gee, Stuart Bond, Steve Hayner, Father Louis Hazboun, Rich Stearns, Heidi Husted, Bob Sanders, Todd Dorman

Back row: Bill Mugford, Mike Graef, Mack Stiles, Steve Barker, Scott Jackson, Milind Sojwal

Jewish people or the right of the state of Israel to exist. Likewise, recognizing and deploring the Palestinian violence does not call into question the Palestinian people's rights or the right of the state of Palestine to exist. Discussing these things is crucial to the spiritual and social health of Israel. Justice and peace are crucial to the lasting existence of a Jewish homeland.

—Milind Sojwal, *All Angels Episcopal Church, New York, NY*

THE BIGGEST ATTITUDE CHANGE FOR ME came from meeting Palestinian people and hearing their stories. After listening to men, women, boys, and girls who live in Jerusalem, in West Bank villages, and in Gaza, I no longer hear the word "Palestinian" and think of violent terrorists, but rather good and decent people with hopes and dreams like my own. Because I spent time in their homes with their families, I count several as real friends. Many I met are Christians, so I also count them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Because I saw a systematic pattern of injustice and violence at work against them, I began to understand their frustration and anger.

As I walked down the Mount of Olives, along the route Jesus might have taken on the first Palm Sunday, I was reminded of how Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem and said, "If you had only recognized the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:41-44). Whatever our opinion of Israel, the Palestinians, and the current crisis, surely we are called to pray that people there *and* here recognize and practice the things that make for peace.

—Bob Sanders, *Lake Grove Presbyterian Church, Lake Oswego, Ore.*

THE TRIP THROUGH GAZA WAS ONE OF the most heart-rending, faith-inspiring days. We left the lush vegetation of southern Israel and crossed the border on foot. We entered a desolate wasteland of buildings that rose out of the dust-haze and saw people who looked like they lived their existences as shadows.

Yet, every World Vision project we visited in Gaza was a shining beacon of hope to the community. Wherever we partner with the reconciling love of Jesus—who teaches that we have the power to respond in love to our enemies—there is hope.

How should Christians pray for peace in the Holy Land? Fervently. Pray for both Palestinians and Jews—maybe more importantly, for their governments. Hearts on both sides must be softened and memories must be cleansed of hatred, fear, and suspicion in order for peace to come to the region.

I will never forget the words of a Pales-

tinian man in his early 30s at the Aida refugee camp. As we stood on a rooftop overlooking Israeli gun placements in the valley below and settlements on the hills above, he said, "I know that God gave this land to the Jews. The Egyptians [pre-Exodus] were not good neighbors. But God put [the Jews] here because we would have been good neighbors." Those are words of peace!

—Bill Mugford, *High Point Church, Madison, Wis.*

EDITORS' NOTE: We realize that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a controversial topic for many of our readers who have strongly held beliefs about the destiny of the Holy Land. Many Christians do not agree on the political, historical, and religious issues at stake.

We invite you to share your views on peace in the Middle East with us. Please send e-mail to WVToday@worldvision.org; letters to *World Vision Today*, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716. ■

WHY WORLD VISION PROMOTES JUSTICE

BY SERGE DUSS

World Vision takes the biblical imperative to advocate for justice very seriously. We have no choice. The Old Testament is clear that God loves justice. From Moses to David to Isaiah, the giants of the Old Testament reflect this.

Jesus carried forward the prophets' justice theme in his ministry on earth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus refers to justice twice. In Matthew 5:6, he says, "Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right." In verse 10: "Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of doing right" (The Jerusalem Bible translation).

In the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, he described the will of his father for God's perfect kingdom on earth to be the same as God's kingdom in heaven. In heaven, there is no injustice. In the new earth about which Jesus often spoke, there also will be no injustice.

Those who say that we must wait rather than work for justice claim that Jesus did not right social wrongs or explicitly command his followers, then or now, to do

so. In fact, Jesus made a point of associating with people who were unclean, unloved, and discriminated against. He consistently upbraided the moral police of his day—the Pharisees—for their hypocrisy and false piety. He attacked his society for all its exclusions and religious legalism. And he did so in the context of embracing the *shalom* (right relationships) vision of the Old Testament.

World Vision is all about justice. If justice prevailed in the world there would be far less suffering, and humanitarian relief would not be necessary. Politically, justice is neither liberal nor conservative, neither Democrat nor Republican. Justice is doing what is right for people—rich or poor, black or white, Israeli or Palestinian, Serb or Kosovar—in the eyes of God. All people have common worth and dignity because they are creatures of the same God who loves them equally.

Seeking justice amid conflict often requires bringing people together—a main thrust of World Vision's peace-building work for more than a decade. In

Bosnia, World Vision has brought people from various ethnic groups together to rebuild homes, schools, and medical facilities. In Kosovo, our staff works with Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox religious leaders to help create trust and restore right relationships between people through aid and rehabilitation programs. In southern Sudan, World Vision's ministry contributed to public reconciliation between two warring tribes, the Dinka and Nuer. And in the West Bank and Gaza, World Vision perseveres to bring aid to the suffering and to build trust and understanding between Palestinian and Israeli.

World Vision promotes justice because God is just. The Old Testament prophet Micah perhaps put it best when he said: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Serge Duss is World Vision's director of public policy and government relations in Washington, D.C.



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What Will Be Your Life Story?

We have an extraordinary opportunity to participate in God's grand story.

AS A FORMER LITERATURE PROFESSOR, I AM deeply fascinated with stories. We find stories all around us, in books, movies, ads, and music videos—each with a little angle on the way things are.

Our lives are all unfolding stories, aren't they? Our new university admissions book is titled, "What will be your life story?" I like that question. Each life story is so intricately beautiful, so profoundly unique, shaped by many different things and many different people.

Our postmodern culture tells us that our stories are not connected to anything. Your story and mine are so separate that we merely bump into each other with no apparent pattern. There is no master-story, no meta-narrative, no big story holding us all together.

But let me tell you what my theology is here. The theologian Ellen Charry provides some helpful language. She says that God wants all of his children to flourish, and we are offered an extraordinary opportunity to participate in the grand story of that flourishing.

As I look around the world today, it is clear that not all of God's children are flourishing, not even here in the United States. This brings grief to the heart of God.

Let me draw on an old, old story: Moses and the burning bush. It begins with God's people groaning in confinement and barrenness. That's the way most Bible stories begin. God's children are not flourishing.



Philip Eaton is president of Seattle Pacific University, a Christian university committed to a vision of engaging the culture and changing the world.

We wait in suspense. What's going to happen? Will God come through? Will he remember his promises? Will he rescue his children?

We find Moses out on the fringes of civilization, tending his father-in-law's sheep. Remember that he grew up in the Egyptian courts of power, wealth, and influence. He was highly educated. What a deal for a young man of such promise—banished out there on the side of a

mountain, surely brooding on the mistakes of his past, bitter about this exile.

And then something startling happens. Something always does in Bible stories. An ordinary bush bursts into flame, right there on the mountain. I think of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who believes that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like the shining from shook foil." Moses runs to see this extraordinary bush. Thank God he was curious. Thank God he was alert, attentive, observant—a real lifelong learner.

God speaks to him out of that ordinary/extraordinary bush, and his story is forever rewritten. "Moses, I have a plan for you," God says. "Go rescue my children. Bring them light and hope. Bring them food. Bring them a vision for a 'land flowing with milk and honey.' Bring them a notion that things can be different. Bring them justice. Tell my people that I remember them."

Then Moses says something familiar to us all: "But, God, I am not gifted enough. I don't have enough faith in myself. I don't even really know who you are. I simply can't make the case for a culture of life when the world is screaming death, darkness, and chaos. It all seems too big."

God then makes an amazing promise: "I will go with you, Moses." But here's the catch: We will only know if this promise is true when we choose to step out and bring God's flourishing love to a hurting world. We have to do something with our gifts. Only then can God go with us.

This is our task, as people of the big story: Christians are called to engage the culture and change the world. Our job is to align ourselves with God's big story.

What will be your life story? As World Vision donors, you already recognize that God's children are not flourishing. As you step out to help, you align your stories with the really big story, so that all of God's children all over the world will know his flourishing love and grace. And remember: God will go with us as we take this step. This is a really big story indeed. ■

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Rich Stearns,
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