



# WorldVision

AUTUMN 2011

IN BOLIVIA

TOUCHING  
LIVES

REFLECTING  
CHRIST

# EARN THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

World Vision

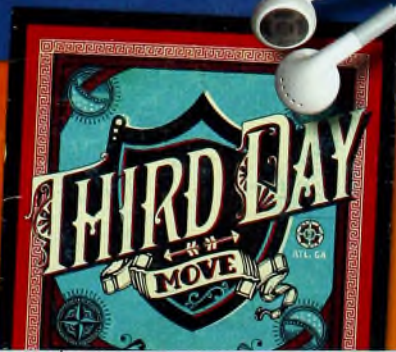
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President Richard E. Stearns  
Editorial Director Jane Sutton-Redner  
Managing Editor Diane J. McDougall  
Senior Editor James Addis  
Associate Editor Ryan Smith  
Photo Editor Jon Warren  
Photo Researcher Abby Metty  
Production Manager Karen Latta  
Design & Production Journey Group Inc.

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World Vision

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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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# A World at War

BY RICH STEARNS

Last Christmas, my daughter gave me “Band of Brothers,” the award-winning HBO series that follows the legendary 101st Airborne Division through its key battles in World War II. One of the most dramatic episodes depicts the Battle of the Bulge. Fought over the winter months of 1944 and 1945, this was Hitler’s last-ditch attempt to divide the Allied forces driving toward Germany and disrupt supply lines by capturing the port of Antwerp.

Antwerp was critical to supplying the Allies with fuel, ammunition, food, and everything needed to support troops at the front lines. Hitler knew that if he could break the supply lines, he could stop the Allied offensive in its tracks.

The German army had initial success, cutting off all seven highways leading to Bastogne by noon of Dec. 21. By nightfall, it had surrounded what were primarily American airborne and armored infantry forces. The outnumbered Americans lacked cold-weather gear, ammunition, food, medical supplies, and leadership. Their only chance of success depended on being resupplied by an airdrop behind enemy lines—which was delayed by unusually severe snow and fog.

Against all odds, the Americans managed to hold off the German tanks until the morning of Dec. 23, when the temperature plummeted, the sky dawned clear and bright with unlimited visibility, and the longed-for airdrop became possible. With fresh supplies, the Americans courageously held on against the German advances until, finally, General George Patton’s Third Army succeeded in punching through to Bastogne on the day after Christmas.

Hitler had bet the farm on this one last offensive and lost. The rest, as they say, is history.

Just as two kingdoms clashed in Europe during World War II, today there continues to be a clash of two spiritual kingdoms in our world. The kingdom of God is engaged in a mighty struggle



JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

*“Be strong in the Lord  
and in his mighty power.”*

—EPHESIANS 6:10

against the forces of darkness. In Ephesians, the apostle Paul advises us to “put on the full armor of God” in readiness for a struggle “not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:11-12).

Living in 21st-century America, we can easily lose perspective on this. It is not fashionable to talk about spiritual forces of evil. But if you don’t believe in these forces, I would like to invite you to come with me to see what I’ve seen—to places where children are bought and sold into sexual slavery; where soldiers gang rape and mutilate women for sport; where men spread terror by amputating limbs with machetes; and where the poor are

trapped in grinding and unrelenting poverty.

Don’t be fooled just because we live in comfortable homes and cities. The world is at war, and we are in the middle of the battle. You, as child sponsors and supporters, are feeding the critical supply lines for God’s kingdom ministries on the frontlines around the globe. World Vision, with 40,000 full-time staff in nearly 100 countries, would be out of business within 60 days if our donations stopped today. The same is true for just about every kingdom ministry you can name. No money, no ministry. No ministry, and the battle is lost.

Jesus said to his disciples, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Matthew 11:12). Friends, please continue to be forceful men and women. Much is at stake for the kingdom of God. ●



**KEEP UP AND ENGAGE WITH  
RICH STEARNS** at [www.facebook.com/  
RichardStearns.WVUS](http://www.facebook.com/RichardStearns.WVUS).

# FRONTLINES

*Compiled by James Addis*



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

*f*

## TORNADO TRAGEDY

**THE DEVASTATION MIGHT** resemble that seen in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, following one of the world's worst earthquakes, but the scene is actually Tuscaloosa, Ala., after scores of tornadoes and violent storms swept across the South and Midwest this past spring, killing more than 400 people. It was the largest outbreak of tornadoes in U.S. history and the worst natural disaster to strike the country since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Veronica May, 25, and her 6-year-old son, Isaiah (pictured), were among those

who lost their home and almost all their possessions. In the immediate aftermath of the storms, World Vision trucked in emergency supplies to Alabama, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Mississippi, Missouri, Minnesota, and Virginia—much of it from the organization's new domestic disaster headquarters in North Texas. The storms showed that when calamity strikes, nobody is invulnerable, and that a true "world vision" means taking care of those at home as well as those in distant lands. ●



AKILU KASSAYEWORLD VISION

## ETHIOPIA | QUEST FOR WATER

Failure of seasonal rains in the Oromia region in March prompted villagers to trek for miles to get water, risking attacks by baboons. The drought caused people to deepen traditional hand-dug wells, making them more dangerous and difficult to use. Villagers reported numerous cases of pregnant women miscarrying after attempting to bring water from these deep wells to the surface. World Vision began trucking water to severely affected villages to provide relief.



KHANG MIN HTOD/WORLD VISION

### MYANMAR | BADLY SHAKEN

A magnitude 6.8 earthquake in the highly populated state of Shan killed more than 70 people in March and severely damaged schools and homes. It also wrecked water-supply systems, leaving thousands without safe drinking water. World Vision installed water-purification equipment that delivered 1,800 gallons of clean water

a day to affected areas. The organization also provided emergency supplies such as clothes, blankets, and mosquito nets to more than 8,000 people.

### CAMBODIA | FIRE FIGHT

Thousands fled heavy artillery bombardments in Preah Vihear province in February as Thai and Cambodian forces exchanged fire over disputed

territory. Most Cambodian evacuees camped out in rice fields, temples, and schools in the Kulen district, where poor sanitary conditions led to high rates of diarrhea and fever among children. World Vision distributed emergency supplies to 10,000 displaced people, constructed 50 latrines, and established Child-Friendly Spaces for affected children.



### JAPAN | CONTINUING EDUCATION

World Vision supported government attempts to encourage children to return to school following the worst earthquake in the country's history. In April, the organization began distributing thousands of back-to-school kits for children whose education was disrupted by the March quake. World Vision's relief and recovery efforts in Japan will continue for two years and will include establishing community kitchens for the displaced.



KEI ITOH/WORLD VISION

JAPAN

### WORLD'S HUNGRIEST COUNTRIES

*Countries suffering exceptional food shortages or widespread lack of access to food.*

EXCEPTIONAL SHORTAGE

ZIMBABWE\*  
IRAQ

WIDESPREAD LACK OF ACCESS

NIGER\*  
SIERRA LEONE\*  
SOMALIA\*  
NORTH KOREA\*  
MONGOLIA\*  
ERITREA  
LIBERIA

\* Indicates where World Vision is working to improve food supply.  
SOURCE: FAO, MARCH 2011

the region are up to three times higher than the Russian Federation average.

### CHINA | MALARIA MENACE

A magnitude 5.8 quake struck Yunnan province in March, killing more than 25 people, destroying 18,000 homes, and forcing the evacuation of more than 120,000 people. World Vision responded with distributions of quilts, tents, and hygiene kits to the worst affected. As the wet season approached, the organization supplied 8,000 mosquito nets to counter the high malaria risk.

### ARMENIA | ESCAPING PROSTITUTION

Children living at Child Care Residential Institution 2 in Yerevan have new opportunities for vocational training following the introduction of classes supported by World Vision. Skills taught include tailoring, batik painting, hairdressing, and cookery. Traditionally, children leaving residential institutions have had few skills and limited job prospects. Many fall prey to traffickers and end up in prostitution.

### INDONESIA | RECOVERY PLAN

A World Vision economic recovery program launched in February will assist farmers whose livelihoods were lost following the eruption of Mount Merapi. The eruption killed livestock and buried crops with volcanic ash. The program will help re-establish snake fruit growing in the affected area (a crop produced by a native palm tree) and

assist farmers to diversify into banana, chili, cassava, and mushroom production.

### PHILIPPINES | MONSOON MAYHEM

Unprecedented monsoons in Mindanao province in February triggered massive floods that submerged homes, blocked roads, and washed away bridges. The loss of infrastructure and the continuous driving rain hampered World Vision relief distributions of food and powdered milk. Many living in isolated villages crossed hazardous swampland and flooded rivers to reach World Vision assistance.



### PROGRESS ON POVERTY

This U.N. Millennium Development Goal looks achievable: to reduce by half the number of people living in extreme poverty.

1990 >> 1.8 billion\*

2005 >> 1.4 billion

2015 >> 883 million  
(PROJECTED)

\* Number living on less than \$1.25 a day.

SOURCE: WORLD BANK, APRIL 2011 PRESS RELEASE



SPHON PETER ESAKU/WORLD VISION

EAST AFRICA

### EAST AFRICA | MILLIONS FOR WATER

World Vision launched a \$120 million water, sanitation, and hygiene initiative in April to improve child well-being and community livelihoods for 4 million people in

Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. Seven out of every 10 people in the areas targeted by the project currently do not have access to safe water. The initiative is part of World Vision's "Child Health Now" campaign to end preventable child deaths.

### RUSSIAN FEDERATION | NEWBORN CARE

A newly launched "Healthy Mothers for Healthy Children" project in Ingushetia and Dagestan will improve the training of maternal-healthcare providers and supply information on newborn care to more than 6,000 mothers. Maternal and infant mortality rates in



# AFRICAN HEARTBEAT

*A youngster's friendship with her sponsored child inspires a new book.*

When writer Barb Christing's 6-year-old daughter picked out a young boy, Bornface Magalasi, to sponsor at a church sponsorship drive, Barb was less than enthusiastic. She couldn't help thinking that photos of many of the other children on the sponsorship table looked more attractive.

But trying to change Katie's mind proved futile. "There was something about this child that really touched my daughter," Barb says, "and she refused to put the folder down. So Bornface came into our lives."

What happened subsequently so inspired Barb, of La Mirada, Calif., that she joined forces with illustrator Phillip Cisneros to produce a

children's picture book. *African Heartbeat*, published by World Vision, explains sponsorship from a child's perspective. The book is loosely based on Katie and Bornface's blossoming friendship, developed through their exchange of cards, letters, and photos.

Despite her young age, Katie gained an insight into the challenges of growing up in rural Malawi and how child sponsors can make things better. Thanks to sponsorship, Bornface's community has a new school, a new well, and a better diet through the use of improved farming techniques.

At the same time, Barb noted a deepening sense of compassion and generosity in her daughter. When the Christing family decided to buy Bornface a goat in addition to their regular sponsorship contribution, an overjoyed Katie danced around the house. "Children often wander around with this mirror in front of their face—all they see are their needs and their wants," Barb says. "Child sponsorship allowed my daughter to take that mirror down and see past herself."

Speak to Katie, and it becomes clear what she means: "Bornface taught me that no matter where you are in the world, you can still be loved by someone far away."

Barb hopes that the book will open children's eyes to the joy of giving and how they, too, can have a friend in a distant land. "Kids are looking for the opportunity to be taken seriously," she says. "They like to help. Our job is to empower them to do so." ●



See the video of Barb talking about her book at [wvmag.org/heartbeat](http://wvmag.org/heartbeat) or scan this QR code with your smartphone.

**TO ORDER** *African Heartbeat*, visit [www.worldvisionresources.com](http://www.worldvisionresources.com). Ideal for children ages 4 to 8 but will appeal to all.



## CHANGE AGENT

**NAME** Craig and Carol Powell

**HOME** Meadville, Pa.

**OCCUPATION** Credit analyst and office manager

**PROGRAM** Gift Planning

**THE BUZZ** As a former farmer, Craig Powell appreciates the value of water in an agrarian society and longs to make it available to those who need it. His wife, Carol, a former paralegal, loves the idea of feeding hungry children. For years, the couple has contributed to both goals by purchasing items from World Vision's Gift Catalog—providing funding for things like wells, chickens, and fish ponds. Impressed by what their donations have achieved, they want to continue their giving after their lifetime and have made World Vision a beneficiary of their will. ●

“For many years, I have been in estate administration as a paralegal. I am always amazed by what people can accomplish by making a charitable donation in their will.”

—CAROL POWELL



JIM HENDEN/GENESIS PHOTOS

**FOR INFORMATION ON** how to include World Vision in your will, call 800.426.5753 or email [giftplanning@worldvision.org](mailto:giftplanning@worldvision.org).

## BLESSED BIKE



JONATHAN D. WOODS/GENESIS PHOTOS

The Christ Bike is a labor of love, but the man who put the custom motorcycle together does not wish to be known. He calls himself “Doc Holliday” and is a retired doctor from upstate New York.

“Holliday” spent three years and \$60,000

building the bike, whose design and paintwork depict the life of Jesus. As the project neared completion, he decided he could not keep the bike for himself. Instead, he felt the Lord directing him that it should be used to advance the cause of the gospel in the biker community as well as the work of World Vision. Holliday was familiar with World Vision after doing medical work for underprivileged communities in Africa and Asia.

So Holliday contacted Joe Marchelewski (aka Pastor Ski) of the Rushing Wind Biker Church in Bohemia, N.Y. It was agreed that during 2011 the bike would be exhibited at shows around the country and raffled to raise money. It's hoped the project will raise at least \$250,000—with 50 percent of the proceeds going to World Vision and the rest going to a Rushing Wind church building project and Bikers for Christ.

While on display, the bike will serve another purpose—to make Christ known. Exhibitors of the bike will be able to explain its various features. In addition to the artwork, these include a headlight ensconced in barbed wire to denote the crown of thorns; a Roman spearhead, similar to one plunged in Jesus' side, on the chain cover; and 30 pieces of silver fused into the gas tank, which also carries the words of John 3:16 and John 14:6—“No man comes to the father except by me.”

Pastor Ski says Holliday does not want any glory for himself. “He just wants the bike out there doing God's work.” ●

**TO SEE MORE PHOTOS** and purchase a raffle ticket with the potential to win the bike, visit [wvmag.org/bike](http://wvmag.org/bike).

## VOLUNTEER AT WOMEN OF FAITH

World Vision urgently needs volunteers for upcoming Women of Faith conferences held in cities across the country. Could you help staff a child sponsorship table and encourage others to sponsor a child?

“My husband, Gene, and I really enjoyed our experience last night for World Vision. I understand our group collectively signed up 80 children. We loved helping people find the child they wanted to support. Those children are so precious.” —Brenda Fuller, Leesburg, Va.

» **VISIT** [www.worldvision.org/events](http://www.worldvision.org/events) or call 888.511.6417.

  
WOMEN OF FAITH

# RUNNING FOR RUBY

*Meeting a 14-year-old sex worker breaks the heart of a fellow teen.*



Stephanie White, 18, dons her running shoes to combat sexual slavery.



DAVID KAMERMAN/GENESIS PHOTOS (2)

**T**here is a song that laments that nobody is born in Matamoros—a troubled Mexican border town that comprises a rootless population from all over the country. Many end up there after being assured of safe passage into the United States, only to find that such assurances are worthless. Girls often resort to sex work to support themselves and their families.

In 2009, Stephanie White of Weymouth, Mass., then just 15 years old, visited the red-light district as part of a church mission trip. Among the many shocks was seeing girls even younger than herself selling their bodies. The shacks they operated from had windows where prospective clients could view what was going

on inside. "There were several people doing that," Stephanie says, "and it just broke my heart."

One girl, Ruby, approached Stephanie's male translator, assuming he was a likely client. He assured her that he was not but suggested they all sit down and have a soda. Stephanie recalls trying to tell Ruby, who was about 14 years old, about God's love, but it was hard going. "You could just see on her face," she says, "that there was no emotion, no hope, nothing left."

Ruby finally brightened when Stephanie gave her a Spanish New Testament. But shortly afterward, Stephanie and her translator felt compelled to make a hurried departure as Ruby's pimp approached. Stephanie's last sight was of Ruby arguing with the pimp

as he demanded Ruby give him the Bible.

Girls like Ruby see little of the money they earn. Pimps will pay them in groceries or demand exorbitant rental payments for the shacks they use. "Girls are unable to save up and get out of the system," Stephanie says.

Memories of Matamoros have haunted Stephanie, now 18, ever since. Determined to do something to help girls like Ruby, she decided to run 365 miles over the course of the summer to raise money for World Vision programs to help sexually exploited girls. Each mile represents one day in a year of suffering for an exploited girl. ●

**TO SUPPORT** Stephanie's fundraising effort, visit [wvmag.org/running](http://wvmag.org/running).

## THE STORY

Zondervan's book *The Story* reads like a novel and condenses the great events and characters of the Bible into 31 compelling and accessible chapters. Now World Vision presents "The Story" double album, featuring 18 new songs telling the biblical story from Adam

and Eve to the second coming of Christ. The album features almost two dozen Christian artists including Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Chris Tomlin, and Mark Hall (Casting Crowns). Money raised from sales of the album will support World Vision's "Child Health Now" campaign.

**TO ORDER**, visit [www.thestorycd.com](http://www.thestorycd.com).  
**TO LEARN MORE** about Child Health Now, visit [www.worldvision.org/childhealthnow](http://www.worldvision.org/childhealthnow).

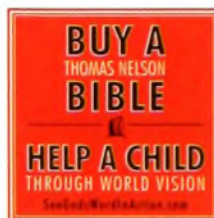
## WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR



HEI-CHUN JAUREGESS PHOTO

## BUY A BIBLE, HELP A CHILD

**Purchase a** Thomas Nelson Bible in a Christian retail store and help support World Vision's efforts to end poverty and preventable deaths among children around the world and in the United States. "Buy a Bible, Help a Child" is part of Thomas Nelson's "God's Word in Action" campaign—encouraging Christians to change the world by serving others. Money raised from Bible sales will be multiplied four times by matching grants and corporate donations with an overall goal to provide more than \$1 million to children in need.



**VISIT** [SeeGodsWordInAction.com](http://SeeGodsWordInAction.com) for more details.



### WHAT CAN I DO?

*Four ways to share the joy of child sponsorship.*



#### HOPE SUNDAY

Share with your church the difference that individuals can make by sponsoring a child.



#### CHILD AMBASSADOR

Receive training and support to inspire others to sponsor children. Travel to project locations and see first-hand how sponsorship changes lives.



#### GLOBAL DINNERS

Host a dinner party featuring a delicious meal from your sponsored child's country.



#### SPONSORSHIP DISPLAY PROGRAM

Set up displays about child sponsorship in high-visibility locations such as libraries, shopping malls, and community centers.

For more information and resources, visit [www.worldvision.org/sharesponsorship](http://www.worldvision.org/sharesponsorship).

### CYNTHIA CARROLL, ALTO, TEXAS

While attending a Women of Faith conference in October 2009, I felt that there was another reason to be there besides worship and fellowship. People from World Vision began to speak, explaining what a difference child sponsorship makes. I listened, not knowing if I could afford it, due to being on disability. I knew that I had the love, but monetarily I did not know. I stepped into the hall and began to pray. The Lord spoke to me: *Have I not always provided for you?* I returned to my seat, and there was a picture of a beautiful girl from Albania. I noticed her birthday: Feb. 14, the day of love. I began to cry and knew then that she was for me to sponsor. The Lord has seen to it that I have enough for my sponsorship and an extra monthly gift. And I have a friend who calls me "Grandma" from far away. ●

**TELL US YOUR STORY** Why do you love being a child sponsor? Write the editors at [wvmagazine@worldvision.org](mailto:wvmagazine@worldvision.org).

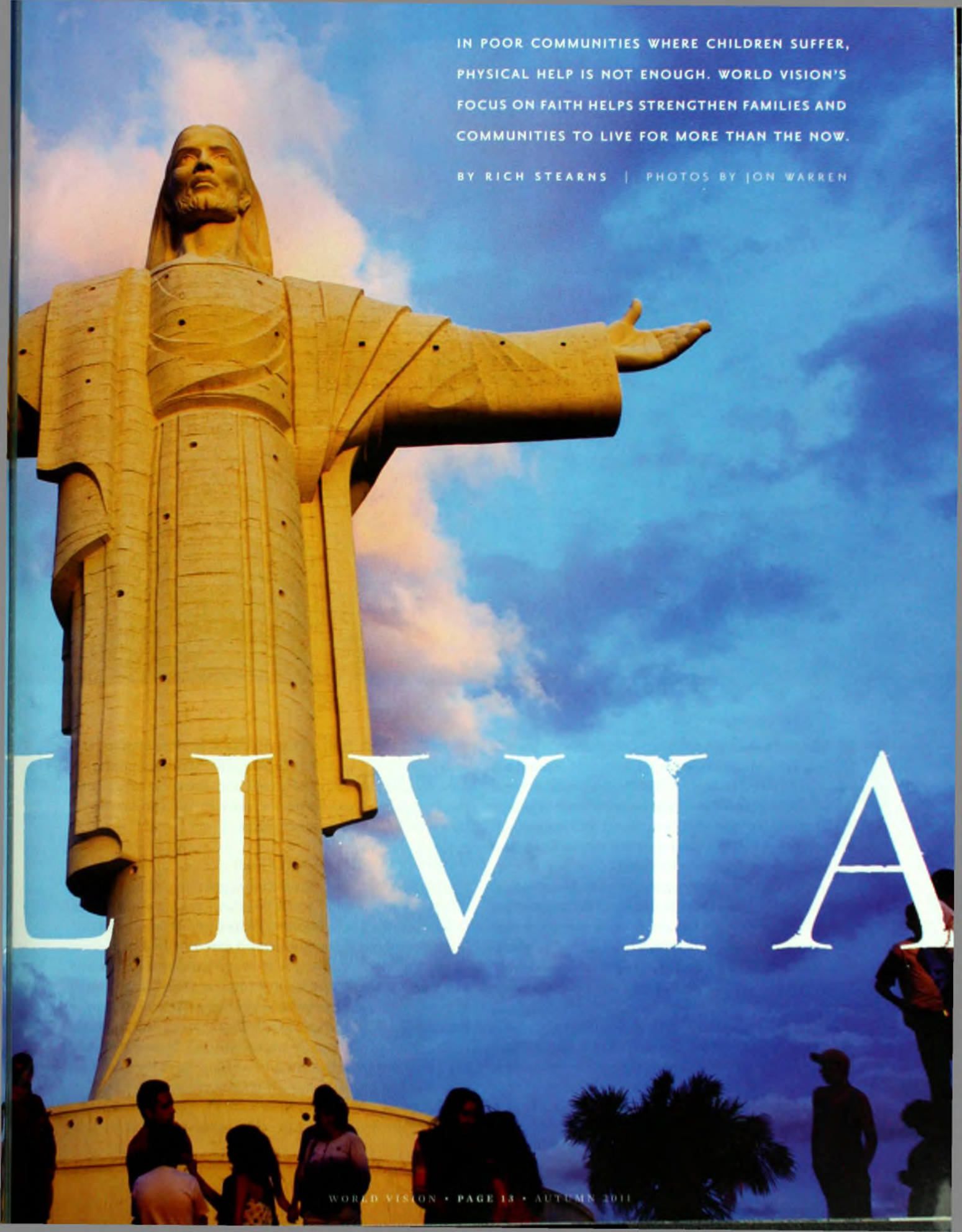


B E A R I N G W I T N E S S

—  
"Christ of Peace"  
looks out over the  
city of Cochabamba,  
where World Vision  
U.S. President Rich  
Stearns visited  
recently.

B O  
IN





IN POOR COMMUNITIES WHERE CHILDREN SUFFER,  
PHYSICAL HELP IS NOT ENOUGH. WORLD VISION'S  
FOCUS ON FAITH HELPS STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND  
COMMUNITIES TO LIVE FOR MORE THAN THE NOW.

BY RICH STEARNS | PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

# OLIVIA



**H**igh on a hill overlooking Cochabamba, Bolivia, stands *Cristo de la Concordia* (Christ of Peace), one of the largest statues of Jesus in the world. It's one of many signs of Christ's presence in Bolivia, where I traveled in January to visit World Vision's projects and meet children and families whose lives have been changed through child sponsorship.

Bolivia is a beautiful country, but like many places where World Vision ministers, it's a hard place to live. It's one of the poorest countries in Latin America, with an average annual income of \$1,000. In places like this, when families struggle and communities fail, children are the most vulnerable. About half of Bolivian children never finish primary school.

World Vision has operated in Bolivia for more than 30 years, starting with a pastors conference in Cochabamba in 1965. The chief purpose, recorded by World Vision founder Bob Pierce, was "to provide the opportunity for pastors to be together to warm their hands and hearts on the fire of Christian love."

Pastors returned to their congregations filled with

enthusiasm and zeal, and subsequent pastors conferences convened in 1970 and 1972. In 1975, child sponsorship started here; today more than 85,000 children are sponsored. From the beginning, World Vision's work in Bolivia has had a strong focus on spiritual nurturing.

#### **WORLD VISION'S HEARTBEAT**

I'm often asked how being a Christian organization makes a difference in the way World Vision works in communities. Our faith is the heartbeat of this ministry. "We are Christian" is the first of our six organizational core values.

Our identity in Christ guides every decision we make and every action we take. This commitment is clearly reflected in our founding documents and guiding principles. Consider our mission statement: "World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the kingdom of God."

We're not just here to provide humanitarian aid. We're



**FACING PAGE:** A group of Bolivian mothers learns about nutrition from World Vision staff. **BELOW:** This tranquil water-catchment pond is part of a World Vision irrigation project.



called to share the gospel.

As the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

We are all ambassadors. At World Vision, we take this seriously. We are to represent Christ in all circumstances, and our conduct both at work and at home should reflect Christ's character.

#### WATCHING LOVE AT WORK

I saw that clearly in Bolivia, where World Vision staff members regard their role as more than a job: It is their calling.



**Our identity in Christ guides every decision we make and every action we take.**

They follow Christ by serving their neighbors. Love and compassion flow out of them naturally because they feel loved by God themselves.

I saw wonderful examples of how our Christian faith finds expression in our work. In the community of Viloma, I met Johnny Ledezma, who came from a family of alcoholic parents and ended up on the streets as a young boy, fending for himself. As he grew, he developed a problem with alcohol but eventually married and started a family. As an alcoholic, Johnny couldn't hold a job, and he was abusive to his family.

His wife, Elizabeth Revollo, became a volunteer for World Vision's project in Viloma. When the project manager, Gerson Cárdenas—who was also an ordained minister—observed that many families in the community were suffering because of alcoholism and violence, he started a couples counseling program for about 18 families.

At Elizabeth's urging, Johnny attended the counseling with Gerson. "I talked to the pastor," Johnny said to me, "and told him, 'I am like this,' and he said, 'No, you have to be different. You have to change.'"



TOP: World Vision is working with neighbors to support these children, whose mother abandoned them and whose father is often absent. FACING PAGE: Recovering alcoholic Johnny Ledezma is now a model family man.



In time, Gerson helped him understand it is only through faith in Christ that we are able to overcome addictions. Through that counseling, Johnny deepened his faith commitment and changed his ways.

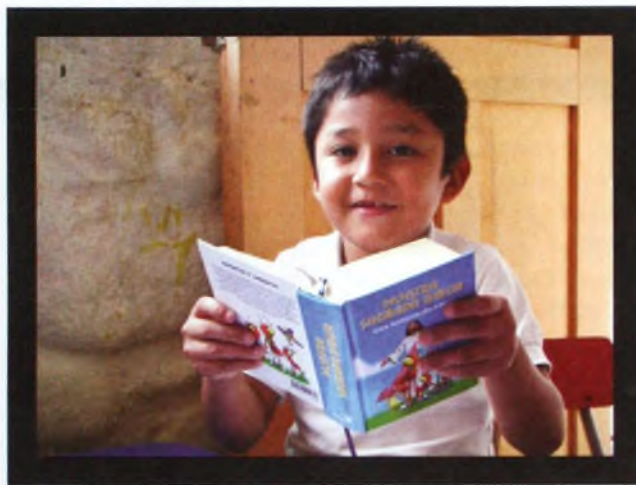
Johnny is a different man. He doesn't drink anymore. There's no more abuse in his home. He is working and supporting



**Children  
are being  
witnesses  
in their own**



World Vision



BALTAZAR VENTURA/WORLD VISION

## **SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH CHILDREN IN NEED**

In addition to caring for impoverished children's physical and material needs, World Vision aims to nourish their souls.

Sadly, thousands of churches in the developing world lack resources to minister to the spiritual hunger all around them. World Vision fills this need by:

- » producing Sunday school and children's Bible study materials,
- » supporting church leadership to witness to and disciple children, and
- » training and equipping churches to advocate for children and marginalized groups.

Over the next five years, World Vision hopes to minister to the spiritual needs of almost 500,000 children.

**Your gift today will support this life-transforming work.**





# GIVE ONLINE!

[www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond](http://www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond)



PLEASE REMOVE BEFORE MAILING

## YES!

I WANT TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS.

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In time, Gerson helped him understand it is only through faith in Christ that we are able to overcome addictions. Through that counseling, Johnny deepened his faith commitment and changed his ways.

Johnny is a different man. He doesn't drink anymore. There's no more abuse in his home. He is working and supporting



## Children are being witnesses in their own



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In time, Gerson helped him understand it is only through faith in Christ that we are able to overcome addictions. Through that counseling, Johnny deepened his faith commitment and changed his ways.

Johnny is a different man. He doesn't drink anymore. There's no more abuse in his home. He is working and supporting his family, and through a loan, he is ambitiously building a house. More importantly, he and Elizabeth are now examples to other couples in the community of what it means to be responsible, caring spouses and parents.

#### INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

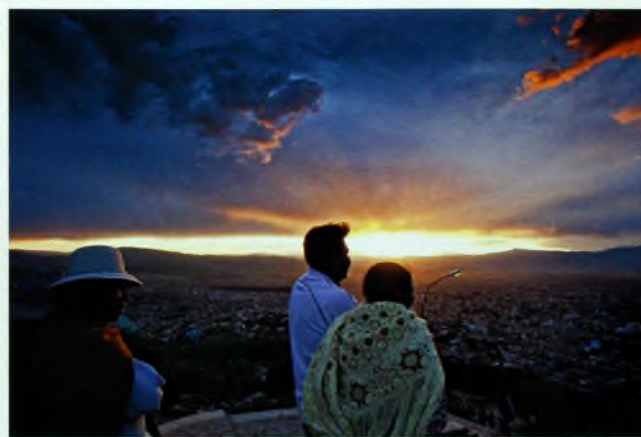
Faith is also integrated in World Vision's programs with children. In Tiraque, I enjoyed meeting a group of child leaders—active, bright, and engaged, full of amazing questions for me. Each boy or girl leads a group of 30 other children, who come to learn and talk about their rights and their faith. The child leaders have been mentored by a World Vision staff member and local pastor, Edwin Fernandez. He focuses on investing in young children—building their self-esteem, helping them

**Children  
are being  
witnesses  
in their own  
homes.**





LEFT: Magaly is a World Vision child leader, with plans to be president of Bolivia one day. FACING PAGE: Women community leaders get excited about health and nutrition.



believe they can stay in school and have a bright future.

The year before, all the children attended a youth camp in Colomi for games, character development, and leadership development. Those who wanted one received a New Testament and learned how their faith in Jesus Christ can be integrated into their daily activities, their families, and their communities. They said the experience changed their lives.

Back at home, they started asking their parents to pray before meals and at bedtime. Graciela Zenteno, 13, told me that her parents said, "It is good what you learned in this camp."

Now, the children say that their parents fight less and the fathers drink less. These children are being witnesses in their own homes.

When I asked where they see themselves in about 10 years, their eyes lit up. One girl wanted to be a doctor, and another wanted to be a nurse. A couple of the boys wanted to be soldiers and join the military. One 12-year-old girl named Magaly Villararroel looked me right in the eye and said, "I plan to be president of Bolivia." She pulled a copy of the Bolivian constitution out of her backpack (she carries

it with her everywhere), told me that she had read it, and vehemently stated that every child should read and own it.

Over the next few days, I saw Magaly at other local gatherings, including one with government officials who were celebrating a new water project. I delivered a speech, as did the mayor and other community leaders. After lunch, there was Magaly on the microphone, addressing the children. I turned to my colleague and said, "She's already started her campaign. I believe that this little girl might someday be the president of Bolivia."

#### THE BOTTOM LINE

It's inspiring to see children's potential unleashed in a community. These children are going to make something of themselves. That's what we hope for them. It's what Jesus wants for them. It's why he came—that they might have life in its fullness (John 10:10).

Child sponsorship is about so much more than just a meal on the table, clean water to drink, and getting a basic education, as important as those things are. It's also about what



kind of leaders the children will be when they grow up. To achieve their full potential, they need loving families and thriving communities where people care for each other, where there is integrity and honesty. Those values come out of faith and Scripture. It is World Vision's hope that all children can grow up in this kind of nurturing environment and, like the children in Tiraque, become leaders and bright lights for God.

Bolivia is predominantly a Christian country, so we can share the gospel openly there. World Vision also ministers in many countries where the dominant faith is Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. In those contexts, proclaiming the good news requires discernment. We are committed to witness through our lives, our actions, and our conversations, and by pointing to evidence of God's work in our world.

What we *don't* do is force a religious message onto people



## Child sponsorship is about more than just a meal on the table.

who don't want it. Spiritual issues are sensitive, and we must respect others' beliefs as much as their cultural differences. We don't manipulate, take advantage, or coerce. We don't say, "We'll help you if you'll listen to our message or read this Scripture tract." World Vision staff support the freedom for all people to choose their religious beliefs, and we respect parents' wishes in regard to the faith of their children.

The example we set in front of people and communities can speak volumes about our faith. It makes people wonder, *What's different about you?* The answer is the power of Christ in our lives. (See "Surprised with Goodness," page 21, for an example of this kind of witness.)

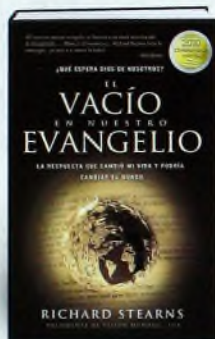
We first earn the right to speak into someone's life. Believe me, the World Vision staff I've seen working in Bolivia and all over the world have earned that right. They have shared the joys and the sorrows of the people they work with. They love their neighbors and they're demonstrating it every day. And that is a powerful witness.

When Jesus talks about evangelism, he says the fields are ripe for harvest (John 4:35). But long before a harvest,

workers have to clear the land. They have to cut down trees and pull out stumps and boulders. Then they have to plow the land, prepare it, and soften it for the seeds. Only then are the seeds planted. Very carefully, the seeds must next be cultivated. With good weather and good help from God, eventually there's a harvest.

In some of the places where World Vision works, there is a big harvest going on. But in other places, we still find stones, boulders, and stumps in the ground. In those places, I like to think that we're pulling stumps, and maybe we're planting some seeds. That's our part. God does the rest: "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow" (1 Corinthians 3:7). ●

### *El Vacío en Nuestro Evangelio (The Hole in Our Gospel)*

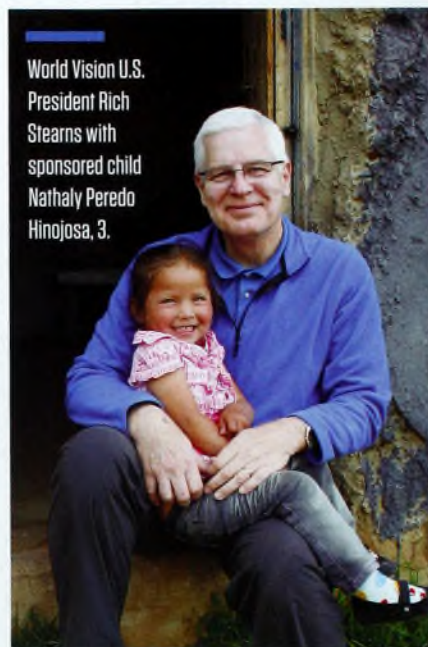


Richard Stearns' book, which won the 2010 Christian Book of the Year award, is available in Spanish. Around the globe, readers are being challenged by Rich's question, "What does God expect of us?" The answer is life-changing, and it's mobilizing people to help change the world.

**ORDER** *El Vacío en Nuestro Evangelio* or *The Hole in Our Gospel* at [www.worldvisionresources.com](http://www.worldvisionresources.com).



Scan this code or go to [wvmag.org](http://wvmag.org) to watch Rich Stearns share how World Vision cares for children and teens in Bolivia.







Regassa was selected as the "best model farmer" in his community.

## SURPRISED WITH GOODNESS

**G**od has called us to love our neighbors, even when those neighbors despise us. World Vision serves in many places where Christianity is not the majority religion and is not always welcome. In those places, we can be respectful and still be faithful, fruitful witnesses.

Regassa Boset was a farmer and a local government official in Ethiopia. He hated Christians and persecuted churchgoers. When World Vision was starting an irrigation project in his community, we needed his approval, as he had the responsibility of assigning land to businesses.

Because he hated Christians, he hated World Vision. So instead of giving us the land we requested, he gave us a piece of land in the cemetery, a terrible insult. But that wasn't enough. He started a smear campaign, going from farmer to farmer to speak against World Vision and the irrigation project.

Then Regassa's life took a tragic turn. He became sick and lost all of his assets. He hit rock bottom when his wife died. Poor, sick, and grieving, Regassa did not even have the water to wash his wife's body and prepare it for burial, an important tradition in his culture.

World Vision heard about his plight, so staff members went to Regassa and said, "We can help you." They uncapped a new well so he could bathe his wife's body and bury her. Then they helped him

~~~~~  
"If you see your enemy hungry, go buy him lunch; if he's thirsty, bring him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness, and God will look after you."

— PROVERBS 25:21  
(THE MESSAGE)

get back on his feet with his farming.

His heart began to soften as World Vision staff came alongside him. They invited him to a Christian conference, where he decided to follow Christ—in large part because of the people he had seen, the way they had loved him, and what he had learned about God through that period in his life.

I met Regassa in 2009 during a trip to Ethiopia. He had remarried, had two more children who became sponsored, and received benefits from World Vision's programs: a cistern and a treadle pump, along with agricultural help. He was growing fruit trees, raising cows for milk, and building a new house. He had recently been selected as "best model farmer" in his community and was once again a leader. And as a follower of Christ, he attended church each week.

It was the integration of Christian witness and love in World Vision's development work that first opened Regassa's heart. Then he was ready to receive the gospel, which resulted in his acceptance of Christ. Today, he is a man transformed. ●

—Rich Stearns

AN INVESTMENT TO LAST

# A LIFETIME

BY MARILEE PIERCE DUNKER

THE AUTHOR'S FATHER, WORLD VISION FOUNDER BOB PIERCE, SET THE EXAMPLE, AND EVER SINCE, WORLD VISION HAS INVESTED ITS WITNESS AND ITS RESOURCES INTO BUILDING CHRISTIAN LEADERS.



COURTESY MARILEE PIERCE DUNKER

“MY GRANDFATHER WAS A HEADHUNTER. But by God’s grace, today I am a heart-hunter.”

I was 10 years old the first time I heard Rochunga Pudaite make that statement, and I have never forgotten the vivid image it painted.

Rochunga grew up in a village deep in the jungles of Manipur, India. His tribe, the Hmar, was greatly feared because members took the heads of their enemies as trophies. But in 1910 a missionary named Watkin Roberts came to Rochunga’s village to share the gospel. Rochunga’s father, Changwa, was among the first to receive Christ; and when Rochunga was 10, he also gave his heart to Jesus.

Hungry for an education so he could learn more about the Bible and help his people, Ro (as his friends call him) began attending a mission school at age 11. It was a five-day journey from his village to the school, and he made the trip four times each year—alone.

Rochunga Pudaite and Bob Pierce.

## RO TRANSLATED THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO THE HMAR LANGUAGE AND FOUNDED THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF INDIA.

As a child I loved hearing my father tell the story of the little boy who trusted God to keep him safe from the man-eating tigers, bears, and snakes of the jungle.

His brave journey was featured in a 1960 issue of *World Vision* magazine and turned into a flannel-graph presentation for Sunday schools. So you can imagine my excitement when Ro visited us in Southern California for the first time. I fully expected him to walk through the door with a tiger by his side and a monkey on his shoulder.

Instead, Dad introduced us to a slender, gentle-spirited young man in his 20s, with eyes that sparkled and a smile that lit up the room. From that time on, Ro was part of our family, and my father and mother would often speak of him as their “spiritual son.” When my mother passed away last April, Ro and his wife, Mawii, came to California to be with the family and pay tribute to the woman we all called “Mama.”

God’s plan for Ro took him far beyond the jungles of his childhood. The boy who risked his life to gain an education and learn more about Jesus went on, with my father’s help, to earn a master’s degree from Wheaton College. While still in school, he translated the New Testament into the Hmar language and later founded the Evangelical Free Church of India, which now has more than 300 churches across northeast India.

Today, more than 80 percent of the Hmar are Christians, and thousands of children from remote villages like Ro’s have received an education because of the schools he and Mawii helped build. During the early years, many of those children were sponsored through World Vision.

### EN ROUTE TO INDIA

In February 2011, the Pudaites invited me to visit

their winter home in Seilmat, overlooking the hills and valleys of Manipur. My father had first traveled to Seilmat in 1957 to help Ro purchase land he would later use to build a hospital, Christian school, and Bible college. The tigers and head-hunters who used to roam the dense jungles are long gone, but I discovered that the heart-hunters are still there. And their numbers are growing.

At 84, Ro is as active as ever, serving as president of Bibles for the World, chairman of the board of Partnership Missions, and moderator of the Evangelical Free Church of India. While visiting him, I spoke to several groups, including the new graduates of Trinity College and Seminary (which Ro had founded)—all of whom had come to Christ and been educated through the Pudaites’ ministry.

“Pray for me, Auntie,” requested one young convert, her face aglow. “Pray that I lead my entire tribe to Jesus.”

I couldn’t help but think of how blessed my father would be to see the fruit of his vision and his many prayers.

### “TELL ME A STORY”

During my five-day visit, I also visited the new hospital that Partnership Missions was building in Seilmat and some of the churches EFCI had built.

In the evenings I became like a child again, sitting at Ro’s feet to listen to his amazing stories. “Begin at the beginning,” I urged on the first night. “How did you meet my dad?”

“It was 1951 and I was a [college] student in Calcutta,” Ro began, and I settled back to listen.

“One day my pastor, Dr. Walter Corlette from the William Carey Baptist Church, called. He said that a Youth for Christ speaker named Bob Pierce was coming to Calcutta on his way home from Korea, and he wanted me to help him gather a



group of university students.

"I went from campus to campus handing out fliers, and 150 students showed up to hear your father speak. Your dad showed a grainy, black-and-white film called 'Korea Vision.' I will never forget it. The film showed a man—thin, dirty, and dressed in rags—singing the old hymn, 'I must have Jesus ... I cannot bear my burdens alone.' The love of Christ shone on his face.

"After the movie, your father spoke about starving children and refugees living without shelter or food, and we all wept.

"Back then, I never cried," Ro added with a twinkle in his eye. "Then your father looked at us and said, 'You may not be able to give much, but you can give something to help these children. Don't let me leave here with nothing.'

"What was remarkable about your dad was that, even though we were just poor college students, he treated us like people who could make a difference. I had my scholarship money from the government in my pocket, and when they passed the plate, I gave it all!

"That was my first introduction to your father," Ro finished with a laugh.

After the meeting, Ro, my father, and Dr. Corlette went out to dinner, where they talked for hours about their visions for ministry. "At 23 my vision was simple," Ro remembered. "I wanted to go to seminary, translate the Bible into the Hmar language, and lead people to Jesus."

## A POWERFUL INVESTMENT

Recognizing God's anointing on the young college student, my dad began helping Ro with his tuition in India and later at Wheaton College. In 1952, when Ro experienced an attack of appendicitis, Dad gave him the money for a life-saving operation. And during the years Ro spent translating the Bible, World Vision helped support him and his new wife.

A community EFCI church in northeast India.

When my father returned to New Delhi, India, in 1953, he sent for Ro. At the time, Ro was attending the University of Allahabad. But when his friend and mentor called, Ro dropped everything and rushed to my father's hotel room to meet him.

"Ro, there is something I need you to do for me," my father said. "I am going to be here for 24 hours, and during that time I need you to arrange for me to meet with Prime Minister Nehru."

Ro's eyes grew big at the memory: "I couldn't believe my ears. He might as well have asked me to grow another head!

"I can't do that, Dr. Pierce," I said.

"Your father fixed me with a look I would become well acquainted with over the years and said, 'Never say you can't do something until you have tried!' Then he left to do a radio broadcast, adding as he walked out the door, 'I am praying you will have my appointment when I get back.'

"I dropped to my knees, crying out to God."

A few minutes later, a hotel bellman knocked on the door to ask if Ro needed anything. An idea popped into his head, and Ro asked for a telephone book.

"I looked up 'government offices' and saw a number for the 'principal private secretary to the prime minister,'" Ro recalled. "With shaking hands I dialed the number and, amazingly, someone answered. 'Hello,' I said. 'My name is Rochunga Pudaite and I am calling on behalf of Dr. Bob Pierce, a very important American. He would like an appointment to see the prime minister.'

"What does he want?" the voice asked.

"I'm not sure," I replied honestly. "I only know that he has just come from Korea, and he has very important business to discuss with Prime Minister Nehru."

## HOW BLESSED MY FATHER WOULD BE TO SEE THE FRUIT OF HIS VISION AND HIS MANY PRAYERS.

“‘Hold on,’ the voice said, sounding put out. I began to pray. A few minutes later the man came back on the line and said, ‘The prime minister will see him at 4 o’clock today, for five minutes only.’”

“Of course,” Ro finished with a smile, “the prime minister talked with your father for 35 minutes, and the next day there was a big picture in the newspaper showing Dr. Bob Pierce, president of World Vision, shaking hands with the prime minister of India.”

### A POWERFUL LEGACY

The significance of this story can only be truly appreciated from the advantage of hindsight. I am struck by the audacity of my father’s faith: He believed that what God had given him to share was important enough to demand an audience with the first prime minister of India. I am also deeply moved by the simple, childlike faith it took for Ro to make that call.

And I am astounded by the way God does the impossible when we obediently serve him. The newspaper picture of my father with Nehru gave World Vision immediate credibility and helped open the doors for the organization’s life-transforming work among India’s poor.

But the story doesn’t end there. In 1971, God gave Ro a vision to reach the world for Christ by sending Bibles to every name and address listed in the public telephone book. Since then, Bibles for the World has mailed more than 20 million Bibles to telephone users in over 100 countries. It makes me smile to think that the seed for this simple idea may have been planted almost 20 years earlier in a hotel room in Delhi.

“You know none of this would be here—the schools, the churches, Bibles for the World—if it

hadn’t been for your father and mother,” Ro commented as we walked together.

This made me think of the millions of young men and women like him whom World Vision is helping today—children with a hunger to know God and a desire to help their people. God has a plan for each and every one, and as sponsors and donors, we play a significant part in that plan. It is my prayer that everywhere World Vision works, children will hear the good news of the gospel, and that we will continue to inspire new generations of world-changers and heart-hunters. ●

*Marilee Dunker Pierce is a World Vision ambassador for children and author of four books, including Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce.*

**VISIT** [wvmag.org/rochunga](http://wvmag.org/rochunga) to learn more about Marilee Pierce Dunker’s journey to India and Rochunga’s history with World Vision.

Marilee with Rochunga and his wife, Mawii.



# A NETWORK OF PRAYER

Sponsors from across the United States share how they pray for the children they support.

SPONSOR

**MELISSA TURI** / Shorewood, Ill.

SPONSORED CHILDREN

**ANA and JOSÉ** / Guatemala

"I pray God keeps [Jose's] belly full and his bed warm at night and that he will live in a town with a school someday; for [Ana] I pray she keeps enjoying school and is blessed with food and shelter and that both sponsored children are loved every day."

SPONSOR

**JANICE KRUG** / North Plainfield, N.J.

SPONSORED CHILD

**SUMITRA** / Bangladesh

"I keep [Sumitra's] picture on the refrigerator as a constant reminder to pray for her. I pray that she learns to love the Lord and lean on him and know he loves her."

SPONSOR

**JOSHUA LEGAS** / Des Moines, Wash.

SPONSORED CHILD

**MOTENG** / South Africa

"I have an orange World Vision rubber bracelet ... that I wear 24/7. Whenever I glance at it or am aware of it, I say a prayer for [Moteng] and World Vision's work: I pray for safety, health, and courage as he grows up being the oldest man of the house to his mom and siblings. Most of all, I pray that he will continue to hear about God and strengthen his relationship with him."

## TELL US

How do you pray for your sponsored child? Share with us at [wvmag.org/pray](http://wvmag.org/pray).

SPONSOR

**KARLA FOSTER** / Jefferson City, Mo.

SPONSORED CHILD

**EDWIN** / Bolivia

"I pray for God to meet [Edwin's] physical needs and help him grow strong and healthy. I think my main prayer now is that as he prepares to be a young adult and leaves being a sponsored child, that he will continue to walk with God and be a man of God for his family."

SPONSOR

**JEANIE SMITH** / Sagle, Idaho

SPONSORED CHILD

**MICHEL** / Lebanon

"I pray that God will guide [Michel] as he enters adolescence, and that he and his family will be protected by God as they live in a conflict-prone area of the world."

SPONSOR

**JETTIE HATHAWAY** / Howell, Mich.

SPONSORED CHILDREN

**DIO** / Indonesia

**NASHKA** / Haiti

**BETENGWA** / Rwanda

"My 5-year-old daughter always sweetly prays that [Dio, Nashka, and Betengwa] would have 'food, water, and clothing ... and that they would come to know [God] more.'"



JAMES ADDIS/WORLD VISION

# DRUG BUSTER

A FORMER SPONSORED CHILD BECOMES AN UNDERCOVER COP.

BY JAMES ADDIS AND KANNIKAR THREEPALAVISEKUL

**R**elaxed, affable, and seldom in uniform these days, Noppadon Changreuen—a major in the Royal Thai Police—looks nothing like a stereotypical, hard-nosed policeman. Mention this, and he will laugh heartily and say it is just as well. As head of the drug squad at Samut Prakan police station in Bangkok, he often poses as an addict or pusher while trying to trap major drug dealers. It's a role he relishes. Noppadon, now 31, grew up in the Bonkai Flat area of Bangkok—at that time a slum notorious for gambling dens and drug addiction. As a result, he says, "I understand the problem. I know how to talk to these people. We speak the same language."

In other ways, his background would seem to have offered few advantages. His parents and two sisters lived in a single-room flat, and his family eked out a living by running a small grocery

store. Noppadon would spend long hours working at the store, often collapsing exhausted on the shop floor to sleep rather than heading home.

He also lived close to a military academy and was impressed by how a title and uniform conferred authority. He felt that, properly used, this authority could be a force for good. That awareness, plus his experience seeing the effects of drug use in his neighborhood, gave him a passion for drug policing.

Nevertheless, he feared that his dream might remain just that—a dream. To get into the police academy, he had to meet high academic standards, and Noppadon's parents constantly struggled to afford school fees.

Things got easier when Noppadon and his sisters were enrolled in a World Vision child-sponsorship program that paid their school fees and provided new shoes, new uniforms, and textbooks.



## "I WAS THE VERY FIRST PERSON IN MY COMMUNITY TO STUDY TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER."

Moreover, Noppadon learned that far away someone cared about him, even though the two had never met. "I remember that my sponsor was a foreigner," he says. "When I was young, he sent me Christmas and New Year cards as well as letters. I was so happy when I received my first letter."

Another highlight of being sponsored involved summer trips to seaside resorts. For many of Noppadon's friends, it was the first time they had seen the ocean. "They were shocked when they saw the



KANNIKAR THREEPALAVISEKUL/WORLD VISION

sea and didn't want to go in, they were so afraid," he laughs. "But by the second day they liked it very much. They did not want to return home."

On these trips, the evenings contained more fun and games, as well as education about drugs.

Sometimes, sponsored children were taken to drug-rehabilitation centers to learn the downsides of using drugs and meet some of the addicts. "Those people were so weak, you couldn't really talk to them," he remembers. "They were like crazy people. I told myself I would never get involved in taking drugs."

Today, the drug problem in Bonkhai is much diminished—a change that Noppadon believes has a lot to do with World Vision's influence.

With his school expenses taken care of, Noppadon concentrated on getting good grades. He was accepted into a select secondary school and later spent four years at the Royal Police Academy, where he graduated as a sub-lieutenant. "If I hadn't become a policeman, I don't know what I would have done," he says. "It was my only goal in life."

Upon graduation, Noppadon began work at Samut Prakan, where he handled everything from traffic offenses and lost children, to fighting and snakes in homes. "I'm afraid of snakes, too," he laughs, "but they called me anyway."

Later, he patrolled near the Cambodian border, combating illegal forestry, poaching, and human trafficking, before returning to Samut Prakan to concentrate on drug crime. "By combating drugs," he says, "I can solve a lot of problems for many people."

Noppadon loves his job and is deeply grateful to his sponsor for helping make his dream come true. "I was the very first person in my community to study to become a police officer," he says. "I was the talk of the town." ●

## ABOUT WORLD VISION

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

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

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

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

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

**TO SPONSOR A CHILD** see the envelope between pages 16 and 17 or go to [www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond](http://www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond).

# Healing Love

BY DR. RAY NORMAN

**W**hen the events of 9/11 echoed around the world, I was into my third year as national director of World Vision's program in Mauritania—a poor and isolated Islamic republic. Naturally, I was shocked at the events.

After 12 years of working in Islamic countries, my family and I knew that most Muslims are everyday people who share hopes and dreams, fears and disappointments—just like everyone else. We had grown to love them deeply. Government officials and neighbors, some of them in tears, offered personal condolences for the acts of 9/11.

Since the beginning of World Vision's work in Mauritania, our staff has prayed for wisdom on how to be an effective witness of a loving God. Our prayers were answered in ways I would not have chosen.

A few weeks after 9/11, a man approached my stationary car on a lonely stretch of road. After ascertaining that my daughter and I were Americans, he opened fire with a handgun. I was shot through the arm; my 10-year-old daughter took a bullet in the chest. Miraculously, the bullet slipped around her rib cage and exited near her armpit, leaving her seriously hurt but alive.

After weeks of recovery in Europe, we made the difficult decision to return to Mauritania. There were many who felt it too unsafe to continue the World Vision program, but others beseeched us not to abandon it. After days of uncertainty, I requested a meeting with one of the leading imams in the country—someone I had never met—and explained to him my quandary. He was an elderly, reflective man.

After a long pause he said, “Mr. Norman, when World Vision comes into our poor communities, their professionalism is commendable, but there is something I don't think you understand.”



COURTESY PAUL BORTHWICK

*“I will praise you, O Lord,  
among the nations;  
I will sing of you among  
the peoples. For great is  
your love, higher than the  
heavens; your faithfulness  
reaches to the skies.”*

— PSALM 108:3-4

At this point, I was sure he was going to say, “Nevertheless, a Christian organization working among devout Muslims is simply not compatible.”

But what he actually said was, “We Muslims give alms and help the poor because we are instructed to do so; but with World Vision, you work with the poor because you love the poor. Stay in this country and teach our people how to love their poor.”

In that moment, I saw that God had answered our cry—we were being effective vessels of his love. Minutes after the meeting, I was convinced: World Vision's program in the country would continue.

Meanwhile, our assailant was caught. My wife, daughter, and I were open about our forgiving him and our desire that no bitterness be harbored against him. Later, we expressed this to him directly during a visit to the prison. The story made the national papers.

After my conversation with the imam, I traveled around the country, assuring people of World Vision's commitment to continue walking with them. I was astounded by their comments and questions: *We've known that you are a Christian organization although we*

*don't know much about Christians. But now we see your willingness to stay with us when not only we are suffering and at risk, but you are as well. Moreover, how can a 10-year-old forgive a man who tried to take her life? Where does this power to forgive come from?*

I began to see how God, in his infinite wisdom, had taken personal tragedy and used it in direct answer to our prayers. Doors of opportunity began to open as we sought ways to appropriately answer these questions and tell the story of the One who is the source of our hope. ●

**Dr. Ray Norman** served as World Vision's national director for Mauritania from 1999 until 2002. He is currently dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Health at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa.

# RETROSPECT



VICHHEA SOK/WORLD VISION

## CAMBODIA

THE VILLAGERS OF THLOK VEAN commune find several uses for the large leaves found on the *kloung* tree. They are handy for wrapping food and making roofs for village huts. Here, Nat Chhim finds another use—shading his sleepy daughter Sophy from the fierce sun as he makes a trek to the local lake to hunt for snails and eels to eat. In the past it's been tough for Nat and his wife, Chab, to always provide the care their children need. Their first daughter struggles with multiple health problems following a difficult birth. At the time, Nat and Chab had little knowledge about health and hygiene. Today, they are much better informed because Chab began attending a village health support group organized by World Vision. Now their children's health is one of the couple's top priorities. It means Sophy has a much better chance of growing up healthy and strong—and is much less likely to get sunburned. ●

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