

# WorldVision

WINTER 2013

## God WITH US

**CHRIST'S LOVE  
REACHES OUT TO  
OUR WEARY WORLD**



**11** INSPIRING GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

**19** PRAY THROUGH PHOTOS



# Delight your sponsored child with a Special Gift

Help meet extra needs in your child's life.



1 Go to [myworldvision.org](http://myworldvision.org) to send your Special Gift

2 Local staff work with the family to decide what's needed most

## how it works



4 "Thank you" letter and photo are sent to you



3 Gifts are purchased locally and delivered



When you send a Special Gift\*, your financial donation provides both immediate and long-term benefits for your child, their family, and even the community.

[myworldvision.org/specialgifts](http://myworldvision.org/specialgifts)

\*Gift minimum is \$100. Brazil, China, Senegal, and Thailand are not participating countries. If you prefer, you can always send your child a small package anytime with inexpensive items that fit into a 6"x9" flat envelope.

## WORLD VISION

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We welcome your comments or address changes. Contact us at: *World Vision* magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716. Email us: [wvmagazine@worldvision.org](mailto:wvmagazine@worldvision.org). To request to be taken off our mailing list, email us or call toll-free 877.596.0290.

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young and old stand  
on the threshold of  
good news.



JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

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One starry night,  
something extraordinary  
happened.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARTINA PELUCCI

Angels appeared to the shepherds, declaring the good news.



**LIKE WHAT YOU'RE READING? LOOK FOR THIS ICON FOR MORE GREAT CONTENT ONLINE.**



# A Glimpse of God's Kingdom

BY RICH STEARNS

**E**arlier this year, I was in Honduras with a group of World Vision supporters to see how, after 18 years, World Vision has helped a community transform from poverty to fullness of life.

Hoping to view this transformation through the experience of a man named Francisco Rodriguez, our group asked him questions about his farming techniques and vegetable business. We didn't get the answer we expected.

You see, Francisco received agricultural training from World Vision at a local church, and it changed his life. He no longer needed to travel for days to find work as a laborer. Francisco could spend time raising his children, providing for their education, and farming his own land.

Francisco's agricultural training enabled him to turn his life around economically, but there was much more to the story. He had been an abusive husband and father, as well as a drunk. For him, agricultural training was the catalyst for many other changes.

He also joined a Bible study and entered marriage classes, which gave Francisco a new hope and strength. After a while, he was mentoring other fathers and husbands in the community. It turned out that farming techniques only helped Francisco because his life was being transformed from the inside out.

This is why World Vision's work as a Christian organization is so important. What Francisco experienced was the Great Commandment and the Great Commission all rolled into one. Before Jesus' death and then before his ascension, he gave two basic instructions.

First, we are called to love God with all our hearts and love our neighbors as ourselves. But this call to a renewed heart is not the end. We are also called out of ourselves to "go and make disciples of all nations." This is the kingdom of God—loving our neighbors, demonstrating the good news, and inviting others to join God's great mission in the world.

This gospel doesn't have a hole in it. Too often, Christians have emphasized evangelism through word to the exclusion of deeds. On the other hand, some Christian social organizations



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

Francisco Rodriguez traded addiction for a joyful, Christ-centered life.

are motivated by their faith to action but may neglect the importance of words in sharing the good news.

Instead, the gospel is most potent when people see it in action and hear it proclaimed.

During our visit to Honduras, I got to see just how powerful it is when we share God's love for our neighbors in both word and deed. The transformation we saw in Francisco had spread throughout the community. It was a glimpse of the kingdom of God in all its fullness.

Once poor, despairing, and without hope, the community now bustles with life and optimism. Crop yields and incomes are increasing. Women meet in groups to weigh their babies, assess family nutrition, and help new mothers learn to raise healthy children.

Financial groups are providing loans, which help families to boost their incomes and assets. Children as well as adults are learning to lead change in their communities. Local churches are equipped to serve, and God's love has infiltrated this community.

When Jesus told his followers to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth, he asked us to show the world a different way to live. He asked us to reach out to people who have been broken, exploited, forgotten, and ignored. When we demonstrate his great love to restore, redeem, and renew the brokenness in our world, it is the most powerful invitation to the fullness of life God offers to us all. ●

*"How beautiful ... are the feet of those who bring good news ..."*

—ISAIAH 52:7



**FOR MORE FROM RICH** and information about his latest books, visit [www.richstearns.org](http://www.richstearns.org).



# FRONTLINES

World Vision®



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

DON'T LET THEM DRINK DIRTY

# WATER

Every day, 2,000 children die because their families don't have access to clean water and basic sanitation systems.

Clean water is a community's first essential step to reducing sickness and ultimately eliminating poverty.

When combined with grant funds, **your gift will triple in impact** to help World Vision drill wells, develop water storage systems, and treat contaminated water in some of the world's poorest regions.



## ON WATER

eat trips to the local health center to treat waterborne diseases also will cease.

For Every Child is providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene to 7.5 million children and their families in 12 countries, contributing significantly to World Vision's role as the world's largest provider of clean water in rural communities.

Soon, this Wonchi pond will no longer reflect the faces of those who now come to its edge to collect contaminated water.

See the form attached here to help provide clean water and better health for rural communities. ●



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BY RII

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*"How beautiful those who b*

—Is

**GIVE ONLINE!**

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



PLEASE REMOVE BEFORE MAILING

**YES!**

**MULTIPLY MY GIFT 3x TO PROVIDE CLEAN WATER TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POVERTY.**

- I'm giving:
  - \$50 to provide \$150 in impact
  - \$100 to provide \$300 in impact
  - \$150 to provide \$450 in impact
  - OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to sponsor a child for \$35/month.
  - GENDER:  GIRL  BOY
  - LIVING IN:  AFRICA  LATIN AMERICA  ASIA  MIDDLE EAST/EASTERN EUROPE
- I want my one-time donation to go where it's needed most.
  - AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check payable to World Vision |  Change my gift to my debit card/credit card

VISA |  MASTERCARD |  AMERICAN EXPRESS |  DISCOVER

USE MY CARD NUMBER ON FILE

CARD NUMBER

CARD EXPIRES

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE

EMAIL

TO RECEIVE PERIODIC UPDATES ABOUT THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT

**SOURCE 2022S05**



# FRONTLINES



KELLEY LYNCH/WORLD VISION



## REFLECTIONS ON WATER

**For now, this dirty pond** is the only water source for a community in Wonchi, Ethiopia. Villagers come here to bathe, collect drinking water, wash clothes, and provide water for their animals. But in a few years, the pond will serve another purpose—a reminder of how life used to be in Wonchi before the clean water system was built through World Vision's Campaign For Every Child.

When a thirsty community gains convenient access to clean water, everything changes: health improves, crops flourish, hygiene skyrockets, and more. Mothers in Wonchi will no longer walk for an hour each way to provide water for their families;

repeat trips to the local health center to treat waterborne diseases also will cease.

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**See the form attached here to help provide clean water and better health for rural communities.** ●



## WHEN HOME ISN'T SAFE

War, political violence, and the illegal drug trade have forced more than 44 million people worldwide to flee their homes. This includes 28.8 million who are internally displaced people (IDPs). IDPs move within their nation's borders and are therefore ineligible to receive aid from the United Nations refugee agency. Refugees—those who have fled to neighboring countries—account for 15.4 million of these homeless people.

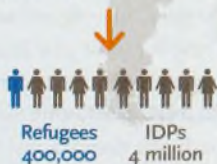
(SOURCE U.N.)



COLOMBIA

**4.4 MILLION**

affected by conflict, political violence, illegal drug trade, including:



SYRIA  
**6 MILLION**

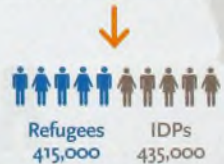
affected by conflict, including:



MYANMAR

**845,000**

affected by conflict, political violence, including:



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**3.6 MILLION**

affected by conflict, including:



**Digital Digest:** Each month, dig deeper into an issue that impacts children around the world—like education, child empowerment, health, and hunger—with news stories, features, prayer points, photos, and video. To receive our monthly best-of-the-best roundup in your inbox, sign up at [wvmag.org/digest](http://wvmag.org/digest).



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

**World Vision Kenya** earned the Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding contributions toward the Millennium Development Goals, which is the United Nations' roadmap for eradicating extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. World Vision was recognized for efforts to fight hunger, provide education, promote healthcare, and enable access to clean water.

**World Vision Sierra Leone** garnered the eHealth award from the African Development Bank for an innovative approach to delivering health services with mobile technology, most notably supporting and strengthening maternal, neonatal, and child health services.

## HIV | CHILD RATES CUT IN HALF

Seven sub-Saharan African countries have cut their HIV-infection rate among children by half or more since 2009, thanks largely to improved education, counseling, and access to antiretroviral drugs for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. World Vision focuses on reducing mother-to-child transmission, which accounts for more than 90 percent of HIV infections among children in Ghana,

South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, and Ethiopia—five of the seven countries that halved their child-HIV rates in the past four years.

## DRC | CHILD MINERS

A new World Vision report, "Child Miners Speak," sheds light on the dangerous working conditions of children who mine above ground for copper and cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) southern Katanga province. The heavy work of collecting raw material and extracting metals—many used to make electronics like cell phones—can permanently damage a child's development. Nineteen percent of children interviewed for the report have seen another child die while mining. World Vision is working to support families and find alternatives to child mining in the DRC.

## RWANDA | CLINTONS VISIT WORLD VISION PROJECT

Former President Bill Clinton and his daughter, Chelsea, visited Kigali, Rwanda, to learn about World Vision's partnership with Procter & Gamble that is bringing safe drinking water to more people. P&G

## IN MEMORIAM

**On July 4**, two World Vision staff members in Sudan were killed when fighting erupted among armed groups near the World Vision compound in South Darfur. We thank God for the lives and work of Ali Ibrahim, 33, and Sabil Mansour, 49. Ali, who became a father in April 2013, worked as a food distributor for five years in camps for internally displaced people. Sabil, a father of nine, was World Vision Sudan's vehicle maintenance and transportation coordinator since 2007. Join us in praying for Ali's and Sabil's families, colleagues, and those they faithfully served. ●



DOUGOU KANGU/WORLD VISION

developed water purification packets that transform water from dirty and dangerous to safe and drinkable within 30 minutes. "It's one of the simplest things we can do to save lives," Bill Clinton said. As part of its Campaign For Every Child, World Vision plans to provide 90 percent access to safe water by 2016 in the areas of Rwanda where World Vision works. At the Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting on Sept. 24, the Clintons launched Flash Flood for Good, a 72-hour campaign to raise money to provide water purification packets to World Vision communities. ●



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

## FAST FACTS

*Child poverty in the U.S.*

23%

of U.S. children live in poverty (family of four living on less than \$23,000 per year)

10%

of U.S. children live in extreme poverty (families with incomes less than 50 percent of federal poverty level)

SOURCE: ANNIS E. CASEY FOUNDATION'S 2013 STATE COUNT DATA BOOK



# LIVESTOCK ROCK



READ MORE ABOUT THIS STORY  
AT [WVMAG.ORG/WINTER2013](http://WVMAG.ORG/WINTER2013).

*A family's financial distress inspires a festival for charity.*



ABBY STALSBRÖTEN/WORLD VISION (INSET), ANDREA PEER/WORLD VISION

**O**ne cold Sunday morning, Jill Hass sat in church and sobbed. Her husband, Alex, was up front playing in the worship band. Her two children were in Sunday school.

From the outside, they looked like a typical, middle-class, Minnesotan family. But, says Jill, “We were in a very dark tunnel.”

In the wake of the 2007 financial crisis, Alex had to close their family-owned mortgage company. “We had nothing left,” he says. “Sometimes we had no food.” Their power was shut off. Their dream home was in foreclosure.

Help came unsolicited. People dropped off groceries, paid electrical bills, and even paid their mortgage. “It made us feel like we wanted to give back,” says Jill. “But we had nothing to give.”

That Sunday morning at church, in the midst of her tears, “I felt like the Lord was speaking to me,” Jill says. “We need to give back. We need to have bands play in our

backyard and raise money to help people.”

Earlier that winter, Jill was thumbing through the mail hoping not to find another bill. Instead, her eyes stopped on a World Vision Gift Catalog.

Her desperate situation had given her a new compassion for parents in need. “If we feel like this in America, when we have the world at our hands,” she says, “what about parents who have to watch their kids eat nothing and die?”

Two months later, Livestock—a playful nod to Woodstock—was launched in their backyard, with two bands, potluck food, and nearly 100 friends and family. The event raised \$4,000 to provide animals for families in need through the Gift Catalog. Jill knew they were onto something.

Five years later, Livestock is one of the biggest events in St. Peter, their town of 11,000. The central park is filled with music, food trucks, merchandise tents, bouncy castles, and a petting zoo.

This year, Livestock raised more than \$30,000. Jill also traveled to Sierra Leone to see how her town's generosity is changing lives.

“What we are doing is working,” says Jill. “Animals are a gift that can continue to give. They are life-sustaining. Livestock animals can offer so many things: wool for clothing, milk to drink, eggs, or like a bull or oxen for working in the fields.”

As for Jill and her family, finances are still tight. But Jill runs her own daycare and Alex has a job in the Twin Cities.

“I’m not anybody special,” Jill says. “All it takes is a passion to make a difference in the world, really. It is simply just saying yes to something way bigger than ourselves.” ●

—Andrea Peer

**GIVE** a life-changing gift through World Vision's Gift Catalog. See the insert between pages 16 and 17.



COURTESY FRANCES BAILEY



## WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

FRANCES BAILEY | NEW YORK CITY

A few years ago, I decided to take my dream trip to Africa, including a visit to my sponsored child in Kenya. I chose Utikas to sponsor because he was born the same day as my oldest nephew, and I wanted to encourage my nephew to learn about kids in other circumstances. My nephew saved money so I could buy Utikas some treats.

Once in Kenya, I visited Utikas at school. It was so humbling. How do you share how much you've prayed for someone over five years? I also visited his house and met his mother. I presented Utikas with the treats, but what he loved most was my nephew's letter.

This was one of my life's greatest moments, watching Utikas connect the dots that a family across the world was praying and rooting for him, including a young man his exact age.

One of my most treasured blessings in life is my family's total support. We all need cheerleaders in life, and I want my sponsored child to know that he has a cheerleader, too—someone to yell encouragements from the sidelines and offer a hand in times of trouble. ●

### TELL US YOUR STORY.

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

## CHANGE AGENT



COURTESY KNOBLOCH FAMILY

*"We are so amazed to look back at the hand of God in all of this. There are no limits to what God can do!"*

**NAME** Knobloch Family **HOME** Normal, Ill. **PROGRAM** Gift Catalog

**THE BUZZ** As Christmas approached last year, Matt and Summer Knobloch wanted to teach their children—Charlotte, Clive, and Cora—the true spirit of Christmas. Even though family finances were tight, they started a "servant's jar." When Matt or Summer "caught" the children serving someone, they put loose change in the jar. The couple planned, on Christmas Eve, to match whatever the children earned, and the family agreed to spend the funds on items in the World Vision Gift Catalog. When Dec. 24 arrived, the change and match totaled \$26, but they couldn't decide on a gift. A few days later, Charlotte, then 6, decided she would make and sell bookmarks for 25 cents each to financially help the family. Touched, Summer suggested Charlotte instead put the money toward their still-undecided World Vision gift for a family in need. Through a boost from Summer's Facebook friends, Charlotte's sales brought the combined fundraising to \$200. But God still wasn't done. In the last week of sales, a local business owner matched this new amount—bringing the total to \$400. Summer says, "We are so amazed to look back at the hand of God in all of this. There are no limits to what God can do!" ●

## SHARING SPONSORSHIP

Now child sponsors can help change the lives of even more children around the world, by simply telling their stories. Share about your sponsorship experience with others on [myworldvision.org](http://myworldvision.org), where you can create your personal sponsorship page—and invite others to join you.

To get started, just follow these three easy steps:



1. Create and personalize your webpage.



2. Share your page with friends and family.



3. Watch as friends sponsor children on your webpage—and lives are changed.

*"My webpage was so fast to set up, and now I have a simple way to spread the word about something that really makes a difference."*

— LEAH PARSONS, World Vision sponsor | Olathe, Kan.

**SIGN IN** at [myworldvision.org/share](http://myworldvision.org/share) to learn more, create your page, and share with friends.



In their new Bible storybook, Reneé and Rich Stearns feature stories of children they met all over the world.

**What message did you and Rich seek to communicate through those stories?**

Our goal is to illustrate not only how much God loves and cares for all of his creation, but also how he might use even the simplest acts of kindness and compassion toward others to change the world.

**Why is it important to teach children about the realities of people living in need around the world?**

As we live in an increasingly interconnected global community, we can help our children become aware that the world is filled with people who may seem very different from us but are really quite similar. We all are loved by God and in need of a Savior. And God has invited even the youngest among us to help make the world a better place to live by embracing God's call to love the world as Jesus does.

**What is your advice for parents about praying with their children for these concerns?**

Some of the circumstances in which people live are too much for small children to handle. But there are ways to gently help children relate to those in need. For example, when you give your son or daughter a glass of water, pray together for the 768 million people who, at least for today, don't have the clean water we so easily take for granted. Or when you take your child to the pediatrician, point out that there are children around the world who are sick, and again take a moment to pray for them. Rely on your child's natural empathy to draw them into conversation with God about those in need. ●

**GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU**, published by Thomas Nelson, is available now in bookstores and online retailers. Find out more at [www.richstearns.org](http://www.richstearns.org). See artwork from *God's Love For You* on pages 12-13.

JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION



# BIBLE INSIGHTS FOR CHILDREN

*God's Love For You, written by Rich and Reneé Stearns, is a Bible storybook with a big worldview. Reneé explains why.*

**There are a lot of children's Bible storybooks out there. What is unique about *God's Love for You*?**

**RENEÉ:** Scripture is the expansive story of God's love for all humankind, yet we often read the Bible as if it only applies to us—American Christians. By pairing familiar Bible stories with the stories of people living in a variety of places and circumstances around the world today, *God's Love For You* reminds readers just how broad and deep God's love is for all of us.

**How did your experience of reading the Bible to your five children influence you as you wrote the modern-day stories?**

As parents, we took seriously the responsibility to raise our children to love God, his Word, and the people he created. Reading Bible stories with our children each day, we longed to bring alive those biblical principles through real-life examples. When Rich began working at World Vision, we were introduced to a whole world of real-life examples. So we decided to share these stories with parents to help their children see God's big world.



VISIT

[www.richstearns.org](http://www.richstearns.org)  
to learn more about all  
three books.

## CHRIST-CENTERED BOOKS THAT CHALLENGE

Few gifts are more valued than those that offer refreshing, timeless truth. These new books from World Vision U.S. President Rich Stearns and his wife, Renee, are filled with faith-growing wisdom and compelling stories that inspire action—just in time for Christmas giving.



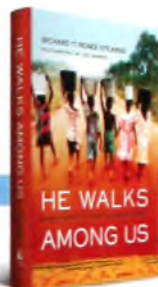
### *Unfinished: Believing Is Only the Beginning*

Rich's second book encourages readers to discover their unique roles in God's kingdom. *Unfinished* invites Christians to recapture the urgency of God's specific mission in their lives and discover the meaning, purpose, and significance we long for. A separate six-session DVD study guide equips small groups and Bible study participants to dig deeper into God's call on their lives.



### *God's Love For You: Sharing His Heart With Children Around the World*

In this beautifully illustrated children's storybook, Rich and Renee couple familiar Bible accounts with stories of children in developing countries, showing how God's love reaches every corner of our world. Children ages 4 to 9 will learn how to share God's love with their communities and the world through these inspirational narratives.



### *He Walks Among Us: Encounters With Christ in a Broken World*

In this 90-day devotional, Rich and Renee help readers to understand why God sees the poor as blessed and gives U.S. believers a global perspective on Christian faith. Dynamic storytelling and photos invite readers to encounter God's transforming power in the lives of Christ-followers who may have very little material wealth but are blessed with spiritual riches. ●



As a Family Christian Ministry, 100 percent of earnings from iDisciple will be donated to support Christian ministries around the world.

## DIGITAL TOOL FOR THE DAILY WALK

There are countless resources for Christian discipleship out there—books, magazines, websites, apps, and audio and video clips. Wouldn't it be great if they were easily accessible all in one place?

Now they are. **iDisciple**, a Family Christian Ministry, delivers biblical and practical content from Christian thought leaders—including World Vision—to mobile devices. Users can access free basic features or subscribe for \$4.99 a month to receive devotionals, Bible studies, sermons, and more, customized to their interests and seasons of life. Subscribers can also access premium content and give to their favorite causes.

Look for World Vision's free channel on iDisciple, delivering daily photos, stories, and prayer content about Christians caring for their neighbors around the world. ●

**SIGN UP** today at [www.iDiscipleApp.com/WV](http://www.iDiscipleApp.com/WV) and start receiving daily resources to help guide your walk with God. iDisciple is available on iPhone, iPad, Android devices, and the web.









TIDINGS  
— of —  
*Great Joy*

MORE THAN 2,000 YEARS AGO, GOD CHOSE HUMBLE SHEPHERDS TO BE THE FIRST TO GREET THE NEWBORN CHRIST. TODAY, IN THE PLACES WHERE WORLD VISION WORKS, GOD STILL CALLS AND EQUIPS THOSE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS LOVE AND BUILD HIS KINGDOM.

BY MARILEE PIERCE DUNKER  
ILLUSTRATION BY MARTINA PELUSO

*And there were shepherds living  
out in the fields nearby, keeping watch  
over their flocks at night.*

—Luke 2:8



---

*Tu*

2003, I visited a remote area of Kenya where World Vision had worked for nearly 20 years. Celebrating all God had done in that time, a group of local pastors invited me for a special “barbeque” under the stars. Meat roasted on a spit, and its juices dripped into the roaring flames, setting off sparks that shot up into the night sky like swarms of brilliant fireflies.

I put my head back to watch their ascent and caught my breath, dazzled by the endless canopy of stars overhead. Millions of stars twinkled with a brilliance I’d never seen in the murky skies over my Southern California home.

Whenever I read the story of the first Christmas in Luke 2, I picture that night. Like our Maasai hosts, the shepherds who kept watch over their sheep at night were nomadic people of the land. Their days were measured by the rhythm of God’s creation. Their lives were hard but predictable, each day much like the one before. Then one night, something extraordinary happened.

*“An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ ” —LUKE 2:9-12*

The world changed that silent, starry night. For thousands of years Israel had been awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Now he was here and, incredibly, of all the people on the planet, God chose to announce this astounding news to a group of humble, illiterate shepherds.

These men were among the poorest of the poor. But their humble station did not disqualify them from participating in a miracle. In fact, the Word says that they were the first to seek out the Christ child—and the first to share the good news with others. Luke 2:18 tells us that “all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.”

Wherever World Vision works, we see God using humble servants like these to declare his glory in the darkness and participate in the works of his kingdom. And as was true of the shepherds’ extraordinary tale, their stories never fail to amaze and astound.





After years of discrimination due to their disabilities, members of this women's group in India are thriving with their growing poultry farm.

ANNILA HARBIS/WORLD VISION

## THE GOD WHO SEES US

**U**NLIKE THE NIGHT OUR SAVIOR WAS BORN, there was no celebration when Minakshy Roul came into the world. She was born with only partial vision, and in rural India it is broadly assumed that physical and mental impairments are the

result of past sins or generational curses. The result of this fatalistic view is that a disabled child is often considered a burden and of little use to either the family or the community.

"I grew up feeling inferior to others. The children called me 'the girl with one eye.' And while my parents loved me, I was sure it was out of pity. After all, I was handicapped," Minakshy recalls.

"Minakshy used to cry and ask why her siblings were normal and she was not," says Dharendra Roul, Minakshy's father. "We were very concerned about her future. Who would marry her? We were certain that she wouldn't be able

to take care of herself."

Angry at the world, her parents, and God, Minakshy dropped out of school before completing 10th grade. Feeling lonely and without hope, she became increasingly depressed. It was during this time that God sent a messenger of hope into her life.

Pratima Tandi, a prayerful and spirited World Vision community development coordinator, saw something special in the young woman and went out of her way to encourage her.

"When I first interacted with Minakshy, she had very low self-esteem. It took many visits for her to realize that she was special and that God loved her just the way she was. I told her that everything happens for a reason and that while others did not see her potential, God saw her for who she truly was and had a purpose for her life."

Eventually Minakshy introduced Pratima to people with



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different kinds of disabilities, like 45-year-old Anjita Das, who has no fingers or toes, and Atushi Biswal, a young woman with autism. Pratima learned that neighbors told Atushi's mother that her daughter was insane and strongly suggested that she kill the little girl to be free from the burden. But Anjana Biswal loved her daughter and refused. Life has been a struggle ever since.

Pratima and Minakhsy began praying for God to show them ways to assist disabled women like Anjita and Atushi and help them develop their God-given talents. As a result, the Maa Batamangala Self-help Group for women with mental and physical challenges was established.

"People thought that we were crazy and questioned the efficiency and sustainability of the group. But we knew the purpose God had given us and kept his vision in mind," Pratima says.

Because the women didn't have any income, World Vision invested \$400 in a poultry farm and trained the nine-member support group to raise chickens and manage their finances. Pratima constantly encouraged the group, instilling a "never-accept-defeat" attitude in the team.

They succeeded beyond all expectations. As a result, a local agricultural officer sanctioned a \$7,400 loan, and now group members are hoping to make their poultry farm a renowned enterprise with hundreds of chickens.

"So what if I don't have fingers and toes on my hands and feet? I can still do things," declares Anjita proudly. "From 40 chicks we will increase to 200, then 300. No one can stop us now."

Atushi's mother, Anjana Biswal, has seen a similar transformation in her daughter's life. "Once my autistic child was confined to her home. But now she mixes with the group, laughing and dancing, and the very neighbors who advised me to kill her now say that she is *lakshmi*—a source of income into our home. It is only God's grace that brought her to this group and his provision gives us hope."

The Bible tells the story of a man who was born blind. The disciples ask Jesus who sinned, the man or his parents? Jesus answers, "Neither. ... This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Minakhsy Roul was born partially blind, but today she works tirelessly on behalf of neighbors with special needs, petitioning the government for everything from wheelchairs to disability pensions and helping others to see themselves as God sees them—as people of value and purpose.

Looking at all she has achieved, her father says, "When I die, Minakhsy will not face the problems I thought she would. She is self-sufficient, and her future is bright. This is solely possible because of God's love. This is the bigger plan of God!"

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*People thought that we were crazy and questioned the efficiency and sustainability of the group. But we knew the purpose God had given us and kept his vision in mind.*

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—Pratima Tandi

WORLD VISION COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

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## THE GOD WHO GIVES PURPOSE



**OVER THE YEARS**, I have met many people like Minakhsy, and they have taught me that the most powerful messengers of hope are often those who once were the most hopeless.

As a trained World Vision AIDS caregiver in the Keembe area of Zambia, Susan Mweetwa has brought hope and comfort to hundreds of people suffering from HIV and AIDS. Her unique ability to understand their pain stems from the fact that Susan is HIV-positive and knows what it means to be without hope.

When she was 17, Susan was raped by a man she barely knew. When her father discovered she was pregnant, he insisted that she quit school and marry the man. Two years later, her husband died, and Susan took her young son to live