



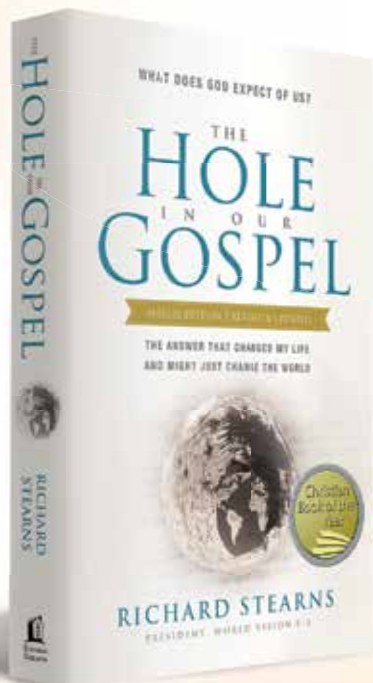
World Vision

WINTER 2014

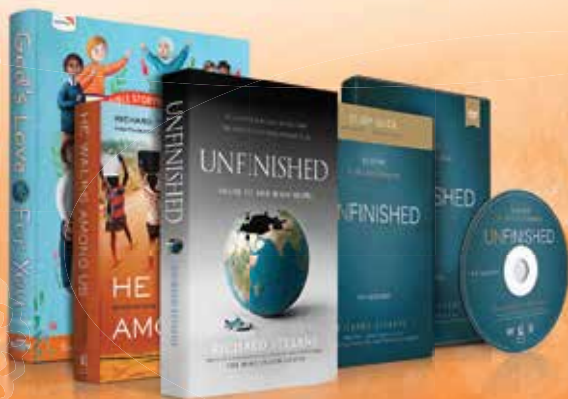
bright
SMILES
big
DREAMS

God calls a U.S.
church to go deep
in Mozambique

Just in time for Christmas!



This re-release of Rich Stearns' award-winning best-seller includes a free small group study guide, plus updated stories, links to inspirational videos, and a full-color appendix showing global needs—and what the church can do to share a full life with children in need.



Explore other books and resources by Rich Stearns—two co-authored with his wife, René!

Order now at richstearns.org/books

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LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

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Serving with Passion

BY RICH STEARNS

When you follow your God-given passion, there's no telling the adventure you'll have.

Back in the early days of our marriage, Reneé and I were attending Park Street Church in Boston. I was working at Gillette selling razors and shaving cream. At the time, I couldn't have dreamed of leading an organization like World Vision in the second half of my career. But Park Street Church's focus on global missions kindled a fire in my heart for what God is doing around the world.

Park Street Church gave more than half of its budget to missions, and we often had missionaries visiting. We heard the stories of health clinics in Africa, orphanages in Eastern Europe, and agriculture training in Asia. I was inspired by stories of people who had never heard of Jesus Christ becoming Christians after a church helped them. As a young couple, we committed early on in our marriage to generous financial and prayer support for God's work around the world.

I might have known that when God places a passion in your heart, extraordinary things can happen. At Park Street, we met Pastor Emeritus Harold Ockenga, who spent a lifetime following his passion for engaging a changing world for the gospel. He was a leader along with people like Billy Graham and Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder who sought to help the church reach out beyond its walls. In his efforts, Harold helped found the magazine *Christianity Today*, Fuller and Gordon-Conwell theological seminaries, and the National Association of Evangelicals. Not a bad legacy and proof that God can do amazing things when we pursue the passion he gives us.

God did the same for me. Our heart for missions would eventually lead Reneé and me to World Vision. Here we discovered thousands of others serving out their own God-given passion. On one of my earliest trips, I met Virginia in the mountains of Peru. As a nurse, she chose to give up the well-paid positions in the city



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Rich visits World Vision's street youth outreach in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where dedicated staff sacrifice to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others...”

—1 PETER 4:10

to live a Spartan existence high in the mountains. She hiked from village to village, providing medical care to children and families in poverty.

“This is my service,” she told me. “This is not a job. It is my sacrifice, my life that I give to Christ.” Virginia has been a powerful example to me. Giving her life to Christ in this way, Virginia was saving the lives of children with every new village she visited. Over the years, I met other Christians at World Vision who are passionate about clean water, community development, or Christian witness in countries where other religions are dominant.

Each of us can discover that God-given passion within. When I was

writing my last book, *Unfinished*, this quote, attributed to the novelist George Eliot, was often in my thoughts: “It's never too late to be what you might have been.” I believe that God has given each of us a unique passion—a special ability and a specific place to serve his great mission in the world. It is never too late to discover that passion. It is the very thing God created us to do. (Starting on page 12, see how others have used their God-given passions to achieve their dreams.)

God has given you and me a calling, and when we pursue it passionately, truly amazing things happen. I am blessed when I think of all the people who have decided to follow Jesus or received clean water or enjoy a community filled with God's abundant life because of your support of World Vision's work. And I'm astounded that God called me—just as he has called you—to play a role in his mission in our world. ●

FOR MORE FROM RICH visit richstearns.org.

FRONTLINES



MATIC ZORMAN

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Often considered a footnote to the Christmas story, the Holy Family's time as refugees in Egypt serves as a reminder of the world's millions forced to flee today.

More than 2,000 years after Christ's birth, Syrians continue to escape the conflict that has engulfed their country for almost four years.

This Syrian refugee girl gathers water amid the tents housing Syrian families in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.

Because Lebanon has no official refugee camps, Syrians live in informal settlements—some dangerously close to the Syrian border. World Vision is providing clean, accessible water to refugees in this community.

The refugees in Bekaa Valley are struggling to survive, and they don't know when they'll be able to return home. This Christmas, take a few minutes to read Matt. 2:13-21 and pray for Syrian refugees living in hardship. ●

DID YOU KNOW? World Vision hires experts from within each country to serve in community project areas. Because these local leaders know the language, culture, and challenges, they are best suited to guide and equip community members as they learn to improve their lives.

WORLD VISION'S 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

Here's a sample of accomplishments in the past year, thanks to World Vision's child sponsors and other partners.

UNITED STATES

World Vision boosted academic achievement and life skills for 282,000 U.S. students by supporting 1,100 schools, 22,000 teachers, and 46 community partners.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Before the rains even stopped, World Vision began distributing relief supplies in May to residents affected by Bosnia and Herzegovina's worst flooding in more than a century. After the waters subsided, efforts turned to recovery and rebuilding.

JORDAN

World Vision staff in Jordan completed water systems, sanitation facilities, and hygiene interventions in sections of Azraq, the country's newest refugee camp, estimated to eventually house 130,000 Syrian refugees.

AZERBAIJAN

World Vision staff was honored with the No Child Left Behind award, recognizing their work with vulnerable children. The prize was awarded by the NGO Alliance on Child Rights, UNICEF, and the European Union.

PHILIPPINES

In the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, World Vision reached more than 737,000 survivors in urgent need of emergency and recovery support. World Vision's response covered three cities, four provinces, and nine municipalities.

BRAZIL

Leading up to one of sports' biggest spectacles, 200 youth from 13 countries convened in Brazil in June for the World Vision Cup tournament to engage in friendly competition and speak out against violence.

MALI

In January, World Vision water teams drilled borehole well number 1,000 in Yaran, Mali, capping off a decade of bringing water to the nation's many parched communities.

GHANA

World Vision and Procter & Gamble Co. celebrated the 1 billionth liter of clean water delivered through their partnership to families in need.

RWANDA

Two decades after genocide ripped the country apart, World Vision celebrated 20 years of peacebuilding and reconciliation work in Rwanda.

SRI LANKA

VisionFund, World Vision's microfinance institution, reached its millionth client: Seetha "Annakili" Lechchami, a 48-year-old tea harvester, borrowed \$150 to purchase goats to breed and sell.



IN THE KNOW ON THE GO

Get the very best of World Vision at your fingertips with **World Vision Now**, our free iPhone app. With photo highlights, daily devotionals, videos, prayer guides, features, and humanitarian news, everything you want is just a tap away. You can even connect with your sponsored child through My World Vision.

Download now from the Apple app store by searching “World Vision Now.”

IRAQ | CRISIS GROWS

Violence has displaced more than 1.45 million people in Iraq. Among them are Christians, Yazidis, and other minorities targeted for persecution. World Vision’s team has set up

MEG SATTLER / WORLD VISION



IRAQ

operations in Dohuk, where children and families are in need of crucial aid and child protection. As of October, 350 families—2,000 people—benefited from World Vision-funded aid.

GHANA | PRODUCTIVE WELLS

A new study from the University of North Carolina Water Institute shows World Vision’s wells in Ghana maintain functionality with age—proof of long-term impact in communities. The study found that World Vision’s model of equipping local residents to maintain and repair the community’s wells results in high performance

over decades. Read more about World Vision’s water work in the Spring 2015 issue of *World Vision* magazine.

SOUTH SUDAN | FOOD CRISIS

Conflict that erupted in December 2013 has pushed the country to the brink of a serious food crisis. About 1.4 million people—half of them children—have fled their homes, abandoning crops and livestock. Meanwhile, markets were destroyed, trade disrupted, and food aid supplies looted. A third of the South Sudanese population, an estimated 4 million people, currently need food aid. World Vision has assisted nearly 380,000 affected people.

U.S. | REVVED UP

World Vision is teaming up with Furniture Row Racing and No. 78 Chevrolet driver Martin Truex Jr., to spread the word about children in poverty. The new partnership debuted in the Quaker State 400 at Kentucky Speedway in June. Find upcoming races and events at worldvision.org/racing.



JON WARREN / WORLD VISION

7 HUNGRY PLACES

A quarter of the world’s children fail to grow because of malnutrition. Chronic undernutrition leads to stunting—and affected children will never regain the growth they missed. The seven hungriest countries around the world, with the highest proportion of stunting include:

Afghanistan

Burundi

India

Timor-Leste

Malawi

Zambia

Guatemala



LEARN MORE AT
WVMAG.ORG/HUNGER.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS



FIND WORLD VISION'S GIFT CATALOG CURRICULUM ONLINE AT WORLDVISION.ORG/CHURCHGC.

The goal was a cow, but they gave a stable instead.



COURTESY LARISSA JAY

The youngest members in a small church in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, learned an important lesson about not limiting God.

With a weekly attendance of about 150, Grace Christian Church members wanted to make an impact on God's work around the world. After hosting a World Vision sponsorship event in 2005, several attendees chose to sponsor a child—including Larissa Jay, a volunteer in the children's ministry.

Last Christmas, Larissa and Children's Ministries Director Bonnie Deroski were searching for a fresh children's curriculum; they turned to World Vision's Gift Catalog Curriculum for the 2nd- to 5th-grade Sunday school class. "We liked how it pointed to the gospel," says Larissa.

The curriculum pairs a Bible verse and lesson with a story about a child in need.

Videos, activities, and discussion questions make each story come alive. During Advent's four Sundays, Larissa says, the children's hearts and minds were opened to the needs of others around the world.

Soon they were excited to raise \$650, enough to buy a dairy cow through the World Vision Gift Catalog.

"At Grace, we always talk about giving cheerfully, from your heart," says Larissa. "And each week the children brought in their offering."

As enthusiastically as the kids gave, Larissa and Bonnie were concerned the children couldn't reach the goal. "We didn't want to put God in a box, but we didn't want the kids to be disappointed," Larissa says. So the class chose a donkey—\$322—as a back-up plan.

Meanwhile, the children were practicing for their Christmas Eve skit. After the

curtain call, they took an offering to boost what was already raised.

Not only had the 25 children reached the dairy cow goal, but there was enough for a sheep and a goat, too. "It was a wonderful opportunity for us to talk with them about how God will often exceed our expectations," says Larissa.

The experience was a faith builder at Grace. "We shared in front of the congregation that we thought it would be just a donkey," Larissa says. Seeing God move in such a big way through the church's children "lit up something in the hearts of the people in our congregation.

"Sometimes," she adds, "children think there's not much they can do, but they can. Clearly, God can do a lot through them. God showed us more than what we thought was possible." ●

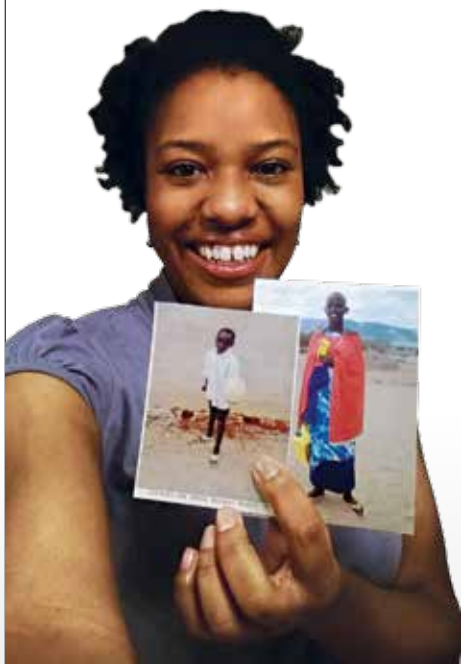
—Elizabeth Hendley

FRESH INSPIRATION

World Vision is pleased to partner with Joel Osteen and Women of Faith to inspire and encourage audiences nationwide.

Joel Osteen's "Night of Hope" features worship music, prayer, testimony, and an inspirational message from Joel. **For locations and dates visit joelosteen.com/pages/nightofhope.aspx.**

Women of Faith's 2014 nationwide tour is on the road through early December with a day-and-a-half event that takes women on a journey from survival to revival. In 2015, Women of Faith also will host "Unwrap the Bible." **For locations and dates visit wvmag.org/womenoffaith.**



WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

**HEATHER NICKELL
VISALIA, CALIF.**

COURTESY NICKELL FAMILY



My husband, Isaac, and I have been privileged to sponsor children through World Vision for more than 10 years, but getting our own kids involved has made it even more meaningful.

In the past few years we've added three children to our World Vision family, each one of them sharing a birthday with one of our own children. First we added Joel from Uganda and Ivan from the Dominican Republic, paired with my sons Evan, 9, and Micah, 8. Most recently, Daniela from Romania joined us in 2013 on the birthday she shares with our daughter, Natalie, 6.

We call these three kids our birthday buddies. Our children are pen pals with them, and they love learning about the various countries and cultures in which our sponsored children live. I feel like this has helped open their eyes to the reality of poverty around the world and made it more personal to them.

I love being a child sponsor and showing our kids how giving to others is part of what God has called our family to do to share his love with the world. ●

TELL US YOUR STORY.

Why do you love being a child sponsor? Tell us at wvmag.org/5ostates.



CELEBRATE YOUR SPONSORED CHILD AND SHARE YOUR STORY



Hundreds of sponsors showed their passion for sponsoring a child by sending us a "selfie" of themselves and their sponsored children through social media. Thank you to all our sponsors who partner with us to help build a better world for children. Watch a video with all the selfies we received at wvmag.org/selfies.

You've shared your photo—now, share your story!



We're working on a special online project that will feature sponsors in all 50 states—and we need your help. Submit your story about why you love being a child sponsor at wvmag.org/5ostates. ●



“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.”

—LUKE 12:48

The Wytttenbach family (left) created an eight-mile water walk event to raise funds to bring clean water to 20,000 people.

The experiential walk educates as well as raises money for clean water.

“Things like 5K’s or fun runs are certainly quality events, but we had a vision of something bigger that wasn’t maybe fun. But everything of value in life isn’t always fun,” Craig says.

To understand what it takes for millions of people to access water in the developing world, participants carry empty 1- to 5-gallon containers two miles to a stream, fill them with water, and walk back—twice. “You can never fully understand what someone else goes through, but if you can come close, there’d be a bigger impact,” Craig says.

Family, friends, and community members rallied around them. Last April 12, 74 people walked eight miles carrying jugs that, when full, weighed up to 70 pounds.

The feedback was favorable.

Some participants said the experience made them feel incredibly wealthy and that they needed to do more to help. Others were surprised how hard it was and how sore they felt. Beyond the emotional impact and awareness raised, some 200 people donated more than \$33,000 to drill two wells in Uganda—providing clean water to 739 people living in poverty. But Craig and Mara aren’t done yet.

The couple now hopes to help 20,000 people in need—the population of Middleton—by raising more money through their World Vision fundraising website and by organizing more walking events. Craig and Mara also hope others around the country will replicate the event in their own communities.

“With our three children under the age of 5 who are the most vulnerable age bracket, we can’t imagine not being able to provide basic necessities for our children,” Craig says. “It feels like a requirement God put on our heart to do everything we can to help.” ●

—Kristy J. O’Hara



COURTESY WYTTTENBACH FAMILY (2)

MORE THAN A FUN RUN

Wisconsin walkers experience the trials of accessing clean water.

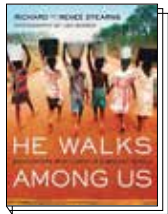
In the summer of 2013, Craig Wytttenbach began to sense a new calling.

He and his wife, Mara, saw a World Vision video about a woman in Kenya who walked eight miles every day to get dirty water for her family. (See video at wvmag.org/8miles.) As he watched, the words of Luke 12:48 rang in Craig’s head: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded” Soon the couple, already the sponsors of 10 children, started brainstorming what else they could do.

As co-owners of a fitness club in Middleton, Wisconsin, Craig and Mara knew the integral role water plays in training—not having access to it seemed unfathomable. In time, they developed a fundraiser called “8 Miles for Water,” in recognition of the Kenyan woman who walked that many miles each day.

GIVE THE GIFT OF STORY THIS CHRISTMAS

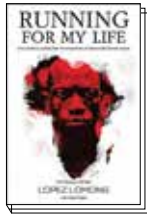
A daring rescue at sea; a boy torn from his family because of war. Powerful stories open our eyes to God's work in the lives of real people. Our editors have rounded up recommendations for our favorite inspirational storytelling books, just in time for Christmas giving.



He Walks Among Us

by Rich and Renee Stearns

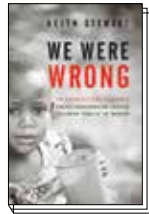
Powerful photography and stories from around the world make this award-winning devotional book a must-read this holiday season.



Running for My Life

by Lopez Lomong

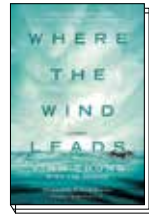
One of Sudan's "lost boys," U.S. Olympic track star Lopez Lomong recounts his journey from a refugee camp to home in the U.S.—and the highs and lows in between.



We Were Wrong

by Keith Stewart

A trip with World Vision forever changed Texas Pastor Keith Stewart's life and ministry after he realized how significant the poor are in God's redemptive plans.



Where the Wind Leads

by Vinh Chung

This dramatic, firsthand account follows a Vietnamese refugee family from the open waters of the South China Sea to Arkansas—and that's just the beginning.



God's Love for You Bible Storybook

by Rich and Renee Stearns

Favorite Bible stories and beautiful illustrations, paired with a real-life story of a child in need, bring spiritual lessons to life for children. ●

MAKE YOUR RESOLUTION COUNT



Your letters matter.

This New Year's, make a resolution to send a letter each month to your sponsored child. Your words are precious to sponsored children and help them know they are valued and loved.



FOR LETTER-WRITING TIPS, GO TO WVMAG.ORG/SPONSORTIPS.

10 YEARS AFTER: REMEMBERING the TSUNAMI

The day after Christmas will mark a decade since more than 226,000 people lost their lives to the raging Indian Ocean tsunami. As the water receded, World Vision staff were already responding in five of the countries that bore the brunt of this historic tragedy.

Among the staff was Clarence Sutharsan, who, on Dec. 26, 2004, faced his first major disaster. Working in eastern Sri Lanka, Clarence was initially unaware of the magnitude of the destruction in nine of the country's coastal areas.

"We were the first agency to respond," Clarence recalls. "Some areas that even the government was unable to reach, World Vision vehicles began to access. I know we saved a lot of lives in those first few days."

World Vision assisted in removing bodies for mass burial. As staff members worked tirelessly, each one grieved for family or friends who had died.

One lost his daughter to the tsunami's second powerful wave, but by then there was no place to purchase a coffin. "So they removed the [wood] windows from their house and made a coffin," Clarence says.

Stunned by the number of people left dead, Clarence realized World Vision had to respond quickly to help the living. Displaced families had nowhere to turn,

so staff members sheltered many in their homes and offices until the survivors could relocate.

Looking back, he can see that God went before them into the disaster. For example, food and water stored a few days before the tsunami became life-giving resources in the midst of massive destruction. A World Vision-built community center served as a refuge for people who climbed on its roof.

Ten years later, communities are rebuilt. Trees World Vision planted along the coast have grown tall. In a recent visit to once tsunami-ravaged places, Clarence spent time with some of the people he had helped.

"Everything is different," he says, "but people's good feelings toward World Vision remain." ● —*Hasanthi Jayamaha*



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



HERE'S TO TH



E D R E A M E R S ...

... those who are very much awake, eyes wide open to the world's pain. They hear a call others may miss, a whisper or an unmistakable shout. Without knowing the end from the beginning, they take a leap of faith. The territory's uncharted, and setbacks are inevitable. But they stay committed. They turn a deaf ear when told, "You don't have a prayer of succeeding"—without prayer, failure is certain. * World Vision has always been powered by dreamers. Former World Vision U.S. President Stan Mooneyham advised: "Let your projects be so big that they are bound to fail without God," and so it was, then and now. World Vision salutes today's dreamers—congregations or individuals, young or old—who believe that John 10:10's "life in all its fullness" is Christ's promise for children and families across the globe. Turn the page to step into their stories. »

GOING

TH



BY CHRIS HUBER AND LAURA REINHARDT

PHOTOS BY ANDREA PEER (MINNESOTA)
AND LAURA REINHARDT (MOZAMBIQUE)



E D I S T A N C E



Eagle Brook Church member Colleen Wilcek runs with a group of children along the road to the new health center under construction in Balicholo, Mozambique.

What happens when a U.S. church decides to unleash its resources to help a developing country? Eagle Brook Church's partnership with World Vision in Mozambique yields impact on both sides of the globe. »



After decades of focusing on local outreach, Eagle Brook Church now pours its resources into global missions.

The rutted red dirt road made for a bumpy ride to the village, but no one seemed to care. The SUV bounced over potholes and skidded along the rain-saturated roadway lined with trees, shrubs, and the occasional plot of corn.

The group from Eagle Brook Church in Minnesota had traveled a long way that February morning in 2007 to attend a worship service in southern Mozambique. When they arrived at the church, about 100 people welcomed them, seating the visitors in the front row as rain cascaded through the roof's numerous holes. Suffocating, 90-degree heat engulfed the partially enclosed structure.

An hour into the service, a woman stepped up to read Scripture. Until then, Eagle Brook member Duane Vik had struggled to follow the service, conducted in Portuguese. But when the woman began to speak, the message became crystal clear. He knew in his heart he was listening to Psalm 8, which praises God's majesty.

Duane felt a bond with the other worshipers and deep gratitude to "be able to share a common faith with people from a completely different culture."

The trip convinced Duane and the others that Mozambique is where they needed to serve, with World Vision as their partner. "Eagle Brookers love it when we can make a monster impact," says Executive Pastor Scott Anderson. And in seven years, they have: 3,400 children sponsored, thousands of pastors supported, nearly 200 wells drilled, and dozens of schools built. Once a congregation focused inwardly and locally, Eagle Brook now pours itself out in global missions.

Convicted by a Rock Star

Eagle Brook Church, which began humbly in 1948 with a handful of members, is today a 20,000-member congregation across six campuses in the Minneapolis suburbs. It ranks 16th on *Outreach* magazine's list of fastest-growing U.S. churches.

Senior Pastor Bob Merritt, who has shepherded the flock since 1991, says there was an enormous need to reach people for Christ in the Twin Cities, so Eagle Brook focused there in its first few decades. He would tell people who pushed for international ministries, "There will be a day when we can harness this growth, to do missions in a way that has an impact globally."

That day came in 2006, during the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit. U2 lead singer Bono delivered a hard-hitting challenge to the western church: Step up to the AIDS crisis and lead the way in emulating Jesus' heart for the poor around the world.

Bob immediately huddled with members of his leadership team and asked, "Are you feeling the same thing I am?"

They were. "It knocked us right between the eyeballs," says Dale Peterson, executive director of the Eagle Brook Association. Unanimously the leadership team agreed that this was the nudge they needed.

But where and how? "We knew we weren't the ones to create a ministry someplace," says Dale. Looking for a credible, experienced partner, they did research and found World Vision. At the next board meeting, the team floated the idea of an initial \$250,000 gift. "I think it was Duane Vik who literally pushed [the paper] back and said, 'That's not nearly enough. We need to double or triple that,'" Dale remembers.

A year after Bono's wake-up call, Dale, Duane, and others were in southern Africa, getting a feel for World Vision's work in communities. They'd wanted to minister in an underserved place, and Mozambique fit the bill: even today, life expectancy is only 50 years; less than half the people has access to safe water; and 70 percent of the population lives under the poverty line.

The Eagle Brook team was impressed by World Vision's



.....
Duane Vik holds the photo of one of his sponsored children in Mozambique.

All About Relationships

Spending a morning helping a grandson ride a scooter is Duane Vik's idea of a good time. He relishes being with his 13 grandchildren all the more since getting involved with Eagle Brook's Mozambique outreach. "We were pretty invested in our grandkids before," says Duane, 69, "but I think it cemented the deal that we want to have relationships with each and every one of them in a special way."

Traveling to Mozambique in 2007 taught Duane that when all else is stripped away, the real value in life comes from relationships. He was amazed to watch members of a rural church give their offerings, despite their poverty, for the good of the church body.

He and his wife of 48 years, Carolyn, sponsor two children in Mozambique, and his four children do the same: "They're teaching their families that there's more to what's going on in the world than what's going on in this address."

An Eagle Brook member for 42 years, Duane has done it all: served on the board and as a deacon, taught Sunday school, and led Young Life ministry. He's seen the church grow from 300 people to today's 20,000, with a remarkable surge in engagement since starting global ministries. "We would send maybe 15 people on short-term missions [before 2006]. We're sending hundreds now."

"It's been a very large blessing to be a part of God's hand visibly active in the body," he says, "to see what he will do if you are just obedient."

community-based model that aims for sustainability. They saw people beginning to thrive because of a well that brought clean drinking water and farming families equipped to cultivate more crops and run better businesses. “We love the fact that the plan is, in 15 years or so, to be out,” Dale says. “So it’s not just this prolonged dependency on America.”

That first trip they realized they could have a deep impact on the entire country.

God’s Mission Unfolds

During 13 years of Marxist rule, Mozambique’s government banned Christianity and other religions. The nation adopted a new constitution in 1990, and Christians once again were free to express their faith. But many pastors still lack training and essentials—even Bibles.

Caring for these struggling pastors and their congregations was a high priority for Eagle Brook. The church’s funding for World Vision’s Christian witness programs has had wide impact across Mozambique, providing training for thousands of pastors, as well as more than 900 Bibles and 15,000 pieces of Christian literature. In addition, thousands more benefited from spiritual nurture activities, prayer, and leadership seminars, including local children, youth, and World Vision local staff.

When Pastor Jornito Jorge steps in front of his congregation at *Luz de Jesus*, or Light of Christ, church in Impareia, it looks a little different than Bob Merritt’s set-up—there are no giant video screens or state-of-the-art audio and lighting systems, no stadium seating for 2,000.



“What you’re seeing is a church that is starting to understand our responsibility to the poor.” —Pastor Bob Merritt

The mud-brick structure with thatched roof and mud bench seats holds a few dozen. But Jornito has a Bible from which to preach—and new confidence.

Jornito, a pastor since 2002, completed training in leadership, spiritual maturity, family issues, and Sunday school teaching. The support brought him closer to other local pastors. “If you have interaction with other churches, you grow spiritually and you learn to know much better the Word of God,” he says.

He also guides Sunday school teachers to focus on children and help them know God.

World Vision equipped Jornito to meet the material needs of his flock as well. He heard about a volunteer program called Community Care Coalition that enables churches to create a support network around vulnerable children, especially

those affected by AIDS. He asked World Vision to help him start a group in his church, which now cares for 144 children. Volunteers routinely set out on foot or bicycle to check on vulnerable families, making sure they get the help they need.

Light of Christ’s coalition sprang into action when they discovered 12-year-old Adelina and her grandmother, Juliet, living in a grass-roofed shelter without walls—all Juliet could manage after their house collapsed. The widow and her orphaned granddaughter suffered when it rained and feared harm from snakes and strangers.

Church volunteers made bricks and brought supplies to build them a sturdy home. Adelina praised the workers as “good people,” but Juliet saw the deeper connection. “God is powerful,” she says, “because he saw that we have been through a difficult situation, and now we have this new house.”



Kids on the Other Side

With two kids, work as a medical transcriptionist, and ministry courses at Bethel University, Aimee Roddel resisted joining an Eagle Brook trip to Mozambique. “My kids need me, my family needs me,” she says was her defense. “How can this house happen without mommy, because I do everything?”

But the urge for missions was there, and she kept hearing from everybody, including her husband, Travis, “Aimee, you have to do this.”

She signed on to this year’s July trip—fundraised by selling pendants made by a friend—and suddenly, there she was in Zambezia province, sitting next to the little girl whose face she knew from a sponsorship folder.

“I never in a million years thought I would ever get to meet her,” says Aimee. “But here I am. She’s real. I touched her.”

Pastor Jornito Jorge, 35, stands inside Light of Christ church in Impareia, Mozambique. He received training from World Vision thanks to child sponsorship in his community and started a community care coalition to help support widows and vulnerable children.

Children are No. 1

Another key connection is between a child in Mozambique and an Eagle Brook sponsor—multiplied 3,400 times. Whenever the church presents the sponsorship opportunity, made real by the testimony of mission teams, the response is immediate and strong.

At one of the sponsorship weekends she organized, Aimee Roddel set up a table laden with child picture folders directly across from the sanctuary. “People just made a beeline to the table in tears,” she recalls. “Families would say to me, ‘I have everything, and they have nothing.’ I was so blessed to witness those life-changing experiences with people.”

Every Eagle Brook sponsor has a story about how the connection with children in Mozambique provoked a shift in priorities. Dale Peterson admits he has a tough time pronouncing



his sponsored child's name, so Dale calls him "Ace." During a visit with the boy, Dale explained that "Ace" means No. 1. "We made a family decision that, given the greater awareness of Ace—and we have two other kids we sponsor in Mozambique—we're going to spend less on each other, and do other things for people who really need help," Dale says.

Colleen Wilcek and her husband, Don, are entering their retirement years, but there's no chance they will discontinue supporting their four sponsored children in Mozambique. Like Dale, Colleen has traveled to meet the children, which not only opened her eyes to their realities but also taught her about unconditional giving. "One of my kids, the poorest of them I could tell, brought me a big container of bananas," she says. "You could tell they didn't have the proper clothing, the proper nutrition, but they were willing to give me not a banana, but a whole bucket of bananas."

With another sponsored child, Dercia, "We just connected," Colleen says. "There was no hesitation on her part, and certainly not on mine. That only happens when Christ is involved in the situation. We were family. No doubt."

Dercia, now 13, holds on to that memory. "It was a very special time. We talked a lot," she remembers. This is a girl

who needs more happy days. Her father died when he suffered an epileptic seizure while bathing in the river, the only water source at the time. Her mother was left alone to care for nine children and seven grandchildren living in the same house.

The river that stole her father was the same place she trekked with her sister at 4 a.m. to collect water. Dercia was afraid of the darkness and shivered in the cold during the winter months. The school she attended was made of stalks covered by grass, which let in the rain. The students had to sit on the ground, dirtying their clothes and books.

But today, thanks to Colleen and other Eagle Brook sponsors, borehole wells provide clean water for Dercia's community. World Vision improved the school, so now Dercia sits comfortably at a desk. After meeting Colleen, she says, she began to study with more enthusiasm because she knew someone was encouraging her and following her progress.

The power of sponsorship is that not only one little girl benefits. Sponsorship funds help provide schools that make education available to all children, increasing hope that the young people will change their circumstances. Dercia says, "With this school, my colleagues also will study and help to end poverty."

"When I think about [my sponsored child] now, I have something tangible to think about." —*Sheryl Olejnicak*



Impact Outside the Walls

An Eagle Brook delegation went back to Mozambique for the sixth time in July. Some, like Colleen, knew what to expect. Others, like Aimee Roddel, experienced everything fresh. In the Atlanta airport, World Vision representative Mike Owen distributed rubber Gumby toys to remind people how important it is to stay flexible.

Once in Mozambique, the group hoisted 20-gallon water jugs on their heads and shared the arduous journey of millions of mothers in the developing world. They kicked a ball around with kids—soccer being "the world's love language," in the words of one participant. They met a mother whose child was once malnourished and now isn't because she learned to make meals with locally available, nutritious food. At a gathering with pastors, some of which had served during the brutal civil war years, they felt the Holy Spirit while the men prayed over them and broke into song.

And then the highlight: meeting sponsored children. Sheryl Olejnicak says, "When I think about her now, I have something really tangible to think about. I can picture her

Carla Hauge learns the time-consuming task of gathering water.



house, her yard, her school.”

Even those visiting Mozambique for the first time could see past the poverty to the signs of progress. Bricks replace thatch, borehole wells replace water holes, and crops grow in once fallow fields. The community members are clearly proud of their accomplishments.

Eagle Brook is changing, too. In addition to Mozambique, mission programs in Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and Norway energize the congregation, which has grown more than 200 percent since 2006. On a recent weekend, 901 people were baptized. In spring 2014, Eagle Brook conducted the Micah Project, a two-month giving initiative that raised more than \$722,000 (overshooting their goal by 80 percent). Of that, \$380,000 went to international missions, including a World Vision child protection project in Mozambique.

“What you’re seeing is a church that is starting to understand our responsibility to the poor,” Pastor Bob says. “They’re glad to be part of a church that’s making impact around the world, outside our walls.”

The global outreach, leaders say, has given Eagle Brook greater alignment with God’s heart for the poor. And loving others in the name of Christ—even those halfway around the world—gives church members a special sense of purpose.

As Colleen Wilcek says, “It’s not about Eagle Brook. It’s not about me. It’s not about trips. It’s for these children.” ●

Sarah and Grace Land, ages 7 and 9, sponsor three children in Mozambique with their parents. The two girls also raised \$300 for clean water through a Sunday school class project.

A Call to Churches

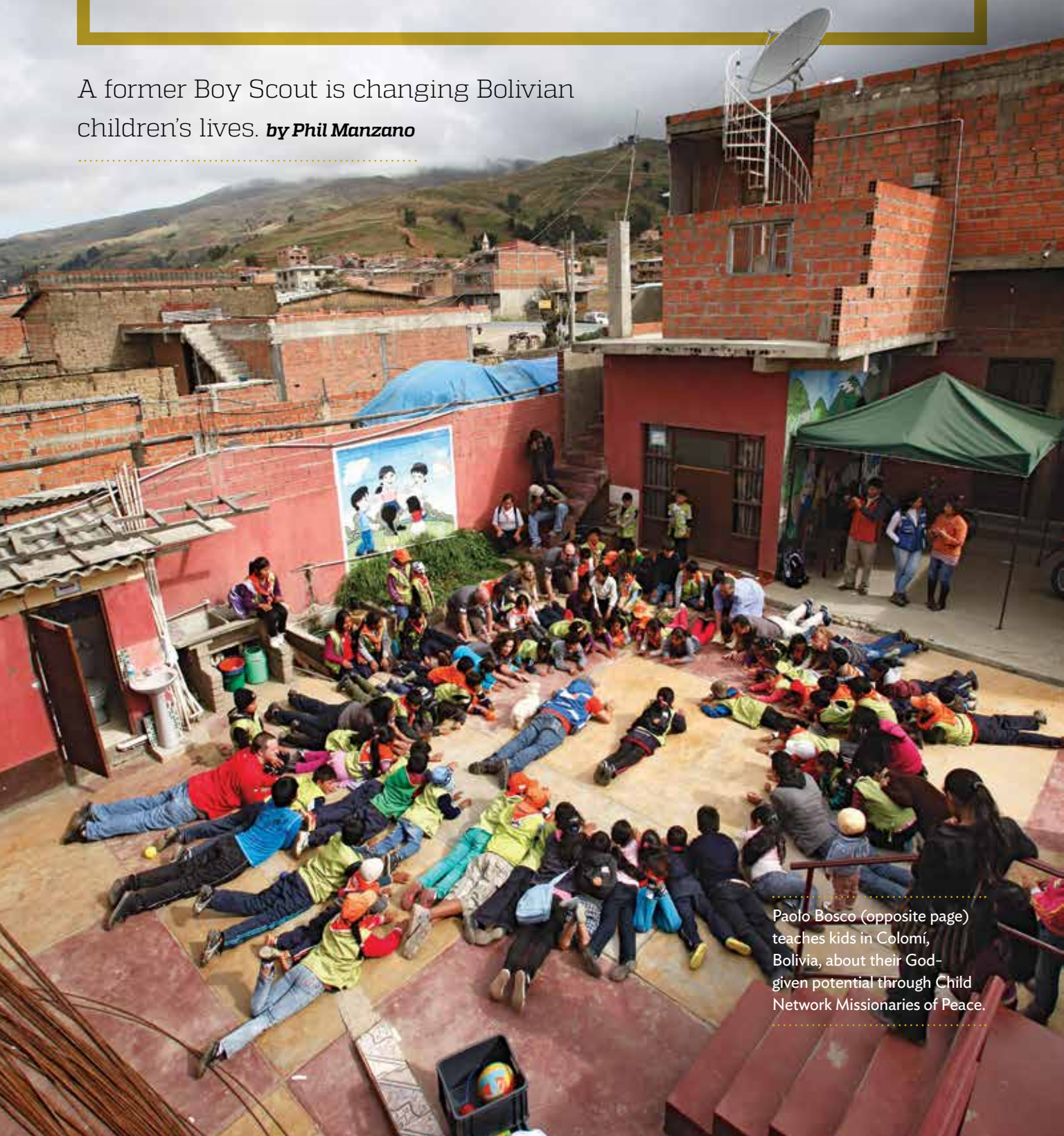
Jesus goes to the margins, serving those the world considers the least, the lost, and the last. To believe in him is to follow him there. Teaming with churches like Eagle Brook enables World Vision to make an impact among the world’s most vulnerable people—beginning with children. With this focus, restorative change takes root in a community, embracing whole families, empowering villages, and building sustainable momentum that ultimately transforms entire regions.



JOIN WORLD VISION TO SERVE IN THE MARGINS.
LEARN HOW AT WORLDVISION.ORG/CHURCH.

PLAYTIME *with* PAOLO

A former Boy Scout is changing Bolivian children's lives. *by Phil Manzano*



Paolo Bosco (opposite page) teaches kids in Colomí, Bolivia, about their God-given potential through Child Network Missionaries of Peace.

About 60 children crowd into a courtyard in Colomí, Bolivia: a squealing, loud, colorful mass of little bodies stomping, clapping, and posing to the whims of Paolo Bosco.

In a game where children mimic his moves, Paolo makes faces, contorts his body, and lies on the ground, while the children follow him with delight.

Playful, even silly, but Paolo's antics have a deep purpose. As the originator of the Child Network Missionaries of Peace, he's launched a program that is on track to be a wellspring of hope for hundreds if not thousands of Bolivian children.

Geared to 7- to 14-year-old girls and boys, this home-grown program is one part Boy Scouts and one part World Vision community development—all infused with Bible stories and lessons.

"I've always had the idea of changing the world," says Paolo, 29, a World Vision staff member who studied political science in college and now pursues advanced degrees in theater and music.

Children face harsh realities in Bolivia, one of Latin America's poorest countries. Fifty-one in 1,000 children don't even live past the age of 5. More than a quarter of Bolivian children between ages 5 and 14 work to help support their families. This practice is so widespread that the government decided this year to drop the minimum work age from 14 to 10.

Paolo and all of World Vision's staff in Bolivia dream of combatting these dismal statistics one child at a time through the Missionaries of Peace. Here, instead of working, these children are encouraged to play. Having fun while learning is the first of three principles Paolo built into the program.

The group gathers for games, music, and lessons on Christian values, child rights, education, nutrition, and health.

The club's second principle is helping children develop a sense of identity that extends beyond themselves. For instance, the clasp on the kerchief the children wear features an upraised hand with a heart in the palm. Paolo says the hand represents each child; the heart, the heart of Christ, which holds the group together.

The third principle is that the group's values are deeply rooted in faith. "Most of the children, they don't learn anything about Jesus," Paolo says. "But now with the network, they learn Bible history, they learn about the Apostles, and Jesus is the model."

Jesus, Paolo says, is an honorary member of the children's group. "We've named him our oldest brother missionary."

To reinforce lessons, Paolo uses a structure he learned as a loyal Boy Scout. Children earn badges in anti-bullying, storytelling, and family activities, or for participating in a community Christmas presentation or anti-hunger campaign.

But the most valued badge is the friendship badge, earned when the peace missionary brings another child to an activity—adding someone in from outside the circle.

From the first group of about 90 children in Colomí, Missionaries of Peace has grown in five years to 300 children in seven communities.

Paolo and the rest of Colomí's World Vision staff hope the program will expand even more. "I have a lot of faith that it can work," he says. While funded through World Vision's child sponsorship program, participation in Missionaries of Peace is available to all.

Steve Biondo, Family Christian store senior vice president, recently visited Colomí and praised Paolo's work.

"The big impact I saw was that kids saw themselves as leaders, servants, and problem solvers, not victims, not poor," says Steve, whose company partners with World Vision to find sponsors for children around the world. "They were learning and applying the truth that, together, we are powerful and difference makers in this community." ●

***Pray** that all of the world's children will have new opportunities to grow into the fullness of life God intends for each of them.*



GARY FONG/GENESIS PHOTOS (2)

PERFECT *in* WEAKNESS

College student is “young enough to make a difference.” *by Elizabeth Hendley*

Watching TV with her parents one night in December 2003, Kendall Ciesemier's life changed—she just didn't know it yet.

The 11-year-old living in Wheaton, Illinois, saw an Oprah Winfrey special about kids in South Africa. The children on the show were Kendall's age. But instead of going to 5th grade like she did, they were caring for their younger siblings because their parents had died from AIDS.

“I was really angry about it,” says Kendall, now 21. “If these kids had been born here, we wouldn't just let them live without parents.” For the first time in her young life, she saw what extreme poverty looks like—no running water, no electricity, mud-hut dwellings—and it was “unfathomable.”

That night, she searched online for information about AIDS orphans in Africa. Topping the results was World Vision's child sponsorship program, and a few clicks later, Kendall found Benite, an 8-year-old girl in Mauritania.

“I reached into my dresser drawer and grabbed \$360 of

my saved-up birthday money,” says Kendall. Her parents, Mike and Ellery, helped her understand that sending a wad of cash in the mail wasn't the best idea, and they figured out how to get Kendall's money—at the time, enough to sponsor Benite for a year—to World Vision.

“Before I saw the Oprah show, I felt like I was supposed to be doing something that God wanted me to do, but I was missing it,” Kendall recalls. “I saw that show and knew exactly what I was supposed to be doing.”

Though she'd never experienced poverty, Kendall was well-acquainted with struggle. Born with a chronic liver disease, she had two liver transplants in the summer of 2004. While her illness didn't interfere substantially in her everyday life—other than missing school for doctor's appointments and therapy—it made her feel different from her peers, and she developed an acute empathy for others who were going through any kind of challenge.

Just before the first surgery, Kendall received her first letter from Benite, who wrote about going to school for the first time and learning to read, write, and add—all made possible by Kendall's sponsorship. “I had really made a difference, and it was so easy,” says Kendall. “I knew I could get so many more people to do the same.”

She contacted World Vision to find a larger project to support and chose the village of Musele, Zambia, one of the areas most highly affected by the AIDS epidemic at the time. World Vision's work in Musele had an annual operating budget of \$60,000, which became Kendall's new goal.

In lieu of the gifts she usually received before surgery, she asked friends and family to donate toward her goal. “I was blogging about my health and would also talk about what I was doing with World Vision, and people really took to it,” says Kendall. “Kids started to do fundraisers across the country.”

By the end of the summer, she'd raised \$20,000. “It was lemonade stands and bake sales and penny wars, and it was really cool,” says Kendall. She decided to start her own nonprofit, and Kids Caring 4 Kids officially launched



COURTESY KENDALL CIESEMIER (3)

Kendall Ciesemier at age 11 with her father, Mike, at the hospital the summer she had two liver transplants.



Kendall visited Zambia in 2010 to see the results of Kids Caring 4 Kids' efforts.

in January 2005. She had no idea that 10 years later, her dream that started with one girl in Mauritania would touch thousands of lives.

Kids Caring 4 Kids empowers young people in the U.S. to expand their worldview by giving to children in need in sub-Saharan Africa. "We show kids [in the U.S.] that they're powerful and they're old enough to make a difference—or young enough to make a difference."

It started slow: Kendall was in and out of the hospital for several years in middle school, so she and her parents dedicated whatever time was left outside school obligations to running the organization.

Kendall began to redefine herself. "I didn't have to be Kendall the sick girl, I could be Kendall the girl who was trying to help other people," she says. "To be used during the worst time of my life in such a powerful way to help other people—I think that's amazing, which is why my favorite Bible verse is 'power made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).'"

By 2007, Kids Caring 4 Kids had doubled its original \$60,000 goal and set a new \$1 million goal. A big boost came

two weeks into Kendall's freshman year of high school: former President Bill Clinton surprised her at a school assembly and whisked her to Chicago to appear with him on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." Donations to Kids Caring 4 Kids poured in, and young people across the country wanted to get involved.

Kids Caring 4 Kids hasn't slowed down. To date, more than 10,000 U.S. children and teenagers have raised almost \$1 million to support projects with partner organizations like World Bicycle Relief, Lifesong for Orphans, and World Vision. The fruit of their most recent efforts is a high school in Kitwe, Zambia, which opened in September with a class of nearly 100 orphaned teenagers.

Though a busy college student—she'll graduate from Georgetown University next spring—with continued health problems, Kendall runs the day-to-day operations of Kids Caring 4 Kids, including speaking engagements and other opportunities. "Kids Caring 4 Kids is the biggest testament in my life that God can use anyone to do great things," says Kendall.

Post-college, she sees the challenge in balancing the organization with pursuing new passions, like her dream job of hosting a documentary series to tell the stories of the world's most vulnerable people.

"Saying yes to God's call is the best choice you can ever make, even if he's going to ask you to do hard things—like have two liver transplants," says Kendall. "I want to continue saying yes to what I feel like I'm being called to do, whether it's something small during the day, or continuing Kids Caring 4 Kids." ●

***Pray** that God will reveal new ways for you to reflect his love as you care for those in need.*

In 2007, former President Bill Clinton brought Kendall to Chicago to appear on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," giving Kids Caring 4 Kids a huge boost.



RUNNING *with* HEART

How God used two unlikely athletes to inspire a movement. *by Kristy J. O'Hara*

As Mark Wagner headed home to Port Orchard, Washington, in early 2003 after driving his semi all day, tears gushed down his cheeks.

The time glowed 1 a.m. The radio softly played Mercy Me's "I Can Only Imagine." The song's emotion hit Mark like a rock.

He wondered: Had he misread what God wanted him to do? Why wouldn't anybody help him—or care?

As the waterworks of frustration poured, he reached home and checked his email. A message from World Vision caught his eye. He read it, amazed.

Three years earlier, as Mark lay in a hospital bed recovering from heart valve replacement surgery, he considered what to do with his second chance at life. At the top of the list: run a marathon.

Mark Wagner pioneered what would become Team World Vision.



COURTESY MARK WAGNER



COURTESY MICHAEL CHITWOOD

Michael Chitwood built upon Mark's vision to create Team World Vision.

He couldn't even walk to the nurse's station without help. But two years later, he ran the Portland Marathon, which inspired a new goal. He wanted to run again. "At the time, I thought, 'I am going to be the first [heart valve runner] in the world to run more than one marathon. I have a platform here—I would like to raise money,'" Mark says. He wrote several large organizations, but nobody seemed interested. In the early 2000s, charity races weren't as common as they are today—but Mark wouldn't give up.

Then the email from World Vision arrived. World Vision fundraiser Dana Buck said he thought Mark had a good idea, and he wanted to help.

The two met. Mark shared his desire to run the 2003 Victoria Marathon in British Columbia, Canada, to raise money for a good cause. Dana showed him a video about AIDS-affected children that made Mark weep, and he decided to fundraise for that.

Initially calling the effort Hope in Motion, Dana and his team helped Mark prepare. When race day arrived, they all went to cheer for Mark—who crossed the finish line having raised more than \$3,000.

It was the beginning of Team World Vision, which to date has engaged 20,000 runners to raise \$13 million for the poor.

Mark had envisioned this, telling Dana: "There are a lot of people like me out there, and if you gave us the opportunity to link our passion for God and our passion for helping the poor with our passion for our sport, you'd really have something."

Mark went on to other pursuits. But about the same time, God also was working on a young teacher named Michael Chitwood 2,000 miles away in Illinois. Michael was grieving his father's death in 2001, searching for God's will for his life—even as pain shook his faith.

Michael felt drawn to running, but he weighed 265 pounds. Still, Michael's wife encouraged him, and God prepped his heart.

"Out on that path as I was training, God really healed my heart and did a lot of work in me spiritually," Michael



says. He lost 70 pounds, but more importantly, “My prayer life got kick-started.”

In 2003, 28-year-old Michael ran with a friend in the Chicago Marathon. At the starting line, Michael committed to doing one race every year for the rest of his life. Two years later during a bike race, he says, “God laid this vision on me and said, ‘You can do these races and help kids in other countries.’”

But like Mark, organizations he approached didn’t seem to understand the impact of equipping people to run for international causes. He turned to a friend for advice. “He said, ‘You need to go out and find the biggest, best organization out there and pitch it to them.’ So I found World Vision.”

In 2006, Michael was hired as the first Team World Vision staff member. He focused the program on equipping runners to fundraise for clean water to developing communities.

“The lack of clean water and sanitation is the No. 1 preventable cause of death in the world,” Michael says. “The No. 1 preventable cause of death in America is heart disease. So you’ve got runners who are trying to get in shape, running to provide clean water for kids who don’t have it.”

Team World Vision is growing about 41 percent annually. Participants can run with teammates at designated events or race on their own and raise funds through Team

Willow Creek Community Church Pastor Paul Jansen Van Rensburg is one of 20,000 runners who have competed for Team World Vision, raising \$13 million to date.

World Vision’s website (teamworldvision.org). Amazingly, about 80 percent of participants were previously nonrunners.

“Most of them say they felt called to join the team and run,” Michael says. “Many of them say that Team World Vision played a role in helping them through a dark place in their life and coming closer to God.” He cited one church in which 55 people said they came to know Christ and were baptized as a result of Team World Vision.

Michael and Mark never met, but neither fit the mold for people who’d start a running ministry. That’s the beauty of how God works.

“If you want to know what God can do in your life, look at your greatest weakness because that’s right where he wants you,” Mark says. “God can take your heart and do something with it that can affect others, and it can touch others to do God’s will.” ●

Pray that God will continue to equip World Vision to provide clean water to many more families.



JANICE EVIDENTE/WORLD VISION

A LEGACY OF LOVE

THAI PASTOR PASSES ON HIS SPONSOR'S 'SPIRIT OF GIVING'

BY JANICE EVIDENTE

The Rev. Thoedsak Akkrasawart remembers well the countless hours he and two siblings spent grinding flour and peanuts to help their parents eke out a tiny income on the streets of their hometown in northern Thailand.

Despite his family's poverty, Thoedsak's parents were determined their children would have a better life. With the little they had, they found a way to send their three children to school. Thoedsak's father sold dumplings, and their mother peddled dried beef and fruit on the dirt roads of Chiang Mai, today a city of 172,000 people.

Even with five family members working, life's basics often ran out. When their school uniforms grew tattered, the children didn't receive new ones. Lunch was often just a little rice with fish sauce.

These daily hardships continued until Thoedsak turned 10—the year a San Francisco janitor sponsored him.

"I received letters and pictures from my sponsor," Thoedsak, now 52, recalls. "As a child, I thought my sponsor must be a wealthy man in order to support me. I was wrong. I later found out that my sponsor was a low-income cleaner who suffered many strokes."

Thoedsak carefully saved every photo and letter his sponsor sent. But because his family's house flooded more than once—at times reaching as high as the boy's chest—none of these mementos survived. But it doesn't matter. "There is no way I will forget him," he says. "He will always be in my heart, in my life."

Determined not to miss the opportunities his Christian parents and sponsor made possible for him, Thoedsak worked hard in school. Sponsorship covered most of his education, so his parents were able to devote more of their meager income to paying for his two older siblings' education.

Thoedsak is thankful for much more than education. "The sponsorship activities also established the foundation for our values, which were very helpful during our teenage days. They provided us the platform to express ourselves."

Although he didn't know it at the time, Thoedsak's future career as a pastor was being shaped through the faithfulness of his sponsor. "I was amazed by his compassion to help despite his dire situation. It made me realize that I don't have to be rich myself to help others."

The encouragement and care he received through sponsorship activities helped inspire his decision to go into ministry. When Thoedsak decided to



JANICE EVIDENTE/WORLD VISION

"I was amazed by his compassion to help despite his dire situation. It made me realize that I don't have to be rich myself to help others."

—THOEDSAK AKKRASAWART

pursue a college degree, World Vision provided the funds for him to attend his chosen school: Bangkok Bible College.

Passing on some of these blessings, Thoedsak and a friend soon began visiting northern Thailand's Karen ethnic group. Through their kindness and sharing the gospel, numerous families found faith in Christ.

The young men also met many orphans among the Karen people who were not in school. Thoedsak wanted to give these children the same opportunities he had received.

"I convinced my friend that we should find some sponsors willing to support them," Thoedsak says. "Today, the project is still sponsoring 200 children. Even with limited resources, I and my wife still support the project. World Vision has planted generosity in my heart."

Thoedsak and his wife, Pat, are parents to a 20-year-old son and 17-year-old daughter. He serves as an associate pastor of the 1,200-member Jaisamarn Full Gospel Church in Bangkok, and he credits his success to the generosity of his sponsor.

"Education is like a door of opportunities. My sponsor was the gateway," he says. "He saved his earnings to support me. His spirit of giving has inspired me. I believe this kind of spirit must be replicated. The legacy has to go on." ●

TO SPONSOR A CHILD fill out the form between pages 4 and 5 and enclose in attached envelope, or go to wvmag.org/sponsor.

World Vision®

WHO WE ARE |

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to 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, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.

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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.

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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. ●

A Personal Passion for Christ

BY MARILEE PIERCE DUNKER

I have always been fascinated by this photograph taken in 1946 at one of Youth for Christ's (YFC) earliest leadership gatherings. Whoever snapped the photo could not have known the significance of what was captured—men on the brink of changing the world in Jesus' name.

The top row alone is impressive. Starting at the left is Robert Evens, founder of Greater European Missions. Next to him is David Morken, a missionary who had recently returned from Sumatra. In 1947, David and my dad, Bob Pierce, traveled to China to hold evangelistic meetings for YFC. It was on that trip that the seeds for World Vision were planted.

Next to David is Robert Cook, who became president of Kings College in New York City. He also had a radio broadcast called "Walk With the King." The curly-haired guy in the bowtie next to Robert is my dad, World Vision's future founder. And the lanky young man next to dad is Billy Graham, who became, well, *Billy Graham*.

I could go on, but you get the point. Every one of these young men went on to do something significant with his life. What stirs my heart when I look at this picture is that not one of them knew at that moment what God was about to do. They had a call on their lives to serve Christ and reach a spiritually lost and dying world. But they didn't have a clue how to do it.

So what took them from insignificance into the history books, you may ask?

The answer, in my opinion, is simple. These men had a personal passion for Christ that translated into a burning passion to give others the same hope they had found. Their passion for Jesus bound them together and gave them the audacity to believe that if they prayed without ceasing and were obedient unto death, they could win the world for Christ.

They also believed that, in the words of the Rev. Andrew Murray, "without [prayer], there is no power for the church to conquer the world." Prayer was an integral part of my father's life. In the early 1940s, he met at 5 a.m. every Tuesday with



"...my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."

—ACTS 20:24

prayer is alive and well in World Vision today. (Pray with World Vision at wvmag.org/prayer.)

Shortly before the Lord took him home, my dad taped an interview at the World Center for Evangelism as an encouragement to the next generation of world changers. In part he said, "Most people think what the gospel needs is more clever, skilled people, when what it needs is more people who are willing to bleed, suffer, and die in a passion to see people come to Christ."

As the New Year dawns on this hurting world, I pray God will give us hearts that are willing. ●



The daughter of World Vision's founder Bob Pierce, Marilee Pierce Dunker serves as an international ambassador for World Vision, speaking to various groups about the many ways Christians can fulfill God's mandate to care for the poor. Read more from Marilee at wvmag.org/GodSpace.

Bound together by Christ, the men in this 1946 photograph went on to change the world.

other young visionaries such as Dick Hillis (founder of Overseas Crusades), Hubert Mitchell (Go Ye Fellowship), and Dawson Trotman (Navigators) to pray and seek God's direction.

By the time this picture was taken in 1946, these men were seasoned prayer warriors who had planted their ministries in faith. Their relationships had been forged together in tears and prayer at the foot of the cross. And over the next five years they would see God launch them into ministries that are still changing the world today.

Until the day he died, my father was a man of vision and prayer. He believed that the two were inseparable, and I am blessed to say that his commitment to

RETROSPECT



MARK NONKES/WORLD VISION

PHILIPPINES

No umbrella—no problem! When it's raining in their village in Cebu, Philippines, 10-year-old Orlando (left) and 11-year-old Pedros use a banana leaf from a nearby tree to cover themselves on the two-hour walk to school. "It keeps our books dry," says Pedros. The two friends attend a school that Typhoon Haiyan severely damaged in November 2013. Thanks to donations from the international community, World Vision provided tents to create makeshift classrooms and school materials for students—so that children like Orlando and Pedros could return to their lessons and life as quickly as possible. ●

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