

The Barnabas Letter

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To encourage, enrich and equip

*Praise Awaits You,
O God, in Zion*
—Rosemary Sabatino

IN FOCUS

Psalm 65 is one of my favorites. This Levitical Song is packed with promises of protection and provision for those whom God draws near to Himself through His Son. From the beginning, our soul is assaulted with beautiful imagery as the psalmist parallels God's abundant favor to man with His ever-faithfulness in the earth. And, by the time we get to the last line, we find that our hearts really have something to sing about. Yet, the stage is set so artfully in the very first verse.

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion. Praise here is defined by Strong's Concordance as a public testimony or song of thanksgiving, generated by the qualities and attributes of God, to tell of His Glory and renown. In other words, praise is the response of a heart touched by the power, presence and person of Jesus! The word *awaits* carries the connotation of being quiet, still and waiting; dormant. *Zion*, the place where God chooses to dwell, means the parched place in desperate need of water.¹

Have you ever seen a plowed field ready to be seeded? It doesn't look like much does it? Yet the farmer knows it holds great potential. He plants the seeds and then the ground waits for the rain. If the rains delay and the ground and furrows get hard, I imagine the farmer starts to worry. You could say he's desperate for rain. When the rains do come, and the ground softens, the farmer's fears allay because he knows the seeds will germinate. Then, as the tiniest sprouts of green begin to emerge the farmer gets. At each stage of growth, as the rains continue, the farmer gets more and more excited because he knows a good harvest is coming. And when it does he's singing praises, I can tell you!

It's the same with the human heart, a desperately needy place where God chooses to dwell—*Zion*. Yet, God knows that within each heart lies the potential for praise. It is lying still and dormant until the heart is touched with the power, presence and person of Jesus; filled with His living water. The result is praise as the heart sings the song of the redeemed! Since God *inhabits the praises of His people* (Psalm 22:3), He works in them to draw others to Himself, and their lives become the fruit that glorifies Jesus.

But it doesn't stop there, for praise is the spontaneous outcry of the redeemed as they are being transformed. It's an ongoing process. As God's children live in constant communion with Him, then just like the farmer's crop, at each stage of growth, there's a new praise report! *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God* (Romans 11:33)!

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion—the parched place in

desperate need. Can there be any more parched or needy souls than those of children in crisis?

Of the 2.2 billion children in the world, two-thirds are in crisis, scorched by abuse, abandonment, exploitation and disease.² They include the sexually exploited, child soldiers, orphans, street children, those in slave labor and those affected by HIV/AIDS. To the world they don't look like much, but God sees in them the potential for great praise.

This month our focus is on the needs of orphans which touches virtually every area of children in crisis. We are grateful for the contributing authors who gave of their time and talent to bless the children and their caregivers. In *God, a Girl and His Garden*, Lisa Foster tells the compelling story of God's call to the orphans of Zimbabwe where, through the children, He is growing a garden of praise which includes children, caregivers, donors and volunteers. Mina De Montalvo Podgaiskay, co-author of *Life Skills Curriculum*, addresses the difficulties orphans face in transitioning to life on their own as she gives practical advice in *Life Skills: teaching the art of independent living*. In *Tears on the Inside*, Virginia Woods, founder and director of *Alliance for Children Everywhere*, relates the deep hurts orphans are subjected to and the significant difference that long-term, loving relationships with care-givers make in healing those hurts. Finally, in the care-givers corner, Wendy Dezan, International Director of *Rainbows of Hope*, offers her article *Be Strong*;—a biblical prescription for standing tall in the face of spiritual oppression; a reality for all those working to bring children out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

Let us remember, that it is in the darkest, driest places that God loves to do His greatest work. In the parched souls of these little ones, scorched by the consequence and environment of sin, praise for their redeemer is lying dormant; waiting for someone to bring them news of the One who will pour out on them living water from the streams of God and fill them with the good things of His house. The result? *Where morning dawns and evening fades He will call forth songs of joy* (Psalm 65:8) and many sons will be brought to glory. But, someone has to reach them; someone has to care; someone has to pray; someone has to go; for

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion!

2. UNICEF; State of the World's Children; 2005

Focusing on Orphan Care

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¹ Strong's Exhaustive Concordance; KJV

God, a Girl and His Garden

—Lisa Foster



There was a time in my life when I felt like a girl who didn't know who she was. Was I the face in the mirror—the body on the scale? Was I the wife praying for a house full of children, but conceiving only one? Lacking my true identity as a daughter of the King, I tried to muster up self-esteem through the shifting glances of people and performance. I had an orphaned identity. God used an invitation to orphans' ministry to woo me into His garden, where the air is free and fresh and life-giving. Now, intimacy and dependence characterize a love that is changing me and my ministry.

At times, I could hear in my spirit their wrenching laments, or their eerie, hopeless silence.

His invitation arrived during a time of deep longing; not for ministry, but for another child. I wanted the busy, loud love of family to wash away years of loneliness. But, Jesus rarely shows up the way we expect. And so, during a Missions Conference in March 2004, the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart, *"Just as you are a mother praying for a child, there are children praying for a mother."* His words had less to do with building my family than building His kingdom, and soon I was waking up in the middle of the night to pray and worship, dance and weep. Some nights, it was for the orphaned children of Peru. Other times, it was for the foster kids in my own county, waiting for adoption with their vacant, imploring eyes. One particular time it was for the sick and fevered children, alone in the night, their beckoning tears going unanswered with no one to comfort. Through it all, I became transfixed by Jesus' gaze and our growing intimacy created a hunger satisfied only by His presence. I was being transformed by His love for the lost, little hidden ones. At times, I could hear in my spirit their wrenching laments, or their eerie, hopeless silence. I was in love – with Jesus and with orphaned children.

In August 2005, with an overwhelming sense of destiny, desire, and a name given in prayer—God's Garden—I cried out for where to begin. I wasn't prepared for His response, but I knew that whatever Jesus asked, the only answer I could give was "yes." He softly said, "Zimbabwe," and after double-checking to make sure I hadn't overheard Him talking to someone else, I agreed. Little did I know of the internal chaos that had brought this once beautiful nation to its knees. There was no way I could do anything to help a country with the lowest life expectancy (34 years for women, 37 years for men), the highest inflation rate (13.2 billion percent), and the largest number of orphaned children per capita in the world. I had no connections and no experience. If this was God, He would have to do it.

*This was where
God's Garden was to grow—
right there in the center of the
impossible.*

The first divine appointment came in January 2006 at a local bookstore, and by the following September, my husband and I were on a plane to Zimbabwe. Together with a former pastor and a national contact, we visited orphanages, schools, and children's villages. It wasn't until we reached Ngundu, a rural village four hours from Harare, with no electricity, or running water, that we found them: 80 dual-orphaned children, sitting silently under a tree. By the time I left Zimbabwe, the children of Ngundu were

lodged in my heart, and I knew this was where *God's Garden* was to grow - right there in the center of the impossible.

After months of prayer, God gave me a vision and a mission, however, it would take the help of a national in Ngundu to carry it out. As I began my search for this special person, I soon found that not everyone likes the impossible. Over and over I was given reasons why the mission would never work: wrong country, wrong village, wrong plan, etc., etc. Then, in March 2007, a friend called and said, *"You're not going to believe this. I just met a Zimbabwean with the same vision you have."* Davison Zhou was two months away from a Masters in Leadership from Denver Seminary. He and his wife Yana came to the U.S. through my former church and incredibly we knew many of the same people. Five years prior, he had written a paper detailing a plan very similar to my own, and even though He was applying to various mission organizations, he knew God was calling him to the impossible choice: *God's Garden*.

God is growing a family, both at home and in Zimbabwe, that is learning to live in His garden, and do ministry from a place of rest.

We received our non-profit status in six short months, and the Zhous began support-raising. However, with only 30% of their gifts in, Davison was told he had six weeks to leave the country. Miraculously, within days of their departure, God provided every penny needed for monthly support, including their daughter's first year in college, and a ministry vehicle.

2008 brought elections and increased violence to Zimbabwe as *God's Garden* quietly began to take root. Our mission was to bring the life-giving presence of Jesus to orphaned children in rural villages untouched by other organizations. Through agriculture, education, medical and spiritual support, in the context of national caregivers and community, we are seeing the Lord's unfolding plan blossom. With over 150 dual-orphaned children registered and a God-created team from Ngundu, including a local pastor and nine volunteers, we are seeing the first harvest of *God's Garden*. Our children are in school; one of our youth is being trained in herbal remedies to help the children medically, and Davison is

disciplining them all at school each week.

God is growing a family, both at home and in Zimbabwe, that is learning to live in His garden, and do ministry from a place of rest. As we keep our focus on Christ, we find that He is focused on the children. We aren't working for God; we are being *changed by Him* as He invites orphaned children, caregivers, board members, donors, and volunteers into His garden through us. Last January, after a time of ministry in Ngundu, one of the young girls, Tendai, summed up life in *God's Garden* perfectly when she said:

*"I'm so happy, I'm so happy!
Because I know God loves me!"*



God's Garden is a nondenominational ministry committed to a simple pursuit of Jesus Christ, living in us, and bringing to His heart the orphaned children of the world. Founded in 2007, the mission of God's Garden is to bring the life-giving presence of Jesus to orphaned children in rural villages untouched by other organizations through agriculture, education, and medical and spiritual support in the context of their caregivers and community.

Orphaned children are like wildflowers. Instead of pulling them from the only soil they've ever known, God's Garden seeks to cultivate and nourish the existing soil of their communities.

The work of God's Garden occurs in three stages. In the first stage they emphasize meeting immediate needs, while the second stage is a building and growing stage. In the third stage, the goal is self-sustainable entrepreneurial and leadership skills,

Lisa Foster founded God's Garden in 2006 and praises God for National Directors Davison and Yana Mzezewa-Zhou who joined with her in 2007. God's Garden is run entirely by a generous team of volunteers in the US.

godsgardens.org



Life Skills: teaching the art of independent living

—Guillermina (Mina) De Montalvo Podgaiskaya

*F*unk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary defines the word *skill* as a proficiency or ability in any task. A developed art, trade or technique. Life Skills refers to the knowledge, tools and proficiency needed for independent living and successful integration into society.

It is crucial, as we work with children at risk and in crisis, that we not forget that one of our responsibilities is to prepare them for life outside our centers and orphanages—life on their own.

A study by the Ukrainian government with institutionalized children shows that within five years after graduating from a state institution...

**...every second graduate commits a crime
...every fifth orphan graduate becomes a “street person”
...every sixth girl graduate ends up in prostitution
...every seventh graduate attempts suicide
...every tenth graduate commits suicide after leaving the orphanage¹**

This same study uncovered additional consequences to graduates of institutional upbringing:

Only 16%	have families
Only 25%	have stable employment
Only 1%	obtain higher education
Only 44%	receive technical training ²

When questioned, institution graduates also expressed their concern about things they knew they should be able to do, but felt incapable of doing. These included: *to live by myself; to not be ashamed of the past, to manage money, to buy clothing and food, to pay for housing, to provide for myself, to visit offices (doctor, government, employment; etc.), to find a new friend, to organize my free time, to fellowship with other people, to live with neighbors without conflict.*³

1. Problems of Orphans in Ukraine Rpt. by Association Emmanuel Kiev, Uk, 2009

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The survey also provided an excellent picture of some areas where youth really need help and support, as it identified certain fears the youth have associated with transition to independent living.

- **76% of children are afraid to leave their institution.**
- **70 % believe they will not be able to get a good education nor obtain the profession of their dreams.**
- **54 % are afraid they will not have enough money for transportation, food, medicine and other necessities.**
- **52 % are afraid they will not have a place to live.**
- **50% think they will not be able to find a job.**
- **18% have no idea what it's like to live independently.⁴**



Certainly the need for Life-Skills training for children living in centers, group homes, and/or orphanages is more than apparent. However, when considering a strategy, it is important that our approach be holistic. We must focus on the spiritual as well as the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of children/youth. One area must not overshadow the others since God made us as whole individuals. Therefore, we must feed all the spheres of our lives in order to be healthy individuals. A good Life Skills program should include tasks in the following areas:

- **Identity:** who am I and how can I develop each part of my personality
- **Social Skills:** how to relate to others, manage conflicts and use good manners.
- **Health and Hygiene:** nutrition, hygiene, bad habits, first aid.
- **Love and Sex:** respect in friendship and girl/boy relationships, the purpose of sexual relationships and their possible consequences.

4. Ibid.

- **Gift of Marriage:** things to consider before you agree to get married, ways to express love and deal with disagreements in marriage.
- **Raising Children:** how to create a family, be a positive parent and know your child's needs; things that harm the child in the womb.
- **Homemaking:** food shopping and cooking, taking care of your home and clothing, hospitality.
- **Time and Money Management:** what life costs and how to budget; how to manage time.
- **Job Skills:** professional orientation, how to find and keep a job; people at risk of human trafficking.
- **Legal Rights:** human rights, orphan's rights, the law and the consequences of breaking it.



Life Skills can be taught “as we go;” included with other education and learned through sharing the responsibilities of everyday life. It should not just be a class lecture, but rather more of a “hands on” approach. If we make it fun and interesting, the children/youth will not only learn the skills, they’ll associate good feelings with the activities involved. They will actually get a positive attitude about washing dishes, cooking, cleaning and making friends, etc. Once they know how to do these activities, they not only eradicate the fear of doing them, but they actually become fun to do.

Encouraging the youth to find their own answers is another key to good Life Skills training. When teaching social skills, for example, it is very important to get the youth involved in sharing and collecting information and examples from life. They will not reject their own research. Usually, youth already know most of the answers; they just need help vocalizing them.

Be patient. It takes trial and error to learn a skill and it is a process. Robert Pike, in his book *Creative Training Techniques Handbook*, identifies five laws for training. One of them is: *Learning hasn't taken place until behavior has changed.*⁵ Youth may know the information we give them, but it does not mean they necessarily know how to apply this information. Once a youth starts practicing what he/she has

been taught, then learning begins to take place. It will take much trial and error for youth to acquire a skill and to truly master it. The time, effort and prayer we sew into life-skills training will reap a harvest if we persevere with patience.

The goal is to see them living a productive, independent life as a unique creation of the Father. They will thank you and the Lord will be eternally glorified!

Guillermína (Mina) De Montalvo Podgaiskaya is a missionary with the “Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.” She is the coordinator of the “Coalition of Children at Risk” in Kiev, Ukraine. She and her husband, Gennady, minister to foster children through the “Village of Hope Ministry Center” in the city of Bucha, Ukraine. They have 3 young children- Bogdan, Mark and Ana Maria.

Mina is also a co-author and trainer of “Life Skills for Youth,” a curriculum of “Lamb International.” This life skills program was designed as a course for future orphanage graduates. Its purpose is to supply the youth with knowledge, tools and skills needed for their independent living and successful integration into society. The program covers all the needed tasks as outlined in this article, and the teachings are based on a Christian world view and Christian values.

It is a program that:

- Provides those working with youth/children with resources to help reach the children for Christ;
- Provides workers with a systematic way of teaching that covers most areas of a youth's needs;
- Provides many games and hands on lessons that can be easily put into practice.

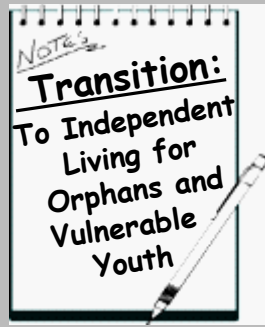
The “Life Skills for Youth” program is currently being used in different regions of Ukraine, Russia, Belarusia, Romania, and Uzbekistan. It has been taught in: orphanages; boarding homes/internats; high schools; independent living situations; Christian orphanages; foster homes; street children/day shelters; and summer camps. In addition, it's been effective as a Bible study program for: youth groups; single adults; and premarital counseling.

Mina holds an MDiv from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. You can contact her at: podgaisky@juno.com.

5. Pike, Robert W., 1989. *Creative Training Techniques Handbook*. Minneapolis, Minnesota; Lakewood Books.

Training Tips

*Plans fail for
lack of counsel,
but with many advisers
they succeed
(Proverbs 15:22 NIV)*



The Task of Transition

All young people will at some point in their lives move out of their home environment. This is achieved by learning and preparing for adulthood, and then with support, moving as an independent adult into the community. In order to transition properly they need practical skills for independent living, psychological and social support, and a chance to gain an increased sense of self worth, confidence and motivation. Once young people make the transition they also require a comprehensive support system for as long as needed.

Orphans and vulnerable young people also need to move into independent living within the community. Sadly, many of these young people are released from care, often at the age of 15 or 16, without the life skills to manage the task of transition. They are often younger, unable and unprepared for life beyond the confines and strict regiments of their previous home. They may have resided in an 'orphanage', small group home, prison or in a street program, and been without a primary care giver to provide the experience of constant adult modeling. When these young people re-enter the 'real' world they are expected to survive unsupported, entirely alone in what can be a hostile environment.

This places them at greater risk of becoming victims of suicide, poor health, substance abuse, early pregnancy, violence, exploitation, and trafficking. To survive, many will resort to crime, begging and prostitution, or be employed in jobs such as domestic work or brick making that abuse their human rights.

With careful and deliberate preparation and follow up support from organizations and others involved in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children, most young people can achieve the task of transition. That is, to leave full time out of home care and be reintegrated back into main stream society to function as a fulfilled adult.

The Aims of Transition

For the Young Person:

- Be interdependent, not just independent— have ongoing relationships with family, community and society.
- Develop skills needed to overcome any obstacles
- Be able to achieve a happy and fulfilled life
- Have meaningful employment and good housing
- Achieve their God given potential
- Make a contribution to community and to society
- Enjoy peer relationships that are meaningful

For the Organization:

- Teach young people valuable life skills
- Help them to utilize these skills in a practical way
- Have them Find suitable employment and housing
- See young people grow into confident, happy adults making 'good choices' and responsible for their lives
- See them established and contribute to their society
- They become resilient—overcome obstacles in life
- They live their lives with a purpose in God

Skills Needed to Make the Transition

- Psychological and Emotional: Raise self esteem— self worth, gaining confidence
- Spiritual: Identity in Christ, learning forgiveness, prayer, worship
- Employment/ vocational training: Skills in agriculture, sewing, a trade, selling food, craft
- Life skills: Budgeting and financial management, cooking, nutrition, hygiene, how to shop, manage time, rent a flat, wash and mend clothing, drive a car, ride a bike
- Education: Literacy and numeracy, computer skills, problem solving
- Protection: Sex education, keeping safe behaviors and contraception
- Interpersonal: Positive values, relationship building, sexual relationships, managing anger, peer pressure resistance, avoiding violent situations and conflict resolution
- Social and cultural: Gender sensitivity, cultural traditions, rituals, taboos
- Health: Knowledge on HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, affects of substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases
- Understanding of Rights: Legal rights, obtaining government benefits, land inheritance

Specific Challenges for the Transition

Education: Many orphans and vulnerable children miss out on all or part of a formal education. If they have been to school the setting may have inhibited personal growth and self-reliance due to the large number of children in the class-

room, a lack of resources, or lack of training of teachers. Consequently, within their educational systems, many vulnerable young people have few opportunities to develop the life or work skills necessary to reintegrate back into society.

Learning Delays: These exist in many orphans and vulnerable young people due to insecure attachments, poor nutrition, lack of stimulation or few life experiences. This results in poor problem solving and limited language development causing a disadvantage to achieve an 'easy' transition.

Behaviors and Attitudes: Depending on their background these can vary from lack of respect for authority resulting in trouble with the law, to over compliant resulting in lack of confidence and inability to make choices.

Emotional Problems: While in care, young people may not have had counselling and may reach adolescence traumatized by their losses. So problems remain hidden, ready to resurface at any time.

Other factors that challenge transition are:

- Lack of understanding of the concept of family
- Lack of understanding of society, community, or culture
- Lack of support from family/organization
- Poor employment opportunities
- Stigma/ discrimination often met with by orphans etc.
- Learned helplessness - 'Learned helplessness' is most often used to describe people who have been institutionalized, such as in prisons, remand homes or 'orphanages'. The systems and structures deprive an individual of making the smallest decision and conformity is rewarded; the 'wrong' choices are punished or at least discouraged. This results in a lack of critical thinking and decision-making skills.

Factors Effecting the Success of Transition

- Length of time young person was in care
- Reason's for the placement
- Attachment to trusted adult
- Healing of past hurts
- Age of young person when leaving care
- Commitment of youth to the success of transition
- Ongoing consult by the organization with the youth
- Youth's development of life skills
- Youth's development of protection skills
- Provision of suitable housing
- Prospect of employment
- Relevant vocational skills
- Individual transition plan
- Commitment of organization to the transition
- Organizational resources/effectiveness to complete task

Strategies

- Development of an individual transition plan
- Immediate needs supplied: If there is a delay in providing basic needs (clothing, food, housing etc.) when the youth leaves care a successful transition is in jeopardy.
- Counseling: After past situations of loss and trauma and many years reliance on others, counselling for vulnerable young people is required to achieve success.
- Education: Many cannot handle a formal study environment for long periods—flexibility/creativity is key.
- Relationship building: Relationships based on trust take time and must be built well before transition begins.
- Organizational support: The organization should be committed to an ongoing mentor program.
- Teaching social skills: Achieved through one to one relationship, modeling, and role playing in the context of home, classroom and community.
- The role of family: Support from family and significant others, if possible, is important. Finding family and encouraging reconciliation and relationship should be done early on.

An Individual Transition Plan

The following are examples of questions that could be answered by the organization overseeing the transition for the young person. The answers will then be put into an Individual Transition Plan, with clear and achievable goals and objectives.

1. What age does preparation for transition start?
2. Who decides when the time is right to leave?
3. At what age of the youth does consultation start?
4. Who does the consultation and how is it done?
5. List skills the youth needs to prepare for independence.
6. How does the youth feel about leaving?
7. How are these feelings to be addressed?
8. Where is the youth going?
9. List long and short term supports needed.
10. Who is the youths contact person for ongoing support?
11. How will they remain in contact?
12. How will their commitment be monitored?
13. What is the exit plan for organizational support?

The above is an excerpt from the CCTI curriculum *Offering Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis: Module 3, Orphan Care* written for CCTI by Janette Pepall.

Janette has worked in local and international adoptions, foster care, counseling and child protection. She served as Senior Social Work Supervisor for Children's services at *Mother's Choice*, an orphanage in Hong Kong. In 1997, she and her husband founded *Children with Hope*, a training organization based in Australia. .

Janette will lead a CCTI training seminar introducing this new CCTI curriculum Module on *Orphan Care* this September in Colorado, USA. See page 9 for details.

Tears on the Inside

— Virginia “Jennie” Woods



Robert Mwanza lives in sub-Saharan Africa. He is too young to have ever heard of HIV/AIDS, but he knows the deadly plague more intimately than most of us. Robert’s father died just before Christmas. His mother died last week. In his community Robert’s tragic situation is not unusual. There are more than 15 million children, under the age of 15, who have lost their parents to AIDS. There have always been orphans, but never on the massive scale that we are facing today.

An African proverb says, *The tears of the orphan run inside*. Maybe the reason why the tears are hidden in the deepest part of the being is because the orphan finds no caring person who can be trusted with his tears. Gone are the arms that embraced, the breasts that nourished and the branch that gave life. Their fate is sealed and cannot be reversed. Too often hope vanishes, and when hope is gone so are dreams, aspirations and acceptable social behavior.

This tragic waste of young lives compels us as Christians to share the Gospel in word and deed. The Church is the one institution on earth that can make an immediate and lasting difference in the lives of orphans and damaged children. There are many secular and humanitarian projects that provide food and shelter, along with therapy and counseling. While we are thankful for every effort and affirm the good that is done, we know Jesus is the only one who can dry the deepest tears.

How do we bring wounded boys and girls to receive the healing Jesus offers? First, we must be available. Amy Carmichael warned us that *children tie the feet*. The biggest breakthroughs don’t come in scheduled counseling sessions, but in unexpected moments in the middle of everyday life. When those moments come they must be put to use. The admonition to “be prepared in season, out of season...” (2 Timothy 4:2) is especially critical. A person who is too busy or too tired may not get a second chance. This is

one reason why workers should be careful not to commit to too much. An orphanage for 50 children may provide food and shelter, but the larger the commitment the more difficult it is to have the level of bonding necessary to reach the hidden hurts.

When dealing with a painful past we may be tempted to encourage the child to forget. However, the healthy and wiser approach is to strengthen the cords to the birth family and culture. If you have pictures, frame them. If you have stories repeat them. If you have no information at all about birth parents, learn about the culture of the family through community. Then ask God for wisdom to see His precepts in that family and culture.

The biggest breakthroughs come at unexpected moments in the middle of everyday life.

Even in the most negative circumstances there is a cord of redemption to be found. Put your conversation about a child’s background and roots to the Philippians 4:8 test; *whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy* talk about these things. Emphasize the positive while you commit the negative to the grace of God.

Carol’s parents were alcoholics and abandoned her when she was a toddler. When she was seven, she was adopted. Her adoptive parents and their extended family welcomed Carol so completely that there was no apparent difference between her and her older brother who had been born into the family. Then, during her adolescence, a deep sadness seemed to settle over Carol. She lost interest in school work and sports, preferring to lie on her bed with earphones and her CD player. Sensing Carol was struggling with her birth heritage, her parents found the birth parents and took Carol on a short trip to spend a day with them. Emotions

were high as the trip was anticipated, but the actual visit was anticlimactic. They brought pictures and stories home and Carol seemed relieved to realize she could freely talk about her birth family with her adoptive family. The walls were broken down and Carol was free to be happy in her adoptive family without betraying her ancestry.

Healing is a process, and like growing, it takes time. One rule of thumb states that it takes five years of nurturing for every one year of abuse or trauma. Howard is an extreme case. He lost both parents before he reached age two and then was in a series of foster and group homes. At age eight, he was placed in the Christian foster home that would claim him as their own. He was frequently in trouble. It seemed no one in his Christian home or community could reach him, but they refused to give up. He left home, fathered two children and worked at a succession of minimum wage jobs. Nevertheless his foster parents never stopped praying for him and continually went as far as they could in accepting him. Then one morning when Howard was almost 40 years old, he wrote his foster parents a letter saying he had given his life to Jesus. It had taken a long time, but the tears were finally being dried.

Howard’s story encourages us to never give up. Those of us who work with children tend to release our relationships when children become adults. Especially in the case of orphans, the critical breakthrough may not happen until years into adulthood. Whether our work is in foster care, an orphanage or a Sunday school we should try to continue contact where possible. Long term relationships are rare and precious even if they only consist of periodic visits, phone calls or letters.

If we had time and space we could relate hundreds of stories, every one of them as different as the children whose experiences they relate. We would cry, laugh and sigh, but at the end, we would certainly redouble our passion and our faith, committing ourselves to do whatever it takes to dry the innermost tears of boys and girls who suffer the deepest losses.

Please see the opposite page for information on Virginia “Jennie” Woods.

NEWS • EVENTS • RESOURCES



*More than 1.2 billion children
around the world grow up without hope and basic necessities.*

*This large group is normally un-
touched by the message of God's
love and compassion.*



What Can we do?

Red Card: Standing Against Oppression, Providing Hope is a dynamic, new curriculum on children at risk. The unique feature of Red Card is the target audience—families. It builds family unity and empowers kids to become advocates for vulnerable children; their own peers.

This 8 week family class raises awareness of six different types of children at risk: children in poverty, orphans, street kids, child laborers, children of war, and children affected by HIV/AIDS. Lessons include videos, simulations, family processing time, prayer, at-home activities, and practical steps for involvement. Participants gain a biblical perspective on God's heart for the least of these and our mandate to respond. Hands-on learning allows participants to step into the daily lives of children at risk, which motivates them to make a difference.

Designed as a cross-generational church class, it may also be used in homes groups and to train short-term family teams going to minister to children at risk.

"An incredible experience for our whole family which opened our eyes to the needs of children around the world." K. Brooke

"Red Card is a powerful Scripture-based educational tool that takes serious God's commands to care for orphans, the marginalized, the exploited, and the powerless. Lessons inform, inspire, and equip families to make an authentic Biblical response to the global suffering of children." Dr. Phyllis Kilbourn, CCTI

Content is age-appropriate for children grade 4 and up

For information, promotional video and a sample lesson, go to:
www.redcardkids.org

Alliance for Children Everywhere

founded and directed by **Virginia Woods**, is a Christian nonprofit organization working in Zambia Africa that establishes and operates church-based child welfare interventions, including infant survival, feeding, crisis homes, foster care, adoption, advocacy and schools.

In 1969, Virginia began providing emergency rescue and child care on Apache and Navajo Reservations. From there she co-directed *House of Samuel*, an adoption and child placement agency in Tucson AZ. She has facilitated international adoptions from Guatemala and Peru and assisted in the founding of a ministry for children in Guatemala that has grown into an adoption agency and orphanage serving 150 children. In 1997 she began the ministry in Zambia.

www.childreneverywhere.org

New Training Seminar **Introducing A New Curriculum Module:** **Orphan Care**

September 23-26 • Denver, CO

Crisis Care Training International (CCTI) and **World Orphans** will co-host a training seminar introducing CCTI's curriculum, *Offering Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis: Module 3: Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*. This module provides an overview of orphans and vulnerable children worldwide along with an understanding of how being orphaned or abandoned impacts their lives. Basic intervention strategies and successful alternative care programs will be explored.

The seminar will be led by Janette Pepall, a social worker and educator who has worked in local and international adoptions, foster care, counseling and child protection. She also served as Senior Social Work Supervisor for Children's Services at *Mother's Choice*, an orphanage in Hong Kong. In 1997 Janette and her husband founded *Children with Hope*, a training organization based in Australia. She has developed extensive training materials and taught in many countries. Perhaps her most important hands-on experience is derived from the adoption of five children from Australia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong.

Register at www.crisiscaretraining.org

Registration Deadline: Sept.1, 2009

Curriculum available through CCTI
at crisiscaretraining.org

Offering Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis:

Module 1: Trauma and Crisis Care, core module of the curriculum, presents foundational issues and principles that provide caregivers with an understanding of children's traumatic experiences and the resulting impact of trauma as well as basic pre-requisites to planning and implementing interventions. Textbook for use with this module: *Healing the Children of War: A handbook for ministry to children who have suffered deep trauma*.

Module 2: Street Children (also available in Spanish) provides an understanding of the impact of street life on a child and his/ her behavior. It also discusses effective prevention and intervention principles and strategies that assist children to give up street life and return to a structured environment with adult oversight. Textbook: *Street Children: A guide to effective ministry*.

Hands That Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors, published by **FAAST** is a comprehensive Christian curriculum to train global caregivers of those trafficked into the commercial sex industry.

Caregiver's Time-out

—Wendy Dezan

Be Strong!

What's going on here? Have you ever asked yourself that question when you—and your team—are sincerely loving, and serving the Lord but every day is a challenge? Have you considered this verse: *...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12)?*

Satan's tactic is to separate you from the Lord.

Perhaps spiritual warfare is a topic that you shy away from. Unfortunately, Satan wants you to ignore the very real battle we are in and to be caught unaware. While you are doing all you can to bring a hope and a future in Christ to children in crisis and their families, the spiritual forces of evil are trying to thwart your advance and cause you to quit. It is wise to recognize this battle and take action.

What can you do? God tells us to *...be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power (Ephesians 6:10)*. Let's examine this verse in different ways. It starts with a verb: 'to be'. The battle is a war for worship and Satan is trying to steal the glory that belongs to the Lord Jesus. You can take action and choose how you will be and whose you will be. Offering praise and worship to God is a powerful weapon against the enemy's schemes. Praise and worship change the spiritual environment. By giving God glory, even when you don't feel like it, you declare that you have chosen Him.

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Satan's tactic is to separate you from the Lord. You can stay rooted in Christ by prioritizing your busy schedule to have time for prayer, bible reading and study, worship, discipleship, and fellowship with other believers. The needs of children at risk and in crisis, and of their families, are

many, demanding and constant. You will need to protect the time you have set aside to be with your Lord, to enjoy His company and gain strength in Him.

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Satan comes only to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10). He is destroying children's lives through violence, exploitation, trauma and loss. Christ came that we might have just the opposite—abundant life. In His Name, you bring freedom, hope and healing to hurting children. The enemy's goal is to get you to stop, to leave the ministry or the field and ultimately to leave Christ. Determine to persevere, and to leave your role only when Christ releases you and moves you on to something new in His service. Gather around yourself and your team faithful intercessors who will do battle in prayer for you and help you be strong.

Pray for an action plan

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. The enemy is a liar and the father of lies (John 8: 44) seeking to change your perception of a situation. If something goes wrong you may feel discouraged, but the enemy will exaggerate the situation to try to cause you to despair. *Be strong in the Lord!* Live in the fullness of Him and in His truth and light. Pray for the Lord to give you wisdom to separate truth from fiction. Then pray for an action plan to deal with the reality.

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. The enemy wants us to believe we must rely on ourselves alone. What a sure-fire way to feel overwhelmed. The Lord is your strength. You can depend on Him. This may mean waiting to speak or take action until you know His will and have His wisdom. Or it may mean taking the first step in accordance with His guidance, having faith in Him before knowing every detail of His plan. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your*

ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. The enemy wants you to believe that a situation is hopeless, and to the human eye it may seem like that. But God is the author of life. He has more creative power than you can ask for or imagine. Remember all the creative ways in which God solved problems in the Bible. Who of us could anticipate a solution using hornets (Exodus 23:28); a talking donkey (Numbers 22:28); a coin in the mouth of a fish (Matthew 17:27); or the many number of other incredible ways that God intervened throughout the Scriptures? Meditating on these will increase your awareness of His mighty power.

Jesus has already triumphed

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. When you work with children who have been victims of violence, neglect and exploitation, the evil around you can seem palpable. You may wonder what you can possibly do to effect change. The enemy wants you to feel helpless and paralyzed into inaction. Instead you can trust that since the Lord called you to minister to the children and families in His name, He will equip you with everything good for doing His will (Hebrews 13:21). Pray for this equipping, then watch for His intervention—perhaps provision of wisdom and insight, finances from unexpected sources, new acquaintances with just the right knowledge or skills, or unanticipated changes in government policies. Sharing your testimonies with others on your team will help you all to be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Remember each day to put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11). Take the enemy seriously, be aware of his tactics, but know that Jesus has already triumphed over sin, Satan and death.

Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Therefore ... stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15: 57,58).*



Crisis Care Training International is a ministry of WEC International.
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