

Dear Friend,

The world hasn't had much to celebrate lately as it continues to reel from the worst economic turmoil since the 1930s.

Maybe you're wondering how you'll stay afloat. Across America, millions are struggling to pay their mortgages, watching their hard-earned retirement savings disappear, and fearing for their jobs.

Yet the global economic firestorm is having its most devastating impact on those who can least afford it—the poor. They don't have retirement accounts or health care benefits. Many don't have jobs to lose, and many were living on just one meal a day—or less—even before the crisis hit.

As bad a year as it may have been for us, it's been worse for them.

But this we know: God is still God, and His heart still beats for the poor. And because of this, **World Vision is as committed as ever to meeting the needs of children and families**, both around the world and right here in the U.S.

I'm grateful to be able to share that World Vision and our supporters are coming together as at no other time in history to stand in the gap for the world's poorest. Through God's grace and your faithfulness, we are still on the job. In fiscal 2008, we:

- Touched the lives of 3.6 million children registered in sponsorship programs
- Responded to approximately 75 humanitarian emergencies around the globe
- Aided 11 million disaster survivors, refugees, and internally displaced people
- Helped more than 600,000 hardworking entrepreneurs transform their lives and communities by providing nearly \$400 million in small business loans
- Taught HIV- and AIDS-prevention education based on biblical principles to more than 671,000 young people living in AIDS-affected areas
- Assisted 2.2 million children and adults in the U.S. with access to basic necessities like warm clothing, building materials, and school supplies
- And much more.

As the calendar turned to 2009, the global economic situation took an even more precipitous downturn. In the midst of the crisis, our very first concern continues to be the children we serve. We are determined to do everything possible to minimize the economic impact on those most vulnerable.

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The poor have no safety nets. No insurance. No bank accounts. No stimulus package. They are not losing their jobs—they're losing their lives. "Cutting back" for them means choosing which family members to feed. Deciding which day to eat. Or worse.

They need the compassion of friends like you and me now, more than ever. The question is, how will we respond?

At World Vision, we've taken decisive actions in recent months to protect the most vulnerable from the brunt of this crisis. Being efficient, effective, and accountable remain our top goals. Committed as always to the very highest standards of stewardship, we are tightening our belts—reducing expenses, forgoing pay increases, and making significant operational adjustments so we can dedicate more funding to those who need it most.

I am humbled and inspired by the generosity and sacrifice I've witnessed over the last few months from our donors. You share God's heart for the afflicted and oppressed, and you have made it possible for us to sustain the critical, life-changing help they so urgently need. That is worth celebrating.

In the economic hardship of the 1930s, communities came together to share burdens. Ordinary people demonstrated extraordinary resourcefulness to provide for their families and neighbors. Today—again—we are seeing the renewal of a shared spirit of concern and compassion for those in greatest need.

I am honored to share this journey with you as we walk alongside the poor, through the power of Christ, in these ever more challenging times.

Thanking you for your steadfast prayers and support of this ministry,



Rich Stearns
President, World Vision