

WOMEN OF VISION



Summer 2000

“Let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead . . .”

1 Peter 3:8-9

A Family's Journey to Reconciliation

It is not often that a life of sincere dedication to a humanitarian cause reaches newspaper front pages or network television lead stories. When this occurs, it seems that often tragedy, violence, or great irony precipitates the attention.

This was the case on August 25, 1993, when it was reported that Amy Biehl, a 26-year-old American woman living in South Africa, was pulled from her car, beaten, and stabbed by a mob of youth who saw her as the embodiment of a political system that had robbed their race of dignity and honor for so many years. They were unaware, despite the cries of her friends, that she was not the enemy. Helping with voter registration, she was there to make sure that these four young men would have the right to vote, to have a voice, to be counted in the April 1994 free elections—elections marking the end of apartheid.

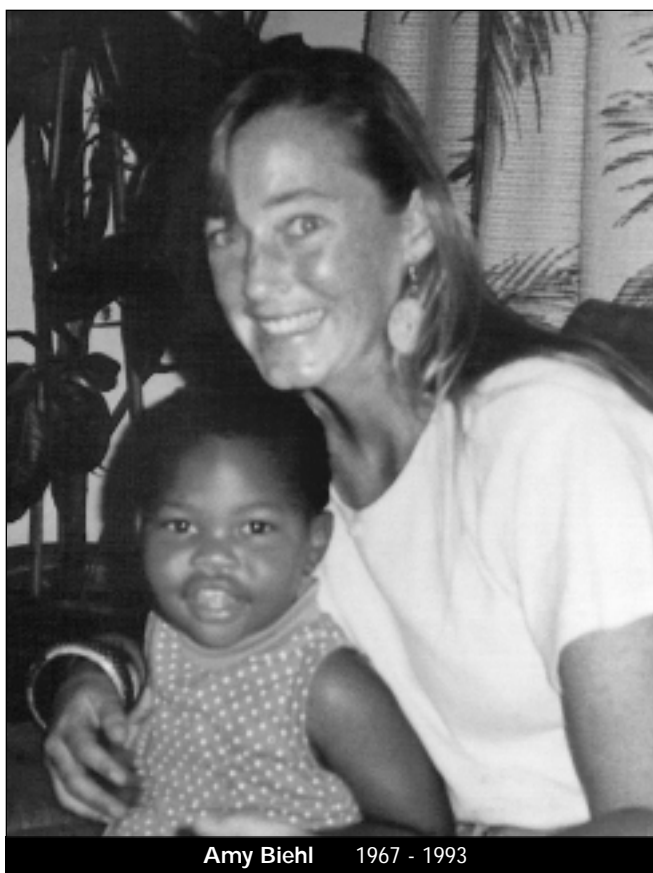
Many times Amy had reminded her family that the frustrated and angry black youth “are only doing what has been done to them by generations of white oppressors.” Ironically, that anger and frustration brought an end to her life. Four young men were tried and convicted of the killing and were given 18-year prison sentences.

Amy's parents, Peter and Linda Biehl, traveled to South Africa after her death to gain a better understanding of their daughter's commitment to the country and the cause of reconciliation. They visited the squatter camps in the black township of Guguletu where the four men had grown up. In a recent CBS News *60 Minutes* segment, Peter

Biehl commented: “If we had never come back here, if we hadn't done something to carry on for her, I think she would be very, very disappointed in us.”

Amy, a Stanford graduate, had been impressed by Nelson Mandela early in her career. She came to strongly believe in the future of a multi-racial democracy for South Africa and was an advocate of human rights, an empowerer of women and children. She pursued this interest in the challenges facing South Africa as it was transitioning toward democracy.

In memory of their daughter's work, Peter and Linda established the Amy Biehl Foundation (U.S.) and the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust (South Africa). In the past few years, through grants, donations, and more than \$1 million in aid from the United States government, the Biehls have implemented a holistic violence prevention effort offering programs in education, music and art, sports and recreation, first aid, and employable skills training. These programs are currently reaching thousands of young people in Guguletu township and are being



Amy Biehl 1967 - 1993

replicated in seven additional communities in South Africa's Western Cape.

The Biehls also have built two state-of-the-art bakeries, each capable of producing 6,000 loaves of bread per day, providing much-needed food and jobs. The bakeries themselves are charitable entities, the profits of which are reinvested in foundation programs and other successful violence prevention and empowerment efforts.

continued on next page

...CHANGING LIVES

A Family's Journey continued

Archbishop Tutu has said that the Biehls have "obunto," a South African word that means the essence of humanity. Rather than receiving reparation for their daughter's death from the South Africans, the Biehls, in the depth of their own agony and pain, have chosen to serve the community that produced Amy's murderers, to help that community be transfigured. This is forgiveness and reconciliation in action.

In July 1997, the men responsible for Amy's death gained amnesty through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up by Archbishop Tutu. The commission was created to review amnesty applications by those confessing to crimes or offenses associated with a political objective during some of the most turbulent times in South Africa. Among those participating in the hearings were Peter and Linda. The Biehls had the opportunity to retain legal counsel and oppose amnesty if granted, but instead they chose to support the proceedings. Peter commented: "If you accept and support the process, as Amy did and as we do, then you must accept the results."



South African students provided musical entertainment and special guests Peter and Linda Biehl spoke on "A Family's Journey to Forgiveness" at the Orange County Women of Vision fund-raising dinner held May 8. A recently aired CBS *60 Minutes* segment was shown, updating more than 500 guests on the story of Amy Biehl, slain in South Africa in 1993. The Biehls shared how they were moved to continue Amy's work. The funds raised from the dinner will support World Vision work with the poor and disenfranchised. Pictured: Betsy Tarbell, Linda Biehl, Don Tarbell, and Peter Biehl.

Since 1997, the Biehls have met and built relationships with two of Amy's assailants. These two young men are now learning trades in one of the Biehls' programs. Peter said it best, "If they make it, they are clear evidence to the new South Africa: Two people can pull themselves up from the very worst of possible situations and make something of themselves. That was her (Amy's)

dream. And I think that she's living that dream today, through these two guys."

The efforts the two young men are making to rebuild their lives are a testimony to the blessing and energy that reconciliation can bring in the most distressing of circumstances. "To us, forgiveness is opening the door to a full and productive life. We can honor Amy, can be true to her convictions, and can carry on with her work and with ours. Forgiving is liberating. By contrast, it seems to us that hatred consumes tremendous energy—negative energy—and robs people of their productivity," stated Peter and Linda in a recent article about Amy.

"Amy embodied the ideal of making a difference; of living a life with meaning and impact. . . . Amy worked to build a nation in which every individual is able to live free from violence, injustice, and abuse. It is not glamorous work; it begins in the home, the community, the village, the township. . . . It is a struggle that must be renewed every day in every heart and mind, in every neighborhood, in every part of the country." Peter and Linda Biehl have chosen to continue this struggle, to reach out to others who suffer, and to direct their energies to further the ideas and dreams for which Amy died. ■

The content for this article was excerpted from other pieces written on Amy Biehl.

Women of Vision International Conference 2001

When: March 1-4, 2001

Where: Glen Eyrie Conference Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Theme: "Girls: Lives Worth Living"

An international forum to connect concerned women with the challenges facing the girls of our world and to celebrate their potential to live, learn, and become the women God created them to be.

Mission Statement: The Women of Vision International Conference 2001 is a gathering of women of faith intent on discovering:

- What it means for women to become a transforming influence in their community, nation, and world.
- The choices and attitudes that hurt girls worldwide.
- The gifts, potential, and value that God places on the life of each girl.

... REACHING OUT

Partnership Meetings Educate and Inspire

Women of Vision partnership meetings held throughout the year give friends and neighbors an opportunity to address the most current challenges facing women and children living in poverty around the world. A lineup of inspiring speakers has characterized the meetings so far in 2000.

A panel of four women shared their experiences living in the war-torn countries of Eritrea, Nigeria, Romania, Laos, and Afghanistan with Women of Vision in Colorado. Kirsten Baynham's photojournalistic exposé of the life of Afghan women living under the oppressive radical ruling party Taliband was very "eye opening." Barred from employment, health care, and social interaction, these women live a terribly secluded and lonely lifestyle.

Patricia Mohr, the director of the West Women's Shelter in Portland and a shelter resident, spoke to the Columbia-Willamette chapter. They shared how the shelter is instrumental in helping many women survive turmoil in their lives and how Women of Vision support is appreciated.

Angela Mason, a World Vision spokesperson and regional director, shared on the topic "Triumphant Women—Hope in Impossible Places" at the Atlanta spring luncheon. Karen Easterday, a Minnesota nurse and grandmother who became a World Vision relief worker, spoke of her experiences caring for the starving at a Sudan feeding station during relief efforts in the ongoing war. Karen's conviction to follow God's "call" in her life was inspiring to Orange County Women of Vision, who themselves feel "called" to this ministry.

A dynamic speaker, Gary A. Haugen, president of International Justice Mission in Washington, D.C., and author of the book *Good News About Injustice*, addressed men and women in Orange County. His experiences as a trial attorney in the United States Department of Justice combined with a U.N. directorship of the genocide investigation in Rwanda have given him the ability to effectively articulate the despair of those who suffer under the hand of abusive power or



Left to right: Alam Fessaka (Eritrea), Harriet Jackson (Evergreen), Adeola Ajala (Nigeria), Fanna Negreanu (Romania), and Cheryl Touryan (Evergreen) share life experiences at the Evergreen Women of Vision partnership meeting.

authority around the world. He shared how the skills he had developed as an investigator and a lawyer are now being used creatively to "seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17). He challenged the audience, comprised of many attorneys, to rediscover God's passion for the world and for justice, to recover a witness of Christian courage, and to challenge the injustices suffered by those in need of rescue. ■

The Blessing of a Life Restored— A Family Reconciled

by Cheryl Touryan

Last fall, a team from the Women of Vision Evergreen chapter adopted a homeless mom, Antoinette, through a local Rescue Mission program. In this program, desperate women are screened and then matched with teams who will help them find housing, offer encouragement and counsel, and bring stability to their lives. Antoinette, living in the shelter with her two children, was separated from her husband, without resources, and without emotional support.

We began meeting with her and assisted her in settling into an apartment. In addition, we helped her with food, clothing, household

appliances, and job counseling. Our get-togethers included studying the Bible, discussing such things as anger, forgiveness, and parenting. During this time, Antoinette was pregnant with her third child and wanted to seek an abortion because her life was in such chaos. We were able to support Antoinette during this crisis and on April 15 had the joy of participating in a baby shower for her new son, who was received with great excitement by both Antoinette and her formerly estranged husband. She and her husband are now reunited as a couple. Antoinette is continuing her education through college



Evergreen Women of Vision celebrate the restoration of a family and the birth of a baby boy. Pictured left to right are Eunice Bollinger (holding newborn Christopher), Cheryl Touryan, Avery, Gail Bryan, Antoinette, Larry (Christopher's mom and dad), and Larry Jr.

coursework. We praise God for the privilege of seeing a family restored, a life rescued from destruction, and a new hope given to a woman who was "at rock bottom." ■

... AROUND THE WORLD

Vision Trips Make a Difference in Our Lives

One of the great rewards of committing time and resources to World Vision international projects through Women of Vision is the ability to travel to "adopted" countries and see firsthand how men, women, and children in impoverished circumstances are benefiting from the assistance they receive. This spring, Women of Vision chapters traveled to Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico City.

Atlanta

On May 1, the Atlanta Women of Vision landed in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. For the next five days they traveled the countryside visiting World Vision-supported health centers, schools, and community outreach centers. The area had never had a visitor from the U.S., and in each of the four villages, the Women of Vision were given the "keys to the city." They were touched by the receptiveness of the children in Texiguat and Liure, near Choluteca, as they conducted their first book-bag exchange project. The women returned to Atlanta with renewed enthusiasm and love for the people of Honduras.



On the trip to Honduras, Atlanta Woman of Vision Dr. Virginia Floyd meets the mid-wife who delivers all the village children. Their encounter prompted Dr. Floyd to observe: "Survival is the biggest challenge for women in Honduras. What can we do? Anything. Whether we bring in medications or help them learn about clean delivery, it will make a big difference."

DuPage County

Loaded with an accordion, book bags, and Spanish children's books, the DuPage County (Illinois) Women of Vision returned to the Dominican Republic and Haiti. They were excited to renew friendships made last year, to see the repaired irrigation canal in Guayajayuco that they had helped fund, and to learn about a new library project. Most meaningful was worshipping with two Dominican congregations on Palm Sunday as they witnessed that the spiritual bond within the family of God is stronger than cultural and economic differences.

Dallas

A Sunday afternoon in April was never so productive and rewarding for eight Women of Vision from Dallas. They had the opportunity to work alongside the young women living at the Sinatel Home for Girls in Mexico City, beautifying their surroundings by hanging drapes, recovering a sofa, and planting a garden. The Sinatel Home, part of the World Vision Children in Crisis project, provides a secure, stable home for girls who have been abused, exploited, or abandoned by their families. Through spiritual and educational assistance, the home helps these young girls



On her first visit to Mexico City, Dallas Woman of Vision Lisa Lalani visited with street children like teenage Sophie and Diana. While there, Lisa realized "what meant the most to these girls was our presence not our presents."

become responsible and self-sufficient young adults—breaking the cycle of poverty and despair.

They also spent time visiting women who had started small businesses with World Vision loans. The visitors were impressed how a small amount of capital and business training can give women the opportunity to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. ■

Dallas Roundup and Charity Auction Raises \$60,000

The Dallas Women of Vision know how to plan a great party! Eddie Deen's Ranch in downtown Dallas was the setting for the third annual Spring Roundup and Charity Auction. A delicious chuck wagon dinner, line dancing, putting contest, and a silent and live auction kept some 200 guests entertained all evening. Table decorations reminded the guests of the projects and individual children they help through their generosity. More than \$60,000 was raised for World Vision projects in Mexico City, Bosnia, and Dallas. ■

... AROUND THE WORLD

Women of Vision in Barrie Go Hungry

In April, the Women of Vision chapter in Barrie, Ontario, joined in a national effort to raise awareness and funds for World Vision sponsored programs. They were among more than 150,000 Canadians participating in World Vision's annual 30 Hour Famine. The Barrie chapter estimates that it raised more than \$1,000 and increased awareness of Women of Vision throughout the community.

"For me, it was a chance to reach out to people in other countries where education isn't available for every child, where basic food and water aren't a part of daily life, and where sometimes there is little hope because of war, drought, or crop failure," said Pat Robinson, education coordinator for the chapter.

In January, Women of Vision welcomed Gaynor McAlister as the new Women of Vision coordinator in Canada. "Since I began, I have had an opportunity to work with many women driven by the desire to make a significant contribution in the lives of impoverished women and their families," reflected Gaynor. "The Women of Vision program is having a tremendous impact on women, and I am looking forward to being a part of its continued growth here in Canada." ■



A photo and message to Suzanne Paulson from her World Vision sponsored child, Susan Nthenya Mwanga: "I love you so much and will always pray for you whenever I am praying."

A Dream Becomes a Reality in New Zealand

About six years ago, Sue Best, a World Vision worker in New Zealand, had a dream of someday creating a women's auxiliary group that would support World Vision New Zealand local and international projects. Last fall, she was amazed to read in a Women of Vision newsletter that her dream was actually a reality in the United States and Canada. She e-mailed the Women of Vision office to learn more and was informed that Karen Stockman, from the Orange County Women of Vision chapter, was making a trip to New Zealand and would arrange to meet with her to share the Women of Vision model.

On January 17, 2000, Sue Best and Robyn Smith from New Zealand, Karen Stockman from the United States, and Anita DelHaas-vanDijk from Amsterdam converged in Auckland, New Zealand, and spent the afternoon exchanging ideas regarding the formation of a new Women of Vision chapter in Auckland. Anita DelHaas-vanDijk, currently heading the World Vision Corporate Donor program in Europe, happened to be traveling in New Zealand and as only God could arrange, was available to meet with the group. Anita shared valuable advice derived from her many years leading donor trips and



Women of Vision Sue Best, Anita DelHaas-vanDijk, Robyn Smith, and Karen Stockman meet in New Zealand to discuss the launch of the Auckland chapter.

from recently starting a Women of Vision group for World Vision Netherlands.

Sue and Robyn, despite busy work schedules, are very optimistic about forming a chapter. They are impressed by the support materials provided by Women of Vision and already have ideas of who they would invite to their first meeting, in addition to what international projects they might consider. As the women parted, all expressed a desire to meet again at the Women of Vision International Conference in March 2001.

Karen Stockman, impressed by Sue and Robyn's "heart" for women, commented that Women of Vision is truly a movement, not an organization. It "moves" in all directions. It "moves" wherever women are "called" by God to use their hands and hearts to improve the lives of women and children. ■

Building Relationships With Our Sponsored Children

Sweet little Susan Nthenya Mwanga, living north of Nairobi, had been despondent after the death of her mother last year. Her grandmother wrote Susan's World Vision sponsor, Suzanne Paulson, to tell her that a timely gift and letter to Susan "made her come back to her normal state." A photo of the smiling eight-year-old girl wearing a beautiful new dress, shoes, and socks and holding her new schoolbooks confirmed the letter. Sponsoring children through World Vision

has been a gratifying experience for Suzanne, and being able to visit them has created a bond that will last a lifetime. Last year, eight Orange County Women of Vision were able to meet and spend time with their sponsored children in Africa. They were able to see firsthand how World Vision sponsorship improves the lives of these children through education, health care, and community support. ■



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

WOMEN OF VISION
A PROGRAM OF WORLD VISION



She extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy.
Proverbs 31:20

Women of Vision, a program of World Vision, is a ministry to poor women and their families. Since 1950, World Vision, a Christian relief and development organization, has assisted the poor in countries worldwide, including the United States. We recognize that poverty manifests itself in different forms throughout the world. Women of Vision educates and motivates women to become women of action as we share our God-given resources in helping to meet the needs of suffering women and their families worldwide.

The Women of Vision Newsletter is published three times per year by Women of Vision, a program of World Vision.

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Redefining "Wealthy"

A guest from South Africa, Gertrude Sgwentu, recently shared her journey of acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with those who had perpetrated injustice to her as she grew up near Cape Town, South Africa. Gertrude's journey was led and supported by her faith in Jesus Christ. In addition, there were cultural tenets that helped to guide her as she matured. The one most striking to me was that a person was known

in the village as "wealthy" not by how much they owned or earned, but instead by how much they gave away to those in need. In the context of this new definition of wealthy, who are the wealthiest people you know? Do you think we would ever have a listing of the Compassion 500 instead of the Fortune 500? Would you be considered "wealthy" if you lived in Gertrude's community?



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