

February 2010

RISE people

God's Love in a Shipping Container



Jenny Hagger AM and the story of Mission World Aid.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,

I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me.....

What you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me

Matthew 25:35-36,40

What do you do when the Lord puts something on your heart that, to all intents and purposes, seems completely impossible to achieve?

This was the challenge facing Jenny Hagger in 1992 when a friend working in an African orphanage asked her to send a container of relief aid into the war-torn nation of Mozambique. Jenny described herself at that time as "a simple housewife living in the Adelaide Hills". While having no experience in collecting or shipping humanitarian aid to the other side of the world, she had a deep compassion for the poor and needy and a belief that Christ would honour a step of faith towards helping those in need.

The idea of sending a container seemed even more impossible when all the "experts" she approached for help told her that no one would ship a container into Mozambique – "Don't you know that the country is in the midst of a bloody civil war?" they would repeatedly say. Jenny understood the facts but she also knew that Jesus was asking her to help the people of Mozambique.

Despite opposition, and in obedience to the Lord's promptings, Jenny and a small group of Christian friends purchased a shipping container, started to collect relief aid and began the mammoth task of packing. It took several months to fill the 20ft container and, once finished, the timing was perfect. On 4th October 1992 a peace treaty was signed in Rome – the war in Mozambique was over. Amazingly the container was ready for immediate dispatch and left Adelaide on 26th October, becoming the first shipment of humanitarian aid to reach the war-torn nation from the southern hemisphere. Even the "experts" were surprised!

The container arrived at Maforga Christian Mission on Christmas Eve. As the doors were opened and the precious contents unpacked, those present sensed the love of Jesus. The following day, Christmas Day, Jenny received a fax from the mission - it simply said "You must be a very blessed people because it is more blessed to give than receive. Thank you". There was incredible joy at the Maforga orphanage – that one container held desperately needed food supplies, blankets, medicines, household equipment, toys for the children and enough clothing for 4,000 people.



some of the people who have benefited from humanitarian aid. (You can view more photos at the end of this article).

Soon a second container followed, and a third, and a fourth..... Photos were sent back to Australia showing some of the thousands of refugees receiving clothing; starving, drought affected people being given food and the sick being helped in the mission's medical clinic..... The words of Matthew 25 were being lived out. The letters of thanks kept saying, "We feel the love of Christ".

Jenny and her husband Brian were able to visit Maforga in 1993. They returned to Adelaide deeply moved and with a growing burden to send more containers. By 1998, 16 containers had arrived at Maforga and other needy destinations had also been identified.

Almost 2 decades after the first container was dispatched, more than 100 containers have been sent to some of the world's neediest nations.

The cost of sending a container is significant – typically it is in the order of \$10,000 but shipping costs to some destinations can be much higher. Each shipment testifies to the Lord's miraculous provision with donations often coming from unexpected sources or just in time to meet specific needs.

While small compared to many aid organisations, Mission World Aid makes a fruitful contribution towards the relief of poverty and the support of those in need. Two distinct categories of support are provided - emergency aid, targeted to meet immediate needs arising from war, famine, drought and other natural disasters; and developmental aid, used to help establish schools, clinics and employment opportunities

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**God's Love in a Shipping Container
(continued)**

through cottage industries and the development of micro economies.

Items sent out by Mission World Aid have included quality clothing and blankets, hospital equipment, furniture, building materials, birthing kits and school equipment. The organisation aims to alleviate suffering at the grass root level, respecting the poor and helping them in their struggle against poverty and famine, disaster and injustice, and the tyranny and corruption that is sadly so common in many parts of the world. Mission World Aid is a member of ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) and abides by ACFID's strict code of conduct requiring members to demonstrate the highest level of accountability in relation to all financial and aid related matters.

Packing each container is a complicated and time consuming process that starts with hard physical work and ends with a mountain of paperwork. The official paperwork includes the completion of extensive shipping, customs, insurance and transport forms. The paperwork process includes the preparation of detailed lists covering every box, every bale of clothing, every item of furniture, every piece of equipment and every other item! Everything must be listed and valued (and for some destinations even the weight must be assessed.)

"In addition to sending aid overseas", Jenny reports, "it has been wonderful to have had opportunities to support a number of Australian Aboriginal communities and various local refugee and migrant communities." In early 2009 a huge volume of blankets and toys was also donated to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

In 2002 a small opportunity shop opened in the Adelaide Hills at the Aldgate Shopping Centre. Funds generated from 'The Mission Shop' go towards containers as well as the work of other mission groups in India, Singapore, the former Soviet Union, Cambodia, Israel, Sudan, India and Mozambique.

Soon after the initial containers were sent to Mozambique, a formal organisational structure was established to manage the ongoing growth of the aid work and to ensure proper accountability – as a result Mission World Aid was born. It is now recognized as the mercy ministry of Australian House of Prayer for All Nations, a highly respected part of the Australian prayer movement also founded by Jenny Hagger. Jenny says "It is wonderful to see the intercessory work of the prayer

movement linked so closely with the provision of very practical humanitarian aid."

One of Jenny's favourite quotes comes from Teresa of Avila: Christ has no body on earth but yours; Yours are the only hands with which He can do His work; Yours are the only feet with which He can go about the world; Yours are the only eyes through which His compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world.

"The prayer of all those involved with Mission World Aid is that we can touch a hurting world with the love of Jesus by practically offering support where it is needed." Jenny invites you to help in any one of a number of ways:

Time: to help collect, sort and package relief aid items.
Finances: contributions towards shipping costs, operational costs and the purchase of relief aid items. Prayer: for volunteer workers, overseas partners, shipping arrangements and the Lord's continuing guidance. Donations: good quality items for use as relief aid are always appreciated. (Specific lists of needs arising from various countries can be made available upon request.)

If you would like to learn more, or would like to contribute to the work of Mission World Aid, you can visit their website at www.missionworldaid.org

Photos of Mission World Aid in action:



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smart living

The Wolf at the Door – Protecting Our Children From Sexual Predators



RISE Magazine talks to CACET Global's Carl Collins about what churches and other youth-focussed organisations need to know, and what they must do, to keep our children safe.

Services and agencies set up to support and develop children and young people are often targeted by child sex offenders. It is imperative that these organisations are aware of the different types of child sex offenders and how they think, operate, groom victims and infiltrate organisations such as schools, colleges, sporting groups and in particular churches.

Over many years Carl Collins has been engaged by churches that have been infiltrated by child sex offenders - providing specialist advice in relation to responding to, as well as the ongoing accountable management of, such situations. It is not until Carl and now his company CACET Global are engaged at this level that, in many cases, a clear lack of professional training has been identified within the organisation. This leaves children vulnerable, as well as the organisation itself and those employed or engaged by it subject to trauma - not to mention costly litigation.

Carl stresses that the safety of children is paramount and if organisations, including churches, are sued for failing to, as far as possible, protect children, "they may well deserve it!"

"Many churches are either providing sub standard training or no training at all for those who oversee or work directly with children and young people".

According to Carl understanding and responding to child abuse and exploitation is extremely complex.

"Becoming aware of or suspecting abuse is far more complex than simply picking up a phone and making a report. What you say, what you don't say, who you talk to and who you don't talk to in that window is extremely important."

Carl and Ian Hopley are both Executive Directors of CACET Global and both are former child abuse investigators. They

have arrived at far too many incidents where an adult had asked a child or young person the wrong questions or spoken to the wrong people and by doing so contaminated entire investigations, leaving children in many cases at serious risk of harm.

"If your car breaks down you don't take it to a dentist" says Carl. "If you break an arm you don't seek out a motor mechanic. Many organisations continue to engage people who have simply read a manual and looked at a DVD in order to become the person responsible for training people in the very complex field of child abuse and exploitation.

"In CACET's view such a practice is nothing short of negligent and has, in many cases, seen churches and other organisations open to costly litigation."

Ian and Carl are highly experienced in the complex field of child protection investigation and prosecution.

For fifteen years Carl was a senior child protection officer/investigator and departmental prosecutor with Protective Services (Department of Human Services), Victoria. He has also traveled throughout the Asia Pacific region and the USA studying and lecturing on child protection techniques and strategies and has provided consultancy to a wide range of organisations, particularly churches, for over 25 years. Carl was also associate minister of the Marion Church of Christ in Adelaide for 11 years.

Ian is a former Victorian Police Officer of 31 years, spending many years as a senior investigator/detective with the child exploitation unit. Ian has traveled the world studying and lecturing on child protection techniques, has served as a police adviser in a number of developing countries and played a significant role in the writing and implementation of child protection legislation.

They are both determined to make a difference in the battle against child abuse and sexual exploitation throughout Australia, the USA and the Asia Pacific Region. Their company CACET Global continues to make substantial inroads in its endeavour to, as far as possible, protect children from all forms of abuse and sexual exploitation.

Their message to South Australian churches and associated organisations is simple, but crucial – make sure that any employees or volunteers who work with children are well equipped to manage and appropriately respond to suspicions of, or disclosures of, child maltreatment.

The wolf may well be at your door – what is your organisation

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The Wolf at the Door – Protecting Our Children From Sexual Predators (continued)

doing to ensure that the most vulnerable and precious members of your community are protected while they are in your care?

CACET Global offers a wide range of unique awareness seminars. Their established and tailored training packages are presented by highly experienced child protection investigators, prosecutors, counselors and practitioners. CACET Global also conducts specialist training for child abuse investigators and law enforcement agencies throughout the Asia/Pacific region, which includes offender profiling consultancy.

For more information on the steps you need to take to make sure your organisation is properly equipped to prevent child abuse, or for more information about the services provided by CACET Global, visit www.cacetglobal.com.au or phone 08 8373 8015.

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Inside Out

Keeping My Poinsettia Alive

RISE editor Wendy Rush has two New Year resolutions – this year she aims to keep her plant and the Christmas spirit alive for as long as she can.

I am writing this outdoors on a typical Summer's afternoon in Adelaide, South Australia. In front of me sits a Poinsettia plant in a red and green pot that I bought to adorn the table for our traditional outdoor Christmas lunch.

Unfortunately my lack of green thumbs has meant Poinsettias purchased in the past have not fared very well in the longer term.

We are now well into the New Year and the plant looks to be thriving but the memory of the Festive Season is fading fast. Apart from this one remnant, all the decorations that have adorned our home inside and out have been taken down and carefully stowed away in the spare room, under the bed or on the top shelf of the wardrobe. As I dismantled Christmas this year, placing each piece of tinsel and each bauble safely in its storage place, I wondered – what else do we pack away with the Christmas decorations?

There are many things we do in the lead up to Christmas that seem to disappear by the time the left over turkey and pudding have been consumed. And it strikes me as being rather sad that we put aside some very wonderful traditions that, if observed daily rather than annually, would enrich our society no end.

Spending time with family is one such tradition. It is expected that we will congregate, often in inadequate spaces atop an eclectic assortment of furniture, with relatives young and old, happy to share the day and the meal with a whole range of characters of different ages and backgrounds. I have heard my friends say that one of the things they like most about Christmas is that it is the one time of the year when every member of the family comes together at the same time.

My question is, why does it only happen at this time but no other time? If it is important to you to have all the family together, and each family member makes the effort to be there, then why not elect two, three, or four other days a year

when you can do the same? Let's not make Christmas a time when families suffer each other, watching the clock until they can finally, with some relief, beg their departure. And let's commit to managing our time so that another year doesn't slip by before we do it all over again.

We also tend to open up to others more freely. It must be that mysterious 'goodwill toward men' factor. Some of us organise street parties with the neighbours or even extend an invitation to others separated from their own families to join us for Christmas dinner. At the very least we all seem to be more polite, even chatty, to those we encounter casually at the shopping centre, bus stop, workplace or school. I imagine we could build a much more vibrant community if, throughout the year, we developed a habit of getting together with neighbours, conversing more freely with others we deal with on a day to day basis, and filling our homes with the laughter of the lonely or alone.

Each year I send and receive about 30 Christmas cards. I know this is miniscule in comparison to people like my Mother who probably receive four times that many, or perhaps it is a lot when compared to others. But at Christmas time it seems particularly important we make contact with old friends and family. Some of my friends make the effort to write annual newsletters (no longer hand written, but still delivered by the postie rather than the email) outlining the highlights of their year. This year I actually took the time to write to a couple of people. I am not one to compile generic 'newsletters' because I keep wanting to make personal comments and observations, drawing on the memories of that particular relationship. Perhaps this is why I haven't made a habit of the Christmas letter as I would probably need to write thirty of them! And for two decades I have sent a Christmas card to a previous boss of mine who, in the last couple of years, has taken to phoning me instead of sending me a card in return. He is now well into his 80s but it is lovely to be able to catch up and talk for 10 minutes or so about life, family and old colleagues.

I know we have Face Book, My Space, email, SMS, Twitter and other social media, but how nice it would be for us to take time to make a phone call or write a personal letter to distant friends and family at regular intervals during the year. It will help us to feel more connected, make them feel more cared for and will mean those Christmas newsletters don't need to be so long!

In the hurry of Christmas preparations, when finances are already stretched to the limit, we also somehow make the time to give generously to those in need. It's wonderful that in this day and age there are lots of ways we can do this, whether contributing to food hampers, buying gifts for disadvantaged

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Inside Out

Keeping My Poinsetta Alive (continued)

children, purchasing goats, seeds or toilets as overseas aid or donating money or time to various charitable causes. Is this Christmas-time generosity representative of just another day in a life driven by compassion for others? Probably not. It is more likely to be just the one day of the year when we are prompted to think about 'others' more than 'self' – how nice to have this flow over into the New Year too!

A trip to church for many is a once a year 'Christmas' event. And for those who go to church every week, Christmas is often the once a year opportunity to invite friends and family along. It is a great time to share the story of Jesus Christ, but can we bring ourselves to invite others to church throughout the year? Most churches have special events that may be of interest to the broader community, so why not extend that invitation more often?

Of course the most significant thing amidst all this Christmas activity is the central focus of Jesus. Do we take this central focus with us, or do we leave the baby in the manger when we pack away the nativity scene? Christmas of course is a celebration of the birth of the Christ child. He entered into our world and experienced all the limits, the challenges, the suffering and the joys that our world has to offer. He grew into a man who taught and ministered to others and he showed us God, in human form. He died, rose again and lives among us and, most of all, as God, he invites us into his World, into his Kingdom. If we really understood this, it would change our 'every day' into Christmas Day in the sense that the hope, love and wonder of God becoming man would stay with us, regardless of the Season.

So you have packed away the tinsel and the baubles? Why not retrieve one decoration and place it somewhere as a reminder to take the spirit, goodwill and good news of the Season into the New Year? As for me, I will work very hard this year to keep my Poinsettia alive, and with it the spirit of Christmas.

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Spotlight on the Nations

The Forgotten Children of Uganda



A South Australian couple shelve their retirement plans to help build a future for children and teenagers in tragic circumstances – and they are looking for people to share the vision and the

workload.

South Australians Wayne and Bev Stevens are at a time in life when you would normally expect them to be planning retirement. Looking forward to winding down and spending more time on leisurely pursuits such as tending the roses, a little volunteer or community work and enjoying time with the grandchildren.



But Wayne and Bev, now in their sixties, are enduring hot and desolate conditions in Uganda. They have none of the luxuries that we spend our lives working for, and only a few basic facilities, sometimes

going months without email communication to the outside world. In the wet season temperatures are regularly 35-40 degrees with 15-25 mm of rain falling every few days. As a result the grass grows about 6 inches (15 cm) in a week so it needs to be slashed every 2 weeks – both to maintain the property and to enable any unwelcome guests such as Cobras and Black Mambas to be spotted.

Wayne and Bev Stevens, founders of the Cornerstone Foundation

How did they come to be so far away from the comfort of suburbia and so far removed from the life that many other Baby Boomers aspire to?

How did they come to be in a place where 70,000 orphans struggle to survive in a region devastated by war, poverty and disease - orphaned as a result of war, AIDS and, even worse, watching their family members being taken away by warlords, never to be seen again.

It is estimated that there are about 2 million orphans in the north of Uganda living in unimaginable conditions with no opportunities for education.

And it is for these orphans that Wayne and Bev choose to battle against very challenges such as heat, disease, weariness, hard living conditions and a difficult political environment in an effort to make a difference in the lives of these children.

Uganda is a country the size of Victoria with a population greater than the whole of Australia (26.8 million) and the challenges faced are many. 51% of the population (13.5 million) is under 15 years old. 70,000 Ugandans die every year from malaria. 35,000 are children under 5 years of age.

Since 1986 a group of rebel soldiers know as the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) has been terrorizing the people of northern Uganda, abducting healthy adults and children as young as 10 years of age at gun-point in the dead of night. The LRA is an extreme, fundamentalist militia group from southern Sudan and have abducted over 20,000 children over 20 years. These children become slaves and 'child soldiers', forced to commit the most atrocious deeds. Young teenage girls are given as 'trophies' to the rebel commanders to be raped and abused. Many of these young girls are now HIV positive and facing the terrible prospect of dying from AIDS.

The United Nations reports that 7,000 are presumed dead due to disease, starvation and brutal abuse at the hands of their captors. Many young people have been mutilated in the most brutal ways by the LRA. Abducted teenagers are often sent back to their communities with hands, lips, ears and nose cut off in order to instil total fear among the Ugandan people. These young people face an extremely difficult future and many will die, unless they receive help.

Because of the AIDS epidemic, a whole generation of parents are 'missing' throughout the country. Grandmothers, already in poverty, are now caring for their grandchildren. Other orphans struggle to survive on their own in the midst of poverty, disease and war.

The insecurity due to rebel activity in the northern region of Uganda has resulted in 1.8 million people being forced to leave their homes and stay in Internally Displaced People's camps, living in the most appalling conditions. They cannot return to their homes for fear of their children being abducted or killed. Many schools in the region have closed and a whole generation of children are no longer receiving an education.

Only 6% of the local people have good, safe water for drinking.

It is from this environment that Wayne and Bev returned to South Australia in 1986 with a clear vision from the Lord to

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Spotlight on the Nations

The Forgotten Children of Uganda (continued)

build a Vocational Training Centre for orphaned and destitute teenagers. In June 2000 Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc was formed. CF(A) is a Christian, inter-denominational, charitable, non-profit organisation formed for the purpose of helping orphaned teenagers in desperate need. Underpinning the Foundation is James 1:27 'The Christian...is the one who takes care of widows and orphans, and who remains true to the Lord.'

The vision is for Cornerstone Vocational Training Centre to provide free education and training in a range of vocational skills such as carpentry, computing, welding and fabricating, tailoring and secretarial skills, amongst others. In addition to training, the children will receive free daily food, medical care and clothing to enable them to survive, become self-sufficient and contribute towards Uganda's future.

Six acres of land has been purchased in Kitgum. A 7 ft security fence has been erected around the boundary and construction is under way on the training centre which will comprise 4 workshops, a kitchen and meals preparation area, a medical clinic, toilets and staff accommodation. Cornerstone Foundation's vision also includes building a number of small cottages, each with a paid house-mother to care for 5 or 6 young people who have been mutilated by the LRA.

Step by step Wayne and Bev's vision is becoming a reality. Working hand-in-hand with the Acholi people, they say their ultimate goal is 'to teach Ugandans to teach Ugandans', to rescue as many orphaned teenagers as possible from the cycle of poverty and death and to bring the love of Jesus in a very practical way to young people who otherwise have no future at all.

Wayne is a qualified Technology Studies teacher with 14 years teaching experience. He has previously worked in the automotive industry as a fitter and turner / toolmaker and production engineer. Skills that are being put to good use in the difficult conditions in which they live and strive to build a safe, serviceable centre for the children.

Wayne and Bev are in great need of people who are willing to come to Uganda to work with them, as the load is becoming too great for them to carry alone. If you are interested in knowing more about Wayne and Bev's work, and you would

like to support them or even join them, please visit the Cornerstone website at www.cornerstonefoundation.org.au

Is this your challenge for 2010? To direct your skills and experience towards a project that will give life and hope to children and teenagers who would otherwise have none? It is a God given vision. God will provide the workers for the harvest. Are you being called to help in the harvest and care for the orphans in Uganda?

The Cornerstone Foundation website features stories of orphan teenagers who have found new life and new hope as a result of Wayne and Bev's work. Click on the links below to read more.