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Signature:

David Patrick King

Date

SEEKING A GLOBAL VISION:
THE EVOLUTION OF WORLD VISION AND AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM

by

David P. King
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies

Date: _____

Approved:

E. Brooks Holifield, Ph.D.
Supervisor

Elizabeth Bounds, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Jonathan Strom, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Grant Wacker, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

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B.A. History, Samford University, 2001
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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

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By David P. King

The past and present suggest two distinct pictures of World Vision. The organization began in 1950 as an American organization to support evangelical missionaries. Today it is the world's largest Christian humanitarian organization undertaking relief, community development, justice, and advocacy work. While it has remained decidedly Christian, it has earned the reputation as an elite international non-governmental organization (INGO) managed efficiently by professional experts fluent in the language of both marketing and development. I argue that World Vision's transformation was not simply another example of an organization encountering modernity, subduing its religious identity, and succumbing to secular methods in order to succeed. Instead, it is precisely the tensions and re-articulation of its religious identity that have helped to define the organization through its engagement with evangelical missiology and ecumenical theology; mainstream media, technology, and professional management, as well as its relationships with secular INGOs and cooperation with the global church.

Using historical and ethnographic methods, I trace World Vision's history as a lens through which to explore both shifts within post-World War II American evangelicalism and the complexities of religious identity within faith-based humanitarianism. While numerous scholars have examined American evangelicalism by emphasizing its American features, which have indeed permeated the nation's politics, religion, and popular culture, they have understated the effect of global forces on American evangelicals. Attending to the evolution and interplay of World Vision's practices, theology, rhetoric, and organizational structure, I hope to show how the organization rearticulated and retained its Christian identity even as it expanded beyond a narrow American evangelical subculture, how the ethos of evangelical missions more generally has shifted from traditional modes of evangelism to humanitarianism, and how exposure to the wider world has influenced the identity of countless American evangelicals. These tensions and patterns of change make possible a distinctive angle of vision on the history and evolution of religious humanitarianism.

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INTRODUCTION

The past and present suggest two distinct pictures of the international Christian humanitarian organization World Vision. Bob Pierce, a young Baptist preacher, founded the organization in 1950 as a small American evangelical agency with a mission of evangelism and orphan-care in Asia. Today, it is the world's largest Christian humanitarian organization. It maintains offices in nearly one hundred countries with 40,000 employees and an annual budget of 2.6 billion dollars. Gone are the days of crusades and orphanages. Now the multi-faceted global partnership engages in emergency relief, community development, justice, and advocacy work. It is managed as an efficient international non-governmental organization (INGO). It maintains a broad Christian identity, but its leaders are no longer pastors and evangelists. World Vision now recruits professionally trained development specialists and CEOs from Fortune 500 companies.

How can we account for World Vision's vast change? As it grew, World Vision began to work with new partners, appeal to broader audiences, and transform its operations. It undertook a conversation with a growing global evangelicalism with a socially engaged theology that World Vision found more persuasive than the provincial American evangelicalism of its founder. It expanded beyond evangelical missions to interact with ecumenical and secular development NGOs. It began to pursue government grants even as it embraced a broader international outlook counter to its past unequivocally pro-American Cold War perspective. It also expanded its base beyond the traditional mission offerings of local churches and revolutionized religious philanthropy as one of the earliest adopters of professional fundraising techniques through direct mail,

television, and the internet. These transitions led World Vision to re-interpret its identity as more an agency of Christian humanitarianism than missionary evangelization, more mainstream than religiously sectarian, and at times more professional than pious in the sense that American evangelicalism understood the term. World Vision remained decidedly Christian, but it earned the reputation as an elite INGO managed efficiently by professional experts fluent in the language of both marketing and development.

The growth of evangelical missionary agencies since World War II and the turn of some of them toward social ministries may be two of the most understudied topics of American religious history. Evangelical mission agencies have mushroomed in size, and alongside this growth has come a shift in emphases away from evangelism and church planting toward relief and development. Six of the seven largest evangelical mission agencies are now primarily relief and development organizations.¹ AIDS, sex trafficking, and global poverty are now the subjects of evangelical mission. Twentieth century evangelicalism often defined itself in diametric opposition to modernism's social gospel, but by the twenty-first century, a new message of humanitarian concern has now come to shape the direction of an influential strand of American evangelicalism. Once forced to apologize for the possibility of Christian development, now World Vision carries the torch for evangelicals eager to join with the likes of U2 front man Bono, Microsoft founder and humanitarian reformer Bill Gates, and the United Nations in pursuit of a more just and humane civil society. Faith based agencies now play a greater role within the ever expanding field of relief and development at the same time that secular

¹ Wilbert R Shenk, "North American Evangelical Missions Since 1945: a Bibliographic Survey," in *Earthen Vessels*, ed. Joel Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 317; Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 118.

development has rekindled an interest in religion's role in shaping the well-being of individuals and communities.

World Vision remains the largest of the faith-based agencies. Its size and influence alone warrant scholarly investigation, but its history also serves as a lens to explore two larger themes. At one level, it illumines the complexities of religious identity. This dissertation will explore how an organization's religious identity and humanitarian ideals intersect with one another as well as how religion functions within a global civil society. At another level, the dissertation explores the often overlooked internationalism of American evangelicals. World Vision's global encounter led it to reconsider its evangelical, missionary, and American identities. Focusing on evangelicals' international impulse, I hope to provide historical perspective for the recent stream of global humanitarianism that has led *New York Times* editorialist Nicholas Kristof to identify evangelicals as "the new internationalists."² I hope also to introduce underdeveloped categories to American religious history to make sense of an evolving post-World War II evangelicalism.

Religious Identity

World Vision's transformation is not simply another story of a small, narrow organization encountering modernity, subduing its religious identity, and succumbing to secular methods in order to flourish. Neither does it follow another commonly told story of American evangelicalism's politicization or polarization. Instead World Vision's religious identity evolved as a result of popularizing, professionalizing, and internationalizing forces in a period of increased global connections. It moved from being

² Nicholas D. Kristof, "Following God Abroad," *The New York Times*, May 21, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/21/opinion/following-god-abroad.html?pagewanted=2>. (Accessed June 12, 2010).

an evangelical missionary support organization to becoming a massive relief and development agency shaped by evangelical missiology and ecumenical theology as well as by mainstream media, technology, and professional management in partnership with secular INGOs as well as cooperation with the global church.

To make my case, I am arguing that the religious identity of a faith-based organization is not distinct and isolated but often intertwined with the structural shifts the organization undergoes over time, the tensions it encounters from both internal and external pressures, and the practices and production of its humanitarian work. Religious identity is also never static. Throughout the history of World Vision, precisely the re-articulation of its religious identity contributed in surprising ways to the evolving self-definition of the organization. My question then is not *whether* World Vision as a development organization is Christian, but *how* it is Christian. The religious identity of faith based philanthropies and the religious motivations of their various donor constituencies are only two of many forces that define the agencies. I am interested in how religion *functions* in religiously motivated relief and development. Attending to the evolution and interplay of World Vision's practices, theology, rhetoric, and organizational structure, I hope to illumine how it challenged an American evangelical subculture even as it also helped to shape it.

Defining Evangelicalism

World Vision's origins are deeply rooted among American evangelicals – a group that has been notoriously difficult to define. Pollsters often define individuals as “evangelical” if those persons identify themselves with the term, claim a “born-again” experience, hold to a certain set of beliefs, or belong to a specific denomination.

Journalists often use “evangelical” as shorthand for theological and cultural conservatives or a political voting bloc.³

Historians have also struggled with defining evangelicals. Some refer to distinctive theological beliefs, such as commitment to the authority of the Bible, the necessity of conversion, the atoning work of Christ, and evangelism. Such broad theological commonalities demonstrate the potential diversity among evangelicals, from black Baptists to Missouri Synod Lutherans, Mennonites to faith-healing Pentecostals, conservative Presbyterians to charismatic televangelists. Yet theological unity—to the extent that it marks the movement—often masks real sociological and cultural differences.⁴ Many of the members of these groups may not even identify themselves as evangelicals.

Because of the difficulty of definition, I will use the term “evangelical” as it has been employed by historical actors to describe themselves. In exploring the evolution of American evangelicalism after 1945, I am attending to the particular self-designated evangelical movement that emerged from the separatist fundamentalist subculture in the 1940s. As the historian George Marsden has explained, this transdenominational network

³ See “Defining ‘Evangelical’ in Polling and Research: Are We Speaking the Same Language?” Grey Matter Research and Consulting, 2008 http://greymatterresearch.com/index_files/Grey_Matter_Report_Defining_Evangelicals_in_Research.pdf (Accessed May 8, 2012). Conrad Hackett and D Michael Lindsay, “Measuring Evangelicalism: Consequences of Different Operationalization Strategies,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 3 (2008): 499–514.

⁴ David W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). Noll rephrases Bebbington’s quadrilateral as conversion, authority of the Bible, and an active life of personal holiness. Mark A Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

of leaders, institutions, and publications shared common norms of behavior, history, and culture that enabled them to function as an informal denomination.⁵

In the nineteenth century, a loose evangelical movement formed around a common penchant for revival and reform. Camp meetings and voluntary societies propelled this impulse at home while thousands of men and women carried a confidence in Christianity's expansion overseas. Yet by 1925, the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy had fractured the Protestant evangelical consensus as both sides often forfeited the evangelical term.

By the 1940s, a coalition of "neo-evangelicals" reclaimed the term. Symbolized by the National Association of Evangelicals and their slogan, "Cooperation without Compromise," these evangelicals defined themselves against fundamentalists by seeking to reengage mainstream culture, restore a Christian America, and regain the social standing of traditional Christianity as they understood it. But they also preserved a boundary between themselves and the ecumenical Protestants, for many years the so-called "Mainline," who symbolized for them the dangers of deviation from orthodoxy and the elevation of political over spiritual aims. In contrast to ecumenical missions, for example, they embraced evangelism, not social action, as their sole end. World Vision emerged out of this neo-evangelical subculture.

This initial coalition, however, remained short-lived as evangelicals continually redrew their boundary lines.⁶ By the 1970s, evangelicalism lost much of its definitional precision as it outgrew its function as a united movement, fracturing instead into a

⁵ George M. Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), vii–xix.

⁶ Jon R. Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

number of smaller interest groups. In the late 1960s and 1970s, “young evangelicals” revolted against the newly established evangelical leaders, and an “evangelical left” emerged under leaders like Ron Sider and Jim Wallis, who challenged evangelicals to accept responsibility for social issues, theological dialogue, and political awareness. Beginning in the 1980s, the Religious Right attempted to build a conservative coalition in opposition to liberals and secularists. The past decades have led to further fragmentation and internal diversity.⁷

While evangelicals often failed to agree on a single vision for their movement, they have invested the term “evangelicalism” with various meaning through their diverse ways of describing themselves. No organization illustrates the evolving tendencies and internal diversity of evangelicalism more than World Vision. Attending to the defining, maintaining, and transgressing of these boundaries, I hope to demonstrate the evolution of World Vision’s evangelical identity.

Most scholars have examined American evangelicalism through the lenses of politics, theology, social status, or cultural style. Some highlight the embourgeoisement of evangelicals through their increasing education, wealth, or popular appeal. Others focus on the maintenance of a subculture and the continued conservative-liberal divide,

⁷ The continual debate of evangelical definition has raised the larger question of whether unity or diversity becomes the dominant image of evangelicalism in America. Timothy Smith describes evangelicals as a kaleidoscope or mosaic. Randall Balmer prefers the image of a “patchwork quilt” in order to capture a diverse yet folksy evangelicalism. See Timothy Smith, “The Evangelical Kaleidoscope and the Call to Christian Unity” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 15, no. 2 (1986): 125-40; Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, 4th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Several recent dissertations have explored the politics of the evangelical left in contrast to the overabundance of literature on the Religious Right. David R. Swartz, “Left Behind: The Evangelical Left and the Limits of Evangelical Politics, 1965-1988” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008); Brantley W Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics: The Rise of Contemporary Progressive Evangelicalism” (Ph.D. diss., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008). Other scholars are trying to find ways to move beyond the dualisms of an evangelical right and left. For instance, Christian ethicist David Gushee has recently advocated for the “the public witness of the evangelical center.” See David P. Gushee, *The Future of Faith in American Politics: The Public Witness of the Evangelical Center* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008).

with its widely publicized political and theological wrangling. Yet scholars most often depict American evangelicalism as almost entirely a domestic movement—a depiction that misses the effect of global forces on a significant number of American organizations. The most common lenses are clarifying but insufficient. As World Vision sought to expose American evangelicals to global need, its global encounters changed the organization. Amidst diverse global evangelical and humanitarian communities, it redefined its identity outside the narrow American evangelical subculture in which it had first taken root. Intensely aware of the divisions in American Christianity, World Vision promoted a new stream of evangelical humanitarianism that appealed to a broad theological and political spectrum. It succeeded precisely because its new global perspective transcended American categories that grew less attractive to countless Americans who considered themselves as evangelicals.

Methodology

My project is a form of institutional and cultural history. I have spent significant time examining World Vision’s archives and published materials as well as conducting oral interviews with World Vision staff members and spending weeks in participant observation. My project differs, however, from studies of denominational or congregational histories. Instead, I adopt the methods of “neo-institutionalism,” a term borrowed from the discipline of organizational studies. Neo-institutionalism defines an institution as an “embedded social structure of rules and hierarchies created to embody and perpetuate a set of cultural norms and values among its members.”⁸ Institutions are never simply hierarchies or bureaucracies, but they also embody cultural logics—

⁸ Harry S. Stout and D Scott Cormode, “Institutions and the Story of American Religion: a Sketch of a Synthesis,” in *Sacred Companies*, ed. N. J Demerath, Terry Schmitt, and Rhys H. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 64.

assumptions or ideas that motivate people. With this approach, I hope to avoid either a top-down intellectual or theological history or a bottom-up social history that ignores institutional cultures and ideas.⁹ My approach seeks to pay attention not only to organizational structure but also to cultural and religious change. Sometimes religious practices and theology help produce structural change. At other times, structural changes alter religious identity. My approach concentrates attention on this two way exchange.

Again applying terminology from within organizational studies, a neo-institutional approach assumes that organizations function within a “field” of institutions, or even a number of fields. For example, World Vision has operated within an American evangelical subculture, a collection of missionary agencies, a global evangelicalism, large-scale fundraising nonprofit organizations, and a secular development INGO network. I argue that one can understand World Vision most fully by investigating the multiple contexts in which it operates and the various audiences to which it articulates its identity. Therefore, debates between evangelicals and ecumenical Christians on the relationship of evangelism and social action, secular and religious approaches to mission and development, and the acceptability of child sponsorship marketing are not superfluous side issues but rather conversations and contentions full of meaning for the organization and its constituencies.

Likewise, global encounters are not limited to immigration, mission trips, international development projects, and foreign policy directives. Often, the cultural imaginaries Americans constructed to make sense of their place in the world are as

⁹ Stout and Cormode, 62.

important as their daily experience in it.¹⁰ Whether it be a Christian America crusading against a godless communism or the religious persecution and physical needs of Sudanese Christians, “context” has affected how World Vision presented its message to its constituents and how they, in turn, received the message in ways that affected their understanding of themselves and the world.

In addition, I incorporate methods from the proliferation of research on religious practices. Scholars studying religious practices have largely turned away from businesses, institutions, and denominations in order to explore practices within the home, religious shrines, or community festivals.¹¹ In contrast, World Vision’s practices are often development techniques, management strategies, or corporate branding, but they are imbued with religious meaning and deserve considerations as examples of Christian practices. I seek to discern how these practices incorporate World Vision’s religious identity and how they form the organization.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One sketches the rise of a “new evangelicalism,” the context from which World Vision’s founder Bob Pierce emerged. By World War II, through such organizations as Youth for Christ, these new evangelicals sought to reengage popular culture, an American civic faith, and the promise of global outreach. Chapters Two and Three trace how World Vision and American evangelicalism grew in tandem through the 1950s. *Chapter Two* depicts World Vision as one of many parachurch agencies founded

¹⁰ David Thelen, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 965–975.

¹¹ David D Hall, ed. *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, eds. *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630--1965* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

during the decade that would foster the remarkable success of American evangelicalism. It succeeded through marketing innovations like child sponsorship and Pierce's firsthand film footage of suffering overseas while interpreting the world through a familiar American evangelical idiom of missionary fervor and American exceptionalism. *Chapter Three* argues, however, that World Vision and American evangelicals were already beginning to revisit their initial global outlooks as a result of international events. Pierce often crossed boundaries—of traditional missions, American self-understanding, and evangelical identity—by working with ecumenical missionaries and indigenous pastors.

Chapter Four describes World Vision's second decade and its first significant transitions. It shed an approach known as "faith missions" in order to professionalize, adopting budgets, marketing strategies, and management procedures. The escalation of the Vietnam War and other postcolonial events and movements forced it to reconsider its uncritical pro-American ideologies and its conventional missionary impulses. Conflict led to the resignation of its charismatic founder and to a torrent of criticism from both ends of the theological and political spectrum. *Chapter Five* demonstrates the emergence among evangelicals of an uncertainty about the future of what was becoming an increasingly diverse evangelical movement. At home, young evangelicals like Jim Wallis and Ron Sider criticized the lack of an evangelical commitment to social justice, and international mission conferences also debated about the relationship between social action and evangelism. World Vision occupied a tentative middle ground. Even as evangelicals fragmented over theology and politics, World Vision grew astronomically by tempering the older language of missions with a Christian humanitarianism publicized through television marketing and expanded through the receipt of government aid.

Chapter 6 explores organizational change in World Vision during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As it expanded from an American to a global evangelicalism, it reconstituted its international structure in order to share leadership between the West and the Global South. As it also became a peer of larger secular and ecumenical NGOs, World Vision adopted the language and practice of development.

Chapter 7 traces World Vision's history from 1983-1995. By the early 1980s, World Vision cast its lot alongside international relief and development agencies and moved some distance from its American, evangelical, and missionary past. Nonetheless, it resisted secularization even as its worldwide mission led it to reconsider the character of its Christian identity. Was it abandoning evangelicalism or was it redefining what it could mean to be an evangelical Christian?

Chapter 8 brings World Vision's story up to the present to account for its exponential growth over the past decade. At one level, World Vision expanded as it continued to move beyond its American and evangelical origins through its embrace of professional development over conventional missions, international governance over American unilateralism, and ecumenical inclusiveness over religious separatism. The relief and development sector returned Christian commitments to a prominent place on the agenda of the organization's work in a global civil society, even as it learned to work with secular agencies, other religious, and other Christian traditions. At another level, World Vision grew as global issues caught the attention of American evangelicals. The organization returned to the local church not so much with a new message as a hope that evangelicals were entering a period in which organizations like World Vision and the culture that it represented could form a new evangelical mainstream. The evolution of

World Vision might yet chart the way for a broadened evangelicalism that sees its Christian responsibility as both a quiet sharing of faith and an intense passion to alleviate the suffering and expand the hope of those whom the Christian scriptures described as “the least of these.”

CHAPTER 1

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW EVANGELICALISM: BOB PIERCE, YOUTH FOR CHRIST, AND WORLD VISION

Today World Vision is the largest Christian relief and development agency in the world. The organization's current success, however, bears little relation to its simple origins. World Vision emerged out of the passion of one man, American evangelist Bob Pierce, after he had traveled to preach in China in 1947 and returned shocked by its poverty. He promised to raise funds to support missionaries and orphans, and he established World Vision in 1950 to show Americans Christians the world's physical and spiritual suffering. To understand World Vision's history, one must understand Pierce. To understand Pierce, one must also understand the American fundamentalist-evangelical subculture to which he belonged.¹²

Pierce's story clarifies World Vision's origins and elucidates shifts within a fundamentalist and evangelical American subculture that would make World Vision's success possible. After World War II, Pierce joined a number of young American evangelicals intent on saving the world. They embarked with a sense of adventure,

¹² Within the historiography of evangelicalism and fundamentalism, one debate remains the definitions of both fundamentalism and evangelicalism. A second debate is their relationship to one another. As this chapter will demonstrate, scholars have often been too quick to draw fault lines between fundamentalism and early neo-evangelicalism. Until the early 1950s, these groups often functioned loosely together and did not define themselves as separate parties against one another. This division developed over time. Following Pierce, World Vision, and its context up until 1950, I will tend to identify fundamentalists and developing neo-evangelicals as a part of a shared loose network in contrast to strict divisions. In a related debate, scholars have argued whether new evangelicals emerge directly from fundamentalists or a wider swath of American Christianity. George Marsden finds the Reformed fundamentalist tradition at the heart of the evangelical story. Timothy Smith and Donald Dayton view it as predominantly Arminian or "pentecostal," emphasizing the activity of Methodists, Pentecostals, and the host of Revivalist (almost Arminianized) Calvinists. (Dayton's "pentecostal" is for Methodists, holiness, Pentecostals alike – and doesn't just fit the heirs of Azusa street.) See Donald Dayton and Robert Johnston, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Douglas A. Sweeney, "The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma." *Church History* 60, No. 1 (March 1991): 70-84. World Vision's early support came from all corners of the fundamentalist-evangelical network. Pierce's broad support demonstrates that a popular message (like foreign missions) often brought these groups together in spite of theological and cultural differences.

optimism about America's place in the world, a passion for world missions, and an interest in international affairs. While stridently independent, Pierce lived within a religious subculture that shaped his understanding of the world at home and abroad. He felt the force of the independent fundamentalist megachurches and revival circuits of southern California. Later he moved into new national networks of evangelicals that emerged from fundamentalist separatism ready to reengage mainstream society. His experience as a popular evangelist in the Youth for Christ revivals in the 1940s introduced him to a new generation of evangelical leaders that led him to launch World Vision.

While initially embedded in fundamentalism, Pierce's story encapsulates the new global engagement of post war evangelicalism. In the late 1930s, Pierce traveled as an evangelist from church to church throughout southern California, preaching to one or two hundred people each night. A decade later, in 1947, he found himself in Shanghai preaching on behalf of Youth for Christ to a full amphitheater of 4000 to 5000 Chinese nationals. How did the transition occur? Historians have discovered in these years the origins of a "neo-evangelicalism" that flourished in the late twentieth century. Some explain the movement through changes in theology or politics, while others give institutional or cultural explanations. Almost all, however, highlight an eager reengagement with society.¹³ I argue this reengagement occurred on three levels: 1) a new

¹³ The scholarly debates over the relationship between fundamentalism and evangelicalism have often distorted and sometimes overwhelmed the historical narrative, but the question of engagement appears to remain central. The issue of separatism, or defined positively, reengagement with society, described the two parties developing within fundamentalism. Those unwilling to reengage "the world" remained relegated as outsiders further withdrawing within a reclusive subculture. Those more "positive fundamentalists" seeking to reclaim America and the world for Christ sparked a generation of new leaders, organizations, and ideas that led to the formation of a new evangelicalism that would ultimately become a significant shaper within both American and global Christianity. Historian Joel Carpenter exemplifies this argument. See Joel Carpenter, "From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition," in

willingness to embrace the methods and parlance of popular culture; 2) a desire to form America “for Christ”; 3) and public interest in global missions and international affairs. It is misleading, then, to devote exclusive or even excessive attention to changes in *American* churches and culture as *the* causal force. The encounter that evangelicals had with the world changed the movement as much as any other single factor. The world beyond American boundaries broadened their worldview, altered their self-definitions, subtly changed their relationship to America, and formed anew their attitudes toward mainstream culture. Bob Pierce and World Vision represented, as clearly as any other person or movement, this evangelical transformation.

Bob Pierce

Robert Willard Pierce was born to Fred and Flora Belle Pierce in Fort Dodge, Iowa, on October 8, 1914, the youngest of seven children. Fred Pierce was a carpenter who soon moved the family to Greeley, Colorado, in search of work and then, in 1924, moved them again to Southern California. Settling outside of Los Angeles in Redondo Beach, Fred Pierce found a steady job at a Safeway grocery store chain. The family revived their Midwestern Wesleyanism by joining the local Grace Church of the Nazarene.¹⁴

Evangelicalism and Modern America (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Also see George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987).

¹⁴ There are several biographical treatments of Pierce’s life. I have drawn basic details from the following: Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do*, 5th Printing. (W Pub Group, 1983); Marilee Dunker, *Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce, Founders of World Vision and Samaritan’s Purse* (Waynesboro Ga.: Authentic Media, 2005); Norman Rohrer, *Open Arms* (Wheaton Ill.: Tyndale House, 1987); Richard Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken* (Grand Rapids Mich.: Zondervan, 1960); “Dr. Bob Pierce Biography”, undated, Folder 23, Box 6, Collection 506, Records of Decision Magazine, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL.

Bob Pierce immersed himself in the congregation, made a “personal decision” for Christ at the age of eleven, and fell under the influence of the local pastor, Earle Mack. When his father died suddenly the year after his conversion, the congregation became a comforting family. By the age of thirteen, Pierce often rode the “Gospel Car,” a converted bus, bringing church members into town on Saturdays to save the lost. Most weeks young Pierce stumped for the Lord on a soapbox, preaching to passersby.¹⁵

Pierce felt drawn to the pulpit but not to education for it.¹⁶ With his pastor’s urging, however, he completed high school and enrolled in the local Pasadena Nazarene College. What he lacked in intellect, he made up in charisma. His classmates knew him as a fun-loving prankster, and that was enough for them to elect him as the student body president. That same year, in 1936, he met Lorraine Johnson, the daughter of traveling evangelist Floyd Johnson, who was holding evangelistic meetings for the Nazarenes in Los Angeles. When Johnson returned home to Chicago, Lorraine stayed to allow a romance with Pierce to blossom. When the lack of finances forced Lorraine to return home, Pierce dropped out of school and hitchhiked to Chicago. He and Lorraine married within a year.¹⁷

On returning to Los Angeles later that year, Pierce put his call to preach on hold. Unless he finished college, the Nazarenes would not license him.¹⁸ In the middle of the Great Depression, he moved from job to job working to earn enough money to bring his bride from Chicago to Southern California. After a year of drifting, he renewed his call to

¹⁵ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 21–23.

¹⁶ Pierce often made fun of his own lack of intellect. He remarked, “I’m one guy who got through high school and most of four years of college without ever learning basic grammar. But don’t blame my teachers. Bob Pierce was lookin’ out the window.” Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 29.

¹⁷ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 29.

¹⁸ Pierce would later receive ordination from a local Baptist church without such education requirements.

preach at a Nazarene camp meeting, put his faith in the Lord to provide financially, and sent for Lorraine. After committing himself to living by faith, Pierce received a stream of invitations to lead revival meetings.¹⁹

Pierce traveled up and down the West Coast preaching in any small church that would have him. There was no shortage of conservative churches promoting revivals, but a host of traveling evangelists were looking for a place to preach. The economy languished, but the evangelistic market had a glut. Nevertheless, at 23 years old, Pierce built a regional reputation. Packed churches heard “the flaming truths of salvation, in burning words from the anointed lips of youth.”²⁰

Pierce’s plain-spoken rhetoric and youthful appearance appealed to congregations, but it did not bring much money. Pierce relied on the hospitality of host churches for lodging and good will offerings for income. For more than a year and a half, he averaged five dollars a week. Financially, he suffered, but as an evangelist he flourished. While clearing only \$400 in eighteen months, he recorded 260 conversions.²¹ He felt most comfortable preaching a familiar message of salvation, itinerating from place to place, and relying on faith in God for support. Lorraine traveled with him, enjoying the variety and excitement of her evangelist husband’s career.

Despite his satisfaction with itinerant preaching, Pierce went to work by 1938 as an associate pastor for his father-in-law, who had returned to Los Angeles a year earlier to hold meetings at the invitation of Aimee Semple McPherson, the most celebrated

¹⁹ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 33–35. In many ways, Pierce modeled the perspective of nondenominational faith missions that dominated the fundamentalist mission movement at the time – without soliciting funds and opportunities, the Lord would provide. Pierce would adapt this method in his later overseas travel. He personally called it, “God Room.”

²⁰ This quote came from one handbill circulated for a Pierce revival meeting. *Ibid.*, 37.

²¹ “Dr. Bob Pierce Biography.”

woman preacher of the era, at her Angelus Temple.²² After his initial success, McPherson extended her invitation from two weeks to thirteen months. When he completed his commitment at Angelus Temple, Johnson remained in Los Angeles and built his own church, the Los Angeles Evangelistic Center. With his wife wanting to stay closer to home, Pierce gave up a life on the road for a permanent position as youth pastor. The church grew, and Pierce stayed busy. The congregation met every Wednesday and Friday and three times on Sunday. He established the youth program, sang in the radio quartet, wrote for the church newspaper, and preached each Monday on the radio.

Pierce's Fundamentalist Subculture

Pierce emerged out of America's fundamentalist subculture. It was a culture permeated by complexities and tensions. Ernest Sandeen and George Marsden have shown that it represented far more than a reaction of backwoods bumpkins to cultural strain. Fundamentalists stood in a flow of multiple American intellectual traditions. They agreed, however, that theological modernism, the effort to adapt traditional theology to modern culture, was a catastrophe. Marsden's definition of fundamentalists as "militantly anti-modern Protestant evangelicals" may best encapsulate the movement.²³

Historian Joel Carpenter has aptly described the new fundamentalist subculture. Rather than surrender to the liberals, fundamentalists created their own interconnected

²² Aimee Semple McPherson is also an amazing study necessary in understanding the fundamentalist culture in America. The two best biographies on Sister Aimee may be Matthew Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1993).

²³ Sandeen identifies fundamentalist distinctives as premillennial eschatology and inerrancy rooted in Princeton theology. Marsden adds revivalism, Common-sense realism, Keswick holiness, and a tie to Calvinist theology (right doctrine) and a trusteeship of American culture (from Puritan lineage and middle-class Victorian culture). Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); William Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Bible colleges, summer conferences, magazines, mission societies, and radio broadcasts. As they aimed to separate from “the world” and an apostate liberal church, their new network of institutions coalesced into a way of life.²⁴

Bob Pierce inhabited this subculture. Moving to Southern California in 1924, the Pierce family joined close to a million and a half other Midwesterners migrating to California during the 1920s. The population of Los Angeles increased twenty-five fold between 1890 and 1930.²⁵ Migrants from the Midwest and the South founded fundamentalist churches offered a familiar gospel packaged in new forms.²⁶ Their churches drew around eighty percent of their members from people who had lived there less than a decade, and they made Southern California a fundamentalist hotbed.²⁷ In 1915, the Midwestern fundamentalist Reuben Torrey established BIOLA (Bible Institute of Los Angeles) and the Church of the Open Door, modeling them after Moody Bible College and Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. In 1923, Sister Aimee Semple McPherson consecrated her Angelus Temple to complement her radio station and national reputation. In 1937, Charles Fuller’s Old Fashioned Revival Hour produced its first nationwide

²⁴ As an organized movement doing battle with modernists within the universities, denominations, and mission boards, fundamentalism did suffer defeat by 1920 and retreated outside the public view. But as Carpenter has made clear, fundamentalism did not disappear. While much of mainline Protestantism suffered a “religious depression” in the 1920s-1930s, fundamentalism was quietly growing. Robert T. Handy, “The American Religious Depression, 1925-1935,” *Church History* 29 (1960): 2–16. Also see, D.G. Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 55.

²⁵ Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 75.

²⁶ Darren Dochuk identifies this “southernization of Southern California” as plain folk Americanism primarily founded on race but also constructed by gender, codes of manliness and womanhood, and family. It also created a distinct sense of citizenship that highlighted an American populist impulse in evangelical Protestantism. Darren Dochuk, “From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Southernization of Southern California, 1939--1969” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005), 74; 372–374.

²⁷ Gregory H Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1978), 119–134.

broadcast.²⁸ These religious celebrities taught “old time religion” to displaced people in search of both stability and new adventure. It preached well.

Pierce’s connections extended far beyond California. His father-in-law had been converted under the preaching of Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) pastor Paul Rader, a fiery but folksy preacher at Chicago’s Moody Memorial Church and later founder of the “Steel Tent,” Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. By 1925, Rader became the first fundamentalist on the Chicago airwaves—the recipient of an invitation from the mayor. He pioneered the medium for other fundamentalists by broadcasting not only sermons but also musical montages and entertaining variety shows.²⁹ After his conversion, Pierce’s father-in-law, Floyd Johnson, worked for Rader and became known as the “Sunshine Man,” a reference to his own popular gospel music radio show broadcast live from the Wrigley Building. But Johnson felt pulled to become a traveling evangelist, a calling that drew him to Nazarene revival meetings and McPherson’s Angelus Temple. In 1944, the periodical *Radio Life* profiled his Los Angeles Evangelistic Center as the “church that radio built.”³⁰ Johnson was a preacher in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Pierce a Nazarene with a Baptist ordination. They embodied the denominational variety of the fundamentalist culture.

Bob Pierce as Evangelist

Pierce resented his father-in-law for restricting his activity in the church and his wife for being too tied to her father. He was a man of head-strong pride, and by 1941, he left the security of the congregation and resumed the revival meeting circuit. The decision

²⁸ By the early 1940s, Fuller’s show attracted over 20 million listeners weekly. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America*, 90–93.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 45–49.

³⁰ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 43.

led to the first of several crises of faith. With invitations drying up and uncertainties about his future pressing in on him, he abruptly abandoned revivals, his faith, and his family.³¹ Because of poor vision, the army denied him enlistment as a chaplain in World War II, so he drifted from job to job as a carpenter and a dockworker, living in ways that he would later recall as unbecoming of a preacher. He sank into depression and sued his wife for divorce. Lorraine Pierce wanted a stable Christian home; her husband was too restless to be tied down. Not until they met at the lawyer's office did she persuade him to withdraw the divorce papers. He returned home but not to church. He dropped his wife off on Sunday and then waited in the car until the service ended.

After a year and a half, Pierce finally slipped into the back pew of his father-in-law's church one Sunday to listen to Paul Rood, president of the World Christian Fundamentals Association. At the end of the sermon, he went to the altar, fell prostrate on the ground, confessed his sins, and asked for forgiveness. The church welcomed him back "home," and his father-in-law soon welcomed him back to the church staff.³²

For the next two years, Pierce poured himself into the work of the Los Angeles Evangelistic Center, but he remained restless. To battle the monotony of local church ministry, he borrowed a camera and tried his hand at producing Christian films. Like many other fundamentalists he had no reservations about using the media of popular culture on behalf of the gospel. To counter Hollywood secularity, he would produce Christian alternatives. While learning the craft of filmmaking, he produced two early films: interviews with thirty of the world's best loved hymn writers and interviews with

³¹ Pierce's decisions often do appear quite abrupt. He was treated for psychological conditions at several points throughout his life – including a nervous breakdown. Several colleagues labeled him manic-depressant.

³² Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 52–3; Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 181.

successful Christian businessmen. Pierce's experience with film would later enhance his powers to capture public attention.³³

In 1944, a black gospel group, the Eureka Jubilee Singers, came to the Los Angeles Evangelistic Center on tour.³⁴ Drawn by Pierce's style and energy, they offered to accompany him on his own three month evangelistic tour. Pierce would be financially responsible for his own travel and publicity as well as the singers, but the offer promised an escape from local monotony: "All I knew for sure was that I was called to be an evangelist and win souls, and I knew that no one else would hire me to do it." Lacking both capital and assurance of success, Pierce set out in 1944 to make his way as an evangelist.³⁵

While the social status of evangelists had declined since the heyday of Dwight L. Moody's crusades, the image of the evangelist retained a special cache in the fundamentalist imagination. Evangelists conveyed to local churches a sense of celebrity. Each revival marketed the evangelist as its centerpiece. They often combined oratorical flair with a muscular Christianity. Evangelists modeled energy and vigor while sometimes portraying local pastors as less than masculine. With an inclination to use pugnacious metaphors, fundamentalist evangelists "packed a punch" and "did battle with the devil." According to John R. Rice, editor of the fundamentalist organ *Sword of the Lord*:

³³ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 55.

³⁴ I have not found further reference to the Jubilee Singers and do not know what experiences they or Pierce had with segregation in their evangelistic travels. Records do not state whether the audiences were mixed, segregated, or all white.

³⁵ "Dr. Bob Pierce Biography"; Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 50–51. Pierce knew that he was an unknown commodity in contrast to the well known Eureka Jubilee Singers. Demonstrating his characteristic entrepreneurial instincts as well as self-effacing humor, he remarked, "They came to hear the Jubilee Singers but while they were there they couldn't avoid hearing my message."

One can be a modernist and be a pastor. But one cannot be a modernist and be a real evangelist.... A pastor content to ‘teach’ his congregation was a ‘backslider at ease in Zion, lukewarm, not willing to pay the awful price that it takes to be a real soul-winner.’³⁶

Evangelists also modeled a sacrificial faith. In contrast to a salaried local church pastor, they lived by faith, depending on good will offerings to make ends meet. They lived on the road, sacrificing the comforts of home and time with family to preach the simple gospel message. Like many others, Pierce found the ideals of celebrity, muscular faith, sacrifice, and adventure intoxicating.³⁷

Countercurrents existed, however, even in the evangelistic culture. With Billy Sunday’s death in 1935, some fundamentalists abandoned Sunday’s pugnacious style. They were eager to adapt their presentation to the styles of a changing popular culture. Moving outside local churches and temporary tabernacles into large city auditoriums, they were intent on marketing their product to the youth culture. With new music, sermons designed to appeal to the young, and associations with celebrities, these youthful—and youth seeking—revivalists became, for many younger evangelicals, the best show in town.

Pierce adopted the new style. Early in 1944 he followed the typical revival circuit, preaching to local churches like Powder Horn Baptist in Minneapolis, where 350 people filled the church. But not satisfied with the status quo, he decided to make a splash. He borrowed the money for an ad in the newspaper and booked the Civic Auditorium. The

³⁶ Margaret Bendroth quotes Rice in Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 77. See specifically John R Rice, “And He Gave... Some Evangelists,” *Sword of the Lord* 19 (Jan. 19, 1940): 1-3 and “Evangelistic Preaching,” *Sword of the Lord* 20 (Sept. 1940): 1-4. Bendroth notes that Rice left his Dallas church to become a full-time evangelist in 1940.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 71–78. Bendroth explicitly compares how the roles of women in the fundamentalist tradition shifted from the evangelical nineteenth century where female revivalists were much more common. Ironically, despite the muscular Christianity of the fundamentalist tradition, she finds greater roles and agency for women in the new institutions of fundamentalism than in the contemporary mainline churches.

next week he was preaching to 4000. Fellow evangelists took notice. Soon after, Pierce received invitations to join a growing cadre of youthful evangelists setting out to win America for Christ.³⁸

Youth for Christ

With the rebirth of revivalism in the 1940s, the burgeoning Youth for Christ movement could fill Chicago's Soldier Field with 70,000 young people for a single rally.³⁹ Here was a model for success that embraced popular culture, civic faith, and a potentially global outreach. Youth revivals had begun in the 1930s, though they were sporadic. One of the first experimenters was Canadian Percy Crawford, whose "Young People's Church of the Air" radio program featured dramatic messages and jazzy gospel tunes. Crawford's protégé, Jack Wyrzten, took the work to another level. Having "gotten religion" while working as a New York City night life musician, Wyrzten took his band on the road as an evangelistic team, scheduling rallies while also campaigning on the radio. By 1943, he was filling Carnegie Hall, and by 1944, 20,000 people attended his "Victory Rally" in Madison Square Garden.⁴⁰ The new youth revivalism spread throughout the country. From Minneapolis to Los Angeles, North Carolina to Texas, similar youth rallies attracted thousands each Saturday night.⁴¹

³⁸ Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 51.

³⁹ James Hefley describes the rally at Chicago's Soldier Field. 500 uniformed nurses marched in all white uniforms to create a living white cross before the platform. World War II soldiers were honored in a moving ceremony. A 5000 member white robed choir and 300 member band led the music. Gil Dodds, Olympic mile track champion ran two laps around the field and then gave his Christian testimony. Navy chaplain Bob Evans offered his testimony on the war, America, and Christian faith. Missionary representatives from China, India, Africa, and Russia processed in native dress to add images of missionary pageant. James C Hefley, *God Goes to High School: An In-Depth Look at an Incredible Phenomenon* (Waco: Word, 1970), 25.

⁴⁰ Forrest Forbes, *God Hath Chosen: Story of Jack Wyrzten and the Word of Life Hour* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1948).

⁴¹ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 161–164.

By 1944, the youth revival movement reached Chicago. With Wheaton College, Moody Bible Church, and a host of fundamentalist radio and newspapers outlets, the city served as the institutional hub of fundamentalism, and the organizational networks worked for youth revivals on a large scale.⁴² Organizing Saturday night revivals throughout the summer of 1944, youth evangelists routinely filled their venues to capacity, packing 28,000 into Chicago Stadium. As they garnered media publicity, they began to hear requests from across the nation, asking for organizational advice. Soon the disparate revivals coalesced into a loose organization called Youth for Christ.

Torrey Johnson, pastor of the large Midwest Bible Church in Chicago, served as the movement's first president. A preacher and radio personality, he had a good eye for new talent. In 1944, he invited Billy Graham, a recent Wheaton grad and pastor of the small Village Church, to host one of his radio shows, "Songs in the Night." He then invited Graham to preach at Chicago's first Youth for Christ rallies.⁴³ In 1945, Johnson gathered forty-two of the evangelists and rally directors for the first annual convention of a new Youth for Christ International organization. They set out to coordinate spiritual revival across America.⁴⁴

Pierce longed to be a part of this new organization. The exact details of his initial involvement are unclear. Pierce claimed his successful evangelistic meetings caught the notice of local Youth for Christ leaders. Torrey Johnson recalled that Pierce came to him unannounced, broken in spirit because of flagging interest at his own evangelistic

⁴² Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 164.

⁴³ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 22; Joel Carpenter, *The Youth for Christ Movement and Its Pioneers* (New York: Garland, 1988); Billy Graham, *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997); William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, 1st ed. (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1991).

⁴⁴ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 25. These rallies launched the careers of a number of the young evangelists who would reshape post-war American evangelicalism.

meetings, and pleaded for an opportunity in the new organization. Johnson sent Pierce to peddle the organization's magazine throughout southern California, but Pierce took the opportunity to preach. By the fall of 1944, Seattle was looking for a director for its local Youth for Christ chapter, and organizers invited Pierce. He stayed fourteen months, making the Pacific Northwest one of the strongest regions of the movement. Along with Billy Graham and a handful of others, Pierce became one of the stars of the movement. By 1945, he served as one of eleven regional vice-presidents to Torrey Johnson's first Youth for Christ International convention. Upon leaving Seattle, he traveled the country, headlining youth rallies in auditoriums and churches. He had found a home, however peripatetic, in Youth for Christ.⁴⁵

The Birth of a New Evangelicalism

Youth for Christ marked the emergence of a neo-evangelicalism. Most scholars have located the origins of the twentieth century evangelical movement in the “fundamentalist leaven” of the 1930s and 1940s.⁴⁶ As fundamentalists began to use such outlets as radio and large-scale youth revivalism, they leaped back into popular culture. Pentecostals, ethnic immigrant congregations, and African-American denominations joined the crusade—some had never entirely departed from it—but fundamentalists dominated.⁴⁷

The term “neo-evangelical” rarely appeared in the 1940s. From the creation of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 until the repudiation of Billy Graham's

⁴⁵ “Interview of Torrey Johnson”, February 13, 1984, Tape T4, Collection 285, Records of Torrey Johnson, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL; “Dr. Bob Pierce Biography.”

⁴⁶ Joel Carpenter, “The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front,” in *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 257–88.

⁴⁷ See footnote 1 to rehearse the historiographical debate on the origins of a neo-evangelicalism.

New York crusade in 1957 by separatists like Bob Jones and John R. Rice, most groups like YFC used “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” interchangeably.⁴⁸ The majority of conservative Christians agreed on core theological tenets. The rifts that developed reflected more differences in mood or temperament. Above all, the issue of separatism ultimately divided fundamentalists from evangelicals, at least for a time. Most fundamentalists withdrew further into a reclusive subculture while new evangelicals sought to reform America and the world while winning both for Christ.⁴⁹

In 1942, a number of evangelicals came together to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Using the slogan, “Cooperation without Compromise,” NAE founders shared a conservative theology but disliked the separatist stance that characterized much of fundamentalism. Harold Ockenga, pastor of Boston’s Park Street Church, appealed to a sense of urgency: “This nation is passing through a crisis which is enmeshing western civilization.” Preaching to the delegates of the first convention, he lamented that evangelicals remained a silent majority “defeated, reticent, retiring and seemingly in despair” overrun by liberalism, materialism, Roman Catholicism, and secularism. Yet Ockenga was optimistic as he advertised the NAE as the dawning of a new era, a united evangelical voice ready to restore a Christian America and evangelize the world.⁵⁰ The NAE served as an alternative to the ecumenical movement, which

⁴⁸ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 10. A leading architect of the neo-evangelical movement, Carl Henry wrote to George Marsden, “In the 1930s we were all fundamentalists... The term ‘evangelical’ became a significant option when the NAE was organized (1942)...In the context of the debate with modernism, fundamentalist was an appropriate alternative; in other contexts (of the debate within the fundamentalist movement), the term evangelical was preferable.” Later he says “Nobody wanted the term ‘evangelical’ when NAE was formed in 1942; in social context and in ecumenical context it implied what was religiously passé.” (letter to Marsden 2-24-86)

⁴⁹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 69.

⁵⁰ Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2008), 89; D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing*

symbolized for them the dangers of deviation from orthodoxy and the elevation of the political over the spiritual. But it also saw itself as an alternative to a fundamentalism that insisted on full separation from denominations associated in any way with mainline Protestants.⁵¹

By 1947, the NAE included a broadening constituency of thirty denominations representing 1.3 million church members as well as an additional three million associated with the mainline. Not only denominations but local congregations and parachurch groups became members. It functioned in a shifting middle, flanked on the left by ecumenism and on the right by a separatist fundamentalism.⁵² Its members were too diverse, independent, and entrepreneurial for the NAE to serve as a singular voice for evangelicalism, but it did help define a new evangelical identity by promoting a move away from separation and toward cooperation with other Christians.⁵³

Other scholars saw the publication of Carl F. H. Henry's *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1947 as the defining event for a new evangelicalism. As the preeminent evangelical theologian of his generation, Henry began his career by writing his best-known book at the age of 34.⁵⁴ Chastising fundamentalists for their isolationism and sectarianism, he appealed for a new coalition that would involve itself in society. The

Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 113.

⁵¹ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 63.

⁵² Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*; Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*, 93–95; Carpenter, “The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front.”

⁵³ The NAE did successfully maintain a number of “trade associations” that served the needs of particular constituencies like missions, relief work, broadcasting, and publishing. (name them) Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 154; James Alden Hedstrom, “Evangelical Program in the United States, 1945-1980: The Morphology of Establishment, Progressive, and Radical Platforms” (Vanderbilt University, 1982), 130; Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham*, 112–3.

⁵⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, 1947, in *Two Reformers of Fundamentalism, Harold John Ockenga and Carl F.H. Henry*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988).

NAE's call for organizational cooperation and revival were not enough. Instead, Henry called on evangelicals to act on a social ethic. He wanted them to be intellectually respectable, socially responsible, and culturally involved.

Henry saw his 1947 manifesto as "reforming fundamentalism."⁵⁵ Henry despaired over the decline of Western civilization, and he called fundamentalists to reclaim its public voice in order to rescue Western culture from the secularity that he saw in the liberal social gospel, which had abandoned belief in biblical supernaturalism and individual salvation. He feared, though, that fundamentalists' revolt "against the Social Gospel" had led to a "revolt against the Christian social imperative." If they ignored a social ethic, they would forfeit their right to be heard as agents of the gospel.⁵⁶

Underlying Henry's manifesto was a call for an intellectual respectability among evangelicals. Several of the early reformers, like Henry and Ockenga, feared that their tradition was forfeiting intellectual strength. They wanted evangelicals to appreciate learning and theology. They needed to recover an intellectual tradition. One step was the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary. With the support of the radio preacher Charles Fuller, Harold Ockenga served as the school's first president and recruited such scholars as Carl Henry, E. J. Carnell, and Harold Lindsell. Debates at Fuller helped, as George Marsden has shown, "reform fundamentalism." Rooted in the Reformed heritage, the faculty debated dispensational theology, biblical literalism, and the issue of separation in order to define the bounds of conservative theological orthodoxy.⁵⁷

Scholars have pointed to the roots of neo-evangelicalism in the cooperative spirit of the NAE, Carl Henry's call for a renewed evangelical social ethic, and Fuller

⁵⁵ Henry, "Preface," *Uneasy Conscience*, np.

⁵⁶ Henry, *Uneasy Conscience*, 32.

⁵⁷ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*.

Seminary's expanding intellectual tradition. Yet, the pertinent question may be whether a new evangelicalism emerged mainly from efforts to reform fundamentalism or the movement toward engaging popular culture. Which was more important: theological debates or evangelistic crusades? Most new evangelicals did not separate the two. In founding Fuller, a popular radio revivalist joined with a scholarly pastor. The professors at Fuller were Reformed scholars but the students --most of them--enrolled after listening to Charles Fuller's Old Fashioned Gospel Hour on the radio.⁵⁸

The Secret to Youth for Christ's Success

While these three all, in part, illustrated a desire for reengagement with mainstream culture, Youth for Christ may best encapsulate the pragmatic pietism that led the way. Youth for Christ embraced the language of the day and the styles of contemporary culture. The organization wanted to be, as it said in its motto, "Geared to the times, but anchored to the rock." New evangelicals sought to conquer America for Christ with the "old fashioned truth for up-to-date youth."⁵⁹

Youth for Christ was entertaining, promoting "a new effervescence of evangelical entrepreneurialism."⁶⁰ Its evangelists mimicked the styles of entertainers. One reporter called Torrey Johnson "the religious counterpart to Frank Sinatra." Gone were sweat-drenched outdated suits. These preachers sported wide ties and white buck shoes and spoke "the language of the bobby-soxers." Tight harmony quartets or swing style bands played an updated gospel music, often using the talents of Christian musicians who had

⁵⁸ Dayton, "The Search for the Historical Evangelicalism: George Marsden's History of Fuller Seminary as a Case Study." Another later example might be in 1956, when Billy Graham dreamt of establishing a leading evangelical periodical to rival *Christian Century*, he turned to evangelical intellectual Carl Henry to be its first editor.

⁵⁹ Joel A. Carpenter, "'Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock': How Contemporary Techniques, Nationalism Helped Create an Evangelical Resurgence," *Christianity Today* (November 8, 1985): 44-47; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 174; Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 18.

⁶⁰ Mark A. Noll, "Where We Are and How We Got Here," *Christianity Today* (October 1, 2006): 46.

once been disc jockeys or dance hall performers.⁶¹ The rallies traded on celebrity, soliciting aid from sports stars, war heroes, and movie actors, who often dropped in to offer their testimonies. Publicity was slick and voluminous. Radio spots, handbills, and press releases advertised the Saturday night meetings. Promoters depicted the meetings as a “dream date” for Christian young people and entertainment for soldiers with a weekend pass. Before his sermon, Pierce often selected the soldier farthest from home and brought him on stage to call his family for all to hear.⁶² The most famous gimmick may have been a “trick horse” able to answer Bible questions.⁶³

While gimmicks and entertainment popularized the rallies, they prospered mainly through efficient organization. In contrast to local churches, the rallies formed a coalition that included evangelists, local pastors, Christian businessmen, and local government leaders. The evangelists could “sell the rallies,” but they needed community support. Churches were willing to work together. The rallies remained largely interdenominational, gathering Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and even Pentecostals together.⁶⁴ Local officials cut through red tape to offer city facilities. Christian businessmen provided capital.⁶⁵ Modeling themselves after the Chicago rallies, the meetings followed a common pattern. Evangelical theologian Carl Henry described a typical rally:

⁶¹ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 167–168; Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 14.

⁶² Carl F. H. Henry, “Accent on Youth” (January 1945): 18–22, 48–49.

⁶³ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 13.

⁶⁴ “Interview of Torrey Johnson.” The opposing camps of mainline Protestants, fundamentalist evangelicals, and Pentecostals were able to come together for most rallies at the community level. Including the Pentecostals at this time was most unique. They often remained outsiders to both mainline and evangelical traditions. While cooperation at a regional or national level may not have been possible, the local structure of rallies in each city allowed for uncharacteristic wide support from the diverse civic and church communities.

⁶⁵ Of particular importance was Herbert Taylor, head of the Club Aluminum Company in Chicago and one of the chief philanthropists of evangelical causes, including Youth for Christ and later World Vision.

The pattern stays pretty much the same: a radio broadcast with audience participations, programs timed to the minute (individuals testifying in the Chicagoland Youth for Christ are given 45 seconds each, and it must be written and checked beforehand), short sermon keyed to youth, music thoroughly rehearsed and technically perfect, and the entire program centered on salvation.⁶⁶

Each program ended by inviting youth to commit their lives to Christ or to “surrender” themselves to Christian service. But Youth for Christ had no patience for long-winded preachers; the meetings ended in a timely fashion. Rallies ran professionally, a well-oiled and efficient operation.⁶⁷

The Youth for Christ movement, entertaining and efficient, resonated with American civic faith. Fundamentalists had always maintained a dual citizenship. They took Dwight Moody’s aphorism to heart and took the lifeboat God had given them to save all the souls they could in this life for the next. But fundamentalists never surrendered their earthly citizenship. Entrusted by God as custodians of this world, they also had a duty to restore a Christian America. When the separatist ideal predominated in the early twentieth century, fundamentalists lamented America’s alleged demise from a distance, but once they re-entered popular culture, they reclaimed the nation for Christ.⁶⁸ World War II opened the door. As Will Herberg noted in his 1955 *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* and Robert Bellah observed in “Civil Religion in America” a decade later, Americans still embraced a civil religion.⁶⁹ They honored traditional values and fell easily into nostalgia. While fundamentalist evangelicals clung to their doctrines, they packaged

⁶⁶ Henry, “Accent on Youth,” 20.

⁶⁷ Mel Larson, *Young Man on Fire: The Story of Torrey Johnson and Youth for Christ* (New York: Youth Publications, 1945), 87. Larson notes the standard outline of each Saturday’s program: 1) It starts at 7 pm. 2) congregational singing, musical numbers; 3) reports on how YFC spreading through country; 4) testimonies from servicemen; 5) main speaker (about 22 minutes); 6) ends promptly at 9:30.

⁶⁸ George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 66–67.

⁶⁹ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96 (December 1, 1967): 1–21.

traditional values in ways that exploited that civil religion. Youth for Christ rallies honored the nation by hanging American flags, welcoming soldiers as war heroes, and honoring the war dead. One caption under a photo of a podium draped in American flags read, “Young Americans are finding that patriotism and the gospel go well together.”⁷⁰

Alongside their nationalism, they challenged a perceived demise of morality and the rise of secularism. As the public worried about duck tail haircuts and the rise of juvenile delinquency, Youth for Christ evangelists preached evangelism and pleaded for right living. The mainline Protestants—many of them—still hoped to reform social structures, but these evangelists insisted that only personal commitment to Christ could change society. Torrey Johnson declared that “young people want something that challenges the heroic. They want something that demands sacrifice...that is worth living and dying for.”⁷¹ The model for many of Youth for Christ testimonies exploited these fears. Many of the evangelists or celebrities had been Christians only for a short time. They knew the path of immorality, and they claimed that good Christian living was far better and more fun.⁷²

The time was right for Americans to listen to such a message. Americans wanted traditional morality, religious faith, and civic virtues. From local mayors to President Harry Truman, politicians supported the youth rallies. Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst publicized Youth for Christ in all of his twenty-two papers.⁷³ Not since

⁷⁰ Torrey Johnson and Robert Cook, *Reaching Youth for Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1944).

⁷¹ Mel Larson, *Youth for Christ: Twentieth Century Wonder* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1947), 29.

⁷² Joel A. Carpenter, “Youth for Christ and the New Evangelicals,” ed. D.G. Hart, *Reckoning With the Past* (1995): 364; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 168–9.

⁷³ Hearst also contributed to Billy Graham’s rise to fame through positive exposure during his 1949 Los Angeles crusade. Before Hearst gave the message to “puff Graham,” he had given the same message to “puff YFC.” “William Randolph Hearst’s Editorial Endorsement of ‘Youth for Christ,’” *United Evangelical Action* (July 16 1945): 13; “Hearst Papers Now Boast Youth for Christ,” *United Evangelical Action* (July 2 1945): 1.

the 1925 Scopes trial had fundamentalists received such national coverage, but this time much of the coverage was positive. At the height of the movement in 1946, Youth for Christ reported nine hundred rallies with an estimated audience of one million youth each Saturday night and millions more tuning in over radio.⁷⁴

In seeking America's spiritual revival, they also looked beyond American shores. Torrey Johnson told *Time* magazine in 1946 that his organization's goal was the "spiritual revitalization of America and the complete evangelization of the world in our generation."⁷⁵ Fundamentalists, unlike the mainline, had never relinquished this motto of global missions. World mission had briefly dropped from the wider public agenda. While fundamentalist mission societies were growing, they largely appealed only to fellow fundamentalists. But with new hope in changing American society, calls to missionary service reappeared. Youth for Christ sponsored hundreds of "world vision" rallies promoting the work of international missionaries.⁷⁶

Having fought in a world war, Americans were more aware of the world. News reports from the frontlines and the stories of servicemen in Europe, Asia, and North Africa encouraged Americans to see themselves as custodians of the Free World, charged to protect it from totalitarianism and communism. Echoing such sentiments, Youth for Christ evangelists reminded their audience that America was God's chosen nation. Harkening back to Puritan jeremiads, Torrey Johnson questioned the nation's readiness: "If we have another lost generation... America is sunk. We are headed either for a

⁷⁴ Carpenter, "Youth for Christ and the New Evangelicals," 355; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 166–167; Larson, *Young Man on Fire: The Story of Torrey Johnson and Youth for Christ*, 90.

⁷⁵"Youth for Christ," *Time*, Feb. 4, 1946, 46–47 quoted in Carpenter, "Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock," 46.

⁷⁶ Carpenter, "Youth for Christ and the New Evangelicals," 368.

definite turning to God or the greatest calamity ever to strike the human race.”⁷⁷ Only a moral America could lead a global revival and ensure political stability abroad. Revival at home would lead to an evangelized world. YFC evangelists recruited hundreds of missionary candidates for overseas service.⁷⁸

Christian conversion was the antidote to global suffering, communism, and materialism. Avoiding politics, the evangelists staged revivals, but they believed the Christian gospel had a role to play in America’s international relations. A number of generals and heads of state agreed. General Douglas MacArthur invited Youth for Christ to postwar Japan to “provide the surest foundation for the firm establishment of democracy.”⁷⁹ Johnson replied, “Who knows but what we’ve got an army of occupation for the purpose of establishing Youth for Christ.”⁸⁰ Youth for Christ became both a mission society and a model of American triumphalism.

Youth For Christ Goes International

After the war, skeptics had predicted the demise of YFC, but its international mission gave it new vitality. YFC leaders called for career missionaries and exported their evangelists. As invitations poured in, Hubert Mitchell, YFC rally director in Los Angeles, remarked that the need now is for “sparks, not missionaries, to help Christians in other countries start their own rallies.”⁸¹ Some U.S. soldiers, “saved” at YFC rallies in America before deployment, now returned overseas, where they organized YFC rallies

⁷⁷ Johnson, “God Is in It!,” Minutes of the First Annual Convention, Youth for Christ International (July 22-29, 1945) quoted in Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 171.

⁷⁸ Noted evangelical missiologist Ralph Winter commented that YFC produced the “greatest generation of missionary recruits in the history of the church.” Carpenter, “Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock,” 44.

⁷⁹ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

wherever they landed. Missionaries and national Christians, hearing of YFC's success in America, invited the evangelists to lead revivals. Evangelists came to spread the Christian message and American-style values in every school, auditorium, and governmental palace opened to them. America was the liberator, and YFC evangelists proclaimed both political and Christian freedom.⁸²

By 1947, YFC International established "invasion teams" that the organization deployed for three to six month evangelistic tours to win the world to Christ.⁸³ The most popular voices—preachers like Billy Graham and Torrey Johnson--toured England, Scotland, and France, while others headed to Eastern Europe or North Africa, South America, the Caribbean, India, Japan, the Philippines, and China. In a twelve month period from 1947 to 1948, YFCI sent out ten international teams. Before embarking, few had firsthand experience overseas. Their international rallies copied the revivals at home, but no matter how much was lost in translation, the evangelistic sermons, upbeat music, Christian celebrities, and massive promotion, coupled with America's global cache, heightened international curiosity.

The reaction was intoxicating, and they felt the time was ripe for "greater conquests for Christ" – they would change the world now or never.⁸⁴ As Western Christians, they could battle communism, false religions, and poverty with the Christian

⁸² Carpenter, "Youth for Christ and the New Evangelicals," 369; Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 29, 34.

⁸³ Military and crusade language was common. YFC founder Torrey Johnson spoke of the need to "invade England with the Gospel." They talked of "beachheads" being planted opening up opportunities for further "invasions." Evangelists were "Christian commandos" with "arsenals" for worldwide evangelization. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 178–179; Richard V. Pierard, "Pax Americana and the Evangelical Missionary Advance," in *Earthen Vessels*, ed. Joel A Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990, 155–179. Pierard discusses the connection of American nationalism and evangelical missionary growth in the 1940s-1950s.

⁸⁴ The often quoted text was 2 Chronicles text 7:14. Merv Rosell, "God's Global 'Go!'" *Winona Echoes* 51 (1945): 260-65; F.D. Whitesell, "God's Purposes in World War No. 2," *The Voice* 23 (Sept. 1944): 8. Carpenter, "Youth for Christ and the New Evangelicals.," 369.

gospel. Much to the satisfaction of their supporters back home, YFC evangelists took a largely American gospel to the world.

Pierce Heads to China

Bob Pierce became one of the international globetrotters. At first he had little interest in world missions. He was called to evangelize America's youth. But in 1947, Torrey Johnson asked him to serve YFC in China. Johnson had declined invitations to China because he was committed to a tour of Europe. Pierce's family had moved to Los Angeles, where Lorraine Pierce had family in order to help with her health issues as Pierce traveled. Confined to bed while suffering from exhaustion, she "released" Pierce to the Lord's call to China only after Torrey Johnson paid her a personal visit.⁸⁵

YFC's shoestring budget could not offer Pierce much financial support for a costly trip to China, so he raised his own funds with the faith that God would provide.⁸⁶ A YFC rally at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles led by Billy Graham pulled in \$300 for Pierce. Graham brought Pierce to the platform and presented him with a Bible on behalf of YFC and the young people of America to deliver to General Chiang Kai-Shek. A picture of the presentation appeared on the front page of the next morning's *Los Angeles Times*, but Pierce probably missed it.⁸⁷ With assurances from Christian businessmen that they would take care of his family, he used the previous night's receipts to book passage as far as the funds would take him – Hawaii. After arriving there, YFC supporters wired him funds to get him to the Philippines. In the Philippines, he found a wealthy Filipino

⁸⁵ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 62–3.

⁸⁶ On defining faith missions, see footnote 8. The principle among independent fundamentalist missions was originally attributed to George Mueller and later adapted by Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission. For more information see, Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, 2000, 105–6; E Frizen, *75 Years of IFMA, 1917-1992: The Nondenominational Missions Movement* (Pasadena Calif.: William Carey Library, 1992).

⁸⁷ *Youth for Christ* (Sept. 1947): 53.

Christian directing the Youth for Christ work that took him on a tour throughout the islands. Filipino journalists treated him as a Western celebrity as he preached to packed auditoriums and met with leading politicians. He flew on to Hong Kong still wondering how he would make it to mainland China. On arrival, the pilot delivered a package to him, a gift from the Filipino Youth for Christ committee exactly covering the cost of his plane ticket to Shanghai. Chinese missionaries told him he had arrived just in time for his scheduled revival meeting that night.⁸⁸

Asia—China in particular—had dominated the missionary imagination.

Throughout the early twentieth century, the Protestant mainline churches directed special attention to Asia. In 1919, they made up over seventy percent of the missionary force in the three largest “mission fields” of China, India, and Japan. Even in the 1930s, when religious depression battered the mainline, their missionary force outpaced conservative Protestant groups ten to one.⁸⁹ Yet by the 1930s, new nationalisms, modernization, and maturing indigenous Christian communities began to question missionary motives. China fell into civil war beginning in 1927, Japan went to war with China in 1937, and India rebelled against British colonial rule in 1920. The new situation devastated mainline missions.⁹⁰

During and after World War II, however, Asian nations once again became prizes to be won, especially as the Cold War absorbed the attention of America and the Soviet

⁸⁸ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 65–66; Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 58–67.

⁸⁹ In addition to missionary personnel, the movement invested millions of dollars in Asia. In 1939, the mainline invested over 2.5 million dollars just in Japan and Korea. See “God and the Emperor,” *Time* (Sept. 9, 1940): <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/archives/>.

⁹⁰ Kenneth Scott Latourette, “The Real Issue in Foreign Missions,” *The Christian Century* 48 (April 15, 1931): 506; For discussion of the decline of mainline foreign missions see, William Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 128, 175.; “Nationalism is Throttling Missions,” *The Christian Century* 50 (Sept. 13, 1933): 1140; Robert E. Speer, “True and Abiding Basis of Foreign Missions,” *Missionary Review of the World* (Oct. 1929): 757.

Union. The Chinese nationalists' fight against the communists worried Americans who backed the Christian Nationalist Generalissimo Chiang and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek. The Kai-Sheks knew how to speak to their Western supporters. They welcomed Christian missionaries to China to build schools and hospitals, and they framed China's war as a battle between Christianity and communism.⁹¹ The China lobby in America, led by powerful men like Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Newsweek*, publicized the nationalist cause and the Kai-Sheks' Christian faith.⁹² The secular media like the *New York Times* and the *Readers Digest*, along with the liberal *Christian Century* and the conservative *Moody Monthly* reported on Christian progress in China. Fundamentalists, no longer languishing in separatist enclaves, joined the conversation.⁹³

Pierce's Discoveries Overseas

Pierce left no information about his level of insight into global politics and missions in China before he arrived. Like most other YFC evangelists, however, Pierce admitted he was quite naïve and ill-informed about Christianity overseas. With no knowledge of Chinese culture and language, he began his evangelistic meetings just as he had in America's heartland. As his interpreter translated his message into Chinese, the crowds and the conversions amazed him. For four months, Pierce held two services a day. Some days he held as many as seven. Massive crowds usually filled the largest

⁹¹ "Chiang and His Wife Laud Christianity." *New York Times*, April 13, 1943, 6; Chiang Kai-Shek, "The Spirit of the Christian Soldier," *The Christian Century* (Mar 15, 1944): 331-332.

⁹² Patricia Neils, *China Images in the Life and Times of Henry Luce* (Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990); Robert Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); T Jespersen, *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

⁹³ More liberal publications like the *New York Times* and *Christian Century* began to waver in supporting Chiang Kai-Shek after 1947 due to charges of corruption as well as meager success. While evangelicals largely remained with Chiang, many Americans read the handwriting on the wall and prepared for a Communist mainland China.

auditorium in town. At the end of the trip, Pierce had recorded 17,852 decisions in the flyleaf of his Bible.⁹⁴

He also recounted his influence on the country's leaders. Chiang Kai-Shek's leading general invited him to preach to his staff and twenty of Kai-Shek's bodyguards accepted Christ.⁹⁵ On a visit with Madame Kai-Shek, he delivered the Bible YFC had presented as a gift to China's Christian leaders. She confided to him that "China's trouble is not political. It is not economical. It is spiritual bankruptcy."⁹⁶ Pierce came to believe that American evangelicals needed to act quickly and decisively.⁹⁷

The adventure enthralled Pierce and satisfied his wanderlust. He loved jumping from plane to plane without knowing what the next day held. In the midst of civil war, Pierce preached in and out of war zones, discovering a Christian mission equal to the challenge of a godly and masculine evangelist. Relieved of cares for wife and family, Pierce sacrificed a "safe life" and encouraged other Americans to emulate him.

Pierce also found China exotic. A train trip, street life, or a ride in a rickshaw took him away from the familiar:

Old and new, everywhere. Coolies shoulder their ageless burdens, while trucks beep for them to get out the way. Farm boys work their foot-operated water lifts while, overhead, a DC-3 flashes its silver wings in the sun. Take away the plane. Take away the truck. Take away the train. And you have the China that Marco Polo found six centuries ago. Old and new. Which is better? The new has brought... Well, what has it brought? War. Greed. New modes of sin. Good

⁹⁴ Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 66; Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 73; "Dr. Bob Pierce Biography."

⁹⁵ Bob Pierce and Ken Anderson, "China as We Saw It," *Youth for Christ*, September 1948, 65.

⁹⁶ While struck by his meeting with Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Pierce felt she "lacked real spiritual insight." Personally, he felt she may think of Christianity more 'in terms of Christian and social betterment.' He wondered if she held more of the Christian principles of her mainline Methodist heritage, but this did not stop Pierce from supporting the Kai-sheks and preaching for them numerous times. Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 72-3.

⁹⁷ "Dr. Bob Pierce Biography"; Ken Anderson, "Ambassador on Fire," *Youth for Christ*, June 1948, 4-7, 15-16.

things too, but also these. Is it worth the price? China makes you think about things like that.⁹⁸

On one hand, Pierce depicted China as an Eastern “other” with superstitions that had no place in the advanced and modernized West. On the other, he described a modernizing China not so distant from the West. Pierce’s images were both fantastic and realistic. Their purpose was to pose a question for American evangelicals: Are Chinese Christians totally alien or can American Christians identify with them? Does the West offer China the benefits of modernization, or does it export only the worst of its culture? Pierce began to see that the East could speak to the West.⁹⁹

The poverty he saw affected him deeply. He praised the Chinese openness to the gospel, but his experience with the poor genuinely troubled him. He felt guilt about “making speeches” in the face of such physical suffering.¹⁰⁰ Between evangelistic meetings, he often went to observe missionaries who worked with the poorest of the poor. In Kunming, he met American missionary Beth Albert, who ran a home for lepers through the China Inland Mission. While intent on evangelism, she spent most of her time treating leprosy and caring for orphans. Pierce talked about her in the *Youth for Christ* magazine: “Work among lepers is a thing of joy. Beth Albert is no weird ascetic. She didn't flee to China in order to escape the eyes of Occidental civilization. Beth Albert is a normal, enthusiastic American girl. . . Beth Albert loves the lepers because she has found the will of God for her life.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ken Anderson and Bob Pierce, *This Way to the Harvest* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1949), 56.

⁹⁹ Anderson and Pierce, *This Way to the Harvest*; John Robert Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision’s Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film” (University of Southern California, 1980), 38–48; Bob Pierce, *China Challenge: Miracle Miles In The Orient*, 1948.

¹⁰⁰ Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 72.

¹⁰¹ Ken Anderson, “Her Community Is Called Death,” *Youth for Christ*, April 1949, 69.

One particular encounter with poverty provided the founding myth for World Vision. In Amoy, China, Dutch Reformed missionary Tena Hoelkeboer invited Pierce to preach to her school of 400 girls. In retelling the story, Pierce admitted his naïveté:

I hadn't brains enough, or insight, to know that there was a cultural difference between Youth for Christ in America and the Chinese way up in the interior of China, so I was preaching the same stuff. I never thought through the differences in their cultural background or how incomprehensible my Western Judeo-Christian ideas and concepts would be to this five-thousand-year-old-culture.... I told these kids, 'Go home and tell your folks you're going to be a Christian.'¹⁰²

When one of Hoelkeboer's students, White Jade, informed her father that she had converted to Christianity, he beat her and threw her out of the house. Hoelkeboer, distressed at the prospect of taking on yet another orphan, demanded of Pierce, "What are you going to do about it?" Pierce gave Hoelkeboer five dollars, all the money he had left, and promised to send more each month on his return to the States.¹⁰³ After his return, he recounted the story to audiences, asking them how anyone could ignore "the half of Asia that goes to bed hungry and without knowing Christ."¹⁰⁴ His invitation repeated Hoelkeboer's question, "What are you going to do about it?"¹⁰⁵

Pierce discovered that international evangelism was his calling. He felt that "God's time was now" for China. His daughter, Marilee Pierce Dunker, declared that Pierce "went to China a young man in search of adventure, but came home a man with a

¹⁰² Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 73.

¹⁰³ World Vision highlights this story as the origin of their child sponsorship program. In 2010, on the occasion of World Vision's 60th anniversary, Pierce's daughter Marilee Dunker Pierce returned to Annoy looking for White Jade. Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 83–84; Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 74–75; Gary F. VanderPol, "The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005" (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 40; Bob Pierce, *Orphans of the Orient: Stories That Will Touch Your Heart* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1964), 55–60.

¹⁰⁴ Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 184.

¹⁰⁵ This served as the last line of Pierce's first book on his travels in China. Anderson and Pierce, *This Way to the Harvest*.

mission.”¹⁰⁶ He wrote to his wife: “These people are so needy, so hungry for the Gospel that even a nobody like me can, under God, do so much that I doubt if I’ll ever be willing to just ‘go through the motions’ of evangelizing in America again.”¹⁰⁷ With his flair for the dramatic, Pierce wrote:

If I had the choice of laboring in any generation since Christ walked on earth, I would rather stand as a harvester in the midst of the present field of China than to have been Martin Luther, Finney, Moody or Sunday in their fields at their ripest. In 18 weeks, God gave us over 17,000 decisions.¹⁰⁸

In short, the world changed him, and he became, for American evangelicals, an advocate for the poor.

Beginning to Bring the East to American Evangelicals

Pierce returned to America in October 1947. “I went to change them,” he said, “but instead I was the one that returned changed.” Pierce’s message attracted attention, however, because of his evangelistic success. Audiences packed churches and civic auditoriums to hear about God’s work in a foreign land gripped by spiritual and political crises. He told them that it was hard to stay away from the Orient. “He had gone there to preach the gospel, true enough,” he said, “but he had also gone there to capture the need of the people and to bring that need back to America.”¹⁰⁹ Pierce accepted the challenge of bringing both Asia’s spiritual and physical needs to the attention of American evangelicals. He began to think of himself as a “man in the gap,” driven by an urgency to save the world for Christ *now*. He assumed that when American Christians heard of the suffering, they could not ignore the need.

¹⁰⁶ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 85.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Letter from Bob to Lorraine Pierce, Aug. 3, 1947.

¹⁰⁸ Bob Pierce, *Youth for Christ*, June 1948, 54.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, “Ambassador on Fire,” 16.

In nine months, he raised over \$67,000 for Youth for Christ work overseas. Pierce had borrowed camera and film for his trip to China, and he hoped his images would give his American audience insight into what Asia was “really like.” For decades, missionaries had offered glimpses of their work by dressing in native garb and showing slides. Pierce offered much more. In his first 38 minute film, the 1948 *China Challenge*, he turned to the viewer at the outset: “one picture is worth a thousand words.... You’ll permit the camera to show you the physical and spiritual needs of a land which words alone could never describe.”¹¹⁰

The seeming realism of his film captivated evangelicals. As travelogue, the camera depicted “the sights and sounds of the Orient” – street vendors, children playing, Buddhist temples, and Christian churches. For social commentary, Pierce showed starving children, families living in garbage dumps, and leper colonies with no medical treatment. *China Challenge* also attested to evangelistic success. Clips of Pierce preaching to thousands alternated with scenes of Chinese coming forward to receive Christ. The film highlighted the work of missionaries as experts and sacrificial heroes. Pierce challenged Americans to take part in the adventure.

Pierce Returns to China - 1948

Pierce wanted to return to China; Youth for Christ was eager to send him. In 1948, the organization also named him an international evangelist and missionary-at-large. That same year, Pierce attended the first YFC International Conference in Beatenberg, Switzerland, which gathered 320 delegates from 30 countries to plan world evangelization. He drew crowds with his stories from China, but Pierce was never one for conferences. The following month, he returned to China with the editor of *Youth for*

¹¹⁰ *China Challenge*, 1948.

Christ magazine, Ken Anderson. YFC knew Pierce had attracted attention in America, and they hoped to capitalize on his second trip with increased publicity.¹¹¹

On this trip, he identified the cities as the battlefields in the spiritual battle for China. Pierce concentrated his efforts in urban areas. Once more he generated enthusiasm with capacity crowds at every event. Better prepared for the poverty he would encounter, he brought funds from America and gave them to the missionaries who worked among the poor. Pierce no longer conceived of his work as simply evangelistic. He gathered more images and stories of social conditions to share with his audience in the West. He lauded the missionaries, making sure that his audience back home knew that they both preached the gospel and ministered to China's overwhelming physical needs.¹¹²

He was not prepared, however, for the growing danger. Pierce learned of pastors and missionaries captured or killed by the communists. Preaching within miles of the front lines, he lauded the sacrifices of nationalist soldiers and portrayed refugees streaming from communist territory, many recounting stories of torture and abuse on account of their faith:

Hourly the shadow of Communism moves down upon the great area of China. Most of the North is already gone. Student centers are still open, but these too, may momentarily be closed. Today is still the day of harvest. Tomorrow may see missionaries forced to vacate the entire country. Then the door of our opportunity will be closed. Maybe it will be closed forever.¹¹³

When Pierce returned to the States, he had little patience for western ambivalence. He told them that they might never have another chance to infiltrate Asia with the gospel.

¹¹¹ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 41–42. Also see “World Congress Report,” *Missionary Digest* (Jan 1949): 6–7.

¹¹² Pierce and Anderson, “China as We Saw It.”

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 68.

Pierce's Emerging Message to American Evangelicals

In 1949, evangelical press Zondervan published *This Way to the Harvest*, Ken Anderson and Bob Pierce's account of their recent trip. It sold through its first edition of 10,000 copies in under five months. Pierce continued to share his firsthand stories as he stumped across America, raising both awareness and funds. With countless retellings, his message coalesced around several themes.¹¹⁴

First, Pierce wanted evangelicals to experience the East vicariously. He described the sights, sounds, and smells, and told about cuisine, religious practices, and family structures, describing the differences between East and West. He wanted his audiences to appreciate the Chinese. He also affirmed the work of missionaries, whom he described as red-blooded, adventurous westerners living out a call from God. He emphasized the common faith Chinese Christians shared with his evangelical audiences: "Even in pagan communities, China is a land of hospitality," Pierce recalled, "and when a Chinese becomes a Christian, his congeniality becomes even more pronounced."¹¹⁵

He also integrated the call for evangelization with a plea for aid to the poor. The missionaries of Pierce's stories alleviated suffering in the name of Christ. Pierce appealed to evangelicals' social conscience with stories of suffering overseas. While a handful of evangelical theologians began to ponder how to reverse the malaise of evangelical social concern, Pierce highlighted it through firsthand accounts of suffering overseas¹¹⁶ He tied

¹¹⁴ Mel Larson, "Review of *This Way to the Harvest*," *Youth for Christ* (Aug. 1949): 51.

¹¹⁵ Anderson and Pierce, *This Way to the Harvest*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Most scholars have pointed to Carl Henry's 1947 *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* as an initial marker for reconsidering an evangelical social ethic as American evangelicals reengaged the world. Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1947).

evangelism and social concern together with insider evangelical language that completely avoided the language of liberal social gospel that conservatives despised.

He sought, moreover, to help evangelicals see their place in the world. He praised the evangelical faith of Chiang Kai-Shek. When much of the mainstream press questioned Chiang's commitment to democracy and his chances to win the war, Pierce, like other evangelicals, continued to celebrate his Christianity. He saw China's war as the frontline of a battle between Christianity and communism that would determine the fate of the gospel in Asia. He praised the suffering Chinese Christians and the missionaries who had endured even martyrdom for their faith. And he modeled the adventure and sacrifice of a true missionary evangelist, preaching and serving as if his life depended upon it. No longer a separatist, Pierce exemplified engagement on the frontlines of God's activity in the world.¹¹⁷

He constantly proclaimed that evangelicalism was at its tipping point throughout the world. Pierce claimed that the opportunities could quickly close. Near the end of their second trip, Peirce and Anderson cabled that they were "winning a thousand souls a day while barely staying ahead of advancing communists who were mutilating the bodies of Christians." Fellow YFC evangelist Merrill Dunlop reemphasized the message: "If we don't evangelize Japan today, we shall certainly have to fight her again in some dark tomorrow."¹¹⁸ In China, Pierce frenetically called the Chinese to accept Jesus; in America he passionately urged evangelicals to take action on behalf of the poor, diseased, and spiritually lost: "What are you going to do about it?"

¹¹⁷ Pierce and Anderson, "China as We Saw It," 67.

¹¹⁸ Hefley, *God Goes to High School*, 40.

Pierce Establishes World Vision

In 1949, not long after Pierce returned from his second Asian trip, China “fell” to Mao-Tse-Tung’s communists and closed its door to Western missionaries. The same year, Billy Graham took the reins of evangelical revivalism in the U.S. in his well-publicized Los Angeles crusade. Pierce had shared Graham’s same dream, but now he had become the “Billy Graham of Asia.”¹¹⁹ China’s closed doors devastated him. Stuck in America, he fell back into traditional youth evangelism and directed the Los Angeles chapter of Youth for Christ, but his heart was elsewhere. He itched to return to Asia. In June 1949, he accepted an invitation from missionary friends to visit Korea. Stopping in Europe to pick up his film equipment, however, Pierce began to lose his way physically and emotionally. His promised financial support fell through, and isolation sent him spiraling into depression. Pierce felt his faith again slipping away. Letters to his family stopped as he drifted around Paris for months. Only word that his malaise had put his pregnant wife on bed-rest brought him home. Dejected, Pierce returned to Los Angeles.¹²⁰

Months later, he overcame his depression and launched plans to return to Asia. After raising the funds, he left for Korea in March 1950 under the auspices of Youth for Christ. Pierce again found large crowds coming to hear his evangelistic messages. He also again found poverty at every turn. He was excited to connect with missionaries eager both to spread the gospel and feed the poor, but he feared the communist threat just across the border in the Soviet Union. He returned to America in June, and while speaking about Korea in Los Angeles’ Church of the Open Door, he learned that the North had invaded South Korea. He stayed in America to raise the finances for his return

¹¹⁹ Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce,” 20. Of course, Graham’s ministry also came to be defined by international as well as domestic crusades.

¹²⁰ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 85–93.

to Korea. By September, he was off again, but he first took time to establish World Vision, Inc. to administer the funds he raised for Korean missions. Taking the name from the “world vision rallies” of Youth for Christ, Pierce’s chartered the organization as “an evangelical inter-denominational missionary service organization meeting emergency world needs through established evangelical missions.”¹²¹

Conclusion

With World Vision in its infancy, Pierce continued his relationship with Youth for Christ, but by the mid-1950s, Youth for Christ had passed its prime and World Vision moved in its own direction. YFC’s story, however, exemplified mid-century evangelical growth as it returned to engage mainstream society in America as well as expand its efforts to include a “world vision.” New mission societies grew within American fundamentalism throughout the 1920s to 1940s.¹²² Yet, unlike fundamentalist missions, YFC moved into the world with a new style of evangelism. It harnessed an increased awareness of global politics to cultivate a renewed interest in world missions while exporting its American revivalist style. YFC evangelists reported conversions in the thousands and returned home to interpret the world to American audiences. World Vision represented that new kind of move into the world. It not only left an imprint on the places where it worked but also felt their imprint on its own organizational forms and methods.

¹²¹ Ibid., 97–100.

¹²² In contrast to a decline in mainline missions, fundamentalists’ and evangelicals’ increasing missionary numbers allowed them to take the reins of the missionary enterprise. Even as their numbers increased and they succeeded in captivating the fundamentalist/evangelical subculture, however, their public role as shapers of mainstream society had diminished. In 1930, there were 12000 career evangelical missionaries but by 1980 the number was 35,000. The mainline missionaries numbers declined from 7000 in 1935 to 3000 in 1980. By the early 1950s, a quarter of the world’s Protestant missionary force were fundamentalist/evangelicals from the U.S. and Canada. (Also shift from Europe to Britain – see 185 in *Revive us Again*) page number? Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 184–186; Joel Carpenter, “Appendix: The Evangelical Missionary Force in the 1930s,” in *Earthen Vessels*, ed. Joel Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 335–342.

Those global encounters would shape World Vision. They might also offer insights into the evolution of an American evangelicalism.

CHAPTER 2

SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH AMERICAN EYES: WORLD VISION'S EVANGELICAL MESSAGE, 1950s

“Let my heart be broken... with the things that break the heart of God.” In 1951, after another long day of encountering poverty and death in Korea, Bob Pierce scrawled this prayer in the flyleaf of his Bible. The prayer became synonymous with Pierce as he encountered global suffering and returned to make it known among American evangelicals. It has continued to serve as World Vision’s watchword.¹ Yet in the 1950s, World Vision *was* Bob Pierce. In traveling as an international evangelist to China and then to Korea for Youth for Christ, Pierce discovered his calling as a missionary ambassador – to meet the spiritual and physical needs of Asia’s masses. Always the evangelistic entrepreneur, he established World Vision to support his work overseas and attained celebrity among American evangelicals.

Evangelicals in the 1940s emerged from isolation eager to embrace mainstream culture and reclaim America “for Christ.” But they also shared an internationalist impulse that expanded through the 1950s as a tide of missionaries and mission agencies sought to evangelize the world. At the same time, evangelicals embraced America as a global power. As Cold War anti-communism turned their attention eastward, they debated the future of “Red” China, watched Korean War news serials, and fretted over communist influence in India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

¹Pierce used the prayer in many sermons and appeal letters. In 1960, the first popular book written to tell World Vision’s story used the prayer as its title. See Richard Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1960). World Vision has continued to refer to the prayer as one of its founding principles even through today. The organization recently recovered Pierce’s Bible with the inscribed prayer, and they prominently exhibit it in their organization’s headquarters.

World Vision grew in the 1950s as Pierce tapped into this internationalism. He pitched his organization as something new, not another missionary agency but a “missionary *service* organization meeting emergency needs in crisis areas of the world through existing evangelical agencies.”² He sidestepped institutional bureaucracy by funneling resources directly to missionaries and local churches. Pierce showcased a new way to do missions, but he also provided evangelicals with a fresh lens to view their work.

In 1956, Pierce wrote: “World Vision is more than a mere name or a title. It is an idea... an ideal... a concept of missions on a world-wide scale.” He claimed that World Vision challenged Americans to see the world “through the eyes of need ... physically... socially... spiritually.”³ In a postwar world, distinctions between the domestic and the international blurred. For Pierce evangelism meant not only a mission in the Far East but also the strengthening of Christian America.⁴ He urged evangelicals to move beyond isolation into the world and to meet material as well as spiritual needs.

Yet despite branding his organization as “new,” Pierce’s message resonated with 1950s popular culture and evangelical Christianity. His ministry followed the Cold War’s hot spots: China, Korea, and then Vietnam. His Cold War ideology understood communism as a “godless religion” and the mission field as a battleground against it. In this crisis, Asia occupied the central stage. He believed the war with communism would

² Marilee Dunker, *Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce, Founders of World Vision and Samaritan’s Purse* (Waynesboro GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 97–100.

³ World Vision 1956 Pictorial. Folder 40, Box 35, Collection 236, Records of the Latin American Mission, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL (hereafter cited as LAM Records)

⁴ The impact of a new international focus on American evangelicals is not only one of the key investigations of this dissertation, but it also a move that American studies’ historians have made in their field. For example, many scholars have investigated the impact America’s new global role played on domestic Civil Rights in the 1950s-60s. Mary L Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

determine the fate of both freedom and the gospel in Asia. His images and insights into the “Asian mind” appealed to Americans’ fascination with the continent. His rhetoric employed metaphors of sacrifice, urgency, and opportunity. He worried that nationalism, secularism, liberalism, and resurgent traditional religions threatened to close the door to Western democracy and missions. At the same time, he recounted Christian conversions in the thousands and celebrated the desire of many Asians for freedom and Christianity. Pierce’s stories and images showcased individual stories that encouraged Americans to undertake compassionate charity.

In World Vision’s early years, Pierce packaged his “new world outlook” in a familiar American idiom. He joined a generation of religious entrepreneurs eager to reestablish evangelicals as the custodians of a Christian America and a revived internationalism. As a young, evolving organization, World Vision remained for Pierce a means to announce the world’s needs in a vernacular that resonated with popular audiences. Pierce exposed evangelicals to a world that reflected the preexisting assumptions of a broad American Christian public.

World Vision’s Evangelical Missionary Context

As a “missionary service organization meeting emergency needs,” World Vision exemplified the postwar passion for missions. The first half of the twentieth century brought changes for the missionary enterprise. By 1900, American missionaries had grown popular and powerful. U.S. presidents spoke at missionary conferences while mission leaders served as foreign diplomats.⁵ The mission movement united across

⁵ In 1900, former president Benjamin Harrison, New York governor Theodore Roosevelt, and President William McKinley all gave speeches at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York City. Soon after, missionary leader John R. Mott participated in diplomatic negotiations under President Woodrow Wilson. Gerald H. Anderson, “American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission: 1886-1986,” *International*

theological lines to “conquer” the world spiritually and socially. The 1910 Edinburgh Conference embodied this enthusiasm “for the immediate conquest of the world” and the “evangelization of the world in this generation.” The height of imperialism, missionary leaders called for non-Western countries to embrace Christian conversion and civilization.⁶

By World War I, the appeal of Edinburgh’s watchword began to falter.⁷ After the Great War, many in the dominant mainline denominations adopted a broader internationalist language. Supporting Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the League of Nations, and self-determination for all peoples, they spoke more of world unity than of world conquest.⁸ Influenced by modernism and the social gospel, some missionaries measured their success through the building of hospitals and schools rather than the counting of souls saved. Others reevaluated their view of non-Christian religions. While missions continued to grow slowly in the 1920s and 1930s, these new directions shattered the united missionary enterprise.⁹

Bulletin of Missionary Research 12, no. 3 (July 1988): 102; Sarah Johnson, “Almost Certainly Called: Images of Protestant Missionaries in American Culture, 1945-2000” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2007), 7.

⁶ Denton Lotz, “The Evangelization of the World in This Generation: The Resurgence of a Missionary Idea Among the Conservative Evangelicals” (Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1970), 35–36; Anderson, “American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission,” 104; Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁷ Renown historian of world Christianity, Kenneth Scott Latourette, referred to the nineteenth century as the “great century” of American mission. Anderson, “American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission,” 105.

⁸ Dana L. Robert, “The First Globalization? The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the Wars,” in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008): 93-130.

⁹ William Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 146–175; Johnson, “Almost Certainly Called,” 9; Grant Wacker, “The Waning of the Missionary Impulse: The Case of Pearl S. Buck,” in *Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home*, 2003, 191–205; James A. Patterson, “The Loss of a Protestant Missionary Consensus: Foreign Missions and the Fundamentalist-Modernist Conflict,” in *Earthen Vessels*, ed. Joel Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990): 73–91.

The fundamentalists and modernists of the era exported their theological battles to the mission field. No document created greater passions than the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry of 1932. Sponsored by seven mainline denominational mission boards and underwritten by liberal layman John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the report questioned the older mission enterprise. Its ideal was Christian humanitarian service, not conversion.¹⁰

The report rocked mainline churches, especially the Presbyterians. The popular author and liberal Protestant Pearl Buck lauded the Laymen's Report, calling for an end to the prideful scramble to convert "pagans."¹¹ Conservative J. Gresham Machen, however, labeled it "a public attack against the very heart of the Christian religion."¹² Robert Speer, head of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, waffled, cautiously admitting that the Laymen's Report had sound advice but holding on to evangelism. Speer brokered a tenuous compromise, but Presbyterian missions looked shaky. Conservatives like Machen withdrew from the denominational mission boards.

The conservative withdrawal produced numerous independent "faith missions." Hudson Taylor and A.B. Simpson had founded the first ones in the late nineteenth century. Unlike salaried missionaries appointed by denominational boards, "faith missionaries" relied only on God's provision for their financial support. Initially, faith missionaries understood themselves as complementing rather than replacing

¹⁰ The Laymen's Report itself was published as *Rethinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, ed. William Ernest Hocking (New York: Harper, 1932). Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, describes the impact of the Laymen's Report in detail, 159–75. In addition to religious periodicals, the popular press also covered the response to the Laymen's Report on the mood of missions at home. See "Rethinking Missions," *Time*, November 28, 1932 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,744802,00.html> (Accessed May 14, 2012).

¹¹ On Pearl Buck's larger role in the mainline missionary experience, see Grant Wacker, "The Waning of the Missionary Impulse: The Case of Pearl S. Buck," in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History*, ed. Daniels H. Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 191–205.

¹² Machen's quote found in Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 172.

denominational personnel. At the height of the mission movement, faith missions commissioned single women as well as those lacking the necessary education to meet the standards of mainline denominational boards. With names like China Inland Mission and Africa Inland Mission, faith missions left the cities and ports to denominational boards and moved inland to "unreached" indigenous populations. They remained largely transdenominational and transnational, requiring only conservative doctrinal agreement. As northern mainline denominations divided, however, faith missions offered an alternative to mainline missions. In 1917, their missionaries formed the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) uniting a number of leading faith missions around the "fundamental doctrines of the historic Christian faith."¹³

Despite a decline in finances and new candidates, the mainline boards had ten times more missionaries than conservative independent agencies between 1920 and 1950. The mainline lost its zeal for evangelization but embraced a desire for a shared world Christianity. Ecumenical mission conferences debated indigenization principles, supported national Christian councils, and redefined social action as an essential part of the gospel. Their missiology evolved as a response to the social sciences, nationalism, ecumenism, and internationalism.¹⁴

¹³ Dana Robert, *Occupy Until I Come : A.T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 183–200; Dana L. Robert, "'The Crisis of Missions': Premillennial Mission Theory and the Origins of Independent Evangelical Missions," in *Earthen Vessels*, 1990, 29–46; Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), 125, 172; Roy Robertson, *Developing a Heart for Mission: Five Missionary Heroes* (Singapore: NavMedia, 2002), 56, 125; Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, 2000, find one.

¹⁴ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 175; Rodger C. Baasham, *Mission Theology, 1948-1975: Years of Worldwide Creative Tension Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 21–50; Anderson, "American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission," 108–109.

During the same period, faith missionaries expanded as fundamentalists abandoned denominational boards and formed independent agencies. During this expansion, many faith missions changed from a “generalized, self-sufficient missionary society model” into specialized agencies. While “evangelism” still dominated, new ministries included Wycliffe Bible Translators, which focused on linguistics, the Far East Gospel Broadcasting Company, which pursued radio evangelism, and the Mission Aviation Fellowship, which flew missionaries into remote locations. Often virtually invisible to mainstream culture, these organizations combined optimism and technology to succeed at worldwide evangelization.¹⁵

The end of World War II brought both mainline and fundamentalist/evangelical missionaries into the mission field with ample finances and confidence in American exceptionalism. General Douglas MacArthur challenged American churches to send 10,000 missionaries to Asia, and the churches surpassed his goal.¹⁶ By the end of the 1940s, however, the mainline fell behind new evangelicals. Former U.S. soldiers returned to study in Bible colleges on the G.I. Bill, joined mission societies, and returned overseas. Dozens of religious entrepreneurs built specialized mission organizations. Young evangelists supported by Youth for Christ, the Navigators, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and similar groups drew record crowds to month long crusades in foreign

¹⁵ Joel A. Carpenter, “Propagating the Faith Once Delivered: The Fundamentalist Missionary Enterprise, 1920-1945.,” in *Earthen Vessels* (1990): 128–130; Joel Carpenter, *Missionary Innovation and Expansion* (New York: Garland, 1988); Harold Lindsell, “Faith Missions Since 1938,” in *Frontiers of the Christian World Mission Since 1938: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Scott Latourette* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 211–214.

¹⁶ Robertson, *Developing a Heart for Mission*, foreword.

cities. Between 1920 and 1950, mainline missions outnumbered evangelicals ten to one, but by 1955 conservative missionaries constituted the majority.¹⁷

The expanding evangelical missions gradually moved from the margins to the mainstream of American culture. Evangelicals still accepted Edinburgh's call for the "evangelization of the world in this generation." They aligned themselves with the popular civic faith and Americanism of the 1950s against what they considered a liberal mainline.¹⁸ Mainline missiology valued ecumenism and indigenization, but evangelicals largely ignored these aims. They remained high on optimism even if short on mission theory. For them, evangelism was the missionary's calling.¹⁹

In this expansive setting, Pierce established World Vision. He simply knew that the time was ripe for world evangelism. Christians could reclaim America for Christ and also accept the global responsibility that an American exceptionalism implied. Pierce would gather new converts, but his plan called for much more.

Pierce's Initial Work in Korea

In 1950, with China now closed to outsiders, Pierce briefly questioned his calling, but then missionaries invited him to tour Korea.²⁰ As Youth for Christ's "missionary at-large," Pierce headlined Korea's "Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade" and had his

¹⁷ Robert T. Coote, "The Uneven Growth of Conservative Evangelical Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6 (1982): 118–123; Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 82–85; Ralph W. Winter, *The 25 Unbelievable Years: 1945-1969* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970), 51–57; Carpenter, "Appendix: The Evangelical Missionary Force in the 1930s."

¹⁸ Andrew Walls has demonstrated how the missions movement became shaped through the 20th century by American over European technologies, optimism, and motivations. Walls along with the articles listed in the previous footnote consider the overwhelming numerical shift of missionaries from Europe to America. Andrew F. Walls, "The American Dimension in the History of the Missionary Movement," in *Earthen Vessels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1–25.

¹⁹ Carpenter, "Propagating the Faith Once Delivered," 131.

²⁰ These friends, the Kilbournes, served with the Oriental Missionary Society, a large faith mission, and had originally served in China where they had met Pierce. Both mainline Presbyterian and faith missionaries sponsored Pierce's tour in March 1950.

greatest evangelistic success. The Korea tour convinced him that Christian revival was the antidote to communist aggression. The crusade was both spiritual and political. Korean President Syngman Rhee told Pierce: “Youth for Christ’s type of evangelism will help hold back the flood of atheism which is flowing through the Far East.”²¹ The two agreed: revival could repulse godless communism.

Pierce admitted that “if it had not been that the Lord strangely directed me toward Korea – there to give me the greatest soul-winning opportunity I have ever known,” he would have remained unaware of Korea’s global significance. He left Korea just days before the outbreak of war. Back home, Americans sought him out for news about communist advances.²² Pierce gave them dramatic images. Newsreels sought to buy his footage, but he wanted to produce his own Christian film, which he eventually entitled the *38th Parallel*. He traveled the U.S. with his images and stories of Korea in the midst of both Christian revival and political turmoil.²³

With the outbreak of war, Pierce viewed Korea as the center of God’s activity in the world. He rejoiced that “God reaped a spiritual harvest in Korea” before the Northern invasion and claimed that “revival often precedes disaster.”²⁴ He established World Vision in September 1950 to carry the gospel as well as American food and clothing to Korea. By October, he managed to board the last civilian flight to Seoul. For three months, he traveled, preaching, filming, and handing out promises of assistance. He handed out more than promises. He gave away more than \$12,000 to starving families.

²¹ “News Report,” *Youth For Christ*, July 1950, 53.

²² Pierce left Korea to address Chiang and Madame Kai-Shek in their personal chapel services in Formosa.

²³ “Bob Pierce: Missionary Ambassador,” *Youth for Christ*, April 1951; “Dr. Bob Pierce Biography”, undated, 7–8, Folder 23, Box 6, Collection 506, Records of Decision Magazine, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL; Bob Pierce, *The Untold Korea Story*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951), 7–8. “Report,” *Youth For Christ*, June 1950, 44; “Report,” *United Evangelical Action*, April 15, 1950: 8

²⁴ Bob Pierce, and Gil Dodds, “God Reached Korea Before the Bullets,” *Youth for Christ*, August 1950, 8.

He paid for transportation for 600 pastors and their families to flee North Korea. He funded the relief efforts of evangelical missionaries. And then he returned to America with fresh images of Korea's Christians, missionaries, American soldiers, and communist aggressors to display at churches and YFC rallies.²⁵

By 1951, Pierce regularly haunted the frontlines of Korea. To get back in, he applied for status as a United Nations War Correspondent and became a reporter for the Evangelical Press Association. As he filed stories for *Youth for Christ* magazine, *United Evangelical Action*, *Christian Life*, and *Christian Digest*, he brought the war—and the mission—to American evangelicals. He designed the reporting to support his mission. He drew his share of converts by preaching to American and Korean soldiers as well as 160,000 captured North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war. But he also worried about the material needs of the country. He listed the atrocities: hundreds of Christians martyred, more than one and a half million homeless, 12,000 villages flattened. During the war, Pierce averaged more than three trips a year to Korea and then returned to tell Americans what the country needed.²⁶

The needs were immense, but World Vision operated on a shoestring. Pierce advertised that every dollar he raised went entirely to “Oriental missions.” With a barebones staff of three, World Vision had little purpose but to account for the funds Pierce raised and funnel them to fulfill his promises overseas. In the first year, World Vision raised \$41,245.52. By 1951, it disbursed \$77,129.89. Most of the funds flowed to individual missionaries and Korean pastors to support hospitals, orphanages, and evangelism. Pierce took pride in World Vision's efficiency. He suggested that mission

²⁵ “Dr. Bob Pierce Biography”; “Bob Pierce: Missionary Ambassador,” *Youth for Christ*, 9–10.

²⁶ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 97; “Bob Pierce: Missionary Ambassador,” 10; Bob Pierce, “Thankful in Korea,” *Youth for Christ*, November 1951, 10.

boards wasted valuable time in debates about priorities while he raised and disbursed funds swiftly and efficiently.²⁷

Pierce saw “the Orient” as the hinge-point for God’s work in the world, a site of both political and spiritual advancement. He blithely mixed the spiritual and the political. “Korea,” he said, “is not only crucial in world affairs. It may well be the key to unlock again all of the Orient for the Gospel.”²⁸ But World Vision expanded into other mission fields, and its first two activities in India illustrate its early goals, a medical clinic and a tent for evangelistic crusades.²⁹ He built his organization on pragmatism and prayer, and his message resonated with evangelicals eager to change the world, not conduct missiological debates.

World Vision’s Place within International Humanitarianism

Pierce exposed Americans to Asian physical suffering and poverty, but he retained his close link to evangelical missions and kept his distance from other religious humanitarian agencies.³⁰ Evangelical missions proliferated but they remained outside the circle of political and cultural power. In contrast, the “three faiths consortium” of mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had ties with the U.S. government that aided their humanitarian efforts. As Franklin Roosevelt enshrined “freedom from want” into his Four Freedoms, new international institutions such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank sought to alleviate global poverty. Roosevelt

²⁷ World Vision’s records of its finances are noted from 1950-1959 in its files of Missionary Disbursements, World Vision International (WVI) Central Records, Monrovia, CA (hereafter noted as WVI Central Records). “Bob Pierce: Missionary Ambassador,” *Youth for Christ*, 10. “Message given by Dr. Bob Pierce at Missionary Conference of American Seoul Clinic,” Oct. 12, 1952 (WVI Central Records).

²⁸ “Bob Pierce: Missionary Ambassador,” 10.

²⁹ Alan Whaites, “Pursuing Partnership: World Vision and the Ideology of Development – a Case Study,” *Development in Practice* 9, no. 4 (1999): 412.

³⁰ Several significant relief agencies were founded earlier in response to conditions after World War I. They included the American Friends Service Committee (1917) and the Mennonite Central Committee (1920)

established the American Council of Voluntary Agencies in Foreign Service (ACVAFS) to coordinate the relief work of American private voluntary agencies (PVOs). In his 1949 inauguration address, President Harry Truman elevated PVOs by establishing his Point Four Program.³¹ Infused with a post-war renewal of belief in American exceptionalism and the need to contain communism, Truman claimed that a modernized West could relieve the world's suffering through international relief and development.³²

A host of religious philanthropies, honed by their voluntary work during World War II, offered themselves as agencies to realize Truman's vision. Catholic Relief Services (1943), Church World Service (1946), Lutheran World Relief (1945), CARE (1945) and the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (1914) captured the public imagination in the 1940s and attained wide recognition during the Cold War, especially through their work in Korea and Vietnam.³³ During the 1950s, they delivered government donated food, surplus goods, and equipment overseas.³⁴ For some, the social aid was

³¹ A private voluntary organization (PVO) is one of the most accepted terms used for a voluntary agency (religious or secular) engaged in overseas relief and development. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 177.

³² *Ibid.*, 47–53; J. Bruce Nichols, *The Uneasy Alliance: Religion, Refugee Work, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 10–11; Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 71–75; Gary F. VanderPol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005” (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 91–92.

³³ By 1947, 75% of private philanthropy overseas flowed through Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish agencies, and by the early 1950s, religious agencies received a majority of government support over secular organizations. Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 63. CARE was the only secular international PVO among the eight largest between 1950 to 1960. While CARE is now a secular agency, it was originally a coalition of religious and secular organizations such as Church World Service, American Friends Service Committee, American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and International Rescue and Relief Committee. The religious agencies pulled out in the 1950s because they felt CARE's objectives became both too closely aligned with U.S. politics as well as infringing on their own individual agencies' work. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 25–28; Rachel M. McCleary, “Private Voluntary Organizations Engaged in International Assistance, 1939-2004,” *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (September 2008): 521; Wallace J Campbell, *The History of CARE: A Personal Account* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 55–56.

³⁴ The 1954 Food for Peace legislation, (PL 480), allowed registered organizations to apply for U.S. surplus goods and remittance for shipping and transportation costs of goods. Only registered organizations could participate. The International Cooperation Administration succeeded the ACVAFS in 1953 to coordinate

more important than evangelism. Others wanted to spread the faith, but their theological commitments and support of American foreign policy enabled them to adopt the language of relief and development, highlighting large-scale assistance over individual conversion.³⁵

Many of the largest religious humanitarian agencies served as arms of denominational or ecumenical bodies. Yet a few independent agencies also registered with the government. The Christian Children's Fund (CCF), for example, grew by 1960 to become the seventh largest among all PVOs with an annual budget over 4.5 million dollars. In 1938, Presbyterian minister J. Calvitt Clarke established China's Children Fund, but he renamed the organization as operations closed in China and expanded throughout Asia. CCF became a leader in caring for Asian war orphans. While at times reminding their donors of the need for foreign missionaries, most often they exemplified the Protestant Mainline's privileging of social needs over evangelism.³⁶

Mainstream humanitarian agencies largely dismissed World Vision's small size and sectarian evangelical theology. Such critiques rarely bothered Pierce. As an evangelical organization, World Vision operated in a different context. Fraternizing too closely with ecumenical mainline Protestants, much less Catholics, Jews, or secularists, was anathema. It also bordered upon promoting social welfare at the expense of

distribution efforts and became the forerunner to the establishment of USAID in 1961. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 64, 77; Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 84.

³⁵ For particular organizational histories from this period, see Eileen Egan, *Catholic Relief Services: The Beginning Years* (New York: Catholic Relief Services, 1988); Ronald Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (New York: Friendship Press, 1996).

³⁶ Edmund Janss and Christian Children's Fund., *Yankee Si, the Story of Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke and His 36,000 Children* (New York: Morrow, 1961); John Caldwell, *Children of Calamity* (New York: J. Day co., 1957); Larry Tise, *A Book About Children: The World of Christian Children's Fund, 1938-1991* (Falls Church, VA: Hartland Pub., 1993); "Helping Poor, Deprived Children Living in Poverty - ChildFund", n.d., http://www.childfund.org/about_us/mission_and_history/ChildFund_History.aspx. (Accessed Feb. 28, 2011).

evangelism. In addition to retaining elements of fundamentalist separatism, Pierce found the relief agencies far too programmatic. He met emergencies through his face-to-face encounters, entrusting missionary friends with World Vision's funds. He had no patience for the reporting, red-tape, and coordination necessary for government partnerships. Bureaucracy quenched the Spirit.

The new humanitarian agencies included few evangelicals. One exception was World Relief. In 1944, the National Association of Evangelicals established the War Relief Commission to transport food and clothing to displaced Europeans; they renamed it World Relief in 1950, hoping to offer both material and spiritual goods. The agency registered to receive government aid in 1956 and grew modestly in size but worried about the risk of minimizing evangelism. World Relief funded humanitarian projects: hospitals, orphanages, and widow homes. It also shipped surplus food and clothing overseas. In each shipment, however, recipients would always find Bibles and religious tracts.³⁷ Its limited size and evangelistic proclivities left World Relief on the periphery of humanitarianism's inner circle.

Though global in scope, the evangelical agencies fell outside the growing relief and development sector. World Relief looked like an evangelical alternative to the

³⁷ In a 1955 advertisement in the NAE's *United Evangelical Action* publication, World Relief promoted its work, "not only relief but the gospel as well to meet the needs of a suffering world." It went on to say, "that is why the NAE through its World Relief Commission provides for the distribution of relief food and clothing with the Gospel in the language of the recipient, bringing both physical and spiritual comfort to the needy. This is one of the many ways the NAE provides for cooperative service without compromise for the Bible believers of America." *UEA* (Oct. 1, 1955): 10. In a 1957 *UEA* ad, World Relief articulated its identity against other mainstream agencies even more clearly: "Why does NAE have its own relief agency – NAE relief is different – it is Christian relief. With every gift of food and clothing distributed overseas by reliable established evangelical Christians, goes a Gospel message in printed form. It is not enough for Christians to relieve the physical suffering of men and women and children, while their souls go to hell. On the other hand, evangelicals cannot preach Christ to people whose stomachs are empty and whose bodies are weak from exposure to cold when Christians have it within their power to feed and clothe them. Through the food, clothing and Gospel testimony distributed by NAE's World Relief Commission every year, thousands and thousands of people find relief from acute physical suffering and spiritual starvation." *UEA* (Mar. 15 1957): 36.

mainline agencies like Church World Service, but World Vision was even more distinct. Neither traditional mission agency nor humanitarian organization, World Vision was innovative, with a unique organization and a message attuned to evangelicals. In size, budget, and popular appeal, it soon far outpaced World Relief.³⁸

World Vision's New Initiative: Child Sponsorship

Initially, Pierce acted whenever he found an emergency, and World Vision was unpredictable. It built hospitals and leprosariums, bought jeeps for missionaries, and funded biblical training for South Korean military chaplains. But Pierce soon found a compelling cause that would define World Vision and spur its growth. "I never intended to be in the orphanage business," Pierce said, but "taking care of orphans" was "the little job God has given me to do."³⁹ War orphans had become a major problem in Korea. In 1954, of the over 170,000 orphans, only 50,000 could be housed in orphanages.⁴⁰ Pierce funneled resources through diverse evangelical missionary agencies. Most often he funded established mission orphanages, but World Vision also built its own orphanages and turned them over to missionaries or Korean Christians to administer.⁴¹ Without

³⁸ According to the 1961 NAE Annual Report, World Relief's income rose from \$52,000 in 1955 to \$114,000 (not including Gifts in Kind [GIK]) in 1960. Folder 17, Box 4, Collection 165, Records of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL (hereafter cited as EFMA records); VanderPol, "The Least of These," 35.

³⁹ Bob Pierce sermon, n.d. approximately 1956-7 (WVI Central Records).

⁴⁰ "Korea: Shining Star for Christianity," *UEA*, Feb 1, 1954, 3. Pierce, at times, does address the conditions that led to the numbers of Korean orphans. In addition, to blaming communist atrocities, he notes the horrors of war on both sides. He recounted how South Korean General Sun Yup Paik killed an entire village of communist guerillas but turned over the orphans to World Vision for care. He and his troops, along with World Vision's support, funded a new orphanage. Gehman, 41. Pierce also critiqued American soldiers who fathered with Korean women but abandoned them when returning home. Pierce noted that mixed race children were not accepted in Korean culture and were often put out of the home. Many of these ended up in World Vision orphanages as well.

⁴¹ In 1955, World Vision supported orphan work through the Oriental Missionary Society, Southern Presbyterians, Methodists, Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, and the Australian Presbyterian Mission, and Presbyterian Church, USA. While some of the mission agencies World Vision supported may not have always been classified as "evangelical" in America, Pierce argued that overseas, all the missionaries he supported shared evangelical values. "Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59".

abandoning its other causes, World Vision made orphan care the backbone of its ministry.

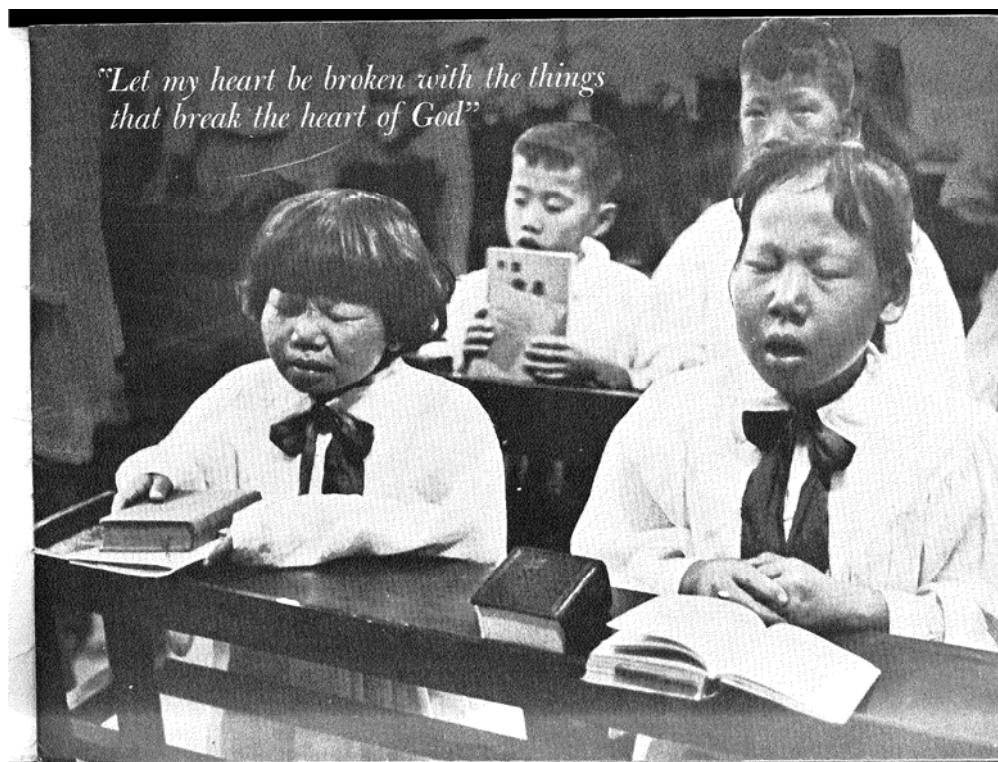


Figure 1: World Vision's Korean Child Sponsorship Program⁴²

The ministry for orphans led to expanding budgets and fundraising success. In 1953, Pierce recruited Ervin and Florence Raetz to head World Vision's orphan program in Korea. Pierce had met the Raetzs in China where they served with the China Children's Fund (CCF), which had established a child sponsorship program that Pierce wanted the Raetzs to replicate in Korea.⁴³ In 1954, World Vision unveiled its child sponsorship program. For ten dollars a month, an American supporter could sponsor a Korean orphan. World Vision forwarded funds to the Christian institutions caring for the children, and fixed percentages went for food, clothing, education, and religious teaching. From 1954

⁴² Courtesy WVI Central Records.

⁴³ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 101.

to 1956, the funds devoted to orphanages mushroomed from \$57,000 to \$452,538. Orphan care grew from 44% to 79% of World Vision's Korean work. Child sponsorship was a financial success.⁴⁴ The image of the innocent child helped World Vision bypass divisive theological debates and paralyzing statistical criteria. While most mission and relief agencies depended either on government or denominational funds, World Vision appealed to the public. Sponsors exchanged photos and letters with their "foster" child as well as sending clothes, candy, and Bibles. Child sponsorship brought World Vision to the attention of both churches and other agencies.

World Vision's Initial Message

World Vision was a new kind of evangelical mission, and it had a captivating message. Film producer Dick Ross noted that "nobody in his generation had the impact on behalf of mission on the domestic audience as Bob Pierce."⁴⁵ Pierce flooded evangelicals with stories and images. Pierce became a cultural broker between America and Asia, and he changed evangelical internationalism. He could criticize other evangelicals, but he used their vernacular. In its early days, World Vision helped evangelicals' re-enter mainstream culture, domestic politics, and international affairs at the vanguard of a renewed popular belief in American exceptionalism.

An Evangelical American Exceptionalism?

Pierce's friends in Youth for Christ claimed that "these are critical days of opportunity for evangelicals, a race against time, an all-out battle with the gathering

⁴⁴ The organization reported the number of orphans it supported in its annual report each year, and the numbers grew from 2,216 in 1954 to 13,215 by the end of the decade. "World Vision: 1947 to 2007;" "Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59;" "WVI Factbook," 1982 (WVI Central Records). Child sponsorship continues to make up the largest source of World Vision's annual income.

⁴⁵ Dick Ross quoted in John Robert Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision's Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film" (University of Southern California, 1980), 72.

forces of the anti-Christ across the world.”⁴⁶ Shaking off their earlier separatism, new evangelicals often saw themselves in the late 1940s as Christian America’s new vanguard. Pierce directed their attention overseas.

Pierce rarely parsed religious and secular issues cleanly. For him, *Pax Americana* harmonized with Christian proclamation throughout the world. He avoided end-times apocalypticism, but he insisted that the gospel and democracy would rise or fall in accord with the energies exerted by American Christians. He claimed that “the Holy Spirit made it necessary for North Koreans to thrust their vicious attack below the 38th parallel,” so that God could get the attention of American Christians. As early as 1951, Pierce recounted his travels to Korea, Japan, and Formosa, and acknowledged: “If Christian Americans fail these strategic points today, then all Asia may be lost to the witness of Christ tomorrow.”⁴⁷ As the mainstream religious culture changed its views of global missions, Pierce foresaw a high-stakes spiritual and political battle for evangelicals.

Christian America in Popular Culture

Pierce’s message attracted the imagination of evangelicals and the preoccupations of popular culture. In 1955, sociologist William Herberg described a tripartite Protestant-Catholic-Jewish American faith. This shared “American way of life” rested on a generalized Judeo-Christian faith in conflict with a monolithic godless communism.

⁴⁶ “Laboring Together,” *Youth for Christ*, Aug. 1953, 37.

⁴⁷ Pierce, *The Untold Korea Story*, 5, 78. For a discussion of postwar evangelical missions and a Pax Americana, see Richard V. Pierard, “Pax Americana and the Evangelical Missionary Advance,” in *Earthen Vessels*, 155–179. Pierce affirmed Jesus’ second coming and his rhetoric sometimes mentioned his belief that it may come in his lifetime, but his work was not defined by eschatology. While eschatological language did fill Cold War rhetoric, this debate will become a bigger one for evangelicals in the 1970s with the publications of Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye. For a fuller discussion of evangelicals and end-times prophecy in American cultural history, see Paul S Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

Religious communities lauded the “return to religion” and claimed record numbers of church members and new church and synagogue buildings.⁴⁸

The popular media discovered God. Media magnates Henry Luce and DeWitt Wallace combined religion and patriotism, with Luce claiming in his 1941 book, *American Century*, that America had a “special mission to preserve its own virtue, and present it to the rest of the world as the more excellent way, while defending earth from evil forces bent on destroying such righteousness.”⁴⁹ As publisher of *Time* and *Life*, Luce filled his magazines with encomia to America and religious virtue: “Christianity,” he wrote, “itself is the living and revolutionary force which alone can halt communism.”⁵⁰

Wallace’s *Reader’s Digest*, which became by the mid-1950s the highest circulation general interest magazine in the United States, claimed to speak for middle America when it lauded faith and anticommunism. In mapping an imagined global geography of American influence and communist aggression, *Reader’s Digest* packaged the Cold War in human interest stories and travelogues designed for unsophisticated readers. Pierce fused religion and politics in much the same way.⁵¹

Cold War Ideology

Harry Truman chastised communists for denying God and imposing its dogmatic atheism on others: “God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some great purpose,” he said. The purpose was Cold War containment.

⁴⁸ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 77.

⁴⁹ Robert Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life*, 1st ed. (Louisville Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 11. (note that this may be Ellwood’s quote over Luce’s direct words- check)

⁵⁰ Henry Luce, “A Path to Peace Through Prayer,” *Life* 35, Sept 13, 1954, 48 quoted in Seth Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950-1957* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 48.

⁵¹ Joanne Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader’s Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

The U.S. president united Americans behind a religious cause: faith and prosperity would overcome Soviet unbelief and communism.⁵²

Conservatives and liberals joined Truman in mixing political and religious rhetoric. Conservative William F. Buckley, Jr. claimed that “I myself believe that the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world. I further believe that the same struggle between individualism and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level.”⁵³ Liberal Democrat and Unitarian Adlai Stevenson referred to communism as the “anti-Christ that stalks our world.” President Dwight D. Eisenhower asked: “What is our battle against communism if it is not a fight between anti-God and belief in the Almighty?”⁵⁴ Secretary of State John Foster Dulles may have best summarized the prevailing rhetoric: “the only vital difference between the two realms relates to ideas, not things.” The fault line for Dulles was not political but spiritual.⁵⁵

Politicians used religion to justify the American position in the Cold War. Truman hoped to unite diverse religious traditions behind his Cold War policies. On one level, he failed. The World Council of Churches (WCC), founded in 1948, lingered with Wilsonian internationalism and refused to march to Truman’s orders. But the leaders of mainline Protestantism no longer spoke with a single voice for their members.

⁵² “In marrying faith and freedom, Truman claimed, “both religion and democracy are founded on one basic principle, the worth and dignity of the individual man and woman.” Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 5–6; Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 1–2, 109.

⁵³ Buckley’s quote is from his 1951 *God and Man at Yale* referenced in Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life*, 61.

⁵⁴ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 259.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 230. Dulles’ full quote reads, “Our people, as a whole, believe in a spiritual world, with human beings who have souls and who their origin and destiny in God... but Russia, on the other hand, is run by communists who deny the existence of God, who believe in a material world where human beings are without souls and without rights, except as government chooses to allow them.”

Nonetheless, politicians persisted: Secretary of State Dulles argued that America's spiritual renewal was necessary to win the Cold War peacefully, and he viewed the nation's "spiritual apathy" and "materialistic mood" as a weakness that only the churches could rectify.⁵⁶

What Truman and Dulles preached, Eisenhower institutionalized. He determined that the Cold War required civil religion. Upon becoming president, Eisenhower joined and attended a Presbyterian church. He encouraged Congress to add "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God we Trust" to U.S. currency. He began the Presidential Prayer Breakfasts. The pervasive spiritual language of the Eisenhower era promoted both individual and civil religion.⁵⁷

Some politicians could not resist the temptation to use religious language as a club to squelch dissenters. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy preferred apocalyptic accents: "Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down – they are truly down."⁵⁸ Like McCarthy, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover feared that communists had infiltrated the U.S. Hoover flooded the popular media with a torrent of anticommunist exhortations. "It [Communism] is a moral foe of Christianity," he claimed. "Either it will survive or Christianity will triumph because in this land of ours the two cannot live side by side."

⁵⁶ Ibid, 230.

⁵⁷ In 1953, *Readers' Digest* wrote, "What President Eisenhower wants for America is a revival of religious faith that will produce a rededication to religious values and conduct. . . . He is determined to use his influence and his office to help make this period a spiritual turning point in America, and thereby to recover the strengths, the values, and the conduct which a vital faith produces in a people." Stanley High, "What the President Wants," *Readers' Digest* 65, April 1953, 2-4. Quote referenced in Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 69.

⁵⁸ McCarthy, Feb. 20, 1950, quoted in Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life*, 83.

Hoover admonished parents that they had a patriotic duty to bring their kids to Sunday school and church in order to produce good Americans.⁵⁹

Nationalism and anti-communism, couched in religious language, served as the glue binding a common Judeo-Christian tradition. While WCC commissions sometimes voiced objections, most mainline Protestants in the pews never questioned language pitting a faithful America against an atheistic communist bloc. By the early 1950s, all the large religious denominations established anticommunist educational programs. The public ignored moderating subcommittee reports from the WCC. Instead, they read the popular Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's anti-communist essays in *Time* and *Life* and listened to patriotic sermons.

Catholics were even more outspoken than Protestants. In the early 1950s, Catholicism attained significant cultural influence. This worried some Protestants, but anti-communism bolstered Catholics' American identity. Pope Pius XII continually drew attention to the millions of Catholics trapped behind the Iron Curtain, suffering for their faith at the hands of satanic regimes. Catholic celebrities like Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Francis Spellman became anticommunist icons. In 1948, Spellman declared: "It is not alone in defense of my faith that I condemn atheistic communism, but as an American in defense of my country. We stand at a crossroads of civilization, a civilization threatened

⁵⁹ Hoover, "Secularism, Breeder of Crime," Speech delivered to Conference of Methodist Ministers, Evanston, IL, Nov. 26, 1947. Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, FBI. Quoted in Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 254; Thomas Aiello, "Constructing 'Godless Communism': Religion, Politics, and Popular Culture, 1954-1960," *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005); Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life*, 13.

with the crucifixion of communism.” America was exceptional, God’s nation. It was every citizen’s duty to defend it against Soviet godlessness.⁶⁰

It was the evangelicals, however, who may have had the most to gain from hitching their wagon to the Cold War cause. Eager to discard their separatism, they became cold warriors for the nation. As one author noted, “what they lack in institutional and intellectual credibility, they tried to compensate for with organization and energy.”⁶¹ In the early 1950s, no one spoke louder than Billy Graham, and he never lowered his voice when he spoke about communism:

Western culture and its fruits had its foundation in the Bible, the Word of God, and in the revivals of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Communism, on the other hand, has decided against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion. Communism is not only an economic interpretation of life – Communism is a religion that is inspired, directed, and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God.⁶²

Evangelicals like Graham thrived on the divisions that such language provided.

More than a few evangelicals viewed the Cold War through the filter of end-times prophecy. Apocalyptic scenarios found biblical allusions to atomic war, Soviet aggression, and world government. More typical, however, was a general premillennial eschatology that accented the need for urgency before Christ’s imminent return. The Rev. Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse, radio preacher, editor, and World Vision board member, saw civilization as “a truck careening downhill with no brakes.”⁶³ Evangelicals could prevent the collision if they erected the right barriers.

⁶⁰ Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life*, 3–4; Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 77–84; Stephen J Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 96.

⁶¹ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960*, 73.

⁶² William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, 1st ed. (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1991), 115.

⁶³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Eternity*, Aug 1952, 1. “Donald Grey Barnhouse,” Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals,” <http://isae.wheaton.edu/hall-of-biography/donald-g-barnhouse/> (Accessed Mar. 4, 2011) ; Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 117–118.

Evangelicals celebrated America's Christian heritage but lamented its sins and faithlessness. They called for revival—for an end to materialism, secularism, liberalism, and juvenile delinquency. And an end to communism in America, the serpent in the national garden. Communism was an “anti-Christian religion competing with Christianity for American souls.” In 1954, Graham preached that “the greatest and most effective weapon against Communism today is to be a born again Christian.” Rebirth was the antidote both to eternal damnation and to the more mundane damnation of communist infiltration.⁶⁴

Evangelicals hoped, too, for revival abroad. The Cold War was a battle for souls in other nations even more than in America. With China already closed to the gospel, evangelicals feared that Korea and the rest of Asia were not far behind. Most evangelicals opposed the diplomatic internationalism of the United Nations and WCC, but they cheered military interventions. It might take guns and bombs to blast open the door for the gospel.

Bob Pierce was a Cold War crusader. His films, particularly *The Red Plague*, described the “battle for souls” against Communism, “a godless religion spawned in hell.”⁶⁵ The Cold War pitted two great opposing missionary forces, and Pierce worried that communism was winning:

The Communists are further ahead of us in evangelizing the world than they are in science. All over the world the Russians are outreaching us, outsacrificing us,

⁶⁴ Graham, “Satan’s Religion,” *American Mercury*, August 1954, 42; Graham, “Our World in Chaos: The Cause and Cure,” *American Mercury*, July 1956, 21; Quoted in Aiello, “Constructing ‘Godless Communism’: Religion, Politics, and Popular Culture, 1954-1960.”

⁶⁵ *The Red Plague*, David Wisner, 1957 (WVI Central Records), quoted in Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce,” 97.

outworking us, outplanning us, outpropagandizing us and outdying us in order to attain their own ends.⁶⁶

He shocked his audiences by claiming that communism had gained more converts in roughly thirty years than Christianity had gained in two thousand; communist success would mean an end to Christian mission.⁶⁷ In his 1953 film, *This Gathering Storm*, clouds on the horizon threatening to end the harvest of world missions served as metaphors for communism, materialism, and the militancy of false religions. Pierce wanted Christians to fight back with the gospel of Jesus Christ, acts of mercy, and the aid of Christian civilizations like the United States.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Bob Pierce, "Too Late for America?," *Eternity*, May 1958 quoted in Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership," 412.

⁶⁷ Bob Pierce sermon, n.d. approximately 1956-7 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁸ *This Gathering Storm*, Dick Ross, 1953 (WVUS Film Archives)



Figure 2: *This Gathering Storm*, 1953⁶⁹

Pierce's words and images subverted evangelical separatism and promoted political action. In his earliest Korean film, *38th Parallel, the Story of God's Deadline in Korea*, Pierce displayed the destruction left in the wake of the "red hordes": flattened villages, malnourished children, martyred pastors, and defaced churches. His conclusion was unequivocal: "one must make a choice between democracy and communism; god

⁶⁹ *This Gathering Storm*, Promotional Poster, 1953 (Courtesy of WVI Central Records).

and the devil.” After making the choice, Pierce mastered the use of images and anecdotes to move people to take action.⁷⁰

The military had a special place in the battle. Pierce praised the brave soldiers who represented the best of Christian and American ideals. He acknowledged that foreign nationals often forgot the lessons Christians taught them. America rebuilt Japan, but the Japanese built temples to commerce decorated with neon signs and juke joints rather than churches to spread the gospel. Even the Korean front lines had beer and movies but no churches. Pierce celebrated America as God’s country, designed to save the world, but he decried American sins at the same time. He excoriated soldiers who fathered children in Korea and then left them. Many of these children became the orphans for whom World Vision took responsibility.

Pierce broadened the perspective of American evangelicals, but American-style evangelicalism always formed his own worldview. He saw Western technology and material progress as fruits of a Christian way of living. He talked like a preacher, a missionary, a patriot, a businessman, a soldier, and a Cold War politician, flowing seamlessly from one to the other. Whatever the voice he chose, he remained confident that, with God’s help, the dominoes would fall not for communism but for Christ.⁷¹

An Eastward Turn: Asia

The rise of World Vision coincided with a cultural moment after 1945 when Americans turned their attention eastward. With the postwar rebuilding of Japan, Mao-

⁷⁰ *38th Parallel, the Story of God’s Deadline in Korea*, Dick Ross, 1950 (WVUS Film Archives); Quote comes from *Dead Men on Furlough*, Dick Ross, 1954, (WVUS Film Archives)

⁷¹ Pierce, “Message Given at Missionary Conference of American Soul Clinic.” (Oct. 12, 1952). Pierce, “Address to the NAE Convention,” 1960 (WVI Central Records). “Pasadena Evangelist Cited for Korean Work,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1959, A5. “Koreans Honor World Vision Head, Dr. Pierce,” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 30, 1958.

Tse-Tung's revolution in China, nationalism in India, and war in Korea, Asia was a formidable challenge that drew interest not only in Washington but also in local evangelical churches. Pierce instructed these churches by regaling them with images and firsthand accounts of daily life: the bright colors of the market, the smell of kimchi, or the human-drawn rickshaws. Yet he also showed them poverty, physical deformities, and squalor.

Pierce's images were orientalist. He made Asians seem exotic, and he demonized aspects of their "heathen" cultures as symbols of their "otherness." His 1953 film, *This Gathering Storm*, advertised the chance to view "rare scenes of Hindu worship... millions bathing in the Ganges ... strange temple rites." The 1958 *Cry in the Night* offered a Balinese cockfight, cremation ceremony, and a never before filmed ritual dance of "demon possession." At times, Pierce depicted Asians as gullible, naïve masses whose false religions, poverty, and traditionalism meant that they stood little chance of resisting the lures of communism, materialism and fatalism.⁷²

At times, though, Pierce portrayed Eastern commonalities with the West, highlighting shared democratic and Christian beliefs.⁷³ This message, too, found resonance in the politics and popular culture of the 1950s. In 1955, Eisenhower launched his People to People program to increase understanding between Americans and Asians.

⁷² Ad for *This Gathering Storm*, *Youth for Christ*, Sept. 1953, 70 and *Cry in the Night*, William E. Brusseau, 1958 (WVI Central Records)

⁷³ American studies scholars investigating the cultural effects of U.S. foreign policy have found that a polarizing us/them dichotomy of communist containment does not rightly describe American interactions with Asia. The global imaginary in the 1950s soon began to highlight integration over difference. At the beginning of a post-colonial world, the United States' saw its rise to global power less through a lens of white man's burden and more through assisting in modernization and development. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 5. Klein advocates for a cultural integrationist outlook of Cold War ideology alongside political containment. Pierce's perspective demonstrates Klein's theory in the realm of evangelical missions and religious philanthropy.

The popular novels and essays of James Michener gave him a reputation among many Americans as an Asian expert. Roger and Hammerstein's hit musicals, *South Pacific* and the *King and I*, romanticized Asian culture, depicting Asians not as a "yellow peril" but as childlike innocents. American film makers said to Asians, in effect, that the country was "getting to know you."⁷⁴ And the movies drew American applause.

The Asian leader now became an object of admiration. The American press lauded them as sage and wise. Despite their "typically Asian" dictatorial and childlike qualities, the best ones were committed to Christianity and democracy. Michener noted that "Christianity persists as a major influence on the minds of the leaders of Asia... They acknowledge with astonishing frequency that they owe much of their education, their attitude toward law and toward the world at large to this same alien religion."⁷⁵ No one shined in America more than the Chinese Nationalist Chiang Kai-Shek, both before and after the 1949 revolution. Heralded as an "Old Testament general," he epitomized the success of the evangelistic mission. The *Christian Century* and *Time* reprinted his conversion testimony and reminded readers of his incessant Bible reading. His wife Madame Kai-Shek may have even eclipsed his influence as she toured the U.S to great acclaim among popular audiences, politicians, and church leaders. The U.S. offered similar treatment to Korean Christian president Syngman Rhee, Catholic Filipino leader Ramon Magsaysay, and Catholic Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 95–102.

⁷⁵ Michener quoted in *Ibid.*, 89–90; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 51.

⁷⁶ During the 1950s, American authors penned several popular biographies of Syngman Rhee to introduce him to American readers. See Corée., *Syngman Rhee Through Western Eyes* (Seoul: Office of Public Information Republic of Korea, 1954); Robert Tarbell Oliver, *Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1954); Robert Tarbell Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960: a Personal Narrative* (Seoul: Panmun Book Co., 1978); Syngman Rhee, *An Asian Leader Speaks for Freedom* (New York: American-Asian Educational Exchange, 1958); Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 118–124.

Pierce advertised his friendship with Chiang and Madame Kai-Shek and reminded Americans that he had been one of the few Western evangelists to preach in their personal chapel. Even after many in the West soured on Chiang's autocratic rule after 1949, Pierce urged evangelicals to support him because he invited both democratic and missionary work in Formosa.⁷⁷ Pierce also defended Korean President Syngman Rhee. He echoed Rhee's American biographers who proclaimed him "a great Messiah sent by Providence to save the Korean people" and reminded audiences of Rhee's Christian conversion by missionaries. He testified to the sincerity of his faith by recounting his own personal prayers with the Korean President. Pierce's friendships with Asia's leading Christian leaders bolstered both the Cold War cause and his own credibility as an authority on Christianity's advance in Asia.⁷⁸

Pierce sometimes told Americans that Asians were just like them. He could compare them to typical Americans who merely wanted freedom and a better life. He admired them for their hard work and their fight against communism. Pierce recounted a typical conversation he had after preaching in a Korean school: "We want you to preach your Christ, because even though most of us on the faculty are not Christians, we know that only Christianity offers a challenge strong enough and stirring enough to turn these young people from Communism." He reported that even unchurched Koreans respected the ties between Christianity and democracy and yearned for American freedoms.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Mid-century American evangelicals continued to refer to Taiwan as Formosa or Nationalist China for several decades.

⁷⁸ Pierce, Address to NAE Convention, 1960 (WVI Central Records). Description of Rhee was by US Ambassador to South Korea, James Cromwell. See Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 122; Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 146–153.

⁷⁹ Pierce, *The Untold Korea Story*, 30.

Though he labeled non-Christian religions as “heathen” and “backwards,” he lauded the exemplary faith of Korea’s Christians. He marveled at the size of the crowds and the number of conversions at his crusades. Thousands of Christians, he reported, traveled for hours to gather for pre-dawn prayer meetings. And many became martyrs for their faith. Many of them were everything Pierce wanted Americans to be, and some Americans shared that vision of unity with fellow Christians across the Pacific.

A Rhetoric of Sacrifice

Pierce preached, “You cannot choose whether or not you will suffer. The only thing you can choose is what you will suffer for.” He lauded sacrifice, and his audiences in America found themselves drawn to that hard message. During World War II, they had bought war bonds, joined WACs, and planted victory gardens. In the 1950s, they commemorated the sacrifice of soldiers who gave their lives for a righteous cause. They applied the rhetoric of sacrifice and righteousness to the Cold War and the Korean conflict. Pierce’s appeals for foreign missions capitalized on the language of shared sacrifice. He said that World Vision’s purpose was “to burden America with the physical and spiritual needs of foreign missions, resulting in an unprecedented increase in praying, giving and going to the mission field....”⁸⁰

The exemplars of sacrifice were the persecuted Christians in Asian churches. Pierce used “the suffering of the masses in Korea” as “a symbol of all lands under oppression.”⁸¹ He praised their dedication, and when he introducing the Asian Christian leaders whom he placed before American audiences, he highlighted their sacrifice; “ready to give up everything, who will live on half enough food, to sleep in the dust and dirt,

⁸⁰ Bob Pierce, “Sermon given in Orchestra Hall,” Chicago, IL, Nov. 5, 1954 (WVI Central Records).

⁸¹ Ibid.

who face disease and death and persecution, and be cast out of their homes to preach.”⁸² He claimed that eighty percent of Korean Christian leaders died as martyrs at the hands of the communists during the Korean War. He told stories about the torture and death of Korean pastors and even depicted such atrocities in his films. Pierce compared Korean Christianity to the apostolic church; both were “born in martyrdom and refined in the furnace of affliction.”⁸³ God had allowed this suffering to rouse a complacent Western Christianity and to challenge Americans to respond in kind. Typical was the response of Billy Graham, who after Pierce led him on a tour of World Vision’s work in Korea, reported, “I came to the Orient a boy. I’m going home a man.” Graham said that he felt overwhelmed by the suffering Asian Christians exhibited for the gospel.⁸⁴

The prime exemplars of sacrifice, for Pierce, were the missionaries. They ministered to people, with truth and tangible goods, in impossible settings. Often remaining in war-torn countries after other expatriates had fled, a few missionaries became models of suffering and sacrifice for the gospel. They lacked funds, but they still tried to help, stretching their limited resources to care for the sick or take in the orphan. Pierce tried to recruit even more missionaries. High on adventure and sacrifice, he attempted to coax American evangelicals away from comfort and safety in order to save the world. His only requirement remained a penchant for suffering.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See films, *38th Parallel*, Dick Ross, 1950 and *The Flame*, Dick Ross, 1952 (WVUS Film Archives). Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce,” 64.

⁸⁴ “Stirred Graham Stirs Orient,” *Youth for Christ*, Feb. 1953, 28. Martin, *A Prophet with Honor*, 150.

⁸⁵ Bob Pierce, “Message given at Missionary Conference of American Soul Clinic,” Oct. 12, 1952. See also Harold Lindsell, “Today’s Missionary – A New Breed of Man,” *World Vision (WV) Magazine*, March 1964, 6. *World Vision Magazine* began to offer a missionary placement service in its magazine each month. Like classified ads, World Vision listed the skills for which missionaries in the field asked. The practical skills predominated. Vanderpol, 46-47

Pierce viewed his life as a symbol of the sacrifice he preached. He claimed that he “made an agreement with God that I’ll take care of His helpless little lambs overseas if He’ll take care of mine at home.”⁸⁶ Yet the months away from family left him estranged from his wife and led to a difficult relationship with his children. The burden of travel as well as the horrors of war and disease left him angry and irritable. His health suffered too. By 1956, World Vision forced him to enter a Swiss sanitarium for mental and physical recuperation. He would often be forced to take extended medical leaves, but he continued to live at the same pace, praying only that he might “burn out for God.”



Figure 3: Bob Pierce in Korea⁸⁷

As a missionary ambassador, he functioned as a symbolic go-between, a bridge between American evangelicals and suffering Asians. One World Vision appeal letter asked supporters “to consider Bob Pierce as your emissary representing you as a good Samaritan giving help to beaten, down-trodden, naked, homeless humanity.”⁸⁸ He often played the part of sacrificial lamb. He even predicted his death at the hands of the communists. He preached: “You cannot choose whether or not you will die - all you can choose is what you will die for.” Pierce therefore called for sacrifice. Few would follow

⁸⁶ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 137.

⁸⁷ Bob Pierce, circa 1950s (courtesy of WVUS Archives)

⁸⁸ “World Vision Appeal Letter,” Dec 1956 (WVI Central Records).

through, but Pierce, along with his beloved missionaries and faithful Asian Christians, could be their sacrificial ambassadors.⁸⁹

An Evangelical Social Message

World Vision amalgamated the popular rhetoric of American exceptionalism, Cold War ideology, orientalism, and the demand for shared sacrifice into a familiar evangelical idiom. He also pushed evangelicals toward social reform. Although theologian Carl Henry tried in 1947 to prick the “Uneasy Conscience” of evangelicals and told them to get to work in the world, most of them preferred conservative patriotism and popular revivalism. They would be “spiritual,” not “social gospelers.” They would stand on the Rock of Ages—and not move from there. Pierce told them that they were blind. They couldn’t see what was happening beyond their comfortable pews. Yet he never gave up on them. Once they saw, they would act.

In other words, Pierce avoided the dichotomy between evangelism and social action that had ripped apart the Protestant missionary enterprise. Without doubt, the gospel came first for him. He wanted conversions. But he wanted more: “We must meet people's physical needs so that we can meet their real (spiritual) needs.”⁹⁰ He believed that conversion even led to material benefits, helping to alleviate poverty and ward off communism. Because he put conversion first, evangelicals listened to his call for social amelioration. That was no small achievement.

Yet Pierce had little understanding of the systemic character of poverty. He showed images of individual victims who suffered through no fault of their own: lepers, orphans, and widows. “If you believe God is interested in your aches and pains, don’t you

⁸⁹ Bob Pierce sermon, n.d. approximately 1956-7 (WVI Central Records); Dunker, *Man of Vision*; VanderPol, “The Least of These,” 42; Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce,” 121.

⁹⁰ Gehman, 184. Lee Grant, “He Only Wants to Save the World, *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 22, 1975, G6.

think the leper's sores touch His heart with compassion? Don't you think He hears the cry of starving children?"⁹¹ But he motivated his audiences by showing them one individual need at a time.⁹² In the America that he knew, too much talk about the "structural" causes of poverty had a "Red" tinge, and Pierce probably shared that assumption with his audiences. Pierce called for Christian charity, not for structural justice.

Yet he exposed American evangelicals to a world to which they might not have otherwise paid much attention. He shocked them with graphic pictures images of destitute orphans overseas juxtaposed with well-fed, middle-class American children. He also contrasted pictures of orphans before and after World Vision's support: the malnourished Korean orphan in one photo appeared in a later photo as a healthy and happy child, flourishing in a World Vision orphanage.⁹³ Pierce might not have convinced many evangelicals to become missionaries, but his images convinced a lot of them to open their pocketbooks.

Conclusion

World Vision began as a new kind of evangelical mission with innovative programs and the skillful use of visual media to expose American Christians to the world. Pierce's folksy message sidestepped theological debates and focused on images and stories. He encouraged donors to support the sacrificial heroes he highlighted. He succeeded because he convinced evangelicals to act by challenging them even while he remained firmly ensconced within the American evangelical subculture. Pierce was a

⁹¹ Bob Pierce, *YFC Magazine*, Sept 1949, 17

⁹² Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 184.

⁹³ VanderPol, "The Least of These," 77.

different kind of evangelical; World Vision would become a different kind of evangelical mission.

CHAPTER 3

OPENING THEIR EYES TO A NEW WORLD: WORLD VISION AND THE EVOLVING IDENTITY OF AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM, 1950s

Pierce attributed to World Vision “a new world outlook,” but it reflected the missionary fervor, belief in American exceptionalism, and internationalism already popular among evangelicals. The organization struggled to find its place. Revered institutions like the NAE and Fuller Seminary rejoined the culture through establishing friendships with politicians, businessmen, and academics. World Vision wanted to aid the poor and the spiritually lost around the globe, and its practices sometimes seemed strange and even questionable.

Pierce liked constant change. World Vision communicated to Americans in new ways and introduced overseas programs through new methods. In promoting missions, it found unusual ways to use the media and raise money. In practicing missions, it used large-scale evangelistic crusades, conferences to train indigenous pastors, and long-term social ministries. World Vision remained popular among many evangelicals in the 1950s, but evangelical gatekeepers were sometimes suspicious.

The organization pushed against traditional evangelical boundaries. Pierce became both an insider and outsider. Well connected among evangelical leaders, Pierce won popularity and authority largely as an international expert. Americans relied in the 1950s on several “religious” figures to interpret Asia. Mainline Protestants had Pearl Buck. Catholics had Tom Dooley. Evangelicals came to rely on Bob Pierce.¹

¹ Buck’s work is well known. For a short time, Tom Dooley’s name consistently ranked among the most admired Americans. From 1955-61, he introduced Americans to Vietnam and promoted Catholic Vietnamese as persecuted refugees and martyrs. World Vision had a few short-term medical teams that worked alongside Dooley for brief time with his MEDICO nonprofit. For a critical look at the reception of

Evangelicals trusted his expertise, but he challenged them to self-awareness and self-criticism by introducing them to global politics and world Christianity.

His expertise won an audience, but he also questioned evangelical presuppositions, even about missions. Pierce disliked the division between social action and evangelism. He disdained missiological debates, and he questioned the overreliance on the Western missionary. World Vision started training indigenous pastors. He also disliked evangelical boundaries. Many rebuked his willingness to work with non-evangelicals on the mission field. Pierce responded that separatism made little sense overseas. Finally, from the vantage of his international experience, he sometimes challenged evangelical naïveté about the righteousness of a “Christian” America and its actions in the world.

Yet American evangelicalism was also changing in the 1950s, and sometimes World Vision led the way. It shaped even as it reflected the international outlook of evangelicals. They accepted Pierce even as he challenged them to redefine themselves and their views of America and the world. He was, after all, one of them.

World Vision’s Innovative Evangelical Methods at Home

Pierce earned his reputation as a Youth for Christ revivalist. His work as a YFC international evangelist led him to establish World Vision, though he continued to barnstorm across the country on YFC’s behalf, filling his preaching with reports from

Dooley’s message by Americans, see Seth Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950-1957* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 126–167. For biographies and Dooley’s own work, see James T Fisher, *Dr. America: The Lives of Thomas A. Dooley, 1927-1961* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Agnes W Dooley, *Promises to Keep: The Life of Doctor Thomas A. Dooley* (New York: New American Library, 1964); Thomas A Dooley, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Story of Viet Nam’s Flight to Freedom* (New York: New American Library, 1961); Thomas A Dooley, *The Edge of Tomorrow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958); Thomas A Dooley, *The Night They Burned the Mountain* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1960); Thomas A Dooley, *Before I Sleep* (New York: Signet Book, 1961).

Asia. Evangelicals came to hear his stories of soldiers, missionaries, exotic customs, and poverty in Asia. He was an evangelist, but he was more, and the combination drew crowds.

I. Popular Media

Probably his most popular innovations were films. To a community that often had refused even to attend Hollywood movies, the documentaries both taught and entertained. Evangelicals had come to embrace new media and technology to reach the religious “market.”² Pierce’s films found a welcome audience among evangelicals eager to put them to the use of the gospel. While in 1939 only one hundred U.S. churches owned film projectors, by 1954, the number reached 60,000.³

Other new parachurch agencies like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Campus Crusade also used films, but no one produced as many as Pierce. During the 1950s, World Vision averaged more than one film a year. It screened them at churches, mission conferences, and civic auditoriums, sometimes attracting audiences of five to six thousand. Churches remained on waiting lists of six to eight months for a scheduled showing.⁴ Pierce spent large sums of money and used cutting edge technology in hopes of keeping up with Hollywood. The same year Hollywood produced a movie in “wide-

² Several good studies have documented fundamentalists/evangelicals’ adoption of new technology. See particularly, Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Kathryn Long documented the American fascination of the Auca martyr missionaries, clean-cut American boys flying planes and filming their encounter with the natives. See Kathryn T. Long, “In the Modern World, but Not of It: the “Auca Martyrs,” Evangelicalism, and Postwar American Culture,” in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home*, ed. Daniel Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003): 223-236.

³ Ken Anderson, “The Story behind Christian Films,” *Youth for Christ*, Jan 1954, 20-22. The only major studies of Christian films remain Terry Lindvall, *Sanctuary Cinema: Origins of the Christian Film Industry* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Terry Lindvall and Andrew Quicke, *Celluloid Sermons: the Emergence of the Christian Film Industry, 1930-1986* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

⁴ Many future World Vision leaders began their careers as youth or college summer employees tasked to travel the country, book film screenings, set up the films, and collect offerings for World Vision’s work. Over a typical ten month period in 1956-7, World Vision recorded 58,914 people attending one of its traveling films. Lee Bernard, Head WV film representative, *World Vision Magazine*, June 1957, 4.

screen Cinerama,” World Vision followed suit, advertising that “it made the viewer part of the scene.”⁵ His original 1948 film *China Challenge* remained “one of the most widely viewed and discussed 16mm sound motion pictures ever filmed.” Pierce’s films put World Vision on the map.⁶

To raise public awareness of World Vision, he invested in other media, including a coast-to-coast radio broadcast in 1956. Evangelicals had flourished through radio, but *Bob Pierce Reports* stood apart for its focus on missions. Each week, juxtaposing his message with the songs of the World Vision quartet, Pierce recounted his international travels, interviewed missionaries and indigenous pastors, and repeated his familiar message.⁷ In 1957, World Vision began publishing the monthly *World Vision* magazine, which soon overtook and dwarfed the size of rival missions magazines. Pierce used it to interpret the headlines from a Christian perspective and to raise money. It won national awards for its reporting while the editors designed its pictures to move donors emotionally. The magazine doubled World Vision’s income.⁸

⁵ Advertisement for *This Gathering Storm*, 1953 referenced in Hamilton, 74.

⁶ For a study of World Vision’s film ministry, see John Robert Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision’s Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film” (University of Southern California, 1980). Anderson, “The Story behind Christian Films,” 22. Anderson claimed Pierce’s films and World Vision had become household words among evangelicals.

⁷ At its peak, World Vision broadcasted Bob Pierce Reports on 140 stations. In addition to offering stories of missionaries, they challenged listeners to sponsor orphans or otherwise support World Vision’s work. They gave away gifts (records, tracts, books) for those who supported their ministry, and they even tracked which giveaways produced the highest return of supporters.

⁸ Pierce recruited Larry Ward, the first managing editor of *Christianity Today* in Dec. 1957 to come to World Vision and produce its magazine. Ward would become Pierce’s right hand man for the rest of his tenure. He would later leave World Vision to establish Food for the Hungry. Norman Rohrer, *Open Arms* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House, 1987), 77; Billy Graham, *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 294.



Figure 4: Bob Pierce Reports, World Vision's Radio Program⁹

Pierce's methods became models for others. Graham's World Wide Pictures later produced movies on a scale impossible for Pierce, but Graham gave Pierce credit for their invention. Indeed, while Pierce was hospitalized in Europe, Graham hired away Pierce's film producer. The move produced some tension, but Pierce later convinced Graham to undertake publishing as well. The result was Graham's *Decision* magazine, which drew thousands of supporters and additional funds to Graham's ministry.¹⁰

Pierce hired a professional publicist and never shied away from drumming up attention for himself and World Vision's work.¹¹ In 1955, wealthy Oregon farmer Harry Holt approached World Vision after watching one of Pierce's Korean films. Holt had already sponsored a number of orphans but wanted to do more, to adopt them and bring them to the U.S. These international adoptions drew the widest media coverage World Vision had received. Pierce and Holt lobbied to change federal law to allow for the adoptions. Then as the plane with the first orphans arrived, Pierce was there smiling for

⁹ Courtesy of WVUS Archives.

¹⁰ Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce," 32; Graham, *Just as I Am*, 174, 294.

¹¹ Pierce's publicist also promoted Hollywood stars Carol Burnett and Julie Andrews. Marilee Pierce Dunker, daughter of Bob Pierce, interview by author, Aug. 24, 2010, digital recording, Los Angeles, CA.

the snapping flash bulbs as he carried each orphan off the plane in his arms. On a subsequent trip, Pierce delivered a Korean orphan to adoptive parents and Hollywood celebrities Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Media outlets from the *New York Times* to *Life* magazine featured images of “Operation Baby Lift.” Holt despised Pierce’s publicity seeking, but Pierce argued that it aided World Vision, and Pierce’s entry into the secular marketplace did indeed open new doors.¹²

II. Fundraising Practices

World Vision also revolutionized fundraising. Like other mission organizations, it placed advertisements in evangelical magazines, but it avoided traditional ad copy and instead displayed pictures of orphans whom donors could sponsor. It also developed an extensive mailing list to which Pierce mailed personal appeals. These techniques did not depend on denominational or even local church partnerships. Pierce spoke directly to the donor.

World Vision combined Pierce’s entrepreneurial spirit with “faith mission” principles. World Vision’s marketing still included Pierce’s old fashioned ability to raise an offering by “passing the plate again.” At the same time, he also subscribed to what he called his “God room” principle: God alone could provide the resources. He often committed funding in his overseas travels that World Vision did not yet have and then prayed that it would come.¹³

¹² Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 69–70. WV 1956 Pictorial (LAM Records); Greg MacGregor, “Oregonian Takes 8 Seoul Orphans,” *New York Times*, Oct 2, 1955, 124; “Rancher Brings 89 More Korean Orphans to U.S.” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, Dec 18, 1956, A12; “Mr. Holt 'Moves the World' Mirror of World Opinion,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr 25, 1956, 22; Malcolm Bauer, “Korean Orphans Find U.S. Homes,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr 9, 1956, 3; “American-Korean Orphans to Arrive Tomorrow,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 22, 1956, 3. Harry Holt would later form Holt International Children’s Services, currently one of the largest international adoption agencies in the U.S.

¹³ Franklin Graham, *Rebel With a Cause* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 141. On faith missions, see Michael S. Hamilton, “More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since

New fundraising approaches did not necessarily mean bigger gifts. While the evangelical world had few Rockefellers and Carnegies, it did have wealthy supporters like Herbert Taylor and Howard Pew to bankroll new ventures.¹⁴ Initially, World Vision had no such wealthy donors. It relied on small gifts, and Pierce celebrated this approach: “I would rather have 80,000 people praying for us and giving us a dollar apiece, than one man giving us eighty thousand dollars.”¹⁵ His aim, after all, was to spread World Vision’s mission to a broad constituency. He wanted it to support global missions in a way that offered a model of compassionate charity.

World Vision’s Anti-Institutionalism

World Vision in the 1950s had no well designed plan. Pierce felt that strategic planning denied the Spirit’s work. He despised institutionalism. “Those were days when things happened fast,” recalled board member Carlton Booth. “Bob turned everything into an emergency. Things had to happen now, and you could never tell Bob why they couldn’t happen that way.”¹⁶ The organization also lacked financial accountability. Its funds rarely matched the amounts that Pierce committed or proposed to spend. In 1958, Dr. Frank Phillips, who had served World Vision as its Executive Director since its founding in 1950, abruptly resigned and died of a heart attack less than three days later. Phillips was the balance to Pierce’s extravagant vision, and his loss almost toppled World Vision. Despite its growth, the organization was still fragile.¹⁷

1945,” in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, 2000, 104–106.

¹⁴ Herbert Taylor was President of Club Aluminum and funded a number of evangelical agencies, from YFC to Campus Crusade. J. Howard Pew initially served as the financial bankroller for *Christianity Today*. Sarah Hammond, “‘God’s Business Men’: Entrepreneurial Evangelicals in Depression and War,” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2010).

¹⁵ Richard Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken* (Grand Rapids Mich.: Zondervan, 1960), 179.

¹⁶ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 77.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 77–78.

Pierce, however, was eager to move forward, even if it meant sacrificing successful enterprises from the past. By 1958, the hallmark of the ministry was orphan care. World Vision supported over 12,488 orphans in four countries. Child sponsorship brought in most of the money, and the organization often had to “borrow” funds designated for orphans to cover other expenses. Yet, child sponsorship had become a managerial nightmare. World Vision had no orphanages; it turned them over to missionaries and Korean Christians. But then it had no way to supervise the staffs. When several of the orphanages got in trouble with the Korean government for misappropriation of funds, Pierce worried about his organization’s reputation. He lamented that World Vision had entered the “orphanage business.” He let his board know that he was ready to jettison his marquee ministry and hand it over to the denominations. He would return to his original vision of evangelizing the world and doling out money when emergencies came into view.¹⁸

He had similar problems with missionaries. In the early days, Pierce met missionaries and promised them funds for a month’s food, supplies for a destitute leper colony, perhaps a jeep, or other aid. By the end of decade, World Vision listed over eighty missionaries in its annual budget. Pierce worried that eighty was too many; their dependence on World Vision restricted his ability to meet emergencies and fund new ministries.¹⁹

World Vision’s Innovative Methods Overseas

Pierce had no patience for the status quo, anywhere or anytime. He wanted constant expansion. In the 1950s, the field was Korea, and World Vision continued to

¹⁸ “President’s Report,” WV Board of Directors’ Meeting, Oct. 7, 1958 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁹ World Vision Board of Directors’ meeting, Aug 18, 1959; Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59,” (WVI Central Records).

spend most of its money there, but Americans lost interest in Korea after the war, and Pierce looked beyond it to other parts of Asia. He had always supported work in other countries. At Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's request, Pierce provided a copy of the Gospel of John to her husband's soldiers in Formosa.²⁰ He supported the work of the Canadian Presbyterian missionary Lillian Dickson among Formosa's mountain tribes for years, and he expanded World Vision's presence in Japan, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam.²¹ In 1956, Billy Graham asked Pierce to accompany him on his crusade tour of Asia because no other evangelical had better connections on the continent.²²

World Vision's expansion gave it a reputation as an Asian organization, but by 1960 it saw the opportunities in Africa, even though it lacked the resources to take advantage of the changes on that continent. The U.S. had rediscovered Africa with the overthrow of European colonial empires and the birth of new nations. Pierce traveled throughout the region, but he remained hesitant to bring World Vision into the African countries. He felt that the organization was not quite ready to embody a truly "world vision."

I. Crusade Evangelism

Pierce never relinquished his identity as an evangelist, and as his reputation grew, he began to headline World Vision's large crusades. In 1956, he reported over 5000 conversions in Manila, Philippines. In 1957, he counted over 70,000 Koreans attending his Seoul Crusade. In 1959, World Vision promoted its largest crusade in Osaka, Japan.

²⁰ Roy Robertson, *Developing a Heart for Mission: Five Missionary Heroes* (Singapore: NavMedia, 2002), 156–7.

²¹ Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59 (WVI Central Records).

²² "Bob Pierce Interviewing Billy Graham," Haven of Rest Radio Program, Feb. 28, 1956. Transcription in Folder 5, Box 6, Collection 74 Records of Billy Graham Ephemera. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois; George Burnham, *To the Far Corners, with Billy Graham in Asia* (Westwood NJ: Revell, 1956).

Pierce came at the invitation of the local churches, but the crusades displayed a typical American style that resembled his successful Youth for Christ meetings. Placing their attention on his personality, the papers reported that “a great man of God” had come to the city. Ralph Carmichael, a composer of contemporary Christian music, accompanied Pierce on the trip to lead a 300 voice Japanese choir and the city’s symphony orchestra in his original compositions. The three week crusade was the longest in Japanese history. It drew over 96,000 people to the city’s largest auditorium and recorded 7,457 decisions for Christ. Tens of thousands more listened and watched on Japanese radio and television.²³

World Vision did not limit its activities in Japan to crusade evangelism. Each day, staff also met with university students, businessmen, and civic leaders to instill them with moral and spiritual values, often with an American coloration. Asians were open to the gospel; Pierce proclaimed it while also trying to intertwine Christian faith with democratic ideals. With international press coverage and local support, these crusades went a long way toward establishing World Vision’s name throughout Asia.²⁴

II. Pastors’ Conferences

World Vision’s crusades promoted an American-style evangelism, but its Pastor Conferences encouraged “indigenous” or “national” Christian pastors. In 1953, Pierce established World Vision pastor conferences to bring together local pastors for education, mutual encouragement, and fellowship. He traced the new ministry’s origin to the widow of a martyred Korean pastor. Pressing her wedding ring into Pierce’s hand, she asked that the proceeds from the sale of her only valuable possession be used for Korean Christian

²³ “Seoul Crusade,” *World Vision* (Aug-Sept. 1957): 7; “Why Going to Osaka for Crusade,” *World Vision* (Feb. 1959): 3; “Pierce Preaching in Osaka Crusade,” *World Vision* (July 1959).

²⁴ Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 237; Marilee Dunker, *Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce, Founders of World Vision and Samaritan’s Purse* (Waynesboro Ga.: Authentic Media, 2005), 147–8.

leaders. That same year, 1953, Pierce brought together over 300 pastors. By 1954, he gathered over 2000, claiming that it was the largest gathering of clergy ever assembled in the Orient.²⁵

Pierce had always promoted indigenous pastors alongside missionaries as heroes who sacrificed for the gospel, and the conferences expanded throughout Asia. By the end of the decade, World Vision had replicated the model in Africa and Latin America, staging five to six conferences each year that gathered a total of 4000 pastors for a week of training. Evangelicals from the West anchored the programs. They included such figures as the prominent pastor and past NAE president Paul Rees, *Christianity Today* editor Carl Henry, Pastor of Washington DC's First Presbyterian Church Richard Halverson, and evangelist Donald Barnhouse. Over time, Pierce also recruited Asian Christian leaders to join the teaching team. Pastor of Korea's largest church K.C. Han joined Mar Thoma Bishop Alexander Mar Theolophilus and Indian evangelist Rochunga Pudaite as frequent speakers on Pierce's tours.²⁶ They offered the basics of pastoral ministry: the art of preaching, Bible study, and theological foundations. They also provided spiritual renewal and Christian fellowship while challenging the pastors to return to their communities with a revived energy for evangelism.²⁷

World Vision's support of pastors' conferences, however, went beyond encouraging the local forgotten pastor. Pierce worried that "heathenism" would continue "to engulf the world," and he came to see these indigenous pastors as the key to

²⁵ Graeme Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times: An Insider's View of World Vision* (Wilsonville Or.: BookPartners, 1996), 19. See also "World Vision News," (Summer Issue, 1955) 4.3. Folder 11, Box 7, Collection 5 Papers of Vernon William Patterson. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter cited as Patterson Records).

²⁶ "Operation Now," 1958 World Vision Pastors' Conferences," Patterson Records.

²⁷ Paul Rees, "Purpose of World Vision's Pastors' Conferences," *World Vision* (Jan. 1960): 4.

Christianity's future outside the West."²⁸ He also hoped they might advance Christianity at the expense of communism. The pastors' conferences, he hoped, would instill Christian beliefs in local leaders so that they could resist the propaganda and infiltration of Communist forces.²⁹ With communism and nationalism rampant through the East, Pierce also feared the expulsion of Western missionaries. It was therefore their duty to train indigenous pastors for the day when the "welcome mat is pulled from beneath the white man."³⁰

Indigenous leaders were necessary for another reason. "No matter how appealing the foreign message may be, and no matter how attractive the personality, it is still something packaged in America," Pierce acknowledged. "The day has passed when an American can command respect simply because he is an American." His mantra became "the day of the white man and his missionary work is coming to a close.... If Asia is to be won for Christ, it must be won by Asians."³¹ The best-known missionary in Afghanistan, J. Christy Wilson, endorsed World Vision as an evangelical leader in indigenous missions. It was, he said, "practically the only interdenominational and independent group which works in full cooperation with the established missions on the field *and* the indigenous churches."³²

According to Pierce, the pastors' conferences could build "true ecumenicity."

Before committing to a pastors' conference, World Vision required a joint invitation and

²⁸ Ellsworth Culver, "A World-wide Impact for Christ" *World Vision* (April 1958): 11.

²⁹ George Burnham, "Special Report from Far East," *World Vision* (Oct/Nov. 1957):3; In promoting 1955 Pastors' Conferences in Indonesia, Pierce claimed, "Indo-China is a powder keg with the Communists ready to take over the entire country. Six months from now the pastors there may be martyrs just as the Koreans became martyrs a few years ago. Pray that God will use these days to His glory." Patterson Records.

³⁰ George Burnham, "Special Report from Far East," *World Vision* (Oct/Nov. 1957): 3-4.

³¹ Burnham, "Special Report from Far East," 3-4; Also see Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 197.

³² J. Christy Wilson quoted in World Vision Annual Report, 1956 (WVI Central Records).

commitment from all local churches. Pierce contrasted his conferences to those of the ecumenical movement that seemed to bring a few select leaders together for highbrow debates. World Vision claimed that it engendered “practical ecumenicity – that many of the ecumenicists have not been able to create by articles and lengthy discourses on the subject.” In funding the training of local pastors, World Vision also brought the power of the purse. As an interdenominational agency offering financial support, World Vision broke down denominational isolation and moved beyond theological and liturgical differences to create a greater diversity than almost any other Christian organization.³³

III. World Vision's Established Objectives

Despite the innovation and disparate programs, World Vision clung to its original purpose as a “missionary service organization meeting emergency needs in crisis areas of the world through existing evangelical agencies.” By 1958, it defined this purpose through five objectives: 1) Christian social welfare; 2) emergency aid; 3) evangelistic outreach; 4) Christian leadership development; 5) missionary challenge. It spent most of its money, however, on the first two, social welfare and emergency aid. Its reputation grew as it offered material aid to people suffering or in poverty. In exposing its constituency to physical need without belittling evangelism, World Vision carved out a unique identity.³⁴

World Vision's Initial Reception by American Evangelicals, 1950-1956

By the mid-1950s, World Vision diversified its programming overseas while garnering a reputation among evangelicals at home. Pierce attracted popular audiences while connecting with evangelical and political networks. Still a first responder to

³³ Burnham, “Special Report from Far East,” 4; Culver, “A World-wide Impact for Christ,” 4.

³⁴ Reproduced in *World Vision* (August 1958): 38 and many other times.

emergencies on the mission field, and still a supporter of orphans and missionaries, Pierce built an identity as a missionary ambassador, an expert on global religious issues. He retained his popular appeal among evangelicals, but he also began to gain an audience in evangelical, missionary, and political hierarchies.

I. Evangelical Missions

The gatekeepers to the evangelical village could remain skeptical. They did not know quite what to make of his go-it-alone approach. Many missionaries abroad adored Pierce because he supported them financially.³⁵ His penchant for responding first to one need and then to another, however, sometimes struck mission executives as a critique of their bureaucracies. Others took offense at Pierce's fundraising tactics. They felt wary of his highly charged messages to the people in the pews, worrying that such vulgar fundraising played on emotions for short-term ends over long-term commitments and shifted the allegiances of their own supporters.

The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) and Evangelical Foreign Missionary Association (EFMA) provided the umbrella for most evangelical/fundamentalist mission organizations. Established in 1917, the IFMA was an association of fundamentalist faith mission societies. The NAE chartered the EFMA in 1945 to unite a number of evangelical missions. Unlike the IFMA, it accepted both independent faith missions as well as denominational organizations. As a subsidiary of the NAE, it repudiated the separatism of the IFMA and identified with the evangelical

³⁵ Missionaries also praised Pierce for the attention he showed them overseas. Oftentimes, he treated missionaries to a night at a nice restaurant in order to show that their work was not forgotten. He not only funded needs for the mission, but he would also donate funds to make missionary families' lives easier: tuition for school, new clothes, radios, or transportation.

adaptation to popular culture and American ideals. The IFMA denied membership to World Vision, but the EFMA allowed it to join in 1955.³⁶

Even after joining, World Vision did not enjoy immediate acceptance as a peer. Its fundraising practices, lack of organizational structure, and resistance to theological hair-splitting kept it on the margins. Its growth and public attention drew some envy. Pierce's social ministries seemed to diminish evangelism. He even worked with missionaries overseas from World Council denominations. At the end of the Korean War, he accepted an invitation from President John McKay at Princeton Seminary to share his experiences with students.³⁷ He always seemed, to some, to ignore evangelical boundaries. In 1953, the EFMA established an annual Missionary Executive Retreat for leaders to debate issues. It did not invite World Vision. At the same time, however, EFMA members recognized that Pierce could win popular support for foreign missions. It rarely invited World Vision to sit at its head table, but it used the organization. Pierce funded EFMA retreats and global mission tours, introduced mission leaders to foreign dignitaries, and supported missionaries in the field.³⁸

³⁶ IFMA's records contain correspondence between World Vision Executive Director Frank Phillips and IFMA leadership detailing their reason for declining World Vision's membership application. The IFMA had formally denied World Vision's application for membership by 1957. Officially, the IFMA claimed World Vision was a service rather than missionary-sending organization, but additional communications indicate that World Vision's fundraising, social ministries, and diverse cooperation across denominations also affected its decision. Folders 3-4, Box 70, Collection 352, Records of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter IFMA Records).

³⁷ Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 142.

³⁸ The EFMA Mission Executive Retreats began in 1953. World Vision first attended in 1959. Folder 2, Box 18, Collection 165, Records of the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter EFMA Records). World Vision's records note its funding of Clyde Taylor's EFMA travel as well as other needs. "Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59," (WVI Central Records).

II. Evangelical Institutional Networks

Pierce faced similar challenges from other institutional evangelical networks. He could be his own worst enemy. Nobody could question his commitment to world evangelization, but both friends and enemies acknowledged his divisiveness. Billy Graham charitably called him a “complex personality.”³⁹ He was quick to speak, prone to anger, blunt, and bull-headed even as he was generous, loyal, and tender-hearted. In the small circle of the evangelical elite, he was a wild card. Genteel theologians like Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry sometimes blanched at his populist style. Was this man a fanatic?

As entrepreneurial evangelical institutions rose to prominence, however, World Vision grew alongside them. A generation of leaders emerged from YFC in the 1950s to start their own organizations and Pierce maintained personal relationships with most of them. He shared regular Bible study with Dawson Trotman of the Navigators and Dick Hillis of Orient Crusades. He opened doors for young Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright. He served as Billy Graham’s tour guide in Asia. Graham, in turn, often introduced Pierce and World Vision at his own crusades.⁴⁰

In 1956, World Vision moved its offices from Portland, Oregon, to the Los Angeles suburbs of Eagle Rock, CA. With Pierce away from home much of the year, southern California left his wife and kids closer to extended family; it also moved World Vision into a hub of prospering parachurch organizations. World Vision shared office

³⁹ Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 18.

⁴⁰ Robertson, *Developing a Heart for Mission*; Graham, *Just as I Am*, 192–197.

space with the Navigators, connected with Fuller and BIOLA seminaries, and hired their graduates. The organization shared in the evangelical growth of the Sunbelt states.⁴¹

Pierce knew the emerging generation of evangelical leaders, and they knew him. Academics like Carl Henry kept their distance, but by the mid 1950s, others viewed World Vision as a member of the club. The NAE invited him to speak and to serve on its International Affairs Committee. World Vision's board attracted evangelical elites. Billy Graham served as board chairmen alongside Henrietta Mears, a Presbyterian noted for her Bible teaching in Hollywood, EFMA chairman Clyde Taylor, NAE past President Paul Rees, Fuller professor Carlton Booth, Wheaton President Raymond Edman, *Eternity* magazine editor Donald Barnhouse, and Richard Halverson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. By the mid 1950s, World Vision had a place among the who's who of evangelical organizations.⁴²

III. Politics – International Christian Leadership

By that time, the organization was also attracting additional supporters from the business and political elite. Lt. General William K. Harrison, Kansas Senator Frank Carlson, and Texas Governor Price Daniel served on its board.⁴³ They also served in the International Committee on Christian Leadership (ICCL or ICL), which the Reverend Abraham Vereide established in 1935 to lead former Christian business and civic leaders back to faith. Vereide's "Idea," as he called it, was one part muscular Christianity and another part American exceptionalism. Like Frank Buchman of the Moral-ReArmament

⁴¹ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 77; Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011); John Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁴² World Vision 1956 Pictorial, LAM Records. World Vision 1961 Pictorial (WVI Central Records). "Report of the Executive Secretary of the NAE's Commission on International Relations," April 28, 1954. Folder 25, Box 3 (EFMA Records).

⁴³ WV 1956 Pictorial, LAM Records.

movement, Vereide aimed to cultivate the spiritual and moral stamina necessary to defend western civilization and counter the communists.⁴⁴

By the 1950s, a few politicians adopted Vereide's "Idea" and met in small groups throughout the country. Senator Carlson convinced newly elected President Eisenhower to establish the Presidential Prayer Breakfast in 1953, and in 1955, Carlson addressed this gathering and coined the ICL's watchword, "a worldwide spiritual offensive."

Representative Walter Judd, former missionary to China and ranking Republican member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, saw the ICL as the potential spiritual counterpart to the United Nations, though he believed that it would be more effective.⁴⁵

The ICL formed small groups of Christian leaders throughout the world, and many of their members came each year to the Prayer Breakfast. Because of his connections overseas, Pierce became an ICL ally. By the mid 1950s, he served as an ICL field representative, speaking on its behalf as he met with Chiang Kai-Shek, Syngman Rhee, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister. He also covered Europe, speaking to such figures as the ICL honorary president Queen Wilhelmina of the

⁴⁴ There has been a plethora of recent books investigating the ICL, which has been known by many names including National Committee for Christian Leadership, National Leadership Council, Fellowship Foundation, the Fellowship, and the Family. Most of this research does little to explore the organization's history but focuses on their contemporary political and cultural influence. Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008); D. Michael Lindsay, "Is the National Prayer Breakfast Surrounded by a 'Christian Mafia'? Religious Publicity and Secrecy Within the Corridors of Power," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 390–419; D. Michael Lindsay, "Organizational Liminality and Interstitial Creativity: The Fellowship of Power.," *Social Forces* 89, no. 1 (2010): 163–184. There has also been a revival of interest in Moral Rearmament. See especially Daniel Sack, *Moral Re-armament: The Reinventions of an American Religious Movement*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁴⁵ Sharlet, *The Family*, 155. "The International Council for Christian Leadership," Summary Document, 1958-60. Folder 2, Box 559, Collection 459, Records of the Fellowship Foundation. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter Fellowship Records).

Netherlands and the outgoing French Prime Minister Eugène Jean Pflimlin about spiritual revitalization.⁴⁶

By 1956, World Vision board chairman Dick Halverson had taken the helm as Executive Director of ICL. Politicians began to take World Vision more seriously. While their approaches differed, Pierce and ICL politicians such as Walter Judd and Frank Carlson at least shared the same notion that a return to Christian faith in America and its expansion throughout the world were necessary to defeat communism. They could all work together to save the world.⁴⁷

Measuring a New Identity: The Missionary, Evangelical, and American Outlook of World Vision, 1956-1960

By the end of the fifties, World Vision had grown in size and matured in sophistication, spending a million dollars a year, supporting 13,215 orphans, and operating an additional 250 projects in 25 total countries.⁴⁸ Its magazine, movies, and celebrity supporters advertised its missionary appeals. Evangelical insiders included it as a partner. Yet evangelical identity was also evolving throughout the 1950s, setting new boundary lines. Pierce remained both inside and outside as ally and critic, leader and gadfly. He spoke in a language that middle class evangelical believers could understand

⁴⁶ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 123. "L.A. Evangelist Tells about Pflimlin's Faith," *Los Angeles Times*, Jun 7, 1958, 14.

⁴⁷ Letters between Dick Halverson and Abram Vereide discussed the impact World Vision pastors conferences are having on ICL's hope for "worldwide spiritual offensive." Abram Vereide to Dick Halverson, Sept. 26, 1956 and Dick Halverson to Abram Vereide, Oct. 4, 1956, Box 509, Fellowship Records. While ICL was made up of evangelicals, Halverson wondered if it was evangelical enough. As an evangelical insider, he understood that ecumenical cooperation remained a barrier to many evangelicals. Kenneth Strachan, head of the conservative Latin American Mission, voiced his concerns for ICL's positions but found himself able to work alongside the organization on issues of anti-communism. (Kenneth Strachan to Donald Gill, Nov. 28, 1955, Folder 9, Box 105, EFMA Records. ICL's own board discussed if Halverson himself was too evangelical for the organization at the same time Halverson questioned whether ICL was losing its past evangelical moorings. Folder 2, Box 509, Fellowship Records.

⁴⁸ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 77; Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 176.

even as he challenged them, along with the organizations, to think about new perspectives.

I. Changes within Evangelical Missions

The decision makers for evangelical missions entered the 1950s defining themselves in contrast to the ecumenical movement, but they learned that simple opposition to church union and the promotion of world evangelization no longer sufficed. They had to reconsider their theory and practice.⁴⁹

As Asians stagnated in poverty, the mission agencies saw the need for relief work, but they feared becoming aid workers rather than evangelists. At their inaugural 1953 Mission Executives' Retreat, one EFMA leader remarked that "the world will look on us with distrust if we ignore this need, (for it is) hard to see a people and give them spiritual food without meeting the physical needs in measure." Another executive responded: "On every mission field poverty abounds, especially this is true in the Orient. It would be very easy to be pulled off center and soon be in relief work and not in evangelization."⁵⁰ They saw the poverty; they questioned whether they should be the ones to alleviate it.

In addition, the communists refused to go away. Evangelicals always spoke of "godless" communism and "Christian" America, but by mid-decade, they stopped dismissing communism as simply "from the devil." Instead, they read Marx and Lenin in order to refute communist ideology and methodology. They treated it as another false

⁴⁹ Lindsell notes evangelical missions in the 1950s were concerned with three main issues: modernism, communism, and Catholicism. Harold Lindsell, *Missionary Principles and Practice* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1955), 18.

⁵⁰ Mission Executive Retreat, 1953. Folder 22, Box 3, EFMA Records.

religion, but as they had done with other Eastern faiths, they took its ideas seriously in order to become better apologists for their own Christian faith.⁵¹

Even more puzzling were the critiques of western imperialism by new nationalists who often had little interest in communism. As a result evangelicals, like ecumenical missionary agencies, turned to indigenous preachers and missionaries. They realized how far they lagged behind the ecumenical movement in creating national church councils, developing indigenous leaders, and indigenizing their practices. While they preferred indigenization in theory, they struggled to implement it in practice. It meant that they had to alter their appeals. Pleas for American missionaries to minister to unreached masses brought numerical and financial results. Sacrificing American exceptionalism and missionary idealism presented a risk.⁵²

World events tempered American triumphalism. Communism and new nationalisms hampered evangelical efforts. They feared the impending merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches. Would it end mission as they had known it? They still wanted to evangelize the world in this generation, but they were less self-assured.⁵³

II. World Vision's Interactions with a Changing Evangelical Missions

Pierce rarely joined the ideological debates; he preferred action. He chastised agencies that refused to support missionaries' relief efforts; he supplied the funds

⁵¹ Arthur Glasser, "Communism – A Missionary Problem," 1955 EFMA Convention, Folder 13, Box 2, Collection 192. Papers of Harold Lindsell. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter cited as Lindsell Papers). Also Arthur Glasser, "An Evangelical Approach to Communism," 1959 Mission Executives Retreat, Folder 9, Box 4, EFMA Records.

⁵² R. Kenneth Strachan, "New Emphasis in Missions," Address to Mission Executives Retreat, 1954. Folder 23, Box 3, EFMA Records. Conversations continued over indigenous principles throughout the decade. See especially Mission Executive Retreats 1955-57, Folder 18, Box 1, EFMA Records. Juan M. Isais, "How Nationals Feel about Missions," Mar. 17, 1958, Folder 12, Box 2.

⁵³ IMC officially merged with WCC in 1961 but the impending merger was announced years earlier.

himself. He had no interest in reading Marx or Lenin and he continued his anti-communist rhetoric by appealing to audiences through images of flattened villages, martyred pastors, and impoverished orphans. Nonetheless, through establishing pastors' conferences, funding local evangelists, and handing over control of programs to local staff, he incorporated indigenizing principles while other agencies merely theorized about them.⁵⁴ He worked with mainline missionaries and told the evangelicals at home that most of the missionaries he knew held an evangelistic faith unencumbered by American theological divisions. More conventional mission executives demanded more respect for theological boundaries.⁵⁵

Pierce continued to talk directly to the people in the pews. He still told stories about his missionary friends and described them as forgotten heroes, adventurous red-blooded Americans. He turned some of the missionaries into iconic figures. His promotion of Lillian Dickson's work among "headhunting tribes in Formosa" brought her Mustard Seed organization to the attention of the U.S. and foreign governments. His stories of Gladys Alyward, British faith missionary to China, led Hollywood to turn her biography, *The Small Woman*, into a 1958 Oscar nominated film, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. Soon after the film's success, World Vision sponsored Alyward on international speaking tours. Pierce fought in the Cold War not by writing treatises but by telling stories.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ "Conferences Prepare Far East Pastors," *Christianity Today* (Oct. 8, 1957): 30-31.

⁵⁵ Both IFMA and EFMA executives expressed some reservation in Pierce's methods. See Jack Percy to S.L. Boehmer, April 6, 1961 for examples of conservative missions' criticisms of World Vision. Folder 3, Box 70, IFMA Records.

⁵⁶ Lillian Dickson was a frequent guest on Pierce's radio show. "Transcription of Pierce's radio interview with Lillian Dickson," Mar. 8, 1959 (WVI Central Records). World Vision invested heavily in her ministry and publicized it often through its appeal letters and magazine pages. Dickson received World Vision's first Christian Service Award in 1960. World Vision sponsored Gladys Alwyard's tour of American and Canada from April 26-Dec. 16, 1959. They later also sponsored an Australian tour. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 71, 83.

Each week, reaching an audience that stretched from coast to coast, Pierce's radio show celebrated missionaries. Each month, *World Vision* magazine reached over 100,000 readers with color images of the world, promoting, like *Life* or *Look*, "facts from the field," describing the culture and geography and needs of one or another mission. With correspondents throughout the world, the magazine reported international news from a missionary perspective. It gave churches practical suggestions for promoting missions and book reviews telling them what to read. Children could cut out paper-dolls of international children in native dress. World Vision equipped its expanding popular audience with a missions-laden global outlook.⁵⁷

Each month, moreover, the magazine ran ads for people seeking a place to serve. Pierce lamented that many denominational missions and even faith missions excluded people without theological training or professional experience. "A nice, godly cultured seminary graduate would never in the world be worth a snap of a finger." Pierce preached, "I don't want a missionary who is ordained but one who knows how to work with the army." Thousands of jobs would go unfilled if they had to wait for educated missionaries to do them. Anyone could be a missionary; anyone could serve; Pierce would find them a place.⁵⁸

Pierce's ideology leaned toward the gospel of masculinity. Flying in and out of danger and preaching on the front lines, both of war and of suffering, he demonstrated the adventure to be had in the mission field. World Vision mainly supported women; Pierce wanted to see men in the field. He scolded them in one radio message:

⁵⁷ Gary F. VanderPol, "The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005" (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 50–51.

⁵⁸ Bob Pierce, "Message given at Missionary Conference of American Soul Clinic," Oct. 12, 1952 (WVI Central Records). See also Harold Lindsell, "Today's Missionary – A New Breed of Man," *World Vision* (March 1964): 6.

I wonder what you're doing, Mister? Are you working as a great big brace grocery clerk or running a great big garage or a lathe, or are you piloting a huge desk in a great insurance company, while some frail woman does the job that God would have had you do in the face of rape and murder and piracy and slaughter and riot and hate and hell and Communism at the ends of the earth? It's something to think about, because somewhere there's something wrong when about four out of five on the mission field are women.⁵⁹

Missions, he said, cost women loneliness, the chance to marry and have a family, and the comforts of home. Pierce heralded these women because they took on the masculine roles forsaken by men, but he did everything he could to reverse the trend.⁶⁰

His special ire found expression when he thought about Americans who remained indifferent to suffering. Initially, he believed that his messages would prod them into action, but their response disappointed him. He intensified his message of sacrifice: global Christians and missionaries suffering while Americans sought wealth and comfort. Why did Americans not do more to help people with far less?⁶¹ The institutional mission agencies presented options for service; Pierce talked about guilt and sacrifice.

III. Changes within American Evangelicalism

World Vision expanded alongside a generation of new parachurch organizations whose charismatic founders often shared ideological and personal connections. Pierce felt comfortable with these people, but he also gradually won more respect from the older guard. In 1958, Dr. Paul Rees joined World Vision's staff as Vice President at Large to coordinate its growing pastors' conference work. Rees was longtime pastor of the First

⁵⁹ Bob Pierce, "Cost of Being a Missionary," World Vision Radio Broadcast, Sept. 27, 1959 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁰ Pierce reiterated a message of female sacrifice in contrast to male excuses. Pierce preached, "Remind the boys in your Sunday School that men can be missionaries too! Perhaps our failure to do this is one reason for the all-too-prevalent male response to the missionary call: 'Here am I, Lord—send my sister!'" Bob Pierce, "Missionary Education in the Sunday School," *World Vision* (Nov. 1958): 6; VanderPol, "The Least of These," 54–56; Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁶¹ Pierce, "Message Given at Missionary Conference of American Soul Clinic," Oct. 12, 1952. (WVI Central Records).

Covenant Church in Minneapolis, an author and radio evangelist, and past president of the NAE. He brought World Vision an intellectual respectability to balance Pierce's uncouth brashness. The theologian Carl Henry found Pierce's lack of theological education and refinement distasteful, but Pierce finally won him over as well. Henry agreed to teach at pastors' conferences and to write scripts for films.⁶²

In the 1950s, evangelicalism rode the coattails of patriotism, triumphalism, and Cold War anti-communism. Yet something new was happening. Ever since the 1940s some evangelicals had begun to attach the prefix "neo" to the labels that described them. They were neo-evangelicals. They wanted to distinguish themselves from fundamentalism on the right and liberalism on the left, but few outsiders comprehended the distinctions. By the end of the 1950s, however, a new evangelicalism had succeeded in distinguishing itself. In 1957, Billy Graham and others founded the periodical *Christianity Today* as the mouthpiece of evangelicalism. It soon eclipsed the mainline *Christian Century* in circulation among pastors and laypersons. *Time* magazine would now identify evangelicalism as a growing third stream in American Protestantism.⁶³

Billy Graham's 1957 New York City Crusade illustrated both evangelical popularity and division. The crusade drew record crowds and unprecedented publicity,

⁶² "Paul Rees Biography" (WVI Central Records); "Rees, News Brief," *World Vision* (Dec. 1958). Rees served as NAE President from 1952-54. He was on the board of *Christianity Today* and many other evangelical institutions. He had spent much of the last few years before joining World Vision assisting Billy Graham in his international evangelistic crusades. For Carl Henry's role in World Vision, see Carl Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986).

⁶³ Most scholars see the neo-evangelical label taking root with the formation of the NAE, but this remains a debated historiography. Some of these concerns are covered previously in chapter 1. For the best synopsis of the issue, see Douglas A. Sweeney, "The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma," *Church History* 60, no. 1 (1991): 70-84. Jon R Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). "Protestants: The Evangelical Undertow," *Time*, Dec. 20, 1963, 57 referenced in Dennis Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 94.

but it also had its critics. Mainline Protestants criticized Graham for elevating individual conversion over social suffering. Union Theological Seminary professor Reinhold Niebuhr rebuked Graham's crusade in *Life* magazine. Fundamentalists chided Graham for working with mainline churches, even with theological liberals. For some fundamentalists, the New York City Crusade was the final straw; John R. Rice and Bob Jones declined thereafter to associate with Graham.⁶⁴

Despite criticisms, evangelicals saw themselves as the new mainstream and the custodians of a Christian America.⁶⁵ By the late 1950s, they were a common sight at Republican rallies, and Graham was a fixture within the Eisenhower White House. The ICL regularly hosted Congressmen and Washington insiders at its Bible studies and the annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast. Embracing the religious language of Truman, Eisenhower, and Dulles, evangelicals became their allies in the anti-communist crusade. After the Korean War and McCarthy's Red Scare, Protestant divisions had intensified. The World Council of Churches invited religious leaders from communist countries to attend its meetings. Some ecumenical leaders reconsidered their past refusal to recognize communist China. Evangelicals seized the opportunity to position themselves as reliable Americans in contrast to an out of touch mainline. They accused the ecumenical movement of going soft on communism, encouraged government investigations of

⁶⁴ 1957 BGEA New York Crusade Exhibit - Welcome", n.d., <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/NYC57/00welcome.htm>" (Accessed Mar. 20, 2010); Reinhold Niebuhr, "Differing Views on Billy Graham," *Life Magazine* 43.1 (1957): 92.

⁶⁵ Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism*; William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, 1st ed. (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1991), 213–217; Graham, *Just as I Am*, 282.

mainline leaders, and even charged that communists and socialists were pulling the strings of mainline puppets.⁶⁶

Anti-communism became a weapon against mainline prestige. Graham's emergence as America's leading evangelical did little to temper his anticommunism.⁶⁷ The NAE almost annually approved resolutions citing the evils of godless communism and fought it in its periodical, *United Evangelical Action*.⁶⁸ In 1956, the ICL funded the adaptation of a Pentagon filmstrip, *Militant Liberty*, to train Americans "in the principles which underlie a Christian society in contrast to the Communist threat which challenges the free way of life."⁶⁹ Evangelicals also gave money for anti-communist education. The leader of the Christian Anti-Communism Crusades, Australian physician and Baptist pastor, Fred Schwarz, began in 1958 to travel across the country to lead week-long, large meetings on the dangers of communism.⁷⁰

By the end of the 1950s, having solidified their reputation as patriots, these new evangelicals distanced themselves from the militant anti-communism of the Far Right.

⁶⁶ William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 97-99.

⁶⁷ In 1956, Graham toured India and met Prime Minister Nehru. Upon returning from this and other trips, he met with John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower about his impressions of Communism's advance in Asia. He also often regularly commented on his political opinions in press conferences. See Billy Graham Press Conferences -- Tapes and Transcripts, Collection 24, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois; Martin, *A Prophet with Honor*, 197.

⁶⁸ J. Edgar Hoover, "Communism: The Bitter Enemy of Religion," *Christianity Today* (June 22, 1959): 3-5; Walter S. Robertson, "Meeting Communism in the Far East," 3.14, April 13, 1959, 9-11; Fred Schwarz, "Can We Meet the Red Challenge?" *Christianity Today* (April 13, 1959): 13-14. In 1960-61, the NAE began a pamphlet, book, and serialized articles thematized under "Christian Answers to Communism."

⁶⁹ Anne Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the US Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge La: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 60. John C. Broger, "'Liberty Militant,' a Condensation by ICL from *Militant Liberty*," 1955 ICL Annual Conference Folder 3, Box 551 (Fellowship Records)

⁷⁰ Lori Bogle, *Creating an American Will: Evangelical Democracy and National Security, 1913-1964* (Ph.D. diss., University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 1997), 328-9; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2001), 61; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 294-5; Sarah Posner, "McCarthy, Born Again and Retooled for Our Time," *Religion Dispatches*, Dec. 5, 2010, http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/3794/mccarthy%2C_born_again_and_retooled_for_our_time (Accessed May 1, 2012); Frederick Schwarz, *You Can Trust the Communists (to Be Communists)* (Long Beach, Calif.: Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, 1960).

Fundamentalist Carl McIntire continued to be a thorn in their side. Alongside Billy James Hargis and his Christian Crusade, he stayed in the headlines with his anti-communist accusations against mainline churches and liberal reformers. The Christian Far Right soon felt closer to the new John Birch Society than to Graham's crusades. Continuing McCarthy's witch hunts, McIntire and the Birchers accused even Eisenhower of communist sympathies for inviting mainline Protestants to the White House. The new evangelicals still feared communism, as did most Americans, but they saw the tactics of the Far Right as uncouth and conspiratorial. They would rather reestablish a Christian America without losing a sense of decorum and respect for America's institutions.⁷¹

It was true that they sometimes spoke with an independent mind. Even with religious observance at an all time high, *Christianity Today* editor Carl Henry suggested that American spirituality was superficial. The neo-evangelicals worried that the West was not up to a spiritual battle with the communists, so they lobbied politicians, criticized foreign aid as a covert secular social gospel, and asked the government to support missionaries. If the purpose was the revival of a Christian America and defeat of communism, how could Christian missions and evangelism be separated from American foreign policy?⁷²

⁷¹ Kevin M. Kruse, "Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, ed. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 290–91; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 63; Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 282–294. For the classic work tracking the "Old Christian Right," see Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983).

⁷² Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 85–87. As an example of articles in *Christianity Today*, see Carl Henry, "Fragility of Freedom in the West," *Christianity Today* (Oct 15, 1956): 8-10, 17; Henry, "Where do We Go From Here?" *Christianity Today* (Nov 12, 1956): 16-18; Henry, "The Christian Pagan West," *Christianity Today* (Dec. 24, 1956): 3-5, 34; Henry, "America's Future: Can we Salvage the Republic?" *Christianity Today* (Mar. 3, 1958): 3-7; Henry, "The Spirit of Foreign Policy," *Christianity Today* (April 29, 1957): 20-23.

IV. World Vision's Interactions with a Changing American Evangelicalism

The evangelical press gave Pierce credit for doing “more to prevent the spread of communism than any other person.”⁷³ Serving as an ICL ambassador, cultivating foreign leaders, and courting the military, Pierce also politicized apolitical evangelicals. He was one of the first American evangelicals to travel behind the Iron Curtain, and he brought home reports of empty churches, persecuted Christians, and the anti-religious education of Russia's youth. Americans needed, he said, to understand communism's materialist and secular ideology. World Vision even helped fund such seminars as Schwarz's Christian Anti-Communist Crusades.⁷⁴ But he worked mainly by telling stories and showing pictures of Korean orphans and martyred pastors.

Yet he was often more critical than his peers of American shortcomings. Lethargic Americans, he said, could one day face suffering and dislocation: “Will God allow Christian America to be ground under by the godless Russian hordes?” And communists were not the only threat: “Would it be worthwhile for us to suffer, for all our churches to be turned into mosques?” Danger lurked just outside American doorsteps.⁷⁵

Where was Christianity most alive? In the small and often persecuted churches of Asia. Billy Graham went with Pierce on an overseas crusade; he reported afterwards that he had seen glimpses of the apostolic church: “My travels in Asia and Africa have enabled me to meet so many Christians whose spiritual commitment, sensitiveness, and discipline are greater than anything I find at home (and) I shall not be surprised if more

⁷³ George Burnham, “World Vision Updates,” *World Vision* (Oct-Nov, 1957): 9.

⁷⁴ Bob Pierce, “The Iron Curtain is Raised,” *World Vision* (Aug 1958): 5-6, 10, 15, 20-22; “Missionary Disbursements, 1950-59,” (WVI Central Records).

⁷⁵ Pierce, “The Greatest Danger,” Jan. 1958 (WVI Central Records).

and more of them come to Europe and North America as ‘missionaries.’⁷⁶ The prospect of reverse missions to re-evangelize the West commended Christian work abroad while criticizing complacency at home.

Pierce continued to challenge evangelical boundary lines. He occasionally funded the missionary work of fundamentalist Carl McIntire’s International Council of Christian Churches and independent faith missions even as he also funded Presbyterians and Methodists on the mission field. To the chagrin of evangelical critics, he spoke before the Korean and Japanese National Christian Councils, which were subsidiaries of the World Council of Churches. Each time, Pierce reminded the critics that the theological fissures were different overseas. The world now required more permeable boundaries.

Conclusion

1. World Vision’s Successful Incorporation into American Evangelicalism

In 1959, Korean President Syngman Rhee presented Pierce with the country’s highest honor, the Medal for Public Welfare Service in “recognition of his exceptionally praiseworthy service to the Republic of Korea.” He elicited similar praise in other Asian nations.⁷⁷ This reputation earned him a place within American evangelical and mission networks, and in 1960, McGraw-Hill even published an account of Pierce’s travels. *Let My Heart be Broken* became a bestseller that exposed World Vision to non-evangelical audiences. Politicians, the mainstream press, and Americans in general viewed him as an expert on Asian affairs.⁷⁸ Pierce remained true, however, to his initial vision: help

⁷⁶ Billy Graham quoted in Paul Rees, “The Remaining Life or The Removed Candlestick,” *World Vision* (April 1960): 4.

⁷⁷ Dunker, *Man of Vision*, 144–5.

⁷⁸ The initial order of *Let My Heart be Broken* was 15,000 copies. World Vision recruited Gehman to write the book and gave him \$10,000 for expenses. In exchange, Gehman would give 20% of profits to World Vision. See World Vision Board of Directors’ Meeting, Nov. 17-18, 1958 (WVI Central Records).

missionaries, aid the poor, and preach the gospel. Pierce was happiest when he was leapfrogging throughout Asia and being the first on the ground when new needs presented themselves.

The world outlook he offered American evangelicals also remained stable. In 1958, Pierce produced the film, *Cry in the Night*. It took top honors as the year's best evangelical mission film, and while it had a bigger budget and better quality than his earlier films, it still peered into an orientalist and exotic Asia, using images of forgotten Hindu temples, pagan dances with demon possession, forbidding jungles, and masses of humanity. He focused his camera on the poor and juxtaposed these images with testimonies of missionaries, local pastors, and his preaching. The old message about communism still permeated the script. The movie ended with the same appeal: now or never. And his message still struck a chord with audiences.⁷⁹

II. World Vision's Subtle Shifts within American Evangelicalism

Despite the continuities, subtle shifts in World Vision during the 1950s would slightly alter evangelicalism, missions, and the evangelical global vision. More at home in American culture, evangelicals still struggled with their separatist tendencies. Pierce's popular rhetoric and maverick identity, and his partnerships across the theological spectrum, unwittingly as well as intentionally crossed boundaries. His descriptions of the differing attitudes toward boundaries in Asia and Africa also complicated the preconceived notion of evangelical identity.

Pierce also complicated conceptions of missions. By the end of the decade, evangelicals in the pages of *Christianity Today* and on the floor of NAE conventions

Gehman actually acknowledged his own Christian conversion at the end of the book as the result of the trip, and one wonders about the objectivity of the author. Gehman, *Let My Heart Be Broken*, 81–82.

⁷⁹ *Cry in the Night*, 1958 (WVI Central Records). Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce," 110–115.

began to reconsider the relationship of humanitarianism and evangelism. Did a singular preoccupation with evangelism undercut the responsibility to relieve the hungry and the thirsty? World Vision was able to serve “the least of these” without losing an evangelical identity. Why could other American evangelicals not do the same? The debate over the question continued for decades.⁸⁰

Pierce spoke for American triumphalism and anti-communism, and he praised “Christian America” for its good fight. An outsider in the world of governmental and voluntary humanitarian organizations, he liked the synthesis of missions and American foreign policy that still won adherents in Congress. By the end of the decade, however, Pierce increasingly criticized American immorality and worried that it hurt missions overseas. He also criticized evangelical indifference to suffering in other places, and he contrasted sacrifices abroad with self-indulgence at home.

Pierce began to differentiate American foreign policy and Christian priorities. In 1958, William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick’s published *The Ugly American*, a novel that brought American foreign policy to readers of popular books. Serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post*, it topped the best-seller list for seventy-eight weeks, and sold four million copies.⁸¹ The book warned about communism but excoriated the incompetence and laziness of State Department officials and aid workers. Pierce publicly affirmed the book’s analysis, recounting his own encounters with defense contractors, aid

⁸⁰ George Burnham, “Choice Seat on Aisle at NAE Meet,” *World Vision* (May 1959): 10.

⁸¹ Clive Christie, *The Quiet American and The Ugly American: Western Literary Perspectives on Indo-China in a Decade of Transition, 1950-1960*, Occasional Paper (University of Kent at Canterbury. Centre of East Asian Studies) no. 10 (Canterbury, Kent: University of Kent at Canterbury, Centre of East Asian Studies, 1989), 38; William J Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1958).

officials, and ambassadors who lived comfortably while refusing to learn local languages and customs.⁸²

Pierce contrasted “ugly Americans” with “America’s best ambassadors,” sacrificial missionaries who served as “highly effective combatants in the fight against communism.”⁸³ He admitted that earlier missionaries had failed because they forced American values on Asians while communists adopted the local customs. But he said that missionaries had learned their lesson; the diplomats had not.⁸⁴ Missionaries were politically valuable: they built trust but also built schools, orphanages, clinics, and churches, and they exemplified democracy. These were the best of both Christian and American ideals. Pierce still sometimes confused Christianity with democracy and the defeat of communism, and yet he wondered if it were not the forgotten missionaries and indigenous pastors who best demonstrated Christian and democratic ideals. Maybe America did not have all the answers.⁸⁵

Despite his authoritarian and charismatic personality, Pierce remained a fragile and unhealthy man, and so did the identity of his organization. World Vision had become a prominent evangelical mission agency. It had adopted American internationalism while exposing audiences at home to an unfamiliar, suffering, overcrowded, disease-ridden, hungry, but sacrificial and often faithful world. It spoke an evangelical language but added new accents that made more than a few people uncomfortable. As both an insider

⁸² Bob Pierce, “We Need More ‘Ugly’ Americans,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 12, 1959.

⁸³ Ibid. Carl Henry, “A Footnote to the Ugly American,” *Christianity Today* (Nov. 9, 1959): 21-22.

⁸⁴ Paul Phealn, “A Call for Christian Zeal,” *Second New York World-Telegram* (Mar. 28, 1959).

⁸⁵ Pierce argued that since the U.S. benefited from missionaries, they should receive the same privileges and prestige that aid and military workers received. He specifically advocated for privileges such as no income tax, reduced shipping and postage rates, and admittance to the commissary.

and outsider, Pierce led World Vision in unpredictable directions, even though he remained unsure where his new path might lead.

CHAPTER 4

WORLD VISION'S GROWING PAINS: EVANGELICAL REASSESSMENT IN A DECADE OF CRISIS, 1960s

In World Vision's second decade, the organization faced challenges that led it to romanticize its origins:

There was something remarkably existential and unpremeditated about our origin. A vision of need in Asia! The passion to act in the meeting of that need. It was almost as simple as that. No long-range planning. No elaborate mechanism of administration. Emergency by emergency, crisis by crisis. It was a summons from Christ to act and to act now.¹

A common observation was that World Vision had grown by expanding the global imagination of evangelicals. It had offered a fresh approach without surrendering the language and dispositions of the evangelical community. But the crises of the 1960s, whether at home or abroad, challenged World Vision's original identity and led to organizational change.

Part of the change came from professionalization. Bigger budgets required greater accountability, and bigger programs demanded greater specialization. Throughout the 1960s, the organization also debated its evangelical heritage, its missionary agenda, and its American identity. In all these ways it mirrored changes occurring among American evangelicals, who positioned themselves as America's mainstream faith in contrast to "militant fundamentalism" or a "compromising ecumenism." Many evangelicals recognized, moreover, that a postcolonial world required them to change, even though missions designed to save the unconverted were non-negotiable. In a similar way, World Vision struggled with the balance between humanitarian aid and soul-saving. In World Vision's second decade, it balanced multiple languages and identities: charismatic and

¹ "Declaration of Internationalization," May 31 1978 (WVI Central Records).

bureaucratic, missionary and humanitarian, evangelical and ecumenical, and American and international.

Evangelicals Enter the 1960s

American Evangelicals as a New Establishment?

In the 1950s, evangelicals transformed themselves from “embattled outposts to flourishing enterprises.”² In the 1960s, they looked to solidify their success.³ Much of their growth came through such independent-minded, personality-driven parachurch ministries as Billy Graham’s Evangelistic Association, Bill Bright’s Campus Crusade, and Bob Pierce’s World Vision. They remained diverse in social class, style, temperament, and theology, yet they shared a rhetorical unity.

A handful of leaders steered them through the change. Billy Graham, NAE founder and pastor Harold Ockenga, theologian Carl Henry, and philanthropist J. Howard Pew collaborated to establish the periodical *Christianity Today* (CT) to advance an evangelical agenda.⁴ The journal served as “the prime agent in demarcating, informing, providing morale for the neo-evangelical, now evangelical, movement.”⁵ By 1960, its circulation numbers outdistanced its mainline rival, the *Christian Century*.⁶ CT cited polls showing that more Protestant ministers were conservative than liberal. Yet evangelical

² Nathan Hatch with Michael S. Hamilton, “Epilogue: Take the Measure of the Evangelical Resurgence, 1942-92,” in *Reckoning with the Past*, ed. D.G. Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 397.

³ James Alden Hedstrom, “Evangelical Program in the United States, 1945-1980: The Morphology of Establishment, Progressive, and Radical Platforms” (Vanderbilt University, 1982), 8.

⁴ Hedstrom, “Evangelical Program in the United States, 1945-1980,” 107.

⁵ Marty quoted in Dennis Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 2.

⁶ *Christianity Today* only began publishing in 1956. It surpassed the *Christian Century* in only four years. Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 195–6. John Carter, “A Sociological Analysis of Christianity Today and Society,” Folder 39, Box 8, Collection 8, Records of Christianity Today International. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (hereafter cited as *CT Records*). In 1958, Christianity Today’s own poll found Protestant ministers classified themselves as: 35% fundamentalist; 39% conservative; 12% neo-orthodox; 14% liberal. See “What Protestant Ministers Believe,” *Christianity Today* (Mar. 31, 1958): 30; “The American Clergy and Basic Truths,” *Christianity Today* (Oct 10, 1960): .

leaders were not satisfied with superior numbers. They sought culture-shaping power and prestige. Ockenga advocated “a plan of action” for evangelicals, an “overall strategy instead of piecemeal action by fragmented groups.”⁷ CT drafted an internal document, “An Evangelical Protestant Strategy for the Late 1960s.”⁸ The journal became a platform for united evangelical action, serving evangelical networks by sponsoring theological conferences, promoting global missions, and lobbying for political and cultural policies.⁹

Evangelicals were moving up socially. By the 1960s, they had more education and more social status.¹⁰ Affluence brought higher giving, which produced increased budgets and building programs. The Aluminum tycoon Herbert Taylor, the oilman J. Howard Pew, and the Genesco CEO H. Maxey Jarman bankrolled evangelical institutions, and in the Sunbelt region, new evangelical churches sprouted everywhere. As a result, evangelical rhetoric changed. Evangelicals now saw themselves less as outsiders and more as mainstream Americans with a voice in the public square.¹¹

The Rhetoric of Establishment Evangelicals: A Christian America?

Establishment evangelicals legitimized their public voice by affirming middle-American values.¹² At home, they continued to worry about morality. Abroad, they embraced American exceptionalism and Cold War anticommunism. Many politicians and mainline Protestants tired of framing the Cold War as spiritual warfare. Former

⁷ Harold J. Ockenga, “Resurgent Evangelical Leadership,” *Christianity Today* 10 (1960): 11–14.

⁸ “Evangelical Protestant Strategy for the Late 1960s,” Outline Document,” Folder 1, Box 15, CT Records.

⁹ Carter, “A Sociological Analysis of Christianity Today and Society,” n.p.

¹⁰ With opportunities like the GI Bill, a number of conservative Christians gained access to higher education for the first time.

¹¹ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 157.

¹² Richard Quebedeaux coined the term “establish evangelicals” in the 1970s to identify one strand of an increasingly diverse American evangelicalism. He identified Graham, Henry, Ockenga, and most of the leading figures in the 1960s as establishment evangelicals. Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 50–51.

ambassador to the U.S.S.R., George Kennan wrote that although Christian values permeated the American conflict with Soviet power, Americans could not conclude that everything they wanted reflected the purpose of God and everything the Russians wanted reflected the purpose of the devil.¹³ Evangelicals, however, relished the dichotomy.¹⁴ FBI director J. Edgar Hoover became a frequent CT contributor.¹⁵ The NAE equipped churches with pamphlets, speakers, and “Christian Answers to Communism.”¹⁶ Billy Graham continued to preach that there was “no such thing as a compromise with atheistic Communism. We cannot pursue a policy of ‘live and let live’ with Hell.”¹⁷

The anticommunist rhetoric resonated with impulses in popular culture. Fred Schwarz, for example, combined populism and Christian anti-communism.¹⁸ From 1960

¹³ George Kennan, *Foreign Policy and Christian Conscience* (Philadelphia: Peace Education Program American Friends Service Committee, 1959), 6.

¹⁴ Communism remained the most prominent political issue in *Christianity Today* throughout the early 1960s. Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism*, 249.

¹⁵ J. Edgar Hoover, “Communism: The Bitter Enemy of Religion” *CT* (June 22, 1959): 3-5; Hoover, “The Communist Menace: Red Goals and Christian Ideals” *CT* (Oct. 10, 1960): 3-5; Hoover, “Soviet Rule or Christian Renewal?” *CT* (Nov. 7, 1960): 8-11.

¹⁶ The 1960 NAE Convention launched “Emergency Christian Mobilization” to stop the spread of communism at home and abroad. It resolved to urge “all Christian Americans” to join the NAE in “an aggressive and unrelenting campaign against this enemy of righteousness and freedom.” For example, see “News: ‘NAE Reaffirms Strong Anti-Communist Stand,’” *CT* (May 9, 1960): 30; Harold Ockenga, “The Communist Issue Today” *CT* (May 2, 1961): 9-12; “Better Red than Dead?” *CT* (April 27, 1962): 47. Anne Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the US Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 118.

¹⁷ Graham preached these words at the 1960 NAE Convention. They were reprinted in *United Evangelical Action* (June 1960), 10. Quote referenced in Kevin M. Kruse, “Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right,” in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 290.

¹⁸ Fundamentalist Carl McIntire originally introduced Schwarz to America in 1953, but Schwarz managed to avoid the more sensationalist rhetoric of the Far Right that alienated mainstream evangelicals. But during the early 1960s, the Christian Far Right also regained a level of popular support. Fundamentalists’ Carl McIntire and Billy James Hargis saw contributions skyrocket in the early 1960s as they partnered with other fringes of the far right such as the John Birch Society and Young Americans for Freedom. They advocated the U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations, a full-scale invasion of Cuba, and countering supposed communist subversives at home by rescinding Americans’ civil rights. While they represented a recognizable minority, the Christian Far Right remained too extreme for many evangelicals. The similarities and differences highlight the formation of an evangelical establishment that sought respectability and popularity within mainstream culture. Daniel K Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 59.

to 1961, his organization's revenue quadrupled from \$367,000 to \$1.2 million.¹⁹ He became known for his Christian Anti-Communist Crusades, week-long "schools," part evangelistic crusade, part pop-science lecture, and part anti-communist polemic. In 1961, he packed 12,000 people into his school at the Hollywood Bowl while several million more watched over television. The next year he gathered 8000 in rallies at Madison Square Garden and Carnegie Hall. He also recruited local leaders, national politicians, and conservative celebrities like Ronald Reagan, John Wayne, and Pat Boone to headline rallies.²⁰

Yet evangelicals still assumed a defensive posture. They saw communism as a symptom of a larger problem: "Secularism has been enthroned, and religion is being rooted out of American life."²¹ The jeremiads echoed after the Supreme Court outlawed compulsory prayer in 1962 and Bible readings in public schools a year later.²²

¹⁹ In a news brief from *World Vision* (Oct. 1961): 3, the magazine's editors note their support of Schwarz's campaigns. "World Vision has supported projects of Dr. Fred Schwarz's Christian Anti-Communism Crusade (which gathered 34,600 in LA in Sept.) and World Vision is happy to see evidence of increasing fruit from his tireless labors in awakening free men everywhere to Communism's ambitions."

²⁰ Kruse, "Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right," 291; Williams, *God's Own Party*, 61; Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (Grove Press, 2009), 196. Schwarz's traveled over 100,000 miles a year to hold his rallies. He saw his CACC contributions double every year between 1957-60 and quadruple in 1961. In Schwarz's 1962 Madison Square Garden rally, Pat Boone famously retorted, "I have four lovely young daughters, and I'd rather see them blown to heaven in a nuclear war than to live in slavery under Communism."

²¹ "Let's Get back to the Center" *CT* (Oct 9, 1964): 29; Future World Vision president and current editor of NAE's *United Evangelical Action*, Stanley Mooneyham addressed the NAE Board of Administration at the 1961 NAE Convention: "When will Americans be shaken from their Pollyannaism long enough to realize that we are dealing not with a group of well-being, conscientious people whom we meet from day to day in our neighborhood, but with a world conspiracy conceived and conducted by a powerful international hierarchy of despots?... And we better start making these people hate us cause that is our calling to fight back and see the problems." Stan Mooneyham, "A Seat in the Balcony," Address to the Board of Administration, National Association of Evangelicals, April 10, 1961, Folder 16, Box 5, EFMA Records.

²² Evangelicals disagreed on a response to the Supreme Court cases. Some supported legislative measures amending the Constitution to allow for prayer in schools. Others insisted that the proper place for prayer and Bible reading remained the home and the church. All agreed, however, that the cases pointed to the growing secularization of government, education, and public life. See debates in Mark G. Toulouse, "Christianity Today and American Public Life: A Case Study," *Journal of Church and State* 35, no. 2 (March 1, 1993): 241-284. The Becker Amendment, and later the Dirksen Amendment, both of which repeatedly failed in Congress sought to amend the Constitution to allow for prayer in public schools. The amendments received a groundswell of grassroots support among conservative Christians. The ACCC and

Evangelicals began to condemn an alleged rejection of a Christian worldview, slipping ethical standards, salacious films and magazines, and declining respect for authority.²³ They saw the 1960s as a decade of “riots, revolt, and revolution.”²⁴ The political New Left and the Civil Rights Movement became signs of “the lawlessness of our times.”²⁵ Evangelicals had wanted to save the world; now they had to save America.²⁶

Evangelical vs. Ecumenical

Evangelical leaders fixated, as well, on the ecumenical movement as their main competitor. They asserted that they occupied the high ground, standing firm for the gospel, while the ecumenical movement compromised Christian truth.²⁷ They saw ecumenicals as promoting unity at the expense of theological conviction while evangelicals called for “cooperation without compromise.” Some viewed theological

NAE testified on the bills' behalf even though *CT* did not support the measure. *CT* and other evangelicals worried that legislating prayer gave as much room for what they considered sectarian prayer. See editorial, "What About the Becker Amendment?" *CT* (June 19, 1964): 20-22; "The Debate on Devotions," *CT* (May 22, 1964): 38; Carolyn Lewis, "Church Testimony Opposes New Prayer Amendment," *CT* (Aug. 19, 1966): 46-47; "Senate Turns Back Prayer Amendment," *CT* (Oct. 14, 1966) 47; "Prayer in the Schools," *CT* (June 23, 1967): 23. With legislative failure, many evangelicals responded by forming their own Christian academies. Kruse, "Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right," 291.

²³ "Perspective on American Christianity," *CT* (April 23, 1965): 29-30.

²⁴ Billy Graham, "The Event of the Year," *CT* (Jan. 1, 1965): 45.

²⁵ Toulouse, "Christianity Today and American Public Life." Toulouse notes that *CT* did not even mention Martin Luther King, Jr. until Jan 17, 1964 in acknowledging his announcement of *Time's* Man of the Year. In 1966, *CT* referred to his efforts as "a sign of lawlessness of our times." See Editorial, "Lawlessness: A Bad Sign," *CT* (April 29, 1966): 29-30. The journal supported civil rights legislation, though it could not help but point out that "the solution seems ultimate to lie not in a civil rights act ... The solution lies in infusing both cultures with the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ." See editorials, "The White Conscience and the Negro Vote," *CT* (Mar. 28, 1960): 22; "Civil Rights Legislation," *CT* (Nov. 22, 1963): 32-33; "Civil Rights and Christian Concern," *CT* (May 8, 1964): 28-29.

²⁶ Toulouse, "Christianity Today and American Public Life. Evangelicals continually echoed the refrain calling America back to its Christian heritage. See the following *CT* articles as an examples: "Can We Weather the Storm?" *CT* (Nov. 23, 1962): 26-27; "Low Tide in the West," *CT* (Dec. 24, 1956): 20-24; "Government Service as a Christian Vocation," *CT* (June 24, 1957): 21-22; Samuel M. Shoemaker, "How to Bring a Nation Under God," *CT* (Nov. 11, 1957): 5-8; William K. Harrison, "Is America's Spiritual Vigor Waning?" *CT* 2 (Jan. 20, 1958): 24-25; "The American Malaise," *CT* (June 20, 1960): 20-21; "Edward L.R. Elson, "Has America Lapsed into a 'Post-Protestant' Era?" *CT* (June 5, 1961): 3-5; "Light Out of Darkness," *CT* (Dec. 20, 1963): 20-21; "National Need --Righteousness," *CT* (Dec. 6, 1963): 26-27; "Freedom and Morality," *CT* (Jan. 17, 1964): 26-27; "A World Short of Breath," *CT* (Nov. 6, 1964): 28.

²⁷ Grassroots evangelicals showed less interest in the councils and statements of the ecumenical movement. It was up to the establishment leaders to persuade the broad conservative Christian constituency that these issues mattered.

liberalism as a byproduct of ecumenical union.²⁸ They also attacked the ecumenical penchant for social and political action.²⁹ In the early 1960s, evangelicals kept spiritual and secular domains separated: “Jesus,” said one, “commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He did not command us to go into the world and organize a peace corps or civil disobedience demonstration.”³⁰ The church lacked a biblical mandate for political meddling or social engineering, and it also lacked competence for such matters.³¹ Evangelicals debated social issues, but they wanted only actions by individual Christian citizens. Direct church action would “make a wrongful use of a sacred divine institution established by Jesus Christ for the purpose of operating permanently in the spiritual world.”³²

Evangelicals also accused ecumenicals of giving up on evangelism, scouring WCC documents to expose redefinitions of mission as humanitarianism or inter-religious dialogue. Ecumenical leaders had opted for unity instead of doctrinal truth, politics instead of piety, and culture instead of the gospel. Evangelicalism now represented faithful mainstream Christianity.

²⁸ Evangelicals also argued that ecumenism sought only organizational unity. Evangelical rhetoric feared an ecumenical one-world super-church, an “ecclesiastical United Nations.” In contrast, evangelicals argued that organizational unions compromised the church’s real need for spiritual unity. Jon R Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 123–5. Also see Editorial, “Diversity in Unity: Report on New Delhi,” *CT* 6.6 (Dec. 22, 1961): 3. W. Stanley Mooneyham, “The Dynamics of Christian Unity: A Symposium on the Ecumenical Movement” (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1963).

²⁹ From 1963-8, *CT* carried at least 14 articles and editorials specifically castigating ecumenical mixing of church and politics. Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism*, 138.

³⁰ Howard E. Kershner, “Church and Social Problems,” *CT* (Mar 4, 1966): 34-35.

³¹ Hollinger, *Individualism and Social Ethics: An Evangelical Syncretism*, 140.

³² *Ibid.*, 34–5. This chapter and the one following will develop evangelicals’ evolving understandings of social involvement.

The Missionary Image

Evangelical rhetoric valorized "foreign missions" which they saw as distinguishing them from their ecumenical competitors.³³ Like ecumenicals, they discussed increasing globalization.³⁴ Some viewed it positively: "The notion of one world has so captured us that in spiritual things we have finally eliminated the false tags of 'home' and 'foreign,' 'we,' and 'they.'"³⁵ Others noted disadvantages:

Disunity has spread its leaven so that a world which is almost one in terms of geography has become a thousand different worlds, each small world at odds with the others and sometimes at odds with itself.³⁶

Both evangelicals and ecumenical Christians had to come to terms with a world connected by technology, communications, and immigration.

As new nations threw off colonial powers, many closed their doors to Christian missionaries. Evangelicals lamented that no enterprise was "so thwarted and threatened by forces all around it as the missionary venture."³⁷ Missionaries had become unpopular. Billy Graham's associate Sherwood Wirt recounted that "the missionary, we are told, is

³³ *CT* and other evangelical periodicals highlighted their missionary dominance. See Sherwood Eliot Wirt, "The World Mission Situation," *CT* (Aug. 1, 1960), 6-7; "American Delegates at New Delhi," *CT* (Nov. 10, 1961), 10-15. Robert T. Coote, "The Uneven Growth of Conservative Evangelical Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6 (1982): 120. Coote's numbers demonstrated the growth of conservative evangelical missions far outpacing mainline Protestants. While evangelicals affiliated with the IFMA/EFMA grew more slowly through the 1960s, the greatest growth began to occur in the last 1960s by unaffiliated evangelicals, specifically the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Southern Baptist Convention.

³⁴ Kenneth Strachan, "Evaluation of Evangelical Conservative Mission Enterprise in Latin America and its Future," Folder 2, Box 11, EFMA Records.

³⁵ C Ralston Smith, "Billy Graham's Evangelistic Thrust: The Crusaders and Changing Times" *CT* (Nov. 10, 1961), 3.

³⁶ Harold Lindsell, "Today's Missionary – A New Breed of Man," *World Vision* (March 1964), 5.

³⁷ F. Dale Bruner, "A New Strategy: Statesmanship in Christian Missions," *CT* (Aug 1, 1960), 3. Countless articles and conferences began to examine the future of foreign missions in a revolutionary age. See Eric S Fife, *Missions in Crisis: Rethinking Missionary Strategy* (Chicago: Inter-varsity Press, 1961). The topic for the EFMA's 1961 Mission Executives Retreat was "The Mission in a Revolutionary World." World Vision's own first Festival of Missions repeated the theme, "Missions in a Revolutionary Age." Fearing the outlook of foreign missions, Billy Graham brought 34 Protestant leaders together for three days of strategy for the future of global missions. Bob Pierce of World Vision was one invited guest. Report in *CT* (Oct. 10, 1960): 26-27.

now regarded as a symbol of religious and cultural superiority, and as a part of a sinister political scheme for re-establishing Western supremacy in erstwhile colonial areas.”³⁸

Western church leaders published popular books entitled *The Unpopular Missionary* and *Missionary, Go Home*.³⁹

In the 1950s, the “younger” churches of Africa and Asia depended on the missionaries, who also shaped American evangelical views of the world. By the 1960s, new nations repudiated Western superiority, and the “younger” churches began to speak with their own voice. If missionaries were to remain, they would have to work alongside or under indigenous leaders, sometimes in hostile political environments.⁴⁰ When the Congolese overthrew the ruling Belgians in 1960 and 1961, thousands of Protestant and Catholic missionaries fled or were expelled. In November 1964, the Congolese captured over 250 whites and ultimately killed 60 hostages. The “Stanleyville Massacres” dramatized the anger felt by some in the post-colonial nations, and that created immense distress among evangelical advocates for missions.⁴¹

One enduring image of the massacres was the execution of American missionary Paul Carlson. He appeared as a martyr on the covers of *Time* and *Life* magazines, yet the cover stories overlooked the complexities of his missionary identity. While “evangelical” in theology, Carlson had an elite education, earning degrees in anthropology from Stanford and medicine from George Washington. He volunteered as a medical missionary

³⁸ “Sherwood Eliot Wirt, “The World Mission Situation,” *CT* (Aug 1, 1960): 6.

³⁹ Ralph E Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary* (Westwood, N. J.: F. H. Revell, 1964); James A Scherer, *Missionary, Go Home!* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964). *CT* actually reviewed both books fairly positively. See P. C. Moore, review of *Missionary Go Home*, by James A. Scherer, *CT* (May 8, 1964): 36; Henry Cornell Goerner, review of *The Unpopular Missionary*, by Ralph E. Dodge, *CT* (July 8, 1964): 26.

⁴⁰ Sarah Johnson, “Almost Certainly Called: Images of Protestant Missionaries in American Culture, 1945-2000” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2007), 31, 38.

⁴¹ “Congo: 2000 Protestant Missionaries Imperiled,” *CT* (Aug 1, 1960), ; “Terror in the Congo,” *CT* (Feb. 14, 1964): 36. “Martyrdom in the Congo,” *CT* (Dec 18, 1964):24-25.

after giving up a lucrative private practice in California. Serving under the conservative Evangelical Covenant Church, he both practiced medicine and evangelized among the Congolese. Theological distinctions baffled the popular press, but the journalists eulogized Carlson, claiming that he “symbolized all the white men—and there are many—who want nothing from Africa but a chance to help.”⁴² *Life* managing editor George P. Hunt called Carlson, “a heroic man of God who lived for the African—only to be killed by his hand.”⁴³ Carlson’s death demonstrated that the West could still idealize missionaries as heroes helping make sense of the dark, savage, and exotic other.⁴⁴

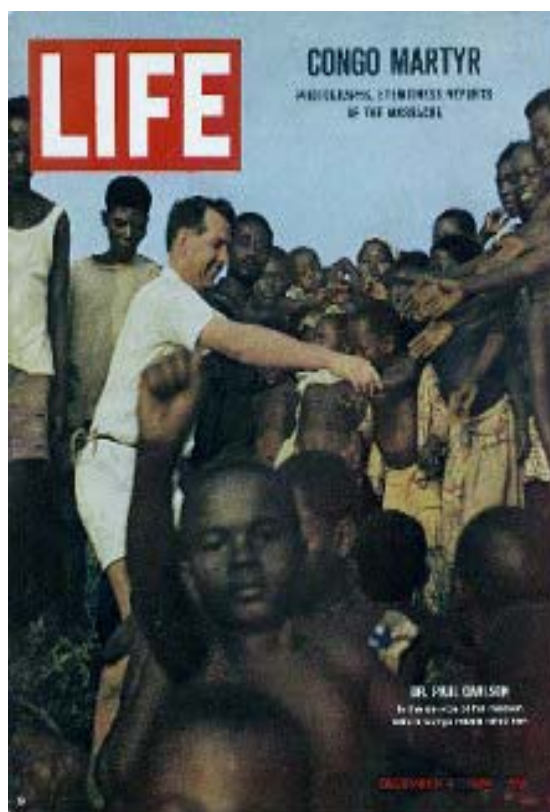


Figure 5: Paul Carlson

⁴² “Africa: The Congo Massacre,” *Time*, Dec. 4, 1964, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,830872,00.html> (Accessed July 8, 2011).

⁴³ “Congo Massacre,” *Life*, Dec. 4, 1964, 32-46. http://books.google.be/books?id=olEEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=en&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false (Accessed July 8, 2011); Dr. Paul Carlson: A Life at Stake,” *CT* (Dec. 4, 1964), 46-7.

⁴⁴ “Africa: The Congo Massacre,” *Time*, Dec. 4, 1964, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,830872,00.html> (Accessed July 8, 2011).

Evangelicals also filled periodicals in the early 1960s with debates over the direction of foreign missions. A 1962 symposium on the “Future of the Missionary” demonstrated a willingness to reconsider the missionary enterprise.⁴⁵ The participants agreed that a new breed of missionary needed both humility and specialized skills. As doctors, businessmen, teachers, or farmers, they must earn the right to be heard in a postcolonial world. World Vision vice-president, Paul Rees, questioned the depiction of missions in the aftermath of Carlson’s death. While he too lauded Carlson as a martyr, he dismissed the naïve stereotypes of the valiant white missionary.⁴⁶ So also did other evangelicals, who reassessed their theology and practices. Evangelical missions began to take on new shapes.

World Vision Enters the 1960s

A Consistent Message

World Vision also assumed new forms.⁴⁷ Pierce continued to see the world as a spiritual and political battlefield, and he never saw indigenous missions as precluding the need for western missionaries. World Vision inundated their evangelical audience with Sunday school literature, flannelgraph stories, world maps, films, records, and prayer reminders. The organization had never abandoned the priority of evangelism. Pierce

⁴⁵ The articles included in this symposium included, C. Darby Fulton, “Are We Going Out of Business,” 8-9; James H. Taylor, Sr., “Principles of the Indigenous Church,” 10-11; John Howard Yoder, “After Foreign Mission- What?,” 12-13; Charles Pickell, “Are Missions Optional?,” 16-18. All are found in *CT* (Mar. 30, 1962).

⁴⁶ Paul Rees, “Publicity Pluses and Minuses,” *World Vision* (Feb. 1965), 1. L. Arden Amquist, “Carlson of Congo,” *World Vision* (Feb. 1965), 22-23. Also see, “Unfinished Task of the Congolese Churches,” *CT* (Dec 18, 1964), 25-26.

⁴⁷ While World Vision had not yet begun to research their donor base, their constituency was clearly evangelical. In late 1959, they advertised in all the leading evangelical to fundamentalist periodicals: *Christian Life*, *Christianity Today*, *King’s Business*, *Eternity*, *Christian Herald*, *Moody Monthly*, and *Sunday School Times*. “List of Advertisers” (WVI Central Records). Throughout much of the 1960s, World Vision paid the costs for all missionaries in the Far East to receive subscriptions for *Christianity Today* in order to instill the evangelical vision overseas.

assured his supporters that it permeated World Vision's ministry, from chapel at Korean orphanages to New Testaments included with relief goods. While his theology lacked the subtlety that evangelical leaders preferred, he made sense to the people in the pews, and they trusted him with their money to save the world.

In 1961, World Vision staged its Tokyo Crusade, the largest in Japanese history. The board worried that tight resources made it an imprudent financial undertaking.⁴⁸ But Pierce appealed to the "spirit's leading." In a full page ad in *Christianity Today*, Pierce noted that "in a time of unrest and confusion... people need Christ.... Japanese Christians have appealed to World Vision and Pierce to lead a great crusade... we must do it now. I must go to Japan for this Crusade. I have no choice."⁴⁹

Pierce secured a 10,000 seat auditorium and the rights to broadcast on radio and television. Christian composer Ralph Carmichael directed an 800 voice choir and a 100 piece orchestra.⁵⁰ Pierce recruited Fuller Seminary professors Wilbur Smith and Carlton Booth, ICL chairmen Richard Halverson, and young Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright as well as over fifty other athletes, entertainers, business executives, and surgeons. The event was an evangelistic crusade as well as good will mission to Japanese universities, businesses, and hospitals.⁵¹

Although Japanese Christians had invited World Vision, the crusade met opposition.⁵² A few national pastors voiced distaste for mass evangelism and accused

⁴⁸ World Vision Board of Directors' Meeting, April 4-5, 1960 (WVI Central Records)

⁴⁹ "World Vision ad for Tokyo Crusade," *CT* (Feb 27, 1961), 36.

⁵⁰ Ralph Carmichael, *He's Everything to Me* (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 109.

⁵¹ Larry Ward, "World Vision radio program, June 11, 1961," Broadcast live from Tokyo, Japan (WVI Central Records); Norman Rohrer, *Open Arms* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1987), 168.

⁵² The crusade was sponsored by the National Christian Council and Evangelical Federation. While not representing all of Japanese Protestants, this was a large majority of the Christian population. World Vision claimed the crusade was sponsored by 740 churches from 41 denominations. Pierce claimed in planning this crusade, he faced the "heaviest spiritual oppression and the most constant and the most insistent

World Vision of “making instant Christians.” Others insisted that evangelism was a job for Japanese Christians without American interference. Some balked at the cost and lavishness of the production.⁵³

The bulk of opposition came from the communists. Pierce claimed that the crusade would help protect Japanese from communism.⁵⁴ In response, Radio Moscow mounted an anti-crusade campaign. Communists labeled World Vision “a false religious organization of American business circles.” Underneath their “showy choir and preaching,” the true objective was the “strengthening of Japan’s dependence upon the United States and expansion of the Anti-Communism Campaign.... The American Crusaders intend to bury the spirit of the Japanese people with money and to paralyze the Japanese desire for independence.”⁵⁵ Critics, some communist, some Christian, urged the city to revoke World Vision’s license to use the municipal auditorium. For several weeks, they purchased crusade tickets and destroyed them to ensure empty seats.

By the end of the month long crusade, however, World Vision claimed victory. Pierce preached to capacity crowds: World Vision spokesmen, Larry Ward, reported over 237,000 worshippers and 8940 conversions.⁵⁶ The secular and religious press gave the crusade broad coverage. *CT* editor, Carl Henry, lauded Pierce for attempting to win an

opposition that I have ever encountered in my life.” Bob Pierce, “Tokyo Crusade,” World Vision Radio Broadcast, May 14, 1961 (WVI Central Records).

⁵³ Southland Evangelist to Open Tokyo Crusade” *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1961 p . 14

⁵⁴ Ibid.; “Christian Drive Slated in Japan,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1961, D12.

⁵⁵ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 166–7. “Crusade in Tokyo: Smoke of Battle Still Hangs over Tokyo, but Light of God Shines Through,” *CT* (June 5, 1961): 27.

⁵⁶ Ward reported over 22,000 people attended just on the last day with thousands more turned away. “Tokyo Crusade,” *CT* (June 19, 1961), 25, 30; “Report of Crusade in Tokyo,” *World Vision* (July 1961): 3–6; “Pierce Calls Crusade, ‘Biggest Battle of my Life,’” *World Vision* (June 1961): 3.

entire country for Christ.⁵⁷ The crusade highlighted World Vision's pro-American, anti-communist, and evangelistic identity.

Despite general support at home, some mission societies questioned Pierce's methods. The same year as the crusade, the International Missionary Council (IMC) merged with the World Council of Churches. Evangelicals worried that the WCC's influence over the IMC would extinguish the missionary impulse in what had been the leading Protestant missions organization. The ecumenical movement saw the move as the integration of "church" and "mission." No longer would they need to distinguish between "sending" (western) and "receiving" (non-western) churches. Missionaries would serve alongside or under the national church as "fraternal workers."⁵⁸ Evangelicals interpreted the merger differently. They suspected compromise, and while many of them offered the younger churches increased respect and cooperation, they would not be "fraternal

⁵⁷ Carl Henry, "Step up the Evangelical Thrust," *CT* (Oct. 13, 1961): 33. As a result of the trip to Tokyo, Fuller professor Wilbur Smith reported a transformation typical of many American evangelicals that Pierce exposed to the global church, "Here in Los Angeles... with our large Sunday audiences in beautiful churches... I think we have developed a dangerous mood of contentedness. In the city of London, on the other hand, I have always felt, in these last years, a dominant mood of spiritual indifference. But in Tokyo there is conflict and war in spiritual realms. You really feel that you are wrestling with the world-rulers of this darkness. It is agreed on every hand, that as Japan goes, so will go the Far East." See "Tokyo Crusade," *CT* (June 19, 1961): 25, 30. The experience was likewise transformative for Bill Bright. After the Tokyo Crusade, Bright turned Campus Crusade to also focus on international ministry and began signing his correspondence with the "watchword" for global evangelization. See John Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 95.

⁵⁸ Rodger C. Baasham, *Mission Theology, 1948-1975: Years of Worldwide Creative Tension Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 50; Johnson, "Almost Certainly Called," 35. Establishment evangelicals issues a flurry of responses. In what *CT* claimed was its longest essay ever, its editors criticized ecumenical missiology by reviewing the *Theology of the Christian Mission* edited by Gerald Anderson. The book served as a companion to the 1961 WCC/IMC meeting in New Delhi, India. While evangelicals noted some positives, it largely highlighted the unorthodox compromises it detected in ecumenical missions. "A New Crisis in Foreign Missions?" *CT* (April 24, 1961): 3-14.

workers” or allow evangelism to be down-sized as indigenous churches institutionalized.⁵⁹

They supported indigenization in theory, but they often struggled to implement it.⁶⁰ Some questioned the orthodoxy of Japanese Christians and separated themselves from Japan’s National Christian Council. When World Vision announced that Council President, Rev. Ken Muto would be a member of its Tokyo crusade planning committee, conservative missionaries revolted and accused Muto of being a pro-Shinto nationalist. They felt that World Vision had insulted them by not asking them to lead. World Vision replied that it came at the invitation of the Japanese churches and not the mission organizations.⁶¹

Was World Vision being duped by the ecumenical movement? Some feared that Pierce was “orthodox in doctrine, but undiscerning in practice,” and the EFMA sent him a letter cautioning against “cooperative evangelism.”⁶² They commended his evangelistic crusades but questioned their inclusiveness. They lauded his work with national churches but advised him that turning over control must be gradual, so that local believers could

⁵⁹ While the ecumenical movement advocated that greater church unity would offer a more persuasive Christian message, evangelicals felt it both compromised Christian mission while also targeting evangelical-leaning church unions. Johnson, “Almost Certainly Called,” 35–6. The divergence also demonstrated the different ecclesiological structures between mainline institutions and evangelical parachurch groups.

⁶⁰ Conservative missionary societies like the Latin American Mission and Overseas Missionary Society (formerly the China Inland Mission) successfully incorporated indigenous leadership and shared their story to guide other evangelical missions in the process. Arthur Glasser, “The ‘New’ Overseas Missionary Fellowship” and Horace Fenton of Latin American Mission, “Discussion of the Use of Nationals within the Framework of the Mission.” Both Addresses at the 1965 Mission Executive Retreat. The annual theme was the “Development of International and Interracial Missions.” Folder 4, Box 18, EFMA Records.

⁶¹ R.S. Nicholson, Jr. (chair of World Vision planning committee) to Clyde Taylor, Mar. 23, 1961; “Comments on the Tokyo Christian Crusade Appraisal” *Japan Harvest Magazine* (Summer 1961), Folder 5, Box 105, EFMA Records.

⁶² Milton Baker to Clyde Taylor, Aug. 15, 1961, Folder 12, Box 4 EFMA Records. Some lamented Pierce’s support of mainline missionaries. In attacks written to dissuade donors from supporting World Vision, IFMA leaders lamented that Pierce’s funding of a liberal Presbyterian missionary’s orphanage could prevent children from ever hearing the gospel. Jack Percy to S. L. Boehmer, April 6, 1961, Folder 3, Box 70, Collection 352, IFMA Records.

faithfully bear the “spiritual authority and evangelization of their own lands.” They worried that “ecumenical leaders seem to be deliberately cultivating a strategy of working with evangelicals in an effort to infiltrate our ranks and ‘swallow us up.’”⁶³ Pierce responded to their “words of caution” with a graceful reply and a commitment to appear more prominently at evangelical events.⁶⁴ At the 1962 NAE Convention, he tried to calm their fears: “We want all the world to know that you are our people. We belong to you, and you belong to us. I’m an evangelical. I’m no longer afraid to be called a fundamentalist. I’m sick and tired of things that are not clear and certain.”⁶⁵

The critics, however, pointed to World Vision’s coziness with the World Council of Churches. The organization replied that it was not a member and that it agreed with the criticisms that appeared in *Christianity Today*. Yet *World Vision* editor Paul Rees claimed that “out of years of overseas contacts and associations, [World Vision] is convinced that it is impossible to draw a rigid line of truth and error, evangelicalism and non-evangelicalism, by the over-simple device of asking, Is your church affiliated with the World Council of Churches?” Rees was becoming tired of debating fellow evangelicals.⁶⁶ The Tokyo Crusade raised World Vision’s stature, but the expense and criticisms almost broke the organization. It was Pierce’s last large crusade of the decade.

Continued Innovation: Marketing World Vision

While establishment evangelicals framed their tradition as the new mainstream, entrepreneurial parachurch leaders disdained church unity and tailored their messages to

⁶³ Baker to Taylor, Aug. 15, 1961. Also Milton Baker and Clyde Taylor to Bob Pierce,” Nov. 1, 1961. A month later, the EFMA sent an identical letter to Billy Graham. They also considered his “cooperative evangelism” both at home and overseas too dangerous. Folder 12, Box 4, EFMA Records.

⁶⁴ Bob Pierce to Clyde Taylor, EFMA, Dec. 6, 1961, Folder 12, Box 4 EFMA Records.

⁶⁵ “Pierce Address,” 1962 NAE Convention, Denver, CO, April 12, 1962, Folder 16, Box 5, EFMA Records

⁶⁶ Paul Rees, “Where We Stand,” *World Vision* (Sept. 1964): 3.

religious consumers in a diverse marketplace. The parachurch model let them bypass older structures and appeal directly to the people.⁶⁷

World Vision's success turned on its innovative marketing to grassroots evangelicals. Pierce's radio program, films, and mission magazine propelled World Vision's growth in the 1950s, and he kept his outlets fresh by moving his radio show outside the studio to broadcast "on location" adding the narration of a reputable CBS anchor to his films, and changing his magazine from a promotional house organ to an academically credible mission journal funded with subscriptions and advertising. By 1964, with a monthly circulation of 200,000, it rivaled *Christianity Today*.⁶⁸ The organization also sent glossy pictorials, modeled after similar gifts from *LIFE* and *National Geographic*, as thank-yous to sponsors, bringing World Vision's work to countless coffee tables. It also sent appeal letters several times a year. Written in Pierce's voice, the letters brimmed with emotive language and snapshots of children in need. To entice donors to sponsor a child, World Vision offered a handmade craft, a prayer card, or Pierce's latest book. For donors to the Tokyo Crusade, it offered a souvenir record that would, as the radio announcer promised, bring "a real touch of Japan right in your home."⁶⁹ Each year, World Vision brought Asian Christians to America for its week-long Festival of Mission to expose American audiences to the world. It also sponsored "Around the World Tours." These "vacations with a purpose" let travelers tour the sights

⁶⁷ Robin Klay, John Lunn, and Michael S. Hamilton, "American Evangelicalism and the National Economy, 1870-1997," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 36.

⁶⁸ World Vision Annual Report, 1964 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁹ Bob Pierce, "Tokyo Crusade," World Vision Radio Broadcast, May 14, 1961 (WVI Central Records).

and World Vision's ministries. It constantly sought new ways to expose evangelicals to the world.⁷⁰

In the 1960s, no fundraiser matched the popularity of the Korean Orphans' Choir. Selecting thirty-four of its 13,000 Korean orphans, Pierce called the choir his "little missionaries."⁷¹ Their smiles conveyed the effects of Christian compassion, and their tours raised funds for other orphans while enabling the children to serve as good will ambassadors. They came "singing their thanks... to the people of North America for rescuing them from starvation and loneliness."⁷²

Their tours receive wide publicity. They packed evangelical churches as well as Harvard's Holden Chapel, Washington DC's Constitutional Hall, and New York's Carnegie Hall. Their diverse repertoire included classical pieces from Strauss and Schubert and hymns like "How Great Thou Art" and the "Lord's Prayer." They sang Korean folk ballads but also performed "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America." After the success of their initial 1961 tour, they came back three more times during the decade.⁷³ As minor celebrities, they sang for Chicago's Mayor Daley and former President Dwight Eisenhower. Caroline Kennedy led them on a behind-the-scenes White House tour. One year they rode in the Rose Bowl Parade. The next they cut a

⁷⁰ Pierce advertised the 1964 Winona Lake Festival of Missions on his radio show: "Rather than we as North Americans reporting on and evaluating missionary activity abroad, some of God's greats- national leaders from India, Korea, Latin America and elsewhere will be giving their challenges and evaluations of what God is doing in various areas of the world where He is so dramatically at work these days." Bob Pierce, "World Vision Radio Broadcast," May 3, 1964; "Vacation with a Purpose Brochure," (WVI Central Records).

⁷¹ One World Vision advertisement described the choir: "Themselves the fruit of missions, the Choir bears bright testimony to the work of Christian missions for children like themselves in many parts of the world, and they understand that they are witnessing for their beloved Jesus wherever they appear." See World Vision ad in *CT* (Nov. 23, 1962): 23.

⁷² "Orphans Sing their Thanks," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 16, 1961, 6.

⁷³ The choir toured in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1965, and 1968. In 1963, their itinerary included 12 countries before headlining 60 concerts in the US (3500 came to hear them in Carnegie Hall on Dec. 6). Venues included churches, civic auditoriums, and even a mosque. *World Vision* (June 1963): 5.

Christmas album with Burl Ives and accompanied Billy Graham's crusades.⁷⁴ In an age of anti-western sentiment, World Vision's Korean Orphans' Choir offered a message that Americans were eager to hear. Americans were compassionate; they should continue to be.

World Vision's Professionalization

World Vision's originally reflected its founder's energetic, entrepreneurial personality, but all that untamed energy became a liability. Pierce roamed the world with World Vision's checkbook, committing more funds than the home office could raise. He trusted that God would provide the resources while the board worried how to cover checks Pierce had already written. Pierce wanted to live by faith, but his enthusiasm caused World Vision to neglect oversight of budgets and programs.⁷⁵

Even Pierce, however, saw the need for professionalism and institutional stability. His attempts to manage day-to-day operations ended in disaster. The organization constantly ran in the red, depending on all night prayer sessions to meet expenses. In 1963, Pierce hired Youth for Christ President Ted Engstrom as World Vision's Executive Vice President. A fixture in evangelical parachurch networks, Engstrom had the managerial gifts Pierce lacked.⁷⁶ Upon arrival, he found World Vision a half million dollars in debt and delinquent in paying its monthly bills. He let it be known that projects could no longer simply rely on prayer. Budgets also mattered. In 1964, World Vision cut

⁷⁴ "34 Orphans From Korea to Sing Here for Suppers of Other Waifs," *Washington Post, Times Herald*, Mar 6, 1963, A15; Korean Orphans Win City's Heart," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 25, 1961, 3

⁷⁵ Franklin Graham, *Rebel With a Cause* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 141. One of Pierce's maxims was "faith isn't required as long as you set your goal only as high as the most intelligent, most informed, and expert human efforts can reach."

⁷⁶ Engstrom was a laymen. He been managing editor for Zondervan's *Christian Digest* before becoming joining Youth for Christ. For more information on Engstrom, see Ted Engstrom, *Reflections on a Pilgrimage: Six Decades of Service* (Sister, OR: Loyal Pub., 1999); Bob Owen, *Ted Engstrom: Man with a Vision* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1984).

Pierce's beloved radio program, which was losing \$30,000-\$40,000 a month. Pierce accused Engstrom and the board of sabotaging his ministry.⁷⁷

World Vision worried about its founder. Engstrom described Pierce as "the most complex, fascinating individual I had ever known or met. In many ways he was a classic schizophrenic."⁷⁸ His compassion was matched by an explosive temper. His travel left him estranged from family. He frequently prayed that he might "burn out for God," and on several occasions he worked himself into depression and exhaustion. He often abdicated day-to-day responsibilities but refused to abide by decisions of his board. He was forced into several extended medical leaves. In 1964, he spent the entire year convalescing alone in Asia.⁷⁹ World Vision hid most of Pierce's emotional and physical struggles, but it announced his year-long medical leave as necessary rest. Yet evangelicals revered his willingness to sacrifice his life for the work of God.⁸⁰

With Pierce absent from day-to-day operations, World Vision leased an IBM 1401 Main Frame Computer for \$6000 a month in order to raise money. In 1962, it advertised that only two other non-profits, The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), had similar machines.⁸¹ New technology streamlined record management and led to new fundraising techniques. Stored

⁷⁷ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 92; Owen, *Ted Engstrom*, 79.

⁷⁸ Engstrom, *Reflections on a Pilgrimage*, 85.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 83. World Vision Board of Directors' Meetings, April 22, 1964, Sept. 22, 1964 (WVI Central Records). Engstrom, "Monthly Memo," *World Vision* (Mar. 1964).

⁸⁰ Pierce's daughter, Marilee Pierce Dunker's candid biography of her parents, *Man of Vision, Woman of Faith*, provide insight into the toll Pierce's personality took on himself as well as friends and family. Originally published in 1980, it was republished with an updated title in 2005. Marilee Dunker, *Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce, Founders of World Vision and Samaritan's Purse* (Waynesboro Ga.: Authentic Media, 2005), 155-7. See Kate Bowler, "Called to Brokenness: Bob Pierce and the Changing Place of Sacrifice," unpublished paper. Within the literature of evangelical leadership, Pierce has become a case study to illustrate changing approaches. See Gordon MacDonald, et.al, "When the Ministerial Family Caves In," *Leadership* 4.2 (Spring 1983): 97-113. "Imperfect Instrument," *CT* (March 2005): 56

⁸¹ Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 86.

information allowed the organization to personalize appeal letters. “Dear Sir or Madam” became “Dear Mr. Smith.” General appeals became targeted requests that matched donors’ interests. It kept track of which “free gifts” received the greatest response and adjusted its appeals accordingly. It rented the mailing lists from like-minded periodicals and bid out its marketing accounts to leading advertising agencies.⁸²

World Vision also cultivated big donors. Pierce had wanted World Vision to rely on grassroots support, but Engstrom hired his former Youth for Christ associate Evon Hedley as World Vision’s first Director of Development. Hedley courted donors outside World Vision’s original evangelical networks. He secured the organization’s first grants from the Kresge Foundation, Lilly Endowment, and Pew Foundation.⁸³ World Vision’s attained a reputation as one of evangelicalism’s savviest agencies.

Professionalization also meant corporate, not charismatic, leadership. Unlike Pierce, Engstrom insisted that efficiency and accountability did not undercut Christian identity. Engstrom adapted American business principles into a style of “Christian management” that he promoted among Christian pastors and nonprofit executives.⁸⁴

⁸² This time period saw the launching of two Christian marketing agencies: the Walter Bennett and Russ Reid agencies. They would compete for World Vision’s business. Walter Bennett produced World Vision’s radio show and coordinated much of its fundraising and marketing campaigns. It would later win the contract for the BGEA. Russ Reid worked for World Vision producing Pierce’s early movies for many years. Later, he launched his own agency. Russ Reid would later have all of World Vision’s marketing accounts. Reid’s convincing World Vision to move to television led to its enormous success.

⁸³ Evon Hedley, interview with author, April 20, 2011, phone. Hedley recounted his personal relationships with John Lynn from Lilly, Allen Bell of the Glen Mead Trust Company that handled disbursements from the Pew Foundation, and Dorothy and Stanley Kresge. The Lilly Endowment gave World Vision a \$25,000 grant to fund the building of their new headquarters in Monrovia. Lilly described World Vision as “one of most effective interchurch agencies coordinating and supporting a world-wide ‘heart to heart’ ministry in the name of Christ.” See “\$25,000 Gift from Lilly Endowment to Build New international Center,” *World Vision* (Mar. 1965). World Vision also promoted “banquet evangelism” where businessmen gathered around a meal and after-dinner speaker to network as well as learn about World Vision’s ministry.

⁸⁴ Engstrom would conduct hundreds of seminars on time management and systems-thinking for both Christian pastors and executives in evangelical nonprofits. Engstrom also wrote countless books on Christian leadership. For Ted Engstrom, *The Making of a Christian Leader: How To Develop Management and Human Relations Skills* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976); Ted Engstrom, *The Art of Management*

World Vision employees attended both weekly chapel services and time management seminars. Foundations and new major donors demanded close oversight of funds raised and dispersed. A more active board challenged Pierce's ability to promise funds and hire staff without approval.

World Vision's organizational transition illustrated the tensions of a host of young evangelical agencies. Founded by charismatic, entrepreneurial leaders, these small, specialized agencies were light on their feet, free to ignore established hierarchies and streamline their ministries to the particular passions of their leaders and constituents. By their second decade, many had developed beyond their capacities. Some dug in to resist change while others adopted new outlooks wholesale. Most fell somewhere in between, realizing that questions of organization and religious identity intertwined.

Campus Crusade and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association mirrored World Vision's transition, moving toward professionalism, aggressive fundraising, and engagement with mainstream culture.⁸⁵ Friendships, casual conversations, and staff transitions permitted a fluid exchange of information. They also produced sibling rivalries. Several child sponsorship agencies competed with World Vision, including especially the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). While most comfortable among the mainline, it advertised in *Christianity Today* and *Eternity* and counted a number of evangelical donors.⁸⁶ Another agency known as Compassion was World Vision's nearest evangelical competitor. Founded as the Everett Swanson Evangelical Association several

for *Christian Leaders* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976); Ted Engstrom, *The Pursuit of Excellence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982). Engstrom, *Reflections on a Pilgrimage*, 92

⁸⁵ Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ*.

⁸⁶ CCF was also undergoing greater professionalization and financial accountability as it fought against the unilateral control of its charismatic founder. Larry Tise, *A Book About Children: The World of Christian Children's Fund, 1938-1991* (Falls Church VA: Hartland Pub., 1993), 61-71.

years after World Vision also to sponsor Korean orphans, Compassion remained a size smaller and step behind. World Vision found that professionalism helped it establish new networks and confirm old ones.⁸⁷

World Vision and Shifts in Evangelical Missions

Managerial Missions: Mission Advanced Research and Communication Center

World Vision also made global missions more professional. Evangelicals still sought the evangelization of the world in this generation, but they now recognized the complexities.⁸⁸ Among their innovations was the “church growth movement.” Pioneered by former missionary and founding dean of Fuller Seminary’s School of World Mission, Donald McGavran, it presumed that people were most effective evangelizing within their own culture. It advocated indigenous church planting over western missionary models and aimed at converting entire peoples instead of simply individuals. McGavran labeled each culture an “unreached people group.”⁸⁹

Church growth required the latest anthropological and sociological research. Proponents believed that technology offered access to new knowledge. Evangelicals were comfortable with technology, having flown planes into remote jungles, broadcast the gospel over radio waves, and filmed people and places for western audiences. Yet some

⁸⁷ The agency was renamed Compassion, Incorporated in 1963. In 1965, founder Everett Swanson died. Compassion often copied World Vision’s programs. Several years after the debut of WV’s Korean Orphans’ Choir, Compassion initiated a similar program. Compassion was often a decade behind other World Vision’s developments such as moving from working with missionaries and expatriates to indigenous Christians; expanding beyond Korea; and professionalization. But they currently remain World Vision’s primary competitor in fundraising from American evangelicals. Gary F. VanderPol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005” (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 127–130.

⁸⁸ Bob Pierce, “Commissioned to Communicate,” *World Vision* (Oct 1966): 7.

⁸⁹ Donald A McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955); Donald A McGavran, *Church Growth and Christian Mission* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); C. Peter Wagner and Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); Arthur Glasser, “The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology Since World War II,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 9 (January 1985): 10; Baasham, *Mission Theology, 1948-1975: Years of Worldwide Creative Tension Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic*, 188–194.

feared a possible loss of evangelistic zeal. They preferred to rely on the Holy Spirit alone. As one mission leader put it, “it is almost as though it said somewhere in the Bible that when one considers the task of evangelizing a lost world, one should switch to a completely non-rational approach to the problem.”⁹⁰

World Vision chose the Spirit along with the latest management and scientific tools. “If we have the resources to put a man on the moon,” it asked, “shouldn’t world evangelization also be possible?”⁹¹ In partnership with Fuller, it brought together NASA aerospace engineers and mission executives to discuss the possibilities. They left optimistic that disciplined planning, research, and development could accomplish the task.⁹² In 1966, World Vision and Fuller established the Mission Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC). In 1967, it became a division of World Vision. MARC served as a clearinghouse and think-tank for evangelical missions, collecting information, linking organizations, and applying technical assistance to aid missionaries.⁹³

MARC offered missionaries a means of greater cooperation, shared information, rigorous research, and new strategy.⁹⁴ MARC collected anthropological, sociological, and

⁹⁰ Dayton, Edward R., “Research, A Key to Renewal,” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 21 (March 1969): 15.

⁹¹ Edward R. Dayton, “Computerize Evangelism” *World Vision* (March 1966): 4-5.

⁹² Ed Lindaman, manager of the Apollo program, suggested the mission executives consider a systems approach to their problem. World Vision soon adopted his PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique) approach.. Originally created by the U.S. to assist missile development during the Cold War, World Vision used it to help project world evangelization.

⁹³ “World Vision Launches New Program Aimed at Global Evangelism,” *World Vision Scope* (Oct. 1967): 6-7.

⁹⁴ David Hubbard, new president of Fuller Seminary, wrote to Carl Henry to report on discussions around creating MARC by noting an evangelical need for something akin to the 19th century’s Student Volunteer Movement. Evangelicals had likewise recently argued about where and how to train a new generation of missionaries. Hubbard hoped Fuller’s New School of World Mission could become one answer to this question. David Hubbard, “Seminaries and the Great Commission,” *World Vision* (Sept. 1964): 6-7; David Hubbard to Carl Henry, 1965, Box 1, Carl Henry Papers, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

religious data.⁹⁵ It sent questionnaires to every mission agency to catalogue what they were doing and where they were working.⁹⁶ It offered strategic planning and management consulting to mission executives.⁹⁷ In promoting MARC's mission, World Vision executive Paul Rees claimed that "the gospel is only worthy of the very best ... [but] deficiencies in planning, decision making and management are often accepted and glossed over with spiritualized explanations." MARC sought to convince other mission agencies that research and development did not take the Spirit out of missions but rather enhanced the efficiency of evangelism.⁹⁸

Despite his wariness about institutions, Pierce championed MARC:

The world in which we live has little time for theological abstractions. We are fooling ourselves if we think that the heroic missionary and evangelistic efforts of the past will stir the young people of today.... This is fast becoming a world of the super-educated technical leader. The One for whom we speak knows the special opportunities for enlarged Christian witness which are now possible through the utilization of today's satellite communications, global television, the marvels of electronic data processing.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ MARC's Directory of Unreached Peoples became a direct precursor to the World Christian Encyclopedia. MARC head Ed Dayton and David Barrett signed a contract to redo the World Christian Handbook, but because of the time it would take, MARC moved in other directions and left the project to Barrett. Begun in 1968, Barrett did not first publish the Encyclopedia until 1983. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 112. Ted W. Engstrom, "The Use of Technology: A Vital Tool that Will Help," in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, Vol. 1, 315-6; Edward R. Dayton, "Computerize Evangelism," *World Vision* (March 1966): 4-5; David Lundquist, "Missions Need R and D," *World Vision* (Oct. 1966): 18-19; Edward R. Dayton, "Research, A Key to Renewal," *JASA* 21 (March 1969): 15-17.

⁹⁶ MARC, *Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas*, 10th ed. (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1973). MARC took over publication of the Directory of Mission Agencies from the Mission Research Library and added essays interpreting the data as well. MARC handed over production of the Mission Handbook to the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in 2000.

⁹⁷ MARC leaders offered PERT management training for many mission organizations. Ed Dayton and Ted Engstrom led a "Think Conference" in 1967 for IFMA-EFMA mission agencies. It also provided training to several gatherings of the Mission Executives Retreat. Folder 1, Box 19, EFMA Records. MARC also published the free monthly "Christian Leadership Newsletter" (WVI Central Records).

⁹⁸ Paul Rees, "Support Disciplined Planning," *World Vision* (May 1966): 3.

⁹⁹ Pierce, "Technology: Servant of Missions," *World Vision* (March 1966): 6-7. The entire March 1966 issue was devoted to the use of technology in missions. The October 1966 issue also was given over to arguing for the need for research and development in missions.

To head MARC, World Vision hired Edward Dayton, a former aeronautical engineer turned Fuller seminarian. As a seminarian, Dayton remarked he felt like a man without a country. Complaints about inadequate spirituality did not appear to him to overcome deficiencies in management and planning. World Vision had filled its staff with pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. Now it hired computer programmers, engineers, and systems analysts.¹⁰⁰

Reassessing “Evangelical Mission”: Evangelism and Social Concern

Evangelicals still worried about the “ecumenical threat.”¹⁰¹ Instead of saving souls, evangelical Sherwood Wirt claimed the ecumenical movement had taken the wrong turn:

A large segment of the Christian church sought “to redefine ‘mission’ either as inter-church aid or as just about everything a church does through its total program.... Today the overseas ‘heroes’ are not those who strive first and foremost to bring nationals into the Kingdom of Christ’s love, but social workers who teach contour farming. Not that contour farming is undesirable. But the Church of Christ seems not to have discovered a divine mandate for it until our century.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Rees, “Support Disciplined Planning,” *World Vision* (May 1966): 3; World Vision Launches New Program Aimed at Global Evangelism,” *World Vision Scope* (Oct. 1967): 6-7; Also see “MARC Newsletter,” August 1967. Folder 40, Box 73, EFMA Records; “What MARC Is and is Not,” pamphlet, 1966. Folder 1, Box 74, EFMA Records; “Using the Systems Approach for Missions,” nd, Folder 1, Box 74, EFMA Records. “That Every Man May Hear,” document prepared for Berlin Congress on World Evangelization, 1966 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁰¹ Editorial, “From Mission to Missions,” *CT* (Aug 1, 1960): 20-21. They defined the ecumenical threat: “To lose the priority of the Great Commission as the defining force of the witness and work of the Church would mean transfer of trust by the Christian community for the renovation of society from foreign missions to foreign aid, from Christian benevolence to social welfare, from proclamation of the Gospel to legislative programs, from a called-out fellowship of twice born believers constituting a spiritual body who authoritative head is the crucified and exalted Christ to the declarations of allied nations or to a global strategy of ecclesiastical leaders.”

¹⁰² Wirt, “The World Mission Situation,” 6. attacks demonstrate language reminiscent to the 1920s’ Fundamentalist-Modernist debates. As in those debates, evangelicals also focused on northern Baptist and Presbyterian denominations. While the Northern Presbyterians and American Baptists were mainline institutions, evangelicals counted many of their members as their own constituents. They called attention to the redefinition of evangelism by denominational leaders that demonstrated liberal leanings and a move away from people in the pews. See “Evangelism or Confusion?” *CT* (Mar. 13, 1964): 26; Willard A. Scofield, “What is the Missionary’s Message?” *CT* (Nov. 6, 1964): 16-17.

Perceived threats to the mission enterprise compelled independent-minded evangelicals to cooperate. The IFMA and EFMA, the two competing professional associations for conservative mission agencies, first met jointly in 1963. The meeting symbolized the emergence of a new common evangelical identity.¹⁰³ Ecumenical opposition also led evangelicals to reassess their *own* missiology. Before the 1960s, pragmatism fueled conservative growth, and conservatives dismissed conciliar mission debates as irrelevant. In opposing ecumenicals, they discovered that the missiological debates had moved on without them. They would play catch-up for a decade.¹⁰⁴

In 1966, two large conferences sought to advance a common evangelical identity.¹⁰⁵ Sponsored by the IFMA and EFMA, the first conference brought 938 delegates from 71 countries and 150 mission boards to Wheaton College for the Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission. It defended evangelism as the indisputable priority of mission. It had no objection to the recent turn toward new management techniques that allowed "evangelical leadership to make plain to the world their theory, strategy and practice of the church's universal mission."¹⁰⁶ It also took note of social problems, though

¹⁰³ Charles Edward Van Engen, "A Broadening Vision: Forty Years of Evangelical Theology of Mission, 1946-1986," in *Earthen Vessels*, ed. Joel Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 213. The IFMA and EFMA had attempted an earlier joint venture to form an Evangelical Committee on Latin America. In 1963, they met together for the annual Mission Executives' Retreat. They soon attempted several other joint ventures, the most significant being the periodical *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. See notes on 1963 Mission Executive Retreat in Folder 3, Box 18, Collection 165, EFMA Records Edwin L. Frizen, *75 Years of IFMA, 1917-1992: The Nondenominational Missions Movement* (Pasadena Calif.: William Carey Library, 1992), 262.

¹⁰⁴ Raymond B. Buker, Sr, "Where Are We Going?" Address at 1964 Mission Executive Retreat, Folder 4, Box 18, EFMA Records. Joel A. Carpenter, "Propagating the Faith Once Delivered: The Fundamentalist Missionary Enterprise, 1920-1945.," *Earthen Vessels* (1990): 132.

¹⁰⁵ Billy Graham employed the term "evangelical ecumenicity" to describe attempts at a common evangelical language.

¹⁰⁶ Harold Lindsell, "Precedent-Setting in Missions Strategy," *CT* (April 29, 1966): 43.

it suggested no solutions. Wheaton settled for reaffirming evangelical standards and attacking ecumenical change.¹⁰⁷

Five months later, even more evangelicals gathered in Berlin at the World Congress on Evangelism. Convened by Billy Graham and Carl Henry on the occasion of *Christianity Today's* tenth anniversary, Berlin's theme, "One Race, One Gospel, One Task," sought to unite evangelicals around the priority of "biblical evangelism." Considered the first large twentieth century global evangelical gathering, Berlin was, as Graham saw it, the rightful heir of Edinburgh and the conference re-appropriated its watchword.¹⁰⁸ *CT* called the congress a "breakthrough" for evangelical unity and media exposure. Yet it recognized tensions over the definition of evangelism.¹⁰⁹ Carl Henry's address repudiated "the current emphases of inverting the New Testament to revolutionizing social structures rather than on [*sic*] the regeneration of individuals."¹¹⁰

Billy Graham agreed:

Evangelism is the only revolutionary force that can change our world.... If the church went back to its main task of proclaiming the gospel and getting people

¹⁰⁷ Harold Lindsell, *The Church's Worldwide Mission: An Analysis of the Current State of Evangelical Missions and a Strategy for Future Activity* (Waco, TX: Word books, 1966). Don Gill, "They Played it Safe in Wheaton," *World Vision* (June 1966): 31 Also see Efiang S. Utuk, "From Wheaton to Lausanne: The Road to Modification of Contemporary Evangelical Mission Theology," *Missiology* 14 (1986): 218..

¹⁰⁸ C. Rene Padilla, "How Evangelicals Endorsed Social Responsibility 1966-1983," *Transformation* (July/September 1985), 28. Utuk, "From Wheaton to Lausanne Utuk, "From Wheaton to Lausanne," 210. Utuk notes that despite representation from 100 countries, some of the delegates from Africa, Asia, and Latin America were not convinced of their equal status.

¹⁰⁹ After Vatican II, evangelicals included both conciliar and Catholic traditions as foregoing the biblical definition of evangelism. "The World Congress: Springboard for Evangelical Renewal." *CT* (Nov. 25, 1966), 34-35. "In contrast to other recent ecumenical conferences, such as the Vatican Council, World Council of Churches assemblies, and the conferences on Faith and Order and on Church and Society, [the Berlin Congress] assumes both the Reformation principle of the final authority of the Bible and apostolic emphasis on the evangelization of mankind as the primary mission of the church." See "Good News for a World in Need," *CT* (Oct. 4, 1966): 34.

¹¹⁰ Carl F. H. Henry, "Facing a New Day in Evangelism," in W. Stanley Mooneyham and Carl F. H. Henry, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1967), 16. The address was in direct response to the WCC's 1966 Church and Society meeting in Geneva that equated the gospel with revolution. The WCC Church and Society meeting claimed that if God was at work in today's world, for the church to be relevant, it must be revolutionary.

converted to Christ, it would have a far greater impact on the social, moral, and psychological needs of men than any other thing it could possibly do.¹¹¹

Like Wheaton, Berlin acknowledged social suffering but said little about it.¹¹²

Most evangelical mission agencies put evangelism first but they differed occasionally about its implications for material and political distress. Some feared any turn toward humanitarian aid.¹¹³ Others saw social ministries as a means to evangelize. Some addressed physical needs as part of a larger mission while still others bound social concern to evangelism.¹¹⁴ Director of the Latin American Mission, Horace Fenton, admitted that evangelicals had long ignored worldly deprivation and injustice.¹¹⁵ If they were to gain a hearing for their gospel, they must attend to those realities. As another missionary put it, “in the drive of evangelism, too often we have rushed by the hungry ones to get to the lost ones.”¹¹⁶

Graham and Henry reminded evangelicals that “the church’s distinctive dynamics for social transformation is personal regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the proclamation

¹¹¹ Billy Graham, “Opening Greetings,” and “Why the Berlin Congress,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, 8, 22.

¹¹² While the Congress made little official space for addressing the relationship of evangelism and social concern, evangelical commentary after the Congress regretted that more attention was not paid to this topic. Notably, the main official exception to this lack of social concern was the address by World Vision Vice President Paul Rees. His paper, “Evangelism and Social Concern,” contended that there were close ties between the two. With racial prejudice in the U.S. and abroad serving as his chief example, he remarked, “We have loved the silken complacency of our verbal tidiness when what we have needed is to feel the savage rawness of human ache and fury and despair. . . . It is a terrifying thought that in a presumably free society, abject poverty, family disorder and disintegration, work insecurity and joblessness, can erect psychological barriers to the reception of the Gospel that are as real as the suppression of free speech.” Mooneyham and Henry, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, 307–8.

¹¹³ L. Nelson Bell, “The Great Counterfeit,” *CT* (Aug. 19, 1966): 26–7.

¹¹⁴ The number of articles debating the balance of evangelism/social concern is too copious to list. For examples, see Willard A. Scofield, “What Is the Missionary’s Message,” *CT* (November 9, 1964): 16–17; L. Nelson Bell, “The Seal of Faith,” *CT* (Oct. 8, 1965): 30–31; Carl Henry, “Evangelicals in the Social Struggle,” *CT* (Oct. 8, 1965): 3–11. Harold Lindsell, “Who are the Evangelicals?” *CT* (June 18, 1965): 3–5.

¹¹⁵ Horace Fenton, “Social Implications of the Gospel,” Address at the 1962 Missions Executive Retreat. The whole retreat debated the social implications of the gospel and the role of evangelical missions in this area. Folder 3, Box 18, EFMA Records.

¹¹⁶ C. Peter Wagner, “Evangelism and Social Action in Latin America,” *CT* (Jan 7, 1965): 10–12. Wagner, *World Vision* (June 1965): 26

of this divine offer of redemption is the Church's primary task," but they too could not ignore starvation and oppression. Graham testified before Congress in support of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and in the latter part of his career spoke against segregation. Carl Henry's *CT* editorials told preachers to say something about material distress in their sermons.¹¹⁷ But evangelicals reached no consensus.

By 1962, World Vision defined its work as "ministry to body, soul and spirit in the Name of Christ."¹¹⁸ Pierce balked at efforts to separate evangelism from social concern, yet he was rarely careful with his theological language. Sometimes he distinguished humanitarian work from evangelism. Other times, he discussed it as a means to an end—claiming Jesus Christ's Great Commandment (Matthew 25) as necessary in order to achieve his Great Commission (Matthew 28).¹¹⁹

As the debate intensified, World Vision adopted the concept of *total evangelism*, "a fully homogenized ministry in which every part is integrated and blended into the whole."

We feed the hungry because they're hungry. We give a man a blanket because he needs it. And of course we tell him of the One who died to save him. These things are not just a means to our evangelism—they are a part of it... an expression of Christian concern which ministers to body, soul, and spirit – which reaches out to every human need.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Henry, "Evangelicals in the Social Struggle," 11. For Graham on race relations and poverty, see William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, 1st ed. (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1991), 167–172, 233–235, 295–296; Michael G Long, *Billy Graham and the Beloved Community* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 79–178. Sherwood Wirt, *The Social Conscience of the Evangelical* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). While it was easier to address social concerns overseas, American evangelical also addressed issues at home, albeit more cautiously. See Editorial, "Christian Compassion," *CT* (Jan. 29, 1965): 28-29. "When all of evangelicalism learns to match its zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel and its shining record of good works abroad with active compassion for the alleviation of injustice and human deprivation at home, it will move forward in a resurgence of power."

¹¹⁸ "Total Evangelism," *World Vision* (Jan. 1962): 7

¹¹⁹ "Total Evangelism Appeal Letter," Mar. 1965, acting President, Richard Halverson, Folder 37, Box 21, EFMA Records.

¹²⁰ Bob Pierce, World Vision Appeal Letter, May 1966 (WVI Central Records).

Pierce persuaded many with his typical folksy piety. “You can’t preach to people whose stomachs are empty. First, you have to give them food.”¹²¹ He narrated his travels to “visit the suffering, war-stripped confused peoples of the world.”¹²² And he brought Jesus to bear on contemporary issues:

When our Lord Jesus Christ brought relief from sin and suffering to the people of His day, He used the things at hand: clay to heal the blind man's eyes, loaves and fishes to feed the multitude, and illustrations drawn from everyday life to teach his parables. If our Lord walked the earth with us today, we believe He would use Band-Aids and antibiotics . . . multipurpose food . . . and space age terminology in His parables.¹²³

This was Pierce’s familiar strategy of using images and stories instead of obsessing over theological detail. He wanted evangelicals to house refugees and feed the hungry, as well as evangelize the world, and he presented World Vision as a means to serve all those purposes.

From Missions to Humanitarianism

The problem was that World Vision did not have the infrastructure or budget for large scale relief. When Pierce started his work, an emergency appeal letter would ask supporters for funds to cover what Pierce had already committed. In 1960, World Vision created “the Mission of the Month Club.” Donors would pledge ten dollars a month that World Vision would reserve for emergencies. Its publications explained how these funds were spent. Emergency relief remained a small but growing part of World Vision’s ministry.¹²⁴

¹²¹ “Bob Pierce Reports: Total Loss for Thousands in Vietnam,” *World Vision Frontline News*, Aug 1965 (WVI Central Records).

¹²² Pierce, Appeal Letter, May 1966.

¹²³ Bob Pierce, Appeal Letter, September 1966 (WVI Central Records).

¹²⁴ “Mission of the Month Club,” *World Vision* (May 1960), 3-4. “Pierce in Iran after Earthquake,” *World Vision* (Oct. 1962), 3, 8.

Mainstream Humanitarian Agencies

World Vision could no longer ignore the relief and development community. The number of mainline missionaries was declining, but religious humanitarian agencies mushroomed.¹²⁵ These religious private voluntary agencies (PVOs) had provided significant relief to post World War II Europe and expanded along with U.S. foreign assistance during the Cold War. As the U.S. battled the Soviet Union, these agencies served as conduits for U.S. food aid, community development, and technical assistance. When former colonies in Africa and Asia gained independence, American foreign aid became an advertisement for Western democratic values, science, and technology. Religious PVOs fell in line alongside diplomats and the Pentagon as relief and development became a tool of statecraft.¹²⁶

A handful of agencies dominated the aid industry. President Franklin Roosevelt had established the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVAFS) to coordinate relief during World War II. After the war, it continued as both a government liaison and an accrediting agency for the aid community. The distribution of food demonstrated the efficacy of the religious PVOs. Known alternately as PL 480,

¹²⁵ Secular humanitarian agencies also grew, but religious agencies still dominated, making up eight of the top ten agencies. CARE remained the leading secular agency. It ranked second among all INGOs. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 27.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 77–78. J. Bruce Nichols, *The Uneasy Alliance: Religion, Refugee Work, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 85. The U.S. Mutual Security Act of 1954 officially reframed foreign assistance from immediate humanitarian relief to include language of self-help, community development, and technical assistance. President Truman signed the first Mutual Security Act in 1951 as the successor to the Marshall Plan. It helped appropriate foreign military, economic, and technical foreign aid. It was renewed each year until John F. Kennedy reorganized the foreign aid program in 1961 with the Foreign Assistance Act that established USAID and separated it from military oversight. Development theory in the 1950s-early 1960s focused on macro-emphases: industrialization, capital formation, and increased GDP. As Walt Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* suggested, if enough capital and technical assistance were infused, poor countries would reach a "takeoff stage" and develop autonomously. Community development served as an official term in United Nations documents in the 1950s. It dealt generally with a concern for social and economic development, the fostering and capacity of local co-operation and self-help, and the use of expertise and methods drawn outside the local community.

Food for Peace, or Food for Work, government programs allowed registered humanitarian agencies to receive U.S. surplus food and other commodities.¹²⁷ The PL480 program grew in the 1950s, as did the reliance of the religious PVOs on such grants. From 1953 to 1960, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) received no less than 53 percent of its total revenue in the form of PL480 commodities. Two agencies, Catholic Relief and Church World Service (CWS), combined to receive 70 percent of all PL480 commodities.¹²⁸

The humanitarian agencies grew as a result of U.S. foreign policy. An average of 67 percent of the revenue of Catholic Relief came from the federal government. From 1955 to 1965, mainline Protestant agencies got 53 percent of their budgets from Washington.¹²⁹ To refuse government partnership was to languish on the sidelines of the aid industry.¹³⁰

Most religious Americans supported this aid to church-related agencies.

Governmental and humanitarian agencies promoted their work in the popular press. The

¹²⁷ PL 480 passed in 1954. In Jan 1959, President Eisenhower referred to use of American farm commodities to promote the well-being of friendly countries throughout the world as using “Food for Peace.” PL480 commodities evolved from a disposal program of American excess to sharing American abundance. The program later evolved from a relief program to a tool of international policy influencing development objectives. Elizabeth Reiss, *The American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, ACVAFS: Four Monographs* (New York N.Y.: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1985), 105–114.

¹²⁸ During the same period, 98 percent of all PL480 commodities went through eight agencies. Only two of the eight were not religious. The eight agencies were CRS, CARE, Hadassah, Lutheran World Relief, CWS, International Rescue and Relief, American Friends Service Committee, and American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 75, 79-80. Note Figure 3.3 which highlights the PL480 food and freight of CRS, CWS, and Lutheran World Relief.

¹²⁹ Rachel M. McCleary, “Private Voluntary Organizations Engaged in International Assistance, 1939-2004,” *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (September 2008): 523–4. McCleary differentiates between mainline and ecumenical Christian. Ecumenical Christian could be a combined effort of Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox. Over the same time period, she identifies ecumenical Christian as receiving 67 percent of all revenue from federal sources. Evangelical organizations received 33 percent of their revenue from the federal government. She includes the MCC and World Relief as the two largest evangelical organizations.

¹³⁰ Scott Flipse, “The Latest Casualty of War: Catholic Relief Services, Humanitarianism, and the War in Vietnam, 1967–1968.,” *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 248.

United States Information Service showcased American humanitarianism and stamped relief boxes with messages like “from the people of the United States to the People of Vietnam.”¹³¹ CARE issued press releases and appeal letters with graphic images. Church World Service promoted CROP-walks to raise awareness for world hunger. Perhaps what evangelicals lamented as the “loss of missionary concern” in the 1950s-60s was more a transfer of allegiances. Still intent on “saving the world,” American Christians substituted relief and development for evangelization.¹³²

In 1961, President Kennedy raised the profile of foreign aid. He established the Peace Corps to “promote world peace and friendship” and the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) to administer growing foreign assistance budgets. He continued to support religious PVOs but refused them special treatment. As USAID shifted its funding priorities from large-scale relief to more localized technical assistance, religious PVOs had to compete for grants and contracts with a number of smaller, specialized, and secular PVOs.¹³³

In the early 1960s, the leading religious PVOs were in flux. They favored a move from relief to development. Yet they struggled to retrain staff and implement new

¹³¹ Humanitarian agencies’ popular public presence often differed based on their need to raise funds. As an independent specialized agency like World Vision, CARE was dependent on individual contributions outside its government support. The majority of other leading humanitarian agencies maintained different institutional structures. For example, CWS, CRS, Lutheran World Relief, and World Relief, were relief arms of larger denominations that distributed percentages of aggregate funds received to its work. Denominations frowned on direct soliciting of congregations and individuals that might take away from other local needs. Therefore, they issued fewer fundraising appeals. Less fundraising led to less shaping of popular opinion. I want to argue that World Vision’s reliance on popular support makes it a more important case study of how its ideology shapes broader public opinion.

¹³² Ronald Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (New York: Friendship Press, 1996); Johnson, “Almost Certainly Called”; Delia T Pergande, “Private Voluntary Aid and Nation Building in South Vietnam: The Humanitarian Politics of CARE, 1954–61,” *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 165–197.

¹³³ Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 95; McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 82–84.

approaches into their current work.¹³⁴ They won USAID contracts for agricultural projects, industrial training, and the building of roads, schools and hospitals, but the government continued to rely on them as first responders to global emergencies. Despite occasional worries about overreliance on government aid, religious PVOs profited from federal largesse, USAID contracts, and their own vision of saving the world.

World Vision and Mainstream Humanitarianism

In 1961, World Vision made its first foray into government partnership. Pierce had always maintained close ties with the U.S. military – traveling with them, preaching to them, and bunking on their bases – but he was careful to avoid official affiliation. He championed American foreign policy, but he feared that too close a relation to the military might compromise religious identity. Yet in 1961, World Vision established Operation Handclasp to ship hundreds of tons of relief goods in the empty cargo bins of US Navy ships. By 1962, it established a separate, nonsectarian NGO, World Vision Relief Organization (WVRO), to be eligible for ocean freight reimbursements and food surpluses.¹³⁵

World Vision registered with USAID but failed to gain membership in the coordinating council (ACVAFS). The accrediting agency feared that new organizations

¹³⁴ Pergande, 174-176; Stenning, *Church World Service*, 35. CWS and other agencies debated whether to continue receiving PL480 surpluses from the late 1950s through the early 1960s. They worried surpluses caused them to rely too heavily on U.S. resources as well as influencing their work toward relief over self-help community development.

¹³⁵ It was necessary for World Vision to form WVRO to distinguish its evangelistic from social welfare work to meet separation of church and state restrictions. Although governed by the same board, WVRO remained a subsidiary of World Vision until court precedent after the 1997 Charitable Choice Act under George W. Bush made the strict separation unnecessary. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 139. “Operation Handclasp,” *World Vision* (Jan 1961): 5. On one 1962 radio broadcast, Pierce described a loaded US destroyer headed to Indonesia with one half million dollars of vitamins and antibiotics provided by World Vision. World Vision Board of Directors’ Meeting, July 6, 1962; April 2, 1963 (WVI Central Records) discusses the incorporation of WVRO. Also see “Million Dollar Missionary Barrel: Review of World Vision’s Relief Procurement Ministries,” Brochure, WVRO files (WVI Central Records).

might threaten their hard-earned government connections. They also questioned the motives of agencies that continued to describe themselves as missionary and evangelistic.¹³⁶ Despite the snub, World Vision learned from the humanitarian community. WVRO executives visited the offices of USAID and the World Health Organization. They conferred with NAE leaders but also attended conferences led by secular PVOs on international development.

World Vision's relief budget amounted to a fraction of the budgets of the leading agencies, but by 1965, it valued the commodities it shipped overseas at almost one million dollars, doubling the amount of the previous year. Most of its government aid came in the form of freight subventions, but it also forged relationships with American corporations for in-kind donations. It shipped Campbell's soup, Carnation milk, Gerber baby food, and Johnson and Johnson pharmaceuticals throughout Asia.¹³⁷ It insisted that its evangelical identity did not prevent it from distributing material aid, working with government and corporations, and learning from non-evangelical humanitarians.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ World Vision was not allowed membership into ACVAFS until 1983. Because of ACVAFS's protection of its relief monopoly, new organizations formed another agency, Private Agencies in International Development in 1980. It often included strange bedfellows, evangelical and secular organizations. These were the majority of new agencies founded in the 1960s-70s, and their ability to work together demonstrate shifts in the relief and development community. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 119, 195.

¹³⁷ Evangelical agencies relied on in-kind donations more heavily than secular or non-evangelical relief agencies probably because of skepticism of government partnership as well as less access to PL480 resources dominated by the few leading humanitarian agencies. Because of a legislative change in 1969 that no longer allowed companies to claim donations at market value but at cost, in-kind donations shrunk drastically. World Vision internally discusses the impact this legislation has had on its commodity procurement in its annual reports. Tax changes in 1976 made in-kind giving again attractive, and all organizations saw donations rise. Again, evangelical organizations continued to outpace others. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 101. "World Vision Fiscal Year Annual Report, 1968-69" (WVI Central Records). World Vision relied on other corporations such as Lipton and Cutter Labs for in-kind donations.

¹³⁸ In Fiscal Year 1964, WV valued its USAID subventions at 28,860.56. In 1965, they totaled \$55,194.53. In 1964, the value of commodities it procured was \$584,192.77. In 1965, it was \$966,181.26. The majority of commodities went to Korea. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Indonesia followed. It also shipped to Vietnam, Iran, and the Philippines. "World Vision Fiscal Year Annual Reports, 1964-5 and 1965-6" (WVI Central Records).

American Evangelicals' Global Outlook Beyond Missions

Some evangelical missionaries continued to dislike material aid and identified it with the ecumenical movement.¹³⁹ Others, however, said that they had a biblical responsibility to save body and soul. Yet even they differed about methods. Most religious agencies insisted that overseas relief go through local churches and missionaries. Such an approach limited a program's size and ability to receive governmental aid. A few viewed government aid as an opportunity to expand their mission, and they recognized that expansion required expertise.¹⁴⁰

Evangelicals admitted that expansion of the military, aid agencies, global businessmen, and sightseers marked "the comparative shrinkage of foreign missions to small potatoes in our international relations." As a result, they set out to make "the whole of America's secular contact with the heathen world an informal Christian mission." If America was God's instrument, they must attend to its debates on foreign policy, international aid, and military intervention.¹⁴¹ Again, however, they shared no consensus. *CT* feared in the 1960s that emulating the large religious PVOs was a slippery slope. The

¹³⁹ H.R. Wiens, Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions, "Role of Material Aid in Missions Today," 1965 Mission Executive Retreat in Folder 4, Box 18, Collection 165, EFMA Records.

¹⁴⁰ Executive Secretary of MCC, "Training of Personnel for Material Aid Work," 1965 Mission Executive Retreat in Folder 4, Box 18, EFMA Records. As relief veterans, the MCC made themselves available to advise evangelical mission agencies interested in material aid. The two leading evangelical relief agencies in the 1960s were the MCC and World Relief. The MCC was respected among the leading ACVAFS approved humanitarian agencies and received significant government support. In 1960, it was the tenth largest PVO. Federal support was 17.3% of its budget. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 27. World Relief was also a member of ACVAFS since 1956, but it remained small, content to provide limited humanitarian relief through evangelical missionaries and local churches. In 1960, it was the 16th largest PVO and received only 2.6% of its budget from federal revenue. Alongside World Vision, these two illustrate the primary interaction of evangelical missions with the growing humanitarian industry.

¹⁴¹ H. Daniel Friberg, "Shifting Balances: Missionaries or Marines?" *CT* (Aug. 3, 1962): 3-5.

journal reminded readers that the same groups championing church-state separation and secularization at home gladly accepted government money abroad.¹⁴²

Evangelicals obsessed on the Peace Corps. They initially applauded the program, but perceived slights chipped away at their optimism.¹⁴³ They felt that Catholics received an unfair advantage. While the program approved Catholic Georgetown and Notre Dame as training centers, it refused Wheaton College as too sectarian. *CT* repeated stories of volunteers teaching religion in Catholic mission schools.¹⁴⁴ At other times, evangelicals feared Peace Corps volunteers undermined Christian missions. They accused the U.S. of “dumping” volunteers into sites who would displace missionaries and local Christian leaders. Occasionally, they painted volunteers as ugly Americans, culturally insensitive and immoral.¹⁴⁵ Yet most often they affirmed the program’s mobilization of Americans for international purposes, and they created their own short-term service programs such as the Christian Service Corps that recruited lay missionaries for two year assignments.¹⁴⁶

They became interested in a wider variety of global issues and events than simply communism and the Cold War. When a famine stalked India in 1966, *CT* printed images of emaciated bodies that it would once have avoided. It noted the work of World Vision as well as CWS and Lutheran World Relief, and it asked its evangelical audience to join the united relief efforts. It highlighted Billy Graham’s rare social statement urging

¹⁴²*CT* claimed those supporting a secular public sphere (i.e. removing prayer and Bible reading in public schools) like mainline Protestants and Catholics were the same ones relying on U.S. funding abroad. “Uneasy Protestant Conscience over Surplus Food to Taiwan” *CT* (June 8, 1962): 25-6.

“Baring Religious Ties,” *CT* (Dec. 7, 1962): 31-32; “US Government Aid Funds Steeped in Religious Compromise,” *CT* (June 21, 1963): 26-7.

¹⁴³ “Interview with Bill Moyers (associate director of Peace Corps),” *CT* (June 5, 1961).

¹⁴⁴ “Signs of Religious favoritism in the Peace Corps Program?” *CT* (Dec. 21, 1962): 26-7; “Is the Peace Corps Compromising on the Religious Issue?” *CT* (Jan 18, 1963): 25; “Peace Corps Aids Sectarian Expansion,” *CT* (Aug 28, 1964): 31; “Peace Corps in West Cameroon,” *CT* (Jan. 1, 1965): 29.

¹⁴⁵ “Religion and the Peace Corps,” *CT* (April 24, 1964): 27-8.

¹⁴⁶ Robert N. Meyers, “The Christian Service Corps,” *CT* (July 17, 1964): 8-10. Other similar denominational programs include the Southern Baptists’ Journeymen program.

Americans to share their wealth with the world's underdeveloped countries. Graham spoke now more clearly about material suffering: "There is a social aspect of the Gospel that many people ignored."¹⁴⁷ Not that evangelism was to lose out. *CT* still insisted that "the best way to improve world conditions is to bring men to Christ and deliver them from the bondage of false religions."¹⁴⁸

Vietnam Shapes Americans' Religious Internationalism

The escalation of the Vietnam War reshaped the international perspective of almost all American Christians in the 1960s. Most first saw Vietnam as another Cold War struggle, "the new face of an old enemy." A melding of religious and political rhetoric depicted Vietnam as the latest site where atheistic communism fought to eliminate a country's right to choose democracy and faith. Some in the press lauded Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, a Christian, as "God's man" for Vietnam.¹⁴⁹

Americans' first impression of U.S. involvement in Vietnam was the 1954-1955 Operation 'Passage to Freedom.' U.S. navy ships rescued one million Catholic refugees fleeing religious persecution in the North. The CIA believed that transporting Catholics to the South would bolster Diem's political position while also galvanizing American popular support.¹⁵⁰ The American press depicted the Catholic refugees as martyrs. When

¹⁴⁷ Joan Kerns, "Famine Stalks India," *CT* (April 1, 1966): 52-4.

¹⁴⁸ "Some Social Consequences of Evangelism," *CT* (May 13, 1966): 32.

¹⁴⁹ Diem only came to power through the political support and maneuvering of the U.S. One of Diem's most ardent supporters was Henry Luce, editor of *Time* and *Life*. He portrayed Diem as "a resilient, deeply religious Vietnamese nationalist who is burdened with the terrible but challenging task of leading the 10.5 million people of South Viet Nam from the brink of communism into their long-sought state of sovereign independence." Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950-1957* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 197.

¹⁵⁰ Diem struggled to gain popular support among South Vietnam's Buddhist majority because he persecuted Buddhist leaders and showed favoritism to Catholic supporters.

asked by a *Reader's Digest* reporter why they must leave, one refugee replied: "Because the communists are burning our churches and won't let us worship Christ."¹⁵¹

Catholic humanitarian Doctor Tom Dooley became the American face of the story. Often on board the ships carrying refugees, Dooley narrated the voyages for *Reader's Digest*. His 1956 book on Vietnam, *Deliver us from Evil*, became a bestseller. Until his death in 1961, Dooley repeatedly landed on the list of most admired Americans. Like Bob Pierce, he offered Americans a way to understand the wider world. He described his own daring humanitarian adventures alongside the suffering of the Vietnamese people. Dooley shaped Americans' perceptions of Southeast Asia and a righteous rationale for Cold War rhetoric.¹⁵²

Before troop escalation in 1965, Americans received limited news of the conflict but heard almost as much on the "other war," the humanitarian efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. Catholic Relief had worked alongside the U.S. Navy to resettle the Catholic refugees in Operation Passage to Freedom. By 1958, four large religious relief services administered the bulk of U.S. humanitarian aid.¹⁵³ In

¹⁵¹ William Lederer, "They'll Remember the Bayfield," *Reader's Digest* (Mar. 1955): 1-8. Lederer was a leading Asian correspondent for *Reader's Digest*. He also wrote the *Ugly American* referenced in Chapter 3. Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 126-7; T. Jeremy Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 170-1.

¹⁵² Thomas A Dooley, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Story of Viet Nam's Flight to Freedom / Thomas A. Dooley* (New York: New American Library, 1961). Dooley remains a complex figure. He founded his own medical humanitarian agency, Medico, and broadcast weekly to Americans from Laos. There is evidence that he was used by the CIA and U.S. government to "market" the Cold War in Southeast Asia. His flamboyant lifestyle contrasted with his devout Catholicism and work with Southeast Asia's poor. For more on Dooley and the marketing behind his message, see Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 139-159; Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons*, 172; James T Fisher, *Dr. America: The Lives of Thomas A. Dooley, 1927-1961* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

¹⁵³ The four agencies were CRS, CWS, MCC, and International Voluntary Services (IVS). IVS was an ecumenical organization started by the Church of the Brethren. It focused less on relief and more on technical assistance. While founded as religious, among the four mentioned, it most quickly lost its religious identity. IVS became a proving ground for many aspiring state department staffers. They would be on the leading edge of community development programs among humanitarian agencies. Scott Flipse, "To Save 'Free Vietnam' and Lose Our Souls: The Missionary Impulse, Voluntary Agencies, and

promoting their work, agencies flooded Americans with heartwarming stories to raise funds as well as convince the public of the rightness of their cause.

For American evangelicals, the “other war” in Vietnam was missions. Missionaries became trusted news-sources.¹⁵⁴ Their message was consistent: “Alongside the more obvious turmoil that now engulfs Vietnam, there is a war being waged for souls.”¹⁵⁵ Without belittling the war’s tragedies, they claimed that the conflict opened new doors to evangelistic opportunity: “It seems just a matter of time between whether it is Communist guerillas or the Christian gospel that claims the yet unreached tribes of northern South Vietnam.”¹⁵⁶ They also claimed that fewer Vietnamese Christians joined the Vietcong than their non-Christian neighbors. Sometimes missionaries became martyrs. In 1962, the Vietcong kidnapped two Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries along with another religious worker. In 1963, they killed two Wycliffe missionaries.¹⁵⁷ The evangelical press declared the missionary effort “was inextricably wed to the struggle for freedom in Vietnam.”¹⁵⁸

Protestant Dissent Against the War, 1965-1971,” in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home*, ed. Grant Wacker and Daniel A. Bays (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 208–210; Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 102.

¹⁵⁴ The Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) dominated Vietnamese missions. In 1911, they founded the Evangelical Church in Vietnam, the church to which most of the 100,000 Vietnamese Protestants belonged. Their 100 missionaries in country dwarfed the size of other groups, but as the war escalated, new missionaries followed from others like the Adventists, Southern Baptists, Wycliffe Bible Translators, and Navigators. “Missions in Vietnam,” *CT* (Feb 26, 1965): 45. “Unheadlined Victories in Vietnam,” *Moody Monthly* (Sept. 1966): 30-31, 58-59; “Advance in Adversity,” *CT* (Dec 18, 1964): 44; Grady Mangham as told to Phill Butler, “New Optimism in Viet Nam,” *Moody Monthly* (Sept. 1967): 30-31, 43-45; “Viet Cong Kill Young Missionary,” *CT* (Feb. 4, 1966): 48.

¹⁵⁵ “Vietnam: The Spiritual War,” *CT* (Sept 25, 1964): 53-54. The article reviews Homer E Dowdy, *The Bamboo Cross: Christian Witness in the Jungles of Viet Nam*, 1st ed., Harper Jungle Missionary Classics (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). Dowdy’s book was one of several popular missionary hagiographies stemming from the Christian and Missionary Alliance’s work in Vietnam. For another of the same genre, see James Hefley, *By Life or by Death: Violence and Martyrdom in This Turbulent Age* (Grand Rapids Mi.: Zondervan, 1969).

¹⁵⁶ Miriam G. Cox, “Vietnam Up-to-Date: The Race with the Reds.” *Eternity* (Aug. 1965): 35.

¹⁵⁷ Miriam G. Cox, “Vietnam Report: Murders, Miracles, and Missions,” *CT* (Dec. 1964): 29-30;

¹⁵⁸ “Report: Missions in Viet Nam,” *UEA* (April 1965): 25.

The 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution escalated and Americanized the war. President Lyndon Johnson authorized air strikes over North Vietnam and committed hundreds of thousands of American soldiers.¹⁵⁹ LBJ matched military escalation by intensifying humanitarian aid. In 1965, he commissioned an ACVAFS delegation to assess humanitarian needs in Vietnam. The leaders of five religious and humanitarian agencies agreed to help but cautioned that they would need government resources. Soon USAID was spending a quarter of its annual budget in Vietnam.¹⁶⁰

Some agencies questioned an even closer relationship with government in an increasingly unpopular war, but most still believed they provided apolitical assistance. As the war escalated, relief workers became targets who had to rely on the military for transportation, supplies, and security. When the U.S. turned to a policy of pacification to fight the insurgency, some aid workers saw themselves as pawns of U.S. policymakers.¹⁶¹

Mounting opposition to the war at home matched unease overseas. The self-immolation of Buddhist monks, government corruption, and President Diem's assassination punctured the idealism of many Americans. While popular support for the war peaked at 61 percent in August 1965 with the escalation of American troops, a growing antiwar movement featured national teach-ins at universities, the emergence of a

¹⁵⁹ In 1964, the U.S. began with 16,300 personnel in Vietnam. By the end of 1965, there were 184,000 soldiers. In 1966 the number rose to 383,000, 485,000 in 1967, and peaked in 1969 with 543,000 troops. Andrew LeRoy Pratt, "Religious Faith and Civil Religion: Evangelical Responses to the Vietnam War, 1964-1973" (Ph.D., diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 383.

¹⁶⁰ The five agencies were CWS, CRS, CARE, MCC, and Lutheran World Relief. Flipse, "To Save 'Free Vietnam' and Lose Our Souls," 207-8; McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 92; Flipse, "The Latest Casualty of War," 251.

¹⁶¹ McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 92; Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 102-107; Flipse, "To Save 'Free Vietnam' and Lose Our Souls."

left-wing student organization known as Students for a Democratic Society, raucous anti-war demonstrations, and the burning of draft cards.¹⁶²

The antiwar movement did not belong solely to a secular New Left. The churches also questioned American foreign policy, especially mainline Protestant leaders. The National Council of Churches lobbied the administration to halt bombing raids and allow the U.N. to negotiate a peace.¹⁶³ In 1965, the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, Father Daniel J. Berrigan, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel formed a multi-faith grassroots organization, Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam (CALCAV).¹⁶⁴ In 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. condemned the Vietnam War from the Riverside Church pulpit.¹⁶⁵ That same year, Protestant Robert McAfee Brown, Jew Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Catholic Michael Novak co-wrote *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*.¹⁶⁶ The simplicities of past Cold War rhetoric no longer held. Vietnam fractured the religious landscape.

Evangelicals supported the war. Vietnam offered another opportunity to position themselves as the new mainstream, the voice of America's silent majority.¹⁶⁷ As Christian

¹⁶² Support for the war continued to hover between 40 and 50 percent through 1967. Pratt, "Religious Faith and Civil Religion: Evangelical Responses to the Vietnam War, 1964-1973," 383.

¹⁶³ Flipse, "To Save 'Free Vietnam' and Lose Our Souls," 213; Jill K. Gill, "The Political Price of Prophetic Leadership: The National Council of Churches and the Vietnam War," *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 271.

¹⁶⁴ Mitchell K Hall, *Because of Their Faith: CALCAV and Religious Opposition to the Vietnam War* (Columbia University Press, 1990).

¹⁶⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," April 4, 1967, Riverside Church, New York City. <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm> (Accessed 7/27/11).

¹⁶⁶ Robert McAfee Brown, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Michael Novak, *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* (New York: Association Press, 1967).

¹⁶⁷ A 1966 NAE resolution noted there was some confusion about the war but it remained possible to affirm obedience to the civil authorities in the name of security and a strong anti-communist position against China. "The Ground of Freedom," *CT* (July 3, 1964): 20-21; "The Last Battle in Asia," *CT* (June 19, 1964): 23; Lt. Gen. William K. Harrison, "Is the United States Right in Bombing North Viet Nam?" *CT* (Jan 7, 1966): 25-26; "Viet Nam: Where Do We Go From Here?" *CT* (Jan 7, 1966):, 30-31.

patriots, they trusted that America's motives were pure and refused to "yield an inch to those who want peace at any price."¹⁶⁸ In 1965, Billy Graham preached:

I have no sympathy for these clergymen who have signed ads recently, urging the U.S. to get out of Vietnam. The world is involved in a battle with communism.... Communism has to be stopped somewhere, whether it is in Hawaii or on the West Coast. The President believes it should be stopped in Vietnam."¹⁶⁹

L. Nelson Bell, Graham's father-in-law and *CT* executive editor assured President Johnson that the "real Christian position in America" was represented by *CT* and not mainline liberals, "a minority...more interested in political and economic matters than in preaching the gospel."¹⁷⁰ Evangelical leaders labeled antiwar demonstrators as "extremists" perilously close to treason, but they saved their greatest rancor for anti-war clergy.¹⁷¹ "What special wisdom do clergymen have on the military and international intricacies of the U.S. government's involvement in Viet Nam? None."¹⁷²

Evangelicals undergirded support of the war at home with stories of Christian success overseas. They highlighted missionaries and Vietnamese Christians as well as soldiers, accusing the religious antiwar movement of ministering more to draft dodgers

¹⁶⁸ "Halting Red Aggression in Viet Nam," *CT* (April 23, 1965): 32

¹⁶⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), Aug. 25, 1965. Richard V. Pierard, "Billy Graham and Vietnam: From Cold Warrior to Peacemaker," *Christian Scholar's Review* 10, no. 1 (1980): 42.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 41. L. Nelson Bell to Lyndon B. Jonson, April 2, 1965. Executive PR4/FG 216, Lyndon B. Jonson Presidential Library, Austin, TX. Quoted in Pierard, "Billy Graham and Vietnam," 41.

¹⁷¹ Pierard, "Billy Graham and Vietnam," 42. LBJ attended a Graham Crusade in Houston. At the event, Graham criticized an earlier peace march and labeled those who "burn their draft cards or themselves and those who carry Vietcong flags" as extremists. He went on to say, "Many of the demonstrators are blaming the situation on the present Administration, but that is not logical. At this time when we have men dying in Vietnam, we must pledge our loyalty to America." *Ecumenical News Service*, 32 (Dec. 9, 1965): 8; Also see Editorial, "Dodging the Draft," *CT* (5 November 1965): 36; Editorial, "The New Spirit of Defiance," *CT* (23 December 1966): 19-20; "NCC Skirmish Over Viet Nam," *CT* (Jan 7, 1966): 50; "Ignorance Often Has a Loud Voice," *CT* (Feb. 12, 1965): 35; "A Time to Speak," *CT* (May 21, 1965): 26; "Religious Coalition in Washington," *CT* (May 21, 1965): 38; "Clergy Press Role in Peace Talks," *CT* (Feb. 18, 1966), 51-52; "The WCC and Viet Nam," *CT* (Mar 4, 1966): 31.

¹⁷² When writing this editorial, Carl Henry admits looking out from his Washington DC offices at a march of 2000 NCC clergy protesting the war. The fundamentalist ACCC demonstrated on behalf of winning the war. Henry felt he occupied the tenuous middle. As mainstream evangelical, he did not join the protest. He did, however, mutter to both sides, "Preacher, go home," transposing the common "missionary, go home" quip used to critique the missionary enterprise. "Rival Churchmen in Vietnam," *CT* (July 1967): 1012.

than servicemen.¹⁷³ They encouraged local churches to support the troops, encouraged evangelical military chaplains to start a revival, stocked military bases with gospel literature, and led Bible studies. One chaplain expressed the consensus among his colleagues in Vietnam: “You tell those ‘God-is-dead’ fellows back home that there is a living God out here in Vietnam!”¹⁷⁴ To counter reports of soldiers losing faith, doing drugs, and brutalizing villages, some evangelicals depicted troops as “disciples in uniform” who could be “the most tremendous missionary force the Christian church has ever had.”¹⁷⁵

Eventually even some evangelicals questioned the war, but they continued humanitarian aid and evangelism. *CT* lamented that the combined budgets of all relief agencies were still less than the cost of one B-52 bomber and urged its readers to support continued evangelism. Vietnam served as a proving ground for the first generation of evangelical relief agencies. Most avoided the debates raging among other religious PVOs and welcomed government support, but increased interaction with other relief agencies led to professionalization. They began to look at the world, at evangelism, and at social amelioration in different ways.¹⁷⁶

World Vision in Vietnam

Vietnam changed World Vision. Pierce believed Vietnam had the makings of being the organization’s next Korea. By the early 1960s, he was regularly flying into the

¹⁷³ “The Church and the Viet Nam-Bound Soldier,” *CT* (May 13, 1966): 30-1.

¹⁷⁴ Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the US Military, 1942-1993*, 151.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁷⁶ The one exception to evangelical relief agencies’ alliance with the U.S. government was the MCC. Its peace church tradition caused it to question greater association with the U.S. government. “Halting Red Aggression in Viet Nam,” *CT* (April 23, 1965): 32; “Aid for Vietnam,” *CT* (Oct. 8, 1965): 53; “Churches Hike Vietnam Relief,” *CT* (Feb. 4, 1966): 48. “Waning Surpluses Curb Church Relief,” *CT* (Jan. 20, 1967): 42; “Compassion Gap in Viet Nam,” *CT* (April 14, 1967): 40-41.

country with American troops, visiting missionaries, assessing needs, and capturing it all on film. World Vision had sponsored orphans and missionary projects in Vietnam since 1954, but as the war escalated in 1965, so did World Vision's work. And instead of funneling all funds through local mission agencies, it instituted its own large scale distribution networks and relief programs. Soon it was constructing and staffing three Christian refugee centers, two orphanages, a hospital for the blind, a vocational training school for tribal people, and a half-way house for disabled war veterans. It supplied wheelchairs and crutches to Vietnamese hospitals and shipped thousands of pounds of relief aid. Commodities came from local church volunteers who assembled small VietKits to deliver overseas as well as expanded USAID grants. World Vision continued to rely on missionaries, military, and local churches, but now it also turned to government resources and the broader aid community.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ World Vision Board of Directors' Meeting, Dec. 9, 1965 (WVI Central Records); "Aid for Vietnam," *CT* (Oct. 8, 1965): 53; "Bob Pierce Reports: Total Loss for Thousands in Vietnam," *World Vision Frontline News*, Aug. 1965 (WVI Central Records). The VietKit program resembled CARE's relief packages. They provided emergency food and hygiene needs, but they also helped publicized World Vision's work at home. In its first year between 1965-1966, WV shipped 133,680 Vietkits. That number grew to 512,727 by 1969-70. See World Vision Factbook as well as World Vision annual Finance Reports, 1965-70 (WVI Central Records). VanderPol, "The Least of These," 84.



Figure 6: World Vision VietKit Brochure¹⁷⁸

Pierce served as a quotable expert for the press, and his appeal letters described the needs he found, but he also wanted Americans to see the war. In 1965, World Vision released the film, *Vietnam Profile*. Images of Vietnam were not yet prevalent on the evening news, and the movie became an instant success. World Vision booked the film for 800 to 900 showings a month for over a year. Dozens of network television stations showed the film for free as a Public Service Announcement. The attention garnered Pierce network television interviews, book contracts, and new funds.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ “Vietkit Brochure,” Folder 5, Box 15, Collection 209, Eugene Rudolph Bertermann Papers. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (Image Courtesy of WVI Central Records).

¹⁷⁹ Running 88 minutes, it was Pierce’s longest film. World Vision edited it to 55 minutes for television. World Vision allowed ads but not for alcohol or cigarettes. Television statements then allowed World Vision to make its own appeal at the film’s conclusion. The Department of Defense also asked to buy portions of Pierce’s footage. *Vietnam Profile*, David Wisner, 1965 (WVUS Archives).

The film followed Pierce's typical pattern. It presented an exotic Asia that included a tour of Saigon, contrasting its luxury and poverty. He highlighted the city's colorful marketplace, modern hotels, and beautiful women alongside its abject poverty. He mixed scenes of poverty and disease with pictures of dead and wounded soldiers. Pierce saw U.S. involvement as righteous, and his narration made clear that the enemy remained an anti-Christian communism.

He acknowledged the growing controversy Vietnam provoked at home but stressed that World Vision's purposes were not political. Instead, Pierce claimed that World Vision was "motivated by the desperate needs we find... and by the conviction that as a Christian agency we must do all we can to help." He was confident that Christians could not ignore the need to "stand with Viet Nam in its crisis hour."¹⁸⁰

The film depicted the diversity of World Vision's work. Ads promised that viewers would "fly over the battlefields, witness war's devastation, see the heroic work of the chaplains, thrill to answered prayer with courageous mountain tribespeople, meet the people of Viet Nam, and watch missionaries and Vietnamese Christians in their evangelistic ministry."¹⁸¹ Pierce highlighted World Vision's weekly evangelistic rallies and Christian literature distribution, but he also captured the "total evangelism" that World Vision professed. He showed tribal Christians constructing a church as well as a new village school. He interviewed CMA missionaries who led Bible studies but also taught new farming methods. He illustrated how each Vietkit included emergency relief

¹⁸⁰ Bob Pierce, *Big Day at Da Me* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1968). "Bob Pierce Reports: Total Loss for Thousands in Vietnam," *World Vision Frontline News* (Aug. 1965).

¹⁸¹ Pratt, 184.

items as well as the Gospel of John. Pierce felt the combination carried a message: “Yes we care about your eternal destiny – but we also care about you now.”¹⁸²

After hitching rides on army helicopters to scout orphanages and deliver aid, he attested to the heroism of U.S. pilots. He witnessed soldiers risking their lives to rescue refugees from the communists and volunteer to assist World Vision medics in treating the wounded Vietnamese.¹⁸³ Pierce hoped to demonstrate the true spirit of the American soldier and make viewers think twice before criticizing the war:

Here in Viet Nam, where the ‘cream of the crop’ of American military ‘know how’ and experience is concentrated, it is heartwarming and encouraging to meet dedicated men of God in uniform who know why they’re here, who brought them here, and what He led them here to do.¹⁸⁴

Pierce had often praised missionaries and the military, but now he also affirmed the humanitarian community. In the past, Pierce described mainstream relief agencies as a way of showing, by contrast, World Vision’s work as a missionary service organization. A few years earlier, he had called U.S. aid workers “ugly Americans,” but by 1965, he was calling USAID workers the “bravest men I know,” “dedicated Americans” willing to live and suffer with the Vietnamese people. While he continued to caution against an over-reliance on government support, he now announced that World Vision was an accredited USAID agency.¹⁸⁵ By 1967, he listed all the missionary, government, and relief agencies he saw working in Vietnam, from the religious to the secular. He illustrated this new perspective by retelling one of his favorite stories from Vietnam. One local village had prayed for a tractor to farm its land. Missionaries made the request

¹⁸²Pierce, *Big Day at Da Me*, 70. “Vietkit Brochure”

¹⁸³ *Vietnam Profile*. Akin to the rhetoric of Catholic refugees in the 1950s, Pierce also made a point to praise the innocent refugees who were “willing to give up everything just to be free.”

¹⁸⁴ Pierce, *Big Day at Da Me*, 49. In *Vietnam Profile*, he also said, “I thank God for those who are in Viet Nam in the uniform of their country, serving Him while they serve the cause of freedom.”

¹⁸⁵ *Vietnam Profile*.

known to Pierce who used World Vision funds to purchase a John Deere. He called in USAID workers to transport the tractor and teach the villagers to use it. Where it once saw competitors and enemies, World Vision now found allies.¹⁸⁶

Conclusion: The Evolution of World Vision and Evangelical Identity in the 1960s

World Vision's depictions of its Vietnam work demonstrated the subtle shifts in the organization. Pierce continued to see the world through glasses colored by Cold War anti-communism and American exceptionalism, but World Vision acknowledged that close association with American politics had liabilities. It still supported missionaries, but the size of its Vietnam programs made it necessary to hire its own staff to transport, store, distribute, and account for relief aid. Across from the American embassy in Saigon, it built a "Christian Embassy" to coordinate its work.¹⁸⁷ Missions were still number one, but World Vision no longer ignored humanitarian relief. By the end of 1967, World Vision recognized that it was entering new territory.

The changes brought conflict. World Vision worked with the Vietnamese government and local churches, but in one instance, a Vietnamese Catholic priest led

¹⁸⁶ In 1967, Pierce defined aid as food, relief goods, technical assistance, medical care, education services, even cooperatives, credit unions and loans to help the people and the economy of Vietnam. He noted that while most of the missionaries and Vietnamese Christians had mostly been involved only in evangelism and church planting before the war, the current desperate need pushed them to "compassion" ministries as well. Pierce named the following agencies in his list of agencies working in Vietnam: American Friends Service Committee, CRS, CARE, Int'l Rescue Committee (IRC), Foster Parents' Plan, Community Development Foundation, Asia Foundation, CCF, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, International Social Service, International Voluntary Services, Medical Mission Sisters, World Relief, People to People Health Foundation, Project Concern, Save the Children, Seventh Day Welfare Service, Vietnam Christian Service (joint program of CWS, Lutheran World Relief, and MCC), World Rehabilitation Fund, World University Service, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Wycliffe Bible Translators. Pierce, *Big Day at Da Me*, 13–15.

¹⁸⁷ Doug Cozart, longtime staffer of World Vision and the Navigators became the first field director of World Vision's Vietnam office in 1966. World Vision broke ground on its "Christian embassy" in 1967. Pierce had long dreamed of building "Christian embassies" in most of the major cities of Asia with World Vision helping to coordinate the Christian work being done in each area while allowing western travelers visit missionary projects. Linda Cozart, *The World Was His Parish: The Life and Times of Doug Cozart Missionary Statesman* (BookSurge Publishing, 2006).

rioting refugees in opposing World Vision's building of an orphanage. Reports assumed that World Vision's reputation as an evangelical and American agency contributed to the violence.¹⁸⁸ Some missionaries felt betrayed by World Vision's new insistence on operating its own institutions. Established humanitarian agencies remained skeptical of World Vision's go-it-alone approach. While it recognized other agencies, it worked only with USAID, the Vietnamese government, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance.¹⁸⁹ As some agencies distanced themselves from U.S. foreign policy, they questioned World Vision's naïve and unquestioning support for American policies.

Conflict was internal as well as external. Future World Vision president Graeme Irvine described the organization's first generation:

Anyone looking at World Vision would see an organization that was action-oriented, centered around Bob Pierce himself, strongly evangelical, innovative, and progressive. As with most things, there was another side to the coin. The apparent strengths had corresponding weaknesses: instability, dependent on the idea and personality of one person, narrow relationships and limited international perspective.¹⁹⁰

By 1967, the strain became too much for Pierce. Despite extended medical leaves, he remained physically and mentally unhealthy. His uncontrollable temper had severed ties with family and friends. His authoritarianism had become an organizational liability.

When the board pleaded for more stability, he refused. He tendered his resignation in a fit of rage and the board accepted. World Vision had outgrown him.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Pierce claimed World Vision had always worked well previously with Catholics, and explained the incident as "a big Vietnamese problem in microcosm – how to overcome the bitterness, tensions, and friction built up during thirty years of war." "Compassion Gap in Viet Nam," *CT* (April 14, 1967): 40; "World Vision Appeal Letter," April 1967 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁸⁹ Technical Assistance Information Clearing House, *Vietnam Programs: US Voluntary Agencies, Foundations, and Missions* (American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, 1966), 15.

¹⁹⁰ Graeme Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times: An Insider's View of World Vision* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, 1996), 22..

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 24. Graeme Irvine reflected on Bob Pierce and World Vision, "Without Bob Pierce World Vision would probably not have been born. It is equally true, in my opinion, that with him it probably would not

have survived.” Publicly, World Vision announced Pierce’s resignation due to medical reasons. Pierce remained connected with World Vision the following year as they funded an around the world goodbye tour for him and his wife. After his resignation from World Vision, Pierce’s story continued to be one of tragedy. His oldest daughter committed suicide in 1968. He remained estranged from his family for much of the rest of his life, and he often received medical and psychological treatment. He often accused World Vision of stealing his organization, but by all accounts, the board treated him well despite the circumstances. For Pierce’s biography after World Vision, see Dunker, *Man of Vision*; Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983). For accounts of Pierce’s resignation, see Norman Rohrer, *This Poor Man Cried: The Story of Larry Ward* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1984), 100. World Vision Board of Directors’ Minutes, Oct. 9, 1967; Dec. 4, 1967, Dec. 6, 1967 (WVI Central Records)..

CHAPTER 5

WORLD VISION, “IN BETWEEN,” 1970-1976

If Pierce’s departure initially brought financial instability and organizational unrest, it allowed World Vision to emerge out from under its founder’s shadow. In 1969, it hired Stan Mooneyham as its second president. A rising star within the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Mooneyham came with Pierce’s entrepreneurial and evangelistic spirit, but he pushed the organization in new directions.¹ Over the decade, it expanded from eight to forty countries while its annual income grew from 4.5 to 100 million dollars. Programs shifted from missionary support to relief and development as it evolved from a small evangelical mission agency to a leading Christian humanitarian organization.²

In the first half of the decade, World Vision continued to balance multiple languages. It sought to remain “evangelical” even as the movement itself fragmented. It feared straying from its missionary roots while embracing humanitarianism. It continued to champion American virtues, but no longer without reservation. As its international experience deepened, its institutional networks expanded, and its theological positions

¹ Reared in Oklahoma and ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister, he launched the Free Will Baptists’ magazine as a teenager and became the denomination’s youngest executive secretary at the age of 27. In 1959, he worked for the NAE as editor of its *United Evangelical Action* magazine. He joined the BGEA in 1964, and later became the special assistant to Billy Graham before being named VP of International Relations in 1967. “Mooneyham Bio,” World Vision United States Archives, Federal Way, Washington (WVUS Archives); Herb Pasik, “Meet Stan Mooneyham: The World is his Mission,” *Palm Desert, CA Desert Post*, Aug 22, 1986. Gary F. VanderPol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005” (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 105.

² 1969-1980 Annual Reports, WVI Central Records, Monrovia, CA (WVI Central Records). The 1980 report lists the World Vision partnership income as \$100.2 million. World Vision US contributed \$64,256,997 million of this total. Ken Waters reports WVUS annual income under Mooneyham’s tenure grew 649%, from 4.5 million in 1969 to 94 million in 1982. Ken Waters, “How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence: Television Fundraising, 1972-1982,” *American Journalism* 15, no. 4 (1998): 69. Child sponsorship grew 530%, from 30,735 to 332,826 children. For statistics on child sponsorship and program growth see “History Timeline,” WVUS Archives and Linda D. Smith, “An Awakening of Conscience: The Changing Response of American Evangelicals Toward World Poverty” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1987), 288–9..

became more complex, it felt less comfortable defining itself strictly as an evangelical, missionary, and American organization, but it remained uncertain about its future directions.

Evangelicals Enter the 1970s

In 1977, Arne Bergstrom came to work for World Vision. He represented a new generation of evangelical. While he heard Billy Graham and Bob Peirce at Youth for Christ rallies as a child and attended Bethel College, he resisted the evangelical subculture. He joined the “Jesus People,” youth who had embraced the counter-culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s and then turned to an informal and unconventional style of Christian living. He participated in the antiwar and Civil Rights movements, and he pursued graduate education in sociology at Marquette. He hoped to work overseas but not as a traditional missionary. In churches, all he ever heard missionaries mention was “soul-winning,” and he found such language hollow without work for social change. Among evangelical organizations, only World Vision seemed to offer an outlet to apply his faith to the world’s problems.³ Despite its success among the evangelical establishment, it also appealed to “young evangelicals” eager to solve social problems and recalibrate the direction of American evangelicalism.⁴

By the mid 1970s, many evangelicals felt they had achieved the mainstream success they craved. They claimed politicians like Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield and Illinois Representative John R. Anderson while relishing Billy Graham’s close

³ Bergstrom continues to work for the organization today. Arne Bergstrom, interview with author, Federal Way, WA, Nov. 16, 2010.

⁴ “Young evangelicals” soon became a category used in the early 1970s to distinguish these new voices from “establishment evangelicals.” Richard Quebedeaux popularized the categories in his 1974 book: Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

relationship with President Richard Nixon. They produced national bestsellers like Kenneth Taylor's *The Living Bible* and Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*.⁵ Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power" (1970) and Pat Robertson's "700 Club" (1962) became fixtures on local television channels nationwide.

Entrepreneurial evangelicals captured the imagination of the news media. In the late 1960s, the "Jesus Generation" brought Christian exuberance into one segment of the youth counterculture. It captivated young evangelicals like Arne Bergstrom, and by early 1971, "Jesus People" ascended into the national headlines. *Time*'s June 1971 cover depicted a "Jesus Revolution" while *Look* declared that "The Jesus Movement is Upon Us."⁶ Broadway celebrated the success of "Jesus Christ Superstar" (1971) and "Godspell" (1971)—musicals that combined lively and memorable tunes with up-to-date renditions of the Gospel accounts. Even Bill Bright's buttoned-up Campus Crusaders planned a week-long evangelical "Woodstock," a Christian version of the rock concert that celebrated the counter culture. Crusade's Explo '72 in Dallas brought together evangelical "straights" and born again "far outs." 85,000 students evangelized the city's streets by day and rallied into the night with Billy Graham and such music icons as Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson.⁷

⁵ First published by Wheaton's Tyndale House in 1971, *The Living Bible* was the best-selling book in America in 1972-3. Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* produced an entire new genre of books predicting end times scenarios in current events. (It is a precursor to the popular *Left Behind* series). Originally published by evangelical Zondervan, its success led to secular Bantam press republishing it in 1973.

⁶ Larry Eskridge, *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America, 1966-1977* (Stirling: University of Stirling, 2005); Larry Eskridge, "'One Way': Billy Graham, the Jesus Generation, and the Idea of an Evangelical Youth Culture.," *Church History* 67, no. 1 (Mar. 1998): 83-106. "The Alternative Jesus: Psychedelic Christ," *Time*, June 21 1971, 56-63; "The Jesus Movement is Upon Us," *Look*, Feb. 9 1971, 15-21; Earl C. Gottschalk Jr., "Hip Culture Discovers A New Trip: Fervent, Foot Stompin' Religion," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 2 1971, 1; "The Groovy Christians of Rye, NY," *Life*, May 14 1971, 78-86.

⁷ For more information on Explo '72, see Eskridge, "One Way"; John Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1-2, 139-146. Billy Graham became a huge supporter of the Jesus Movement. His 1971 book, *The Jesus Generation*, sold over 500,000 copies. By the end of 1972, however, the Jesus

The success, however, could not mask internal divisions. As early as 1967, Carl Henry, the editor of *Christianity Today* had feared that evangelicals stood “at the brink of crisis.”⁸ The next year *CT* financier J. Howard Pew forced Henry to resign for his unwillingness to politicize the magazine. New editor Harold Lindsell feigned apoliticism but borrowed President Richard Nixon’s description of his supporters as the “silent majority” in order to portray evangelicals as conservative Republicans. By 1974, Bill Bright, pastors Jack Hayford and John Hagee, and Amway founder Richard DeVos had hatched a “Plan to Save America” through precinct-level political activism.⁹

As some evangelicals sought entrée among the nation’s conservative establishment, others hoped to take the movement in the opposite direction. Nowhere was this more evident than on college campuses. Between 1960 and 1972, the proportion of evangelicals with a college education tripled. Evangelical colleges formed new “secular” departments in the social sciences while evangelical students pursued degrees at state schools in larger numbers. Having come of age in the turbulent 1960s, a number of “young evangelicals” - urban, educated, and articulate – challenged the evangelical establishment as a cultural Christianity.¹⁰

Movement had reached its zenith. Its short popular success, had a lasting effect on evangelicalism. Many of the Jesus People came to lead successful evangelical operations. For example, Chuck Smith founded the Calvary Chapel denomination as well as Maranatha Music, the first Christian label to promote the new style of contemporary Christian music that traced its roots to the movement.

⁸ He worried responses to the current challenges in theology, socio-political involvement, and ecumenism would further fracture the evangelical voice. Carl Henry, *Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis, Significance of the World Congress on Evangelism* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1967).

⁹ DeVos said, “The plan, among other things, was designed to help elect ‘real Christians’ to government” and “get rid of those so-called liberal Christians like Mark Hatfield.” Quoted in “Giving God ‘the Business,’” *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (Sept. 14, 1979); Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ*, 163–5.

¹⁰ David R. Swartz, “Left Behind: The Evangelical Left and the Limits of Evangelical Politics, 1965-1988” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008), 46, 65–66. Swartz, 360 analyzes the specific demographics of younger evangelicals: “First, its members were educated.... Second, despite efforts to recruit African-Americans, its members were overwhelmingly white.... Third, its members worked in the social service

Establishment evangelicals had privileged evangelism to oppose a “compromising ecumenism,” but young evangelicals claimed that they ignored social justice. In 1969, Billy Graham hosted the U.S. Congress on Evangelism in Minneapolis to address their concerns. Speakers discussed Vietnam, revolution, race, and poverty. World Vision VP Ted Engstrom acknowledged that evangelicals were too slow to deal with the “social, political, and economic evils so evident in American life.” *Christianity Today* reported that “perhaps no evangelical conclave in this century has responded more positively to the call for Christians to help right the wrongs in the social order.”¹¹

The following year, the triennial Urbana mission convention of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) gathered twelve thousand students around the theme of “Christ the Liberator.” Many nodded as Peruvian Samuel Escobar challenge the “middle-class captivity” of American evangelicalism. They stood and cheered as black evangelist Tom Skinner preached that “any gospel that does not want to go where people are hungry and poverty-stricken and set them free in the name of Jesus Christ—is not the gospel.”¹² Carl Henry agreed that “the time is overdue for a dedicated vanguard to move evangelical

sector.... Fourth, its members disproportionately lived in cities. In short, progressive evangelicals seemed to be prototypical members of the “knowledge class.”

¹¹ Leighton Ford, interview with author, Durham, NC, Mar. 24, 2011. George W. Wilson, *Evangelism Now: U.S. Congress on Evangelism - Official Reference Volume, Papers, and Reports* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1970). David Hubbard, quoted in Edward B. Fiske, “New Liberal Mood is Found Among Fundamentalist Protestants,” *New York Times*, Sept 14, 1969. See Ted Engstrom, “US Congress on Evangelism,” *World Vision* (Nov. 1969): 36-7. Paul Rees, “From the ‘Congo’ to ‘Ole Man River,’” *World Vision* (Nov. 1969): 47. “U.S. Congress on Evangelism: A Turning Point?,” *Christianity Today* (October 10, 1969): 32. Yet in the following issue, editor L. Nelson Bell replied that he was “afraid that evangelicals were moving away from the primary task of evangelism and developing a new social gospel.” Bell, “Beware!” *Christianity Today* 14 (Oct. 24, 1969): 24-25.

¹² Samuel Escobar, “Social Concern and World Evangelism,” in John R. Stott, *Christ the Liberator* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971), 107–108; Keith and Gladys Hunt, *For Christ and the University: The Story of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of the U.S.A./1940-1990* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 274–278; Brantley W Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics: The Rise of Contemporary Progressive Evangelicalism” (Ph.D. diss., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 65–67.

witness to frontier involvement in the social crisis.” He worried that if evangelicals avoided social issues, they would lose the coming generation.¹³

A number of young professors began criticizing the lack of social concern in evangelical publications. Marquette sociologist David Moberg urged evangelicals in *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* to consider not only individual but structural sin. Indiana State University historian Richard Pierard’s *The Unequal Yoke: Evangelical Christianity and Political Conservatism* and Calvin College ethicist Richard Mouw’s *Political Evangelism* criticized the evangelical equation of Christian values with political conservatism. Establishment evangelicals like Denver Seminary president Vernon Grounds and Carl Henry also contributed to the deluge of books with titles like *Evangelism and Social Responsibility* (1969), *Revolution and the Christian Faith* (1971), and *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (1971). Young evangelicals absorbed these popular books, and many, like Arne Bergstrom, flocked to study under teachers who saw the social implications of the Christian scriptures.¹⁴

The movement attracted activists as well as academics. In 1965, Fred Alexander and his son John began publishing *Freedom Now*, a journal that urged evangelicals to take up the cause of civil rights. By 1969, the Alexanders renamed their journal the *Other*

¹³ Carl Henry, *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), 22; Carl Henry, “The Tensions Between Evangelism and the Christian Demand for Social Justice,” *Fides Et Historia* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 8.

¹⁴ Bergstrom studied with David Moberg at Marquette. With dozens of books published, one critic has described the late 1960s to early 1970s as an “unmistakable renaissance in evangelical social concern.” See Robert Booth Fowler, *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought, 1966-1976* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 189.” David Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism Versus Social Concern*, [1st ed.]. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972); Robert G. Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard, *The Cross and the Flag* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1972); Richard V. Pierard, *The Unequal Yoke* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co, 1970); Richard Mouw, *Political Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973); Vernon Grounds, *Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969); Vernon Grounds, *Revolution and the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971); Henry, *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*. Gasaway outlines all the major books in this new genre. Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics,” 51–61.

Side and broadened their mission beyond race to “the other side of America that is hungry, defeated and miserable.” The magazine became one of the first evangelical platforms to criticize injustices in American society and “apply the whole gospel to the problems of suffering people.”¹⁵

In 1971, another small group of students from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School formed the People’s Christian Coalition. Led by Jim Wallis, they defined themselves as radical evangelicals. Wallis shared the New Left’s hostility toward the injustices of American society, but he aimed his critique at the church. In the first issue of their magazine, *The Post-American*, Wallis claimed the church’s cultural captivity caused it “to lose its prophetic voice by preaching and exporting a pro-American gospel and a materialistic faith which supports and sanctifies the values of American society.”¹⁶ *The Post-American* became the most aggressive voice among the young evangelicals.¹⁷

These young evangelicals represented a minority, and they rarely spoke with a common voice. They taught in universities, lived in alternative communities, and organized political action committees.¹⁸ Few evangelicals were willing to accept their more radical views, but many were open to new perspectives. In the wake of the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal, some evangelicals knew

¹⁵ [Fred and John Alexander], “The Other Side,” *The Other Side* (Sept-Oct 1969): 31. For more information on the Alexanders and *The Other Side*, see Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics,” 27-39. The early *Freedom Now* issues served as one of the few spaces where African Americans could confront and question white evangelical assumptions on race.

¹⁶ Jim Wallis, “Post-American Christianity,” *The Post-American* (Fall 1971): 3. It renamed the publication *Sojourners* in 1975.

¹⁷ For more information on Wallis and the formation of Sojourners, see Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics,” 39–49; Swartz, “Left Behind,” 89–92. The *Other Side* (circulation 13,000) and the *Post-American* (55,000) were only two of many new periodicals to address similar issues. Others included the *Reformed Journal*, *Eternity* (46,000), *Vanguard* (2,000), *Right On* (65,000), *HIS* (90,000), and *Wittenburg Door*. David R. Swartz, “Identity Politics and the Fragmenting of the 1970s Evangelical Left,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 82.

¹⁸ In 1972, some young evangelicals engaged in the U.S. presidential race by organizing “Evangelicals for McGovern,” which served as quite a departure from the reputed evangelically-friendly incumbent Richard Nixon. Swartz, “Identity Politics and the Fragmenting of the 1970s Evangelical Left,” 82.

they could no longer call for evangelism to the exclusion of social engagement. In 1973, fifty leaders came together over Thanksgiving weekend at an inner city Chicago YMCA to discuss evangelical social responsibilities.¹⁹ They renounced those who either dismissed evangelism or wedded the church to conservative middle-American values. The resulting *Chicago Declaration* called for economic justice, peacemaking, racial reconciliation, and gender equality.²⁰ It served as a manifesto for the young evangelicals, and it received broad coverage in the religious and secular press. *The Washington Post* reported that it “well could launch a religious movement that could shake both political and religious life in America.” At the least, it demonstrated the surfacing of an evangelical left.²¹

Amidst evangelical divisions, World Vision proved difficult to categorize.²²

Pierce had established the organization as an evangelical enterprise, but his social ministries had often taken him beyond the comfort zone in the circles that he frequented. World Vision elder statesmen Carl Henry and Paul Rees were two of the few establishment evangelicals invited to attend and sign the *Chicago Declaration*.²³ Some

¹⁹ Ronald J Sider, “An Historic Moment for Biblical Social Concern,” in *The Chicago Declaration* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1973), 31–33.

²⁰ For the text of the declaration and commentary on the event, see Ronald J. Sider, *The Chicago Declaration*. (Carol Stream, Ill: Creation House, 1974); Gasaway, “An Alternative Soul of Politics,” 70–78.

²¹ Marjorie Hyer, “Social and Political Activism Is Aim of Evangelical Group,” *Washington Post*, November 30, 1973, D17; *World Vision* (Jan. 1974): 3; Roy Larson of the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote with a bit of hyperbole, “Someday American church historians may write the most significant church-related event of 1973 took place last week at the YMCA hotel on S. Wabash.” Quoted in Joel Carpenter, “Compassionate Evangelicalism,” *Christianity Today* (2003): 43. Few establishment evangelicals demeaned the Chicago Declaration. In fact, Billy Graham, in a post-Watergate interview with *Christianity Today* claimed, “We have a social responsibility, and I could identify with most of the recent Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern. I think we have to identify with the changing of structures in society and try to do our part.” Watergate: Interview with Graham,” *CT* (Jan 4, 1974): 17-18.

²² Several texts seeking to categorize evangelicals at this time struggled to situate World Vision. For example, see Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals*, 111.

²³ Rees had served as a WV Vice President since 1957. Carl Henry had recently joined World Vision as lecturer-at-large. Sider tells a story of one elder evangelical statesman (unnamed, but noted by others as Carl Henry) “who had experienced alienation and isolation in recent years because of his forthright demand

young evangelicals pointed to World Vision as an example of evangelical social action, and a few joined its staff. Others on the staff, however, resisted their brash methods, realizing that raising multi-million dollar budgets necessitated appeals to a broad conservative constituency. Many sought to claim World Vision. It appealed to all of them but refused to let any one of them define it.

Evangelical Missions Enter the 1970s

World Vision deflected confrontations over domestic issues by continuing to pursue international missions. During this period, evangelicals still contrasted themselves to “ecumenical” Christians. They claimed that the WCC’s 1968 Uppsala meeting secularized mission by abandoning evangelism for social work. They recoiled when the 1973 WCC Bangkok meeting issued a moratorium on missionaries. But as evangelical missions thrived and ecumenism struggled, evangelicals began to reassess their own approaches to mission.²⁴

After the 1966 Berlin Congress on World Evangelism, they organized regional conferences outside the West for the first time. In Singapore, Stan Mooneyham convened the 1968 Asia-South Pacific Congress on Evangelism as the capstone of his work with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association before assuming the presidency of World Vision. Mooneyham remarked that the West must now listen to the voices of the global South. Global evangelicals assured the West that they valued evangelism and did not

for social concern among evangelicals.” Sider narrated that Henry signed his name and then removed it. After reconsidering, he felt “he must support the call for greater evangelical social concern, whatever the cost.” Sider then describes a heartfelt embrace between Henry and Jim Walls. Sider, *The Chicago Declaration*, 9, 29.

²⁴ Donald A. McGavran, *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents, 1964-1976: Expanded Edition of Eye of the Storm, The Great Debate in Mission, Including Documents on Bangkok and Nairobi* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977). See especially, McGavran’s response to Uppsala, “Will Uppsala Betray the Two Billion?,” 233-241. Donald H. Gill, “WCC’s New Thrust for Mission,” *World Vision* (April 1968): 20-23; Paul Rees, “Uppsala Reflections,” *World Vision* (Nov. 1968): 47. Rees, “Bangkok Beckons (What Will It Say),” *World Vision* (May 1972): 23.

need a “wholly new theology,” but they wanted to dissociate the gospel from Western cultural entanglement.²⁵

The following year, Latin American evangelicals met in Bogota, Colombia, for the First Latin American Congress on Evangelism (CLADE I). They sought an alternative to Catholic liberation theology and ecumenical liberalism.²⁶ Entitled “Action of Christ in a Continent in Crisis,” the conference addressed the crises of “underdevelopment, injustice, hunger, violence, and despair.”²⁷ The main outcome of the congress was the formation of the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana* (FTL)²⁸ Through the FTL, Latin American theologians demonstrated that they would not be beholden to American evangelicals. They criticized their coziness with Western imperialism and its preoccupation with personal salvation at the expense of social issues.²⁹

²⁵ Carl Henry, “An Assessment,” in W. Stanley Mooneyham, *Christ Seeks Asia: A New Note Is Struck in Asia* (Hong Kong: Rock House, 1969), 11. Sherwood E. Wirt, “A New Note is Struck in Asia,” *Decision* 10.2 (1969): 9. Paul Rees commended Mooneyham at the Asian Congress for “hiding himself while Asians carry the ball.” See Rees, “Where Half the World Lives,” *World Vision* (Nov 1968): 47. The Other regional Congresses following Berlin were: The West African Congress on Evangelism in Nigeria, July 1968; US Congress on Evangelism, Minneapolis, 1969, the Latin American Congress on Evangelism (CLADE I), Bogota, 1969; European Congress on Evangelism, Amsterdam, 1971. See Valdir Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility Within the Lausanne Movement.” (Th.D. diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1989), 111–114.

²⁶ The historic Medellin conference where Latin American Catholics embraced liberation theology had been held in the same city just the year before. The Evangelical Latin American Conference (CELA) had met just months earlier. “Evangelical” has most often refers to all Protestants in Latin America. The divide between the more ecumenical CELA conference and the new evangelical CLADE demonstrated some of the Western categories thrust upon Latin American Protestants. American Christians were concerned about the direction of the Latin American evangelical church. See Dayton Roberts, “Latin American Protestants: Which Way Will They Go,” *CT* 14.1 (Oct. 10, 1969): 14.

²⁷ “Evangelical Declaration of Bogota,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 6.3 (1970):174.

²⁸ The FTL is alternately known in the U.S. as the Latin American Theological Fraternity (LATF).

²⁹ In his paper at CLADE I, Samuel Escobar asked, “How is it that evangelicals have become a conservative force afraid to call into question the status quo and raise a prophetic voice? They jealously guard a sterile message which attempts at all costs to prove that the message is not dangerous, that it is not subversive and that it will not cause changes. Have we not diluted the Bible?” In “The Bible and the Social Revolution in Latin America,” Folder 1, Box 8, Collection 358, Charles Peter Wagner Papers, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL.

Global evangelicals were finding their voice, and many Western mission organizations were more willing to listen. Without sacrificing their desire for person-to-person evangelism, they realized that post-colonial conditions required attention to non-Western voices, new methods, and social justice. The executives and field workers at World Vision felt that they were leading the way. Few agencies were better connected. Because of its long history of pastors' conferences, World Vision knew most of the leaders of the Christian churches in the global South. It connected them with Western evangelicals and hired them as local staff. It helped coordinate regional congresses in Asia and Africa as well as underwrite the costs of FTL meetings in Latin America.³⁰

Playing the seasoned veteran, World Vision urged missionaries to avoid past mistakes. In 1971, as U.S. relations with China thawed, some Western evangelicals readied a missionary invasion to evangelize the mainland. President Mooneyham suggested a different tack. He opposed the sending of American missionaries and hoped the "internationalizing of missions, stripped of Western Christian imperialism, would be a magnificent demonstration of the validity of our message in the nonwhite world."³¹

World Vision also insisted on professionalization. The organization implemented management guru Peter Drucker's "Management by Objectives" while its Mission Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC) pioneered fresh research. If some evangelical missionaries had questioned World Vision's reliance on data,

³⁰ See Swartz, "Left Behind," 120.

³¹ Stanley W. Mooneyham, "Lord, Save China from American Evangelical Opportunists!" *World Vision* (June 1971): 4; John Dart, "Missionaries Warned China Won't be Easy," *LA Times*, June 19, 1971. Mooneyham noted that he spent thirteen weeks in China in 1970. In 1971, he published W. Stanley Mooneyham, *China, The Puzzle* (Pasadena, CA: World Vision International, 1971). World Vision funded a new Asia Information Office to target China for future mission work. It also covered Chinese political and cultural events heavily in its magazine. Mooneyham's interest is significant for both his critique of "evangelical missionary hucksters" as well as World Vision's own continued missionary impulse.

technology, and organization as contrary to the Holy Spirit, they questioned no longer. Now they joined the rush toward the refinement of organizational technique and strategic planning.³²

They were also ready to reconsider social action. Mission agencies heard the critiques from young evangelicals at home, but their experience on the ground overseas was even more persuasive. Larger numbers of American evangelicals traveled for the first time as short-term missionaries. New programs like Wheaton College's Human Needs and Global Resources (HNGR) sent students for field-based service learning around the world. Both the Christian and mainstream press brought increased coverage of global events into American homes. In magazines like *Christianity Today*, *World Vision*, and InterVarsity's *His*, global evangelical voices reminded American evangelicals that the prophets had called for justice and Jesus had fed and healed the poor. Evangelicals could not deny that. They were no longer willing to let the mainline build the schools and hospitals and feed the hungry. While World Vision had sometimes felt it occupied the fringes of evangelical mission, by the early 1970s, it represented the mainstream of both evangelical missiology and popular opinion.³³

Just at the moment American evangelicals cornered the missionary enterprise, they discovered that it had taken new directions. The dichotomy between saving souls and feeding bodies no longer made sense to a host of evangelicals, and some of them recognized that they had let their fixation on communism, theological liberalism, and

³² Arthur Glasser, "Managerial Missions," 1974 Mission Executive Retreat; Folder 2, Box 19, Collection 165, EFMA Records.

³³ Swartz notes that this international engagement broke down some of the insularity of evangelical subculture. Not only did evangelical colleges see growth in short-term mission travel, but they also accepted more international exchange students. InterVarsity also led the way. *HIS* magazine often offered articles by global evangelicals. Its Urbana conferences were the platform for FTL leaders like Samuel Escobar. Swartz, "Left Behind," 117.

secularism skew their global vision. In July 1974, Billy Graham convened the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland. This “Lausanne Congress” gathered 2700 evangelicals from 150 countries to equip the church for world evangelization, define the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility, and seek evangelical unity.³⁴

Lausanne proved that evangelicalism had circled the globe. For the first time, half the delegates came from the global South. Several delivered keynote papers. In his opening address, Graham made a distinction which had rarely occurred to evangelicals twenty years earlier: “When I go to preach the gospel, I go as an ambassador for the kingdom of God, not America.”³⁵ British leader John Stott asked evangelicals to take a humbler tone, repent for their arrogance and pride, listen to the ecumenical movement and each other, and expand their definition of mission.³⁶

Western leaders still set much of the agenda. The church growth movement led by Fuller Seminary professors Donald McGavran and Ralph Winter took center stage. Their concept of “unreached people groups” became the guiding principle of Lausanne to equip the mission movement with the research and techniques to evangelize the world. The Latin American theologians Samuel Escobar and Rene Padilla, however, made the biggest splash when they denounced American evangelicalism. Escobar claimed American Christianity had generated two attitudes: either Constantinianism, seeing

³⁴ Graham, “Why Lausanne?” in J.D. Douglas, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: Official Reference Volume, Papers and Responses, International Congress on World Evangelization* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), 26. C. Rene Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 90.

³⁵ Graham, “Why Lausanne?” quoted in Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 203. Also see Richard V. Pierard, “Billy Graham and Vietnam: From Cold Warrior to Peacemaker,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 10, no. 1 (1980): 37–51. Pierard describes how international crusades and Vietnam altered Graham’s view of the Cold War and American exceptionalism.

³⁶ John Stott, “The Biblical Basis of Evangelism,” in Douglas, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 65–79.

Christianity as a religion of the West, or indifference to embodied persons, seeing the gospel merely as a spiritual message.³⁷ Padilla attacked evangelicalism as “a cultural Christianity” that equated faith with the American way of life. With church growth theory in mind, he criticized evangelicalism’s penchant for “managerial missions” that turned “the strategy for the evangelization of the world into a problem of technology.” Such an obsession with efficiency had made the gospel a commodity, a “product... to distribute among the greatest number of consumers.”³⁸

The Lausanne Covenant represented an unprecedented international evangelical statement on the need for Christians to resist poverty, hunger, and injustice. It called for missionaries to preach the gospel and get their hands dirty in the streets at the same time.³⁹ But it left open the question of how to explain the relationship of social action and evangelism. John Stott interpreted the Covenant as saying that the two were equal partners. Others, while accepting the need for missionaries to care about bread and shelter, wanted still to insist that the proclamation of Christ in word had to be the priority. Escobar and Padilla convened dissenters who felt that Lausanne had spoken too timidly. They published a manifesto on “Radical Discipleship,” endorsed by almost a fifth of Lausanne delegates, that went beyond the Covenant by saying that the gospel included liberation, restoration, wholeness, and “salvation that is personal, social, global, and cosmic.”⁴⁰ While Western evangelicals now shared the conviction that Christians cared

³⁷ Samuel Escobar, “Evangelism and Man’s Search for Freedom, Justice, and Fulfillment,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 304–5.

³⁸ Padilla went on to say that such a “fierce pragmatism” was found not in Scripture but “in the political sphere [that] has produced Watergate.” René C. Padilla, “Evangelism and the World,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 125–126, 132, 139–140.

³⁹ Section 5 that addressed social concern was by far the longest section of the Lausanne Covenant. Douglas, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 4–5.

⁴⁰ The Radical Discipleship statement “repudiate[d] as demonic the attempt to drive a wedge between

about the body as well as the soul, many of them were taken aback by the force of the global critique. After Lausanne it was fair to ask: Would evangelical missions continue to be a united movement?⁴¹

World Vision felt that it emerged from Lausanne as one of the winners. It had invested over \$125,000 and countless hours of staff support.⁴² It applied its skills in media promotion and research to construct exhibits, and Mooneyham's keynote address highlighted World Vision's potential in a stirring statement that ranged in content from statistics on world evangelization to video clips of his interviews with evangelicals from every continent.⁴³

Mooneyham saw World Vision as an ally of the new global evangelical voices. While some mission executives hesitated to embrace the new rhetoric of what came to be called "Two-Thirds World" evangelicals, he spoke as the leader of an organization that had already learned that Jesus wanted his disciples to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and visit the imprisoned while they carried his message of salvation into all the world. He remarked that sometimes he found himself more at home with the impatient voices of the

evangelism and social concern," in "Theology Implications of Radical Discipleship," *Ibid.*, 1294–1296. Carl F.H. Henry, "The Gospel and Society," *Christianity Today* (Sept. 13, 1974): 67. As elder statesmen, Henry felt that if the global evangelical critics had approached the issue more delicately, they could have achieved an even stronger statement on social action within the Lausanne Covenant. Instead, they drafted a rival statement. John Stott, chair of the writing group for the Lausanne Covenant, signed both statements. See Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*.

⁴¹ Harold Lindsell, "Lausanne 74: An Appraisal." *Christianity Today* (Sept 13, 1974): 21-26; Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 207. Some critics have questioned whether the rhetoric of Lausanne outdistanced its actual effects. Yates notes that the style of American evangelicalism continued to dominate. He claimed there were twice as many to the right of John Stott and the global evangelicals than ones that joined him.

⁴² World Vision Board of Directors' Meeting, Dec. 10, 1974 (WVI Central Records).

⁴³ Dominating the exhibit hall was a digital clock that calculated the increasing world population to remind delegates of the need for world evangelization. Mooneyham, "Acts of the Holy Spirit, '74," in Douglas, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 428–448; excerpted in *World Vision* (July/Aug. 1974): 8-10. At the last minute, the BGEA paid for Bob Pierce to attend Lausanne. While still grieving from his ouster at World Vision, he noted Mooneyham's speech as the highlight. "World Vision's accelerated growth and increasing influence is sometimes terrifying to me. Yet it was most reassuring to sense the Holy Spirit's anointing and the true spiritual passion evident in the ministry of World Vision's president that night." Pierce, "Lausanne in Retrospect: a Personal View," *World Vision* (Oct. 1974): 10-11.

global South than with some American evangelicals. Yet World Vision also had to learn to accept criticism from those impatient voices. Some saw it as another “managerial mission,” a highly specialized western organization bent on exporting its technology, business principles, and fund-raising strength to institutionalize—and thereby domesticate—missions in the developing world.⁴⁴

After the Congress, the Lausanne movement seemed to travel in two directions. Church growth experts promoted strategies for harvesting souls while evangelicals in the global South wanted to plant the seeds of social justice.⁴⁵ Mooneyham was not naïve; he worked both sides of the aisle and continued to pour money into Lausanne.⁴⁶ World Vision’s MARC division cheered for church growth and outreach to unreached peoples. Donald McGavran handed leadership of the Lausanne Strategy Working Group to MARC director Ed Dayton. In handpicking congress delegates and directing programs, Dayton ensured that Lausanne remained committed to the evangelization of the world.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ In a letter from leading Australian evangelical A.J. Dain to World Vision MARC director Ed Dayton, Dain remarks that Fuller’s church growth strategies and MARC’s research are “frankly largely meaningless to many of our brethren in the Third World.” He continued, “American aggressive activism in organization and promotion often overwhelms and frustrate the people of other lands and cultures and paralyzes the flow of dynamics which would generate and flow freely if the organization and structure of the program were to take the ‘local’ structure and organization more into consideration.” A.J. Dain to Ed Dayton, April 26, April 1974, Folder 47, Box 33, Collection 46, Records of the Lausanne Movement. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL. For a similar critique see, Kwame Bediako, “World Evangelisation, Institutional Evangelicalism and the Future of the Christian World Mission,” in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ’s Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism*, ed. Vinay Samuel and Albrecht Hauser, (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), 52–68.

⁴⁵ Robert Hunt and Samuel Escobar differentiate three trajectories within the Lausanne Movement: post-imperial (European evangelicals like John Stott); managerial (American evangelicals of the church growth school like McGavran and Dayton); and the critical (global South evangelicals such as Padilla and Escobar). Robert Hunt, “The History of the Lausanne Movement, 1974-2010,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 2 (April 2011): 83–4; Samuel Escobar, “A Movement Divided: Three Approaches to World Evangelization Stand in Tension with One Another.,” *Transformation* 8 (October 1, 1991): 7–13.

⁴⁶ In a 1986 internal report, Ed Dayton estimated World Vision had invested \$4.5 million in the Lausanne movement. Ed Dayton, “World Vision and LCWE: An Analysis,” April 28, 1986; Dayton, “World Vision Support for LCWE,” International Affairs Committee, July 1, 1986 (WVI Central Records).

⁴⁷ In the late 1970s, Ed Dayton served on the Lausanne Executive Committee as well as chairing the Strategic Working Group and Program Review and Planning Committee. Dayton negotiated with World

Mooneyham supported Lausanne because it legitimated the quest for social amelioration and justice as part of the evangelical mission. Without providing exact formulas for the division of labor between the evangelists and the activists, Mooneyham believed World Vision left Lausanne with a mandate. As one executive reflected: “The emphasis on social action ministries hand in hand with evangelistic outreach put World Vision in a unique catalytic and leadership position in Evangelical Christianity.”⁴⁸

By no means did World Vision abandon the mandate to evangelize. Local missionaries and national church leaders still administered most World Vision funded programs for orphans, medical care, education, and relief. The agency continued to sponsor conferences to train local pastors, and Mooneyham revived Pierce’s revival crusades, preaching to thousands in Indonesia, Cambodia, and the Philippines.⁴⁹

World Vision believed it supported traditional missions; it simply supported more than traditional missions. In 1973, Project REAL (Revolution, Evangelism, Action, and Love) formed a partnership with the Jesus People to sponsor young adults on ten month missions to the Philippines. Serving as workers in a nationwide Filipino evangelistic campaign, students learned to maintain the balance between evangelism and social ministry. They dug wells, rebuilt rice paddies, and provided pre-natal health care; they also taught Bible classes and went door-to-door proclaiming that Jesus was the way of salvation.⁵⁰

Vision to invest the 50 to 75 percent of his time with World Vision into his positions with Lausanne as a strategic investment. “World Vision Support for LCWE,” International Affairs Committee, July 1, 1986 (WVI Central Records)

⁴⁸ William Newel, Director of WV Canada, was a part of a World Vision International Committee to assess World Vision’s position at Lausanne. See World Vision 1973-4 Annual Report (WVI Central Records)

⁴⁹ World Vision had not attempted a large-scale crusade since Tokyo in 1961.

⁵⁰ Much of their work was to prepare for Mooneyham’s crusades in Nov. 1973 and April 1974. The young adults served under the “Christ the Only Way” nationwide evangelistic movement in the Philippines. See

At the same time, World Vision expanded into large-scale relief work. It had always provided emergency relief through missionaries and local Christian communities, but high profile disasters in the early 1970s prompted the organization to take on larger challenges. In 1970, it moved into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), which had suffered from a massive cyclone, tidal wave, and civil war that left 500,000 dead and created ten million refugees. In 1972, it received its first large government grant to coordinate relief after a devastating earthquake in Nicaragua. In Africa, it launched programs to feed people during famines in Biafra (Nigeria) and Ethiopia.⁵¹

The interventions brought increased media attention and more donations from evangelicals.⁵² That support led to new kinds of evangelical agencies: Christian relief and development organizations that operated outside the sphere of evangelical missions. Medical Assistance Program (MAP), World Concern, Food for the Hungry, and Institute for International Development, Inc. (IID) followed in World Vision's footsteps.⁵³ With an average annual growth of seventeen percent throughout the 1970s, these new agencies

"Philippines: Nation Struggling to stay on its Feet," *World Vision* (Nov. 1972): 7; "Project REAL," World Vision fundraising appeal to Herb Taylor of the Christian Workers' Foundation. Folder 48, Box 28, Collection 20, Herbert John Taylor Papers. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL.

⁵¹ "World Vision Factbook, 1982" (WVI Central Records); WV History Timeline," WVUS Archives. By 1972, *World Vision* magazine began to evolve from a scholarly mission journal back into to house organ. The new form took an area or issue as the in-depth cover story. Many of these reported on World Vision's new relief ministries. For examples, see Bill Kliewer, "Joi Bangla: Birth Cry of a Nation," *World Vision* (April 1972): 4-6; Mooneyham, "Longest Walk of their Lives," *World Vision* (Jan 1973): 4-6; Mooneyham, "Managua Aftermath – Caricature of Reality," *World Vision* (Mar 1973): 4-8; "Six Million in Upper Volta Drought," *World Vision* (Sept. 1973): 20.

⁵² Seven new evangelical agencies were founded in the 1970s, including Food for the Hungry, Save the Children, Global Outreach, and International Institute for Development (IID).

⁵³ Henry Carl Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), 59. Smith, "An Awakening of Conscience," 95. Smith notes that nine new evangelical organizations were founded in the 1970s. Five had been founded in both the 1950s and 1960s. Established agencies such as World Vision, World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, and Bread for the World also flourished. Larry Ward, former VP at World Vision left to found Food for the Hungry in 1971.

grew at twice the rate of traditional evangelical mission organizations.⁵⁴ As the largest, World Vision grabbed the greatest share of headlines and support among evangelicals. Government funds still made up only a fraction of World Vision's budget. Instead, it expanded through emergency appeals for monthly pledges. World Vision had become the exemplary Christian relief agency. But it had not yet fully defined what it should be.⁵⁵

World Vision in Southeast Asia

World Vision moved into new continents, but it still concentrated on Southeast Asia. By the early 1970s, a third of its programs were in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. In following U.S. troops to Vietnam in the 1960s, the number of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in Vietnam multiplied.⁵⁶ The U.S. government depended on them to “win the hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese, so federal officials gave them USAID funds. World Vision's workers began to interact with both governmental agencies and non-evangelical humanitarian organizations.

In 1967, the U.S. consolidated all aid programs into a new Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) under the command of Army General William Westmoreland. Some of the private organizations complained that the action politicized and militarized foreign aid. Aid workers in some ecumenical and peace

⁵⁴ Smith, “An Awakening of Conscience,” 104–108, 312–316 (ft. 104). Smith reports that of the 85 evangelical relief and development organizations she studied, average growth rate was 17 percent while the evangelical missions agencies averaged only eight to ten percent. Overall evangelical giving to Third World poverty grew over the decade from \$147.7 to \$622 million. Evangelical relief and development agencies grew from income of \$21.8 million in 1969/70 to \$190 million in 1981/82 (a nine-fold increase). Evangelical contributions to the Third World in general quadrupled from \$62 million to \$238 million between 1969 and 1982.

⁵⁵ “World Vision Advertisement: I was Hungry, Naked, Homeless, Lonely;” *World Vision* (Jan 1972). The entire issue was devoted to relief in Bangladesh and Africa. Appeal Letters, April 1, 1972 and July 1, 1972 (WVI Central Records).

⁵⁶ By 1967, thirty-seven PVOs had registered in Vietnam. Twenty of these had only arrived since 1965. At the height of the U.S. military buildup in 1969, there were 50 PVOs. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 93–94.

churches spoke out against U.S. policy. They condemned the bombing of North Vietnam and the invasion of Cambodia as inhumane.⁵⁷ The American Friends Service Committee and Mennonite Central Committee even defied U.S. sanctions to provide aid to the North Vietnamese. The U.S. government responded by slashing funding to aid agencies.⁵⁸

As aid to ecumenical agencies dwindled, the evangelical upstarts were often the beneficiaries. They were less dependent on federal funding than the mainline Christian organizations but more willing to work alongside the U.S. government. In 1970, South Vietnam Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky visited the United States to lobby against the withdrawal of U.S. troops. World Vision welcomed him with a tour of its headquarters and a private dinner for like-minded religious leaders. Even as antiwar protesters picketed outside, World Vision claimed that its work transcended politics. Workers in other agencies called them naïve – or worse, complicit in U.S. policy.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ On Sept. 19, 1967, staff of International Voluntary Services (IVS) published an open letter to President Johnson in the *New York Times*. The next year, several leading IVS staff resigned and took their critique of US military policy on the road to American audiences. By 1971, the US would ask IVS to leave Vietnam completely. Scott Flipse, “To Save ‘Free Vietnam’ and Lose Our Souls: The Missionary Impulse, Voluntary Agencies, and Protestant Dissent Against the War, 1965-1971,” in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home*, ed. Grant Wacker and Daniel A. Bays (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 218.

⁵⁸ Vietnam Christian Service (VCS) united the established agencies of Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, and the MCC for work in Vietnam. By 1971, MCC left VCS to provide aid to North Vietnam. The US unilaterally cut VCS feeding programs in 1971, and VCS would later refuse all USAID contracts. By 1974, VCS had turned its community development projects over to the Vietnamese and pulled out of the country. Perry Bush, “The Political Education of Vietnam Christian Service, 1954–1975,” *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 198; Scott Flipse, “The Latest Casualty of War: Catholic Relief Services, Humanitarianism, and the War in Vietnam, 1967–1968,” *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 264; Flipse, “To Save ‘Free Vietnam’ and Lose Our Souls,” 221.

⁵⁹ “Ky to Arrive Today; Demonstrations Set,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 2, 1970; Ted Sell, “Ky Says America Must Decide if Vietnam Is Worth Supporting,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 3, 1970; John Dart, “Ky, Religious Leaders Visit During Trip,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 6, 1970. Dart noted that World Vision “considers itself a Protestant agency” but it draws heavily for its support on evangelical, often conservative Protestant churchmen.” He also noted the private gathering of religious leaders included one Roman Catholic and a handful of non-evangelical Protestants, but local Southern Californian religious conservatives made up the majority. Stan Mooneyham to Grady Wilson, Nov. 24, 1970, Folder 11, Box 27, Collection 544, Grady Baxter Wilson Papers, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL.

By 1970, most evangelicals could see that America was failing in Vietnam, but they refused to abandon their patriotic ardor. Billy Graham, for example, met with missionaries to Vietnam and told Nixon of their misgivings about military policy in the region, but months later, Graham joined with the White House in a national “Honor America Day.” His July 4th sermon at the Lincoln Memorial highlighted American virtues: the nation had opened its doors to the alienated and oppressed, shared its wealth and its faith, and always refused to use its power to subjugate other nations. America, moreover, was a land of faithful believers; it was still “one nation, under God.”⁶⁰ Evangelicals approved of Nixon’s insistence on peace with honor. America should get out of the war, but it should impress its ideals on the world by continuing to be a city on a hill.

A few evangelicals disagreed with Nixon’s strategy, and Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield led the way. Elected to the Senate in 1966, he became known for both his faith and his anti-war sentiments. Evangelicals were proud of his voice in government but puzzled by his opposition to the war. He was an enigma.⁶¹ Graham had lobbied Nixon to select Hatfield as his running mate in 1968, but after Nixon selected Spiro Agnew, Hatfield became one of Nixon’s harshest critics on the war. In co-sponsoring the McGovern-Hatfield bill in 1971, he sought to overturn executive power, halt military

⁶⁰ William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story*, 1st ed. (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1991), 365–371; Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*, 84–5; Andrew LeRoy Pratt, “Religious Faith and Civil Religion: Evangelical Responses to the Vietnam War, 1964-1973” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 292–295. Quebedeaux quotes Joe Roos’ response to Graham’s “Honor America Day” sermon. Joe Roos, “American Civil Religion,” *The Post-American*, Spring 1972 (9-10)

⁶¹ As Oregon governor, Hatfield was the lone opposing vote against American intervention in Vietnam at the 1965 National Governors’ Conference. For examples of evangelicals’ fascination with him as a Christian leader, see Mark O. Hatfield, “The Vulnerability of Leadership,” *CT* (June 22, 1973): 4-6; John Warwick Montgomery, “Washington Christianity,” *CT* (Aug. 8, 1975): 37-38. Mark Hatfield, *Conflict and Conscience* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971); Mark Hatfield, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976).

funding for Vietnam, and immediately withdraw troops. Hatfield believed, too, that America was a city on a hill, but he feared that aggression in Vietnam was costing the nation its soul.⁶² Seated beside President Nixon at the 1973 annual prayer breakfast, Hatfield asked Americans to repent and prayed for God to forgive the nation.⁶³

Hatfield feared that evangelicals had capitulated to civil religion, a position that angered the evangelical establishment but won adulation from the younger crowd.⁶⁴ Invited to speak at Fuller Seminary's commencement in 1970, he found that a third of the graduating class wore black armbands on their gowns to protest the war.⁶⁵ The following year, chief staffer Wes Granberg-Michaelson put the inaugural issue of Jim Wallis' *Post-American* on his desk. The cover depicted Christ with a crown of thorns and draped in the American flag. The caption read, "and they crucified him." Hatfield reached out to Wallis and his organization, Sojourners.⁶⁶

⁶² His distaste for civil religion grew as a result of America's actions in Vietnam. As the keynote speaker at the 1964 Republican Convention, he claimed that the pinnacle of faith for Americans "must be in the strength of our religious heritage and the need for a spiritual renaissance in our country." Robert Eells, *Lonely Walk: The Life of Senator Mark Hatfield* (Chappaqua N.Y.: Christian Herald Books, 1979), 49–51; Robert James Eells, "Mark Hatfield and the Search for an Evangelical Politics" (New Mexico University, 1976), 218.

⁶³ President Nixon took offense to Hatfield's prayer as a direct attack. Eells, *Lonely Walk*, 82–83.

⁶⁴ Because of his radicalized politics, Bill Bright removed Hatfield from the board of Campus Crusade. Billy Graham also began to distance himself. Hatfield demonstrates the difficulty of characterizing evangelicals in political categories. He was a Republican and committed member of the Fellowship (Family) as well as close friend with Fellowship director, Doug Coe. But his political agenda put him at odds with almost every position of the Religious Right. Recent scholarship on the Family has most often avoided these finer distinctions. Randall Balmer, "The Breakfast Club: Review of The Family, Jeff Sharlett," *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2008, sec. Arts & Living, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/10/AR2008071001924.html>. (Accessed April 12, 2011).

⁶⁵ In addition to Fuller, Hatfield gave another often reprinted address, "The Path to Peace," at the 1969 United States Congress on Evangelism that criticized evangelicals for their lack of social compassion. Eells, *Lonely Walk*, 72–76. Marsden's surveys of Fuller Seminary students substantiate younger evangelicals' support of Hatfield. In the 1950s, three-fourths of Fuller students said social justice was less important than evangelism. At the end of the 1960s, only a little more than half still agreed that social justice was less important. George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987), 254.

⁶⁶ "Cover," *Post-American* (Fall 1971). The story of Hatfield's connection with the *Post-American* is recounted in several places. See for example, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Unexpected Destinations: An Evangelical Pilgrimage to World Christianity* (Grand Rapids Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011), xii.

Wallis shared Hatfield's distaste for an American civil religion. To him, America was no Israel and no city on a hill; it was Babylon:

A society blatantly manifesting violence and racism and resigned to the dictates of a corporate military complex, a people drunkenly worshipping the idolatrous gods of American nationalism, pride, and power, a culture where values of wealth, property, and security take top priority.⁶⁷

Wallis claimed that civil religion squelched the Christian prophetic voice. It also led American Christians to endorse as holy the evils of an America empire. Wallis argued that Vietnam was not a war to free oppressed people but a war against Third World peoples, a practice ground for the military, and an opportunity for corporate economic interests to continue to exploit underdeveloped nations.

Wallis shared the language of "Two-Thirds World" evangelicals. Like Padilla and Escobar, young evangelicals attacked the "Constantinian" and "cultural Christianity" of the West. Both groups read the French sociologist and evangelical Jacques Ellul, who depicted the West as a "technological society." Wallis described America as a near totalitarian state fueled by the gods of consumption and technocratic control.⁶⁸ If warplanes dropping napalm bombs on North Vietnamese villages had become the

Granberg-Michaelson served on Hatfield's staff from 1969-1975. He would then become the editor of *Sojourners* magazine from 1975-79.

⁶⁷ Jim Wallis, "The Issue of 1972," *The Post-American* (Fall 1972): 2. Jim Wallis, "Babylon," *Post-American* (Summer, 1972); William Stringfellow, "The Relevance of Babylon," *The Post-American* (Jan-Feb 1973). Quoted in Gasaway, "An Alternative Soul of Politics," 44.

⁶⁸ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, [1st American ed.]. (New York: Knopf, 1964); Jacques Ellul, *The Betrayal of the West* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). René C. Padilla, "Evangelism and the World," 126. Fowler, *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought, 1966-1976*, 133. In Fowler's analysis of the *Post-American*, he found that half the articles deal with the faults of institutions. The change from *Post-American* to *Sojourners* in 1975 reflects the growing shift toward withdrawing to create an alternative community and adopt a simple lifestyle. It also demonstrates the growing affinity of the young evangelicals with an Anabaptist perspective. See John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1972). For discussion of the simple lifestyle movement among evangelicals, see Swartz, "Left Behind," 340-356.

American way of life, then Christians, Wallis suggested, might want to withdraw into alternative communities.

The chief target of the young evangelicals was Billy Graham. As chief priest of the American civil religion, Graham played golf with presidents and endorsed their policies from the pulpit, and he failed to condemn the nation's corporate sin. The *Post-American* offered a point-by-point rebuttal to Graham's 1970 "Honor America Day" sermon.⁶⁹ Wallis and other young evangelicals disrupted the patriotic display Bill Bright and Graham planned at Explo '72 by chanting "Stop the War" and unfurling banners that read, "Christ or Country" and "Cross or Flag." The Christian could not serve two gods.⁷⁰

Carl Henry sympathized with the younger evangelicals, but he had reservations. He had spent his career building evangelicalism into a movement able to turn America into a truly Christian nation. But he suffered from the haunting fear that just at moment when evangelicals had risen to positions of influence with the power brokers of the society, the nation had already reached its spiritual and moral peak. The future, he worried, would bring a downhill slide. Yet he felt that the young were guilty of "cheap judgment." He worried they too quickly condemned capitalism; that they were escaping into utopian enthusiasm. He used the editorial pages of *Christianity Today* to take on Wallis: if Wallis was "post-American," Henry claimed to be "supra-American." Global evangelicals had convinced Henry that the faith transcended nationalisms of every kind,

⁶⁹ Jim Wallis, "The Movemental Church," *The Post-American* (Winter 1972): 2; Joe Roos, "American Civil Religion," *The Post-American* (Spring 1972): 9-10.

⁷⁰ Another banner read, "300 GIs killed this week in Vietnam won't be reached in this generation." The night of the disruption by the People's Christian Coalition, Explo '72 had welcomed military personnel to speak from the platform, participated in a Flag Day celebration, and received a welcome telegram from President Nixon calling these young Americans to a "deep and abiding commitment to spiritual values." Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ*, 144; Gasaway, "An Alternative Soul of Politics," 39-40. Peter Ediger, "Explo '72," *The Post-American* (Fall 1972): 13; Jim Wallis, *Revive Us Again: A Sojourner's Story* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 83-85. "The Jesus Woodstock," *Time*, June 26, 1972, 66.

even the American variety, but he could not tolerate a vision of America as the incarnation of evil. He was not yet ready to give up on his nation.⁷¹

World Vision had to negotiate the differences. In 1973, it hired Henry as lecturer-at-large and added Hatfield to its board. The two men often disagreed, but both shared World Vision's sense of the practical. The evangelical right envisioned a Christian America; the evangelical left deplored a militaristic American empire; World Vision turned away from both sides. It saw both as idealistic and naïve. Pierce, too, had been naïve, but World Vision had moved beyond Pierce. As Mooneyham explained, "I believe in God but not Pollyanna. I am fully aware of the political and military realities."⁷²

The combination of pragmatism and a sense of Christian duty led World Vision to expand its work in Southeast Asia when other organizations pulled out. In 1969-70, it received its first PL480 food aid from the U.S. government. Because fewer agencies were now in the field, it received more USAID grants to provide medical care, refugee housing, and education for the South Vietnamese. As the U.S. began to bomb North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia, World Vision received permission to provide relief in these countries as well.⁷³

⁷¹ "Revolt on Evangelical Frontiers." *CT* (April 26, 1974): 4-8; Jim Wallis, "Revolt on Evangelical Frontiers': A Response." *CT* (June 21, 1974): 20-21; Henry, "The Judgment of America." *CT* (Nov. 8, 1974): 22-24. Ron Sider to Carl Henry, June 10, 1974; Donald Dayton to Carl Henry (copied to Richard Quebedeaux, Ron Sider, Jim Wallis), July 10, 1974. Carl Henry to Jim Wallis, July 31, 1974; Carl Henry to Jim Wallis, Aug. 6, 1974; Jim Wallis to Carl Henry, undated; Box 6, Carl F.H. Henry Papers, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.

⁷² Mooneyham, "My Intensely Personal Encounter with the Cambodian People" *World Vision* (April 1975): 7.

⁷³ Mooneyham, "Refugees-Laos, Mountain People on the Run," *World Vision* (June 1972):4-6. Gordon Diehl, WVRO Report, World Vision Annual Report, 1970 (WVI Central Records).

While Vietnam and Laos remained World Vision's largest operations, Cambodia came to dominate organizational lore.⁷⁴ In 1970, Mooneyham organized a convoy to travel from Saigon to Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh. When red tape halted their trip at the Vietnamese-Cambodian border, he ordered the convoy to blitz the checkpoint. When they arrived with \$100,000 in medical supplies and relief aid, Mooneyham spoke about the love of God that motivated him to relieve suffering. He often retold the story because he felt that the trip encapsulated the meaning of World Vision. It would accept risks, defy bureaucrats, and do whatever was necessary to carry out Christ's mandate to feed the hungry.⁷⁵

As the first NGO in Cambodia, World Vision siphoned medical supplies and food aid through Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries and the local Khmer Evangelical church. Persecuted under the previous Sihanouk regime, only 600 Christians remained in Cambodia. In 1972 and 1973, Mooneyham preached in the country's first evangelistic crusades, which won 3000 Christian converts.⁷⁶ The Cambodian government gave World Vision land to build the nation's first pediatric hospital. It still raised money

⁷⁴ World Vision Annual Reports, 1970-1975 have records of budgets and descriptions for all Southeast Asian programs (WVI Central Records).

⁷⁵ Mooneyham admitted that he asked God what to do if the war spilled over into Cambodia. The verse he received as an answer was Ecclesiastes 11:4. Mooneyham quoted it from the *Living Bible*, "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." Mooneyham, "My Intensely Personal Encounter with the Cambodian People" *World Vision* (April 1975): 4-8; W. Stanley Mooneyham, *Come Walk the World: Personal Experiences of Hurt and Hope* (Waco Tex.: Word Books, 1978), 17. Dan L. Thrapp, "Need of Relief in Cambodia Called Acute," *Los Angeles Times*, Jun 21, 1970, D5.

⁷⁶ "Cambodia Report," *World Vision* (Jan 1972):15; Billy Bray, "Evangelistic Explosion in Cambodia: the Church Triples in Three Days," *World Vision* (May 1972): 4-6; World Vision leaders were excited to Cambodia's openness to the gospel. One claimed, "Cambodia is wide open to the gospel now, but with the military activities increasing, opportunities for a Christian witness may be cut off in the near future." *World Vision* (Nov 1972): 14.

from its private donors, but it now received USAID grants for feeding centers, mobile health clinics, and refugee resettlement.⁷⁷

Alongside Catholic Relief Services and CARE, World Vision joined a small company of agencies in Cambodia. With the war's unpopularity at home and fear that the Cambodian government would fall to the communist Khmer Rouge, most agencies saw Cambodia as too risky, too unpredictable, indeed, a liability. The Asian nation, however, served as World Vision's tutor. In Cambodia, it learned how to function in complex humanitarian emergencies. Politically unstable, the country relied on the U.S. government. A number of World Vision's staff came with military experience in Southeast Asia. Don Scott, director of World Vision's Vietnam operations, asserted that his Navy service gave him clearance to move in and out of countries in a way that few others could imitate. New staff members had backgrounds in the aid community, and they taught World Vision the language needed to receive USAID grants.⁷⁸

Its Cambodian involvement also brought it more press coverage. After the U.S. withdrew combat troops from Vietnam in 1973, the press praised the relief agencies that remained to clean up the humanitarian mess that the military had left.⁷⁹ Some reporters portrayed World Vision's relief workers as cowboys, plunging into a wild frontier. Others labeled them as relief experts, efficient in preventing waste and overcoming local

⁷⁷ Donald E. Warner, "Cambodia: a Gentle People Trapped in War," *World Vision* (July/Aug 1973): 4-6; Mooneyham, "Cambodia: Brittle and Delicate" *World Vision* (Nov. 1973): 4- 8.

⁷⁸ "Don Scott Bio," *World Vision* (June 1972): 19.

⁷⁹ David K. Shipler, "For Cambodia, Rehabilitation Is Painful, Lonely Effort," *New York Times*, Oct 21, 1973, 3; Fox Butterfield, "As G.I.'s Fade, So Does Help for Vietnam's Orphans," *New York Times*, May 16, 1973, 3; Daniel Southerland, "Cambodian Refugees: U.S. Ups Aid Fourfold," *Christian Science Monitor*, Mar 11, 1974, 1.

corruption.⁸⁰ World Vision positioned itself as politically neutral, pleading for more U.S. humanitarian aid while also appealing to the Cambodian government for peace.⁸¹

The commitment to Southeast Asia won plaudits, but it also brought criticisms. In 1975, after a fact-finding mission for the World Council of Churches, a Japanese churchman, John Nakajima, attacked World Vision's work in Cambodia. His accusations, reprinted in a number of newspapers, painted the organization as a pawn of the American military, an agency that received 95 percent of its operating budget from USAID while ignoring the needs of local Cambodians. World Vision's chief contribution, Nakajima claimed, was serving as a conduit of information for the CIA.⁸²

Mooneyham denied Nakajima's allegations. World Vision, he said, worked with the local government to approve each of its aid programs, and most of its staff were local Cambodians, not expatriates. He dismissed Nakajima's unsubstantiated accusation of collusion with the CIA and insisted that World Vision supplied only the information required of all voluntary agencies by USAID to account for the funds received. Nonetheless, Nakajima's charges damaged World Vision's reputation. Mooneyham appealed for help to Eugene Blake, the former president of the World Council of Churches, but Blake refused to get involved. He reminded Mooneyham that evangelical accusations had hurt ecumenical organizations. Mooneyham tried to distance World Vision from those critics, insisting that its hope was to build a bridge between the two camps. Blake and others could not be persuaded. Representatives of Church World Service reminded World Vision that they had refused USAID contracts in Cambodia

⁸⁰ Philip A. McCombs, "Paying Cambodia's Middlemen," *Washington Post*, Feb 24, 1974, A18.

⁸¹ H.D.S. Greenway, "Hunger Stalks Phnom Penh," *The Washington Post*, Feb 15, 1975, A1; Daniel Southerland, "Cambodia Suffering Mounts," *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 19, 1975, 2; "Urgent Appeal for Peace in Cambodia," *World Vision* (June 1974): 22.

⁸² Rev. John Nakajima, "Cash for Services Rendered," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (April 25, 1975).

because they were not willing to be complicit in American foreign policy. If World Vision accepted government contracts, it had to accept the consequences.⁸³

On the ground, World Vision was forging a new identity as a professional relief agency, but a great many of its critics ignored its local partnerships and frontline experience in humanitarian emergencies and looked on it as both too American and too narrowly evangelical. That identity probably aided fundraising at home, but it hurt efforts overseas. After substantiated reports surfaced that the CIA had indeed used missionaries as informants, Mooneyham and Senator Hatfield lobbied President Ford and CIA Chief George H. Bush to end such practices. Their efforts had little success. The revelations threatened to hinder the humanitarian work of the organization. A debate about identity was underway in World Vision, and the agency was altering its practice on the ground, but it still seemed to critics of American policy that World Vision was simply one more group of evangelical missionaries, fervently anticommunist, capitalist, and naïve to political realities.⁸⁴

As the fall of Vietnam and Cambodia to the communists appeared imminent, World Vision grieved the loss of its programs in Southeast Asia. Some of the staff closed down the offices even as troops traded fire in the neighboring streets. U.S. army helicopters evacuated World Vision expatriate staff, but many local workers could not get

⁸³ Mooneyham to Nakajima, June 23, 1975; Nakajima to Mooneyham, July 4, 1975; Mooneyham to Nakajima, Aug 5, 1975; Hatfield to Eugene Carson Blake, July 14, 1975; Blake to Hatfield, July 19, 1975; Mooneyham to Blake, Aug 4, 1975; Robert McAfee Brown to Mooneyham, July 7, 1975; William Needham to Brown, July 15, 1975. Also see Board of Director Minutes, July 24, 1975 (WVI Central Records).

⁸⁴ Edward E. Plowman, "Conversing with the CIA," *CT* (Oct 10, 1975): 62-6. Plowman estimated that 10-25 percent of missionaries had given info to the CIA. "'Valuable Sources': Missionaries and the CIA," *Sojourners* (January 1976), 8-9; "Hatfield Urges Ban on CIA Use of Missionaries," *Eternity* (March 1976), 9; Joseph Bayly, "Missionaries and the CIA: Succumbing to Mammon or Patriotism," *Eternity* (April 1976): 51-52. Brian Eads, "Charity Groups 'Ran Out' Saigon Returnee Charges," *The Washington Post*, Aug 9, 1976, A18; Mooneyham, "Open Letter to President Ford," *World Vision* (Mar. 1976): 3.

out, and many of them died at the hands of North Vietnamese soldiers. Cambodian dictator Pol Pot turned the patients out of World Vision's pediatric hospital and used the building as a torture chamber. The staff of World Vision despaired, and they asked publicly in their magazine whether the investment had been worth it. Other NGOs had decided these countries were too risky, but World Vision had invested itself heavily. The consensus was the investment was the right thing to do. By making it, World Vision had been faithful to God's calling.⁸⁵

"Operation Babylift" served as one response to the loss of its Southeast Asian programs. Worried about its orphans under new political regimes, World Vision decided to airlift as many as possible out of Vietnam and Cambodia. It planned for 300 but could rescue only forty-seven. Twenty-three children came to the U.S. to be adopted. Normally, World Vision did not do international adoption. Instead, it tried to keep children in their home culture. But in this case, passion outstripped its preparation and principles. It turned the orphans over to a Christian adoption agency with instructions for children to be placed in evangelical Christian homes. When a non-evangelical prospective parent sued to challenge the policy, World Vision defended itself against accusations of religious discrimination. The case lasted two years in the courts; according to the settlement, the children were to remain with the original evangelical parents. As the case played out in

⁸⁵ Alan Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership: World Vision and the Ideology of Development – a Case Study," *Development in Practice* 9, no. 4 (1999): 416. Sydney H. Schanberg, "U.S. Starting to Evacuate Relief Aides in Cambodia," *New York Times*, Mar. 18, 1975, 1; J. Don Scott, "In Vietnam: Preparing for the Worst, Serving the Last," *World Vision* (July/August 1975): 12-13; Mooneyham, "Southeast Asia: God Still in Control," *World Vision* (May 1975): 4-8; Carl Henry, "Grief, Grace, and Grist," presented at WV staff retreat, *World Vision* (April 1976): 16-19. *World Vision's* May 1976 cover reminded donors not to forget Southeast Asia even after it was forced to leave. See Mooneyham, "No Place Left to Run," *World Vision* (May 1976): 4-8 and William L. Needham, "Many Tears, Muted Hope," *World Vision* (May 1976): 10-11.

public opinion, World Vision's position cost it some constituents, but it demonstrated that when forced to choose, it was most at home among American evangelicals.⁸⁶

With the closing of its Southeast Asian offices, World Vision lost a third of its programs and 23,000 sponsored children. Without children to sponsor, World Vision stood to lose financial support. Without programs, staff had to be reassigned or let go. It hastily set up operations in Latin America and Africa and sought new children to sponsor.⁸⁷ This expansion allowed it to adapt what it had learned in Southeast Asia. It continued to broker relationships with local missionaries and evangelical churches, but World Vision knew it must learn to work with other Christian factions; mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Pentecostals vied for influence with the organization. As it moved into relief and development, it also became more operational, establishing its own programs, hiring staff, and often interacting with other relief agencies. New programs in new contexts allowed World Vision to start with a clean slate.

Television Leads World Vision in New Directions

The new programs allowed World Vision to recoup its losses from Southeast Asia, but fundraising became the catalyst for World Vision's explosive growth. Pierce's

⁸⁶ "Saigon Halts Orphan Airlift," *Chicago Tribune*, Apr 7, 1975, 1 ; Betty Liddick, "Who Will Keep This War Orphan?" *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1975, F1; Robert Rawitch, "Religious Group Sues to Keep Orphans,"

Los Angeles Times, Nov 12, 1975, E3; Edward W. Janss, "Operation Babylift: Handling Precious Cargo," *World Vision* (May 1975): 10-11; Cliff R. Benzel, "The Babylift: Confronting the Objections," *World Vision* (May 1975): 12; Richard L. Wilson, "Court Case Affects 20 Cambodian Orphans," *World Vision* (Nov 1975); "Cambodian Orphans Home at Last," *World Vision* (Oct 1976): 16-17. Engstrom, "Monthly Memo?" *World Vision* (Aug 1977): 18.

⁸⁷ Graeme Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times: An Insider's View of World Vision* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, 1996), 53; Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership," 414. "Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective," edited by Sheryl Watkins, Last updated Mar. 20, 1998 (WVUS Archives). The loss of 23,000 sponsored children equaled an annual loss of three million dollars. Other records claim the loss at 30,000 children. In seeking replacements, World Vision expanded to nine new Latin American countries: Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Ecuador. With the impending close of operations in Southeast Asia, World Vision began adding 1000 children from Latin America per month to its system.

movies, direct mail campaigns, and full-page color ads had always made World Vision an innovative fundraiser, but his target audience remained church-going Americans.

Mooneyham sought to parley World Vision's success in social ministries into partnerships with evangelical denominations and mission agencies, but they considered him more of a threat than a partner. Spurned by conservative churches, he decided to bypass the churches and reach out to the American public.⁸⁸

The advertiser Russ Reid steered World Vision to television. As a teenager, Reid had traveled the country showing Pierce's films in local congregations. After working for Youth for Christ and Word Books, he launched an advertising firm to introduce state of the art marketing strategies to Christian agencies. By 1968, the Russ Reid Agency had won World Vision's account.⁸⁹ After dominating religious radio, evangelicals had begun the move to television. Pastors bought time to broadcast their worship services. Pat Robertson launched his religious variety show, the *700 Club*, on the Christian Broadcasting Network, and Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker were soon to announce a rival show, *Praise the Lord*, on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.⁹⁰ Reid pushed World Vision to try something different: a documentary that would not preach at the audience and would limit fundraising appeals to three or four short commercial breaks. World Vision

⁸⁸ Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA, digital recording.

⁸⁹ The Russ Reid agency had won World Vision's direct mail account in 1966. In 1968, it took over the entire account from the Walter Bennett Company. Walter Bennett and Russ Reid would remain the two main evangelical advertising firms. Walter Bennett's main account remained the BGEA. John Robert Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision's Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film" (Ph.D., diss., University of Southern California, 1980), 183-4; Waters, "How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence," 74.

⁹⁰ Pat Robertson bought the license for his first television station in 1961. The 700 Club began broadcasting as a daily two-hour religious variety show in 1962. Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker's PTL Club started in 1974 after Pat Robertson fired them over differences at the 700 Club and CBN. Stewart M Hoover, *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988); Quentin J Schultze, *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media: Perspectives on the Relationship between American Evangelicals and the Mass Media* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1990).

could use images and stories of hungry children to compel viewers to give money. In 1972, World Vision produced its first hour-long documentary, *Children of Zero*, and released it the following year on 300 stations nationwide to introduce its work in Vietnam. The film's success led to the release in 1974 of a second documentary, *They Search for Survival*, to highlight its work in the African Sahel, Bangladesh, and Cambodia. Aired in 167 markets, it generated 95,000 new names for World Vision's mailing lists.⁹¹

The documentaries gave World Vision a new platform. Mooneyham felt that the television "put the average American family inside the skin of these Asian kids and let them feel with us what it is like to be born in a developing world."⁹² Shot on location, the films gave audiences a sense of intimacy with the children who appeared on their screens. They depicted World Vision staff members as credible experts worthy of support. Celebrities lent even more credibility. Television personality Art Linkletter provided the initial "tune-in value." As audiences watched Linkletter travel with Mooneyham throughout Asia, they traveled alongside a trusted source to see World Vision's work firsthand. The documentary taught, but mainly it motivated. After each segment, a celebrity asked for financial support while images of hungry children flickered in the background. The appeal was emotional, reducing large problems to an image of a single hungry child. "If you don't help that one child," Mooneyham declared, "nobody will." The approach was not new for World Vision, but television heightened the effect.⁹³

⁹¹ Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce," 185–204; Waters, "How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence," 74–5.

⁹² "Children of Zero: A 'Special' Special for the Whole Family," News release, May 22, 1972 (WVI Central Records).

⁹³ Waters, "How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence," 74–75.

The medium did not change the message, but it did lead to a shift in rhetorical style that subtly altered the organization's identity. Mooneyham had made a calculated risk when he appealed beyond church walls. That decision led him to drop the "evangelical code words" on which World Vision had often relied. In the words of one producer: "World Vision productions couched the organization's Christian motivation in language the average person could understand. We did not want to hide the Christian purpose, but to express it in general terms more appropriate for a television audience."⁹⁴ World Vision was reaching an audience outside the evangelical orbit. It never hid its Christian identity, but explicit language about mission now fell into the background; World Vision was about hungry children, and its messages, still religious and humanitarian, reached both liberals and conservatives.

By 1975, its documentaries evolved into multi-hour hunger telethons. Images of poverty and starvation alternated with upbeat musical numbers by celebrities like its own Korean Children's Choir, the Muppets, and Julie Andrews. Telethons lent themselves to immediate responses from the audience.⁹⁵ Rather than writing a check to a PO Box, they could phone pledges to toll free numbers. Productions left little to chance. Scripted programs tested with focus groups allowed World Vision to predict which appeals maximized its return on investment. It collected extensive demographic research about its

⁹⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁵ *One to One*, 1975 (WVUS Archives); Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce," 205–218.

donors.⁹⁶ As it followed professional marketing trends, World Vision became the leader among relief agencies in television fundraising.⁹⁷

No longer known simply to evangelicals, World Vision created a television presence that appealed to a broader demographic. Even as it invested heavily in the Lausanne movement, it dropped the word “missionary” from its self-description and referred to itself as a Christian humanitarian organization. In the mid-1970s, its television income led annual budget growth of twenty, thirty, and forty percent per year. Even as critics questioned its evangelical, missionary, and American identities, World Vision was gaining influence with a larger audience than its critics could ever reach.⁹⁸

Hunger

As a twenty-fifth anniversary project, World Vision designated 1975 for a year-long emphasis on world hunger. It announced Project FAST (Fighting Against Starvation Today) to raise funds and public awareness. It ramped up operations in Africa but realized it had arrived late. Since the 1960s, relief agencies had provided emergency aid for famine victims in North Africa’s Sahel region. With the famine at its height in 1972 to 1974, newspapers shocked western readers with images of malnourished African children. Such images became stock photos of World Vision’s famine coverage.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ World Vision produced five telethons and a number of additional television documentaries through the 1970s. The first telethon garnered \$700,000 in one-time and first pledge gifts over a three month period. “Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective.”

⁹⁷ Soon many other humanitarian organizations sought to follow World Vision’s success. Christian Children’s Fund began similar productions in 1976 focused not on multi-hour telethons but short commercials. Sally Struthers became its public voice and image. Larry Tise, *A Book About Children: The World of Christian Children’s Fund, 1938-1991* (Falls Church VA: Hartland Pub., 1993), 85.

⁹⁸ Richard Halverson, “A History of Service,” *World Vision* (Nov. 1976): 6-8. World Vision Annual Reports, 1970-1978 (WVI Central Records).

⁹⁹ For critiques of these practices of fundraising through images of suffering, see Alexander De Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); Susan D Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War And Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

It enlisted Hatfield, a recent addition to its board, as the FAST campaign's honorary chairman. With American troops withdrawn from Southeast Asia, Hatfield turned his attention to world hunger. In 1974, he served as an official U.S. delegate to the World Food Conference in Rome. The United Nations sponsored the conference to deal with the growing hunger crises in Africa and Asia. Countries pledged to eradicate hunger within a decade and make access to food a basic human right. Hatfield returned home to press for U.S. support. He discovered that U.S. food surpluses had declined by half since the 1960s, with the remaining aid often politicized. Hatfield noted that Cambodia had received as much aid in 1974 as the entire continent of Africa. His calls for substantial increases in humanitarian food aid met with resistance from President Ford and Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz. Hatfield claimed that they had caved in to politicians, corporations, and agri-business.¹⁰⁰

What Hatfield could not accomplish through legislation, he publicized through a Senate "Thanksgiving Resolution" in November 1974. For the next year, he challenged Americans to identify with the poor by simplifying their lifestyles and donating a portion of their earnings to help feed the hungry. He resolved to end 1975 with a National Day of Fasting on Thanksgiving. In announcing the resolution, Hatfield gathered Congressional leaders and reporters to a Capitol luncheon. To their surprise, the meal consisted of nothing more than a few ounces of rice, the 67 caloric average daily intake of the world's

¹⁰⁰ Eells, "Mark Hatfield and the Search for an Evangelical Politics," 359, 370–4. From 1968-1972, PL480 funds averaged nine million tons. By 1974, the average was only 4.3 million. Hatfield worked to depoliticize U.S. aid. He claimed that for every tax dollar spent on life-sustaining and life preserving programs, 50 U.S. tax dollars went to the military and destruction of life. In 1974, he noted \$450 million of Food for Peace aid went to Indochina whereas Pakistan, Sahel, Bangladesh, and India received only \$206 million. Mark Hatfield, "World Hunger: More Explosive than Atomic Weaponry," *World Vision* (Feb. 1975): 4-7. In an effort at political compromise, Hatfield was able to get legislation passed in 1975 that allowed no more than 30 percent of concessional aid to be used for political purposes to countries not seriously affected by food shortages. Another bill limited U.S. aid to any one country to 10 percent of the total. The executive branch, however, found ways to continue circumventing the regulations.

hungry. With Mooneyham by his side, Hatfield took the opportunity to announce his partnership with World Vision, “It is my hope the government will respond when it sees that Americans do feel compassion for the millions now starving throughout the world.”¹⁰¹

The resolution served as the kick-off to the FAST campaign, and World Vision followed with its own media blitz. It bought even more time for its television specials while Mooneyham and Hatfield fielded interviews from the press and flooded evangelical magazines from *Christianity Today* to the *Post American* with articles on hunger.¹⁰² The FAST campaign not only sought to raise funds but also challenged Americans to identify with the hungry. Hatfield realized that “until Americans willingly experience hunger, even on a limited basis, they cannot begin to comprehend the condition ... responsible for the death of more than 10,000 of their fellow men every day.”¹⁰³ World Vision developed “planned famine” curricula for local churches so that youth groups could raise funds while fasting for forty hours. The Love Loaf campaign asked families to skip a meal each

¹⁰¹ “Joint Senator Hatfield and World Vision Press Release.” The press release contains the text of Hatfield’s resolution. Folder 10, Box 20, CT Records. Hatfield, “Responses to a Hungry World,” *World Vision* (Jan. 1975): 20; “Hatfield Urges National Fasting Day,” *Washington Post*, Nov 26, 1974, A4; “Senators Ask for Sacrifice, Fast for Year,” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 27, 1974, D13.

¹⁰² For example, see Mooneyham, “Ministering to the Hunger Belt,” *CT* (Jan. 3, 1975): 6- 11; Mooneyham, “Famine... and One Man’s Family” *World Vision* (Jan. 1975): 4-8; Ted Engstrom, “Lo the Black Horse Cometh! As Christians, How Shall We Respond to Famine?” *World Vision* (Jan. 1975): 9-11; Hatfield, “Thanksgiving 1974: Feast or Famine?” *Eternity* (Nov. 1974): 35-6, 40-41; Hatfield, “The Greed of Man and the Will of God,” *The Other Side* (Nov/Dec. 1974): 8-13, 62-64; Hatfield, “And Still They Hunger,” *Post American* (Jan 1975): 20-24; Hatfield, “The Shadow of Global Hunger,” *Moody Monthly* (Jan. 1975), 30-31, 71-73; Hatfield, “An Economics for Sustaining Humanity,” *Post American* (Mar. 1975): 16-21; Carl Henry, “Spectre of Famine,” *CT* (Aug 8, 1975): 26-27; J.D. Douglas, “Awakening to a Hungry World,” *CT* (Oct, 24, 1975).

¹⁰³ “Joint Senator Hatfield and World Vision Press Release.”

week and give the amount to world hunger, and it also distributed small loaf-shaped banks as reminders for families to pray for the hungry at each meal.¹⁰⁴

World hunger resonated with evangelicals, and World Vision offered them acceptable ways to respond.¹⁰⁵ It allowed them to act, indeed to become social activists within limits. They could provide emergency aid without abandoning evangelism or becoming entangled in unproductive debates about structural change. They could funnel support through mission and parachurch agencies without turning to government programs. World Vision's appeals offered hard facts and statistics, but they made sure that "hunger has a face."¹⁰⁶ Playing to emotion and asking for an immediate response, the hungry child became the face of World Vision.

World Vision emotionalized hunger, but it also began to challenge evangelical audiences to move beyond Christian charity. In calling for an "all-out war against world hunger," Mooneyham deemed World Vision as an advocate for the voiceless: "Who pleads their case to an overfed, affluent world that seems more concerned with gross national product, megatons and horsepower than it does with human beings?"¹⁰⁷ He criticized the premillennial eschatology that led evangelicals to reject this world for the next; he also dismissed any secularist alternative to Christian faith. Some economists, advocates of so-called "life-boat ethics," proposed that since saving everyone was impossible, it was best to let the majority drown. Mooneyham said that no Christian would succumb to an ideology limiting help to "the fittest." Defining himself as a

¹⁰⁴ Mooneyham: "The Year Ahead: Focus on a Hungry World," *World Vision* (Dec. 1974): 8 Mooneyham and Hatfield hoped the campaign would raise \$5 million for World Vision programs in 1975. VanderPol, "The Least of These," 112.

¹⁰⁵ Fowler, *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought, 1966-1976*, 182-3.

¹⁰⁶ "FAST Project," Mooneyham papers (WVI Central Records).

¹⁰⁷ Fowler, *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought, 1966-1976*, 182-3.

Christian humanitarian, Mooneyham said that World Vision viewed the hungry as persons in need of spiritual as well as physical aid. And he added that the aid would sometimes require social change. World Vision matured in its understanding of poverty; its appeals were religious, but they also reflected an awareness of the political, economic, and systemic dimensions of hunger.

World Vision began to introduce structural topics into its language of Christian compassion. Secular or ecumenical agencies it previously labeled as suspect now became partners in a shared mission. World Vision encouraged supporters to bring resources from the United Nations, USAID, and Church World Service into their churches. It often repackaged statistics from these organizations into its own marketing. Layering the systemic and the individualistic, it began to redraw the boundaries lines between sacred and secular.¹⁰⁸

Mooneyham wanted also to expose Americans to global perspectives. For two decades, World Vision had defined its missionary agenda in concert with Cold War anticommunism. It now realized that divisions once seen as purely ideological were in fact economic. Turning to America's dependence on foreign oil and cheap coffee, Mooneyham demonstrated how globalization made the West complicit in poverty. He dispelled popular myths that the poor were happy with their current conditions and criticized simplistic population control policies. While curtailing population was popular in the West, he encouraged his audience to consider the issue from the perspective of people in the global South. Not only did they dislike it when the West told them what to do, but the poor in the global South also had different reasons for having children. The

¹⁰⁸ Ed Norman, "Our Hunger Program – Not Either/or but Both/And;" William Needham, "Where to Learn More About our Hungry Planet," *World Vision* (May 1975): 16

West viewed children as a cost; the rest of the world saw them as potential security. World Vision acknowledged its previous captivity to American parochialism, and it challenged its audiences to free themselves from the same prison.¹⁰⁹

Before long, it was raising hard questions about the American way of life. It remained hopeful that Western technology could boost food production, but it complained that broken systems created hunger in the midst of abundant resources. Mooneyham echoed Hatfield's pronouncement that the U.S. was far less generous with foreign aid than its citizens believed. He chastised the American military for withdrawing from Cambodia and allowing the Khmer Rouge regime to butcher thousands. But Mooneyham's critique went beyond systems and governments. He told the American public that it shared the guilt. He criticized American over-consumption, challenged Americans to fast in solidarity with the poor, and admonished Christians to join the move toward simple living. "Should not doing good include working for systematic change as well as delivering a Christmas basket, making a contribution on worldwide communion Sunday, or writing a check to the United Way?"¹¹⁰ World Vision's fundraising appealed to the "compassionate charity" of American Christians, but it began to teach them that charity was not enough.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ W. Stanley Mooneyham, *What Do You Say to a Hungry World?* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1975), 137–150.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 178–9; VanderPol, "The Least of These," vii. VanderPol uses "compassionate charity" to characterize evangelical social action from the 1950s-1970s. The simple living movement gained steam among many Americans in the 1970s. See David Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). It also gathered steam among evangelicals in the late 1970s. For a comprehensive list of references, see Swartz, "Left Behind," 352. Ron Sider's work is best associated with this movement. See especially Ronald Sider, *Living More Simply: Biblical Principles & Practical Models* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980); Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977). He convened a Lausanne Conference on Simple Living as well in 1980. See Ronald J. Sider, "Lifestyle in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle" (1982).

A few from the evangelical left adopted simple lifestyles, protested structural poverty, and began to question American innocence. Most evangelicals ignored critiques of American imperialism, demands for structural change, and appeals for simplicity of life, but pleas to feed starving children in the name of Jesus touched their hearts. By 1976, as the worst of the Sahel famine passed and World Vision's campaign ended, the hunger crisis faded from the front pages.¹¹² But it had put World Vision on the humanitarian map.¹¹³ It had introduced Third World poverty to American evangelicals and made it, for many, a goal of Christian mission. It was helping to change evangelical humanitarianism.

Samaritan's Purse

Bob Pierce regretted World Vision's new directions. After his resignation, with his physical and mental health slowly returning, he took control of another struggling evangelical mission organization, Food for the World. With only twelve dollars in the bank, Pierce renamed it Samaritan's Purse in 1970 and set out recreating the World Vision that he had founded in 1950.¹¹⁴

World Vision was expanding beyond missions; Samaritan's Purse would remain a missionary service organization. Pierce traveled the world in search of small groups who needed emergency help. Rather than channeling resources through institutions, he delivered funds directly to missionaries. "I'm going to spend my life," he said, "backing up people [who have] proved they care about people and God. When I could no longer do

¹¹² Occasionally, Mooneyham raised his voice to remind audiences that hunger had not disappeared even if it had fallen from the front page. Mooneyham, "Where Did the Hunger Crisis Go?" *World Vision* (Oct 1976): 10-11.

¹¹³ World Vision reported its 1975 income was up 57 percent over the previous year, and it also claimed its hunger appeals led to increased contributions to Church World Service, Food for the Hungry, and World Relief as well. Mooneyham, "Where Did the Hunger Crisis Go?" 11.

¹¹⁴ Marilee Dunker, *Man of Vision: The Candid, Compelling Story of Bob and Lorraine Pierce, Founders of World Vision and Samaritan's Purse* (Waynesboro Ga.: Authentic Media, 2005), 193-4.

that through World Vision, that's when I resigned and started Samaritan's Purse."¹¹⁵

Having taken World Vision's mailing list and the loyalty of many missionaries with him, he solicited support through letters filled with "on-the-scene" stories of need.

Pierce feared that the professionalization of World Vision had come at the expense of its evangelical faith. He told the *Los Angeles Times*: "World Vision has a new complex computer system which diagnoses the failures of Christianity and prints them on a data sheet.... I can't stand it. I love the early days when I was walking with widows and holding babies. When I began flying over them and being met by committees at the airport it almost killed me."¹¹⁶ He felt that World Vision's "slick, market driven" fundraising appeals lost any "personal identification with individual human needs."¹¹⁷ He drew on the parable of the Good Samaritan to differentiate Samaritan's Purse from other agencies. The priest and Levite, the two characters indifferent to the wounded traveler on the side of the road, represented the "organizational machinery of relief agencies, charities, and even churches." He cautioned: "You can operate exactly like Sears & Roebuck or General Motors or IBM—but the blessings will all be gone."¹¹⁸

World Vision ventured outside an exclusively evangelical orbit; Pierce entrenched himself in conservative evangelicalism. The critics of World Vision among other NGOs scolded the organization for bringing evangelism to its humanitarian work; Pierce wore his evangelist credentials as a badge of honor in contrast to those he believed watered down the faith into nothing more than "do-goodism." Samaritan's Purse, he said, should

¹¹⁵ Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 77.

¹¹⁶ Lee Grant, "He Only Wants to Save the World" *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 22, 1975, G1 and G6.

¹¹⁷ Pierce, *Samaritan's Diary*, 1973, vol 1. Folder 4, Box 1, Collection 593, Records of Lillian Dickson. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL.

¹¹⁸ Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 53.

never to be ashamed to “fly the banner of Jesus Christ high.” And it should refuse any government funding. World Vision was his object lesson: “who pays the piper, calls the tune.”¹¹⁹ Pierce was an evangelical, nothing more than an evangelical and nothing less. The priority was preaching the gospel.

Under Pierce, Samaritan’s Purse grew modestly. When diagnosed with leukemia in 1975, he sought to mentor a potential successor. Billy Graham introduced him to his son, Franklin, a man whose story resembled Pierce’s. Having rebelled from the faith of his youth, Franklin had little interest in education or Christian gentility, but he shared Pierce’s need for adventure. In 1975, Franklin Graham accompanied Pierce on an around the world tour designed as an excursion into suffering. Pierce died in 1978; twenty-eight year old Franklin Graham became the president of Samaritan’s Purse a year later.¹²⁰

Samaritan’s Purse grew under Graham into a sizable organization by adhering to Pierce’s principles. Committed to Pierce’s notion of “God room,” he believed that God would always provide resources beyond his organization’s capacities to plan and fundraise. Graham built Samaritan’s Purse around his own personality, soliciting support through personal stories of individual and emergency needs encountered through his danger-filled travels. As a crusade evangelist, Graham noted that his organization is “not just a Christian relief organization. We are an evangelistic organization... and I will take advantage of each and every opportunity to reach [anyone] with the gospel message that can save them from the flames of hell.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Franklin Graham, *Rebel With a Cause* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 149; Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 83.

¹²⁰ Graham, *Rebel*, 165; Graham and Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce*, 81–85.

¹²¹ Graham, *Rebel*, 187.

Conclusion

The differences between Samaritan Purse's and World Vision demonstrated the growing divisions within evangelicalism. When presidential candidate Jimmy Carter declared himself "born-again" and *Newsweek* declared 1976, "The Year of the Evangelical," it appeared as if Carl Henry's initial dream of an evangelical alliance destined to shape the world had come to pass.¹²² Instead Henry lamented that the "evangelical lion is nonetheless slowly succumbing to an identity crisis."¹²³

By 1976, evangelical growth splintered the movement. In politics, an evangelical left called for America to repent from militarism, consumerism, and neo-colonialism at the same time a Christian right, popularized by the Virginia Baptist Jerry Falwell, organized "I Love America" tours around the country to combat secular humanism, pornography, abortion, and homosexuality. Political conservatives had always been the majority in the evangelical churches; by the end of the decade, Falwell's Moral Majority became their dominant voice to the larger culture.¹²⁴

In theology, evangelicals fought over biblical inerrancy. Some evangelicals feared popular growth would compromise their distinctive theological positions. *Christianity Today* editor Harold Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible* labeled the doctrine of biblical inerrancy non-negotiable, and called out any "so-called" evangelicals who disagreed.

¹²² "Born Again!" *Newsweek* (Oct. 25, 1976): 76

¹²³ Carl F.H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco: Word, 1976): 22. He would later reflect, "During the 1960s I somewhat romanced the possibility that a vast evangelical alliance might arise in the United States to coordinate effectively a national impact in evangelism, education, publication, and sociopolitical action, but by the early 1970s the prospect of a massive evangelical alliance seemed annually more remote, and by mid-decade it was gone." See Carl F.H. Henry, "American Evangelicals in a Turning Time," *Christian Century* (Nov. 5, 1980): 1060.

¹²⁴ The historiography of the rise of the Religious Right is voluminous. The best recent book is Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 166–176. Also see Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton NJ : Princeton University Press, 2000).

Accusations directed against people like Carl Henry and institutions like Fuller Seminary made Lindsell few friends, and it led to further internal divisions that convinced some evangelicals to return to their fundamentalist roots.¹²⁵

Evangelical mission leaders continued to debate about the proper mix of evangelism and social action. When the church growth strategies of Western evangelists began to dominate the Lausanne movement, some global evangelicals reconsidered their partnerships with Western mission organizations. As missions overseas turned to indigenous leaders, some of them questioned the old distinctions between “evangelicals” and “ecumenicals.” This was, they said, a Western issue; in a post-colonial society, it was an irrelevant luxury. Western evangelical mission agencies still viewed the ecumenical movement as a threat, and now competition from humanitarian organizations like World Vision siphoned evangelical funds. The result was division and uncertainty. World Vision tried, however, to stay above the fray. Mooneyham grew to deplore his fellow evangelicals’ penchant for rigid categories. He argued that the world was gray: “one man’s evangelical may be another man’s liberal.”¹²⁶ He grew impatient with inner-evangelical squabbles over school textbooks or the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. After spending most of his year in war-torn Southeast Asia or drought-stricken Africa, Mooneyham found these disputes petty. While others argued, he said that World Vision would do one thing: feed the poor in Jesus’ name.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Donald W. Dayton, “The Battle for the Bible: Renewing the Inerrancy Debate,” *Christian Century* (November 10, 1976): 976-980. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976); Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 279–280.

¹²⁶ Mooneyham, “The World: Color It Gray,” Address given to Religion Newswriters’ Association, Anaheim, CA, July 5, 1975, (WVI Central Records); Mooneyham, “Some Thoughts about the Bandwagon,” *World Vision* (May 1978): 23; Mooneyham, “The Affliction of Adjectivitis,” *World Vision* (June 1979): 23; Mooneyham, “United We Fall,” *World Vision* (April 1980): 23.

¹²⁷ Mooneyham, *What Do You Say to a Hungry World?*, 31–32.

Pierce was right. World Vision was no longer the organization he had founded. By the mid-1970s, it was still evangelical, but as identity politics divided American evangelicals, World Vision broadened its message. It could not avoid the internal debates within evangelical missions, but it increasingly presented itself as humanitarian organization, albeit one that spoke in evangelical accents. It still remained largely an American organization, but it recognized the implications of its global presence: it could no longer be tied to the ideology of a single nation.

So Pierce was right, but he was also wrong. World Vision did not fit into his categories. It had little interest in squabbles about the mix of evangelism and social action, even less interest in quarrels about biblical inerrancy, and almost no interest in right wing politics. It preferred to present the image of global poverty in the face of an individual child. Donors saw in the organization whatever they wanted to see. It straddled divisions. Was it removing itself, without intending it, from evangelical circles? Or did it represent the future of evangelicalism in America?

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONALIZATION: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN WORLD VISION, 1974-1983

As it evolved from an agency for missionary service to an organization for humanitarian aid, World Vision leaders vowed to honor its original twin mandate of witness and service.¹ The principles remained unchanged. The practices, however, subtly evolved. Mooneyham realized that World Vision's work in Cambodia and the African Sahel had already altered the organization. In 1974, he announced World Vision's new direction in a speech that he called "Some Thoughts about Two Words." "One of these words is *development*," he said. "The other is *internationalism*." In the same speech, he reiterated the non-negotiables: "the message we preach, the Bible we believe, and the Christ we serve." He refused to sacrifice the organization's religious identity, but he would not allow it to build an altar to the status quo. He realized that World Vision would have to change. It was becoming a vast international relief and development agency, but it strove to hold on to its religious roots. Organizational change led World Vision to reconsider what it meant to be a Christian organization.²

Internationalization

Pierce had referred to his organization as World Vision International since 1966, but it largely remained an American agency funding programs run by local missionaries

¹ World Vision had already characterized itself as a Christian humanitarian organization in its own publications and appeal letters as well as accepted the label as reported in the mainstream press. However, it officially transitioned from "a missionary service organization meeting emergency needs in crisis areas of the world through existing evangelical agencies" to "a humanitarian organization [that] is an interdenominational outreach of Christians concerned for the physical and spiritual needs of people throughout the world" with its "Declaration of Internationalization." Reprinted in *World Vision* (September 1978): 2.

² W. Stanley Mooneyham, "Some Thoughts About Two Words," *World Vision* (Jan. 1974), draft copy in Mooneyham Papers (WVI Central Records).

and churches overseas. By the late 1960s, it opened support offices in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to serve as fund-raising branches of the American-based World Vision International. By the 1970s, the new offices wanted to help make decisions and plan programs.³

World Vision's American label had proven a liability. In its first two decades, the joint identity as Christian and America served its purposes as it joined U.S. efforts to halt the expansion of a godless communism. But by the 1970s, Vietnam had sullied America's image at home and abroad. Some media, NGOs, and foreign governments criticized World Vision as inexperienced and naïve at best and provincial and uncritically pro-American at worst.⁴

Fellow evangelicals also criticized World Vision's reflex Americanism. Mooneyham supported the social agenda that Two-Thirds World evangelicals defined at Lausanne, but they chafed under the organization's reliance on Western voices, structures, and technologies. Its own personnel complained of the organization's paternalism and seeming need for rigid control. Staffers in field countries expressed frustration that they had little voice in planning programs, and staffers in other fundraising countries complained that it was hard to raise money for an American organization.⁵

³ The World Vision Canada office opened in 1957 and was incorporated in 1959. World Vision opened offices in Australia and New Zealand in 1966. Australia incorporated in 1969, and New Zealand in 1974. An office opened in South Africa in 1975. Along with the U.S., these became known as World Vision support countries in contrast to field or national countries that received funds to operate programs. "Report of World Vision Internationalization Study Committee," 1976 (WVI Central Records).

⁴ Alan Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership: World Vision and the Ideology of Development – a Case Study," *Development in Practice* 9, no. 4 (1999): 414.

⁵ "Report of World Vision Internationalization Study Committee," 1976; Bryant Myers, "Journeying Toward Interdependence: The Unfinished Story of World Vision," n.d. (WVI Central Records).

Mooneyham saw that World Vision could not turn back the clock. It had to become a genuinely international agency. It was too large and diverse to follow a single voice. The negative coverage of its work in Southeast Asia taught him that a narrow identification with one culture and one national perspective hurt the organization. To become a peer among international humanitarian NGOs, it must abandon provincial Americanism for global geopolitics. Internationalization would open the way for greater representation and participation; it would also require more democratic structures and the delegating of accountability. Mooneyham worried that resistance to change could prompt national offices to secede and create competing organizations.⁶

For Mooneyham, internationalization was more than a question of organization; it was a matter of theology. The western agency that saw itself as sending missionaries to act on behalf of native peoples had become an “anachronism.” Evangelical missiology now viewed Western missionaries as partners or servants of indigenous churches. World Vision championed a supranational and supracultural church, but its organization was American. Mooneyham saw that he had to lead the organization to change; he saw, also, that this meant a change in theology.⁷

Attempts to “express spiritual internationalism in organizational terms” led to real structural change.⁸ By 1973, World Vision promised to replace most American expatriate

⁶ Whaites, “Pursuing Partnership,” 414. “Report of World Vision Internationalization Study Committee.” In his unpublished memoirs, former WV Canada president, Bernard Barron, remembers a conversation with Stan Mooneyham at the 1972 National Prayer Breakfast. While one U.S. board member declared that World Vision Canada must “get back in line” with the U.S. vision of the organization, Mooneyham was more charitable in trying to mend tense relationships with the Canadian office, 52.

⁷ Paul Rees, “Theology of Internationalization” and Sam Kamaleson, “Theology of Internationalization,” in “Report of World Vision Internationalization Study Committee.” Minutes of Combined Meetings Boards of Directors of WVI, Pattaya Beach, Thailand, Mar. 22-25, 1974 (WVI Central Records). Mooneyham, “Some Thoughts About Two Words.” Graeme Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times: An Insider’s View of World Vision* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, 1996), 78.

⁸ “Mooneyham’s remarks, “Board of Director’s Meeting,” July 16-18, 1973 (WVI Central Records).

staff personnel with an indigenous workforce while helping field countries establish autonomous boards.⁹ That same year it began its official internationalization. To realize World Vision's "big experiment," the Western support offices and a handful of field office staff planned for a restructuring. By 1978, the United States office handed over control to create World Vision International (WVI), a new legal entity governed by a board comprising all five support offices.¹⁰ The U.S. office remained the most influential, but now sat at the table as one among several voices making decisions about strategic planning, field operations, and budget.¹¹ The new organization was not as international as many hoped. Western countries still dominated the governing board while non-Westerners remained under-represented, but WVI at least united as a single international organization.¹²

The organization celebrated the change, but some fretted still about identity.

Some U.S. leaders lamented their loss of authority and worried that diversity might lead

⁹ A later discussion became not only moving to an indigenous workforce but also diversity in senior leadership. By 1978, Mooneyham claimed that two of three vice-presidents were non North Americans. One was Australia. The other was Indian. Sam Kamaleson of India became the first WVI Vice President from a former Third World country. He had first participated in evangelistic crusades with Pierce in Asia. Mooneyham recruited him to head World Vision's work with pastors' conferences. Mooneyham, "Remarks on Aspects of Internationalization prepared especially for presentation to Australia/New Zealand Boards," Feb. 1, 1978 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁰ The Internationalization Study Committee studied a number of multi-national corporations, international organizations, and mission agencies and returned without finding an appropriate model for World Vision to follow. Particularly, it studied the Salvation Army, mission agencies like Latin American Mission, African Inland Mission, and Youth for Christ as well as international aid and government agencies like USAID, Oxfam, UNESCO, and UNICEF. World Vision had begun to reorganize and share leadership internationally long before most other INGOs. In this case, World Vision's religious identity led to progressive changes that outpaced secular development

¹¹ Because World Vision U.S. contributed the greatest proportion of funds to the partnership (75 percent), it held a higher proportion of board seats: 4 U.S., 2 Canada, 2 Australian, 1 New Zealand, and 6-8 at large. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117. In early 1975, World Vision reported an income of \$15 million. \$11 million came from the U.S., \$2 million from Australia/New Zealand, \$1.5 million from Canada, and \$250,000 from South Africa. Mooneyham, "Ministering to the Hunger Belt," *CT* (Jan. 3, 1975): 10.

¹² Irvine, *Best Things*, 83. For the specifics of World Vision's reorganization, see the "Report of the Internationalization Study Committee," "Declaration of Internationalization," and the "Minutes of World Vision's Joint Board and International Councils – 1974, 1976, 1978, and 1980" (WVI Central Records).

to the sacrifice of an evangelical identity. Other national offices feared that World Vision U.S. would give lip service to equality but continue to dominate the partnership.

Mooneyham could not help worrying about the changes he had helped bring about: “I have either assured the future of World Vision or destroyed it. God have mercy on us.”¹³

If internationalization did not immediately solve World Vision’s organizational challenges, it opened the way for new perspectives. Even as it gained support among American evangelicals, it opposed the support that some of them had begun to give to the politics of the Religious Right. When American evangelicals turned inward to debate inerrancy or battle in the American culture wars, World Vision looked toward a wider world that had other preoccupations.

Development

Alongside internationalization, World Vision also pursued the goal of development. It had already expanded beyond orphanages, but just as World Vision moved into large-scale relief, others agencies began to experiment with development. Agencies like Church World Service and the Mennonite Central Committee combined their resistance to the politicizing of U.S. aid in Vietnam with efforts to create new development models that would empower local communities rather than serve Western purposes. The same agencies that accused World Vision of naiveté because of its past partnerships with the U.S. government now derided them as ambulance-chasers who sped in with emergency relief but did not stay around to help with lasting change.¹⁴ World

¹³ Bryant Myers, “Journeying Toward Interdependence;” Roberta Hestenes, “Laying the Foundations: Brief Reflections on WV History,” n.d. (WVI Central Records).

¹⁴ Barron, “Memoir,” 52. Barron remembers one Oxfam executive making the accusation to him in 1972 that World Vision waits at the bottom of the cliff with an ambulance waiting for the accident to occur but never looks to preventive measures.

Vision gave heed, but the expansion of its own relief work in the 1970s had already convinced it that emergency relief alone was inadequate.

Some World Vision staffers were already experimenting with development programs in the early 1970s. That was the period when the Indonesian country director Gene Daniels initiated his “Pioneers for Christian Development” Program. When Daniels first entered Indonesia for World Vision the early 1960s, Pierce told him only to find what God was doing and follow. Now Daniels was bringing Indonesian teachers and agriculturalists to teach remote villagers to read and care for the health of their communities as well as plant cash crops and raise livestock. It had impressive success and sought extra funding from World Vision to expand the program. The organization noticed that staffers in other countries were beginning to launch similar projects.¹⁵

By 1974, World Vision decided to make development a part of its ministry.¹⁶ It hired a retired Army general, Hal Barber, to lead a new Relief and Development division and added a former Army corporal, Bryant Myers, to implement the logistics. Myers confessed that “we didn't know a lot about development ourselves then. It was sort of like the teacher who keeps one page ahead of the student.”¹⁷ But development became the new World Vision buzzword.

Development theory grew out of the reconstruction of Europe after two world wars. It expanded as a part of Western assistance to Third World nations during the Cold

¹⁵ Gene Daniels, interview by author, June 6, 2010, telephone, digital recording. Norman Rohrer, *Open Arms* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1987), 150–151.

¹⁶ World Vision added “developing self-reliance” to its core objectives in 1974. This was the first objective that World Vision had added since its founding. The six objectives were: 1) ministering to children and families; 2) providing emergency aid; 3) developing self-reliance; 4) reaching the unreached; 5) strengthening leadership; 6) challenging to mission. See Graeme Irvine, World Vision VP of Field Ministries, “Ministry Integration: What Is Meant By It and Why We Need It,” Oct. 7, 1978 (Irvine Papers, WVI Central Records).

¹⁷ Bryant Myers, interview by author, June 20, 2007, Pasadena, CA. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 149–152.

War. With modernization and economic growth the goal, the United Nations declared the 1960s as the Development Decade. Soon the U.N., International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank were pouring money into large-scale development projects. They brought in Western technical and scientific knowledge to build highways, promote industry, and establish universities. Tackling macro-issues, they theorized that a growing Gross National Product (GNP) would trickle down to benefit everyone.¹⁸

The initial development models had more than their share of critics. Latin American dependency theorists claimed that development perpetuated Western domination and reinforced the same systems that had helped create poverty. Other Third World leaders did not refuse Western aid but advocated “self-reliance” that allowed them to make their own choices about how development should proceed in their countries.¹⁹ When the United Nations declared the 1970s the Second Development Decade, it heeded some calls for change. Development policy moved from investments in governments and an obsession with GNP to the redistribution of wealth and consultation with local communities about what they saw as their needs.²⁰

In 1973, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act known as “New Directions” aligned USAID with this new agenda. Instead of awarding contracts for the distribution of relief goods or the building of infrastructure to a handful of established agencies, it asked all

¹⁸ Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, a Non-Communist Manifesto*. (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1960). Rostow proposed development as a tool to help counter the rise of communism. It hypothesized that traditional societies would reach a point of economic growth that would allow them to “take-off” and modernize, and it was up to the West to bring Third World societies to this point. Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 80–85; Tara Hefferan, *Twinning Faith and Development: Catholic Parish Partnering in the Haiti* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007), 44–45.

¹⁹ Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, became best known for popularizing “self-reliance” into development parlance. In the Arusha Declaration in 1967, he used the term and also called for autonomy and auto-centered development. Rist, 123.

²⁰ Rist, *The History of Development*, 123–168; Hefferan, *Twinning Faith and Development*, 46.

NGOs to propose grants for individual projects. The number of NGOs receiving grants skyrocketed. The U.S. valued their expertise and capacity to mobilize local resources. NGOs appreciated the ability to shape their own projects.²¹

Most religious NGOs supported these new directions. The dependency theorists' critiques of Western development paralleled the rise of liberation theology among both Catholic and ecumenical Protestants, who called for solidarity with the poor in ways that facilitated participatory development. And at the same time that some theologians were praising community development because it represented solidarity with the poor, organizational networks in the NGOs nurtured their long standing relationships with local communities. The smaller NGOs lacked the resources for large scale relief, but most religious agencies had decades of experience working in towns and villages.²²

Although evangelicals had once considered development as a form of “secularized missions,” they now began to make it a part of their missiology. Amidst the debates over evangelism and social action, development offered some a more holistic language. Others used it to support a turn toward indigenous missions.²³ Still others liked it because it allowed evangelicals to raise the question of structural injustice.²⁴

²¹ The U.S. government also liked the ability to provide aid without having to extend an official state presence that could strain international relations. It also limited in-country government personnel. McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 103–105.

²² The 1968 Medellín Conference affirmed the preferential treatment of the poor and liberation. Theologians Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff popularized such claims. Both noted that the poor were dignified when they participate in their own liberation—hence the importance of the formation of base ecclesial communities. Kevin Norman York-Simmons, “A Critique of Christian Development as Resolution to the Crisis in U.S. Protestant Foreign Missions” (Vanderbilt University, 2009), 75.

²³ Note there were American evangelicals doing development in the 1960s, but it took the western economic model of the time. Development Assistance Services, later renamed International Development Association, became an affiliate of the World Evangelical Fellowship. It sought to use Western businessmen to help train national Christians in economic development so that churches and missionaries could focus on evangelism. Folder 8, Box 28, Collection 338, World Evangelical Fellowship. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois. (Hereafter known as WEF Records).

²⁴ Carl Henry, lecturing for World Vision on a Latin American tour, retold a story of being accused as another Westerner who only gave aspirin and band-aids over working against injustice. Henry criticized his

Missionaries now talked of development projects in local communities while evangelicals founded new development agencies that had no missionary past. Organizations like Food for the Hungry, World Concern, and the Institute for International Development, Inc. (IIDI) had different understandings of development, but they agreed that it fit under the evangelical canopy.²⁵

At first, World Vision's definition of development functioned as a catch-all for what it was already doing. It meant ministry "to the whole person," "self-help," "long-term" assistance, or "community-focused" programs. To interest donors, it used stories, explaining, for instance, an early microfinance program by describing how the gift of a cow provided a poor family with income, status, and milk that will allow them eventually to pay back the purchase price to World Vision.²⁶

To become a respected relief and development organization, World Vision had to strengthen its institutional capacity. In 1975, USAID awarded it a three-year Development Program Grant (DPG) to facilitate its competence in development practice and technical expertise.²⁷ The funds allowed World Vision to hire Relief and

accuser's eagerness to embrace Marxism but admitted that attacking unjust social structures was an important part of the gospel. Ronald J Sider, ed., *Evangelicals and Development: Toward a Theology of Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 99.

²⁵ Larry Ward, Food for the Hungry's founder, left World Vision in 1971 to start an organization committed to world hunger issues in more systematic ways. Relief and development was also a part of Ward's original plan, but it gathered steam slowly. It offers a striking comparison to World Vision's story. Yujun H, "The Changing Discourse of International Humanitarian Charitable-Relief NGOs" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2003); Norman Rohrer, *This Poor Man Cried: The Story of Larry Ward* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1984).

²⁶ *World Vision* (April 1977): 3-7

²⁷ Rachel M. McCleary, "Taking God Overseas: Competition and Institutional Homogeneity Among International Religious Private Voluntary Organizations," *International Studies Association*, 2004, 20; McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 105. As USAID began to fund development grants to NGOs over awarding contracts to meet humanitarian mandates, it had a vested interest in facilitating leading NGOs to build institutional capacity as development organizations. Between 1973-1979, it awarded 40 DPGs to NGOs for this purpose. World Vision received \$102,068 in year 1, \$263,835 in year 2, and 235,804 in year three. Initially, all relief and development programs and government funding went through the subsidiary, World

Development Coordinators for each of its global regions, teach field staff the language of development, and implement reporting systems and procedures into its programs.²⁸ The grant also thrust the agency into a new web of humanitarian organizations. It applied for USAID grants, conducted dialogues with foreign governments, and interacted with secular organizations. It attended conferences on income generation, sustainable agriculture, and family planning. Such exposure allowed it to experiment with a new language of development.

Increased institutional capacity and new partnerships led World Vision to expand its development work. In 1975, it began with twenty-two programs. The next year, development programs grew by 160 percent. By 1977, it reported 314 projects in thirty-nine countries, and the number continued to double almost every year throughout the decade.²⁹ Yet despite their rapid growth, relief and development programs remained a small part of World Vision's international programming.³⁰

As projects expanded, World Vision struggled to staff them with competent development professionals. It still relied on missionaries and indigenous pastors to implement many of its programs on the ground. They knew their local communities, but

Vision Relief Organization to avoid questions of government funding of religious programs. WVRO Annual Report to USAID (April 1975 to March 1976), WVI Central Records.

²⁸ World Vision Board of Directors Meeting, March 23, 1974.; Hal Barber, "World Vision's View of Development," Internal Position Paper, Jan. 22, 1979 (WVI Central Records); Bryant Myers, "Development Policy and Position Paper," Internal Document, Mar. 2, 1987 (WVI Central Records). Rohrer noted that from 1976-78, for each region of world, World Vision had one Relief and Development staff member whose salary, travel, office budget, and teaching materials were paid by the US government. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 152.

²⁹ World Vision Annual Reports, 1970-1979 (WVI Central Records).

³⁰In Fiscal Year 1975-6, childcare made up \$11,237,391 of its \$15,328,704 budget. Africa proved the only exception. Having only established an operational office there in 1974-5, Africa lacked the structures already in place for child sponsorship. As momentum shifted to relief and development within World Vision, development projects soon predominated. In Fiscal Year 1975-6, development made up \$1,853,886 of the \$2,641,942 of Africa's budget. These percentages would later change as World Vision implemented sponsorship into Africa. Sponsorship remained the chief tool necessary for World Vision's overall fundraising success. See World Vision Annual Report, 1975-1976 (WVI Central Records).

few had development training. It began to recruit new staff outside traditional evangelical networks. In 1977, it hired a Purdue University professor to head its new Agriculture division.³¹ Outside hires built institutional capacity and added credibility among new peers but led others to question whether the additions eroded evangelical identity.

Most often World Vision sought to retrain existing staff. In 1976, it used USAID funding to bring all of its Relief and Development Coordinators to Nairobi, Kenya, for its inaugural development workshop.³² In 1978, it sent over fifty staff to a five-week training at the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in the Philippines. Directed by development pioneer Dr. James Yen, the IIRR played a leading role in shaping the field. The training was a watershed moment for the World Vision staff. Yen's approach matched their needs, and they left optimistic that could now articulate what World Vision meant by development.³³

³¹ The Purdue scientist, Robert C. Pickett, had already consulted in over ninety countries in international crop management. In one article to World Vision donors, Pickett articulated his commitments, "As a scientist, I know that much can be done about many of the conditions and situations that allow hunger, malnutrition and inadequate nutrition to exist. My purpose in coming to World Vision was and is to do something about the situation." See Robert C. Pickett, "Hope for the Hungry," *World Vision* (Mar. 1978): 10-11; "World Vision Hires Robert Pickett," *World Vision* (Sept. 1977): 20.

³² Present at this conference were, Bryant Myers (Associate director for Asia), Robert Ash, (Associate director for Africa), Dr. Ken Tracey (Director of Africa), Don Wisbrod, Relief and Development coordinator, Guatemala), Getachew Chuko (Acting field director Ethiopia), and Rev. Gottfried Osei-Mensah [Executive secretary of the Lausanne continuation committee and chair of the Pan African Christian Leadership Associate Committee (PACLA)]. "Relief and Development Conference in Nairobi," *World Vision* (Oct 1976):19; "Ken Tracy to Gottfried Osei-Mensah," Folder 32, Box 23, Collection 46, Records of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization." Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois (Hereafter known as Lausanne Records).

³³ World Vision staff often replicated Yen's development approach verbatim in articulating their own approach. While offering more information on each step, the approach was: go to the people; live among them; learn from them; work with them; plan with them; build on what they have; teach by showing; learn by doing; not a showcase, but a pattern; not odds and ends, but a system; not relief but release." See for example, Myers, "Bible and Development," Burundi Development Seminar, 1979 (WVI Central Records). It was also important for World Vision that Dr. James Yen identified as a Christian. See "Engstrom with Dr. Yen," *World Vision* (May 1978): 17. Bryant Myers, "World Vision Policy on Development," revised 1987 (WVI Central Records). Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 152. Gene Daniels, interview by author, June 6, 2010; "International Institute of Rural Reconstruction", n.d., <http://www.iirr.org/index.php/aboutus/history> (Accessed Nov. 11, 2011).

In 1973, Bryant Myers had admitted that World Vision knew little about development. By 1979, he predicted that over the next ten years development would make up 75 percent of the organization's work.³⁴ Explicit missionary language waned as World Vision increasingly began to refer to its staff as aid workers. Even if stories of meeting individual needs with Christian compassion continued to dominate fundraising appeals, it no longer shied away from describing programs as enterprises in health care, family planning, land regeneration, income generation, and vocational training.³⁵ Such a shift in self-definition reflected non-evangelical influences. Some saw it as an expansion of evangelical influence into new spheres. Others worried that World Vision was leaving its evangelical heritage behind.³⁶

Evangelicals and Development

While a number of evangelical agencies came to share World Vision's enthusiasm for development, the transition also perpetuated tensions over the relationship between evangelism and social action. The 1974 Lausanne Covenant had attested that both were necessary. Evangelism remained primary, but as Lausanne chairman, John Stott, claimed "the [Great] Commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus."³⁷ Stott's attempts at mediation failed to end the debate.

The dominant group consisted of those who sought to use Lausanne as the platform for world evangelization. In 1980, the Consultation on World Evangelization

³⁴ Myers, "The Directions for the Next Ten Years," *World Vision* quoted in *Ibid.*, 153.

³⁵ This basic list of development activities had remained the same for World Vision since 1974, but it initially appeared in its *World Vision* magazine in 1978. "Engstrom on Relief and Development," *World Vision* (Jan. 1978): 17.

³⁶ Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership," 414.

³⁷ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 23.

(COWE), in Pattaya, Thailand, gathered over 900 attendees to form strategies for the evangelism of unreached peoples. World Vision and its MARC division loaned staff, provided statistical research, and invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to the meeting. Yet the Pattaya consultation left social action off the agenda.³⁸

That same year, evangelical ethicist Ron Sider gathered a smaller group for an International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle. They called evangelicals to suffer with the poor by pledging “to live on less and give away more.” In moving beyond past evangelical statements of social concern, they labeled some social structures as evil and they criticized Western overconsumption.³⁹

Two years later, at the Lausanne Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, both sides sat down to mediate this growing rift within evangelicalism. The consultation allowed for three possible relationships between social action and evangelism. Social action could be a consequence of, a bridge to, or a partner with evangelism.⁴⁰ In pitching a big tent, it fell

³⁸ Similar to the Radical Discipleship statement at the 1974 Lausanne Congress, those advocating for social action and the voices of Two-Thirds World evangelicals on the Lausanne agenda, drafted a “Statement of Concern on the Future of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization.” In René Padilla and Chris Sugden, eds., *Texts on Evangelical Social Ethics 1974-1983* (Bramcote: Grove, 1985), 22–24. David J. Bosch, “In Search of Mission: Reflections on ‘Melbourne’ and ‘Pattaya,’” *Missionalia* 9, no. 1 (1981): 3–18; Waldron Scott, “The Significance of Pattaya,” *Missiology* 9, no. 1 (January 1981): 57–76; Valdir Steuernagel, “The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility Within the Lausanne Movement.” (Th.D. diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1989), 189–195. Ed Dayton, “World Vision and LCWE: An Analysis,” April 28, 1986; Dayton, “World Vision Support for LCWE,” International Affairs Committee, July 1, 1986 (WVI Central Records).

³⁹ International Consultation on Simple Life-style. “Lausanne Occasional Paper 20: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Life-style.” www.lausanne.org/all-documents/lop-20.html (Accessed Nov. 12, 2011); Ronald Sider, *Lifestyle in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982).

⁴⁰ The conference emerged out of a bitter feud within the evangelical movement. Arthur Johnston’s 1978 book *The Battle for World Evangelism*, traced the decline of the World Council of Churches to its loss of commitment to missions, and he predicted Lausanne was moving in the same direction. John Stott countered Johnston’s accusations in an open letter in *Christianity Today*. They put together the CRESR conference to sort out their differences. John R. W. Stott, “Twenty Years After Lausanne: Some Personal Reflections,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19, no. 2 (April 1995): 51–52; Arthur Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1978).

short of providing a definitive solution, but it demonstrated that most evangelicals now found both necessary.⁴¹

As evangelical missions moved beyond either-or debates, practitioners adopted holistic over dichotomous language. In 1983, the World Evangelical Fellowship sponsored a Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need in Wheaton, Illinois. It declared that since “evil is not only in the human heart but also in social structures... the mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation.”⁴² While not theologically far from the earlier Grand Rapids consultation, the Wheaton ’83 statement sought to overcome dualisms by integrating evangelism and social concern into a single concept of “transformation.” By the 1980s, holistic language dominated the discourse of evangelical missions to the poor.⁴³

Advocates for social action applauded the turn to development. In the recent debates within evangelical missions, development privileged the dignity of the local person over paternalism and holistic over dualistic language. The International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle, CRESR, and Wheaton ’83 all affirmed Christian development. Some evangelicals, however, became wary and in some circles new

⁴¹ The CRESR conference went on to define social action and evangelism as equal partners. It described the relationship as “two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird.” In “Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment,” LOP 21, <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/79-lop-21.html> (Accessed Nov. 12, 2011); Bruce Nicholls, *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986); Gary F. VanderPol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005” (Th.D., diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 163–4; Stott, “Twenty Years After Lausanne,” 51–52.

⁴² “Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need,” Wheaton 1983 Statement, <http://www.lausanne.org/alldocuments/transformation-the-church-in-response-to-human-need.html> (Accessed Nov. 3, 2011).

⁴³ This shift of evangelical missions to the poor is largely the subject of Gary F. VanderPol’s dissertation. VanderPol, “The Least of These.”

questions tempered evangelical enthusiasm. Was development Christian? What made it Christian? Did it inevitably diminish the passion for evangelism? Was there a unique evangelical form of development?

Evangelical relief and development agencies soon outgrew evangelical missions and caught up to mainline and secular humanitarian organizations in size and annual budgets, but now they stopped to consider their theology.⁴⁴ Some worried that their understanding of development—and their presentation of it to others—were steeped in secular language. Perhaps they had embraced it too quickly. In 1977, ethicist Ron Sider wrote *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* to encourage evangelicals to live more simply and dive into social issues.⁴⁵ He championed development but acknowledged that “it makes no sense for Christian development agencies to take their basic assumption on the nature of development from secular sources like the United Nations, secular government in developed or developing nations, or private secular development agencies.”⁴⁶

Some evangelicals viewed development as a loaded term. They worried it returned to outdated missionary models that privileged western knowledge while ignoring

⁴⁴ Edward R. Dayton, “Social Transformation: The Mission of God,” in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, ed. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 53. Evangelicals convened a number of conferences on development in the late 1970s through early 1980s. In 1977, Carl Henry convened a symposium on the “The Ministry of Development in the Life of the Church,” for Development Assistance Services. The World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) convened a Consultation on the Theology of Development the week prior to Sider’s 1980 International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle. They featured presentations like “Development that is Christian,” or “The Contribution of the Evangelical Relief and Development Agency to the Mission of the Church in Today’s World.” See Carl F. H. Henry and Robert Lincoln Hancock, *The Ministry of Development in Evangelical Perspective: a Symposium on the Social and Spiritual Mandate* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979); Sider, *Evangelicals and Development*. Also see minutes for WEF Consultation of Development in the 1980s,” Folder 267, Box 37, WEF Records.

⁴⁵ Despite its somber themes, Sider’s book has now gone through four editions and sold over 350,000 copies. Among many evangelicals, it became a cult classic. Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977); David R. Swartz, “Left Behind: The Evangelical Left and the Limits of Evangelical Politics, 1965-1988” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008), 143–6.

⁴⁶ Ron Sider, “Toward a Theology of Community Development,” Development Assistance Services conference (DAS), Haiti, 1978. Folder 7, Box 32, EFMA Records.

the experience of underdeveloped peoples.⁴⁷ In 1983, Wheaton professor Wayne Bragg introduced the concept of “transformation” as an alternative vision of development.

Bragg argued:

Transformation is a particularly Christian concept – to take the existing reality and give it a higher dimension or purpose..... Development that is Christian is transformation of the person and social structures that frees persons and societies to move toward a state of increasing wholeness in harmony with God, with themselves, with others, and with the environment.⁴⁸

Transformation came to serve as the evangelical in-house term that distinguished *Christian* development from the kind practiced by the World Bank or USAID.

Evangelicals struggling to define Christian development in theory struggled also to incorporate it into traditional missions in practice. Despite hiring its own development professionals, the majority of World Vision’s staff came with missionary experience. Aid workers and missionaries often lived in the same compound, attended the same church, and sent their children to the same boarding school. Yet by the early 1980s, as evangelical relief and development agencies grew more prosperous and professional, theological differences or various resentments sometimes eroded these natural affinities.

⁴⁷ Tom Sine, “Development: Its Secular Past and Its Uncertain Future,” in *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1983), 9–36. The World Council of Churches and ecumenical mission also took issue with development as undermining indigenous principles and promoting western visions of modernization. See Kenith A. David, “Development Is Not Our Word,” *International Review of Mission* 73, no. 290 (April 1984): 185–190.

⁴⁸ Wayne Bragg had served as a missionary to the Caribbean and then became the Human Needs and Global Resources program at Wheaton College in 1976. This program served to train many evangelical students in development principles. Wayne Bragg, “Beyond Development,” in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, ed. Tom Sine (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1983), 37–95; Wayne G. Bragg, “Beyond Development to Transformation,” *International Review of Mission* 73, no. 290 (April 1984): 157, 165. Bragg’s thought became highly influential within World Vision’s own analysis. He consulted for them on numerous occasions. World Vision’s own early development policies acknowledge Bragg’s work. See Geoff Renner, “Position Paper on a View of Development,” May 11, 1978 (WVI Central Records). Bryant Myers’ work became the standard expression of World Vision’s development model. He too acknowledges Bragg as a key evangelical voice in the conversation. Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 95. Also see York-Simmons, “A Critique of Christian Development as Resolution to the Crisis in U.S. Protestant Foreign Missions,” 87–89.

Arne Bergstrom, now working for World Vision in the Philippines, described living between two worlds. Although he attended the same churches as the missionary families—and sent his children to the same Christian schools--other missionary families ostracized him. “We were not true missionaries. We were those development people,” Bergstrom remembered. He had even less in common with secular development workers. World Vision straddled two worlds; the balance was precarious.⁴⁹

Evangelical R&D agencies faced the same problem at home. Evangelicals in the pews supported the new agencies; uninterested in the old debates over social action and evangelism, they responded to appeals to help victims of poverty, famine, or war in the name of Jesus. But traditional missionary executives worried that the new agencies were co-opting their donor base, and they feared losing funds for evangelism.⁵⁰ In 1979, evangelical R&D agencies founded their own umbrella organization, the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO). While AERDO invited evangelical mission organizations for shared conversations, its member agencies were asking different questions. AERDO sought to foster technical expertise, mutual support, and best practices among its members while also lobbying USAID for government grants. They had evolved from mission agencies that did social service into relief and development organizations that included evangelism as a part of their holistic mission.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Arne Bergstrom, Interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA, digital recording.

⁵⁰ Wage Coggins, “The Administrator’s Dilemma in Confronting Development Needs,” 1978 Haiti Development Assistance Services Conference, Folder 7, Box 32, EFMA Records.

⁵¹ Linda D. Smith, “An Awakening of Conscience: The Changing Response of American Evangelicals Toward World Poverty” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1987), 316; VanderPol, “The Least of These,” 100. Folder 4, Box 35, Collection 165, EFMA Records. AERDO charter members were World Relief; Food for the Hungry, Compassion, World Concern, MAP international, Institute of International Development, Inc, and World Vision International. World Vision operated on the outskirts of both evangelical mission and R&D agencies at the time. Because it was so much larger than its evangelical peers and had already begun to receive government funding, it felt that it had less to gain from partnership while more to lose by sharing expertise with its competition.

World Vision as a Christian Development Agency

Adopting development affected World Vision's theological outlook and organizational structure. As it continued to professionalize, Vice President Ted Engstrom classified all work into one of three departments: Evangelism, Childcare, or Relief/Development. The divisions led to clearer management structures and greater expertise. Relief and Development could develop partnerships with USAID and foreign governments while a separate Evangelism division could lead pastors' conferences and support Lausanne's push for world evangelization.⁵²

The largest division was still childcare. Sponsorship funds brought in the bulk of its income while sponsorship programs made up over seventy percent of field ministries' expenditures. In the past, each country or mission station decided independently what the sponsored children should receive. Not until 1973 did World Vision standardize its childcare activities. A new Director of Childcare Ministries established policy and procedures to monitor the status of sponsored children. It instituted minimum benefits packages for all children and mandatory training of childcare workers. It also shifted from an orphanage to a family-focused model. Acknowledging critiques of institutionalization, World Vision realized that shifting the benefits of sponsorship from individual orphans to extended families would help with the long-term goal of community change.⁵³

⁵² Graeme Irvine, "Program and Ministry Integration" (Relief and Development Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 1976); Irvine, "Ministry Integration: What is Meant by It and Why We Need It" (Irvine Papers, WVI Central Records).

⁵³ "Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective," (WVUS Archives). Bruce Davis, Associate Director of Latin America Regional Office (LARO), "Observations and Some History of the Childcare Holistic Method from the Latin America Region," Sept. 1980 (WVI Central Records). Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 121. World Vision realized that sponsored children were getting opportunities that unsponsored children in the same community did not receive. Sometimes parents would give non-orphaned children to World Vision for care because they saw the added benefits of sponsorship.

For some, Christian development meant recruiting development specialists while ensuring that evangelism continued through crusades and childcare ministries. But World Vision's policy was to hire only staff who would affirm its statement of faith. It soon realized that finding development experts who shared its Christian identity proved difficult. Often, it recruited local Christians and then gave them development training. Other times, it hired nominal Christians with development experience in hopes that the organization's Christian culture would rub off. Some insiders worried that expanding programs beyond its small pool of dedicated Christian and technically competent staff would lead World Vision to dilute its Christian identity for the sake of efficiency and expertise.⁵⁴

Struck by the promises of development, World Vision had initially adopted it with wholesale optimism. Now it feared that the term was overused and misapplied, and it sought to distinguish its model of Christian development from those of its secular and religious peers. Some missionaries added it to their list of activities in order to raise funds, but it often served as a new term for the same work. Others used development as a cover to enter countries that had been closed to foreign missions.⁵⁵ Development could mean roads and schools built by governments, land rovers purchased by humanitarian agencies, or meals served by missionaries. World Vision had to engage in some reassessment.⁵⁶

What did it mean by Christian development? Some felt that it required direct evangelism as an aspect of its relief and development programs. Saved souls were

⁵⁴ "World Vision Long Range Planning Goals," Milton Coke to Cliff Benzel, July 22, 1980 (WVI Central Records)

⁵⁵ Ted Ward, Address to World Vision staff, Feb. 13, 1981 (WVI Central Records)

⁵⁶ Bryant Myers, "Bible and Development," Burundi Development Seminar, 1979 (WVI Central Records).

essential to sound communities. Others described it as development done by Christians. Their measurement was the Christian commitment of staff. Still others saw it as simply the motivation behind their activities. If the organization's mission and vision remained Christian, then Christian development would follow.

These answers failed to satisfy the people responsible for shaping World Vision's development policy. They shared the wariness of some other evangelicals about the possibly inherent secular nature of development and felt a genuine enthusiasm about a biblical language of transformation. The internationalizing of World Vision, moreover, led non-Westerners to use their new voice to question the paternalistic practices of Western development and call for a mutuality of shared experiences in local communities. They were among the most enthusiastic proponents of the "holistic." Christian development sought nothing less than to transform the world order into the Kingdom of God.⁵⁷

The effort to articulate a theology of development forced World Vision into organizational restructuring. Separate divisions in the early 1970s allowed for greater efficiency and expertise but functioned in ways that countered the holistic theology. How could it talk of doing away with dichotomies between evangelism and social concern when it divided the two into separate departments? By 1979, a movement for "ministry integration" once again challenged the organization to adapt to new circumstances. In concert with internationalization, the leaders of the organization gave all regions more

⁵⁷ Edward R. Dayton, "Christian Development," Aug. 1977; Geoff Renner, "World Vision and its View of Development," May, 11, 1978; Hal Barber, "World Vision's View of Development," Jan. 22, 1979 (WVI Central Records). In 1979, World Vision approved its first Development Policy Statement. It amended the policy under Bryant Myers leadership in 1987.

autonomy but asked that they integrate evangelism, childcare, and relief/development in each local program.⁵⁸

Ministry integration vaulted relief and development to the forefront of the agency's internal conversations. World Vision continued to organize pastors' conferences and support local churches' evangelistic crusades, but most of the evangelism took place within community development programs. The staff still argued that Christian development must offer an opportunity for each individual to respond to the gospel, but most saw evangelism integrated into every effort to reestablish the relationship of human beings with each other and God.⁵⁹

Ministry integration also reshaped its childcare ministries to correspond with its theology. In the early 1970s, childcare expanded from institutions to families, but sponsorship still provided fixed assistance packages to individuals. By 1979, World Vision pledged to move fifty percent of its childcare projects to development by 1984. It would change from an organization that asked donors to support individual children into an agency that would pool sponsorship dollars for community development. The new approach allowed World Vision greater flexibility but made risky adjustments in the program that brought in the bulk of its annual income. Yet the adjustment helped bring its organizational structure and fundraising practices in line with its theology.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Irvine, "Program and Ministry Integration," and "Ministry Integration: What Is Meant By It and Why We Need It" (WVI Central Records).

⁵⁹ Edward R. Dayton, "Some Introductory Thoughts on Evangelization and Development," MARC Newsletter, Nov 1977; Dayton, "Development as Evangelism," MARC Newsletter, Jan. 1979; Dayton, "World Vision and Evangelization," International World Vision Staff Conference, 1978 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁰ "Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective" (WVUS Archives); Fram Jehangir, "Holistic Development Approach in Childcare," 1979; "World Vision Childcare Position Paper," 1985 (WVI Central Records).

Organizational Change and Identity Formation

Income grew by double digit percentages throughout the 1970s, but growth raised further issues about shared leadership and holistic development. The 1978 Declaration of Internationalization marked World Vision's first significant organizational change. It established the new World Vision International (WVI) and illustrated the organization's transition from missionary service to relief and development.⁶¹ Soon afterwards, WVI President Stan Mooneyham toured World Vision offices to tout the changes. Mooneyham hoped that such changes would allow for greater flexibility, the sharing of personnel and resources, integrating ministries on the ground, and a sense of partnership that would put its theology into practice while positioning the organization for future success.⁶² He also sought to allay fears that change would lead to secularization and insisted World Vision remained unapologetically evangelical. While arguing for the necessity of organizational evolution, he too worried that success, new outside influences, and globalization threatened to erode World Vision's spiritual values.⁶³

Success

The success of agencies like World Vision led evangelicals into new debates about parachurch organizations. In the wake of World War II, a host of charismatic and entrepreneurial leaders like Billy Graham, Bill Bright, and Bob Pierce had founded organizations that led to evangelicalism's popular reemergence. While they all had independent streaks, they envisioned their ministries as supplements to denominations and local churches. Yet some evangelicals worried that they had gone from

⁶¹ Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership," 415."Declaration of Internationalization;" Also World Vision Annual Reports, 1970-1980 (WVI Central Records).

⁶² Mooneyham, "Remarks on Aspects of Internationalization prepared especially for presentation to Australia/New Zealand Boards" Feb. 1, 1978.

⁶³ Ibid.

supplementing to supplanting the church. In 1979, historian Stephen Board noted, “there was a day when newspapers would summarize Sunday’s sermons of prominent ministers in their Monday editions; today the media interview and quote from parachurchmen.”⁶⁴

When brimming budgets and media attention made parachurch leaders the face of American evangelicalism, detractors questioned their fiscal responsibility and lack of accountability. Some accused them of narrowing the gospel for reasons that served their own self-interest while they needlessly duplicated each other’s efforts. Others turned to ecclesiology, questioning how parachurch agencies should function in the church’s mission. Heated exchanges filled the editorials pages of evangelical magazines. At one point, the Lausanne movement brought church and parachurch leaders together to mend strained relationships.⁶⁵

World Vision’s leaders took these tensions seriously. Even as they moved from missions to development, they valued their long history with the local church. They admitted the faults of the parachurch, but they also pointed to its positive contributions. Greater flexibility and expertise allowed parachurch ministries to adapt to new situations of need while sometimes even serving as a prophetic voice calling the church to action.

⁶⁴ Stephen Board, “The Great Evangelical Power Shift: How Has the Mushrooming of Parachurch Organizations Changed the Church?” *Eternity* 30 (1979): 17-21. The two best studies of the influence of evangelical parachurch organizations are Christopher P Scheitle, *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Michael S. Hamilton, “More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945,” in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, 2000, 104–138.

⁶⁵ Ron Wilson, “Parachurch: Becoming Part of the Body,” *Christianity Today* (Sept. 19, 1980): 18-20; J. Alan Youngren, “Parachurch Proliferation: The Frontier Spirit Caught in Traffic,” *Christianity Today* (Nov. 6, 1981): 38-41. “Cooperating in World Evangelization – A Handbook on Church/Para-church Relationships, Lausanne Occasional Paper 24 ,1983, <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/67-lop-24.html> (Accessed Nov. 22, 2011).

World Vision continued to argue that it served as an extension of the church's witness in areas where the church was non-existent or needed assistance.⁶⁶

World Vision's theology kept it rooted to the church, but professionalization often led it in another direction. It decried the inefficiency of the church and brought a corporate management culture into Christian nonprofits. In promoting a "stewardship of results," it claimed that its professional capacities ranked second to none in the evangelical world. World Vision insisted that all employees profess a Christian faith, but fewer now came with pastoral callings or degrees from evangelical seminaries. With a need for more marketing, development, and management specialists, a new class of technocratic experts from the secular marketplace entered World Vision's ranks.⁶⁷

New fundraising strategies also led it away from the local church. Pierce had taken his early films to churches to raise support, but Mooneyham realized that mission offerings in local churches provided a meager return on investment. With rapid income growth in the 1970s and early 1980s coming from television and government grants, local churches became less important. Telethons appealed to mass audiences and allowed World Vision to stay out of missiological debates and domestic church politics. The large majority of World Vision's donors remained Christian, but Catholics, mainline Protestants, and generic "born-again Christians" joined World Vision's evangelical base.

⁶⁶Mooneyham, "Church vs. Para-church – a Non-issue?" Discussion Paper presented to WVI Council, 1978; Paul Rees, "Response to Mooneyham," June 2, 1978; William J. Newell, "Responses to Mooneyham," Oct. 4, 1978 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁷Mooneyham, "Remarks on Aspects of Internationalization prepared especially for presentation to Australia/New Zealand Boards" Feb. 1, 1978. Mooneyham did not apologize for the need to recruit Christians from the secular marketplace.

Even as it reaffirmed its evangelical roots, it moved beyond its older donor base and expanded its identity.⁶⁸

World Vision also moved away from Christian education. In order to raise the largest possible amount of money, the organization used telethons that substituted emotional appeals for education. Market analysis demonstrated that stark images of African children drew more funds than information on systemic development or world evangelization.⁶⁹ One World Vision filmmaker voiced his concerns for the organization: “It was abandoning its responsibility to communicate the needs of the world to churches and challenge them to Christian mission. . . . The result? More funds raised, but at the expense of a holistic Biblical message.”⁷⁰

Professionalization also led it away from the church in its programs overseas. As it initiated larger development operations, it relied less on local pastors and missionaries to administer them. Isolated cases of local pastors misappropriating funds or proselytizing recipients of government aid worried World Vision. It recognized that its programs had become too complex and the need for accountability too high to trust untrained specialists.

⁶⁸ Bill Kliewer, “Report on World Vision’s Constituency,” Aug. 12, 1980 (WVI Central Records). Kliewer, then World Vision’s Marketing Director, reported to fellow marketing executives that it was not up to them to decide who were the “wheat and tares” among its donors but only to control what it could – World Vision’s own identity. Kliewer’s comments were in response to growing internal fears of the organization’s secularization. From 1974-84, the percentage of funds World Vision U.S received from local churches went from a high of 7.6% to 4%. In the early 1980s, they only worked with 2000 churches. Two decades ago, it had worked with 2500 just in its Northwest office. “World Vision and Church Relations,” 1984 (WVI Central Records)

⁶⁹ Ken Waters, “How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence: Television Fundraising, 1972-1982,” *American Journalism* 15, no. 4 (1998): 87–89.

⁷⁰ James Greenelsh, Director of Film and Audiovisual Productions for World Vision offered this critique in 1979. Quoted in John Robert Hamilton, “An Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision’s Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film” (University of Southern California, 1980), 273.

Its commitment to hire an indigenous workforce led to even more conflict with local Christian communities. On entering a new area with big budgets and new programs, World Vision's higher salaries, land rovers, and air-conditioned offices led a number of local pastors to leave their churches. Missionary agencies that had spent years building relationships and educating local leaders accused World Vision of arriving late and stealing the best Christian talent. Some missionaries and local Christians questioned World Vision's motives and complained about its success.⁷¹

World Vision's growth made it difficult to implement the ideals of internationalization. Fundraising outpaced organizational development. The United States office hounded field countries to establish new programs and locate new children to sponsor. Field countries could not recruit and train staff quickly enough. Programs rushed into operation to market to Western donors suffered from inadequate design. Development practitioners in the field felt out of sync with the fundraisers in southern California. Tensions grew between the "donor" western countries and "recipient" field countries. A constant refrain from field countries became that World Vision followed the golden rule, "the one with the gold makes all the rules."⁷²

Fundraising success led some to raise again the question of the relationship of World Vision's activities to its new theology of development. Its marketers knew that images of starving African children with flies on their faces best motivated donors, but practitioners felt such depictions diminished the dignity of those in need. It stereotyped

⁷¹ The accusation of stealing Christian leaders for its staff became a constant refrain against World Vision. Rohrer, *Open Arms*, 157. From World Vision's perspective, it insisted on paying nationals a fair wage so that they would not be considered second-class citizens to the expatriate staff who received far more.

⁷² Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 9, 2010, Monrovia, CA; Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA; Roberta Hestenes, *Laying the Foundations: Brief Reflections on WV History*;" Bryant Meyers, "Journeying Toward Interdependence: The Unfinished Story of World Vision."

Africans as helpless poor, denied them the opportunity to help themselves, and avoided confronting donors with the need for structural change. As outside critiques of such images mounted, internal debates also raged within World Vision. By the early 1980s, the leaders acknowledged the tensions but decided that for the sake of budgets they had to live with them.⁷³

Some critics even used World Vision's financial success to point to a decline in Christian values. Some Christian agencies viewed impoverished budgets as a sign of living by faith, but Mooneyham made no excuses for excellence. He knew it was necessary to retain the best staff and recruit big donors. Yet in some settings World Vision earned the reputation for lavish lifestyles: jet-setting around the world, staying in fine hotels, and building impressive office buildings. World Vision's own staff argued that its largesse perpetuated its reputation as a Western dominated agency that elevated charity over development even as it challenged Christians to identify with the poor through living a simpler lifestyle. World Vision's answer again was to insist on living within the tensions.⁷⁴

Before the 1970s, Christian nonprofits grew with little oversight, but when reports surfaced in 1977 of suspect agencies pocketing up to ninety-five percent of funds raised, the public began to demand regulation. World Vision had already recognized that the climate of charitable giving was changing. It faced stiffer competition for donors' dollars even as donors grew skeptical of charitable organizations. It could no longer rely on its

⁷³ Mooneyham, "Stanley Mooneyham Interview," *Wittenberg Door* (Feb/Mar 1975): 8-15; Peter Stalker, "Please Do Not Sponsor this Child," *New Internationalist* 111 (May 1981) <http://www.newint.org/features/1982/05/01/keynote/> Stalker's article was among the first wave of exposes that grew to critique child sponsorship programs as ineffective development. World Vision had already begun to debate these questions. See "Fundraising and the Dignity of People," Aug 31, 1980; "WV Promotion and Dignity of People" 1981 (WVI Central Records)

⁷⁴ John Rymer, "World Vision and Lifestyle," Paper presented at 1983 World Vision International Council (WVI Central Records).

reputation as a Christian mission. It began to publish its overhead expenses, marketing its efficiency as something that should reassure donors of its reliability.⁷⁵

With Congress threatening to regulate the industry, World Vision and the BGEA convinced other evangelical agencies to form in 1979 the Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability (ECFA). As the Better Business Bureau for evangelical nonprofits, the ECFA required member agencies to disclose financial statements and implement professional management criteria. Many modeled their professionalization on World Vision's example.⁷⁶

Guilt by Association

The suspicion from some evangelical circles refused to dissipate. Some feared that as World Vision received government grants and adopted development strategies, peer pressure would lead it to relinquish its evangelical identity. The YMCA, Red Cross, and Christian Children's Fund (CCF) became oft cited examples of how easily organizations lost their religious roots. Through the 1970s, evangelism served as the marker World Vision that used to measure its religiosity. Vice-President, Ed Dayton claimed that "evangelism is the umbrella under which we do everything but we didn't define what evangelism was."⁷⁷ President Mooneyham agreed: "We put evangelism first and last in our work, but this doesn't mean that everything we do has direct evangelistic

⁷⁵ Engstrom, *World Vision* (Feb. 1976): 9; Engstrom, *World Vision* (Jan. 1977): 17; "Evangelical Agencies Meet to Discuss Regulation," *World Vision* (Feb. 1978): 22; Engstrom, *World Vision* (Feb. 1979): 16; Engstrom, *World Vision* (April 1979): 19.

⁷⁶ Ted Engstrom, *Reflections on a Pilgrimage: Six Decades of Service* (Sister, OR: Loyal Pub., 1999), 126–7. Mooneyham, "History of ECFA," Speech delivered at Inaugural ECFA Membership Meeting," Sept. 11, 1979 (WVI Central Records).

⁷⁷ Ed Dayton, "World Vision and Evangelization," 1978 (WVI Central Records).

connection. We don't stamp Jesus Saves on every vitamin pill."⁷⁸ Founded by an evangelist, World Vision had an evangelistic commitment that originally few could question, even when the organization coaxed Americans to respond to social needs. Yet through missiological debates and its embrace of Christian development, World Vision came to adopt holistic language and ministry integration. It championed these moves as successes, but some accused it of abandoning its evangelistic roots.

In 1979, World Vision opened fundraising offices in the United Kingdom and Germany, and later in several other Western Europe countries. From the beginning, these offices appealed to a more secular donor base and hired a more religiously diverse staff than other World Vision offices.⁷⁹ The U.S. office worried about the trend, and some global South evangelicals joined it in its worrying. The WV India board questioned whether the organization was becoming a secular agency.⁸⁰

Record budget growth, institutional expansion, internationalization, and the addition of development marked a decade of drastic change. A few within the organization cautioned that it was time to step back to see how the organizational changes had affected its religious identity. Mooneyham responded by declaring 1980 as World Vision's Year of Evangelism. Even as World Vision debated how to define evangelism, an Evangelism Taskforce sought to insure that it did not lose its spiritual heart. Having introduced assessment tools into its development programs, it attempted to measure the

⁷⁸ Mooneyham continued, "We simply try to demonstrate Christian love in tangible ways. I feel it would be phony and manipulative to provide help to suffering people only because they are potentially evangelistic statistics." Sue Avery, "World Vision – Food and Faith," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 25, 1980, SG1.

⁷⁹ The establishment of World Vision's European offices presented their own problems. Established Christian charities such as Oxfam and the relief, development, and mission arms of other denominations resented World Vision expanding on their turf. WV-UK committed to avoid fundraising in churches for 15 years to assuage the fears of competition from other charities. As a result, they attracted a far more secular support base even as they continued to be attacked by the church establishment as fundamentalist. Whites, "Pursuing Partnership," 416–517.

⁸⁰ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 187.

spiritual growth of local communities. It required existing staff to document how they would implement evangelism in each field program while training new hires in Christian discipleship and appropriate evangelistic techniques.⁸¹ It also drafted new guidelines when considering whether to work with governments and other agencies to clarify when such partnerships might compromise its mission and prevent evangelistic opportunities.⁸²

World Vision faced mounting criticism for the way it expressed its evangelical identity. In 1977, the Roman Catholic press accused World Vision's Filipino staff of withholding childcare funds, encouraging contraception in opposition to Catholic teaching, and requiring aid recipients to attend Bible studies before receiving assistance. World Vision dismissed a number of the charges as unfounded but admitted that in four of its ninety-two childcare programs, over-zealous pastors did pressure Filipino Catholics to attend Protestant services. While World Vision forbade proselytism, the indigenous staff people did not always follow or understand organizational policies. To make amends, World Vision met with Roman Catholic leaders and developed training manuals to educate field staff on Roman Catholicism. In predominantly Catholic countries like the Philippines, World Vision hired a handful of Roman Catholics to fill local staff positions.⁸³

⁸¹ Edward R. Dayton, Gene Daniels, J. Paul Landrey, "World Vision Evangelism Task Force," 1980 (WVI Central Records); "Report on World Vision and World Evangelization," Jan. 1981; Sam Kamaleson, "Use of Dialogue in Evangelism," 1979; Sam Kamaleson, "History of Evangelism in World Vision," 1985; Also see Engstrom, International Affairs Committee, Feb. 14-17, 1983. Engstrom had just assumed the interim role of WVI president after Mooneyham resigned in 1982. At the meeting, Engstrom expressed his concern that World Vision not let social concerns obscure the need of personal conversion and the importance of holy living (WVI Central Records).

⁸² "Relationship to Governments and Supra-Governmental Bodies," Originally approved June 3, 1978, revised Mar. 13, 1985, WVI Policy Statement (WVI Central Records).

⁸³ Graeme Irvine, "World Vision Programs in the Philippines," June 14, 1978; Irvine, "Relationships with Roman Catholic Church," Sept. 16, 1983; Irvine, "Guidelines for Field on Roman Catholic Relationships," 1983 (WVI Central Records).

The incident led World Vision to reassess its relationship with non-evangelical organizations. It recognized that the Catholic Church was not monolithic and pledged to work with Catholics willing to labor alongside an evangelical organization. In expanding to include ecumenical organizations, World Vision publicly committed itself “to work first with those, regardless of ecclesiastical tradition, whom we identify as combining evangelical fervor with a desire to serve all men in Christ’s name.”⁸⁴ It reaffirmed the NAE statement of faith but argued that its evangelical identity did not prohibit it from cooperating with others who ministered with the poor.⁸⁵

World Vision faced criticism from all sides of the religious spectrum. Catholics and the ecumenical World Council of Churches used incidents of proselytism to disparage World Vision as a fundamentalist organization ill-equipped to work with other Christian humanitarian agencies.⁸⁶ Some of World Vision’s traditional partners interpreted dialogue with Catholics and partnerships with other ecumenical bodies as compromising its evangelicalism. Some of its own local staff resented the pressure put on them by senior management to work with Catholics.⁸⁷

Mooneyham insisted that World Vision remained “evangelical in the historic sense” but “ecumenical in spirit.” He defined evangelical as allowing for “broad inclusivity” in contrast to a “narrow and exclusive” fundamentalism, and he refused to

⁸⁴ World Vision’s policies went on to say that when a Christian community is divided and World Vision perceived it could not work with both parties, it would cooperate with those closest to its own evangelical position. Edward R. Dayton, “World Vision’s Relationships to Roman Catholics,” prepared for Field Review Meeting, Aug. 21, 1978 (WVI Central Records).

⁸⁵ “Relationships with Other Christian Organizations,” World Vision Policy Statement, approved June 3, 1978 (This policy would be revised Mar. 13, 1985). Edward Dayton, “Discussion of Policy,” World Vision Board of Directors Meeting, Sept, 16-17, 1979 (WVI Central Records)

⁸⁶ Michael Lee, “World Vision, Go Home!” *Christian Century* (May 16, 1979): 542-544; Mooneyham, “World Vision: A Different Opinion,” *Christian Century* (July 4, 1979): 707-8.

⁸⁷ Irvine, “Relationships with Roman Catholic Church,” Sept. 16, 1983 (WVI Central Records)

allow past “evangelical prejudices to establish parameters for World Vision’s work.”

Mooneyham’s only criterion for partnership was that “people are exposed to the word of God.”⁸⁸ Without dismissing real theological differences, Mooneyham cared little for participating in theological discussions or working through established ecclesial structures. Instead he sought a “practical ecumenism” that found partners willing to work around a common cause. While some admired his pragmatic approach, others saw his unwillingness to engage theological differences and ecclesial structures as another example of the go-it-alone approach that they associated with World Vision.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, World Vision benefited from the popularity of American evangelicalism even as it reassessed its own evangelical identity. As the mainstream media “discovered” evangelical growth in the mid-1970s, they often used World Vision as a prime example. Coverage of evangelicals consisted largely of stories about conflict, personal piety, and popular culture.⁹⁰ Yet Mooneyham accused fellow evangelicals of “navel-gazing” and “aping American culture” at the expense of global issues.⁹¹ As coverage of evangelicals began to hone in on the Religious Right by 1980, Mooneyham worried that domestic politics and culture wars would only further divide evangelicals

⁸⁸ Mooneyham remarks, World Vision’s International Affairs Committee, Feb. 19-20, 1980 (WVI Central Records); Mooneyham reflected at the end of his career after leaving World Vision, “We’ve been ecumenical from day one; we will continue to be ecumenical. It sometimes isn’t easy to work with people who claim it in name, and believe it in theory but don’t practice it in reality.” Mooneyham, “Keep Marching off the Map,” Addressing joint Board-Staff Luncheon on the occasion of World Vision’s 40th anniversary, Mar. 13 1991 (WVUS Records)

⁸⁹ World Vision’s International Affairs Committee, Feb. 15-19, 1981 (WVI Central Records); Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 203.

⁹⁰ Ken Woodward, “Born Again!” *Newsweek*, Oct. 25, 1976: 68-78; “Back to that Old-Time Religion,” *Time*, Dec. 26, 1977: 52-58; “Protestants: Away From Activism and Back to the Basics,” *US News & World Report*, April 11, 1977: 58

⁹¹ Mooneyham, “The Day of Missions Has Hardly Begun,” Address to World Vision New Zealand, Nov. 1979 (WVI Central Records); James Mann, “‘Old-Time Religion’ on the Offensive,” *US News and World Report*, April 7, 1980; Kenneth L. Woodward, “The Split-Up Evangelicals,” *Newsweek*, April 26, 1982: 88

into special interest groups that ignored global poverty. World Vision wanted to be evangelical; it also wanted to be distinctive.⁹²

Evangelicalism was hard to define. Was it piety, politics, or theology? One reporter described Mooneyham “as an evangelical but not the type who walks around with a Bible under his arm and invokes the name of the Lord in every other sentence.”⁹³ The pastor of New York City’s mainline Riverside Church, William Sloane Coffin, quipped in 1977: “If you get an Evangelical with a social conscience you’ve got one of God’s true saints.”⁹⁴ World Vision hoped it fit the bill, but it knew that its public remained undecided.

Global or American?

World Vision’s distance from the identity politics, inerrancy debates, and culture wars that defined American evangelicals showed the effects of its internationalization. In its early history, Pierce had championed evangelical missions and American exceptionalism as he followed the U.S. military to fight for freedom and Christian faith in Korea and Vietnam. As it evolved into a professional relief and development organization, World Vision was more careful to distinguish its mission from an American political agenda. When asked by an evangelical reporter what God was saying to America, Mooneyham answered: “Why should God be saying something special to America that He isn’t saying to Canada or Mexico or scores of other countries? When

⁹² Mooneyham, “Some Thoughts about the Bandwagon.” *World Vision* (May 1978): 23; Mooneyham, “The Affliction of Adjectivitis,” *World Vision* (June 1979): 23; Mooneyham, “United We Fall,” *World Vision* (April 1980): 23.

⁹³ Sue Avery, “World Vision – Food and Faith,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 25, 1980, SG1

⁹⁴ “Back to that Old-time Religion,” *Time*, Dec. 1977, 58.

God did speak to other nations other than His people, Israel, it was most often an announcement of judgment.”⁹⁵

Long after other humanitarian agencies had distanced themselves from American foreign policy, World Vision maintained a close relationship with the U.S. government. It stayed in Vietnam until U.S. military evacuated its staff in 1975. But by 1978 it returned to Southeast Asia against U.S. advice. As Vietnam returned to war against Cambodia and China, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese fled their country. Over 277,000 attempted to flee by boat, but with inadequate supplies, piracy throughout the South China Sea, and no countries willing to accept them, the refugees stood little chance of survival. On discovering their plight, Mooneyham appealed to his government connections only to be told to forget the “boat people.” Never one to take orders, he decided that World Vision would act on its own.⁹⁶

In 1978, World Vision bought a boat and set sail on the South China Sea looking to rescue Vietnamese refugees. The boat found no refugees and proved unseaworthy. Mooneyham procured a replacement, but no country would grant it registration. Finally, he convinced Honduras to license the vessel. Flying under the Honduran flag, he christened the vessel Seasweep. “Operation Seasweep” commenced in July 1979. Since no country would accept the refugees, they could only offer food, fresh water, and medical treatment to the refugees they encountered. They made Bibles available on

⁹⁵ Mooneyham to John Kenyon, Associate Editor of *Christian Herald*, April 2, 1980 (Mooneyham Papers, WVI Central Records)

⁹⁶ J. A. Eckrom, “Operation Seasweep: When World Vision Went to Sea” (WVUS Archives); W Stanley Mooneyham, *Sea of Heartbreak* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980). Tom Getman, former congressional aide to Senator Mark Hatfield and subsequent WVI staffer remembered Hatfield giving Mooneyham help to secure World Vision’s first boat. See Interview with Thomas Getman, retired World Vision Executive Director for International Relations, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, February 26, 2009 <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-thomas-getman-retired-world-vision-executive-director-for-international-relations > (Accessed Dec. 10, 2011).

request. But “Operation Seasweep” also helped turn the world’s attention to the refugees’ predicament. Sympathizers called it advocacy. Detractors called it a public relations stunt. Many humanitarian agencies decried the mission as ill-conceived, another example of World Vision’s working counter to local and long-term development principles.⁹⁷

If Seasweep failed in rescuing refugees, it succeeded in garnering press coverage. World Vision highlighted the “boat people” in its own fundraising appeals, magazine, and films, but it received international attention when the BBC came on board to film its own documentary, *The Desperate Voyage*.⁹⁸ Soon Seasweep found its way into newspapers, national newscasts, and even *People* magazine.⁹⁹ After four weeks in Southeast Asia, Mooneyham flew back to the U.S. to capitalize on the media attention. Publicity led to a spike in donations and exposure to new audiences beyond the evangelical base. It also contributed to the decision of the United Nations and sixty-five nations to pledge financial support for the refugees. President Carter reversed course and ordered U.S. navy ships to assist in rescuing refugees and offering them asylum in the U.S. Other western countries followed suit. World Vision claimed Seasweep not only as a

⁹⁷ Michael Lee, “World Vision, Go Home!” *Christian Century* (May 16, 1979): 542-544

⁹⁸ *The Desperate Voyage*, BBC, 1979; World Vision produced its own film, *Escape to Nowhere* in 1978 and a revised edition in 1979 (WVUS Archives). For coverage in World Vision’s magazine, see “One Family’s Ordeal,” *World Vision* (September 1978): 12-13; Burt Singleton, “Operation Seasweep: Our First Encounters,” *World Vision* (September 1978): 11-13; “We Knew We Were All Going to Die,” *World Vision* (December 1978): 14-15; Kenneth L. Wilson, “On the Edge of Freedom,” *World Vision* (April 1979): 11; Kenny Waters, “1400 Tons of Compassion,” 93 Faces of Joy,” *World Vision* (August 1979): 3-7; Kenneth L. Wilson, “Seasweep’s New Mission,” *World Vision* (October 1979): 3-7; “Seasweep II Begins,” *World Vision* (May 1979):16.

⁹⁹ Sally Koris, “Stan Mooneyham Gets Help at Last in His Fight to Save the Boat People,” *People*, August 6, 1979; James Quig, “One Man’s Mission to Save Refugees,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 1979, 1,10; Gerald Utting, “Captain Courageous Leads Fight for Life in Voyage from Hell,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 18, 1979, 1,10; Paul Dean, “Coming to the Aid of the Boat People,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1979. p. E1 “Refugees: More Trials for the Boat People,” *Time*, August 13, 1979; “Interviewing Boat People Survivors,” *60 Minutes*, June 24, 1980.

marketing and humanitarian success but also as its first success in shaping public and political opinion.¹⁰⁰

Seasweep demonstrated World Vision's willingness to second-guess and criticize U.S. policy.¹⁰¹ Yet among American donors, Mooneyham still appealed to faith and freedom as the nation's founding values:

I keep remembering that our country was conceived in the hearts of a group of families who also prized freedom above everything else, and sailed on a perilous journey to give birth to this nation under God. They too were refugees from tyranny. And they gave us our heritage as the land of the free and the home of the brave. From that day until this, we have never refused to open our hearts, our hands, yes, and our doors to any people who sought to live as free men.... God has promised to bless the people who do justly and show mercy. You know I believe He'll bless you if you'll extend a loving and compassionate hand to these homeless and unwanted refugees.¹⁰²

Mooneyham ended his appeal by melding the Beatitudes with Emma Lazarus' poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. In tying "blessed are the merciful" with "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses," Mooneyham criticized the U.S. for not living up to its mission. He resorted to the traditional evangelical jeremiad, lamenting America's failure to live as a Christian nation.¹⁰³

World Vision's rhetoric occasionally relapsed into the language of American exceptionalism, but it also began to demonstrate where its Christian mission diverged from American foreign policy. World Vision became one of the first humanitarian organizations to return to Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. It

¹⁰⁰ J. A. Eckrom, "Operation Seasweep: When World Vision Went to Sea." World Vision staff disagreed over the significance of Seasweep. While it had little impact on organizational development and program implementation, it did raise World Vision's public profile. Bill Kliewer interview by author, June 27, 2007, Monrovia, CA; Dave Toyce interview by author, May 28, 2010, phone.

¹⁰¹ Mooneyham talked of the "indifferent and cynical neglect" of the world's governments. He admitted, "I was angry at the international bureaucrats and governments of the world who ignore this problem as if it did not exist." *Escape to Nowhere*, 1978 (WVUS Archives). Quoted in Hamilton, "An Historical Study of Bob Pierce," 229, 233.

¹⁰² *Escape to Nowhere*, 1979, revised edition (WVUS Archives); Hamilton, 241-2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

committed itself to reopening its National Pediatric Hospital and help the new Cambodian government provide healthcare to its people. Moving beyond the Christian anticommunism of an earlier generation, World Vision assisted a communist regime for the first time.¹⁰⁴

World Vision's renewed work in Cambodia gave it courage to break from Western interests in other areas. In the early 1980s, it worked with other communists regimes in Ethiopia and funded programs in Sandinista-governed Nicaragua. While American evangelicals deepened their commitment to Israel, World Vision spoke out against Israel's invasion of Lebanon and advocated for Palestinians' human and civil rights. Not only did such positions oppose U.S. policies, they also conflicted with the views of the core evangelical constituency.¹⁰⁵

World Vision vowed to stick to its Christian principles even if they led to positions that cost it donor support, but it found that putting its principles into practice often led to internal tensions with efforts to maximize income, expand programs, and heighten its professional reputation.¹⁰⁶ Latin America served as one setting for major expansion.¹⁰⁷ World Vision had funded small programs in Latin America for many years,

¹⁰⁴ Mooneyham, "Cambodia: Does the World Care?" *World Vision* (Nov. 1979): 3-7; Paul Jones, "Inside Cambodia Wounds only God Can Heal," *World Vision* (Feb. 1980): 3-6; Paul Jones; Mooneyham, "Kampuchea: It Is Worth Beginning Again," *World Vision* (Mar. 1980): 3-9.

¹⁰⁵ Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership," 416-7. Lee Huhn, "Dateline Nicaragua," *World Vision* (Oct. 1979): 18-19; Alan Maltun, "Israel Accused of Halting Mercy Ship," *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 1982, SG1; "Press-Time Report: Inside Lebanon," *World Vision* (Aug 1982): 12-13, 18; W. Stanley Mooneyham, "Shattered Buildings, Broken Lives," *World Vision* (Sept. 1982): 3-11; Jean Bouchebel, WVI, Former National Director for Lebanon, currently fundraiser for Arabic Ministries in US, interview by author, June 10, 2010, Monrovia, CA, digital recording. Roberta Hestenes, "Laying the Foundations: Brief Reflections on WV History."

¹⁰⁶ David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 284. WVUS Annual Reports, 1978-80 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁰⁷ The budget for World Vision's Latin American programs grew from \$400,000 in 1975 to \$27.2 million by 1983. In 1977, the budget expanded by 70 percent in a single year. It grew by 59 percent in 1978, 48 percent in 1979, 44 percent in 1980, 46 percent in 1981, 26 percent in 1982, and 21 percent in 1983. World Vision Board of Directors' Minutes, Sept.14-15, 1982 (WVI Central Records)

often supporting progressive evangelicals like the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL). FTL criticized Western evangelicals for their lack of social engagement and it conducted dialogues with liberation theologians. World Vision exposed its donors to these positions, even reprinting in its magazine the sermons of martyred Salvadorian bishop Oscar Romero.¹⁰⁸ Yet it raised suspicions when expanding its own programs in Latin America. Many appreciated that it did not fit the Western missionary model, but it earned a reputation as too big, too flashy, and too independent. Latin American evangelicals liked it that World Vision hired locals and worked in grassroots communities, but other established humanitarian and mission agencies felt that they had been pushed aside. World Vision's rhetoric favored partnerships with other Christians, but local programs only appeared to hire conservative evangelicals.

In 1981, World Vision lost control of its program in Honduras. Alongside CEDEN, the mainline Protestant relief agency and CARITAS, the Catholic agency, World Vision maintained camps for Salvadorian refugees fleeing El Salvador's civil war. The humanitarian agencies suspected that the Honduran government was supplying names of dissidents to the Salvadorians. All agencies except World Vision refused to provide lists of refugees to the Honduran government. An uproar ensued after World Vision allowed Honduran officials to take two refugees from its camp—refugees who turned up dead. The Catholic human rights NGO, Pax Christi, mounted a public campaign against World Vision, labeling it a “Trojan horse” of U.S. foreign policy and accusing it of collaboration with the CIA and Honduran secret police, the theft of food

¹⁰⁸ Oscar A. Romero, “Taking Risks for the Poor,” *World Vision* (June 1982): 6-7; Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, 285.

aid, aggressive proselytism, and subversion of the work of other Christian agencies.¹⁰⁹

World Vision fought back, denying any connection with the CIA or Honduran government, but internally it admitted that a number of the accusations had merit and laid the blame at the feet of the local program staff. The project director, a renegade anticommunist Cuban exile, had used the program to promote his own political and theological agenda, stealing food, and pressuring Catholics to convert. World Vision shut down the program and fired or transferred much of its local staff.¹¹⁰

Pax Christi's unrelenting accusations in the press took a toll on World Vision.¹¹¹ Depictions of World Vision as a professional and progressive organization were displaced by renewed characterizations of the organization as a fundamentalist puppet of American foreign policy. World Vision's internal report admitted that outsiders saw it as "active, organized, compassionate, but naïve." The report continued:

In large part we remain not only evangelical, but also conservative, essentially North American, and consciously non-involved with those issues having the most sensitive political ramifications.... In trying to remain apolitical, we became frozen around inaction and security. So we communicated that we favored status quo while others more actively defended human rights.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Human Rights Reports of the Mission Honduras/Salvadorian Refugees," Pax Christi International, 1981 (WVI Central Records).

¹¹⁰ Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, 286–290.

¹¹¹ Kenneth L. Woodward, "Missionaries on the Line," *Time*, March 8, 1972, 69–70; Maria Rodriguez Araya, "U.S. Relief Agency Accused of Complicity with Honduran Military," *Latinamerica Press*, Feb. 25, 1982, 7–8; Steve Askin, "Hostility, Conflict Engulf World Vision," *National Catholic Reporter*, April 23, 1982, 9ff. World Vision continued to call for Pax Christi to issue a retraction throughout the 1980s including private meetings with leadership throughout the Catholic Church. See "A Summary of the Pax Christi World Vision Controversy Prepared for His Eminence, Cardinal Franz Koenig by World Vision," July 1986; Graeme Irvine, "A Statement to the Executive Committee of Pax Christi International, April 1988 (WVI Central Records).

¹¹² "WVI Pax Christi Report." World Vision did its own extensive investigation of the Honduran program. See Tony Atkins, "Report of an Investigation of the Refugee Relief Program of World Vision In Honduras," Nov. 24, 1981 (WVI Central Records).

World Vision realized that distinguishing themselves from American foreign policy was no longer enough. Its work in Latin America served as a wake-up call. It had hoped to avoid politics but it now realized that its Christian identity called it to advocacy.

Conclusion

Over the decade, President Mooneyham led World Vision's evolution from an American mission agency to the world's largest Christian humanitarian organization. While his vision diverged from founder Bob Pierce, in many ways, the two leaders had much in common. Wearisome travel, constant expansion, and exposure to the world's most difficult areas took its toll. Mooneyham's marriage dissolved, he adopted a more dictatorial leadership style, refused accountability, and lost the support of the board. He resigned in 1982.¹¹³

Yet, Mooneyham had taken World Vision in new directions. The organization grew savvier as it expanded its marketing to broader demographics and adopted new relief and development methods. It reconfigured its American and evangelical identity as it pursued internationalization and professionalization. Yet despite the changes, World Vision admitted that it had an image problem. Many still saw the organization as inflexible, isolationist, Western, and fundamentalist.¹¹⁴ From the opposite side of the spectrum, others believed it had abandoned missions and evangelical fidelity. The question among donors, peer agencies, religious leaders, and critics remained, "who was World Vision?" By the 1980s, World Vision had embraced its transition from evangelical mission agency to Christian relief and development organization, but change was coming

¹¹³ "President's Report," Board of Directors' Minutes, Sept 14-15, 1982 (WVI Central Records); Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 94.

¹¹⁴ Mooneyham remarked to World Vision leadership that the organizational evolution would take five to ten years to register with World Vision's peers and critics. Mooneyham to International Affairs Committee, Aug. 16-19, 1982 (WVI Central Records)

too fast. World Vision was still debating what it wanted to be. It could not escape the question: how could it retain its evangelical heritage while it was evolving into an international relief and development organization willing to work in ways—and alongside other organizations—that troubled evangelicals attuned to narrowly American identities and interests and older visions of what evangelicalism meant? Was it abandoning evangelicalism or was it redefining what it could mean to be an evangelical Christian?

CHAPTER 7

A CHANGING WORLD VISION. A CHANGING EVANGELICALISM? 1983-1995

By the early 1980s, World Vision cast its lot alongside international relief and development agencies and away from its American, evangelical, and missionary-centered roots. In ten years, it had expanded dramatically: from 1976 to 1984, its annual income grew by 500 percent.¹ Its budget doubled again from 1983 to 1986. Along with increased government funding, its gift-in-kind (GIK) receipts grew eighty-five fold over the same four year period.² World Vision struggled to manage its growth. In addressing the World Vision board, new WVI President Tom Houston admitted, “We traveled so far so fast that we left even our heads behind sometimes in what we did.... Now we are needing to learn to move from a dashing to a disciplined lifestyle.” New leaders realized the organization was “due for a resetting of the compass.”³ The decade was a roller-coaster of ups and down. Yet by the 1990s, it returned to double-digit annual growth and emerged as a fixture among the ten largest international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).⁴

If its original identity had left it on the fringes of the relief and development establishment, its size, professionalization, and expertise now prompted other INGOs to take a second look. The new recognition led World Vision to restate its mission. Later WVI President Graeme Irvine remarked: “If World Vision does not speak about itself

¹ WVI’s 1976 income totaled \$27,358,000 million and grew to \$127,400,000 by 1984. Field staff grew from 260 to 1800 over the same period. WVI Annual Reports, 1976 and 1984 (WVI Central Records); “Commission on Internationalization, 1978-1983, Interim Report,” Sept. 1984 (WVI Central Records).

² WVI only began to record any significant GIK funding in 1981, and that had grown by 100% by 1984. The following years, GIK funding grew astronomically from \$US 945,000 in 1984 to \$80 million in 1986. Tom Houston, WVI President, “Partnership in Transition,” 1986 International Council Address, Sept. 16, 1986 (WVI Central Records); International Affairs Committee, Aug. 22-24, 1984 (WVI Central Records).

³ Houston, “Partnership in Transition.”

⁴ World Vision cracked the top ten as the ninth largest INGO in 1990, and never again fell out of the top ten. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 96.

with accuracy and truth, others will speak of it out of ignorance and distortion.”⁵ Yet the desire for clarity collided with new diversity and division within the organization.

It had already adopted an international rather than an exclusively American outlook, a holistic mission, and a broad evangelicalism willing to work with ecumenical and non-Christian groups. Its new place in the culture of international organizations pushed World Vision to restate its Christian identity as the principle holding the organization together. But what did the Christian identity now mean for the organization? Did it require different practices? Did it mean distinctive methodologies? Did it require structural changes? Should it entail different relations to Christian, religious, and secular partners, and to donors? Such questions produced vigorous internal debate.

The Ethiopian Famine: World Vision’s Turning Point

In 1984-1985, famine in Ethiopia dominated international headlines. Before the famine, World Vision’s work in Africa lagged behind its work in other regions. After the catastrophe, the continent of Africa consumed its attention.⁶ In 1981, it released *Crisis in the Horn of Africa*. Like earlier television appeals, it featured celebrities in studio alongside firsthand footage of hungry children. A television crew filmed President Mooneyham as he transported the sick to medical clinics. The crew flew on a World Vision plane to distribute grain to remote villagers. And they visited an over-crowded feeding center to capture images of children with flies on their faces and mothers with withered breasts, unable to feed their babies. The resulting television film provided the highest return on investment of any World Vision television appeal, and the

⁵ Graeme Irvine, “Relationships Require Work,” May 4, 1993 (WVI Central Records); Roberta Hestenes, WVI International Council Moderator, “How Do Others See Us?” 1986 International Council Address, Sept. 18, 1986, (WVI Central Records).

⁶ In 1983, World Vision spent 28,949,766 in the Americas, 18,244,509 in Asia, 17,854,388 in Europe and the Middle East, and 13,312,280 in Africa. “World Vision 1983 Field Report;” (WVI Central Records).

malnourished African child became the human face of humanitarian relief in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷

Closing its offices in Southeast Asia, World Vision turned wholeheartedly to Africa. It had already acted to relieve the Biafra famine in the African Sahel during the 1970s. By 1980, it established a Relief and Rehabilitation Division, designed for large humanitarian emergencies. With more attention to famines, natural disasters, and international politics, World Vision attempted to deploy resources more quickly, manage complex logistics, and handle large shipments of relief goods while raising its profile among the international aid community.⁸

By late 1983, World Vision realized that severe drought was creating a humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia. That same year, Tom Houston became the president. He was the first non-American president, but he maintained an evangelical and ministerial voice. He had been a pastor in native Scotland and Nairobi, Kenya. He was a player in the Lausanne movement and directed the British and Foreign Bible Society before moving to World Vision.⁹ In his new job, he sensed the tensions quickly. Support and field countries fought over autonomy and control while the staff struggled to implement

⁷ *Crisis in the Horn of Africa*, 1981 (WVUS Film Archives); Ken Waters, "How World Vision Rose From Obscurity To Prominence: Television Fundraising, 1972-1982," *American Journalism* 15, no. 4 (1998): 81-83. Waters notes that *Crisis in the Horn of Africa* produced \$9.23 pledged for every dollar spent in production and purchasing air time. World Vision Magazine articles and direct appeals reiterated the stories and images. See Stan Mooneyham, "A Disturbing Silence," *World Vision* (July 1981): 3-8; Mooneyham, "Life Revived, Laughter Restored," *World Vision* (Nov. 1981): 3-8. One World Vision staffer notes, "Today, through television and such magazines as this one, you and I look into Ethiopian eyes whose glaze expresses as much agony as those of Nain's poor widow or the Jericho roads' beaten robbery victim." *World Vision* (June 1983): 2. By the 1990s, World Vision and other agencies studied the impact of positive vs. negative images for fundraising and found that positive images actually garnered a greater response. Theology, development methodologies, and fundraising potential came together as World Vision began to display more positive images of children in need. Evelyn J. Dyck and Gary Coldevin, "Using Positive Vs. Negative Photographs for Third-World Fund Raising," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (September 1, 1992): 572-579.

⁸ Dean Hirsch, "World Vision's Relief Ministry," 1986 International Council Records (WVI Central Records)

⁹ Tom Houston bio; "World Vision News Release," Sept 19, 1983 (WVI Central Records)

development programs with the technical expertise. Growth had outpaced relationship-building and strategic planning.

Nevertheless, Houston gambled World Vision's reputation on the Ethiopian crisis. He took charge of a new African Drought Project and pledged over twenty-five million dollars of unbudgeted funds. Some within the organization viewed Houston's move as an attempt to circumvent local control. Others realized that it brought support that the local World Vision Ethiopian staff could not alone provide.¹⁰

World Vision was one of several INGOs providing emergency Ethiopian relief. Agencies attempted to alert donors through direct appeals, but the severity of the famine remained underreported. Ethiopia's Marxist government prevented foreign journalists from entering the country and few media outlets would press the issue, but in October 1984, a World Vision plane took two reporters, Mohamed Amin and Michael Buerk, into the country.¹¹ When the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast their footage on October 23, the famine became international news. Amin alternated close-ups of malnourished children with pictures of hungry people in lines that stretched for miles. Buerk's narration depicted Ethiopia as "hell on earth." The original BBC footage garnered an estimated audience of 470 million viewers. *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw picked up the story. *60 Minutes* soon followed. Within a month all three major U.S. networks featured the famine. Camera crews flooded every INGO refugee camp.¹²

¹⁰ Houston, "African Drought Project," (WVI Central Records); "Africa's Agony: Drought Withers a Mighty Continent," *World Vision* (Aug-Sept 1984); Graeme Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times: An Insider's View of World Vision* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, 1996), 98. Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 9, 2010, Monrovia, CA.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹² Susan D Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War And Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 111–117; Jonathan Benthall, *Disasters, Relief, and the Media* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993), 84–5.

Funds for famine relief poured into international charities. British musician Bob Geldof established his Band-Aid organization and gathered fellow recording artists to raise money. Their song, “Do They Know Its Christmas?” climbed to number one on the charts, selling over six million copies, and raising over eight million dollars. In 1985, Geldof organized Live-Aid, a global concert that attracted 70,000 to London’s Wembley Stadium, 80,000 to John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia, and over 1.5 million others watching live through satellite. The concert raised another \$80 million for famine relief and empowered bands like U2 to take up humanitarian concerns.¹³

World Vision capitalized on the media frenzy by producing its own stream of fundraising appeals, yet aggressive marketing was not necessary. News anchors provided free publicity through interviews with relief workers and doctors. World Vision labeled 1985 “as the year the world cared.” It raised funds faster than it could create programs to spend them, its income increasing by eighty percent in a single year.¹⁴ Its funds for Ethiopian relief and development grew from six million in 1984 to seventy-one million in 1985 while its in-country staff mushroomed from 100 to 3,650.¹⁵

World Vision had already edged away from Pierce’s prohibition of governmental funding, but as it learned to handle large gifts in kind, it drew record levels of support. USAID awarded World Vision 13.5 million dollars and 1.5 million metric tons of food aid for Ethiopia. In 1985, 93 percent of World Vision US’s revenue came from federal

¹³ Subsequent royalties have brought in over \$200 million for Band-Aid to invest in relief and development work. Benthall, *Disasters, Relief, and the Media*, 84–5; Nina Shapiro, “The AIDS Evangelists,” *Seattle Weekly*, November 15, 2006, <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2006-11-15/news/the-aids-evangelists/>; Mark Moring, “Songs of Justice, Missions of Mercy: Why Christian Musicians Are Embarking on a Different Kind of World Tour,” *Christianity Today* (November 2009): 30–37. The Ethiopian Crisis introduced U2’s lead singer, Bono, to World Vision and would lead to a continued relationship.

¹⁴ 1985 WVI Annual Report (WVI Central Records).

¹⁵ *Ibid*; Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 100.

dollars. The percentage dropped to 87 percent in 1986 and 42.3 percent in 1987, but the Ethiopian famine made World Vision a major broker of federal humanitarian aid.¹⁶

The rise in federal assistance required professionalization. World Vision hired consultants away from USAID and other INGOs to establish new programs almost overnight. New grants created logistical nightmares. Purchasing fleets of trucks, establishing feeding centers, and training short-term staff, World Vision learned to navigate governmental bureaucracies and contract with other INGOs for services it could not yet provide. It scrambled to implement means of evaluation to meet the accounting standards of its government donors.¹⁷

Even as it took in millions of dollars for emergency aid, World Vision realized that famine relief was not enough. Like other INGOs, it began to move from relief to development. World Vision introduced USAID funded “food for work programs” that provided agricultural assistance packages (AGPAKs) to Ethiopian families, giving them the seeds and supplies to plant one hectare of land. Farmers received an ox and plow; herdsmen got sheep or goats. World Vision drilled wells and stepped up its work in agricultural training. By 1986, it presented Ethiopia’s Ansokia Valley as a model for success. A barren region that only two years earlier had housed 60,000 Ethiopians in a World Vision feeding center now emerged as a “green oasis” with the return of the rains and INGO-led community development projects.¹⁸

¹⁶ McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 134. WVI notes that GIK made up 27.3 percent of their income in 1984, 61.9 percent in 1985, and 59.4 percent in 1986. 1986 WVI Annual Report (WVI Central Records). Today, GIK makes up approximately 50% of World Vision’s budget. GIK includes not U.S., U.N., and other bilateral aid as well as donations from corporations. Food and pharmaceutical donations make up the majority of World Vision’s GIK.

¹⁷ Hirsch, “World Vision’s Relief Ministry.”

¹⁸ “Ethiopia: The Nightmare Begins,” World Vision Appeal Letter, 1988 (WVI Central Records); Rachel Veale, “Dignity amid Poverty in Ethiopia: From Relief to Development” *World Vision* (April/May 1986): 12-14; “Ansokia Valley,” *Together* (Oct/Dec 1985): 18. Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 104–105.

World Vision now moved to large-scale development (LSD), which it defined as projects budgeted over one million dollars, lasting at least three years, and aiding multiple communities. Before the era of rapid budget growth and government aid, World Vision had worked mainly at the village level. Now it believed LSD projects would increase the reach of the organization and draw more funding. LSD projects required higher technical standards for staff members, more complex logistical structures, and closer interaction with local governments. They also required a high level of federal aid. World Vision's leaders knew that few INGOs had succeeded with large-scale programs, but they could capture the attention of USAID, foundations, and other funding agencies. World Vision stood to gain substantial fundraising and publicity if its large-scale approach succeeded, but failure would be costly. The stakes were high but so was World Vision's optimism.¹⁹

After emergency aid relieved the Ethiopian famine, however, international attention waned. As crowds of hungry people disappeared from the feeding centers, camera crews moved on to other stories. By 1987, World Vision's income had shrunk to almost half its record high two years earlier.²⁰ The organization had to lay off staff, cut programs, and deplete its reserves to keep commitments. Some ugly realities came to light. The INGOs and media had depicted the famine as a natural disaster from years of drought, but Ethiopia's government had also spent its own money on weapons to fight a counterinsurgency instead of meeting the basic needs of its citizens. For access to the

¹⁹ John A. Kenyon, "Moving from Relief to Development," *Together* (Oct/Dec. 1985): 12-13; Stephen K. Commins, "Big Goals, Big Problems," *Together* (Oct/Dec. 1985): 20-23. Cliff Benzel, "Large Scale Development: A New Ministry for World Vision," prepared for World Vision International Affairs Committee, Feb. 1986 (WVI Central Records). *Ibid.*, 107. World Vision attempted to establish 11 LSDs in Africa between 1985-1987.

²⁰ In 1985, World Vision's annual income was \$231.5 million dollars. In 1986, it had slipped to \$164 million. By 1987, it totaled \$127 million. WVI Annual Report, 1987 (WVI Central Records).

feeding centers, INGOs had been compelled to ignore political irresponsibility in Ethiopia.²¹ Work with local governments would become increasingly difficult as INGOs moved from providing emergency relief to implementing long-term development.

World Vision reevaluated its engagement in Ethiopia. While some INGOs still saw the organization as “aggressive and uncooperative,” operating more like a fire brigade than a seasoned development agency, it succeeded in making the jump into the select circle of large INGOs, becoming a leader in fundraising, emergency relief, and cooperation with the U.S. government. But the difficulty of fundraising and Large-Scale Development projects entailed a scaling back of effort.²² Expansion had required hiring staff members who did not share its Christian values. Growth followed by budget slashing also created tensions, often between fundraisers from Western support countries and development staff in the field offices of the global South. It was not easy to function among the elite echelon of international relief and development agencies, but there was no going back.²³

INGOs and a Shared World Culture

In the 1980s, the combined budgets of INGOs almost tripled from 2.3 to 6 billion dollars.²⁴ Western governments turned to these agencies to administer most of their humanitarian aid. From 1970 to 1990, government aid to NGOs increased from under

²¹ Alex de Waal, “Humanitarianism Unbound?”, November 1994, <http://www.netnomad.com/DeWaal.html> (Accessed Mar. 3, 2011); Ken Waters and Sandy Young, “The Art & Ethics of Fundraising,” *Christianity Today* 45, no. 15 (December 3, 2001): 50–52.

²² World Vision quickly scaled back initial projections of \$200 million over 5 years to \$6-10 million per year. Staff cutbacks and turnover eventually led the project to raise a total of \$18 million. Sam Voorhies, “Large Scale Development: A Review of World Vision’s Large Scale Development Programs,” World Vision Staff Working Paper No. 11, 1991 (WVI Central Records). “LSD History, Analysis, and Status,” Cliff Benzel to Hal Barber, Feb. 13, 1986 (WVI Central Records)

²³ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 101.

²⁴ Roger Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 48.

\$200 million to 2.2 billion dollars.²⁵ Government funds allowed the biggest agencies to continue to expand while upstarts like World Vision received substantial federal aid for the first time. It soon learned to speak the common language of an INGO culture.²⁶

Models of development also changed that culture as agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded that developing nations make structural adjustments in order to receive foreign aid. Favoring neo-liberal economics, they required the reduction of government spending, deregulation of public institutions, and free trade. The theory linked under-development with corruption and inefficiency. If they could privatize the public sector, free markets would benefit everyone. In reality, however, the demands led governments to cut social services. Western aid once funneled directly to foreign governments now went to the INGOs.²⁷ Growing numbers of western expatriates and locals made their living in the humanitarian industry. When one INGO's grant expired, they moved on to another agency. As agencies imitated each other, swapped staff, and worked alongside each other, they began to reflect the contours of a shared culture.

²⁵ Tara Hefferan, Julie Adkins, and Laurie A Occhipinti, *Bridging the Gaps: Faith-based Organizations, Neoliberalism, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 4.

²⁶ McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 106–8; Rachel M. McCleary, "Taking God Overseas: Competition and Institutional Homogeneity Among International Religious Private Voluntary Organizations," *International Studies Association*, 2004, 22.

²⁷ Sharon Harper, ed., *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Reflections at the Ection of Science, Religion, and Development* (Ottawa: IDRC, 2000), 71–72; Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 176; Leys, Colin, "Rise and Fall of Development Theory," in *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism*, ed. Angelique Haugerud and Edleman, Marc (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 113; Tara Hefferan, *Twinning Faith and Development: Catholic Parish Partnering in the Haiti* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007), 48.

Scholars have pointed to INGO growth to illustrate the effects of globalization.²⁸ Without denying either complexity or local diversity, they emphasize its power to shape an overarching “world culture.”²⁹ Nation-states, transnational corporations, and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) set the norms for this common culture, but INGOs often mediate them to civil society. This shared world culture appears rationalized, linked closely to science, production-oriented, and professional. Some scholars claim that INGOs often come to embody and reflect the secularized world culture they help to promote.³⁰

World culture theorists posit that as INGOs come into closer contact with governments, IGOs, and one another, they exhibit a homogenization of language, practice, and organization. To some scholars, this is known as “institutional isomorphism.” Within international relief and development, the desire for federal funding led many INGOs to adopt a minimum level of professionalization and regulation required by government authorities. At other times, a desire to gain cultural legitimacy among donors or a need to compete with other INGOs served as the impetus for imitation. As a

²⁸ As defined by Peter Beyer and José Casanova, globalization is “connected to western institutions and the modernization of the capitalist economy, nation state, and scientific rationality in the form of modern technology.” Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London, U.K.; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994), 8; Jose Casanova, “Religion, the New Millennium, and Globalization,” *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 4 (2001): 423.

²⁹ Peter Berger names four cultural forms of globalization: 1) an international business culture; 2) an intellectual elite and progressive NGO culture; 3) popular culture; and 4) popular religious culture in the form of a global evangelicalism or Pentecostalism. These cultural forms interact with each other and engage in a give and take with local cultures. All four of Berger’s formulations help us analyze an international NGO such as World Vision Peter L Berger and Samuel P Huntington, eds., *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World / Ed by Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6–8.

³⁰ John Boli and David V. Brewington, “Religious Organizations,” in *Religion, Globalization, and Culture*, ed. Peter Beyer and Lori G Beaman (Boston: Leiden, 2007), 203–231; John Boli and George M Thomas, “World Culture in the World Polity: A Century of International Non-Governmental Organization,” *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 2 (1997): 171–190; John Boli and Thomas, George M., “Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875”, 1999; Joshua J. Yates, “To Save the World: Humanitarianism and World Culture” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2006), 7–9.

recognized field of international relief and development solidified, the leading INGOs came to look remarkably similar.³¹

World culture theorists predicted that the INGOs would become “modern” and secular.³² Like the sociologist of religion Max Weber, they foresaw a privatization of religion or a transition from charismatic to bureaucratic authority.³³ It seemed to follow that even though an organization like World Vision claimed a religious identity, it would eventually function like any other secular relief and development INGOs within its field. In presuming a shared world culture, these theorists ignored religion.

Other scholars, however, pointed to the resurgence of public religions in the modern world, or drew attention to the plethora of religiously diverse humanitarianism organizations.³⁴ While a cosmopolitan, transnational elite stratum of international relief and development agencies might share a common world culture, others would resist it. Working among largely secular organizations, these resisters held on to religious motives that made them more complex than the secularization theorists recognized. They did not see inevitable conflict between religion and humanitarianism. They held on to fluid identities that combined religious values and technical expertise.³⁵

³¹ PJ DiMaggio and W.W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

³² José Casanova notes the frequent linkage of globalization to secularization, which he defines primarily as 1) a differentiation of religious and secular spheres; 2) a decline of religion; 3) or a privatization of religion José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19–38.

³³ Max Weber, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building, Selected Papers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Mark Chaves, “Secularization as Declining Religious Authority,” *Social Forces* 72, no. 3 (March 1994): 749–774; Mark Chaves, “Intraorganizational Power and Internal Secularization in Protestant Denominations,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 1 (July 1993): 1–48.

³⁴ Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 17–38. Casanova recognizes the differentiation of religious and secular spheres, but he dismisses claims about religious decline and questions the privatization thesis. He insists that there has been a revival of public religions alongside the fundamentalisms that other scholars identify as simply a reaction against modernity.

³⁵ Evelyn L. Bush, “Measuring Religion in Global Civil Society,” *Social Forces* 85, no. 4 (2007): 1645–8.

Such issues permeated discussions within World Vision. Evangelical R&D agencies expanded throughout the 1980s, and by the end of the decade, six of the seven largest evangelical mission agencies were R&D organizations. These combined an evangelical religious identity with humanitarian work.³⁶ World Vision was distinctive because it inhabited both the evangelical world and the culture of the large elite INGOs.³⁷ Some within World Vision worried about this. They feared that government funding would silence the evangelistic impulse. They petitioned World Vision to limit reliance on government support so as not to compromise its mission. Others saw federal funding as the ticket to expansive growth and lobbied to create programs in accord with government funding priorities.³⁸

World Vision would not abandon the drive toward professionalization. Staff members affirmed its Christian identity, but more of them now came with experience in other development agencies, university appointments, or government posts.³⁹

³⁶ From 1980 to 2005, the Association of Evangelical Relief Agencies (AERDO) expanded from ten to forty-seven affiliates. Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, 2000, 118, 130; Gary F. VanderPol, "The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005" (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 218–9; McCleary, "Taking God Overseas."

³⁷ WVI President Ted Engstrom expressed a perpetual concern to leading staff, "I am concerned that we never forget our roots in World Vision. Constantly be aware of staying close to our roots of evangelism and biblical social concerns." International Affairs Committee, Feb. 14-17, 1983 (WVI Central Records)

³⁸ For example, by 1987, World Vision launched its Child Survival and Beyond campaign to reduce infant mortality and immunize six million vulnerable children by 1990. The program fit World Vision's focus on children and sponsorship but also met the priorities of UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). As a result, World Vision became a leading recipient of USAID child survival grants. See Jack Kenyon, "Child Survival: A Time to Be Moved," *Together* (Oct-Dec 1987): 1. World Vision devoted this entire issue to child survival highlighting the criteria of the WHO and its own work. Also see the International Affairs Committee, Feb. 9-10, 1982 (WVI Central Records). World Vision also realized that procuring government funding and commodities would allow it to grow while reducing costly overhead that went along with traditional fundraising.

³⁹ Stephen Commins served as an example of a new type of World Vision employee. Commins served as Director of Policy and Planning at WVI and implemented much of World Vision's integrated development policies. An Episcopal priest, Commins came to World Vision from Directing the Development Institute at the UCLA African Studies Center. He held a doctorate in urban planning and later went on to work for the World Bank.

Government funding and large-scale programs led to new layers of logistics and expertise. Some worried that faith did not run as deep in these newcomers as the first generation, but they could no longer afford to hire pastors and missionaries and give them on the job training. World Vision expected both professionalism and piety, but when forced to choose, some favored technical expertise.⁴⁰

World Vision's leaders followed the latest in development practice but tried to interpret them with a biblical and Christian vernacular, but many of them now spoke also the language of international humanitarianism. Secular development may not have been their mother tongue, but many had become bilingual. What did it then mean to be a Christian development agency? The discussions produced no consensus.⁴¹

Nonetheless, World Vision did pursue partnerships outside its evangelical context. Forging them was not easy. Many still saw World Vision as arrogant, uncooperative, and American. World Vision sometimes perpetuated these stereotypes, and the humanitarian industry's old guard had little incentive to open its doors to "upstarts." Yet, by 1985, World Vision had gained consultative status with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Programme (WFP). A few years later it added the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to the list.⁴² When Pierce founded World Vision in 1950, few evangelicals trusted the United Nations. By the mid-1980s, Pierce's organization was making UN initiatives central to its own work.

⁴⁰ WVI VP Manfred Grellert described the perpetual tensions between piety and professionalism within World Vision, "You may have a bunch of pious folks who are stupid, and a bunch of technocrats who are shallow. And neither exemplify our aspirations to have both of them put together." Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007, Monrovia, CA, tape recording.

⁴¹ Bryant Myers, "World Vision's Development Ministry: Issues for the Future," presented to World Vision's International Council, 1986. Myers' paper would lead to a revision of World Vision's development policy in 1987.

⁴² Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 116-7.

Many saw bilateral partnerships as the answer to World Vision's image as narrowly American and as a way to position it as a peer among other leading INGOs. In 1985, World Vision named Australian, Graeme Irvine, as its first vice-president of International Relations. Irvine opened a World Vision office in Geneva to be near the leaders of other INGOs. He even lobbied World Vision to move its headquarters there. He failed to persuade the board, but by the end of the decade World Vision worked consistently with the United Nations, gained a seat at the World Economic Forum in Davos, and initiated bilateral aid programs with the World Bank.⁴³

The most difficult partner remained the World Council of Churches (WCC). Despite World Vision's willingness to work closely with ecumenical agencies, the evangelical-ecumenical divide proved difficult to overcome.⁴⁴ The WCC still questioned World Vision's theology and accused it of proselytism, stealing national church leaders, and Western imperialist tendencies.⁴⁵ Most often the WCC's accusations reflected past rather than present relationships, but the conflicts were also personal, as in a family feud. Over time, however, the chilly relations thawed, and in 1987, evangelical and ecumenical leaders met in Stuttgart, Germany, to write a shared statement on evangelism. Both admitted past faults and recognized with some surprise, how much they had in common.⁴⁶

⁴³ Irvine continually advocated for WVI to move its operational headquarters to Geneva to demonstrate its international character. Even after he became WVI President in 1989, he continued to press the issue without success. Despite some pressure to keep operations in the U.S., the cost of operations in Geneva was another drawback. Irvine, "How Can World Vision Become More International?," n.d. (circa 1986); Irvine, "International Relations Update," Aug. 1987; Irvine, "International Office Location Study," Mar. 3, 1987; Irvine, "Locating the International Office – Geneva Question," May 3, 1991. All found in Irvine Papers (WVI Central Records). Irvine, "The World Bank and World Vision: a Status Report," Jan 19, 1987 (WVI Central Records); Steven Commins, "World Vision International and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?," in *NGOs, States, and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 149–151.

⁴⁴ "Report on Europe Program," Irvine June 17, 1986; "International Relations Update," Newsletter of WVI, Aug. 1987

⁴⁵ "Relationship with the WCC," Global Leadership 'Team Report, Mar.2-4, 1988 (WVI Central Records)

⁴⁶ Irvine was one of 46 attendees invited to attend the Stuttgart gathering. Irvine, "International Relations Update," Newsletter of WVI, Aug. 1987 (WVI Central Records). Vinay K. Samuel and Albrecht Hauser,

In many countries, World Vision's staff worked closely with local national church councils. By 1992, the International Coordinator of UNICEF as well as the General Secretary of the WCC would bring greetings to World Vision's International Board.⁴⁷

Tensions over World Vision's Organizational Identity and Public Image

World Vision's growth required changes in the organization. Alongside expanding budgets, it opened new offices and by 1986, it operated in 92 countries. Other Western support countries raised their contributions so that soon World Vision United States supplied little more than half of the international partnership's budget.⁴⁸ Some of these offices began to downplay their evangelical identity. World Vision's name recognition in Australia stood between eighty to ninety percent, but a majority of Australians saw it as a secular development agency.⁴⁹ Only established in the late 1970s and early 1980s, World Vision's European offices had the same public image.⁵⁰ Because church-related European NGOs feared World Vision would siphon off their Christian constituents however, World Vision went in another direction, relying on government funding. They never held to a strict policy of only hiring evangelicals and came to

eds., "Statement of the Stuttgart Consultation on Evangelism," in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), 212–225; John R. W. Stott, "A Note About the Stuttgart Statement on Evangelism," in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way*, ed. Samuel, Vinay K. and Albert Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), 208–211.

⁴⁷ 1992 WVI International Council Records (WVI Central Records)

⁴⁸ Mike Still and Bryant Myers, "Financial Growth of the World Vision Partnership," Jan. 27, 1989 (WVI Central Records); "Chronology: Expenditures and Staffing since 1979," Partnership Review Committee, Dec. 9-10, 1988 (WVI Central Records); Houston, "Partnership in Transition."

⁴⁹ Bill Kliewer, WVUS Senior Director of Special Initiatives, interview by author, June 27, 2007, Monrovia, CA.

⁵⁰ World Vision's main European offices were located in Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands.

employ a broad range of Christian staff, many of whom did not interpret World Vision's Christian identity as requiring anything different from secular development.⁵¹

Not only did its Western support offices disagree on World Vision's future, but the field offices administering the programs raised their own concerns. The number of field countries doubled throughout the 1980s.⁵² World Vision pushed them to raise their own funds and establish local governing boards. In 1982, Hong-Kong became the first field office to support programs outside its borders. Other nations like South Korea soon followed.⁵³ In encouraging field countries to take ownership of their programs, World Vision empowered new voices to address local concerns as well as raise questions relevant to the entire partnership.

These new voices pressed World Vision to reposition itself in the midst of a diversifying world Christianity. In many countries, World Vision was learning to work with and often hire staff outside of its traditional evangelical fold. While an evangelical ethos still dominated, field countries now hired staff from Pentecostal, Catholic, Orthodox, and mainline traditions. Not only did evangelical staff have to learn to operate in contexts where secularism or other world religions dominated but also some began to debate about the organization's evangelical ethos. A single "World Vision story" was now impossible.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Alan Whaites, "Pursuing Partnership: World Vision and the Ideology of Development – a Case Study," *Development in Practice* 9, no. 4 (1999): 416–7.

⁵² "Chronology: Expenditures and Staffing since 1979," Partnership Review Committee, Dec. 9-10, 1988 (WVI Central Records)

⁵³ Kliewer, interview by author, June 27, 2007; "WVUS Timeline" (WVUS Archives)

⁵⁴ As this story continues, I will focus primarily on the response of World Vision United States through its interaction with these global contexts.

The East-West divisions that defined World Vision throughout the Cold War now gave way to divisions of North and South.⁵⁵ Throughout World Vision's history, Western evangelicals had celebrated the spread of a World Christianity that assimilated familiar Western forms. Two-Thirds World evangelicals reminded the Americans that the world had changed. A global Christianity would require the West to listen and reevaluate its own theology and practice.⁵⁶

Tensions abounded as World Vision expanded. While professionalization increased efficiency and government funding, some complained it conformed the organization to Western norms. While internationalization led the U.S. office to give up full control, field offices realized that only the largest fundraising countries had a real voice. Southern partners complained that they were treated as second-class citizens and demanded a more equitable partnership. Northern partners complained that the central World Vision International office operated unilaterally, focusing on the field with little regard for the wishes of its financial supporters.⁵⁷

When Houston assumed the WVI Presidency in 1985, frustrations were high. Houston responded with a reorganization plan. Instead of Western offices making decisions for field countries, he appointed three regional vice-presidents over Latin America, Asia, and Africa. With these leaders in each region, Houston hoped to give national offices a greater voice in decision-making. The following year, WVI changed its

⁵⁵ Bryant L. Myers, "Journey Toward Interdependence: The Unfinished Story of World Vision," n.d. (WVI Central Records).

⁵⁶ At the 1986 WV International Council, Manfred Grellert called for WVI to allow for unique regional strategies to "contextualize the ethos of WVI in the Latin scene." Grellert, interview by author, June 9, 2010. Samuel Kamaleon, retired WVI vice president of pastors conferences, interview by author, July 10, 2007, phone.

⁵⁷ Christopher A. Bartlett and Daniel F. Curran, *World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership*, Harvard Business School Case Study, May 17, 2005, 3–4, www.stthom.edu/Public/getFile.asp?File_Content_ID=5545J. (Accessed Mar. 1, 2011)

bylaws to balance representation from field and support countries on its governing International Council.⁵⁸

While organizational changes helped, they did not solve the problem. Support and field offices came with different priorities. Most often divisions of labor exacerbated their differences. The common assertion was that Northern countries raised the funds while Southern countries administered the programs. Both accused one another of a limited vision and a lack of understanding. Fundraisers like the U.S. office felt that the development staff minimized the difficulty of raising budgets. They complained that the field staff took too long to develop programs, and then created programs laden with so much technological-jargon that they held little interest to Western evangelical donors. The development staff complained that support offices clamored for programs that might bring in funds but would not work on the ground. If they were not technically feasible, culturally appropriate, or welcomed by the local community, the development staff argued they ran contrary to World Vision's mission.⁵⁹

A debate over development education illustrated the divisions. While claiming to be a relief and development agency, most Western fundraising offices had little knowledge of development and subdivided the mission between the work they did "at home" and the development work done "in the field." The development staff resented the pictures of malnourished children that World Vision U.S. used to raise funds, arguing that such images implied a call for simple charity that undermined the dignity of the people

⁵⁸ Houston, "World Vision Reorganization," Jan. 5, 1985 (WVI Central Records)

⁵⁹ Myers, "Journey Toward Interdependence;" Roberta Hestenes, "Laying the Foundations: Brief Reflections on our History," Mar. 16, 2006 (WVI Central Records)

they served as well as the organization's commitment to development.⁶⁰ They claimed that World Vision had a responsibility to educate its staff and donors on development.⁶¹ President Houston defined the conflict as one between idealism and pragmatism.⁶² Yes, educating donors about development was important, but marketing studies told fundraisers that images of hungry children brought in more financial resources than explanations of crop rotation or reforestation. U.S. marketers debated about the ethics of their approach, but they knew pragmatically that World Vision evaluated them on money raised over the message portrayed.⁶³

Debates over child sponsorship led to even more heated confrontations. In the late 1970s, World Vision made commitments to incorporate development into its childcare ministries and pool child sponsorship resources for the needs of an entire community. By the 1980s, some wanted to get rid of the programs for assistance to children. In the early 1980s, child sponsorship agencies faced increased scrutiny and negative publicity.

Investigative journalists uncovered isolated cases of negligence or fraud. Other

⁶⁰ Under pressure from the field offices, World Vision's marketers undertook a major study in the early 1980s to develop a fundraising philosophy that respected the dignity of people. See "Fundraising and the Dignity of People," Aug 31, 1980; "World Vision Promotion and the Dignity of People," Dec. 2, 1981; Bill Kliever, "World Vision Fundraising Philosophy," Oct. 2, 1981 (WVI Central Records).

⁶¹ In its *Together* magazine (Oct-Dec 1990), World Vision spent the entire issue debating the issue of development education. It interviewed field staff and marketers in donor countries. It included articles with titles such as "Knowledge that Leads to Enthusiasm," "What I Want Donors to Understand – A Field Perspective," "Development Education: Nicety or Necessity? – Bridging the Human Gap," "Let's Begin with the Fundraisers," "Development Education in Primary Schools?" In 2001, former WVI communication staffer Ken Waters interviewed Marty Lonsdale, VP of Marketing. Lonsdale noted a World Vision study that found "after six to twelve months... sponsors can articulate the community development story clearly." Waters and Young, "The Art & Ethics of Fundraising." Development staff were not so sure.

⁶² Houston, "Idealism vs. Pragmatism," n.d. (WVI Central Records)

⁶³ In World Vision's research into its donor base, it knew that appeals for immediate relief and impoverished children proved most successful. Ed Gruman, "1984-5 Donor Research Study," 1985 (WVI Central Records). World Vision marketers also knew they had to negotiate these truths with the overarching vision to become an integrated development agency. See Ed Gruman, "Clarifying Mission Challenge Study," 1983; Ross Arnold, "Marketing Study Final Report," Aug 8, 1986 (WVI Central Records). World Vision later drafted guidelines on what it could and could not film (for example, unclothed women and children, flies in the eyes). Joan Mussa, WVUS, Senior Vice President, Donor Engagement, Advocacy and Communications, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010, Federal Way, WA, digital recording.

mainstream media sources, including a few evangelical publications, questioned whether child sponsorship was the best way to raise money for humanitarian causes.⁶⁴ Internally, World Vision admitted that child sponsorship was difficult to administer and required enormous overhead. It worried that child sponsorship ran counter to its development values, but it also knew that sponsorship remained the most reliable and largest source of annual income.⁶⁵

In 1983, despite having enrolled over 300,000 sponsored children, an internal Sponsorship Task Force recommended that World Vision move away from its sponsorship program.⁶⁶ The fundraising offices in the U.S., Canada, and Australia experimented: Instead of assigning donors a specific child, World Vision sent information about a “representative child” and spoke of helping children in community. With its focus on the Ethiopia famine in 1984, World Vision decided to stop acquiring new sponsors altogether. After two years, however, World Vision saw a substantial decline in its sponsor fulfillment rates. Marketers realized that people were not connecting to a “representative child.”⁶⁷

By 1985, already seeing budget shortfalls after the height of the Ethiopian famine, World Vision once more expanded child sponsorship. It still integrated the funds into community development programs, but it realized that donors needed a one-to-one

⁶⁴ Peter Stalker, “Please Do Not Sponsor this Child,” *New Internationalist* 111 (May 1981) <http://www.newint.org/features/1982/05/01/keynote/>; Also see David Johnston and Jennifer Leonard, “TV Charities: Let the Giver Beware,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 20, 1985; Kathleen Hayes, “Child Sponsorship: Mything the Mark,” *The Other Side* (March 1983): 36-37.

⁶⁵ “Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective,” Bryant Myers, “Development with Sponsorship Funds,” WVI International Affairs Committee, Aug. 16-19, 1982 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁶ “Report on Sponsorship Task Force,” WVI International Affairs Committee, Feb. 14-17, 1983 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁷ “Understanding Child Sponsorship: A Historical Perspective.”

connection.⁶⁸ By the end of the decade, they were sponsoring more than one million children. Not everyone was happy with the decision. Some field offices refused to sign up kids for sponsorship just for the money that sponsors would bring to their programs.⁶⁹

World Vision learned to live with tension, but some worried that rising discontent would fracture the organization. National offices began to work against one another, form alliances, and hold closed-door meetings. Frustrations came to a head at the annual 1987 Field Directors' Conference in Sierra Madre, California. As international leaders presented future strategies and operations, national directors balked. Joining in protest, they took over the agenda to voice their concerns. The WVI vice-president of Latin America, Manfred Grellert, recounted that "people were angry and spoke rough things to one another.... but what looked to be a fiasco created an agenda for authentic partnership."⁷⁰ The event propelled World Vision into years of dialogue to repair relationships and revise structures.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Bryant Myers, "Childcare Position Paper," drafts from 1985-87. It culminated with a new World Vision Childcare Policy approved by the International Board in 1987; Myers, "World Vision's Sponsorship Ministry: The Ministry and the Money," Report to World Vision International Council's Ministry Review and Evaluation Committee, Mar. 11, 1989 (WVI Central Records). Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA. WVUS donor surveys indicated that despite attempts at describing the benefits of community development, a majority of U.S. sponsors preferred their contribution go directly to their sponsored child and family. Fifty-six percent of English sponsors and forty-three percent of Hispanic sponsors wanted their monthly contribution to go to their sponsored child and family *exclusively*. This proportion climbed to sixty-two percent among evangelical sponsors. "World Vision, 1999 Comprehensive Donor Survey" World Vision commissioned the study, performed by Richard Michon and Associates, Inc, Aug 1999 (WVUS Archives).

⁶⁹ Peter McNee, "Sponsorship: Can It Be a Two-way Street," *Together* (April-June 1989): 8-10. *Together* devoted the entire issue to questions of child sponsorship within the partnership. Also see John Kenyon, "Child Sponsorship: Getting to the Real Questions," *Together* (April-June 1989): 1-2.

⁷⁰ Christopher A. Bartlett and Daniel F. Curran, "World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership," 4-5; "1987 Field Directors' Conference Notes," WVI Central Records; Grellert, interview with author, June 9, 2010; Grellert, "Following Jesus," Moderator's Address, 1992 WVI International Council (WVI Central Records)

Organizational turmoil led to Houston's resignation in 1988.⁷¹ Australian Graeme Irvine, who took his place, was a long time World Vision staffer respected for his leadership of field ministries and his willingness to move the organization forward. While affirming an evangelical theology, he came out of a non-evangelical heritage. As an unordained Anglican, he came out of Australia's YMCA movement. He was more at ease with ecumenical traditions, and he brought a contemplative rather than a revivalistic spirituality, introducing employees to the work of Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton, Catholic spiritual mentors popular in ecumenical seminaries.⁷² Irvine defined his tenure by building consensus and rebuilding a fractured organization.

By the end of the 1980s, World Vision had recovered from budget cuts and was again expanding programs, but internally it remained in crisis.⁷³ Describing World Vision's conflict as a "*kairos* moment...at the crossroads of time," Irvine claimed that the organization mirrored the struggles of the larger world.⁷⁴ Vice-president Manfred Grellert pointed to global Christianity's evolution from "a whiter to darker face." Board Chairperson Roberta Hestenes issued a public confession:

The most profound division in the world Church and in World Vision was between those of dominant culture and those who are marginalized.... World Vision has been primarily Protestant; we have been primarily evangelical or members of daughter churches of evangelical missions. We have been primarily traditional in our worship patterns. We have been primarily male. We have been primarily members of the dominant cultures, no matter where we are from in the world.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Houston, "Resignation Message to the International Office Staff," August 26, 1988 (WVI Central Records).

⁷² Grellert, interview by author, June 9, 2010.

⁷³ Grellert, "Moderator's Address at 1989 WVI International Council," (WVI Central Records).

⁷⁴ Irvine, "At the Crossroads of Time," Presidential Address at 1989 WVI International Council, Sept. 22, 1989 (WVI Central Records)

⁷⁵ Roberta Hestenes, "Beyond Sentimentality: Reflections on Christian Unity," 1989 WVI International Council, Sept. 22, 1989 (WVI Central Records)

World Vision wondered if it could bridge the divide between North and South to become a “truly international NGO, in which North and South can work together in authentic partnership.”⁷⁶

Over much of the next decade, Irvine led World Vision through the slow and deliberate process of redefining itself.⁷⁷ His Partnership Task Force (1988-1995) proposed a new system of governance. WVI needed to adapt to its massive growth. In interviewing hundreds of staff members, the task force discovered three key concerns. First, labeling support countries as fundraisers and field countries as development practitioners perpetuated conflict and made the mission more difficult. Second, Southern countries complained that the partnership privileged money as the measure of power, and they demanded more equitable leadership. Third, with growing religious diversity and secular influences, the staff needed guidance as to how World Vision’s Christian identity informed its practice.⁷⁸

Such debates over decentralization or partnerships between Northern and Southern NGOs raged in the international humanitarian community. World Vision framed some of its concerns theologically: how could it model a holistic Christian mission and inclusive global Christianity within a growing partnership? Other concerns of efficiency and governance came out of organizational and management studies.⁷⁹ With

⁷⁶ “Partnership Review Committee Report to WVI International Council,” Sept. 1989 (WVI Central Records)

⁷⁷ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 134–42. WVI approved Core Values in 1990, Mission Statement in 1992, and the Covenant of Partnership in 1995. These documents still remain binding today. For the documents themselves, see Appendices B, C, D in Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 271-285.

⁷⁸ “Partnership Task Force Report and Recommendations,” 1995 (WVI Central Records).

⁷⁹ “Partnership Task Force Report and Recommendations,” 1995

the help of Harvard business professor, Charles Handy, World Vision eventually proposed a new federal model.⁸⁰

Federalism offered a balance of independence and interdependence. Irvine noted that “in an organization of the size, diversity, and geographical dispersion of World Vision, a high degree of decentralization is essential.”⁸¹ Federalism allowed national offices to make local decisions. It removed the labels of field and support countries in order to repair divisions between fundraisers and ministry practitioners. It provided for more equitable representation on the World Vision board to counter the assumption that money was the measure of power.⁸² It even implemented a process of peer review in which national offices shared mutual accountability by evaluating one another.⁸³

Within the new federalized structure, the International Office (IO) moved from the top to the center of the partnership. The national offices had often experienced the IO as a “no organization.”⁸⁴ In moving from managing to serving the national offices, it provided centralized services like human resources, accounting, and information technology to increase efficiency but allowed for local autonomy. Yet World Vision

⁸⁰ Charles Handy, “Balancing Corporate Power: A New Federalist Paper,” *Harvard Business Review* 70, no. 6 (November 1992): 59–72. Manfred Grellert recounts that because Handy was the son of a pastor and believed in World Vision’s mission, he offered his consulting pro bono. Grellert, interview with author, June 22, 2007.

⁸¹ Irvine in Whaites, “Pursuing Partnership,” 419.

⁸² The current board structure is made up of seven Regional Forums. The chairs of each national board in a region nominate three members to represent their region on the International Board. “Partnership Task Force Report and Recommendations,” 1995; Myers, “Journeying Toward Interdependence; Tim Burgett, WVI, General Counsel, interview by author, June 15, 2007, Monrovia, CA, tape recording.

⁸³ “Partnership Task Force Report and Recommendations,” 1995; Myers, “Journeying Toward Interdependence.”

⁸⁴ Bryant Myers, interview by author, June 20, 2007, Pasadena, CA

hoped that the new central office could provide common language, systems, and operations that would lead to common global strategies.⁸⁵

World Vision spoke of the national offices as dual citizens, attending to the local issues distinctive to their context while committing themselves to a global partnership. Each national entity had to consent to certain Core Values, the Mission Statement, the Covenant of Partnership, and the Statement of Faith.⁸⁶ A top-down, exclusively Western directed organization was no longer possible.

World Vision and the Reimagining of its Christian Identity

The staff worried especially about maintaining the organization's Christian identity. Even in the midst of reorganization, World Vision launched a partnership-wide Christian Witness Commission in 1992 to assess its practices in the light of the organization's evangelical past and future plans. It used terms like holistic and integrated mission but debated the role of explicit evangelism. The commission questioned what boundaries to set to government and church partnerships. Almost all agreed that hiring a Christian staff was a minimum requirement, but some worried that staff members now came without the depth of faith necessary for effective witness.⁸⁷

World Vision U.S. and American Evangelicalism

World Vision U.S. (WVUS) tied its Christian identity to its evangelical roots, and many viewed the 1980s as the height of evangelical success. Televangelists created empires through the expansion of the "electronic church." Pastors like Rick Warren and

⁸⁵ Myers, "Journeying Toward Interdependence," Christopher A. Bartlett and Daniel F. Curran, "World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership," 5-6.

⁸⁶ Tim Burgett, interview by author, June 15, 2007. In addition to affirming these core documents, each World Vision entity must work toward legally establishing a local Board. It must also sign a trademark agreement and agree to peer review and open itself to regular integrated audits.

⁸⁷ "Christian Witness Commission Final Report," Sept. 1995 (WVI Central Records).

Bill Hybels adopted seeker service models to build Saddleback and Willow Creek into the country's largest megachurches. With the election of Ronald Reagan, evangelicals became a sought after voting bloc and Christian Right leaders like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and James Dobson led many conservatives into political and cultural issues.⁸⁸

Others lamented that evangelicals had become victims of their own success. Televangelism soon suffered from financial misappropriations and sex scandals. Fellow evangelicals accused seeker churches and celebrity pastors of watering down faith for larger numbers. Some worried that right-wing politics drew evangelicals into “culture wars.” Carl Henry, by now an evangelical elder statesman, lamented by the end of the 1980s that the “respectable reputation” for which evangelicals had worked so hard had fallen “into open caricature and ridicule.”⁸⁹

Just as an evangelical left splintered in the 1970s, the evangelical establishment further fragmented in the 1980s. Some evangelical scholars wanted social, economic, or political issues to define evangelicals along a conservative-liberal spectrum. The majority worried more about theological and doctrinal distinctives. Almost all sought to hold evangelicals together as a single movement.⁹⁰ By the end of the 1980s, however, some

⁸⁸ Quentin J Schultze, *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media: Perspectives on the Relationship between American Evangelicals and the Mass Media* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1990), 196–227.

⁸⁹ Carl F.H. Henry, “Foreword,” in Kenneth S Kantzer and Carl F. H Henry, *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1990), 20; David A. Faser, *Evangelicalism: Surviving Its Success: Conference June, 1986* (Eastern College, 1987); Carl F H Henry, “American Evangelicals in a Turning Time,” *Christian Century* 97, no. 35 (November 5, 1980): 1058–1062.

⁹⁰ Within the historiography of evangelicalism, George Marsden identified the Reformed tradition as the heart of the evangelical story. See his *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987). Timothy Smith and Donald Dayton view it as predominantly Arminian or “pentecostal,” emphasizing the activity of Methodists, Pentecostals, and the host of Revivalist (almost arminianized) Calvinists. (Dayton’s “pentecostal” is for Methodists, holiness, Pentecostals alike – and doesn’t just fit the heirs of Azusa street.) See Dayton Donald and Robert Johnston, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Donald W. Dayton, “The Search for the Historical Evangelicalism: George Marsden’s History of Fuller Seminary as a Case Study,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 23, no. 1 (1993): 12–33. Dayton’s

gave up on any quest for unity.⁹¹ In response to Carl Henry, evangelical historian Nathan Hatch claimed that a single “Evangelicalism” was nothing more than an abstraction, and he acknowledged that further fragmentation was inevitable. He pointed to a cultural style that defined evangelicalism more thoroughly than doctrines did.⁹² Its success was tied to its “entrepreneurial quality, its populist and decentralized structure, and its penchant for splitting, forming and reforming.”⁹³ America fostered multiple evangelicalisms with similar, but not identical, practices and institutions. World Vision still fit within such an evangelical network, and the majority within the organization still defined themselves as evangelical. While it sought to appeal to a broad Christian audience, its common language and practices made clear that it still felt most at home among evangelicals.

When Stan Mooneyham became President of WVI in 1980, long time World Vision Vice President Ted Engstrom assumed the Presidency of WVUS. A contemporary of Bob Pierce and Billy Graham, Engstrom was a first generation post-war evangelical who stood among the “who’s who” of American evangelicalism. His rolodex included a wide spectrum of evangelicals from Francis Schaeffer, Robert Schuller, and James Dobson to Jim Walls and Ron Sider. He focused all his speaking, writing, and consulting

theological definition is also tied to an outsider mentality. From his perspective, when evangelicals become insiders, they inherently change. Douglas A. Sweeney, “The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma.” *Church History* 60, No. 1 (March 1991): 70-84.

⁹¹ Donald Dayton and Robert Johnston, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

⁹² For an insightful conversation on defining evangelicalism and the nature of evangelicalism as a “cultural imaginary,” see James K.A. Smith, “Who’s Afraid of Sociology?,” *The Immanent Frame*, August 15, 2008, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/08/15/whos-afraid-of-sociology/>. (Accessed April 2, 2011).

⁹³ Nathan Hatch, “Response to Carl Henry,” in Kantzer and Henry, *Evangelical Affirmations*, 97.

within evangelical contexts. Engstrom's initiatives made World Vision a leader among American evangelicals.⁹⁴

Yet as the first generation of postwar evangelicals retired, World Vision joined other American evangelicals in seeking leadership among a new generation. In 1987, WVUS named Robert Seiple as President. While World Vision's earliest leaders had degrees from evangelical colleges and seminaries like Wheaton or Fuller, Seiple had an Ivy-league education from Brown University. After flying combat missions with the Marines in Vietnam, he made his name as an administrator and fundraiser in higher education. When World Vision hired him at the age of 44, he was serving as president of evangelical Eastern College. Like Engstrom, he felt at home within evangelical networks, but he represented a changing of the guard.⁹⁵

When Pierce founded the organization, he preached and took his films to evangelical churches, mission conferences, and Bible colleges. As it expanded in the late 1970s, World Vision turned to mass marketing through direct mail and television. By 1984, it acquired eighty-six percent of its donors through television.⁹⁶ Pierce's vision was not only to raise funds for foreign missionaries but also to educate evangelical congregations on global issues. Over time, World Vision emphasized fundraising more than education. It downsized its Church Relations department and used its remaining staff members to cultivate donors instead of ensuring resources for the mission efforts of local churches. It was expensive and time consuming to build relationships with local

⁹⁴ Ted Engstrom, *Reflections on a Pilgrimage: Six Decades of Service* (Sister, OR: Loyal Pub., 1999), 127.

⁹⁵ "Seiple Announcement," *World Vision* (April/May 1987): 1. Chuck Colson, former Watergate conspirator turned evangelical insider as founder of Prison Fellowship, was a confidant to Engstrom and a constant guest at World Vision's offices. It was Colson that first recommended Seiple to World Vision. Russell Chandler, "New World Vision President Named: Robert A. Seiple, 44, Will Replace Ted W. Engstrom, 70," *Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 1986.. "Seiple Bio" (WVUS Archives).

⁹⁶ "1984 Source/Motivation Donor Value Study," May 22, 1985 (WVI Central Records)

churches. As World Vision sought more efficient funding sources, it left the local church behind. Some evangelical congregations began to question their relationship with the new World Vision. They no longer had much direct contact with the organization. While they respected evangelical voices like Ted Engstrom, they wondered if World Vision had become merely another fundraising, hunger relief, and development agency? Some pastors labeled it the “IBM of the Christian world,” an organization too big to rely on local support.⁹⁷

World Vision worried that its move away from local churches and foreign missions betrayed its original mission and lost evangelical support. Mass marketing led WVUS to recast its language for a broader demographic, and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it succeeded in increased revenues and new donors. Still, the core constituency remained American evangelicals.⁹⁸ In 1998, forty-one percent of the U.S. population considered themselves born-again Christians compared to eighty-six percent of World Vision donors.⁹⁹ When using the more stringent definition of the pollster George Barna,

⁹⁷ Joe Ryan, “Report on World Vision’s Church Relations,” Nov. 1984; “World Vision’s Ministry to the Church, Executive Summary,” Mar. 10, 1986 (WVI Central Records)

⁹⁸ Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA; Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010. By 1985, however, it realized that mirroring the percentages of American Christianity, their largest denominational group of donors (20 percent) were Catholic. “1984 Source/ Motivation Donor Value Study,” May 22, 1985 (WVI Central Records).

⁹⁹ “The World Vision: 1999 Comprehensive Donor Survey,” Aug. 1999 (WVUS Archives). World Vision United States has comprehensive data on its donors since 1988. Other studies go back further, and they demonstrate a remarkable consistency in its donor base. In 1976, labeled the “Year of the Evangelical,” the Gallup organization first began asking about a “born-again experience.” Ever since it has used the born-again label as a synonym for evangelicals. George Barna defines born-again Christians as those affirming that “they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today” and “when they die, will go to heaven because they confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior.” For further discussion on the sociological definition of evangelicalism, see Conrad Hackett and D Michael Lindsay, “Measuring Evangelicalism: Consequences of Different Operationalization Strategies,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 3 (2008): 501–502.

evangelicals made up seven percent of the American population but forty-two percent of World Vision's supporters.¹⁰⁰

World Vision learned not to take its core constituency for granted. Its research demonstrated that evangelicals were more likely to recognize the organization's reputation and trust it with longer term financial commitments.¹⁰¹ While it still poured the bulk of its marketing into television and direct appeals, it kept its networks in the evangelical subculture. World Vision continued to get its name in *Christianity Today* through full page advertisements as well as stories reporting on its work. It recruited at InterVarsity's Urbana mission conferences and created a curriculum that highlighted its work for use by Christian schools and homeschooling parents.

World Vision also turned to the growing contemporary Christian music (CCM) industry. The rival evangelical child sponsorship agency, Compassion International, competed to sign artists to endorse their work. Early Christian artists like Sandi Patti and Dino accompanied World Vision on overseas trips and then returned to offer testimonies

¹⁰⁰ "The World Vision: 1999 Comprehensive Donor Survey," Aug. 1999 (WVUS Archives). World Vision's surveys use Barna's definitions of both born-again and evangelical. Barna defines "evangelical" not as a synonym but a subset of born-again. In addition to affirming the two statements to qualify as a born-again Christian, Barna requires seven additional criteria to be labeled an evangelical. They are 1) saying their faith is very important in their life; (2) believing they have a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with non-Christians; (3) believing in the existence of Satan; (4) believing that eternal salvation is gained through God's grace alone, not through human efforts; (5) believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life while on earth; (6) believing the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and (7) affirming God as an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today. Hackett and Lindsey, "Measuring Evangelicalism," 504. From 1994 to 1999, World Vision noted weekly attendance of its donors surveyed climbed from 69 to 80 percent. In its next survey in 2006, it recognized that its segment of evangelical Christian had grown by 50 percent since 1999. "The World Vision: 1999 Comprehensive Donor Survey," Aug. 1999; World Vision: 2006 Comprehensive Donor Survey," July 5, 2006 (WVUS Archives).

¹⁰¹ World Vision also knew evangelicals were more likely to remain long-term donors. "1984 Source/Motivation Donor Value Study," May 22, 1985 (WVI Central Records); "Perceptions of Poverty," 1999 (WVUS Archives); "Americans' Awareness and Perceptions of World Vision," July 2001(WVUS Archives).

in television specials or to perform benefit concerts.¹⁰² Most often artists promoted child sponsorship on concert tours. After the artist shared stories of children in need, World Vision staff members gave information packets to concert-goers during intermissions. Artists often received a percentage of a new sponsor's pledge. Bigger artists received up-front tour expenses. By the 1990s, World Vision and Compassion had saturated the CCM market. Almost every Christian concert brought a plug for child sponsorship and further solidified World Vision's evangelical identity.¹⁰³

Maintaining broad evangelical support, World Vision also moved across the theological and political spectrum. When evangelicals began reading an outpouring of books on premillennial eschatology and prophecy, World Vision walked a narrow line, affirming popular theologies while still pursuing a humanitarian agenda. In 1984, Engstrom praised Billy Graham's latest bestseller, *Approaching Hoofbeats*, an interpretation of the book of Revelation.¹⁰⁴ He agreed with Graham's interpretation of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse as famine, pestilence, war, and death, and he affirmed his belief in Christ's imminent return, but he warned evangelicals against isolating themselves in a "cloistered, ecclesiastical compound," from which they pushed "tracts out through knotholes."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² For example, see World Vision's 1982 *Together* album that featured CCM artists Amy Grant, Andrae Crouch, Dino, Keith Green, Walter Hawkins, the Imperials, Evie Karlsson, and country singer Barbara Mandrell highlighted in *World Vision* (March 1983): 19. After going on a World Vision trip in 1984, Dino gave all proceeds from his *Great is the Lord* album to World Vision's work in Ethiopia. *World Vision* (Oct-Nov 1984): 2. Sandi Patti was featured on several World Vision television specials. She also recorded a number of hymn projects with proceeds going to World Vision. *World Vision* (Aug-Sept 1986): 7.

¹⁰³ Paul Diedrich, Director of Business Development – Artists' Associates, interview by author, Nov. 17, 2010, Federal Way, WA. During my research I attended a number of these World Vision Christian concerts as a part of my ethnographic study. In 2010, World Vision sponsored an entire tour of leading CCM artists Third Day, Michael W. Smith, and Toby Mac who accompanied noted evangelical author, Max Lucado.

¹⁰⁴ Billy Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats: the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983); Paul S Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 139–140.

¹⁰⁵ Engstrom, "As the Hoofbeats Draw Near," *World Vision* (Dec/Jan 1984-5): 23.

It was no easy matter to stand in the middle between two evangelical cultural spheres. Well-connected World Vision leaders may have attended the annual National Prayer Breakfast, but they avoided direct support of the Religious Right. Their international orientation often kept them above domestic culture wars.¹⁰⁶ They criticized the Christian Right for trying to gain political power when Christian agencies had already earned political credibility. Without dismissing the issues that defined the culture wars, World Vision kept its eye on child poverty, famine, and global evangelism.

It also kept its distance from the evangelical left, which by the 1980s had fallen from public interest. While *Sojourners*, the *Other Side*, and similar groups and publications still served as alternative communities, they lost their place among evangelicals in the public square. World Vision did not sever its connections with them. John Perkins, a black evangelical who had worked in local community development, joined World Vision's board and helped develop its U.S. ministries, but he never assumed a major public voice. Its partnership with Tony Campolo, however, did gain attention. A sociologist who gave up his prestigious post at the University of Pennsylvania to teach at evangelical Eastern University and live among Philadelphia's urban poor, Campolo was a captivating speaker who resonated with young evangelicals. World Vision worked with Eastern University on a new program to train development practitioners, and it joined with Campolo on a film to promote its work in Africa. In preaching to thousands of evangelical youth at the 1987 Urbana mission conference, he had questioned whether it was possible to follow Jesus and drive a BMW. "What would

¹⁰⁶ In the wake of *Roe v Wade* and the rise of the evangelical pro-life movement, World Vision did make explicit its anti-abortion position in all family planning policies. "Family Planning," WVI Board Policy Statements, originally approved June 3, 1978 and revised Mar. 13, 1985 (WVI Central Records).

Jesus drive,” soon became a stock Campolo refrain.¹⁰⁷ After reprinting the sermon in its magazine, World Vision received more letters to the editor than it had received in reaction to any other article, most of them attacking Campolo. Few within World Vision joined the critics, but the negative responses from donors demonstrated how difficult it was to maintain a broad constituency.¹⁰⁸

World Vision had already moved beyond evangelicalism in accepting government aid, adopting professional development, and entering the INGO culture. It expanded its donor base, diversified its staff, and found new partners. Yet American evangelicalism was also broadening. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, evangelicals moved up the social scale through gains in higher education, income, and political power. No longer outsiders, they were becoming the new religious mainstream. For increasing numbers of Americans, it became acceptable to be known as an evangelical.¹⁰⁹

Was it still important to define who was in and out of the evangelical movement? World Vision had challenged traditional boundaries. Evangelical anthropologist and Fuller Seminary missiologist Paul Hiebert introduced the mathematic metaphor of “bounded” versus “centered sets.” Bounded sets made clear who was in and out through moral and cultural codes, ideologies, and institutions, but they offered little definition

¹⁰⁷ Anthony Campolo, *20 Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1988).

¹⁰⁸ “Joining up with Campolo, Africa in Crisis,” *World Vision* (April/May 1989): 22; “Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up,” *World Vision* (Oct-Nov, 1988); Tom Sine, “Will the Real Cultural Christians Please Stand Up,” *World Vision* (Oct/Nov 1989); Lauralee Mannes, “God’s Catcher in the Rye,” *World Vision* (Oct/Nov 1991): 2-4

¹⁰⁹ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 187, 192. Michael Hout, Andrew Greeley, and Melissa J. Wilde, “The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States,” *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 2 (2001): 468. Hout, et. al. claim that while in the past, social advancement meant often moving from Baptist to Presbyterian to Episcopal, “the conservative power brokers’ prayer breakfast may well have supplanted the need some once felt to align their congregational affiliation with their socioeconomic status.” For an in depth look at a strand of evangelical cosmopolitans in contrast to evangelical populists, see D Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

beyond those boundaries. Centered sets offered a core ideology but fewer boundaries.¹¹⁰

World Vision appropriated the metaphor of “the centered” to describe itself. It still claimed an evangelical identity, but it often found American evangelical boundaries constricting.¹¹¹

While WVUS followed the changes within its American evangelicalism, it remained alert to the growth of global evangelicalism. Too many people still saw evangelicalism as an American product, a Western export in a globalized world with more than a few suspicions about the West.¹¹² WVUS realized that Americans were no longer at that center of evangelical demographic or institutional growth, which had shifted to the global South.¹¹³ How would the work of World Vision have to change if a non-Western evangelicalism defined the agendas? In this international setting, World

¹¹⁰ Paul Hiebert: “Conversion, Culture and Cognitive Categories” *Gospel in Context* 1:4 (Oct. 1978): 24-29. More recently, Darrel Guder and Alan Hirsch have also employed the concept more popularly in conversations on the nature of the “missional church.” Darrell L Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998); Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003).

¹¹¹ A number of World Vision leaders begin to employ the center-set metaphor. Robert Seiple, Former President of WVUS, Former Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, interview by author, Nov. 8, 2007, phone; Bryant L. Myers, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Evangelical-Ecumenical Cooperation,” *International Review of Mission* 81, no. 323 (July 1992): 297–407.

¹¹² Berger and Huntington, *Many Globalizations*, 8–9. Berger names a popular evangelicalism as one of his four cultural globalizations. See also James Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6–9; James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Several more recent scholars have reminded scholars of world Christianity of America’s significance in global interactions with more nuance while noting that America is not the preeminent shaper. Mark Noll has analyzed how global Christianity has embraced the style of American evangelicalism, and Melani McAllister has studied American evangelicals as they portray their interactions with Christians from around the world. Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009); Melani McAlister, “What Is Your Heart For?: Affect and Internationalism in the Evangelical Public Sphere,” *American Literary History* 20, no. 4 (2008): 870–895. Robert Wuthnow charges that the urgency to portray the vibrancy of Christian faith in the Two-Thirds World has overemphasized the autonomous agency of indigenous churches and unduly diminished interest in studying western interactions. Robert Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 55.

¹¹³ World Vision’s research noted 70 percent of evangelicals lived in the developing world by the turn of the twenty-first century. Bryant L Myers, Don Brandt, and Alan Whaites, *Global Context for Action 2001* (Monrovia, CA: World Vision, 2001).

Vision saw few clear boundaries. Evangelicals and the ecumenical church now agreed more often than not about both mission and evangelism. In Latin America and Asia, World Vision worked with ecumenical Protestants, Catholics, and Pentecostals. It employed evangelicals beholden to liberation theology and Catholics who had no place for it. As global Christianity changed, World Vision sought to interpret that change, and the organization's identity, to American evangelicals.¹¹⁴

From Evangelism to Christian Witness

WVUS also took the lead in pondering the Christian identity of the WVI partnership. World Vision championed “holistic ministry,” but what was “holistic”? Some worried that it had become a cover for avoiding evangelism. In 1987, World Vision updated its official policies by affirming the “proclamation of the Name of Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁵ WVI President Irvine explained that the organization wanted to avoid capitulation to the secular: “The history of other movements shows that a clear understanding and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ is often the first element of ministry to be watered down and sometimes abandoned.”¹¹⁶ WVUS President Seiple challenged other countries with a \$500,000 matching grant to include evangelism in their programs.¹¹⁷ Whether by pressure or enticement, evangelism would be part of the agenda for World Vision.

Perceptive observers within the organization recognized, however, some contradictions between the organization's stated purpose and its publicity and practice.

¹¹⁴ Myers, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Evangelical-Ecumenical Cooperation.”

¹¹⁵ “World Vision's Evangelism Policy,” WVI Board approved Sept. 18, 1987, Appendix 2 in “Christian Witness Commission, Final Report (Sept. 1995): 83 (WVI Central Records); Sam Kamaleson, “History of Evangelism in World Vision,” 1985 (WVI Central Records).

¹¹⁶ Graeme Irvine, “World Vision and Evangelism, Paper in Process,” March 1991 (WVI Central Records).

¹¹⁷ Bob Seiple, “Evangelism and Economic Development,” International Affairs Committee Minutes, Mar. 2-4, 1988 (WVI Central Records)

Sometimes it altered its presentation when communicating with governments, aid recipients, or donor publics. At other times, it altered evangelistic methods to fit cultural differences or political restraints. It knew that while it had a Christian staff, many members did not know how to share their faith. Some members had little interest in evangelism while others carried their zeal in the direction of outright proselytism, which it defined as “requiring aid recipients first to listen to a religious message as a condition of help or using aid as an inducement for aid recipients to change religions.”¹¹⁸ Ninety percent of senior leaders and the majority of grassroots staff members agreed on the necessity of “leading the lost to faith in Christ.” But how? Should every program include an evangelistic component? Should the organization separate evangelistic work into a separate division? Should it even turn over evangelism to local churches?¹¹⁹

After three years of study and debate, World Vision’s Christian Witness Commission offered a new policy on “Witness to Jesus Christ.”¹²⁰ To avoid preconceptions, it replaced the term evangelism with Christian witness, which it hoped would reemphasize its holistic approach, but it realized even the term “holistic” had become a catchphrase without clear content. World Vision defined Christian witness as “being Christian, living as Christians, doing Christian service, and verbally sharing the good news about Jesus Christ.”¹²¹ The Commission’s report noted that “being Christian” defined World Vision’s identity and mission. The question was not “where is the

¹¹⁸ World Vision’s proselytism statement figures prominently in its public communications and on its website. <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/learn/christian-identity-hiring-practices?> (Accessed April 4, 2012). While the distinction is lost on many, World Vision makes the clear separation between evangelism and proselytism. As a humanitarian organization, World Vision refuses to proselytize as required by all signatories to the Red Cross Code of Conduct. Graeme Irvine, “World Vision and Evangelism, Paper in Process,” March 1991 (WVI Central Records). Dean Owen, Director of Executive Communications, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

¹¹⁹ “Christian Witness Commission Report,” 16.

¹²⁰ “Policy on Witness to Jesus Christ,” in *Christian Witness Commission*, 45-49.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 35, 47. World Vision began to promote these as the inseparability of “life, deed, word, and sign.”

evangelism?’ but rather “What must our ministry look like, and how must we do it so as to create the environment in which the Holy Spirit may encourage people to ask questions to which the gospel is the answer?”¹²² World Vision had to ask how its Christian witness defined its identity and practice.

Transformational Development

Evangelicals recognized after the early 1980s that Christian development was clearly possible but that they did not always know how to do it. They could work with local churches, but few pastors had the development training to administer complex programs. Exactly where did evangelism fit in the enterprise of development? ¹²³ By the 1990s, World Vision realized that its earlier forms of Christian development were insufficient. As it professionalized, the staff came to speak the technical language of development fluently. World Vision had once grafted a few development principles onto its missiology; now it worked to integrate Christian discourse into its first language of development.

It benefited from increased international funding to INGOs in the 1980s, but it criticized some of the policies that underlay the increase. Was the project of development still dominated by Western assumptions, economic measures, and theories of modernization?. After decades of work with the poor, some critics now advocated “people-centered” rather than “economic growth-centered” development. Theorists like David Korten and Robert Chambers urged agencies to concentrate on the needs and capacities of local communities in order to move from welfare to “sustainable

¹²² “Christian Witness Commission Report,” 34.

¹²³ Bryant Myers, “World Vision’s Development Ministry: Issues for the Future,” 1986 WVI International Council (WVI Central Records); Bryant L Myers, *Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 2.

development.”¹²⁴ These critics forced the agencies to revisit the definition of poverty and the goal of development. Beginning in the 1980s, Chambers defined poverty not only as material deficit but as “entangled clusters of disadvantage,” and he saw the goal of development not as material wealth but as “responsible well-being.”¹²⁵ Another theorist, John Friedman, added that only access to political power could enable the poor to escape from the social systems that kept them disadvantaged.¹²⁶ By 1990, Indian economist Amartya Sen introduced measurements to evaluate a people-centered approach. The resulting Human Development Index (HDI) added life expectancy, health, and literacy to the standard economic measure of a nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These new theories and measurements changed the way development agencies designed their programs.¹²⁷

The leaders in World Vision consumed the work of Chambers, Korten, Friedman, and Sen. It hired them as consultants to train staff members and assess its own programs. They adopted Chambers’ expansive definition of poverty and introduced participatory evaluation to allow communities to tailor development to their needs.¹²⁸ They continually worked to redesign programs in response to the evolving trends within professional development. But all of this still left open the question of how to integrate Christian

¹²⁴ Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (London: Longman, 1984); Robert Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts?: Putting the First Last* (London: Intermediate Technology, 1997); David C Korten and Rudi Klauss, *People-centered Development: Contributions toward Theory and Planning Frameworks* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1984); David C Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1990).

¹²⁵ Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 164.

¹²⁶ John Friedmann, *Empowerment: the Politics of Alternative Development* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

¹²⁷ Sen instituted The Human Development Indicators in 1990 even if he did not publish his magnum opus demonstrating these ideas until 1999. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 29–31, 167–168.

¹²⁸ World Vision used Chambers’ list of aspects of poverty: 1) material poverty; 2) vulnerability; 3) physical weakness; 4) isolation; 5) powerlessness. Its only addition to his five categories was a “spiritual poverty.” Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 116. This list appeared in a number of World Vision documents as they reflect on the nature of its Christian identity within its development principles.

witness into development programs. In 1983, World Vision began to publish *Together*, a periodical for its own development practitioners and any others who “ministered to the poor and needy of the world in the name of Jesus Christ.” In the first issue, editor John Kenyon claimed that the journal would be unique in combining issues in development, missiology, and Third World dynamics. World Vision believed it was among the few organizations attempting such an endeavor.¹²⁹

At times, World Vision still employed past evangelical dichotomies or missiological vocabularies. Following a *Together* article by David Korten on sustainable development, WVUS president Bob Seiple made sure to highlight that “sustainable development is truly sustainable only when it is rooted in Christian values,” which included “naming the Name,” and “sharing the Good News in all of its holistic richness.”¹³⁰ In 1988, World Vision’s leading development researcher, Bryant Myers, noted that the majority of the world’s poor stood among those unreached by the gospel. Using the language of the Lausanne mission initiatives, Myers tied World Vision’s development work among “unreached peoples” in the “10/40 window,” the latitude lines that encompassed the majority of people defined by poverty and lack of access to the gospel.¹³¹

¹²⁹ John A. Kenyon, “Where We Come from and Where We Are Going,” *Together* (Oct.-Dec. 1983): 7. World Vision published the magazine quarterly from 1983 to 2000. The magazine debated liberation theology and theories of sustainable development as well as offering case studies and instructions on building technologically appropriate water pumps or irrigation systems

¹³⁰¹³⁰ David C. Korten, “The Sustainable Project: A Contradiction,” *Together* (July-Sept. 1991): 3; Bob Seiple, “As Sustainable as Eternal Grace,” *Together* (July-Sept. 1991): 8-9.

¹³¹ The “10-40 Window” refers to those peoples between 10 degrees and 40 degrees North latitude. Evangelical missiologists Luis Bush coined the phrase at the Lausanne II Conference in Manila, Philippines in 1989. Bryant Myers, “Where Are the Poor and the Lost?” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1988): 8; John Robb, “The Power of People-Group Thinking,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1988):4; “Toward the Light: Empathy without Urgency,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1988):13.

By the mid-1990s, the rigid divisions between evangelism and social action faded as World Vision and other evangelical R&D agencies became more self-assured in their ability to work as Christians toward holistic development.¹³² World Vision strived to define evangelism as more than assent to a set of western theological propositions. In using the term Christian witness, it spoke of an invitation to relationship and work toward the kingdom of God.¹³³ And it often found fellow global Christians served as its best teacher. Two-Thirds World voices within World Vision were the first to criticize the lack of humility and the penchant for modernization and economic growth in Western development programs. They did not need to wait on “people-centered development” for evidence of the need to foreground local experience and address disparities of power and influence. Their contextual theologies had already led them to the same conclusion. World Vision believed that development theory was beginning to move in tandem with its own theological positions.

By 1995, transformational development (TD) became the new buzzword. It referred to an effort to attend to participatory and sustainable development; local political, environmental, and social problems; and culture and religion. World Vision saw TD as validation of its desire for Christian development.¹³⁴ Several members of the World Vision staff articulated sophisticated models of transformational development. Bryant Myers’ *Walking with the Poor* became the most influential. Originally published in 1999

¹³² Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 2; Bryant L. Myers, “What Makes Development Christian?: Recovering from the Impact of Modernity,” *Missiology* XXVI, no. 2 (1998): 143.

¹³³ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 205–6.

¹³⁴ While the irony was lost on the professional development community, “transformation” was the original term that Wayne Bragg introduced to evangelicals at the Wheaton 1983 consultation on “A Christian Response to Human Need.” Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 153–4. They were attempting to find an alternative term for Christian development that did not privilege secular approaches. Later Ron Sider and other evangelical social ethicists would publish a journal, *Transformation*, to address these same concerns.

with Orbis Press, it has gone through over thirteen printings, and it became the standard work used by evangelical seminaries and development agencies. Myers defined transformation as "restoring relationships, just and right relationships with God, with self, with community, with the 'other,' and with the environment."¹³⁵ Myers couched the entire enterprise in Christian terms, yet he resisted the claim that he was merely spiritualizing secular theory. He sought a biblical vision and an expansive vision of poverty that included spiritual deprivation. Arguing that poverty was relational, he claimed that the powerlessness of the poor resulted from sin, broken relationships with God manifested in "relationships that do not work" on personal and psychological, social, and structural levels.¹³⁶

Myers charged that Western development sought only modernization and failed to value the knowledge and skills of "underdeveloped" peoples. Development agencies ran roughshod over local desires by offering unwelcome answers to unasked questions. Modernity had led to the "great divorce" of physical and spiritual worlds that framed the assumptions of Western governments, local churches, and even Christian development agencies.¹³⁷ When listening to non-Western cultures, he found that spiritual and secular divides made little sense. Religion and spirituality were not privatized categories. World Vision asserted that secular development itself implied a particular culture, set of values,

¹³⁵ Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 1999, 36.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 86; Jayakumar Christian, *God of the Empty-handed: Poverty, Power, and the Kingdom of God* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1999).

¹³⁷ Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 6–7; Myers, "What Makes Development Christian?: Recovering from the Impact of Modernity," 145.

and worldview.¹³⁸ In dismissing the myth of a neutral modernity, it could affirm its Christian valuing of material, social, *and* spiritual change.

World Vision even created assessments to measure Christian witness, religious change, and spiritual sustainability.¹³⁹ By using transformational development indicators, it could measure levels of well being for children, degrees of transformation in relationships, the impact of Christian witness, the empowerment of local communities, and any changes within those communities in the degree of hope people felt about their future.¹⁴⁰ In its relationships with other INGOs and governments, World Vision could now advocate for spirituality in development. It developed guidelines to test the appropriateness of government funding for its Christian mission, and it committed itself to transparency in communicating its Christian identity. While it still accepted government funding and the restrictions that such funding sometimes required, it encouraged governments and other agencies not to import a Western worldview that separated the religious and material. When necessary it integrated private with public funds to introduce holistic programming.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Jayakumar Christian, "Worldviews Should Be Analyzed," *Together* (July/Sept 1992): 4. William van Geest, "Development and Other Religious Activities," *Together* (July/Sept 1997): 1-9.

¹³⁹ Myers, *Walking With the Poor, 2011*, 239–285. Myers highlighted a number of respected development evaluation techniques (Participatory Learning and Action, Appreciative Inquiry, Logical Framework Analysis) that relied on local communities to express their own desires for development and their perspectives along the way instead of relying on Western categories alone.

¹⁴⁰ Excerpted from WVI's Transformation Development Indicators. *Ibid.*, 299–302. Ethnographer Emily Hogue described a World Vision Peru Area Development Program that saw its holistic development as striving for the "inseparable physical, spiritual, and psychological well being of participants." Emily Hogue, "God Wants Us to Have a Life that Is Sustainable": Faith-based Development and Economic Change in Andean Peasant Communities," in *Bridging the Gaps: Faith-based Organizations, Neoliberalism, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Julie Adkins and Tara Hefferan (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), 136–137.

¹⁴¹ "Christian Witness Commission Report," 55-58; Malcolm Caruthers, "World Vision's Relations with Governments," Aug 1986 (WVI Central Records).

World Vision's Practical Ecumenism

World Vision also moved beyond scattered local community projects toward expansive Area Development Programs (ADPs). By the early 1990s, these ADPs identified pockets of poverty in a geographic area that encompassed multiple communities and populations of 20,000 to 40,000 people. Programmatically, ADPs offered World Vision a model that combined funding from international governmental organizations (IGOs) and the support of individual child sponsors with the stability of long-term planning.¹⁴² It realized that social structures perpetuating poverty often extended beyond a single community and that larger projects would allow it to implement its holistic principles. World Vision pledged to support each ADP for 10 to 15 years until it could turn over complete control to the local communities.¹⁴³

World Vision's ADPs drew good reviews from its development peers, but they sometimes alienated local church partners. Past church partnerships had created a "double dependence." World Vision depended on the limited development capacities of the churches while local churches depended on the finances of World Vision.¹⁴⁴ It realized that few local churches had the adequate infrastructure or training to staff ADP programs as it also extended Christian development beyond the walls of the church. To involve the entire community, ADPs set up local boards. Church leaders were only one among many stakeholders as World Vision introduced its Christian development to a broader public.

¹⁴² World Vision's initial attempts at Large Scale Development (LSD) in the wake of the Ethiopian famine largely failed, but it felt ADPs offered a more sophisticated approach as the organization had achieved exponentially more sophistication in its development strategy.

¹⁴³ Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007, Monrovia, CA; Bill Kliewer, interview by author, June 27, 2007; Susan Mary McDonic, "Witnessing, Work and Worship: World Vision and the Negotiation of Faith, Development and Culture" (Duke University, 2004), 66. World Vision Australia - Transforming Lives in Area Development Programs", n.d., http://www.worldvision.com.au/issues/Transforming_Lives_Child_Sponsorship/Why_is_it_happening/Transforming_lives_in_Area_Development_Progra.aspx (Accessed Mar. 26, 2012).

¹⁴⁴ "Commission of the Church Report," 2002 (WVI Central Records).

Some churches felt betrayed. They complained that World Vision may be technically sound but had lost touch with local churches.¹⁴⁵

By this time, however, World Vision saw itself as a model for practical ecumenism. It had always prided itself on working across evangelical-ecumenical divisions.¹⁴⁶ Now it envisioned its ecumenical relationships even more broadly.¹⁴⁷ Often impatient with the slowness of ecumenical dialogue, it leveraged its size and resources to bring diverse voices together. One Latin American Catholic bishop praised its “grassroots” rather than merely “academic” ecumenism.¹⁴⁸ World Vision’s commitment to work alongside indigenous communities pushed it into inter-Christian tensions that it had previously avoided. It sought to repair broken relationships with Catholics in the Philippines and Latin America.¹⁴⁹ It attempted to overcome rigid divisions between Latin American evangelicals and new prosperity preaching Pentecostals.¹⁵⁰ It realized that joining with a single church often produced jealousies and a univocal theology that did not represent the community. World Vision grew comfortable partnering with anyone affirming a broad evangelical ethos. Its practical ecumenism did not always work, but the

¹⁴⁵ Graeme Irvine, “World Vision and Evangelism, Paper in Process.” World Vision saw the transition as a positive, a “twenty year journey from working through the church to working with the church and now to working directly with the community.” See “Christian Witness Commission Report,” 20.

¹⁴⁶ Ted Engstrom, “Peering into the Future: Through the Eyes of Ted Engstrom,” *World Vision* (Nov. 1982): 4. Engstrom remarked in 1982, “Although we know where we stand theologically with our statement of faith, we are able to bridge that gap between the conciliar and the evangelical elements of the church.” He continued to say that World Vision maintained a good reputation in both.

¹⁴⁷ Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007, .

¹⁴⁸ Ricardo Ramírez, “Toward a More Perfect Union: The Challenge of Ecumenism,” *Ecumenical Trends* 25 (November 1996): 155–160.

¹⁴⁹ Gene Daniels, “Strategic Considerations for a Catholic Initiative,” June 1992 (WVI Central Records); Gene Daniels, interview by author, June 9, 2010, Monrovia, CA.

¹⁵⁰ I distinguish Pentecostals as separate from evangelicals in the same way that World Vision has done historically to draw attention to the particular divisions these communities have had in North American and Latin America. Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007, offers a number of examples from his firsthand experience in World Vision Latin America. Presently, World Vision follows the general categorization of Pentecostals as a subset of evangelicals.

organization found that Catholics, evangelicals, ecumenical Protestants, Pentecostals, and the Orthodox could undertake solutions to local problems.

A commitment to hire local staff also led to a more diverse Christian workforce. Pierce and other World Vision leaders had worked with established evangelical networks. By the 1970s, World Vision often moved into disaster areas where it had few connections. As it grew exponentially in the late 1970s and early 1980s, its need for experienced workers outstripped the numbers of local evangelicals available. World Vision's staff began to resemble the Christian communities in the countries where they worked. As it expanded to Eastern Europe after the Soviet Union's collapse, it hired a number of Orthodox staff persons. In Latin America, it hired more Catholics. The percentage of Pentecostal staff grew alongside the movement's growth throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of staff members still identified themselves as evangelical, and the interactions among diverse Christian traditions were not always rosy.¹⁵¹ Yet, a diverse donor and staff constituencies made room for a broader Christian language that no longer reflected only the dialect of an American evangelicalism.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ World Vision instituted a number of sensitivity training seminars to help staff dispel false preconceptions and better appreciate each traditions' commonalities as well as distinctions. "Christian Witness Commission Report," 58.

¹⁵² In a survey of staff in 1999, WVI found 57% identified as evangelical, 19% as mainline, 16% as Catholic, 1% as Orthodox, and 7% as other. "The Commission of the Church Report," 2002. In an informal poll of WVUS staff, Cindy Waple, Spiritual Formation Director of WVUS, estimated 68% identified as evangelical/Pentecostal and only 6% as mainline. Cindy Waple, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA. Presently, WVUS uses the five divisions employed by the ecumenical organization Christian Churches Together (Protestant, Roman Catholic, evangelical, Orthodox, and Pentecostal). The 2002 WVI "Commission of the Church Report" does not clarify if Pentecostals are included in the evangelical category or who is included within the "other."

Hiring Practices and Christian Witness

World Vision offices differed about the degree of permissible ecumenical diversity; they agreed, however, that every staff member should be a Christian.¹⁵³ This would inoculate World Vision against secularity. It became almost a slogan in the organization that its Christian identity depended on hiring well.¹⁵⁴ But the organization also needed development professionals, and this could lead to predicaments:

Some feel that there is a choice to be made between being professional and being Christian.... Should we hire good Christians, who are not relief or development professionals, and accept lower quality of ministry? Or, should we hire the best professionals we can find who have some kind of Christian commitment or values similar to ours?¹⁵⁵

The Christian Witness Commission recognized that in some World Vision offices being Christian had become a box to check rather than a way of life. World Vision, like other INGOs, had a revolving door for development workers. Staff members moved between agencies in accord with grant cycles and project needs.¹⁵⁶ The Commission reported that less than half of World Vision offices referred to the mission statement in screening employees. Forty percent asked for a written personal faith statement. Only a third made use of the Statement of Faith.¹⁵⁷ World Vision had originally adopted the NAE's original Statement of Faith, but it realized that some offices avoided it because they found its "old language and fundamentalist feel" no longer applicable. But altering it required a unanimous vote of the council, and World Vision's leaders feared that change would prove divisive. The Commission proposed affirming the Nicene Creed or Lausanne

¹⁵³ "Christian Witness Commission Report," 16.

¹⁵⁴ Bill Kliewer, interview by author, June 27, 2007.

¹⁵⁵ "Christian Witness Commission Report," 38.

¹⁵⁶ Tim Burgett, interview by author, June 15, 2007.

¹⁵⁷ "Christian Witness Commission Report," 19.

Covenant as an additional option.¹⁵⁸ They were willing to embrace evangelical alternatives, but they worried that the staff's ignorance of its Christian principles would cost the organization its identity.¹⁵⁹

It began, therefore, to offer Christian education. In 1995, it required each World Vision office to review its practice and establish a department of Christian Witness. Responding to critiques that it relegated religious talk to chapel, devotions, or the occasional retreat, it created programs to train staff how to express their faith in comfortable and culturally appropriate ways. It also promoted spiritual self-care. Recognizing the burnout that often troubled development workers, it cultivated a spirituality that could sustain a “holistic practitioner.”¹⁶⁰ It hoped to convince the staff that “being Christian enhances professionalism, rather than detracts from it.”¹⁶¹ Its efforts met with mixed results, but by raising the issue through high level commissions, funding, and required programs, it demonstrated its efforts to maintain a Christian staff.

World Vision, however, had to go sometimes into countries where its message was unwelcome. It identified these areas as “restricted contexts.” By the 1980s, it had designated over one-third of countries where it worked as restricted contexts, the majority led by socialist governments or dominated by a Muslim majority.¹⁶² In 1995, the

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 31-32, 64.

¹⁵⁹ As early as 1980, World Vision voiced this concern, “Staff recruitment emphasized technical and professional skills. . . . Apart from a “standard” profession of faith, candidates were not evaluated primarily in terms of their commitment to evangelism or as to their gifts in this areas. . . . As a result, in some instance there has been a diminution of our evangelical witness because we do not have committed Christians involved in the programs.” “World Vision’s Ministry in Resistant Areas,” Evangelism and Research Division, WVI, Mar. 16, 1980 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁶⁰ Bryant Myers’ approach modeled World Vision’s push for integration, “We cannot share what we do not have. We cannot live eloquent lives that provoke questions to which the gospel is the answer unless our lives are made alive by the Spirit of the living God.” Myers, *Walking With the Poor*, 2011, 234.

¹⁶¹ “Christian Witness Commission Report,” 38.

¹⁶² “World Vision’s Ministry in Resistant Areas,” WVI Evangelism and Research Division, Mar. 16, 1980 (WVI Central Records).

Christian Witness Commission decided that World Vision would register as an official Christian humanitarian organization with every government where it operated and insisted that it be able to describe its work as motivated by the love of Christ. While it agreed to forego direct evangelism if legally required to do so, it maintained its right for its staff members to pray and worship together as well as work directly with any local churches. Even if religious restrictions prevented it from introducing holistic development, its staff members could be open about their Christian faith.¹⁶³

Restricted contexts forced World Vision to weigh its dual commitments to hire indigenous and Christian staff members. In many countries, few Christians had the necessary skills. In these contexts, it imported experienced Christian expatriates to set up new programs, but it also hired local, non-Christian staff members. It stipulated that they would not be able to advance to senior management positions, they must be willing to support World Vision's mission, and they must adopt a manner of life in accordance with its values. But it also made clear that non-Christian staff members would be treated hospitably, invited but not required to attend World Vision's religious gatherings, and given freedom and space to practice their own faith.¹⁶⁴

The majority of non-Christian staff members came from Muslim majority countries.¹⁶⁵ World Vision's willingness to hire Muslims has sometimes tested its support

¹⁶³ "Christian Witness Commission Report," 51-53.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 54-55. In such settings, it also trained Christian staff to appreciate and be aware of cultural and religious differences in the field. World Vision staff have told numerous stories to the author describing the respectful interaction World Vision's Christian and non-Christian staff share. Sanjay Sojwal, long-time World Vision staffer in Asia, shared one story of World Vision's Christian staff making space within their own worship setting for Muslims to pray in Indonesia. He also retold a story of the respect and patience Muslim staff and aid recipients exhibited while World Vision Christian staff prayed before distributing food. Sanjay Sojwal, Director of Marketing for Christian Witness, interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

¹⁶⁵ In some settings, it also has hired Buddhist and Hindu staff. Twenty countries where World Vision operates today are Muslim-majority countries.

among evangelicals. One philanthropist ruefully remarked that “World Vision is the largest Christian employer of Muslims around the world.”¹⁶⁶ It did have a long history of engagement in the Muslim world.¹⁶⁷ In the early 1960s, Bob Pierce brought relief to Iran and Afghanistan. In the 1970s, Stan Mooneyham expanded operations in Muslim majority countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. It supported evangelistic efforts to Muslims. In 1978, World Vision and the Lausanne Movement co-sponsored the North American Conference on Muslim Evangelization and published the proceedings, *The Gospel and Islam*, as the text for evangelistic outreach to “unreached” Muslim peoples.¹⁶⁸ In the wake of the Iranian Revolution, World Vision released the video, *Islam: Unlocking the Door*, to give Western evangelicals accurate information on Islam’s history and growth.¹⁶⁹

During the 1990s, it reached out evangelistically to Muslims, but it recognized that the Muslim World often had the greatest physical needs. Was work in the Muslim world worth accepting the restrictions? Usually World Vision decided that it was. Some staff members believed that Islamic countries needed a counter-Christian presence. Most

¹⁶⁶ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 46. World Vision has answered a number of inquiries about its hiring position. See an exchange between Bryant Myers and Thomas H. McCallie, head of the Maclellan Foundation inquiring about World Vision’s efforts in Mali and North Africa. Thomas H. McCallie, III to Bryant Myers, Feb. 17, 1994; Bryant Myers to Thomas H. McCallie, III, Mar. 1, 1994 (WVI Central Records). In the last decade, WVUS pulled funds from WVI’s work in Afghanistan because it felt it could not sell the country’s Muslim staff to its American evangelical constituency. Bryant Myers, interview by author, June 20, 2007, Monrovia, CA. Today, between 18 to 20 percent of World Vision’s staff are Muslim. Tom Getman, “Away from Evangelicalism: Reflections on Changes at World Vision,” interview by Katherine Marshall, May 1, 2009, <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/events/away-from-evangelicalism-reflections-on-changes-at-world-vision>.

¹⁶⁷ Dave Robinson, “Historical Timeline of World Vision Ministry in the Muslim World,” Nov. 10, 2009 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁶⁸ Don M McCurry, *The Gospel and Islam: A Compendium* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979).

¹⁶⁹ James Greenelsh and Gospel Light Video, *Islam Unlocking the Door* (Ventura, CA: World Vision International, 1981). Other texts followed. For example, see John Dudley Woodberry, *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* (Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1989).

argued differently, insisting that verbal evangelism was only one aspect of its efforts to bring about the kingdom of God.¹⁷⁰

Programs in Muslim countries took different forms. The need to be religiously nonsectarian complicated efforts to raise funds through traditional child sponsorship and mass market appeals, but World Vision received a larger number of governmental grants. If it conducted any religious activities, it raised private funds or worked with other independent Christian agencies.¹⁷¹ World Vision may not have highlighted their hiring of Muslims to its Christian donor constituency, but it did advertise the successes of programs in the Muslim world. For example, World Vision maintained a long history of good working relationships in the West African countries of Senegal, Mali, and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania where most local staff members were Muslim. World Vision highlighted communal changes and the increased well being of children. Yet it also recounted invitations to share the gospel. One past country director noted partnerships with separate evangelical agencies, Youth with a Mission (YWAM) and Child Evangelism Fellowship, which provided Christian education.¹⁷² As it expanded to consider more diverse Christian and even non-Christian voices, what emerged was an expansive view of what made it a Christian organization, retaining an evangelical center while accepting diffuse and fluid boundaries.

¹⁷⁰ “Work in Islamic Countries,” WVI Board of Directors’ Policy Manual, Sept. 18, 1987 (WVI Central Records); “Islam and World Vision,” Mar. 4, 1991 (WVI Central Records); “Christian Witness Commission Report,” 53-54.

¹⁷¹ In some contexts, World Vision partnered with local Christian churches, but it was also aware that partnership might draw undue and unwelcome attention to Christians who may have faced religious persecution. In such case, World Vision handled partnership carefully. “Christian Church Commission Report,” 54.

¹⁷² Torrey Olsen, Director of Christian Commitments, WVUS (former country director of Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania), interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

World Vision Debates Justice and Advocacy

Evangelicals had historically distinguished their mission activities from the political engagement characteristic of the ecumenical movement. World Vision tried also to remain non-political, but prominent voices in other agencies suggested that its claims of neutrality were naïve, and they criticized its unwillingness to speak against unjust political and social structures.¹⁷³ Some of its staff members privately harbored similar reservations, and in 1982, World Vision’s field directors convened to discuss “World Vision in a Political and Social Context.”¹⁷⁴ They agreed that World Vision could not help the poor without doing something about the root causes of injustice. Recounting occasions when World Vision had remained silent in the face of injustice, field staff members lamented that the organization failed to live out its mission. The following year, they presented their case before the WVI Council:

We need to recognize the reality that our ministry is political, that you cannot separate politics from the web of circumstances which calls forth our compassionate response and that there are enormous political consequences stemming from much of our development work... rather than trying to maintain a dangerous fiction that we are non-political, we would be better served by developing far more political expertise.¹⁷⁵

Strict divisions between politics and ministry may have placated evangelical constituencies in the fundraising offices, but practitioners argued they made little sense on the ground.

President Mooneyham commissioned Anglican priest and World Vision New Zealand board chair John Rymer to prepare a study that began a ten year focus on the justice issue. In 1983, Rymer presented a document, 150 pages long, that gave a biblical

¹⁷³ John Rymer, “The Church in Search of Justice,” Sept. 1983 (WVI Central Records)

¹⁷⁴ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 146–147.

¹⁷⁵ Cliff Benzel, “Justice and Human Rights in an Age of Turbulence,” WVI Council, 1983 (WVI Central Records).

and theological argument for justice. He reiterated arguments from global evangelicals such as Orlando Costas and Samuel Escobar as well as information from the World Council of Churches and Latin American Catholic bishops.¹⁷⁶ Few denied the thoroughness of Rymer's work, but some complained that it was too abstract. What they needed was a direction for internal decisions and external communications. What they got was a theological position paper.¹⁷⁷

The majority of those shaping policy came to view justice as indispensable. So what forms should this commitment take? In 1985, World Vision adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While the United Nations had adopted the Declaration in 1948, most evangelicals dismissed it as a secular document ill-suited or even contrary to its missionary work. World Vision's affirmation of the need to encourage people to secure these universal human rights represented an important first step. In 1987, a revised policy statement on development and a new statement on urban ministry also suggested a need to oppose oppressive and unjust structures.¹⁷⁸ By 1989, the World Vision board adopted a statement on justice. A statement on advocacy followed in 1991.¹⁷⁹

Some within the partnership complained that taking up questions of justice and advocacy would alienate its donor base and take time from relief and development. With

¹⁷⁶ "Conversing with John Rymer on Justice," *Together* (July-Sept 1990): 6-7. Rymer remarked that while World Council of Churches' representatives refused to admit that World Vision measured up to the understanding of justice that Rymer presented, they wished us well in their efforts. Rymer also recounts his visits with the Chilean and other Latin American archbishops.

¹⁷⁷ John Rymer, "The Church in Search of Justice," Sept. 1983 (WVI Central Records); Harold Henderson, "World Vision's Justice and Reconciliation Ministry: Directions for the Future," WVI Council, 1986 (WVI Central Records); In critiquing Rymer's report, Vice President Hal Barber wrote to President Tom Houston to complain, "We don't need any more philosophers on the justice committee." Letters between Houston and Rymer also point to the frustrations they experienced in translating theological proposals into applicable procedures. See Hal Barber to Tom Houston, Dec. 12, 1985; Tom Houston to John Rymer, Sept. 9, 1984 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁷⁸ "World Vision's Development Ministry," April 15, 1987; "World Vision's Urban Ministry," April 15, 1987, WVI Policy Statements (WVI Central Records).

¹⁷⁹ World Vision and Justice Policy Statement," 1990; "World Vision and Advocacy Policy Statement," 1991 (WVI Central Records).

the support of the Western fundraising and Latin American field offices, World Vision added the new statements to its mission statement in 1992, but a number of Asian and African evangelicals abstained from the vote.¹⁸⁰ World Vision pushed ahead in implementing justice and advocacy.¹⁸¹ By the early 1990s, World Vision added justice as part of a three-fold mission: promoting human transformation through relief and community-based development, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, and working to change unjust structures affecting the poor.¹⁸²

It ventured slowly into advocacy. It had publicized the Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s and the Ethiopian famine in the 1980s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, World Vision became more willing to work for political change. In 1989, WVI President Graeme Irvine lobbied the United Nations for changes in Cambodia, where World Vision had a long history. In front of the prison where 20,000 Cambodians were tortured and killed, Irvine pressed the U.N. to reject former Khmer Rouge leader, Khieu Samphan, as its Cambodian representative, call for free elections, and push for religious freedom. The media blitz and political rankling that followed led Cambodia to implement each change.¹⁸³

World Vision's passion for the Palestinians stimulated another early advocacy effort. Having opened an office in the West Bank in 1986, it spoke out against Israel's "oppression" of the occupied territories. Among World Vision's constituency, President Irvine realized, "this is not something to be attempted carelessly, naively, or on an

¹⁸⁰ Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007.

¹⁸¹ "World Vision and Justice Study Guide," 1989 (WVI Central Records)

¹⁸² "World Vision Mission Statement," 1992. World Vision now frames its three-fold mission as relief, development, and advocacy.

¹⁸³ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 157–160. Graeme Irvine, "Cambodia: An Occasion to Speak," *Together* (July-Sept. 1990): 4-5.

emotional impulse.” He knew that evangelicals often referred to Israel as “the people of God,” and “the creation of the Israeli state as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.” Yet he felt that World Vision was obligated to correct misinformation and raise public awareness about the plight of the Palestinian people. “Failure to speak or act on behalf of the poor... [would] be inconsistent with World Vision’s Christian development stance.”¹⁸⁴

In subsequent years, ADP staff in Honduras helped organize farmers around land management and environmental policies.¹⁸⁵ In 1992, World Vision joined the Red Cross to ban the manufacture, sale, and use of landmines.¹⁸⁶ The following year, it drew attention to the exploitation of children, particularly in child prostitution.¹⁸⁷ World Vision’s initial campaigns met with success across its diverse constituency. Yet it chose its issues selectively; few found banning landmines or protecting children controversial.¹⁸⁸

The staff members assigned to advocacy issues remained small. In 1985, World Vision hired Tom Getman, former aide to Senator Mark Hatfield, to set up an office in Washington D.C. As World Vision’s Director of Governmental Relations, Getman managed a staff of two. When he left in 1997, he managed a staff of forty-seven.¹⁸⁹ Access to power grew as the organization became larger and more well known, and it

¹⁸⁴ Graeme Irvine, “Beyond Anger,” *Together* (July-Sept 1990): 1-4; “World Vision Advocacy Policy Statement,” 1991.

¹⁸⁵ Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 160–162.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 178–9.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 149–152.

¹⁸⁸ The case of apartheid in South Africa did raise controversy within World Vision South Africa. Because South Africa was a support and field country, it raised funds mostly from white donors while the recipients of aid were almost all black. The interracial World Vision South Africa staff had to find a way to raise fund while speaking out for justice. Roberta Hestenes, “Laying the Foundations: Brief Reflections on our History,” Mar. 16, 2006; “On the Side of the Poor” World Vision UK Advocacy Paper, Feb. 6, 1997 (WVI Central Records)

¹⁸⁹ Getman notes that in 2009, there were over 150 employees in the Washington D.C. office. Getman, “Away from Evangelicalism: Reflections on Changes at World Vision.”

soon could lobby U.S. legislators and U.N. representatives on foreign aid policy and international relations while also planning future programs in accord with the grant cycles of USAID. Advocacy campaigns to raise public awareness were good, but briefing elected officials was often better.

World Vision and Gender

By the 1970s, the field of development turned its attention to women. The United Nations christened 1976-1985 as its Decade for Women. New development programs focused on women's health, child-rearing, and economic growth; research showed that women were the linchpin for development success. A few World Vision staff members attended the 1985 Nairobi United Nations conference that reviewed efforts for "equality, development and peace." They were enthusiastic but they had few means of support. A few World Vision practitioners experimented with local development initiatives for women, but World Vision remained on the sidelines of larger conversations.¹⁹⁰

Advocates for women's development initiatives turned their attention to the lack of women leaders in World Vision. Without claiming intentional gender discrimination, they confronted the "old boys club" culture that kept women out of senior leadership positions. World Vision commissioned a study group that led the partnership to approve a new "Women in Development and Leadership Policy" in 1992.¹⁹¹ The studies led to change. Roberta Hestenes, World Vision International Board Chair and the only woman among World Vision's senior leaders, posed the question: "Is the gospel good news for women?" She linked her own story with that of a female Quichua Indian in Ecuador. Like this forgotten villager, she too had felt invisible and unimportant as her Christian

¹⁹⁰ Linda Tripp, "Getting Beyond Lip Service," *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 4-5.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

subculture had led her to accept assumptions about male leadership that subordinated her gifts. Yet Hestenes concluded that the gospel not only called Christians to work for change among Quichua villagers, it also called for changing roles for women in ministry.¹⁹² World Vision found the first a much easier sell than the second. Work on behalf of Two-Thirds World women was an issue of biblical justice. Views on women in leadership among its constituents were much more diverse.¹⁹³

After intense research and debate, the committee adopted a Master of Divinity thesis, “Women in the Bible and the Implications for Leadership,” by Fuller seminarian, Katherine M. Hambert, as its text. The paper drew support because it was both intellectually informed and practical. It offered a theological reassessment of traditionally conservative understandings while not ignoring troublesome Pauline texts that seemed to restrict women. World Vision sent the paper for review to theologians inside and outside of World Vision, male and female, from widely different theological and cultural traditions. The partnership could finally say that its “biblical and theological stance values the equal worth and dignity of women and men.” Insisting that its theological work guided its decision-making, World Vision advocated a new policy elevating women in its development programs and leadership.¹⁹⁴

The new policy “recognized that the responsibilities of women far outweigh their access to educational, health, material, social, and political resources that are necessary to support their transformation and growth and so enable the well-being of those in their

¹⁹² Roberta Hestenes, “Is the Gospel Good News for Women?,” *World Vision* (June/July 1988): 10-11; Hestenes, “Is the Gospel Good News for Women?,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 3.

¹⁹³ Charles Clayton, “Building a Better Theology,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 5-7; John Kenyon, “Agreeing on the Theology,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 8.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Clayton, “Building a Better Theology,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 5-7; John Kenyon, “Agreeing on the Theology,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 8.

charge.”¹⁹⁵ In 1992, World Vision launched its Girl Child Initiative to address these inequities. It highlighted its work to donors by running articles on women of the developing world.¹⁹⁶ Integration of women into leadership moved more slowly. World Vision set up recruitment and personnel policies that promoted equality and opportunity. Several women ascended to leadership as vice-presidents and country directors, but uprooting an evangelical “old boys club” proved difficult.¹⁹⁷

Conclusion

After the Ethiopian famine, World Vision sought to be at the forefront of every humanitarian crisis. With the overthrow of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989, World Vision flocked to the country and publicized the thousands of children abandoned in orphanages. Beginning in 1991, it delivered relief to war victims in the Balkan Civil War. By 1993, it joined agencies pouring into African hot spots to offer relief to the victims of ethnic fighting in Somalia, Uganda, and Rwanda.

World Vision’s Rwanda work illustrated its new comprehensive approach.¹⁹⁸ It provided immediate relief through medical care and food aid while it also advocated for greater international responsibility to act. Its graphic images of torched churches,

¹⁹⁵ “World Vision’s Women in Development and Leadership Policy,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 8.

¹⁹⁶ “World Vision US History Timeline,” 1995, WVUS Archives; “Bangladesh: The Girl-Child Initiative,” *Together* (Oct-Dec. 1992): 16-17; “Signs of Hope: Women of the Developing World,” *World Vision* (June-July 1992): 18-19; Barbara Thompson, “Coming Out of the Shadows: Women in the Third World,” *World Vision* (Feb-March 1993): 2-7. World Vision’s *Together* periodical gave its entire Jan-Mar. 1996 issue over to the issue of “The Girl Child.” These initiatives gained support among evangelical audiences. Tim Stafford, “Where Are the Men?: Overseas Humanitarian Groups Target Women, and for Good Reason. But It Isn’t Enough,” *Christianity Today* 49, no. 8 (August 2005): 38–41.

¹⁹⁷ Linda Tripp, “Gender and Development from a Christian Perspective: Experience from World Vision,” *Gender and Development* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 62–68. “World Vision Partnership Office Gender Self-Assessment Results,” Nov. 2002 (WVI Central Records). Robert Hestenes, email to WVUS offices, Oct. 9, 2009 (WVUS Archives). Joan Levitt, chairperson of the Women in Development and Leadership Commission became the first Vice-President of WVI. Linda Tripp became the first Vice President of WV Canada.

¹⁹⁸ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees explicitly commended World Vision’s work in Rwanda. “World Vision History Timeline,” (WVUS Archives).

butchered bodies, and mass graves helped compel the public to insist on a response to the genocide.¹⁹⁹ On the ground, it implemented long lasting holistic development as well as reconciliation projects between Hutus and Tutsis and centers for child soldiers to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into their communities.²⁰⁰

In the 1990s World Vision sought to expand the reputation it enjoyed among evangelicals to the relief and development community. It added large-scale government aid and GIK alongside its donor base child sponsors.²⁰¹ Growth became the measure of success, but Christian identity remained its defining marker. The majority of donors attested that the organization's Christian identity and compelling need convinced them to give. Yet internally World Vision debated how its Christian identity affected organizational growth and practice. While some wondered whether it hindered professionalization and development expertise, organizational leaders crafted distinctive approaches to Christian witness and development. It moved further away from the local church, even as it posited an expansive Christian vision for its work. It grew more religiously diverse, yet its leadership remained vigilant to defend the organization against signs of secularization. World Vision was changing, but what did the change mean? Did it reflect a changing evangelical culture, both abroad and in the United States? Or was the organization now in tension with the evangelical culture that had supported it?

¹⁹⁹ I can attest to the graphic nature of these images. Having viewed hours of World Vision films, these were by far the most graphic, unsanitized images. It made me physically sick to watch them. Other World Vision employees shooting these images also noted their own flashbacks to these events. Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010.

²⁰⁰ World Vision established the Gulu Children of War Rehabilitation Centre in Northern Uganda in 1995. Since the center opened, World Vision states nearly 11,000 former abductees and their children have been helped through its services. Irvine, *Best Things in the Worst Times*, 169–181; “Children of Gulu”, n.d., <http://www.worldvision.ca/ContentArchives/content-stories/Pages/ChildrenofGulu.aspx>. (Accessed April 10, 2012).

²⁰¹ “WVUS History Timeline,” 1991 (WVUS Archives), World Vision topped one million sponsored children in 1991. In 1980, it sponsored only 70,000. Bartlett and Curran, “World Vision International’s AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership.”

CHAPTER 8:
WORLD VISION AND THE NEW INTERNATIONALISTS
1995-PRESENT

By the late 1990s, World Vision claimed to be the “largest privately funded relief-and-development agency in the world.”¹ Yet growth in the 1980s and 1990s paled in comparison to the expansion in the decade after 2000. In 1995, WVI’s budget stood at 300 million dollars. By 2002, it had tripled to over one billion dollars, and by 2006, it had doubled again. In 2008, WVI’s income stood at 2.6 billion dollars. It operated in ninety-eight countries, employed 40,000 staff members, and assisted one hundred million people annually.² Where it had previously remained on the periphery of the relief and development industry, its size and stature now afforded it a seat among the other elite agencies. Media outlets relied on its experienced staff as a source for firsthand comments on breaking global news.³

World Vision’s rise also reflected the growth of fellow Christian relief, development, and mission agencies. Sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow claimed that American Christians now spent four billion dollars annually on overseas ministries, a fifty percent increase over the past decade. Career missionaries and short-term mission

¹ While its revenue includes millions in federal and international government aid, the majority of its funds still come from private individuals, corporations, and foundations. Robert Seiple, “De-Seiple-ing World Vision,” *Christianity Today* (June 15, 1998): 51. World Vision also referred to itself as the world’s largest Christian humanitarian organization. It also claimed the title as the largest U.S. based international relief and development organization.

² World Vision International Annual Reports, 1995-2008 (WVI Central Records).

³ After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, World Vision was the first humanitarian agency interviewed by CNN and NPR. Dean Owen, Director of Executive Communications, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010, Federal Way, WA. During her research on World Vision in the early 2000s, anthropologist Susan McDonic noted that the North American press mentioned World Vision an average of 150 times a day. Susan Mary McDonic, “Witnessing, Work and Worship: World Vision and the Negotiation of Faith, Development and Culture” (Duke University, 2004), 117.

trips continued to multiply, evangelical engagement in foreign policy issues intensified, and the size of almost every faith-based relief and development agency ballooned.⁴

As American evangelicals turned to international issues, outsiders took note of their interest. In 2002, *New York Times* editorialist Nicholas Kristof labeled them the “new internationalists.”⁵ In the wake of Religious Right politics and domestic culture wars, Kristof found evangelicals’ international forays refreshing. Many evangelicals also appreciated the attention. While they disputed any claim that evangelicals’ interest in global and social issues was new, they agreed that evangelicals were developing a “deepening social conscience.”⁶

How then can we account for World Vision’s exponential growth? At one level, World Vision expanded as it continued to move beyond its American and evangelical roots. It chose professional development over missions and international governance over American unilateralism. It also embraced a Christian identity that allowed it to partner across ecumenical, interreligious, and even secular divides. At another level, World Vision grew as global issues caught the popular attention of American evangelicals.⁷ Throughout its history, World Vision believed that it served as the vanguard of popular American evangelical social action. But over the past decade, World Vision has returned to the American church. It did not offer a new message as much as a hope that evangelicals were entering a period that put World Vision at the center of a new mainstream.

⁴ Robert Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1.

⁵ Kristof, “Following God Abroad.” (Accessed June 12, 2010).

⁶ Joseph Loconte and Michael Cromartie, “Let’s Stop Stereotyping Evangelicals,” *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/07/AR2006110701228.html>. (Accessed June 12, 2010).

⁷ WVUS’s revenue quadrupled over the past decade. WVUS Annual Reports, 1998-2008. (WVI Central Records).

WVI's Institutional Rise

World Vision sought to capitalize on its inclusion within the fraternity of elite international relief and development agencies. In 1996, WVI named Dean Hirsch its new president. Having worked his way up through the ranks, Hirsch came with relief and development expertise along with on-the-ground experience. Hirsch made it his mission to elevate World Vision's professional reputation and cultivate new partnerships. World Vision had built some bridges with other INGOs in the previous decade, now its leaders had easy access to the World Economic Forum, World Health Organization, and USAID offices.⁸

By 2003, it was the largest distributor of food aid. It trailed only the Red Cross in responding to disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies.⁹ Increased capacity meant the ability to apply for multi-million dollar governmental grants and receive generous gifts-in-kind (GIK), donated commodities that it could distribute to people who needed them.¹⁰ Its reputation, record of efficiency, and aggressive marketing interested some large companies in corporate social responsibility (CSR). World Vision developed partnerships with Fortune 500 companies like Coca-Cola as well as upstarts like TOMS shoes.¹¹ From National Football League t-shirts and U.S. Department of Agriculture grain

⁸ Bill Kliewer, "Everything We Have Is Copyrighted... So Please Copy It Right," World Vision Chapel Message, May 19, 2010 (WVUS Archives); Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010.

⁹ World Vision measured its global position in various "product lines" within the humanitarian industry including sponsorship, humanitarian response, food aid, advocacy, and development. Specifically, in regard to food aid, it was the largest recipient of World Food Programme commodities. Bryant Myers, "Our Future Orientation," March 2005 (WVI Central Records).

¹⁰ Organizations like World Vision often have come to monetize much of their GIK (sell the product on the open market) and use the income generated for other program expenses. This is standard practice for many agencies. "AERDO Interagency Gift-in-Kind Standards," Dec. 2009 http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/4/Gift_in_kind_Standards.pdf (Accessed April 30, 2012).

¹¹ Blake Mycoskie founded TOMS shoes in 2006 with the pledge to give away one pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair purchased. In 2009, he received the U.S. Secretary of State's 2009 Award for Corporate Excellence (ACE) presented by Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton to highlight a commitment to "corporate social responsibility, innovation, exemplary practices, and democratic values worldwide." "Bio

to Pfizer pharmaceuticals, one group after another gave gifts in kind that required less overhead than governmental grants or child sponsorship.¹²

Despite the high operating costs, the criticism of child sponsorship from development theorists, and journalistic exposes, individual child sponsors still made up the greatest percentage of World Vision's funding.¹³ World Vision had spent decades reconsidering child sponsorship, but the steady stream of support was too lucrative to abandon. While other INGOs depended on government grant cycles and the latest development fads, World Vision's devoted base of individual donors afforded it a measure of financial stability.¹⁴

of Blake Mycoskie, The Founder & Chief Shoe Giver Of TOMS Shoes - TOMS.com", n.d., <http://www.toms.com/blakes-bio>. (Accessed April 11, 2012). When Mycoskie needed help fulfilling his pledge, he turned to World Vision to help identify and distribute TOMS shoes. As of 2011, World Vision has helped distribute over two million pairs of shoes. Steve Haas, WVUS, Vice President, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

¹² By 2004, GIK and government grants made up sixty percent of World Vision's total income. In 1994, this total was only 18%. World Vision Annual Report, 2004 (WVI Central Records). Gary F. VanderPol, "The Least of These: American Evangelical Parachurch Missions to the Poor, 1947--2005" (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2010), 225. In 2010, World Vision US received about \$251 million in GIK, around 25% of total revenue. For one oral history of World Vision's GIK program, see Dave McGinty, Senior Strategic Advisor, Public Private Partnerships at World Vision, interview by author, Dec. 20, 2011, telephone. Critics claim an over-abundance of GIK leads to bad development practice and misleading reporting of revenue. Recently, World Vision has received negative press for accepting unused Super Bowl merchandise from the National Football League (NFL) branded with the losing team's logo. The NFL writes off the donated merchandise for a tax deduction while World Vision values the merchandise as revenue while receiving free positive publicity. The practice has led to negative publicity the past two years. Laura Seay, "The Steelers Won the Super Bowl? T-shirts Sent to Africa Say So," February 15, 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0215/The-Steelers-won-the-Super-Bowl-T-shirts-sent-to-Africa-say-so>; Laura Freschi, "World Vision Super Bowl Shirts: The Final Chapter", Mar. 16, 2011, <http://aidwatchers.com/2011/03/world-vision-super-bowl-shirts-the-final-chapter/>. (Accessed April 12, 2012). New federal regulations and negative publicity have also led World Vision and other agencies to reconsider the values it assigns to GIK. The valuations of pharmaceuticals are a major source of debate. William P. Barrett, "Donated Pills Make Some Charities Look Too Good On Paper," *Forbes*, December 19, 2011, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/williamparrett/2011/11/30/donated-pills-makes-some-charities-look-too-good-on-paper/> (Accessed April 12, 2012).

¹³ Michael Tackett and David Jackson, "Myths of Child Sponsorship: The Miracle Merchants," *Chicago Tribune*, March 22, 1998. Several anthropologists have studied the effect of child sponsorship both on donors and recipients. See Erica Bornstein, "Child Sponsorship, Evangelism, and Belonging in the Work of World Vision Zimbabwe," *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 3 (2001): 595-622; McDonic, "Witnessing, Work and Worship: World Vision and the Negotiation of Faith, Development and Culture," 51-110.

¹⁴ Arne Bergstrom, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

If in the past, it trailed other INGOs in development expertise, now it was an early adopter of innovative programs.¹⁵ Local staff persons had experimented for decades with micro-lending, small loans to jump-start small businesses, especially to poor women. World Vision implemented microfinance programming in 1993. By 2003, it spun off its own Vision Fund subsidiary to capitalize on the newfound popularity of micro-finance among donors.¹⁶ In 2009, it adapted the platform of the popular NGO, Kiva, to allow individuals to loan money directly to a self-selected project.¹⁷ World Vision understood that its success depended on maintaining both development expertise and marketing prowess.

It also joined other INGOs in making advocacy a big part of its mission. Its Washington D.C. office now housed over 150 employees, each with a portfolio of issues for which to fund, campaign, and lobby on Capitol Hill, the United Nations, or the G8 summit. While it still felt the need to explain its rationale to some Christian constituencies, it no longer shied away from advocacy. It even found lobbying on certain issues an important marketing tool that raised its name recognition and appeal among donors. Drawing heavily on governmental funding, it also understood that lobbying Congress about foreign aid was as important as applying for grants. Lobbying efforts gave it new friends on Capitol Hill, and its staff testified as expert witnesses on global

¹⁵ World Vision even set up a “skunk works” outside normal channels of operations to test new programs. Rachel M McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135.

¹⁶ “VisionFund: Hope for a Better Future,” Tim Dearborn, “Integrating Christian Witness: Reflections on Business and Micro-enterprise Development,” 2009 (WVUS Archives). Charis M. Bracy, “A History of Microenterprise Development: An Examination of MED’s Beginnings in Latin America and Its International Expansion, 1970-Present,” Aug. 17, 2006 (WVI Central Records). Bracy traces World Vision’s first involvement in micro-enterprise to the early 1980s in Sri Lanka.

¹⁷ World Vision Launches Kiva-like Microfinance Platform,” *SocialEarth*, n.d., <http://www.socialearth.org/world-vision-launches-kiva-like-microfinance-platform> (Accessed April 12, 2012).

crises. World Vision came to see advocacy as a tool for marketing, protecting its funding interests, and promoting its expertise.¹⁸

The Rise of Faith-Based Organizations

Throughout this period, faith-based organizations (FBOs) expanded, with evangelical agencies leading the way. In 1946, evangelicals constituted sixteen percent of faith-based INGOs. By 2004, they made up forty-five percent. Over the same period, the real revenue of evangelical agencies grew from five percent to forty-one percent of all FBOs.¹⁹ These evangelical agencies ranged from new small agencies to established industry leaders.²⁰ Most got little help from government or denominational hierarchies.²¹ Unlike Catholic Relief Charities that received most of its revenue from federal funding, most evangelical agencies raised the bulk of their funds from private donations. And

¹⁸ World Vision's website offers a list of its advocacy efforts, transcripts of World Vision testimonies, legislative victories, as well as speaking points for key issues and contacts on how individuals can call their own elected officials. "World Vision - Advocacy Action Center", n.d., http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/learn/globalissues-action?open&lpos=day_txt_action-ctr (Accessed April 12, 2012).

¹⁹ McCleary notes that in 1946, the "distribution of faith-based organizations was 38 percent Jewish, 19 percent Mainline Protestant, 16 percent Evangelical, 12 percent Faith-Founded, and 3 percent Catholic.... In 2004, the breakdown was 45 percent Evangelical, 13 percent Faith-Founded, 11 percent Mainline Protestant, 9 percent Catholic, 7 percent Ecumenical, 5 percent Jewish, 2 percent Muslim, and 1 percent Orthodox." McCleary's measurement of real revenue of FBOs found similar numbers. "In 1946, the revenue shares were 64 percent Jewish, 16 percent Catholic, 7 percent Ecumenical Christian, 5 percent Evangelical, 4 percent Mainline Protestant, and 3 percent Faith-Founded Christian.... In 2004, the percentages of total revenue were 41 percent Evangelical, 28 percent Faith-Founded, 13 percent Catholic, 7 percent Jewish, 6 percent Ecumenical, 4 percent Mainline Protestant, and 1 percent Muslim." McCleary defines the evangelical category based on doctrine (inerrancy of the Bible, deity of Jesus Christ and personal salvation through him, necessity of evangelism, and pre- or post-millennium belief). McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 14–16. She identifies World Vision as moving from "evangelical" to "faith-founded" in the 1980s. With that being the case, McCleary's categorizations may even understate the growth of evangelical INGOs. Rachel M. McCleary, "Private Voluntary Organizations Engaged in International Assistance, 1939-2004," *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (September 2008): 521–522.

²⁰ If World Vision is counted as an evangelical organization, evangelical agencies made up three of the top six largest INGOs and four of the top ten in terms of real revenue in 2004. (The others are Feed the Children, MAP International, and Samaritan's Purse.) McCleary, *Global Compassion*, 25; Rachel M. McCleary, "Taking God Overseas: Competition and Institutional Homogeneity Among International Religious Private Voluntary Organizations," *International Studies Association*, 2004, 39.

²¹ The private income of evangelical INGOs was 4.6 times that of Catholic organizations and 7 times that of mainline Protestants. In 2000, out of 53 evangelical agencies registered with the government, 28 received federal assistance. There are hundreds more unregistered evangelical INGOs who do not take federal funding. McCleary, "Taking God Overseas," 5.

unlike denominational agencies like Church World Service or the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), which served as an arm of denominations with oversight over their budget and programs, independent evangelical agencies had the freedom of entrepreneurs.²²

Nonetheless, federal regulations became more favorable to faith-based organizations. In 1995, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) endorsed its partnership with Christian NGOs in development.²³ In 1996, the United States government passed the Welfare Reform Act that allowed a number of FBOs unable to meet distinctions between religious and secular activities to apply for federal funding. In 2001, Congress consolidated these ‘charitable choice’ provisions with passage of the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Act. The same year, President George W. Bush established Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in five federal departments.²⁴ A 2004 ruling determined that “USAID can no longer discriminate against organizations which combine development or humanitarian activities with ‘inherently religious activities’ such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytisation.”²⁵

²² Again, World Vision becomes the exception to the rule as an evangelical agency receiving millions from federal funding, but it still raised the majority of its funds independently. World Relief becomes the exception of an evangelical agency that serves as the humanitarian arm of a denominational body (National Association of Evangelicals). Its relatively small size in comparison to World Vision or Samaritan’s Purse may prove the value of evangelical entrepreneurship. McCleary, “Taking God Overseas”; Mark Chaves, “Intraorganizational Power and Internal Secularization in Protestant Denominations,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 1 (July 1993): 1–48. Ronald Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (New York: Friendship Press, 1996), 114–116.

²³ Canadian International Development Agency, “Christian NGOs and CIDA: Guiding Principles, Understandings and Affirmation”, October 1995; Linda Tripp, “Gender and Development from a Christian Perspective: Experience from World Vision,” *Gender and Development* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 63–64.

²⁴ In 2002, a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiative office came to USAID.

²⁵ Gerard Clarke, “Agents of Transformation? Donors, Faith-based Organisations and International Development,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (February 2007): 82–83.

The new regulations met with mixed reviews, and they did not immediately affect World Vision, which already received millions in federal support and which operated by earlier, stricter standards. Other more sectarian evangelical agencies like Samaritan's Purse saw the ruling as an opening for expansion. Most international evangelical agencies continued to refuse government aid.²⁶

The changes led to robust scholarly debate over the definition of faith-based organizations. Some had in mind local congregations; others did not know exactly what the term meant. Some defined FBOs as a subset of INGOs. They focused on the religious features of FBOs that distinguished them from secular relief and development.²⁷ Others emphasized the diversity among FBOs, either locating them along a continuum of "more or less" religious; looking at how religion affected staff hiring, organizational structure and public identity; or scrutinizing relations to donors and aid recipients.²⁸ They either

²⁶ A *Boston Globe* 2006 study found that between 2001-2005, USAID funneled 1.7 billion dollars to FBOs. While the article's intent was to note the significance of Bush's new policies, it did not note what percentage of these agencies already received significant government funding (World Vision and Catholic Relief Services just being two examples). "Bush Brings Faith to Foreign Aid," *Boston Globe*, October 8, 2006, http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/10/08/bush_brings_faith_to_foreign_aid/ (Accessed April 12, 2012). A sociological survey found that while increased funding to evangelical agencies may have been Bush's intent, they still avoided federal funding. Helen R F. Ebaugh, Janet Saltzman Chafetz, and Paula F. Pipes, "The Influence of Evangelicalism on Government Funding of Faith-based Social Service Organizations," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 4 (June 2006): 380-392.

²⁷ As example of this approach, see Clarke, "Agents of Transformation?"; Gerard Clarke, "Faith Matters: Faith-based Organisations, Civil Society and International Development," *Journal of International Development* 18, no. 6 (August 1, 2006): 835-848; Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings, eds., *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations: Bridging Sacred and the Secular* (Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

²⁸ Thomas H. Jeavons, "Identifying Characteristics of 'Religious' Organizations: An Exploratory," in *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*, ed. N. J. Demerath (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 79-95; Ronald and Heidi Rolland Unruh Sider, "Typology of Religious Characteristics of Social Service and Educational Organizations and Programs," *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33, no. 109 (2004): 109-134. Helen Rose Ebaugh, Janet S. Chafetz, and Paula E. Pipes, "Where's the Faith in Faith-based Organizations? Measures and Correlates of Religiosity in Faith-based Social Service Coalitions.," *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 2006): 2259-2272; Andrew Natsios, "Faith-Based NGOs and US Foreign Policy," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliott Abrams (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield, 2001), 189-202; Stephen V. Monsma, "Faith-Based NGOs and the Government Embrace," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliott Abrams (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2001), 203-225.

presumed that FBOs remained outsiders to a dominant humanitarian discourse or that such groups had to accommodate their faith to a shared world culture. In actual practice, FBOs were incredibly diverse.²⁹ World Vision illustrated the fluid and contested nature of religious identity, for it maintained its religious character even as it evolved. Religion shaped its development practice; development activities altered the way it presented its religious identity to staff members, donors, and aid recipients.³⁰

Religion and Development

World culture theorists acknowledged the claims of FBOs that they had religious motives, but they assumed that as FBOs worked more in professional development, the result would be an increasingly secular language, practice, and organization. In presuming the hegemony of a “secular world culture,” they failed to see how religion could shape development.³¹ Some theorists called for the “end of development,” seeing it as “top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic,” reproducing hegemonic power while overlooking local cultures.³² Religion served as a case in point. Andrew Natsios, former WVUS vice president and head of USAID under the George W. Bush administration,

²⁹ Tamsin Bradley, “A Call for Clarification and Critical Analysis of the Work of Faith-based Development Organizations (FBDO).,” *Progress in Development Studies* 9, no. 2 (April 2009): 101–114; Tara Hefferan, Julie Adkins, and Laurie A Occhipinti, *Bridging the Gaps: Faith-based Organizations, Neoliberalism, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).

³⁰ Elizabeth Olson, “Common Belief, Contested Meanings: Development and Faith-based Organizational Culture,” *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 99, no. 4 (September 2008): 393–405; Fred Kniss and David Todd Campbell, “The Effect of Religious Orientation on International Relief and Development Organizations,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no. 1 (1997): 93–103; Jenny Lunn, “The Role of Religion, Spirituality and Faith in Development: A Critical Theory Approach,” *Third World Quarterly* 30, no. 5 (July 2009): 937–951.

³¹ John Boli and David V. Brewington, “Religious Organizations,” in *Religion, Globalization, and Culture*, ed. Peter Beyer and Lori G Beaman (Boston: Leiden, 2007), 203–231; John Boli and George M Thomas, “World Culture in the World Polity: A Century of International Non-Governmental Organization,” *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 2 (1997): 171–190.

³² For representative examples of the new critics, see Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Arturo Escobar, “‘The United Nations and the End of Development’,” *Development*, no. 1 (1997); Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (New York: Zed Books, 2008); Tara Hefferan, *Twinning Faith and Development: Catholic Parish Partnering in the Haiti* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007), 62.

remarked: “While most American and European foreign policy elites may hold a secular worldview, much of the rest of the world lives in one of the great religious traditions.”³³ Such criticisms took hold, and the field took a look at itself. Many saw secular development as its own “global faith.”³⁴ One conclusion was that holistic development could occur only if “social and economic change corresponded with the moral basis of society.” Religious values affected both “the actual kind of development that takes place” and the “very meaning of development.”³⁵

Scholars of development confessed that they had failed to recognize the force of religion. In a content analysis of the three development journals from 1982 to 1998, sociologist Kurt Ver Beek found no articles dealing with development and religion.³⁶ Participants in the development sector came to appreciate the size, experience, and expertise of FBOs, as well as the power of public religion. Latin American Pentecostals, the U.S. Christian right, Hindu nationalists, and Iranian ayatollahs demonstrated that religion was not privatized. Secularism was a minority view in the world.³⁷

Even inter-governmental agencies like the World Bank came to appreciate the potency of religion. Movements like Jubilee 2000 rallied religious voices to call for debt

³³ Natsios, “Faith-Based NGOs and US Foreign Policy,” 200.

³⁴ Scott M Thomas, “Faith and Foreign Aid: How the World Bank Got Religion and Why It Matters,” *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs* (Fall 2004): 22; Sharon Harper, ed., *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion, and Development* (Ottawa: IDRC, 2000), 80.

³⁵ Thomas, “Faith and Foreign Aid: How the World Bank Got Religion and Why It Matters,” 23.

³⁶ Kurt Alan Ver Beek, “Spirituality: A Development Taboo,” *Development in Practice* 10, no. 1 (February 1, 2000): 31–43.

³⁷ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Samuel P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: the Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990); Paul Freston, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

relief and to criticize the World Bank's policies. As a consequence, the Bank discovered that religious leaders had some sound ideas. An informal staff gathering known as the Friday Morning Group began meeting in the late 1980s to discuss the issues, and under new president James Wolfensohn, the World Bank established in 1995 a Development Dialogue for Values and Ethics.³⁸ In 1998, he enlisted Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey to convene the leaders of the world's faiths to create the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD).³⁹ Soon the Bank acknowledged that "religion is a central part of the international system . . . [Even] if it wished to do so, the Bank could not entirely sidestep the faith engagement."⁴⁰

For one thing, the Bank saw religion as an asset in local communities. Its survey *Voices of the Poor* interviewed sixty thousand poor men and women to find that "churches and mosques, as well as sacred trees, rivers, and mountains' were highly valued among the poor."⁴¹ It also noticed that religious leaders often could empower and

³⁸ David Beckmann, one of the founders of the Friday morning group, would later become the head of the U.S. Christian advocacy group, Bread for the World. David M Beckmann, *Friday Morning Reflections at the World Bank: Essays on Values and Development* (Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1991).

³⁹ There are a number of accounts of the World Bank's encounter with religion. For an insider account or conference proceedings, see Katherine Marshall, "Development and Religion: A Different Lens on Development Debates," *Peabody Journal of Education* 76, no. 3/4 (October 2001): 339–375; Katherine Marshall and Richard Marsh, eds., *Millennium Challenges for Development and Faith Institutions* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003); Katherine Marshall and Lucy Keough, *Finding Global Balance: Common Ground Between the Worlds of Development and Faith* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2005). For outsider accounts, see John A Rees, *Religion in International Politics and Development: The World Bank and Faith Institutions* (Cheltenham; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2011); Harper, *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market*, 72–79; Thomas, "Faith and Foreign Aid: How the World Bank Got Religion and Why It Matters."

⁴⁰ Duncan Mcduie-Ra and John A. Rees, "Religious Actors, Civil Society and the Development Agenda: The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion," *Journal of International Development* 22, no. 1 (January 2010): 25.

⁴¹ Deepa Narayan, "Voices of the Poor," in *Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa*, ed. D. G. R Belshaw, Robert Calderisi, and Chris Sugden (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001), 45–46; Lunn, "The Role of Religion, Spirituality and Faith in Development," 942. The *Voices of the Poor* study was published as a three volume work by the World Bank. See Deepa Narayan and Raj Patel, *Voices of the Poor [Vol. 1], Can Anyone Hear Us?* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000); Deepa Narayan, *Voices of the Poor [Vol. 2], Crying Out for Change* (New York, NY: Oxford

motivate developing communities and that FBOs could gain the trust of local leaders and imbed themselves at the grassroots far better than its own program staff.⁴²

Yet, the World Bank used religion instrumentally. It encouraged “good religion” that shared its presuppositions. It had no use for “bad religion.” Indeed, religious voices at global conferences could support Bank initiatives while local religious leaders became conduits to churches, synagogues, mosques, or temples. But secular agencies still often misunderstood religion. Transformational development theorists saw religious worldviews as necessary for human well being, but development agencies saw them often as a static set of beliefs, and they wondered what difference propositions could make.

Religion and development stimulated a flood of books, lecture series, conferences, and think tanks.⁴³ Some religious agencies liked the attention; some felt used; and some saw themselves as offering alternatives to the methods of Western development.⁴⁴ A few FBOs withdrew when they realized that most people in the secular development community dismissed their normative claims and disdained their evangelistic witness. But however great the cacophony, religion was on the agenda.

University Press, 2000); Deepa Narayan and Patti L Petesch, *Voices of the Poor [Vol. 3], From Many Lands* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴² Judith M. Dean, *Attacking Poverty in the Developing World: Christian Practitioners and Academics in Collaboration* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 243–248.

⁴³ As the World Bank’s program was dying down, it moved the WFDD to Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. The facilitator of the World Bank program, Katherine Marshall came to lead the concentration on Religion and Global Development (<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/programs/127>). Another recent program is Birmingham University’s Religion and Development Research Programme <http://www.rad.bham.ac.uk/>. For an overview of research and other programs, see Anne Marie Holenstein, “Governmental Donor Agencies and Faith-based Organizations,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 87, no. 858 (2005): 367–374. In addition to religion in development, other fields like international relations and foreign policy have embraced renewed discussions of religion’s role. Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ Wendy Tyndale, “Idealism and Practicality: The Role of Religion in Development,” *Development* 46, no. 4 (2003): 22–28; Wendy Tyndale, *Visions of Development: Faith-based Initiatives* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006).

It is possible, in any case, to avoid both the lack of awareness on the part of some secular development personnel and the instrumentalizing of religion by governments and secular agencies.⁴⁵ Religion is never simply a set of static beliefs; neither is development theory. Both are fluid social traditions latent with their own cultural logics, meanings, symbols, and organizational structures. Both are also complex value systems that can be mutually beneficial as well as competitive. World Vision's history shows that a religious identity can facilitate structural shifts, soften tensions from both outside and inside sources, and illumine humanitarian practices. It also shows that development ideologies and practices can alter, maybe even deepen, religious identity. At ground level, abstract categories and typologies fade into the distance.

World Vision International

Internal Diversity

World Vision International had its own internal struggles about the balance of development ideology and Christian identity. In Australia, World Vision muted its Christian identity. Ninety-three percent of Australians recognized the agency by name, but only eleven percent recognized it as a Christian agency. In Europe, World Vision offices gained favor with international agencies and received government grants but made less headway with the Christian public.⁴⁶ Yet in Ghana, most World Vision staff

⁴⁵ For further discussion of an alternative perspective, you might see McCleary, *Global Compassion*; Yujun Mei, "The Changing Discourse of International Humanitarian Charitable-Relief NGOs" (Arizona State University, 2003). S  everine Deneulin offers a typology of five dominant modes of religion in development. He notes: 1) religion is instrumental to development goals ; 2) religion forms people's values and what counts as legitimate development; 3) religious freedom is fundamental human right to protect; 4) religion is constitutive part of overall wellbeing; 5) religious is a political force that shapes societies' structures. S  everine Deneulin, *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script* (London: Zed, 2009), 28..

⁴⁶ "Strategy Working Group Records," Feb. 20-22, 2001 (WVI Central Records).

members embraced neo-Pentecostalism and funded pastor training conferences.⁴⁷ In the U.S., World Vision remained rooted within an evangelical subculture and went to federal court to protect its right to hire co-religionists. Meanwhile, in the twenty Islamic countries where it worked, most personnel were Muslim. In a global partnership of one hundred countries, no single strategy could prevail.

World Vision saw the diversity as a theological and organizational hallmark. In listening to the missiological concerns voiced by Two-Thirds World evangelicals at Lausanne and beyond, World Vision adopted theological commitments that led it to privilege voices that pushed back against Western control and demanded greater autonomy. By the 1990s, World Vision could say that no single voice defined the partnership. For some, this was a virtue; for others, a lack. Leaders wondered if they had lost a cohesive vision. The national and regional offices marketed different messages, produced their own mission statements, and even carried different logos.

A stronger central organization seemed imperative.⁴⁸ In an age of the internet and twenty-four hour cable news, there had to be one clear message. World Vision even suggested coffee retailer Starbucks as a model. Starbucks was ubiquitous in a globalized world, but each local franchise maintained a consistent brand.⁴⁹ Diversity had led local World Vision offices and even departments within offices to compete for resources, create redundancy, and resist any cohesive strategy. World Vision challenged its local entities to capitalize on its size by working together. In the early 2000s, World Vision did

⁴⁷ McDonic, "Witnessing, Work and Worship: World Vision and the Negotiation of Faith, Development and Culture," 140–143.

⁴⁸ In a survey of senior leadership, over ninety percent called for 1) a central Partnership strategy; 2) changes in governance and decision rights; 3) a process of strategic allocation of resources; 4) improved performance culture; 5) better efficiency, effectiveness, and quality. "Newslines," May 25, 2005 (WVI Central Records).

⁴⁹ Bryant Myers, "Newslines," July 25, 2005 (WVI Central Records).

strategic planning that issued in stronger central control.⁵⁰ To manage overhead costs, it consolidated such functions as information technology and human resources into single units to service the entire partnership for greater cost efficiency.⁵¹ Countries adopted a common vision statement, enforced a single logo, and launched a singular brand strategy. Like Starbucks, it sought to make World Vision’s orange trademark synonymous with humanitarian relief and development.⁵²



Figure 7: “World Vision Logo”⁵³

⁵⁰ It began its “Our Future” strategic initiative in 2003 and claimed it would be the largest “change initiative the World Vision partnership has ever undertaken.” Its visioning process commenced at its 2003 National Directors’ Conference which led to a “Big Goals Summit” in 2004. In 2005, it began implement the Strategic Mandates of the Our Future campaign. “Our Future,” Overview Brochure (WVI Central Records). The campaign has met with mixed reactions and success. Many employees have voiced their concern that it has become a waste of money, time, and energy. Manfred Grellert, interview by author, June 22, 2007; June 9, 2010, Monrovia, CA.

⁵¹ Human resources (which WVI calls designated as People and Culture) is coordinated throughout the partnership by World Vision Australia. Andrea Pink, interview by author, Nov 3, 2010, Melbourne, Australia, via Skype.

⁵² Bonnie Jensen, WVI, Director of Brand Strategy, interview by author, Dec. 7, 2010, phone. “Strategy Working Group Minutes,” Aug. 19-21 1996 (WVI Central Records). World Vision saw the orange color as helpful in emergency relief situations. Easily recognizable, people could associate orange with safety and help. It also stood out in its marketing efforts from other relief and development agencies. The cross/starburst also was matter of intense debate. For many of World Vision’s Christian constituents, the symbol connotes a cross, but it is not so recognizable as a Christian symbol, that is off-putting to non-Christians. Trevor Roberts, “Cross and Crown: How to Use a Great Logo: World Vision”, September 28, 2011, <http://cacpro.com/educational/how-to-use-a-great-logo-world-vision>. (Accessed April 12, 2012).

⁵³ World Vision and the World Vision logo are licensed trademarks of World Vision. “World Vision - World Vision Website Linking and Usage Policies”, n.d., <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/pages/linktowv> (Accessed April 12, 2012).

World Vision called its local entities to a “twin citizenship.” Without foregoing local priorities, each country had some responsibility for the international work. This was not a call for a top-down model that located all management decisions from in a central, Western office. The goal was a federalized structure that allowed for a stronger center (World Vision called it the ‘Core’) to handle partnership-wide tasks more efficiently and empowered the representative WVI Council to make decisions for the entire organization. Individual offices retained local autonomy, but they were accountable to one another.⁵⁴ The head office knew that the plan was messy, but it balanced a theological commitment to stewardship and to diversity within community.⁵⁵

Christian Commitments

World Vision’s reorganization in the late 1980s and early 1990s reflected worries about Christian identity.⁵⁶ Its reorganization in 2005 was no different. When it issued its five strategic mandates in that year, the first was to reinforce its Christian identity and witness.⁵⁷ This was the origin of its new department of Christian Commitments.⁵⁸

The renewed interest in Christian identity reflected, first, a recognition of internal religious diversity. In 2002, fifty-seven percent of staff members identified themselves as evangelical, nineteen percent as mainline, sixteen percent as Catholic, one percent

⁵⁴ Each national office participated in a peer review process on a regular basis. In such an arrangement, even World Vision U.S. that provides almost half off the partnership’s revenue is reviewed by a field country such as Ghana or the Philippines. The goal was to introduce mutual accountability and reflect on each country’s endorsement of the core values, mission statement, and Covenant of Partnership. It also sought to disavow that money was the measure of one’s contribution. Bryant Myers, “Our Future Orientation,” March 2005 (WVI Central Records). Dean Hirsch, “The Last Three Years in Perspective,” Report to WVI Board, Sept. 1, 1998 (WVI Central Records).

⁵⁵ Bryant Myers, “Our Future Orientation,” March 2005 (WVI Central Records).

⁵⁶ That concern led to the partnership wide Christian Witness Commission which issued its report in 1995. I referenced the Commission’s work in Chapter 7.

⁵⁷ “The Will to Make It So,” 2007 (WVI Central Records)

⁵⁸ Currently Christian Commitments (CC) has over 200 employees throughout the partnership. 190 of these are designated Christian Commitment staff for specific countries. Eighteen CC staff support international programming and overall planning. Claire Okeke, Christian Commitments, interview by author, June 9, 2010, Monrovia, CA

Orthodox, and seven percent “other.”⁵⁹ The other included several thousand Muslims, Buddhist, and Hindu staff members.⁶⁰ Evangelicalism could no longer provide a univocal language. But World Vision interpreted its move toward global ecumenism not as a loss of evangelicalism but instead a broadening of a shared Christian faith. Returning to the analogy of a shared center rather than rigid boundaries, it agreed on a minimum faith that included the uniqueness of Christ, the authority of scripture, personal faith within Christian community, and a commitment to mission.⁶¹

The solution did not satisfy everyone. Some fretted that the accent on financial growth and professionalization sacrificed piety.⁶² The worries about secularization varied from place to place. WVUS collected most of the money for Christian Commitments, designed to insure the organization’s Christian identity, but its persistence created some tensions. African, Latin American, and Asian countries liked the clarity of Christian identification; Europe and Australia were not convinced.⁶³

⁵⁹ “Commission of the Church Report,” 2002 (WVI Central Records), 48.

⁶⁰ Tim Dearborn, WVI, Christian Commitments, interview by author, June 1, 2010, phone. Dearborn estimated that among its current staff, World Vision employed around 2800 Muslims and 1000 Buddhists and Hindus.

⁶¹ “Commission of the Church Report,” 2002 (WVI Central Records), 13. Tim Dearborn, WVI, Christian Commitments, interview by author, June 1, 2010, phone

⁶² Torrey Olsen, “What Legacy Will You Leave at World Vision,” PowerPoint presentation to World Vision U.S. staff. (WVUS Archives). Based on the work of Larry Reed, Olsen talks of the pressures major organizations face in maintaining their Christian commitments. He names four ways that most often lead Christian agencies astray: 1) pressure to grow financially; 2) valuing professionalization over piety; 3) becoming accountable to professional peers or public opinion over God; 4) compartmentalizing faith as private issue. Torrey Olsen, Director of Christian Commitments, WVUS, interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

⁶³ One World Vision U.S. staff member estimated that while all support offices initially committed to raise support for Christian Commitments, World Vision U.S. currently provides 95 percent of partnership funding. Torrey Olsen, interview. Because World Vision U.S. continued to maintain close ties within traditional evangelical networks, it was able to cultivate major individual and foundation donors, some with specific instructions to use funding for Christian witness. “Strategic Working Group Minutes,” Aug. 19-21 1996 (WVI Central Records). In recent years, World Vision U.S. staff members have implemented fundraisers to cultivate what they believe is an untapped income stream for its work in Christian witness.

Most strategists in the organization saw a need to strengthen ties to local churches.⁶⁴ The original staff members had been ordained ministers or missionaries, and World Vision implemented programs directly through local church partners. It maintained connections with local churches even as debates broke out over parachurch ministries. As World Vision evolved from Christian parachurch agency to professional INGO, it dropped, for the most part, its ties to local churches.⁶⁵ But this was a matter that needed revisiting. World Vision repented for its past attempts to see itself as a “substitute, competitor, or replacement for the Church.”⁶⁶ It now saw itself as an expression of the universal Church in a unique position as a global agency to pull diverse churches together.⁶⁷

The department of Christian Commitments, using a core staff in the international office and at least one staff person in each national office, led the charge. Some offices welcomed it while others buried it in bureaucracy. But with a large budget and buy-in from upper-level management, Christian Commitments began with a three-fold mission: the spiritual nurture of staff members, the development of partnerships with local churches, and the integration of Christian witness into every World Vision program.⁶⁸ To help form staff members spiritually and educate them about the faith, World Vision

⁶⁴ Tim Dearborn, WVI, Christian Commitments, interview by author, June 1, 2010, phone.

⁶⁵ “Commission of the Church Report,” 2002 (WVI Central Records), 4-7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁶⁷ World Vision’s training exposed staff to the theological and organizational diversity among Christian traditions. For instance, knowing the differences between the episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational systems of church governance helped staff to “understand and relate appropriately to the various church structures they encounter in their work.” It also established protocols for how the church functioned in various cultural contexts. It identified countries as “Christian majority, Christian minority, Post-Christian, Restrictive Contexts, or Persecuted Contexts.” Each setting required distinct sensitivities to Christian witness and partnerships with local church communities. “Commission of the Church Report,” 2002 (WVI Central Records).

⁶⁸ “Global Centre Christian Commitments Strategy Overview 2010-2012;” “Christian Commitment Do’s and Assures: Criteria Used in Annual Christian Commitment Country Assessment and Global National Office Dashboard,” Feb 2010 (WVI Central Records).

commissioned partnership-wide Bible studies and devotionals, spiritual retreats, and weekly chapel services in national offices. By 2010, it had partnerships with over 200,000 churches in its Area Development Programs.⁶⁹

The quest for a core Christian identity was difficult. The Commission introduced standards that required each office to affirm its Christian identity in fundraising, grant-writing, or program delivery.⁷⁰ It set guidelines for working as a faith-based agency with secular or hostile governments.⁷¹ It also recognized that its internal religious diversity now required attention to inter-faith relations. In 2006, it hired its first World Religions specialist, Chawkat Moucarry. As a Syrian evangelical with a PhD in Islamic Studies from the Sorbonne University, Moucarry traveled from one office to another in the World Vision partnership to promote religious reconciliation as well as greater interreligious understanding.⁷²

Integrating Christian witness into its programs proved the most difficult task. The Christian Commitment staff members worked with each World Vision ministry to implement an appropriate Christian witness, one that was sensitive to cultural differences. From drafting vision statements to evaluating outcomes, World Vision tried to measure Christian witness in programs ranging from emergency relief and micro-finance to community development and the well-being of sponsored children.⁷³

⁶⁹ Torrey Olsen, interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010.

⁷⁰ Tim Dearborn, WVI, Christian Commitments, interview by author, June 1, 2010, phone

⁷¹ “Interfaith Relations Policy Statement,” April 2, 2009 (WVI Central Records).

⁷² New World Religions Specialist: World Vision UK”, September 21, 2006, <http://www.worldvision.org.uk/news/press/press-releases/new-world-religions-specialist/> (Accessed April 12, 2012). Chawkat Moucarry, *The Prophet & the Messiah: an Arab Christian’s Perspective on Islam & Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001); Chawkat Moucarry, *Faith to Faith: Christianity and Islam in Dialogue* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001); Chawkat Moucarry, *The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).

⁷³ “Principles to Guide Formation of National Policies on Spiritual Nurture of Children,” April 19, 2010 (WVI Central Records). Christian Commitments is producing an “Integrating Christian Witness Series,” for

World Vision U.S.

In the late 1970s, the U.S. office ceded control to the new international structure. Since then, WVUS has followed WVI trends. It kept pace with the partnership's growth, maintaining marketing dominance among child sponsorship agencies even as it became a leading relief and development organization respected for its professional expertise, receipt of government funding, and procurement of GIK donations. While organizationally separate, WVI and WVUS maintained close ties. Despite calls for WVI to relocate its offices in order to distance itself from its image as an American agency, WVI continued to share U.S. office space in southern California. In 1995, it was the U.S. office that moved, pulling up stakes from the San Gabriel Valley to relocate just outside of Seattle to Federal Way, Washington. Citing high taxes, cost-of living, and government regulation, WVUS President Seiple explained that relocation would save five million dollars annually to invest in humanitarian programs. WVI offices remained in Monrovia, but with a relatively small number of staff members. The move may have symbolized a degree of difference in organizational culture and a mutual willingness to move in slightly separate directions.⁷⁴ It made sense for WVUS to maintain strong ties to a vibrant and prosperous American evangelical subculture. It also made sense for WVI to listen more carefully to international voices even as it reaffirmed its own evangelical commitments.⁷⁵

World Vision staff to reflect on Christian witness in its work. As of 2009, it had released four of thirteen. In my interviews at WVI in 2009, an intense discussion was developing on Christian witness within Emergency Relief work.

⁷⁴ Renee Tawa, "World Vision Charity to Leave L.A. for Seattle," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 16, 1994; "World Vision Pulling Up Stakes," *Christianity Today* (April 25, 1994): 45.

⁷⁵ Torrey Olsen, interview by author, Nov. 19, 2010; Richard Stearns, WVUS, President, interview by author, July 1, 2010, phone.

Further Professionalization

WVUS needed professional leaders just as much as the international division needed them. At first, it tried to retrain its staff of evangelical missionaries and pastors, but before long it led evangelical parachurch agencies in adopting corporate techniques of management and marketing. As it moved into relief and development, it often had to go outside the organization to find expertise, so it brought in former USAID staffers or hired away other agencies' professionals. By the late 1990s, it no longer needed to launch searches for outsiders. As one of the elite American humanitarian agencies, it found that other humanitarian and government agencies now recruited its own staff members. Newly elected President George W. Bush selected former World Vision Vice President Andrew Natsios as his USAID administrator, replacing Clinton appointee J. Brady Anderson, who became Vice Chairman of the World Vision U.S. board.⁷⁶

American evangelicals were moving up in the world, gaining positions of power in politics, business, the arts, and entertainment. While World Vision's donors represented a cross-section of a broad-based American evangelicalism, its staff members represented a more cosmopolitan form of evangelical piety. Sociologist Michael Lindsay observed that evangelical elites had joined social networks across diverse sectors and overcome some of the perceived divisions between sacred and secular.⁷⁷

WVUS's selection of Rich Stearns as its most recent president illustrated the transitions within evangelical leadership. While its previous president Bob Seiple was a

⁷⁶ Pew Forum: Religion and International Development: A Conversation with Andrew Natsios", Mar. 1, 2006., <http://pewforum.org/Government/Religion-and-International-Development-A-Conversation-with-Andrew-Natsios.aspx> (Accessed Feb. 2, 2012); "Former Ambassador, Brady Anderson, Chairman of Wycliffe USA Board," *Wycliffe Bible Translators USA*, n.d., <http://wycliffeusa.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/former-ambassador-brady-anderson-chairman-of-wycliffe-usa-board/> (Accessed April 13, 2012); D Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42–46.

⁷⁷ Lindsay, 221-222.

layman with experience in higher education, he still came with credentials as an evangelical insider. Stearns had taken a different path. He converted to evangelical Christianity while a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and had served as a youth leader at Boston's historic evangelical Park Street Church, but his world was business. In 1998, when World Vision went looking for its next president, Stearns was CEO of the luxury china maker, Lenox. World Vision wanted a leader with business acumen, able to oversee a complex organization and expand its reach. Stearns saw the move as a calling. While his salary made him one of the highest paid executives of a Christian agency, it was an eighty percent pay cut from his position at Lenox.⁷⁸

Christian nonprofits were increasingly reaching out to business executives as potential leaders. World Relief and Habitat for Humanity also turned to the corporate world for their new CEOs.⁷⁹ Stearns' new Vice President of Donor Engagement, Atul Tandon, came with twenty years of experience as a banker for Citigroup. World Vision knew that its success relied on more than compelling stories. As a multi-million dollar operation, it had to streamline expenses, reduce overhead, and boost performance. Soon World Vision returned to double-digit revenue growth, increasing its name awareness and donor satisfaction while keeping marketing expenses flat.⁸⁰ Stearns' tenure signaled a

⁷⁸ Stearns and World Vision have used his story repeatedly in promoting its work. Stearns may offer the fullest recounting of his move to World Vision in his recent bestselling biography. Richard Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 27–50. Bob Smietana, "Leaps of Faith," *Christianity Today* (Mar. 2007): 58–61. Richard Stearns, interview by author, July 1, 2010, phone. World Vision reported Stearns' total compensation as \$439,155 in 2010. When he left Lenox, his salary was \$800,000.

⁷⁹ Bob Smietana, "Leaps of Faith," *Christianity Today* (March 2007): 58–61; Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 190–194.

⁸⁰ Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010. "Influential & Effective: These Fundraisers Know How to Bring in the Cash and Further the Profession," *The Nonprofit Times*, Jan 15, 2009. Atul Tandon left World Vision in 2009 to join United Way Worldwide as the Executive Director of the organization's 41

culture shift. He measured employees' performance in quarterly reviews and on bottom lines. Dozens of staff members unable to meet the new expectations had to go elsewhere.⁸¹

At the same time, a number of Christian businesspersons wanted to move "from success to significance."⁸² A testimonial on a World Vision webpage exemplified the trend:

For 5 years, I rose through the ranks at Microsoft. But I wondered where I was 'storing up my treasure.' Instead of being ambitious for one of the world's largest corporations, now I'm ambitious for the poor and children. Working here is the best-kept secret for ex-corporate types.⁸³

Located in the backyard of Microsoft and Boeing, World Vision's new Federal Way offices appealed to computer programmers and graphic designers looking to get out of insular corporate cultures. Although they were mostly evangelical Christians, they came less frequently with degrees from Christian colleges like Azusa Pacific or Wheaton. They

country International Network and their Executive Vice President of Investor Relations. He often used his own story as evidence of the need for World Vision's work. Reared in rural India on less than one dollar a day, Tandon appeals to the sacrifices of his mother to give him access to the education that allowed his success. Kristi Heim, "The Business of Giving: World Vision's 'Slumdog' Vice-President," *The Seattle Times*, Feb. 20, 2009.

http://blog.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/philanthropy/2009/02/20/world_visions_slumdog_vice_pre.html (Accessed April 14, 2012).

⁸¹ Christopher A. Bartlett and Daniel F. Curran, *World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership*, Harvard Business School Case Study, May 17, 2005, 7–8, www.stthom.edu/Public/getFile.asp?File_Content_ID=5545J. Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010,.

⁸² Bob Buford introduced the term with a series of books and motivational speeches. Buford is the founder of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management as well as the Leadership Network that serves as a management coaching and connection for mostly Christian leaders, from megachurch pastors to corporate executives. Bob Buford, *Halftime: Changing your Game Plan from Success to Significance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994); Smietana, "Leaps of Faith," 58. This trend has also led to a growing "faith at work" movement. While not distinct to evangelicalism, much of the movement finds its greatest traction within this subculture. The movement has produced an exhaustive literature. Two books that may provide the best overview are David W Miller, *God at Work: the History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Laura L Nash and Scotty McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: the Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

⁸³ Accessed at <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/hr-home70openDocument> in November 2005. Also quoted in VanderPol, "The Least of These," 223.

came with Harvard MBAs and years of experience with consulting firms or advertising agencies.⁸⁴

WVUS and its Evangelical Base

Even the newcomers, however, kept their eyes on the evangelical target audience, partly because of religious affinities but also for reasons of fundraising. In the 1970s, World Vision's move to television issued in record budget growth and exposure to new audiences. By the 1990s, World Vision continued to pour money into television without measuring its return on investment. With advertising costs rising, it sought bargains, buying time in bulk or late at night. The new leaders of the late 1990s forced a reassessment of marketing expenses. It simply cost more to acquire a donor through television than through other media, and television donors were often less reliable than others. The organization abandoned high priced television specials and redoubled its direct mailing, returned to advertise on Christian radio and magazines like *Christianity Today*, and made wise use of its ties to contemporary Christian music artists. It also created a prominent presence on the web and in social media and made good use of links to corporations.⁸⁵

It did not turn its back on American evangelicals, its sturdy foundation. From 1999 to 2006, the number of donors identifying themselves as evangelicals increased by

⁸⁴ Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010; Steve Haas, WVUS, Vice President, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010, Federal Way, WA. Haas remarked that when he speaks at churches or college campuses, he is mobbed afterwards by students eager to work for World Vision. He often has to tell them they stand little chance of earning a job with the organization. Bonnie Jensen, WVI, Director of Brand Strategy, interview by author, Dec. 7, 2010. Jensen exemplifies World Vision's new type of employee. With an MBA from University of Washington in Environmental Management, she became a corporate consultant for Deloitte and Touche. World Vision hired Deloitte for work on a new brand strategy. After Jensen worked on the World Vision account, she loved non-profit better than for-profit and accepted World Vision's offer to come work there.

⁸⁵ Mussa interview, Nov, 19, 2010; Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov.16, 2010.

fifty percent.⁸⁶ Evangelicals were far more likely than others to recognize World Vision's name and to have a favorable impression of it.⁸⁷ It had penetrated the evangelical market more than the general public, and it honed its marketing strategies to reach them more effectively. With an expanding evangelical subculture, World Vision could narrow its focus and still maintain double-digit annual growth.⁸⁸

It also saw a return to the church as a moral and theological obligation. The evangelical coolness toward holistic views of outreach had driven the organization to mass marketing and government funding. But evangelicals were changing, local churches were open to broader views of development, and Stearns thought that a close tie to the church was the best way to ensure the organization's Christian commitment. No longer would it use the church only as a source to raise funds when convenient; it would return

⁸⁶ In its 2006 survey, evangelicals (based on the more rigorous Barna definition) made up 64% of World Vision's donors (while only making up 9% of the general U.S. adult population). 91% of English speaking sponsors identified as born-again Christians. In its past 1999 study, evangelicals made up only 42% of sponsors and 7% of the U.S. adult population. Born-again Christians were 86% of World Vision's English speaking donors and while only 43% of the U.S. population. World Vision also discovered that eighty percent of all donors contributed financially to their local church, and fifty percent contributed to other Christian "electronic ministries." Sixty percent of all donors identified as politically and socially conservative, 30% middle of the road, and 10% are liberal. "World Vision, 1999 Comprehensive Donor Survey," Aug 1999 (WVUS Archives). "World Vision: 2006 Comprehensive Donor Survey," July 5, 2006 (WVUS Archives).

⁸⁷ World Vision's unaided awareness remains surprisingly low (hovering around 4% of the general population and around 7 to 10% of conservative Christians). Aided awareness is much higher (40% of the general population, 76% of evangelicals, and 54% of born-again Christians). "Americans' Awareness and Perceptions of World Vision," conducted by Barna research for World Vision U.S., Aug. 2001 (WVUS Archives); "World Vision Reputation Research," Feb.-Mar. 2008 (WVUS Archives).)

⁸⁸ World Vision is now concerned that while its name recognition is higher among evangelicals than its peer evangelical humanitarian peer agencies (such as Compassion or Samaritan's Purse), these organizations are receiving a greater percentage of evangelical support than World Vision. Non-evangelical agencies like CARE Christian Children's Fund, and others have also made inroads to gain evangelical support. Lisa Pang, "World Vision U.S. Branding Research Study," June 2004; "World Vision Reputation Research," Feb.-Mar. 2008 (WVUS Archives); Lisa Pang, Director, Strategic Research and Analysis, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010, Federal Way, WA.

to its original objective of educating and inviting the church to help it do God's work in the world.⁸⁹

A New Evangelical Internationalism?

Most evangelicals, like most Americans, still paid more attention to domestic issues than to international affairs.⁹⁰ Grassroots organizations like the Christian Coalition rallied evangelicals around local political issues while national evangelicals rejoiced that the 2000 presidential election of George W. Bush put “one of their own” in the White House. But only thirty percent of evangelicals identified themselves with the Religious Right.⁹¹ George W. Bush's campaign promises of a “compassionate conservatism” had greater appeal, but it seemed to put the emphasis on meeting social needs in America.⁹²

Nonetheless, evangelicals were wrapped up in global realities even if they failed to recognize it. They had always sponsored world missions; they had been fervent anticommunists; and they had learned about the world through such missionary agencies as World Vision. Now twenty-four hour cable news, the World Wide Web, and social media brought audiences stories of natural disasters, war, and suffering. The global awareness of U.S. church members reached an all-time high.⁹³ American Christians also traveled more; their companies and farms relied on international trade, and economic

⁸⁹ Richard Stearns, interview by author, July 1, 2010; Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010; Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov.16, 2010.

⁹⁰ World Vision found that only one-quarter of donors to nonprofits gave to international agencies. The focus on poverty remained domestic. Evangelicals were actually twice as likely to give to international causes than the average population (50% to 25%). “Perceptions of Poverty: Baseline,” July 1999, study conducted by Barna Research and commissioned by World Vision (WVUS Archives). In 2006, World Vision found sixty percent of all donors identified as politically and socially conservative, 30% middle of the road, and 10% are liberal. “World Vision: 2006 Comprehensive Donor Survey.”

⁹¹ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 28; Christian Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁹² Marvin N Olasky, *Compassionate Conservatism: What It Is, What It Does, and How It Can Transform America* (New York: Free Press, 2000).

⁹³ Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*, 20–21.

crises reminded them of their dependence on events abroad. Advances in communication and transportation reduced distances and differences. Transcontinental business flights to Asia, Skype calls to friends' overseas, and immigration made globalization a daily reality. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow reported that 62 percent of active U.S. church members have traveled or lived in another country.⁹⁴

According to Wuthnow, 74 percent of American congregations have supported a missionary working in another country in the year prior to his survey.⁹⁵ Each year the number of full-time missionaries has steadily increased; the greatest growth came with short-term mission experiences. Lasting anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, short-term missions (STM) have taken an estimated 1.6 million Americans annually into another culture. The non-profit coalition Independent Sector estimated the dollar value of the STM enterprise at over 1.1 billion each year.⁹⁶ While some critics insisted that STMs did more harm than good, the movement accelerated.⁹⁷ Two percent of active churchgoers went overseas in a single year, while twenty-five percent will probably go at some point during their lifetime.⁹⁸

Some Western churches adopted sister churches overseas, and the reciprocal exchanges in this “twinning” movement promoted mutuality and a sense of a shared mission.⁹⁹ American congregations sent members overseas at record levels. But global

⁹⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 128–130, 149. Denominational mission boards continued to grow, but the independent agencies, or “faith missions,” have exploded. They now make up 72 percent of all revenue for overseas missions and 61 percent of U.S. foreign missionaries.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 170–171. “Value of Volunteer Time,” Independent Sector, www.independentsector.org (Accessed Oct. 12, 2011).

⁹⁷ Robert J. Priest et al., “Researching the Short-term Mission Movement,” *Missiology* 34, no. 4 (O 2006): 431–450.

⁹⁸ Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*, 171.

⁹⁹ For more on the sister church/ twinning movement, see Hefferan, *Twinning Faith and Development*; Janel Kragt Bakker, “Encountering the Church in the Global South: Sister Congregation Relationships and

awareness can be disconcerting. Sociologist Robert Priest has argued that the increased international exposure unsettled “a confident American exceptionalism” and troubled “simplistic patriotism.”¹⁰⁰

American Christians looked at evangelical expansion in the global South and worried about Christianity closer to home.¹⁰¹ But global awareness did not always bring worries. The academic field of world Christianity studied the influence of demographic shifts on missiology, theology, and Christian history, and some scholars in the field have enthusiastically depicted a trend toward a globalized Church.¹⁰² Evangelicals have welcomed global Christian growth and felt an affinity with born-again believers abroad. Sometimes they embraced an “enchanted internationalism” that bolstered global solidarity but reintroduced an “imperialist-style imaginary” that exoticized the other it claimed to embrace.¹⁰³ After brief international experiences, Western evangelicals often claimed to “really know” their fellow global Christians. Shared beliefs often trumped real differences.¹⁰⁴ Global awareness, in short, has been a source of both discouragement and

Their Impact on Parishioners in Select Washington, D.C. Area Churches” (The Catholic University of America, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Priest quoted in Brian Howell, “The Global Evangelical,” *The Immanent Frame*, July 28, 2008, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/07/28/the-global-evangelical/>. (Accessed April 2, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Kim A. Lawton, “Faith Without Borders: How the Developing World Is Changing the Face of Christianity,” *Christianity Today*, 1997.

¹⁰² Wuthnow has taken on this field for what he sees as an essentializing of global Christianity as separate and in contrast to the West. Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*, 32–61. His interlocutors he sees as popularizing this argument are mostly Phillip Jenkins and David Barrett. Jenkins has brought the academic argument into popular parlance. Barrett bolsters the case through demographic research. David B Barrett, George Thomas Kurian, and Todd M Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁰³ Melani McAlister, “What Is Your Heart For?: Affect and Internationalism in the Evangelical Public Sphere,” *American Literary History* 20, no. 4 (2008): 870–895; Melani McAlister, “Evangelical Internationalism Under Fire”, n.d., <http://underfire.eyebear.org/?q=node/523> (Accessed Feb. 10, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ Brian M. Howell, “Mission to Nowhere: Putting Short-term Missions into Context,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33, no. 4 (October 2009): 206–211; Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*, 181–182; Robert Wuthnow and Stephen Offutt, “Transnational Religious Connections,” *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 2 (June 20, 2008): 209–232.

enthusiasm, but in either case it created a more knowledgeable audience for the message that World Vision wanted to convey.

A new generation of evangelicals looked at global issues without rehashing old debates over evangelism and social action. Ron Sider, a longtime evangelical social activist, described the trend as a genuine shift:

The bitter battle between conservative Christians who emphasize evangelism and liberal Christians who stress social action that weakened the church for much of this century has largely ended. Increasingly, most agree that Christians should combine the Good News with good works and imitate Jesus' special concern for the poor.¹⁰⁵

More evangelicals found themselves drawn to “international issues and geopolitical inequity.”¹⁰⁶ Former World Vision VP, Bryant Myers, therefore could label the old evangelical dichotomy as a “historical footnote.” Even Bill Bright’s Campus Crusade and televangelist Pat Robertson created relief and development projects.¹⁰⁷

In the late 1990a, the chief lobbyist of the National Association of Evangelicals, Richard Cizik, noted that 'the American electorate was split right down the middle on... cultural wars [about abortion and school prayer], and nobody was going to win them. [But the new international efforts] are "going gangbusters."¹⁰⁸ One such international issue was religious freedom. Popular evangelical agencies like The Voice of the Martyrs

¹⁰⁵ Ronald J Sider, *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 217.

¹⁰⁶ Howell, “The Global Evangelical.”

¹⁰⁷ Campus Crusade established Global Aid Network and Pat Robertson established Operation Blessing. Myers provides an exhaustive list of evangelical agencies engaged in social ministries. He also notes that over half of new masters students enrolling in Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of Intercultural Studies are drawn to international development, children at risk, or urban ministry over traditional strengths in church growth and evangelism. Bryant L Myers, *Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 48–49.

¹⁰⁸ Cizik resigned under pressure from the NAE in 2008 over his efforts for creation care as well as his refusal to dismiss his potential support of same-sex civil unions. In 2010, he co-founded the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good to pursue similar lobbying work. Kristof, “Following God Abroad.”

had documented the persecution of Christians since the 1960s, but in the 1990s evangelicals refocused attention on the persecuted church in Africa and Asia.¹⁰⁹ A religious civil war in Sudan, the “underground” house church movement in China, and the prohibitions against Christian worship in Saudi Arabia rallied evangelicals to action.¹¹⁰ Evangelicals from across the theological spectrum came together to champion religious freedom, even partnering with old enemies like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and World Council of Churches. Conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats came together to push legislation through Congress.¹¹¹ In signing the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act into law, President Bill Clinton established an independent Commission on International Religious Freedom and named outgoing WVUS President Bob Seiple as its first Ambassador-at-Large. Seiple’s task was to hold countries accountable for their religious rights records.¹¹² To protect the persecuted

¹⁰⁹ In his study of representative evangelical periodicals over the 20th century, Mark Noll cataloged the rise in coverage of the persecuted church. He noted that the sensational stories of Christian persecution often served as the most common entrée of American Christians to the growth of global Christianity. Mark A Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 127–150.

¹¹⁰ The biography of The Voices of the Martyrs founder, Richard Wurmbrand is a cult classic among American evangelicals. Published in 1963, it is still in print and often given away free from a number of evangelical organizations. Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ* (London: Lakeland, 1967). For an academic treatment, see Melani McAlister, “The Politics of Persecution,” *Middle East Research and Information Project*, n.d., <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer249/politics-persecution>. (Accessed 4/20/2012). For a more charitable account of evangelicals and religious persecution, see Allen Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 107–131.

¹¹¹ Evangelical voices included World Vision and Sojourners as well as Franklin Graham, the NAE, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Leading Congressional voices included Republicans Sam Brownback, Michael Horowitz, and Frank Wolf as well as Democratic voices Tony Hall and Nancy Pelosi. The drive against religious persecution continued to forge unusual alliances. Hertzke notes that the campaign for Sudan peace brought together the Christian Right, Catholic bishops, Reformed Jews, Episcopalians, and the Southern Baptist Convention along with the Congressional Black Caucus and secular activists. Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, 237–239.

¹¹² After the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act, evangelicals returned to demonstrate their internal differences. Many evangelicals attacked Seiple for his patient, bureaucratic approach. Tying him to his World Vision background, many claimed he was a Washington insider. As a Democrat, he was also accused of working against George W. Bush and not using his office as evangelicals intended to bring immediate policy changes to countries like Saudi Arabia and China. Seiple dismissed these critiques as grumblings from those who did not grasp the complexities of international relations. Robert Seiple,

church, evangelicals were willing to work through government channels, cross traditional boundaries, and even adopt human rights language.¹¹³

Evangelicals also attacked child exploitation and global sex trafficking. In 1997, Gary Haugen founded the International Justice Mission (IJM). A former civil rights attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice, Haugen led the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide. This experience led him to start IJM as “an evangelical social gospel.”¹¹⁴ IJM’s core mission was to “stand against violent oppression in response to the Bible’s call to justice (Isaiah 1:17): Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow.”¹¹⁵ Haugen spearheaded evangelical lobbying efforts that led to The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000.

IJM’s accolades came from beyond the evangelical world. Television personality Oprah Winfrey promoted Haugen’s efforts on her show.¹¹⁶ The Journalist Nicholas Kristof accompanied IJM investigators on raids and recounted them in his *New York Times* editorials.¹¹⁷ Yet, IJM was most popular among young evangelicals. It has over 120

interview by author, Nov. 8, 2007. Seiple, “De-Seiple-ing World Vision”; Michael Horowitz, “Cry Freedom: Forget ‘Quiet Diplomacy’ - It Doesn’t Work,” *Christianity Today* 47, no. 3 (March 2003): 48–51.
¹¹³ Several sources recount the evangelical efforts to pass the International Religious Freedom Act. The most exhaustive is Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*. Others include Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 42–44; Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*, 158–160. These accounts offer a somewhat different analysis. Wuthnow sees the alliance for government backed religious freedom and human rights language as an issue of an elite strand of evangelicals and not a concern the people in the pews raised. Hertzke disagreed. While noting that 70 percent of evangelical elites affirmed that “stopping religious persecution should be given top priority in American foreign policy,” the evangelical population registered a higher concern for these issues than the general public. If anything, broad support demonstrated evangelicals’ expertise in popularizing and disseminating a message to motivate its constituency. Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, 35.

¹¹⁴ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 45.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.ijm.org/who-we-are> (Accessed 4/22/2012).

¹¹⁶ Gary Haugen on *The Oprah Show*, June 25, 2008.

¹¹⁷ Nicholas D. Kristof, “Raiding a Brothel in India,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2011, sec. Opinion, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/opinion/26kristof.html>; Nicholas D. Kristof, “Sex Slaves? Lock Up the Pimps,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 2005, sec. Opinion, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/29/opinion/29kristof.html>. IJM’s website features its recent publicity. <http://www.ijm.org/press-center>. For several examples, see Quentin Hardy, “Hitting Slavery Where It

campus chapters, and its internship program overflowed with qualified candidates.¹¹⁸ Haugen's hope was to entice competent Christian lawyers to work in government and international relations in order to change the world.¹¹⁹ For Haugen, IJM's mission was to "motivate the evangelical community... to care about what's going on in the world beyond [U.S.] borders and to pay attention to the sin of injustice." He knew that "twenty-five years ago, IJM couldn't have made this kind of progress. Previous generations [of evangelicals] thought the social gospel was a distraction to spiritual concerns."¹²⁰ Now he claimed that evangelicals "under thirty," understood that "you can still be orthodox... and take action."¹²¹

In conjunction with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that pledged to halve global poverty by 2015, new agencies like Micah Challenge emerged to enlist evangelical support.¹²² A generation ago, most evangelicals saw the U.N. as a liberal or even atheistic enemy. Now a number of evangelical NGOs and denominations integrated the Millennium Development Goals into their aims for mission. In the wake of September 11, 2001, World Vision joined with other humanitarian organizations to form the "Better Safer World Campaign" to fight against global poverty. In 2004, with celebrities like Bono, the leader of the rock band U2, and the funds of the

Hurts", January 12, 2004, http://www.forbes.com/global/2004/0112/055_print.html; David McKay Wilson, "A Calling for Justice," *Harvard Magazine*, April 2005, <http://harvardmagazine.com/2005/03/a-calling-for-justice.html>.

¹¹⁸ For a list of colleges with chapters, see <http://www.ijm.org/itmatters>. (Accessed 4/22/2012).

¹¹⁹ IJM's core values look similar to World Vision's: a commitment to Christian identity, professionalism, and building bridges. <http://www.ijm.org/careers/our-values> (Accessed 4/22/2012).

¹²⁰ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 45.

¹²¹ Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, 319; Gary A. Haugen, *Good News About Injustice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999); David P Gushee, *The Future of Faith in American Politics: The Public Witness of the Evangelical Center* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 104–105.

¹²² Micah Challenge takes its name from the biblical passage, Micah 6:8, "He has shown you O man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." See, <http://www.micahchallenge.org/> (Accessed 4/23/2012).

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the agencies reorganized to launch the ONE campaign to end extreme poverty and the global AIDS epidemic. While the campaign's goal was to persuade the U.S. government to allocate one percent of its budget to the world's poorest countries, its biggest success was making global poverty an issue for a new generation. Young evangelicals bought "Make Poverty History" wristbands and attended benefit concerts in droves. Few stopped to think about distinctions between structural injustice and individual salvation or whether poverty was a religious or secular issue. In other words, World Vision now worked in an atmosphere vastly different from the world of Bob Pierce.¹²³

World Vision, American Evangelicals, and AIDS

World Vision introduced its own popular campaigns to fight global poverty, sex trafficking, the selling of "blood diamonds," or exploiting child soldiers. It sought to capitalize on the renewed interest in global humanitarianism.¹²⁴ At the same time, it felt an obligation to push American evangelicals beyond their comfort zone. Its AIDS initiative served as a case in point. In the 1990s, the disease was not well understood. Most evangelicals associated it with homosexuality and sexual promiscuity. A World Vision executive characterized the general sentiment, "you play - you pay."¹²⁵ After

¹²³ Richard Stearns, interview by author; July 1, 2010; Joan Mussa, interview by author, July 1, 2010; Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

¹²⁴ The blood or conflict diamond issue was another effort that few had reason to oppose. African nations fought civil wars and committed human rights abuses over the diamond trade. Interfaith partnerships with corporations and governments led the U.S. and others to refuse importing these "blood diamonds." With legislation and popular support, the conflict diamond industry has shrunk, but it still remains strong in Congo. See a record of World Vision's recent and past advocacy on this effort here: <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/congo> (Accessed 4/23/2012). It also gained publicity for its own campaign to combat American tourists exploiting children for sex abroad. It purchased billboards in countries like Thailand claiming that those caught soliciting sex with minors will also be prosecuted in their own home countries." See "Ads Warn Child-sex Tourists Abroad: You Will Be Prosecuted Back Home," *USA Today* (Oct. 15, 2004).

¹²⁵ The quote is attributed to Steve Haas, former staff member at evangelical megachurch Willow Creek. Haas now works for World Vision as a chief spokesperson with churches on the AIDS issue. Nina Shapiro,

1990, World Vision's field offices took up the AIDS crisis, providing relief to orphans and their caregivers in Uganda, care for Romanian children infected through unsterilized needles, and help for young women and girls trying to escape prostitution in Thailand.¹²⁶

World Vision rarely publicized these programs. Funds often came from inter-governmental sources like the World Bank. After that funding ran out, it struggled to market AIDS care to its donors. Its staff was ill prepared for the epidemic. How would they respect local religious beliefs while debunking misinformation and myths?¹²⁷

African development staff members called for help, and a few months after his arrival at WVUS, president Stearns took a trip to Uganda to see the AIDS crisis firsthand. He returned determined to put AIDS at the forefront of World Vision's agenda.¹²⁸

World Vision arrived later than most other humanitarian agencies to the AIDS crisis, and it worried the issue had little traction among its evangelical constituency. Stearns remembered the advice of his marketing team: "We're a G-rated ministry getting involved in an R-rated issue.... People equate us helping children and families in need. They said if we start talking about AIDS, prostitutes, drug users, long-haul truckers, and sexuality, it would hurt our image."¹²⁹ Their marketing hunches proved correct. A 2001 World Vision sponsored Barna poll found that "evangelical Christians were significantly less likely than non-Christians to give money for AIDS education and prevention

"The AIDS Evangelists," *Seattle Weekly*, November 15, 2006, <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2006-11-15/news/the-aids-evangelists/>.

¹²⁶ Vivian S. Park, "Interview: World Vision President Richard Stearns," *Christian Post*, April 19, 2004, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/20126/>; Shapiro, "The AIDS Evangelists."

¹²⁷ Bartlett and Curran, *World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership*, 11–13.

¹²⁸ Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*, 194; Shapiro, "The AIDS Evangelists." Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

¹²⁹ Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*, 195; Bartlett and Curran, *World Vision International's AIDS Initiative: Challenging a Global Partnership*, 11.

programs worldwide.” Only three percent of evangelical Christians would consider supporting World Vision’s AIDS efforts.¹³⁰

Stearns pressed ahead. World Vision established its Hope Initiative in 2000 as its global response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Marketing costs would be higher and returns on investment much lower, but World Vision decided that education would be as important as the fundraising. It enlisted celebrities like Bono to turn contemporary Christian artists onto the HIV/AIDS issue.¹³¹ In 2003, WVUS also launched its first Hope Tour to educate American Christians and their churches about AIDS. Taking its message to major cities across the country, it parked its 2,500 square foot interactive, World Vision Experience, in church gyms, civic centers, and even New York’s Grand Central Station. As people made their way through the exhibit, they followed the story of a child affected by AIDS. At the conclusion, participants had the opportunity to sponsor a Hope Child, a designation given to children awaiting sponsorship in communities devastated by AIDS.¹³² In a single year, World Vision saw the percentage of evangelicals willing to support HIV/AIDS work jump from three to fourteen percent.¹³³

¹³⁰ “World Vision: Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and HIV/AIDS Research,” Barna Research Group, Jan. 2001, (WVUS Archives). Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010. Shapiro, “The AIDS Evangelists.”

¹³¹ Mark Moring, “Songs of Justice, Missions of Mercy: Why Christian Musicians Are Embarking on a Different Kind of World Tour,” *Christianity Today* (November 2009): 30–37. Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

¹³² Today, over fifty percent of the children that World Vision donors sponsor are Hope children. See Shapiro, “The AIDS Evangelists”; Janet I. Tu, “Bringing Message on AIDS Home — via Africa - Changing Attitudes Exhibit Gaining Notice among Evangelical Churches,” *The Seattle Times*, May 9, 2008. In my research, I have visited two churches hosting a World Vision AIDS Experience. While it is branded as a World Vision event, the local church does all the legwork. World Vision staff bring in the exhibit and supervise setup and teardown, but the local churches provide the space as well as volunteers to staff the one to two week event. They do the advertising and all other tasks. Despite the work involved, the three traveling exhibits can be booked up to two years in advance.

¹³³ World Vision: Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and HIV/AIDS Update Research,” Barna Research Group, Nov. 2004, (WVUS Archives). 2006 Comprehensive Donor Survey,” July 5, 2006 (WVUS Archives); S Shapiro, “The AIDS Evangelists.”

While World Vision lobbied governments, bilateral organizations, corporate donors, and celebrities to support its AIDS work, Stearns saw the Hope Initiative as the first big opportunity to get World Vision back to the church. He began by chastising the church for its indifference:

Where has the church been? If we honestly ask who are the ones who have taken the lead in fighting against AIDS and showing compassion to its victims, we find a surprising list....the homosexual community, Hollywood, rock stars, political liberals, the U.S. government, the United Nations, secular humanitarian organizations, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.¹³⁴

Speaking in evangelical vernacular with a revivalist flare, World Vision depicted the AIDS crisis as a pandemic about which Christians had to care. It counted on evangelical progressives like Tony Campolo and megachurch pastors like Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church and Rick Warren of Saddleback to speak out. It encouraged evangelicals to lobby Congress for support of George W. Bush's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—a program that proposed a commitment of fifteen billion dollars to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.¹³⁵ Richard Cizik labeled World Vision the 'E.F. Hutton' of AIDS work. "When World Vision speaks, people listen."¹³⁶ A decade ago, Stearns saw evangelicals as not only apathetic about AIDS relief but "downright hostile toward it."¹³⁷ The tide finally turned, and World Vision deserved part of the credit. Within the organization, the AIDS response became a badge of pride. It had

¹³⁴ Shapiro, "The AIDS Evangelists."

¹³⁵ Alan Cooperman, "Evangelical Christians Lobby for AIDS Funds; Groups Endorse Bush's \$15 Billion Program," *Washington Post*, Jun 13, 2003. Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, 47–48. Despite broad support, PEPFAR has remained controversial. Many have celebrated it as one of the greatest bi-partisan successes of the Bush administration. Others have critiqued it because of stipulations for percentages of funds to be spent on abstinence-only programs. While this requirement was lifted in 1998, some wonder that those receiving PEPFAR funds (World Vision and other Christian agencies being large recipients) will use them for this purpose.

¹³⁶ Shapiro, "The AIDS Evangelists."

¹³⁷ Richard Stearns, interview by author, July 1, 2010.

taken a prophetic stance, regained the trust of the churches, and led evangelicals into the midst of a catastrophe. That was precisely where it wanted to lead them.¹³⁸

World Vision and Evangelical Icons

One new convert was Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in southern California, one of the largest megachurches in the country, and the author of *Purpose Driven Life*, one of the best selling non-fiction books in American history apart from the Bible. Warren promoted church growth principles and personal discipleship, but he seemed an unlikely champion for humanitarianism. His wife, Kay Warren, was the evangelist who turned him around. On a conference call with World Vision spokesman Steve Haas, she found herself overwhelmed by the statistics and stories of AIDS orphans. World Vision enlisted her to educate fellow evangelicals.¹³⁹ Rick Warren soon confessed: "I have been so busy building my church that I have not cared about the poor."¹⁴⁰ After visiting Africa, he felt God calling him to "the cause of ending global poverty."¹⁴¹ By 2005, Warren established his PEACE plan to "Plant churches, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, and Educate the next generation."¹⁴² With an invitation

¹³⁸ Janet I. Tu, "A Journey Of Conscience - With Faith and Funding, Richard Stearns is Out to Save the World," *The Seattle Times*, August 23, 2009; "Interview with The President of World Vision | Volusion Ecommerce Blog", n.d., <http://onlinebusiness.volusion.com/articles/world-vision> (Accessed April 2, 2012). Rebecca Barnes, "The Church Awakens: Christians Make AIDS Fight a High Priority," *Christianity Today* (Jan. 2005): 22-23.

¹³⁹ Shapiro, "The AIDS Evangelists." Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Timothy C. Morgan and Tony Carnes, "Purpose Driven in Rwanda: Rick Warren's Sweeping Plan to Defeat Poverty," *Christianity Today* 49, no. 10 (October 2005): 32-36; Marc Gunther, "Will Success Spoil Rick Warren?," *Fortune*, October 31, 2005, http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2005/10/31/8359189/index.htm.

¹⁴¹ Holly Lebowitz Rossi, "Rick Warren Publicly Pursuing Programs Against World Poverty," *Christian Century* 122, no. 14 (July 12, 2005): 15-16.

¹⁴² "The Peace Plan," <http://thepeaceplan.com/WhatIsThePeacePlan>; <http://www.saddleback.com/aboutsaddleback/signatureministries/thepeaceplan/> (Accessed 7/21/2010 and 4/22/2012). The vision and strategy has since evolved through several iterations since its originally proposed in 2005. The biggest change has been in the first initiative (planting churches). After much criticism, Warren changed it to promote reconciliation. Today it is, "planting churches that promote reconciliation."

from Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Warren set about to make Rwanda the first “purpose-driven nation.”¹⁴³ Most development experts questioned Warren’s methods if not his motives. Boston College political scientist Alan Wolfe criticized Warren’s “considerable naïveté,” but he also said that historians were “likely to pinpoint Mr. Warren’s trip to Rwanda as the moment when conservative evangelical Protestantism made questions of social justice central to its concerns.”¹⁴⁴

Bill Hybels, founding pastor of the 20,000 member Willow Creek Community Church, also led his church to reframe its mission program. Renamed as “Compassion and Justice Ministries,” it combined short-term missions, education, and advocacy with the work of global partners “to fight local and global poverty and injustice.”¹⁴⁵ Like Saddleback, Willow Creek’s influence extended far beyond its membership. The Willow Creek Association counted over 10,000 local affiliates. Hybels introduced them to World Vision. Both Bill and his wife Lynn Hybels have served as WVUS board members, and in 2009, WVUS president Stearns headlined Hybels’ annual Leadership Summit, attended by over 100,000 church leaders. The same year Willow Creek teamed up with

¹⁴³ David Van Biema, “Warren of Rwanda,” *Time*, August 15, 2005, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1093746,00.html>; Gunther, “Will Success Spoil Rick Warren?”; Morgan and Carnes, “Purpose Driven in Rwanda”; Cynthia McFadden and Ted Gerstein, “Rick Warren’s ‘Long-Term Relationship’ with Rwanda,” *ABC News Nightline*, July 31, 2008, <http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=5479972&page=1#.T5hKKdnYGcc>.

¹⁴⁴ Alan Wolfe, “A Purpose-Driven Nation?,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 26, 2005, http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/rvp/pubaf/05/wolfe-wsj.html. Warren has also faced criticism from fellow evangelicals for his naïveté and ‘amateur’ approach to humanitarian work. For example, see Andrew Paquin, “Politically Driven Injustice: Fixing Global Poverty Requires More Than Rick Warren’s Peace Plan,” *Christianity Today* (February 2006): 22. Warren’s PEACE Plan has gone through several changes as he has responded to a number of these criticisms and his own experience. Timothy C. Morgan, “Rebooting Peace: Rick Warren Adds Reconciliation to an Already Ambitious Missions Strategy,” *Christianity Today* 52, no. 7 (July 2008): 17–18; Timothy C. Morgan and Richard Warren, “After the Aloha Shirts: Retooling Saddleback’s International Work and Hosting a Presidential Forum Serve a Common Purpose, Says Rick Warren,” *Christianity Today* (October 2008): 42–45.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.willowcreek.org/compassion> (Accessed 4/23/2012).

World Vision to award \$100,000 to an outstanding local church program involved in fighting HIV/AIDS.¹⁴⁶

World Vision and the Local Church

In considering Stearns's mandate to return to its roots, World Vision spent the first decade of the new millennium renewing relationships with local churches. The timing was right, for many evangelicals were now interested in issues like global health or clean water. Yet, many megachurches or non-denominational churches did not have reliable partners for accomplishing such work. At the same time, denominationally-affiliated churches were becoming less inclined to funnel their mission resources to institutions that gave them little control over where their funds were spent. Churches needed experienced partners, but they wanted to maintain control and a personal connection to their work. World Vision took this as an opportunity. It had the infrastructure, experience, and connections on the ground in one hundred countries. As the world's largest child sponsorship agency, it excelled at helping people understand vast suffering through the story of a single child. World Vision could serve as the link for local churches to mission opportunities overseas.

World Vision employed regional representatives to connect with pastors. Evangelical leaders met with the pastors at invitation-only VIP events.¹⁴⁷ It hired a

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.worldvision.org/home.nsf/home/my-story/the-leadership-summit-3-834>. The 2009 Leadership Summit where Stearns appeared was broadcast in 100 North American cities and videocast later in 50 other countries. (Accessed 4/23/2012). Jennifer Riley, "Major Contest to Bolster Church's AIDS Fight," *Christian Post*, March 20, 2008, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/31604/>. (Accessed 4/23/2012)

¹⁴⁷ In my research, I attended one such VIP pastor event headlined by evangelical pastor and author Max Lucado. Lucado served as the after-dinner speaker to the intimate gathering of 30-50 pastors. Then World Vision staff gave the pastors free books and materials and also asked if they would be willing to take one Sunday service to promote a Hope Sunday event (emphasis on AIDS as well as an opportunity for church members to become child sponsors). Then we were invited to reserved seats at a World Vision concert with contemporary Christian artists Third Day, Michael W. Smith, and Toby Mac. Pastors received follow-up calls over the next few weeks and personalized visits from World Vision staff.

handful of respected evangelicals to speak at mission conferences, pastors' gatherings, and student events.¹⁴⁸ It set up exhibits at mission fairs, denominational meetings, and local churches while distributing resources showing how to promote its work in sermon series, prayer guides, and mission experiences. It often took pastors on Vision Trips overseas to see its programs in action, and the returning pastors shared their experiences with congregations. Instead of recruiting a handful of child sponsors, World Vision launched a campaign to adopt an entire village by sponsoring 500 or 1000 children as a congregation.¹⁴⁹ It used the funds to facilitate large-scale development, but the church had a connection with a community where it could send mission teams, collect school supplies, or lead Bible school classes. World Vision prospered through its church connections; local churches expanded their vision with the help of World Vision.

World Vision also stood in the background of some of the transitions in evangelical youth culture. It recognized that its marketing was not reaching young people. Television spots or direct mail had little effect on what it labeled the "high touch generation."¹⁵⁰ Turning to "creative activism," World Vision realized that new donors wanted not merely to give money but to *do* something. In 2004, World Vision established Acting on AIDS as a student ministry on college campuses. It also expanded the agenda to include issues of sex trafficking, malaria, and global poverty. Through partnerships with the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), InterVarsity

¹⁴⁸ One example would be Steve Haas. One of the leading associate pastors at Willow Creek Community Church, Haas came to World Vision in 2001 as Chief Catalyst and World Vision Ambassador. Haas often speaks at chapel services on college campuses. The first day I met him, I listened to him speak to group of pastors in Dalton, GA about World Vision's work. The day I interviewed him at WVUS' offices, he had been on the phone earlier with Bishop Charles E. Blake of the Church of God in Christ as well as Rick Warren. Steve Haas, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

¹⁴⁹ K. Connie Kang, "Answering the Call in the Global Fight Against AIDS; Awareness Leads to Action for an Evangelical Church in Paramount, which Has Adopted an African Village Hit Hard by the Disease," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 2004.

¹⁵⁰ Marty Lonsdale, interview by author, Nov. 16, 2010.

Fellowship, and Urbana mission conferences, it soon had 20,000 students active on 400 campuses.¹⁵¹ With interactive websites and Facebook pages, World Vision provided resources for learning about clean water or microfinance as well as space for uploading personal stories. Tweets went out encouraging members to call their elected representatives about pertinent legislation.¹⁵² Investment in “creative activism” was costly, and it did not always provide the same returns on investment as other income streams. But in educating and motivating the next generation, World Vision believed it stood at the center of a growing conversation around the integration of faith and a passion for justice.

World Vision as a New Evangelical Center¹⁵³

In trying to appeal across a broad cross-section of American Christianity, World Vision refused to be monopolized by an evangelical right or left. Dean Owen, Director of Executive Communications at the U.S. office, described World Vision’s approach:

On one side, you have Jim Wallis of Sojourners. Over here, you’ve got Franklin Graham of Samaritan’s Purse. In between those two extremes...we attempt to present World Vision as a moderate voice.¹⁵⁴

Few evangelical agencies have been able to enlist support across the theological spectrum better than World Vision. Besides plugs by Bono and former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, the lists of endorsements for Rich Stearns’ most recent book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, included a who’s who of evangelicals (Jim Wallis, Rich Sider, Tony Campolo, T.D. Jakes, John Ortberg, Max Lucado, Bill Hybels, Chuck Colson, Kay Warren, Eugene

¹⁵¹ James Pedrick, Sr. Advocacy Associate, Acting on AIDS, interview by author, Nov. 17, 2010, Federal Way, WA; Joan Mussa, interview by author, Nov, 19, 2010.

¹⁵² <http://www.worldvisionacts.org/> (Accessed 4/23/2012).

¹⁵³ David Gushee has popularized the term of evangelical center in contrast to an evangelical right and left. Gushee, *The Future of Faith in American Politics*, 87.

¹⁵⁴ Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010.

Peterson just to name a few).¹⁵⁵ Few other evangelicals appear on the conservative Focus on the Family radio broadcast one month and at a Sojourners rally, led by the progressive Jim Wallis, the next.¹⁵⁶

In its official communications, World Vision used “Christian” as a descriptor instead of “evangelical” in order to cast a wider net.¹⁵⁷ It shared statistics and stories that could touch the conscience along the entire spectrum of Christian groups. To bring attention to the severity of global poverty, Stearns observed that “26,500 children die each day of poverty related causes.” Then came the clincher. This was, he said, “the equivalent of 100 jetliners filled with children, crashing every day, 365 days a year.”¹⁵⁸ World Vision did not argue about the need to care about global injustice. Instead, it quoted Scripture, painted pictures of need, and shared stories of changed lives.

President Richard Stearns modeled the approach in his first book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, published in 2009 with evangelical press, Thomas Nelson. The book served as Stearns’s coming out party. After eleven years as an internal CEO focused on day-to-day operations, the book’s success made him an evangelical celebrity. Stearns claimed that “being a Christian requires much more than just having a personal and transforming relationship with God. It also entails a public and transforming relationship with the world.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*.

¹⁵⁶ Richard Stearns, interview by author; Joan Mussa, interview by author, July 1, 2010; Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010.

¹⁵⁷ Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010.

¹⁵⁸ Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*, 106–7; Robert Gelinas, “The Hole in Our Gospel: Interview with World Vision’s Richard Stearns,” *God’s Politics*, April 29, 2009, <http://sojo.net/blogs/2009/04/24/hole-our-gospel-interview-world-visions-richard-stearns>.

¹⁵⁹ Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*, 2.

Stearns's book struck a chord. It was part biography as Stearns narrated his first conversion to Christianity and his second conversion to the "whole gospel" that combined "proclamation of the good news" with a "compassion for the sick and sorrowful" and a "commitment to justice."¹⁶⁰ It was also part Bible study, compiling and interpreting texts to build a biblical case for a holistic gospel. By the end, he chastised the American church for being "AWOL for the greatest humanitarian crisis of all time."¹⁶¹ He offered a brief history of evangelical social engagement, and challenged the church to sing and pray but also to do more for the world. The Evangelical Christian Publishers Association named it the 2010 "Christian Book of the Year." Bill Hybels bought 10,000 copies to distribute to his congregation.¹⁶² World Vision followed up on the book's success with its own media blitz of study guides, videos, and press releases. The book elevated the standing of the organization throughout evangelical popular culture.¹⁶³

The acclaim did not inoculate WVUS from criticism. More liberal voices, many coming from within World Vision's own international partnership, lamented what they viewed as a retreat. Stearns spoke the evangelical language, but they claimed he was simplistic and naïve. He slid into biblical proof texting and emotional stories rather than educating his readers with sophisticated theology and development theory.¹⁶⁴

From the other side, some conservatives still accused World Vision of giving up evangelism and chasing after liberal social issues. In 2006, James Dobson and thirty other

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 21–22.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 190.

¹⁶² "World Vision - What Book Did Bill Hybels Buy 10,000 Copies Of?", May 6, 2009, <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/20090506-Hybels>.

¹⁶³ World Vision's hosts all its materials for Stearns' book, his new blog, and speaking schedule on a branded website "The Hole in our Gospel," <http://www.theholeinourgospel.com/> (Accessed April 25, 2012).

¹⁶⁴ Bryant Meyers, interview by author, June 20, 2007, Pasadena, CA; Robert Seiple, interview by author, Nov. 8, 2007.

evangelical leaders lobbied Congress against a proposed increase in U.S. contributions to the Global Fund, an international effort to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.¹⁶⁵

Dobson complained that the Global Fund promoted condom distribution as well as “legalized prostitution and all kinds of wickedness around the world.”¹⁶⁶ These same evangelicals targeted World Vision as a co-conspirator with the Global Fund. If it would not take a stand with evangelicals in the culture wars, how could it claim their support?

Stearns answered their attacks carefully in *Christianity Today*:

As Christians we have to have a list of priorities. Sometimes I think we get our priorities turned upside down... I think abortion is on that list. But how can you care about abortion and not care about the 26,000 children that die every day of preventable causes? It dwarfs the abortion problem in America. Five times as many children die around the world of preventable causes than die in abortions.¹⁶⁷

World Vision advocated sexual abstinence for the unmarried in its programs and claimed that it supported condom distribution only as a last resort, but it acknowledged that the complexity of the AIDS epidemic did not allow for simple slogans. “When you're talking to a sex worker in a brothel who has to feed her child and maybe her elderly mother and father through her work,” Stearns said, “it's not realistic to say she's going to be abstinent.”¹⁶⁸ Current WV VP of Southern Africa, Bruce Wilkinson, said it more bluntly: “Christians keep majoring on the minor. The issue really needs to be: what can the church do to provide love, care, and support.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Shapiro, “The AIDS Evangelists.”

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Burke, “AIDS Fight Moves to Religious Arena,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 2006, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-06-02/news/0606020188_1_global-fund-evangelicals-aids.

¹⁶⁷ Mark Galli, “We Are Not Commanded To Be a Docent in the Art Museum. We Are Commanded To Love the Poor,” *Christianity Today* (June 12, 2009), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/juneweb-only/123.53.0.htm>.

¹⁶⁸ “Q and A with Richard Stearns,” *Christianity Today* (Oct. 2006): 27.

¹⁶⁹ Chris Keller, “Interview with Bruce Wilkinson – R.A.P.I.D.S., Zambia,” *The Other Journal*, August 8, 2005, <http://theotherjournal.com/2005/08/08/interview-with-bruce-wilkinson-r-a-p-i-d-s-zambia/>. (Accessed April 2, 2011).

World Vision would not allow its alliances with the churches to undercut its insistence on professionalization. Local churches had the ability to start their own programs overseas and send their own short-term missionaries, but World Vision remained the expert. Stearns acknowledged that there was “a tendency to say. ‘This ain't rocket science. People are hungry: feed them.’” But he admonished energetic amateurs like Rick Warren and his PEACE Plan, “The deeper you get into relief and development, you realize *it is rocket science*, because you are dealing with all kinds of social, cultural, political, and religious landmines.”¹⁷⁰ He admitted World Vision’s own mistakes, and he urged zealous evangelicals not to repeat them.

World Vision’s response to the publicity that accompanied the distribution of a video called *Kony2012* illustrated its education of American evangelicals. Three young filmmakers, Jason Russell, Bobby Bailey, and Laren Pool, founded an organization named Invisible Children in order to expose the forced conscription of child soldiers by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda in 2003. Their earlier 2006 documentary *Invisible Children: The Rough Cut* also mobilized thousands of Christian students around the issue of child soldiers. In March 2012, Invisible Children released *Kony2012* with the intent of “making LRA warlord, Joseph Kony famous” and generating public pressure on the U.S. government to capture him and hold him accountable for war crimes. The film reached over 40 million views in three days, and before long it attracted 100 million viewers on the internet.¹⁷¹ But it also drew critics. Development professionals, foreign policy experts, and African studies scholars criticized the video for manipulating facts,

¹⁷⁰ “Q and A with Richard Stearns,” *Christianity Today* (Oct. 2006): 27.

¹⁷¹<http://www.invisiblechildren.com/critiques.html>; J. David Goodman and Jennifer Preston, “How the Kony Video Went Viral,” *The Lede Blog, New York Times*, March 9, 2012, <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/09/how-the-kony-video-went-viral/>. (Accessed April 12, 2012).

advocating violence, and over-simplifying issues. They also questioned the organization's finances and methods.¹⁷²

World Vision stepped into the debate.¹⁷³ Realizing that many of Invisible Children's advocates were the same younger evangelicals it courted to support its own work, World Vision praised Invisible Children's good intentions: "People are still talking about Joseph Kony. We'll say it again: That's a good thing."¹⁷⁴ Staff members talked of "seizing the Kony Moment" as it saw a spike in its own website traffic and donations. Yet it spoke to the issue as an organization with professional expertise and knowledge. It reminded audiences of complexities that the video ignored. It highlighted its own twenty years in the country rehabilitating child soldiers as well as preventing the current "main killer" in Uganda, malaria.¹⁷⁵ It asked supporters to ask Congress not for military action but for increased foreign aid. It spoke as an organization that knew the African cultural terrain from decades of painstaking work on the ground.

Still, some advocates of civil liberties accused World Vision of a retrenchment into a separatist Christianity. Criticisms gained steam around the question of religious

¹⁷² Mareike Schomerus, Tim Allen, and Koen Vlassenroot, "Obama Takes on the LRA," *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136673/mareike-schomerus-tim-allen-and-koen-vlassenroot/obama-takes-on-the-lra?page=show>; Mareike Schomerus, Tim Allen, and Koen Vlassenroot, "KONY 2012 and the Prospects for Change," *Foreign Affairs*, March 13, 2012, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137327/mareike-schomerus-tim-allen-and-koen-vlassenroot/kony-2012-and-the-prospects-for-change>. A widely circulated tumblr page by Acadia University student Grant Oyston has catalogued the leading criticisms and Invisible Children's responses. See Grant Oyston, "Visible Children", n.d., <http://visiblechildren.tumblr.com/>. (Accessed April 28, 2012).

¹⁷³ World Vision had developed a response distancing itself from Invisible Children since 2005. See "Relationship with 'Invisible Children,'" World Vision U.S. Messaging Guidelines, Dec. 2005 (WVUS Archives).

¹⁷⁴ Jesse Eaves and Nathaniel Hurd, "Seizing the 'Kony' Moment", March 20, 2012, <http://blog.worldvision.org/advocacy/seizing-the-kony-moment/?page=all>; Nathaniel Hurd, "Standing Side-by-Side With Northern Uganda", March 2012, <http://blog.worldvision.org/conversations/standing-side-by-side-with-northern-uganda/>. (Accessed April 28, 2012).

¹⁷⁵ Eaves and Hurd, "Seizing the 'Kony' Moment"; "Kids Living In Terror | Video | Fox News," Collection, *Fox News*, April 9, 2012, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1503138315001/kids-living-in-terror/> (Accessed April 12, 2012)..

hiring rights. World Vision claimed a right to hire employees who shared their faith while still receiving federal grants.¹⁷⁶ With its Christian identity already an issue within World Vision's international partnership, WVUS president Stearns argued that "faith-based organizations would not be faith-based if they could not hire employees who share their values and embrace their missions."¹⁷⁷ WVUS was the only office in the WVI partnership that still required all employees to sign a statement of faith. In Canada, Australia, and many European countries, religious discrimination was illegal. Without the ability to hire only co-religionists, other World Vision offices framed the question of Christian identity in different terms. WVUS, however, did not feel that it could retreat on this matter.¹⁷⁸ In 2006, it had fired three employees for doubting the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. When the employees sued for wrongful dismissal, World Vision agreed to serve as the test case for other faith-based agencies and fight the suit all the way to the Supreme Court. It organized workshops to advise other Christian NGOs of their rights, and argued its point in the court of public opinion.¹⁷⁹

The 1964 Civil Rights Act allowed for any "religious association, corporation, educational institution or society" to consider religious preference in hiring staff members. The growth of FBOs and the federal funding of faith-based initiatives

¹⁷⁶ A similar dismissal of staff by NAE's World Relief also led to widespread publicity. Manya A. Brachear, "Help Wanted, but Only Christians Need Apply," *Chicago Tribune*, March 29, 2010, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-03-29/news/ct-met-world-relief-20100531_1_refugee-resettlement-policy-hiring; Lornet Turnball, "World Relief Rejects Job Applicant over His Faith," *Seattle Times*, March 9, 2010, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011301098_worldrelief10m.html.

¹⁷⁷ World Vision - Statement by World Vision U.S. President Richard Stearns on Today's Decision by U.S. Supreme Court", October 3, 2011, <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/20111003-religious-hiring-rights?OpenDocument> (Accessed April 23, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010; Tim Dearborn, interview by author, June 1, 2010. World Vision's Christian Identity and Hiring Practices", n.d., <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/learn/christian-identity-hiring-practices?Open#hiring>. (Accessed April 23, 2012).

¹⁷⁹ Dean Owen, interview by author, Nov. 18, 2010. Bobby Ross, "Faith-based Fracas: From the White House to the Courthouse, the Battle Escalates over Whether Christian Groups Have the Right to Employ Only Christians," *Christianity Today* (June 2010): 17–20.

reintroduced the question of whether this provision discriminated on the basis of religion. During the 2008 Presidential Campaign, Senator Barack Obama pledged to end religious discrimination, but once in office, he backpedaled from his pledge.¹⁸⁰ In 2010, the Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that World Vision qualified as a religious rather than non-sectarian humanitarian organization and therefore had the right to dismiss employees on religious grounds. In October 2011, the Supreme Court declined to hear the case. World Vision said that if it had to choose between its employment policy and hundreds of millions of dollars it received each year in federal funding, it would give up its government funding. World Vision's chief legal advisor, Steve McFarland, claimed that anything less "would start down a slippery slope that would soon dilute and divert World Vision's mission, character, and witness."¹⁸¹ In court, World Vision won the day. In popular opinion, the results were mixed. Its defense of religious hiring pleased conservatives; it disappointed some Christians who had come to see World Vision as the face of a new progressive Christian humanitarianism.

Conclusion

World Vision continued to bolster its popular and professional reputation with its rapid response to the 2005 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Stearns observed that being one of the first and largest NGOs on the ground introduced the organization to "millions of Americans who might not have known the depth and breadth of our work."¹⁸² In 2009, President Barack Obama asked Stearns to join the new

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸² Stearns acknowledged there were more than 60,000 first time U.S. donors over the first few weeks following the tsunami. "This was more than at any previous time in its history, and may have only been topped by the Haiti earthquake. Mark Cutshall, "We've Got an Emergency," *Christian Management Report*,

President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In debates over foreign aid budgets World Vision lobbied Congress and fellow evangelicals to resist all cuts. Protestant mainline stalwarts like Martin Marty admitted that World Vision's global humanitarianism and progressive politics led him to recalibrate past explanations of an American Christianity divided between two parties, one for public good works and the other for private piety.¹⁸³ *New York Times* editorialist Nicholas Kristof chastised his "secular liberal" readership for stereotyping and told them to take notice of World Vision and the changes it represented among American evangelicals.¹⁸⁴

World Vision prided itself in working across traditional boundaries while keeping a foot in multiple worlds. Even as it adopted development methodologies, leading INGOs often looked askance at the agency's faith-based humanitarianism. While they once viewed religion as out of bounds within the practice of relief and development, now religion returned to a place of prominence on the agenda of global civil society. World

August 2005, 1-3,

<http://www.ministryplanet.net/servlets/DocumentDownloadHandler/264462/39009/418569/13%20-%20CMR%20Article%20-%20We%20ve%20Got%20an%20Emergency.pdf> (Accessed 4/23/2012).

¹⁸³ Martin Marty popularized the dualism in 1970 when he distinguished between the public and private parties of American Protestants. The public party (liberal, or mainline, or ecumenical Protestants) pursued social reform while the private party (fundamentalists or evangelicals) sought individual conversions. While Marty and others have subsequently embraced a broader pluralist narrative, the division still shapes popular perceptions. Martin E Marty, *Righteous Empire: the Protestant Experience in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1970); Jean Miller Schmidt, *Souls or the Social Order: The Two-party System in American Protestantism* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1991). Sociologists of religion introduced similar dualisms to explain divisions between conservative-liberal or orthodox-progressive parties. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since War II* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1988); James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: the Struggle to Define America* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1991). Recently, Martin Marty used World Vision as his example in demonstrating how a two-party system no longer explained American religion. Martin Marty, "World Vision Foreign Aid," *Sightings*, November 14, 2011,

http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/sightings/archive_2011/1114.shtml; Richard E. Stearns, "Evangelicals and the Case for Foreign Aid," *Wall Street Journal*, November 11, 2011, sec. Houses of Worship,

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204190704577026391811161000.html?mod=googlenews_wsj.

¹⁸⁴ Nicholas D. Kristof, "Learning From the Sin of Sodom," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/opinion/28kristof.html?emc=eta1>; Kristof, "Following God Abroad." (Accessed April 12, 2011).

Vision played a similar role within evangelicalism. If many evangelicals viewed World Vision's work as out of step with traditional theological and missionary outlooks, World Vision saw itself as out ahead of the pack. Its interactions with both relief and development peers as well as its Christian constituencies demonstrated that there was not a single approach to faith-based humanitarianism or a single evangelicalism. Yet, as it moved in and out of these diverse communities while seeking to maintain its Christian identity, World Vision exemplified the future for a broadening evangelicalism and global humanitarianism.

CONCLUSION

A single snapshot cannot capture the current World Vision. Viewed from various angles, the organization conjures up contradictory images. Some see relief workers after a massive earthquake. Others see child sponsorship and Christian education. Some see development experts testifying before the United Nations. Others picture short-term mission trips and a contemporary Christian music concert. Some see a culture warrior fighting secular forces and defending its religious rights. Others think of its efforts to build a broad-based coalition to work across traditional boundaries to reduce global poverty and preventable diseases. All of these images convey a small piece of the truth about World Vision. It is a diverse, complicated, worldwide organization, and no one generalization encompasses it. Even its own staff members continue to debate about the character of the organization. But it was—and still is—one of the most remarkable Christian institutions in American religious history.

To be clear, this dissertation does not seek to tell the entire story of World Vision International (WVI). In an international organization made up of almost 100 countries each with wide latitude to pursue individual agendas, such a task would be impossible. The activity and religious identity of each national office differs depending on its historical and current context. I have tried to note the internal diversity within WVI while focusing on the WVUS office as one case study within the partnership. To paint a full picture of the organization, scholars would need to produce a number of ethnographically informed case studies to demonstrate the organization's diversity and allow for comparative analysis.¹

¹ While academics have studied specific World Vision projects within the field of development studies, few have attempted a cultural study of World Vision offices. Two anthropological studies that have attempted

A Transnational American Religious History

It remains impossible to focus on even the U.S. office of an organization named “World Vision” without telling an international story. The writing of a transnational history of American religion is still in its early stages, but historians of American religion have extended their reach. Some of the greatest of the writers on America, Alex de Tocqueville, Phillip Schaff, Perry Miller, and Sydney Mead have, to be sure, sought *the* distinctive features that defined America’s religious vitality, often perpetuating a sense of American exceptionalism. But de Tocqueville made frequent comparisons with France, Schaff wrote for a German audience from a German and Swiss perspective, and Miller connected his narrative to England and the Netherlands. In the past half century, however, historians have further expanded the study of religion in the United States by telling comparative stories that included Canada, Victorian England, Scotland, Africa, China, the Middle East, and the Native American traditions of Mexico.² New regional narratives have helped break down a monolithic American religious history and a search for a single overarching narrative. Renewed interest in the West, the borderlands, and the

comparative work with World Vision in the U.S. and Canada alongside field work in Zimbabwe and Ghana stand out in this regard. See Erica Bornstein, *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Susan Mary McDonic, “Witnessing, Work and Worship: World Vision and the Negotiation of Faith, Development and Culture” (Duke University, 2004).² For a few of numerous possible examples, see Mark A Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992); Marilyn J Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978); Albert J Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Laurie F Maffly-Kipp, *Religion and Society in Frontier California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Michael B Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Ramón A Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Atlantic world has allowed for new historical actors and interpretations. Yet, the trend toward transnational history is still in its early stages.

Transnationalism has served a number of purposes for historians. For some, it removed the nation-state as the historical centerpiece and cast the spotlight on other institutions and communities. For others, it highlighted a globalized world with a fluid movement of people and resources. For still others, the story of internationalization traced the exchange of ideas and transformation of worldviews.³

World Vision's history demonstrates the need for further situating American religious history transnationally. A rash of recent histories have explored the religious values in American foreign relations.⁴ Others have prescribed religious understanding as a necessary topic for diplomatic history and current decision-making.⁵ While World Vision's interactions with the U.S. government, its foreign policy, and international aid are essential to its story, this history highlights international faith-based NGOs as key actors in a growing civil society. In addition to states and markets, their histories illumine a post-colonial and globalized world, and they point toward even greater possibilities for an American religious history that places America within larger international settings.

³ For the debate over American exceptionalism and transnational history among American historians, see Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1, 1991): 1031–1055; Michael McGerr, "The Price of the 'New Transnational History,'" *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1, 1991): 1056–1067; C. A. Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 1, 2006): 1441–1464; David Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 965–975.

⁴ William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jason W Stevens, *God-Fearing and Free: A Spiritual History of America's Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (Knopf Canada, 2012).

⁵ Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (Harper Perennial, 2007); Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra, eds. *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

Yet, it is not only foreign policy, immigration, and international aid that matter in such a history. Increased exposure to a global world has also reshaped Americans' cultural imaginaries. In my history of World Vision, I have begun to explore the international outlook of American evangelicals from World War II to the present. With the Cold War, Vietnam, the downfall of past colonial powers and rise of new nation-states, and the turmoil in the current global economy, some evangelicals—it is impossible to know how many—have revised their worldview. Whether retaining an American exceptionalism or recasting themselves as global citizens, they interpreted the world and their place within it through religious lenses. Americans learned about the world through newspaper stories and politicians' press releases, but they also viewed it through the sermons they heard, the missionary magazines they read, the religious infomercials they watched, and the children they sponsored. As organizations like World Vision gained first-hand knowledge of such dilemmas as hunger, poverty, exploitation, and suffering throughout the world, they felt that they had to do something. They in turn introduced many American Christians to a world different from the one that they had imagined and that corporations and government agencies had convinced them to accept. At least some Americans, including some evangelicals, changed as a result. I hope that World Vision's history encourages some Americanists to expand their inquiries into other global institutions and movements that illumine the meaning of religion at home and abroad.

From Missions to Religious Humanitarianism

World Vision's story exemplified the growth of evangelical missions after World War II as entrepreneurial parachurch agencies thrived through innovations in fundraising, corporate organizing, and publicity. Initially, these missionaries assumed that being an

evangelical meant simply practicing evangelism, understood through the lenses of American individualism, and left social action to the World Council of Churches. Yet as evangelicals began to talk and listen to Christians outside the West, some found themselves in occasional dialogue and agreement with the ecumenical church. As religious historian William Svelmoe has argued, missionaries, more than any other group, moderated and broadened American evangelicalism.⁶ Experience overseas allowed many missionaries from across the theological spectrum to embrace common purposes in contrast to the cultural and theological boundary markers that divided American Christianity at home.

This dissertation focuses on one example of this shift through the rise of ecumenical and evangelical relief and development INGOs. Agencies like World Vision have now become the largest mission agencies, and this study has sought to help explain why missions have moved in this direction.⁷ It has also explored the religious dimension of the relief and development sector. As faith-based agencies have become more influential, the experts in global development have begun to value their size, experience, and expertise. Yet development studies have sometimes failed to see that faith based organizations (FBOs) are not all the same. They differ in size, prestige, and the extent to which their faith influences their work. Some FBOs like World Vision are elite members of the development INGO fraternity while others are small local grassroots organizations.

⁶ Svelmoe claims, “Operating on the frontiers of religious and cultural interaction, missionaries were placed in ideal positions to reanalyze, reinterpret, and perhaps even discard facets of their worldview in favor of startling new paradigms.” William Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1896-1945* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2008): 318.

⁷ This shift in evangelical missions may have much to do with the general shifts of evangelicalism in a new era: encountering pluralism, embracing modern methodologies, and an increasing social status. By 1998, six of the seven largest parachurch mission agencies were focused on relief and development instead of evangelism: World Vision Feed the Children, MAP International, Compassion International, Food for the Hungry, and Christian Aid Ministries. See Hamilton, 118.

Classification continues to grow more complicated as denominations, local churches, and short-term missionaries enter into the larger picture.

Scholars have offered various categorizations of FBOs. Some place them along a continuum of “more or less” religious. Others measure how religion affects staff hiring, organizational structure and public identity, or relations to donors and aid recipients. The danger is always excessive generalization. A case study approach allows us to see the fluid and contested nature of an organization’s religious identity as well as the multiple fields in which it operates. For example, even as World Vision fluently speaks the common language of development among its peers, it also participates in wider debates within American evangelicalism, missiology, and the agencies of global Christianity. World Vision’s history demonstrates how one organization integrates development into its religious practice and interprets that integration to donors and aid recipients.

Evangelicalism

World Vision grew with the rise of a post World War II American evangelicalism. The historiographical debates over the definition of evangelicalism continue unabated, but the term remains a helpful category for historical analysis. While the term “Evangelicalism” is too abstract for precise understanding, we have no better alternative to describe what it signifies. As evangelicals erected, maintained, and transgressed their boundaries, they imbued the term with various meanings. They fought over doctrine and practice, but in many ways, they defined themselves, in various ways, by a cultural style characterized by its “entrepreneurial quality, its populist and decentralized structure, and its penchant for splitting, forming and reforming.”⁸ Sprouting from a fertile evangelical

⁸ Nathan Hatch, “Response to Carl Henry,” in Kenneth S Kantzer and Carl F. H Henry, *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1990), 97.

subculture, World Vision's pragmatism and broad support across the theological spectrum demonstrated that even as it moved in and out of evangelical networks, it retained the cultural style and language native to American evangelicals.

World Vision modeled one evangelical style, but that did not necessitate a singular theological or political position. In focusing on missions and religious humanitarianism, I hope to correct the overabundance of attention historians and journalists have paid to evangelical politics. While recent pronouncements of the death of the Christian Right may be premature and conservatism remains fairly entrenched within American evangelicalism, the movement is more diverse than some journalistic overviews might suggest.⁹ No longer can pundits rely on sound bites from a few celebrities to represent the evangelical whole. Over the past half century, evangelicals have moved into the public square, but they have occupied different corners and spoken from different platforms. While it is impossible to understand twenty-first century evangelicalism without the politics, the political dimension is only part of the evangelical ethos.

World Vision's history also helps to move historians beyond the "two-party" narrative of twentieth century American Protestantism.¹⁰ Martin Marty popularized the dualism in 1970 when he distinguished between public and private parties among American Protestants. The public party (liberal, or mainline, or ecumenical Protestants) pursued social reform while the private party (fundamentalists or evangelicals) sought

⁹ Seventy percent of evangelicals claim the Religious Right does not speak for them. D Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 28.

¹⁰ The main divide has centered on conservative vs. liberal whether theological, social, or political. The dualisms could also be orthodox/heretical; elite/populist. See Douglas G Jacobsen and William Vance Trollinger, *Re-forming the Center: American Protestantism, 1900 to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Douglas and William Vance Trollinger Jacobsen, "Historiography of American Protestantism: The Two-Party Paradigm, and Beyond," *Fides Et Historia* 25 (1993): 4–15.

individual conversions.¹¹ While Marty and others have subsequently embraced a broader pluralist narrative, the division still shapes popular perceptions.¹²

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow similarly argued in 1988 that the cultural changes of the 1960s, the demise of denominationalism, and the rise of single issue special-purpose groups resulted in a renewed conservative and liberal divide.¹³ Sociologist James Davison Hunter split Protestants into the orthodox and the progressives and linked their antagonisms to a broader “culture war.”¹⁴ Still other sociologists have found duality on a global scale, with religion battling secularism, Christianity clashing with Islam, or the West against the rest.¹⁵

The dualistic narrative obviously captured an important feature of twentieth century Protestantism. World Vision began as an evangelical organization that defined itself against mainline Christianity and the secular left, but as it began to work with Christians throughout the world, it crossed over traditional boundaries. It pursued justice and social reform without dismissing the need for individual conversion. It broadened to embrace mainline and Catholic mission agencies as well as non-Christian and non-

¹¹ Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970) and Jean Miller Schmidt, *Souls or the Social Order: The Two-Party System in American Protestantism* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991).

¹² Catherine Albanese highlights these same divisions when describing Protestantism even within her textbook that takes a decidedly broader and pluralistic perspective. She notes liberal Protestantism and mission-minded Protestantism. In *America: Religions and Religion*. Too often in the historiography, evangelical has served as the antonym for liberal. See Donald Dayton in Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, *Evangelicals and Empire: Christian Alternatives to the Political Status Quo*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos press, 2008): 190.

¹³ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, 1950. In contrast to Marty who dates the two party system to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, Wuthnow claims religious Americans maintained a united civil religion through the 1950s in the style of Will Herberg’s *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*.

¹⁴ Hunter, *Culture War*. For another perspective from a congregational studies lens, see R. Stephen Warner, *New Wine in Old Wineskins* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

religious partners. These new associations – driven in large part by institutional imperatives both inside and outside American evangelicalism – produced a different kind of Christian organization. In the U.S., it retained its evangelical style and language even if it no longer used the label, but it did not understand itself simply as an alternative to some imagined “other” in a “competitive religious marketplace.”¹⁶ The dichotomies have departed; the center has expanded.

World Vision as Bridge-Builder

World Vision often connected disparate communities. Building bridges over long-established divides was not easy. The staff worked with their feet planted in first one world and then another, functioning sometimes as insider, sometimes as outsider. Its innovations created tensions among evangelicals uneasy with its work alongside ecumenical missions, its devotion to the solving of social problems, and its decision to share leadership with Christians outside the United States. The ecumenical movement thought that it still overemphasized a narrow form of evangelism. Non-religious relief and development agencies worried that it could not measure up to the standards of a demanding international enterprise. Christians outside the West sometimes accused it of propagating an aggressive American exceptionalism. World Vision could never escape the tensions.

World Vision might possibly register momentous shifts within American evangelicalism. While scholars have examined American evangelicalism primarily as an American movement, manifest in politics, theology, or popular culture, some miss the effect of global forces on American evangelicals. A look at World Vision’s history helps

¹⁶ Stephen Ellingson, *The Megachurch and the Mainline: Remaking Religious Tradition in the Twenty-first Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

explain how it came to rearticulate and retain its Christian identity even as it expanded beyond a limited American evangelical subculture, how the ethos of evangelical missions has shifted from evangelism alone to creative forms of Christian humanitarianism, and how exposure to global influences affected the reflection and effected change in the self understanding of many American evangelicals at home. As more American Christians embrace a global vision that leads them to transcend the theological and political divisions that have led sociologists to talk of a “culture war,” a broadening middle ground and practical ecumenism might be on the horizon.

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