

abandoned by her family. His prayer that day has become the very heart of the largest Christian Humanitarian, Development and Relief NGO in the world, World Vision. Today, nearly 40,000 employees serving 100 million people in 100 countries pray his simple, yet profound prayer...Would you pray this prayer with me today? *"Lord, please allow my heart to be broken for the things that break the heart of God."*

Thursday—A QUESTION OF THE WILL

"I am willing, Jesus said..." Once Jesus sees, hears and feels the effects of leprosy in the life of the man kneeling at his feet, he is now left with a question of the will. Is he willing to do something? The Step into Africa Experience AIDS Tour is providing men and women, young and old in churches all over America the opportunity to see, hear and feel in a very personal way the effects of the greatest humanitarian crisis of all time. Once this catastrophic disease has become very personal to us, we are left with a question of the will. What will I do now? What will my Bible Study or Small Group do now? What will my church do now? As you come to the end of the exhibit, you will have the opportunity to spend as much time as you need in prayer and reflection. Take the needed time to sit before the Father whose heart is broken over this disease and allow him to speak to you. What are you willing to do? Can you sponsor a child living in a community impacted by HIV/AIDS? Would you like to learn more about supporting our ongoing HIV/AIDS related work in Nigeria and Cameroon? Would you like to join our HIV/AIDS Task Force to respond with compassion to needs right here in Elk Grove and Sacramento? Can you pray along with me, *"Lord, please begin to show me how I can make a difference in offering hope to someone struggling with HIV/AIDS?"*

Friday—TOUCHING THE UNTOUCHABLES

"Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man..." I like to believe that Jesus reached out and touched the man right on one of his "untouchable" sores. In touching the man with leprosy, Jesus was branding himself as unclean. He was breaking all the religious and social mores of his day. He was stepping outside of his comfort zone. Why? Why did Jesus physically touch the man? Couldn't he have just proclaimed, "Be clean!"? When Jesus spoke to the wind and the waves to "Be still!" the Sea of Galilee became as smooth as glass (Mark 4:35-41). Jesus had the power to change nature by simply lifting his voice, *"...he lifts his voice, the earth melts."* (Ps. 46:6). The man had probably not been touched physically by another human being in years. He was not only in need of physical healing. He desperately needed emotional healing as well. Jesus is concerned about the whole person. Can you imagine what was going through his mind and heart as he felt the human touch and affirmation of another human being? He must have been overwhelmed. I've prayed that our encounters this week with the children in the exhibit would also be powerful encounters with the Savior. He is calling each one of us to step out of our comfort zones and to touch the untouchables we encounter on a regular basis. May the Lord use us as his hands to touch the lives of those suffering with HIV/AIDS in our community and in the world. Please pray with me the words of Isaiah following his encounter with the Holy One, *"O Lord, Here I am, send me!"* Amen.

By Andy Smith, World Vision - Northern California

What Would Make Richard Stay?

Focus on children

William's Story

An invitation from God

Caring's Rebound Quality

A Covering

A Community

A Command

What Would Make Richard Stay?

World Vision Experience: AIDS Week

January 23-29, 10am-8pm

For more info on the exhibit: worldvisionexperience.org

Sunday, January 24, 2010

by Steve Haas, VP World Vision

Emmaus Road

...and he opened to us the Scriptures (Luke 24:32)

HIV/AIDS and the Heart of God

On Sunday we heard from World Vision Vice President Steve Haas about the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on children in Sub-Saharan Africa. All this week a 2,500 square foot African village will allow you and people from our community to Step into Africa. Coming face to face with this pandemic can be overwhelming ... yet Jesus brings comfort, perspective and hope. Let's return to the Scriptures and look through them at this pressing issue.

Read Mark 1:40-42

"A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean. Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, 'I am willing,' he said, 'Be clean! Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.'" Mark 1:40-42

I would like to invite you to reflect with me this week on a very brief, yet life-changing encounter between Jesus and a man suffering from the effects of a cruel disease called leprosy. In the days of Jesus, a person with leprosy was an outcast from the society in which they lived. The physical discomforts of the disease were horrible, but the emotional pain and suffering was devastating. People suffering the effects of leprosy were the "untouchables" of the society. Forced to live outside of the community, unable to attend public worship, and obligated to shout a warning "I am unclean!" to anyone coming near him or her, a man or woman suffering the effects of leprosy often died internally of loneliness, despair and rejection long before the physical effects of the disease took over. One day Jesus encountered a man with leprosy and this great humanitarian crisis became very personal to him. This week FBC is partnering with World Vision in hosting the Step into Africa Experience AIDS Tour in the Chapel. We will all have the opportunity of experiencing what living with the effects of a modern-day leprosy (HIV/AIDS) would be like. Please take time each day to reflect on this brief encounter between Jesus and a man suffering with this disease. Allow the Lord to speak to you about your personal encounter with HIV/AIDS. That day, leprosy became very personal for Jesus. He wept. My guess is that the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa will become very personal for you this week. Please pray, "O Lord, may I encounter you in new and fresh ways this week as I encounter a person living with HIV/AIDS."

Monday—KINGS AND QUEENS

"A man with leprosy came to Jesus..." The man in this story was *drawn* to Jesus. One who knew rejection and stigma was attracted to the Savior. Jesus invited with a passion those who were not welcome elsewhere. The broken and marginalized people knew he liked them. Do they know that we like them? Where do the men and women in our community who are suffering with the effects of HIV/AIDS go to church? Are

they welcome at our church? Do they feel *drawn* to be with us? In Psalm 8:4-5, the Psalmist declares, *"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor."* Jesus had a way of seeing and treating every person he met as if they were royalty. He honored them. They felt it. This man was made in the image of God and was precious to Jesus. The writer of this story doesn't say, *"A leper came to Jesus."* He says *"a man with leprosy"* came to Jesus. Leprosy had invaded the life of a person made in the image of God. HIV/AIDS is a disease ravaging the lives of human beings that are precious to God. Jesus viewed every person he encountered as if he or she were wearing a crown, as if each was a King or a Queen. The broken, marginalized and sinful men and women of his day ran to be with him. They knew he cared. They knew he loved them. Would you pray this prayer with me, *"Lord, please help me to see and honor every person I meet today as if they were wearing a crown."*

Tuesday—WHEN A STATISTIC HAS A NAME

"...and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing you can make me clean.'" The greatest humanitarian crisis of all time is happening on our watch. Over 30 million people have already died as a result of complications related to HIV/AIDS and another 30 million are currently living with the HIV virus. Approximately 6,000 people die every day as a result of complications from this horrible disease. That is comparable to TWO 9/11 disasters happening every day, 24/7. Another 6,000 children become orphans every day. The statistics are numbing. They often leave us unable to do anything...until this week when these overwhelming statistics will have names and faces.

After approaching Jesus, this man falls to his knees. Jesus is moved. Jesus is now looking at leprosy in the face of one human being and hearing the voice of one man who is suffering. Leprosy has now become personal for Jesus. This man has a name. He has a family. He has dreams. He has a story. He is drawn to Jesus because he still has hope. This week we will all encounter HIV/AIDS in the faces of one of three real life children. We will see the effects of HIV/AIDS in their faces and we will hear the stories of Mathabo, Babirye and Emmanuel. They all have names. They have families. They all have dreams. We will see and hear their stories. The greatest humanitarian crisis of all time will become very personal for us this week. Would you pray this prayer with me, *"Lord allow me to see and hear the story of a child in ways that will change me forever."*

Wednesday—HIV/AIDS AND THE HEART OF GOD

"Filled with compassion, Jesus..." After seeing leprosy in the face of the man on his knees and hearing the cry of his voice begging for mercy, Jesus is filled with compassion. "Compassion" means to "suffer with". Jesus allows his heart to be wrenched. The God who spun the heavens now has tears welling up in his eyes. His bottom lip is beginning to quiver. The heart of Jesus is moved as he suffers with this broken human being who is kneeling at his feet. This week is really not about HIV/AIDS. It is not about World Vision. The week is not about FBC or about Africa. This week is truly about the heart of God. People who suffer are very close to the heart of God and I pray they are close to our hearts as well. Almost sixty years ago Bob Pierce allowed his heart to be broken while holding in his arms a little girl who had recently been