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ABOUT THE COVER: Five-year-old Fatao from Burkina Faso needed open-heart surgery to save his life. Read about his journey on page 4.



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MAGAZINE

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IN *good* HANDS

You're in good hands. This popular ad slogan was created a half-century ago to embody a company's ongoing commitment to providing its customers with quality products, service and peace of mind.

As Compassion donors, you have given us a sacred trust to care for 1.3 million children on your behalf. We take that responsibility seriously. "From the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48). Our goal is to exceed expectations and surpass ever-higher standards of excellence and accountability because, in our business, the outcomes are eternal. We want you to have confidence that your resources, and your sponsored child, are in good hands with us.

But you don't have to take just my word for it:

- Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, has given Compassion its four-star (highest) rating for 11 years in a row. That places Compassion in the top 1 percent of trustworthy nonprofit organizations.
- *The NonProfit Times* lists the 100 largest nonprofit organizations every year. At Compassion's 50th anniversary in 2002, we finally squeaked onto that list ... at number 100! Today as we celebrate our 60th anniversary, we stand at number 33.
- The number of Compassion beneficiaries has doubled in just the last six years. During the greatest global economic downturn of our lifetime, God has caused this ministry to prosper.

FROM THE HEART OF THE PRESIDENT,
WESS STAFFORD

I share this news to encourage you and to thank you. This is your ministry. While we work diligently to be worthy of your trust and sacrifice, we know such achievements are the result of God's blessing and your steadfast support.

But who exactly are "we"? Who are the people of Compassion who combine hearts and efforts to provide your sponsored child with the opportunities to reach his or her God-given potential?

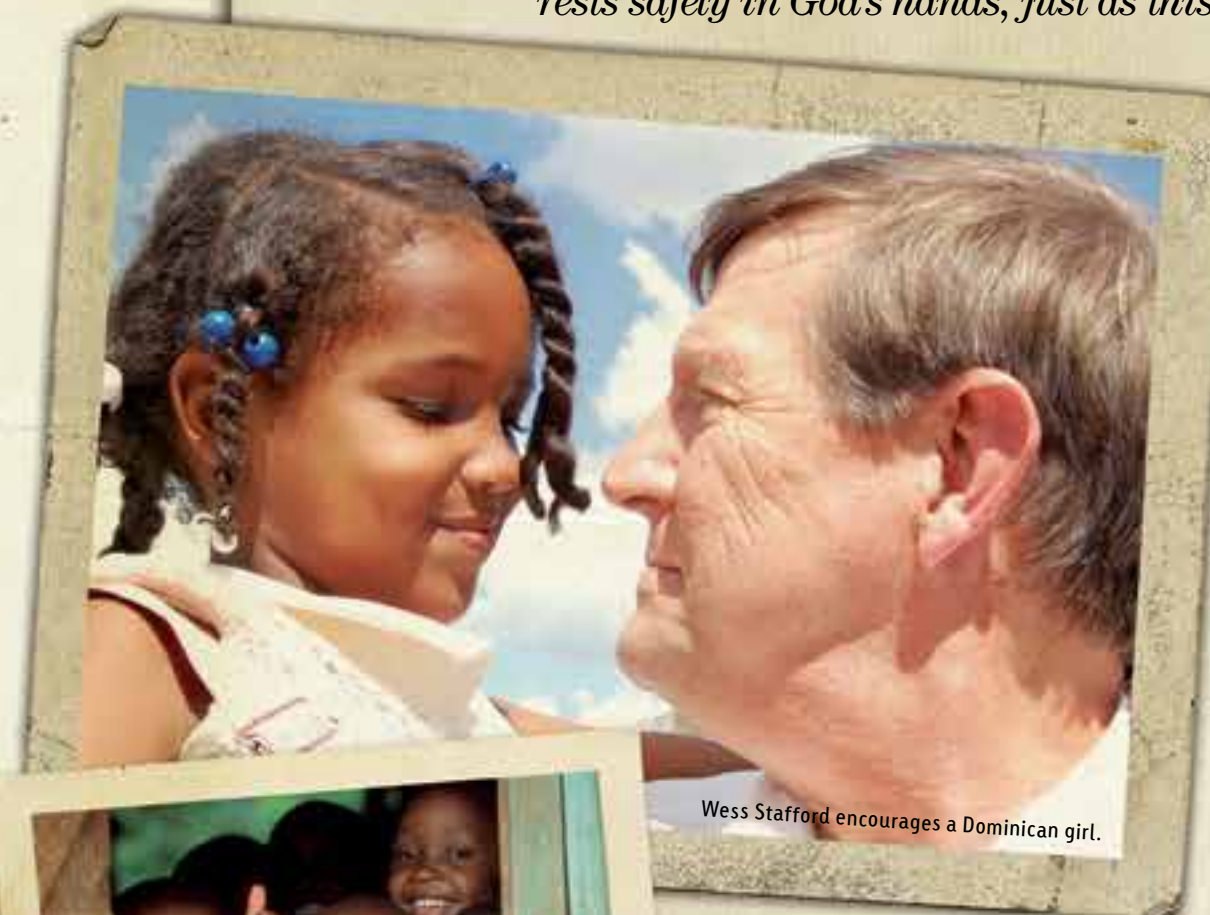
Compassion International's staff consists of more than 2,500 dedicated, godly people who are passionate about our mission of releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name. The majority, nearly all nationals, work in Compassion's 28 country offices around the world. Almost 900 work at our Global Ministry Center in Colorado Springs. Together we serve 5,800 local church partners

where your sponsored child participates in Compassion's child development programs. More than 6,000 sponsors traveled to visit their sponsored children last year. If you are one of them, you witnessed firsthand the spirit and competence of Compassion's staff — and you know your sponsored child is in good hands. But again, you don't have to take only my word for that: Compassion International is one of only 27 organizations worldwide, representing all facets of business, to have recently received the prestigious 2012 Gallup Great Workplace Award. According to Gallup, this award recognizes Compassion as having "one of the most productive and engaged workforces in the world."

Wess Stafford, with Compassion staff members and Gallup representatives, accepting the Gallup Great Workplace Award on May 17, 2012, in Omaha, Neb.



After 35 years with Compassion, I plan to retire in the next couple of years. We covet your prayers for the CEO search. This transition rests safely in God's hands, just as this ministry always has.



Wess Stafford encourages a Dominican girl.

Tom Rath, who leads Gallup's Workplace and Leadership consulting practice, said, "Organizations such as Compassion have established a new global standard for engaging people. When compared to the millions of workgroups we have studied around the world, the awardees have worked tirelessly to create an environment that values people. They go far beyond trivial perks to ensure that each employee has an emotional connection to the company's mission and growth."

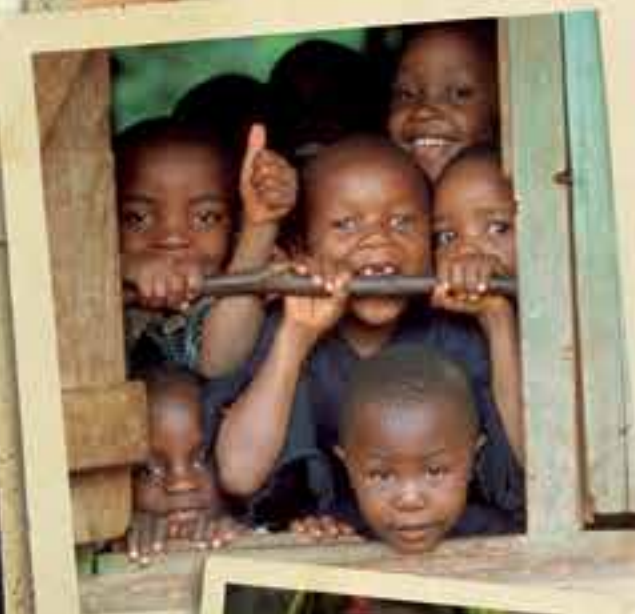
Why do such things matter? Because what Compassion has been called to do is central to God's kingdom. And high employee engagement correlates to increased productivity, which directly affects the children in poverty whom we serve. I've known for years that Compassion's staff is exceptional — but you might suspect I am a little biased! I'm thrilled for Compassion's employees to be recognized and validated by a

world-class, credible organization like Gallup. Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds" and give you awards! Uh, no — that they may "glorify your Father in heaven." We are humbled to receive such affirmation, yet are more gratified that the light of your and our good deeds is rescuing children, changing lives and honoring God.

This also matters because of a big change that is on Compassion's horizon. After 35 years with Compassion, 20 of them as president, I plan to retire within the next couple of years. I won't "retire" from my calling of "speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8), but it's time for the next generation to take the helm of this amazing ministry. People can get nervous when changes in organizational leadership occur, but I trust you have glimpsed enough of the quality of Compassion's staff and practices to be assured that the ministry is indeed in very good hands!

The succession planning process is also in good hands. Compassion is blessed with an outstanding board of directors and an extraordinary global executive leadership team. A professional search process is under way. We covet your prayers for the CEO Search Committee. Please pray for God's will to prevail each step of the way. I have every confidence that God will bring to this position the person He has already chosen, someone He has uniquely gifted to lead Compassion into its next chapter. How comforting it is to know that this transition rests safely in God's hands, just as this ministry always has.

We cannot thank you enough for your faithfulness to God, to your sponsored child, and to this ministry. We look forward to Compassion's light shining even brighter in the future, bringing hope to more of the world's children, and more glory to our heavenly Father. ✝



WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS AND COMMENTS!

Please email compassionmagazine@us.ci.org or write to Editor, *Compassion Magazine*, Compassion International, 12290 Voyager Parkway, Colorado Springs, CO 80921-3668.

See and read more in Compassion's online magazine — and share it with your family and friends! Go to compassion.com/magazine.

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PACKED WITH MEANING

Fatao, Sanou (left) and Marie-Jeanne sit near his home and pack his bag for India, including gifts from Compassion sponsors.

Illustration by Shannon Averill



ALL heart

By Leanna Summers
Photos by Chuck Bigger

It wasn't meant to be like this.

At first Sanou and Kone welcomed their sixth son, Fatao, into the world. Another boy! Celebrating their sweet baby's birth, they prayed he would have a future better than theirs. But as they watched their son grow into a toddler, something went wrong.

Fatao had no energy. He didn't eat well. His heart seemed to beat too quickly. So Sanou and Kone did what seemed impossible.

They scraped together enough francs to visit a doctor. The sacrifice was almost too much to handle on their combined salaries of less than \$2 a day. But they would do anything to help their sick boy get well.

HOW SPONSORS, DONORS AND COMPASSION CHURCH PARTNERS WERE MOVED IN THEIR HEARTS TO HEAL A LITTLE BOY'S BROKEN ONE

On the day they visited the doctor, they waited with hundreds of other patients. Some had fevers, some had coughs, many had starving children. The line snaked around a red-dirt street to the only medical center near their home in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.

The doctor was stretched, available only a few days a week. On the other days he traveled to nearby villages to tend to the sick and dying.

When Sanou and Kone finally visited the doctor, he listened to Fatao's heart, took x-rays, ran tests. Soon after, he gave them a diagnosis — one that revealed their worst fears:

"There is nothing we can do for your son here. Fatao has a ventricular septal defect. There is a hole in his heart. He needs surgery to patch it, but there is no medical equipment here. He will die without help. You must take him abroad."

Hopeless and numb, Sanou and Kone wept together. And almost resigned to give up.

A trip abroad would cost \$23,000 — about 12 million francs. "Fatao's disease is not a disease for a poor person," Sanou says. "There is no way to pay."

In one last desperate attempt to save their son, they pinched together a few more francs and tried the traditional healing methods popular in their town. A witch doctor scarred the boy's skin with small holes. Then he placed herbs on the skin and washed it with boiled leaves. Fatao's heart did not heal.

The toddler grew into a small and listless boy as the years ground on. Sanou and Kone ached to know how much time they had left with their son. Then a new opportunity came — and with it, a chance for hope to take root.

Sanou heard about a Compassion center at a church a few blocks from their concrete hut. The pastor and staff, neighbors said, were helping their children. Maybe they could help Fatao, too?

Sanou rushed to enroll Fatao in Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program. Not long after, a pediatrician came to the center for health checkups — almost unheard of for children who had barely seen a doctor, much less a specialist.

The pediatrician confirmed what Kone and Sanou already knew. Fatao would need to go abroad for open-heart surgery. If the now-5-year-old did not go soon, he would die.

Hearing this news, Compassion staff in Burkina Faso began securing funding then planning for the trip. "I wept for joy when I found out that Fatao would be able to have the surgery," says Kone. "I bent my head down because I didn't want the pastor to see me cry, but they were tears of joy."

For the surgery, Fatao would need to travel to Chennai, India, where leading-edge equipment and an excellent hospital specializing in heart surgeries are located. Director and Chief Pediatric Cardiac Surgeon Dr. Robert Coelho would perform the surgery — a skilled physician who had already saved the lives of 3,000 children, including 18 Compassion-assisted children from Africa and India.

When Compassion sponsors and donors heard about Fatao's need, they quickly raised the funds he needed to go.

Fatao's parents would need to stay home. Without birth certificates, savings accounts and steady jobs, they were denied passports. Both agreed to have Marie-Jeanne, the health specialist at Fatao's Compassion center, travel with him instead. On March 6, 2012, Fatao began his 6,000-mile journey from a broken heart to a whole one. ✨



HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE

Two of Fatao's brothers and his father and mother spend time with him before his trip, hopeful that he will return home healthy.

THE LONG TREK

To get to the airport, Marie-Jeanne and Fatao trekked from Bobo-Dioulasso to the capital of Ouagadougou on a crowded bus. The journey on dusty, pocked roads was more than 220 miles and took about four hours.

CARE ADVANCES

Just a day after arriving from Ouagadougou, Fatao began multiple tests at Miot Hospital in Chennai to determine the state of his heart and to prepare for his surgery.

BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL

As Fatao underwent testing, Sanou continued to work at her roadside business selling steamed bean cakes — and praying for Fatao's safe return.



GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Just a few days after Fatao's arrival in Chennai, a team of doctors prepped him for surgery (pictured). Then they began operating on him. First they stopped Fatao's heart and used a heart-lung machine to keep blood circulating and oxygenated. Next they cut through the sternum to get to the heart. Finally, doctors stitched a GORE-TEX® patch made in Virginia to cover the hole in Fatao's heart. The entire procedure took less than four hours.



INTENSIVE CARE

After his surgery, Fatao spent several days in intensive care under the careful monitoring of Dr. Coelho and a nurse assigned to care for him. Marie-Jeanne was always close by, holding his hand and comforting him as he healed.



A NEW LIFE

Less than three weeks after Fatao's journey began, a fast-healing boy returned home to his excited family who greeted him with hugs and special food — a hopeful celebration of his new life, much like the one they had when he was born.



ABOUT VENTRICULAR SEPTAL DEFECT

Ventricular septal defect (VSD) is a congenital heart condition in which a hole forms between the two lower chambers of the heart.

- VSD causes rapid heart rate, bluish skin and breathlessness.
- Infants with VSD may suffer from poor brain development.
- VSD decreases oxygen flow to the rest of the body, causing poor physical development.
- If untreated, ventricular septal defect will result in heart failure and death.

● SEE MORE OF FATAO'S JOURNEY AND HOW HE'S DOING NOW AT compassion.com/heart

2012

COMPASSION-SPONSORED CHILDREN

- 21 received cardiac surgery
- 6 treated for cancer, leukemia and tumors
- 4 treated for kidney/renal disorders
- 2 received brain surgery



Health Care in the Developing World

WHY GO TO India FOR MEDICAL CARE?

The average cost of open-heart surgery in private Indian hospitals:

\$5,000

MEDICAL CARE IN BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest nations in the world, with an average gross domestic product per capita of \$1,500 per year.

Burkina Faso was ranked 25th in the world for national death rate, with an average of 12.47 deaths for every 1,000 people in 2012.

There is barely one hospital bed for every 1,000 people in Burkina Faso.

There is approximately one doctor for every 1,000 people in Burkina Faso.



Hospitals in India offer leading-edge technology, including powerful heart-imaging tools that aid in the diagnosis of heart problems.



Well-stocked hospitals in India contain continuous oxygen supplies, defibrillators and echocardiography systems.



Cardiothoracic centers in private Indian hospitals offer excellent services, such as 24-hour 1:1 nurse-patient ratios.

A MOTHER'S LOVE FOR AN ABANDONED BABY CHANGES
THE COURSE OF BOTH THEIR LIVES.

Special Delivery

By Brandy Campbell with Jayaseelan Enos,
India Communications Specialist

Mahalakshmi, pictured when she was still in Compassion's Child Survival Program, has received crucial support and love through her most impressionable years.



Photo by Chuck Bigger

Her first days are shrouded in mystery. Nobody knows who Mahalakshmi's parents are. Was she born on a cold cement floor? Was her father in the room to hear her first cries? Did her mother look into Mahalakshmi's brown eyes? Did she have brothers and sisters?

What kind of desperation hung in the air that day? While we don't know the details of Mahalakshmi's birth, we do know the events that followed just a few hours later. That someone took Mahalakshmi to a patch of dirt in the small southeast Indian village of Kamaraj Nagar and left her there, bleeding, in a thicket of thorns. That while she lay there screaming, a wild animal attacked her, causing her to lose an eye. That ants crawled over her, biting her tender skin. Little Mahalakshmi lay in the hot sun, fighting for her life.

The commotion over Mahalakshmi's discovery that morning 11 years ago was loud enough to draw a crowd. People walked out of their homes and stood at a distance. They whispered, speculated, murmured about the evil spirits that must have caused this horrible tragedy. But nobody moved to pick her up. Most adults in Kamaraj Nagar had children of their own — children they struggled to feed and clothe on less than \$2 a day. And all of them believed that the newborn infant would die.

Geetha and her husband, Palani, heard the noise and approached the fringes of the group. They pushed through the crowd until Geetha finally saw Mahalakshmi. She glanced around. *Will no one help this tiny, helpless child?* she wondered. And almost before she knew what was happening, Geetha stepped forward, scooped up the bloody and broken baby, held her close to her chest, and walked home.

As Geetha cleaned Mahalakshmi's wounds and applied ointment to the cuts, she pondered what she had done. She already had a son, an active little boy for whom they could barely provide. Palani worked as a plumber, but he went for weeks without jobs. The family often skipped meals; Geetha had gone to bed hungry more times than she could count.

As Geetha tenderly cared for Mahalakshmi, she believed she

had made the right decision. But her resolve would be tested in the coming months.

Mahalakshmi required extensive medical care, and bills from her hospital visits piled up. At times, Geetha couldn't even afford milk for the child and would feed her sugar water from a bottle.

"I remember the times we didn't have enough to eat," says Geetha. "We had no food, and we would pour water into the leftover rice and keep it until evening and have it as rice gruel."

Was it possible, Geetha wondered, that she had saved Mahalakshmi only to watch her starve?

For two years the family lived on the brink of collapse, never able to get ahead. But then Geetha heard about a program in the village that helped families like hers who struggled through desperate poverty. Compassion's Child Survival Program, she learned, ministered to infants or toddlers and their mothers. Geetha didn't waste a moment to meet with the program staff. She and Mahalakshmi were enrolled immediately, and suddenly Geetha felt the burden finally begin to lift. The child's medical bills were now covered, and soon they had vegetables, milk and meat to eat. A new mosquito net hung over the bed in their small home to protect the family from malaria. For the first time, Geetha felt hope. Maybe there was a future for her family after all.

Into this relative peace, though, came tragedy once again. Geetha's husband, the family's sole provider, suddenly deserted her and their two young children.

"We were shattered and our hearts were broken," Geetha remembers. "I had several questions in my mind — how can we live without him and how can I take care of my children?"

The staff of the Child Survival Program encouraged Geetha, provided vocational training, and offered support. Once again, Geetha persevered. And she saw her perseverance pay off when Mahalakshmi joined Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program at the age of 4.

“I thank God for Compassion,” Geetha says. “They have taught me to surrender everything into the hands of the almighty God. Compassion is supporting us and we are living peacefully today.”

Seven years have passed since Geetha’s husband abandoned her to raise their children alone. Today, Mahalakshmi is a beautiful 11-year-old who loves to sing and is always surrounded by friends and family. She wants to be a doctor when she grows up.

“Because Mahalakshmi is in the program, I have no worries about her at all, be it food, clothing, or her education and her future,” Geetha says.

The miracles of Mahalakshmi’s life are not lost on her. While her birth is shrouded in mystery, she sees clearly the love of her mother — the woman who literally rescued her when nobody else would step forward. And she knows the love of the Father — who has a bigger plan for her life than she can even dream.

“We were shattered and our hearts were broken ... I had several questions in my mind ...”



Photo by Jayaseelan Enos

Geetha with Mahalakshmi

PRACTICAL HELP, ETERNAL HOPE

The Child Survival Program is unique because a local church provides practical help through personal, in-home visits. The program makes a direct impact on survival through:

PRENATAL CARE Moms receive medical care, dietary supplements and education. They learn about fetal development, childbirth and breast-feeding.

FOOD Moms receive nutritious food and training in balanced meal planning, hygienic food preparation and basic nutrition.

HEALTH CARE We treat children’s diseases and infections. We also teach caregivers preventive care and how to recognize symptoms so they can intervene. Each mother and child receives checkups and updated health records.

INFANT SURVIVAL TRAINING We teach moms about sterilizing baby bottles, child-proofing their homes, and discipline.

EDUCATION Caregivers are given the opportunity to learn to read, write, and develop a trade skill to help them provide for their families.

FAITH COMMUNITY All the benefits of the Child Survival Program are delivered through a local church, so children and caregivers are surrounded by a caring community.



THE CHILD SURVIVAL PROGRAM CURRENTLY SERVES MORE THAN 27,000 BABIES AND THEIR MOMS IN 18 COUNTRIES. [1] Mexico [2] El Salvador [3] Haiti [4] Dominican Republic [5] Ecuador [6] Peru [7] Bolivia [8] Rwanda [9] Uganda [10] Ethiopia [11] Kenya [12] Tanzania [13] India [14] Sri Lanka [15] Bangladesh [16] Thailand [17] Indonesia [18] Philippines



Two small
BRACELETS,
one big
LESSON.

When God tugs at your heart, that’s the moment to act. Watch the short, powerful story of one woman’s encounter with extraordinarily generous children. See how her own failure to respond to God’s leading teaches us a profound truth about where we find our treasure and how to live our lives with an open hand.

compassion.com/twobracelets

Poverty has never come so close.
**HOPE HAS NEVER BEEN
SO REAL.**

Compassion presents Change the Story: The Compassion Experience — a landmark exhibition now visiting churches and other venues across the country to introduce the blessing of sponsoring a child.

Guests are immersed in the devastating reality and effects of extreme child poverty around the world ... and they see children find hope as they are nurtured in Compassion's world-class child development program.

Check **COMPASSION.COM/CHANGE** to see if Change the Story is coming to your area!



twitter.com/ChangeTour
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Have you ever waited ...
and waited ...
for a dream to come true?

Sponsor a child who has been waiting a year or more!

Right now there are 1,500 children on Compassion's waiting list who have been waiting a year or more to be sponsored. Tell a child,

*"You are special.
I am choosing you!"*

Make today a day of celebration. Please sponsor a child at **compassion.com/EndTheWait**.



*Leave a
Legacy of
Hope!*

Please remember Compassion — and children in need — the next time you review your will or estate plan. For more information, call the Gift Planning department at (855) 315-5019 or email giftplanning@compassion.com.

compassion.com/giftplanning

IMPORTANT DEADLINE APPROACHING ...

**Share Christmas joy
with your sponsored child!**

Sending your child a Christmas gift is easy. Just choose one of these options:

- ★ Visit compassion.com/joy or
- ★ Call (800) 336-7676 or
- ★ Return the form you received in the mail.

We recommend \$20 for each child. Please send your gift by **October 31** to ensure delivery by Christmas. Thank you!

Compassion.com/joy

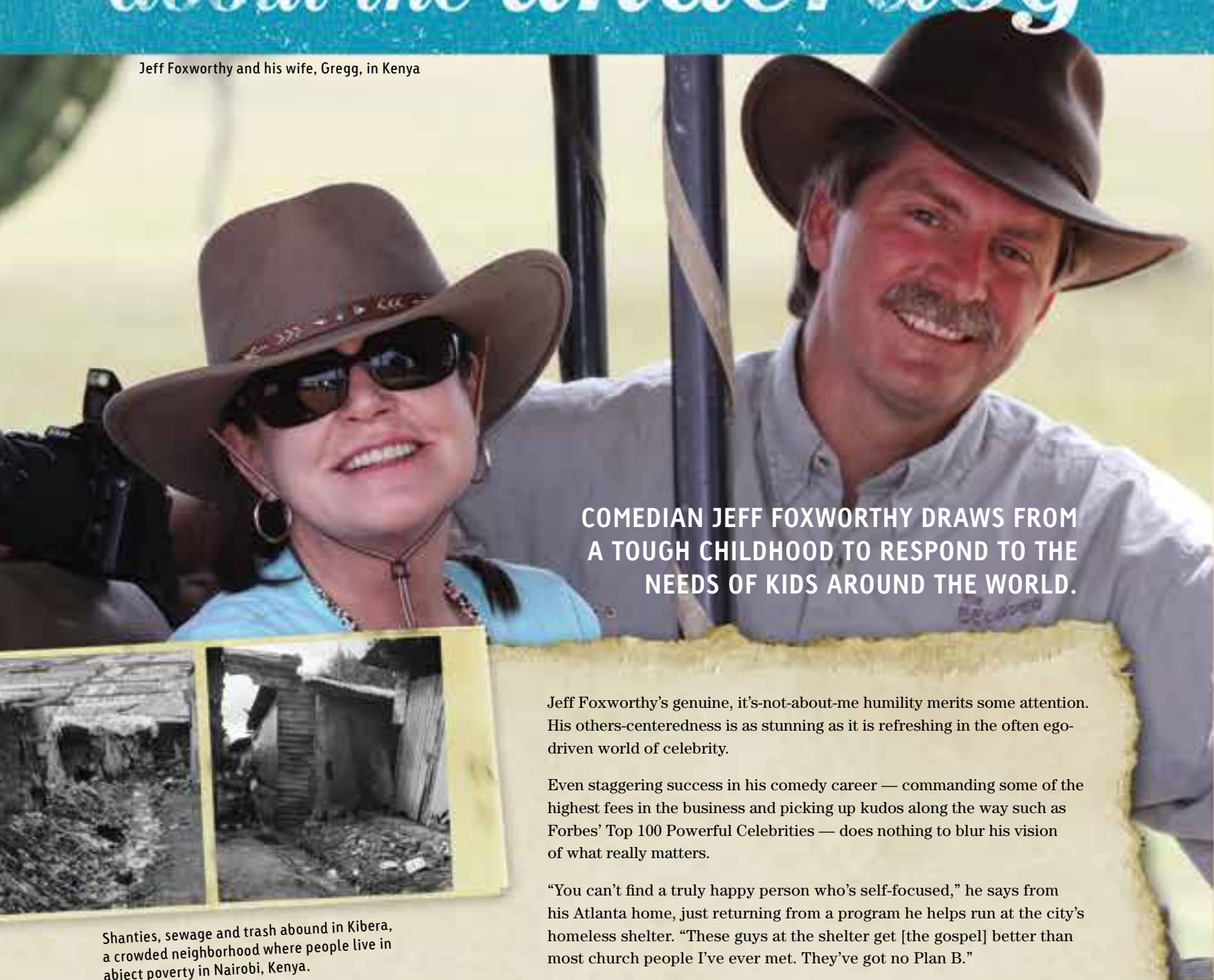


SERIOUS

By Martha Anne Tudor

about the underdog

Jeff Foxworthy and his wife, Gregg, in Kenya



COMEDIAN JEFF FOXWORTHY DRAWS FROM A TOUGH CHILDHOOD TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF KIDS AROUND THE WORLD.

Jeff Foxworthy's genuine, it's-not-about-me humility merits some attention. His others-centeredness is as stunning as it is refreshing in the often ego-driven world of celebrity.

Even staggering success in his comedy career — commanding some of the highest fees in the business and picking up kudos along the way such as Forbes' Top 100 Powerful Celebrities — does nothing to blur his vision of what really matters.

"You can't find a truly happy person who's self-focused," he says from his Atlanta home, just returning from a program he helps run at the city's homeless shelter. "These guys at the shelter get [the gospel] better than most church people I've ever met. They've got no Plan B."

Shanties, sewage and trash abound in Kibera, a crowded neighborhood where people live in abject poverty in Nairobi, Kenya.



Jeff and Jordan plant a tree at a Compassion child development center in Kenya.



Jordan with a Compassion-assisted child in Kenya

A fervent supporter of Compassion International and other hands-on programs that help the poor, sick and downtrodden, Jeff says simply, "I have a heart for the underdog."

He first learned about Compassion six years ago on a church trip to the Kibera slum in Kenya. What he saw was jolting.

"I had no idea poverty like that existed anywhere in the world. ... the women, the children, the sewage in the streets, the vultures, the smell so awful.

"When you make them real people, that's when you've got to respond somehow."

The experience was life-changing for Jeff and his oldest daughter, Jordan, 14 at the time and his companion on the trip. She was transformed from a shy girl who never wanted to leave the house to a passionate advocate who has traveled around the United States promoting Compassion's efforts to reduce malaria rates among sponsored children.

The Foxworthy family (which also includes Gregg, Jeff's wife of 27 years, and younger daughter Jules) has since remained actively involved with Compassion, sponsoring children through the Child Sponsorship Program as well as young adults in the Leadership Development Program. They even worked with Compassion to build a 15-child orphanage five years ago in Kenya.

"You see kids over there on their own. They're 10 years old," says Jeff. "They get raped, they get

used." Jeff and Gregg decided to forgo presents one Christmas and build the orphanage instead.

When they went to visit the new facility a year later, the experience was overwhelming.

"My wife slowly walked through it, went outside, sat down in a field and sobbed."

As a ministry aiming to change lives, Jeff says, Compassion gets it right.

"The word *ministry* gets misused sometimes. 'This is our building and this is what we do.' No. It's everybody, whoever you meet. If you look at the life of Jesus, Jesus always cared. Every life had value.

"People on the other side of faith don't want to hear people talk about faith. But they can see people living out that faith."

Along with sponsorships and the orphanage project, Jeff has participated in benefits for Haiti earthquake victims and spoken on behalf of Compassion to major news organizations. He also waived his appearance fee for a sold-out performance last April in Franklin, N.C.

The event was held at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, owned by longtime Compassion supporters Phil and Sharon Drake. The Drakes donated use of the theater and matched ticket sales, bringing the night's total to more than \$160,000. The donations went to Compassion to provide children with clean, safe water.

"Why do I give a Saturday night?" Jeff asks. "That's the most valuable time for me to give.

But, because I gave away a Saturday night, 2,000 people will have clean drinking water."

While his desire to love others as Jesus did is based in faith that took hold when he was only 7, his empathy for the suffering is grounded in childhood experiences that left him feeling unwanted and looked down on.

Jeff grew up outside of Atlanta with two younger siblings. His dad left the family when Jeff was 9, marrying five more times before his death.

"When a parent leaves," Jeff says, "you always have the feeling something was more important than you."

After his parents' divorce, Jeff watched his mother struggle to provide the basics from her wages as a keypunch operator. He still feels the sting of being mocked by other kids for his worn baseball uniform.

"I thought, *You don't know me. You're just looking at my shirt.*"

Such are the scars that keep this megastar humble and clearheaded about what matters most in life.

"Whatever I've got, it's because God gave me the ability to be funny. It's not mine."

It's all about personal validation, he says — the very heart of Compassion's sponsorship program.

"By being a child's sponsor, you've given him worth. Even from across the world. Jesus gave children worth during a time when children weren't given worth. To Him, everyone has worth. Think how different the world would be if everybody thought like that." ✨

radical GENEROSITY

By Martha Anne Tudor

"I don't believe it's my money ... God's simply made me the steward of it. And I intend to give it all away."

Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts



The way Phil Drake sees it, bankruptcy was the best spiritual thing that ever happened to him.

"God got my attention."

His composure melts as he describes the time nearly 30 years ago when his software business bottomed and he was forced into bankruptcy. He and his wife, Sharon, and their three young children received food through a federal program for the poor.

But the most humbling moment came when a friend offered him \$500.

"Accepting it was the most difficult thing I've ever done," he says. "It was a life-changing event. It changed my attitude about giving."

It was 2 a.m. on a day soon after, on his way home from work, that Phil reached the point of total surrender. "I told God, 'I have messed this up. If You take care of my business, I'll take care of Yours.'"

Phil and Sharon rebuilt the company and repaid every cent from their bankruptcy. He says, "We might not have had a legal responsibility to do so, but we had a moral and ethical one."

Phil now sits comfortably at the helm of an 18-company enterprise, the flagship of which is multi-million-dollar Drake Software, which produces a product used by 37,000 tax professionals every year.

Headquarters are in his hometown of Franklin, N.C., where the 60-year-old is known as a powerful mover and shaker, devoted family man and faithful Christian. Town folks say he is quick to help those in need, with a nonjudgmental kindness they long remember.

Phil and Sharon's radical generosity reaches far outside their town, however — even to the other side of the world.

They became involved with Compassion when daughter Sarah, now 30, was in middle school and asked to sponsor a child. When Phil researched Compassion's reputation for financial accountability, he and Sharon decided to give more.

The Drake family has since sponsored many children through the Child Sponsorship and Leadership Development programs, and provided substantial support for the Child Survival Program and other Compassion initiatives.

Six years ago they helped fund the building of the Najile Girls School in Kenya, offering young girls in the Ewuaso Kedong community a choice they'd never had before — secondary school over immediate marriage.

Back home last April, the Drakes donated use of their 1,500-seat Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts for a Compassion benefit with comedian Jeff Foxworthy, and also matched ticket sales.

"I don't believe it's my money," Phil says. "God's simply made me the steward of it. And I intend to give it all away." ✨

Phil and Sharon Drake, left, with Jeff and Gregg Foxworthy at the benefit



– Stuff – An American Phenomenon

How channel surfing brought home a lesson on what we own.

I have my favorite TV programs just like everyone else. But every once in a while, I like to see what else is out there. So the other night, as I flipped through channels, I came across a program that I didn't recognize. It showed an auctioneer rolling numbers off his quick tongue as a crowd gathered.

What are they bidding on? There was obvious tension between some of the bidders as they countered each other ... \$800 ... \$900 ... \$1,000 ...

By now I was hooked. I had to know what it was that they wanted so badly. Two rivals threw a little trash talk at each other as the numbers continued to increase. Finally, a winner emerged with the bid of \$1,600. That's when the camera pulled back to reveal the item he had won: a storage unit.

These bidders didn't even know what was in the storage space. They were bidding on stacks of unmarked boxes, furniture pieces and miscellaneous junk in hopes of finding something valuable.

We love "stuff" in our country, don't we? Apparently, we love it so much that we're willing to pay for someone else's stuff too, just to add to our own. And, as I later found out, storing stuff we don't have room for is largely an American phenomenon.

According to the Self-Storage Association's website, there are more than 58,000 storage facilities around the world. And 80 percent of those are here in the United States. In fact, one in every 10 households in the U.S. rents a storage unit. That's pretty interesting, considering just how large our homes have become. The average size of a house in the U.S.

is about 2,100 square feet. But apparently that's not enough room for our stuff. Our stuff spills out of our homes, into our garages and, when that's not enough, into a storage unit.

At Compassion we minister to more than 1.3 million children around the world, most of whom have no idea what a storage unit is. The concept of having more stuff than you have room for is foreign to those living in extreme poverty. And the truth is, most storage units are nicer than the homes our kids live in.

Here in the U.S., we even have climate-controlled storage units for our stuff, with cement floors, cinder-block walls and solid roofs. Our stuff has better living conditions than moms, dads and kids in other parts of the world have.

The more I dig into this reality, the more I have to put myself under the microscope. I admit I have more than I need in my life, too. There's a closet in my house where I stashed things years ago. They haven't been touched since. Shelves in my garage have items collecting dust. To be honest, I've been tempted to rent a space to store the overflow. But, for the reasons listed above, I have decided against it. Besides, maybe there's someone else out there who could make better use of those things.

Donating to Goodwill or another charity that takes such items is a good start. Or perhaps

you could have a yard sale and donate the income to those who don't have enough. There are approximately 1.3 billion people on this planet who live on less than \$1.25 a day. For them, some of our stuff — or the proceeds from it — could mean the difference between eating today or going hungry. While we have more than we need, they need more than they have.

Now, I understand that there are times when extra space is necessary. Our brave men and women fighting overseas often find themselves needing

a place to keep their possessions during their deployment.

Families in transition sometimes need a space to store belongings until a new home is built or while

waiting on a new stage in life. But many more of us use storage units simply because we don't have room for all our stuff.

What about you? Is there stuff in your life that could go to better use? Are there items you've been holding on to, only to allow them to decay or rust away? And perhaps we need to ask ourselves these questions: How did we ever get here? What are we seeking from material things that drives us to accumulate more than we have room for?

Maybe a lifestyle change is in order. Maybe it's time to clean out the clutter. I heard this profound quote recently. I'm not sure where it originated, but it's powerful: "Live simply so that others may simply live."

Let's all take a personal inventory of our stuff and see if, somewhere on a forgotten shelf, is an opportunity to help someone in need. ✨

Mark Hanlon, Senior Vice President, USA, Compassion International



NEWS AND VIEWS

By Tim Glenn

{ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD}

20,000 people, many of whom are children, are killed by dengue every year.

THE END OF DENGUE?

Dengue fever kills nearly 20,000 people every year — many of whom are children. But a French drug manufacturer may be close to creating a vaccine that could prevent millions of infections — and save thousands of lives.

Researchers at Paris-based Sanofi are getting ready to test the three-stage vaccine on 4,000 children in Thailand, with hopes of marketing the inoculation by 2015.

4,000 children in Thailand will participate in a drug company's testing of a dengue vaccine.

Worldwide, there has been a **30-fold** jump in dengue cases over the past **50 years**.

Dengue virus is spread by the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and can cause intense joint and muscle pain. The World Health Organization reports that there has been a 30-fold jump in cases over the past 50 years.

Dengue has been a serious health issue since the 18th century, but it became a pandemic after World War II because of military troop movements throughout the Pacific Theatre — where the mosquito is very common. During that war alone, some 90,000 American troops were hospitalized with dengue.

Photo: Associated Press

MALNOURISHED CHILDREN IN AFRICA RECEIVE LIFELINE

In the Sahel region of Africa (west and central Africa), between 7 million and 12 million people are in need of emergency assistance due to food insecurity. Drought, locusts, blister beetles and the migration of families and their livestock are taking their toll on agricultural areas. The area is desperate for rain. Food costs have skyrocketed. Oxfam International, a confederation of organizations working to end poverty and injustice around the world, reports that many vulnerable families spend up to 80 percent of their income on food alone.

The U.S. State Department recently announced that it is increasing aid to the Sahel region to \$200 million this fiscal year. The aid will provide lifesaving food for malnourished children and will help develop small-scale projects and infrastructure to withstand future drought and establish lasting food security.

INFANT MORTALITY DECLINING IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Infant mortality has declined in the Dominican Republic, according to the World Bank. In January 2000, there were 33 deaths for every 1,000 live births. That number dropped to an all-time low of 23.5 last year.

Compassion church partners are working throughout the Dominican Republic to bring those numbers even lower.

As part of the Child Survival Program, churches like Iglesia Metodista Libre Casa de Restauracion (House of Restoration Free Methodist Church) have organized training meetings to provide expectant mothers with medical care and teach them how to keep themselves and their growing babies healthy. Pastors and public health doctors host the training sessions and speak on topics ranging from prenatal care to breast cancer prevention.

NICARAGUAN PASTORS TACKLE DRUG PROBLEM

In Nicaragua, Compassion's church partners are working to fight a growing drug problem in their communities. In addition to teaching kids about the consequences of drug abuse, the churches are also focusing on drug-addicted parents of Compassion-assisted children. And they are beginning to see results.

"Our church celebrates evangelistic campaigns in the community," one pastor says, "where we share testimonies of church members who were totally submerged in drugs, touched bottom, but nowadays are completely restored through our Lord. We tell them that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."

"We tell them that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."