Partnership helps Compassion build a church and a center to respond to an isolated island's SOS.
IN THIS COMPASSION MAGAZINE, WE ARE HIGHLIGHTING THE LOCAL CHURCH PARTNERSHIPS THAT ARE SO CRITICAL TO EVERY ASPECT OF OUR MINISTRY.

Compassion has an extensive network of more than 6,200 church partners throughout the countries where we minister. It is these local heroes who most directly influence every child who receives care through Compassion’s programs. We are also blessed to work with resourceful church partners across North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea whose congregations sponsor Compassion-assisted children. I’d like to share some excerpts with you from a recent conversation I had with a pastor of one of these resourced church partners, Pastor Jeff Lockyer from Southridge Community Church in Ontario, Canada. Jeff and his team are passionate about ministry. It is these local heroes who most directly influence every child who receives care through Compassion’s programs — in our mindset, our priorities, our consumption and our relationships. Compassion has supported us in this, not only by granting child sponsorship for every participant, but also by helping us develop and improve the curriculum and process. From behind-the-scenes planning to frontline implementation, Compassion has been actively involved in leading our community on this discipleship journey.

It’s great that your church has embraced the concept of global missions through child sponsorship. Can you tell us more about that?

In recent years, Compassion has come alongside our church as we developed a discipleship process called the Global Action Plan. The Global Action Plan is a six-month training experience we designed to help our congregation live as global missionaries — in our mindsets, our priorities, our consumption and our relationships. Compassion has supported us in this, not only by granting child sponsorship for every participant, but also by helping us develop and improve the curriculum and process. From behind-the-scenes planning to frontline implementation, Compassion has been actively involved in leading our community on this discipleship journey.

We believe that every member of the Body of Christ is intended by God to be a global missionary to serve the global poor with our everyday lives regardless of where we live. However, since the majority of our congregation will not have the opportunity to travel abroad to serve in direct proximity to the global poor, building this aspect of our faith has been a challenge.

Will you explain how Compassion has been helping you meet that challenge?

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Our leadership believes that global poverty is best addressed by the local church and is best maximized the impact of our investment. But our partnership with Compassion doesn’t stop there; Compassion has also supported the stewardship of our finances in ways that maximize the impact of our investment. Our leadership believes that global poverty is best addressed by the local church and is best maximized the impact of our investment. But our partnership with Compassion doesn’t stop there; Compassion has also supported the stewardship of our finances in ways that maximize the impact of our investment.

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Q. And Southridge has found its unique global niche?

A. In our context, that’s meant partnering with Compassion with an increasing portion of our operating budget to support the Child Survival Program. In recent years, we’ve become the sponsoring agent for Child Survival Programs in Ecuador, Uganda and Indonesia. And now our own church members, particularly those who are involved in our Global Action Plan, have the opportunity to sponsor children who graduate from our partner Child Survival Programs.

So Compassion not only enables us to maximize our global impact corporately, they’re also helping us grow every member of Southridge into a global missionary!

You told me once that you experience Compassion’s ministry has been life transformational for you and your family. Will you tell us readers about that?

A. I’m not just the lead pastor of Southridge Community Church. I’m also a church member who’s seeking to live more like Jesus. So when our church introduced the Global Action Plan a few years ago, my wife and I were part of its first graduating class.

A core part of our journey as a family has been the sponsorship of our own Compassion child named Edgar. He, his mother, Brenda, and his younger sister, Yohanna, live in Guatemala. A few years ago,

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Cast Away NO LONGER

BY WILLOW WELTER
PHOTOS BY CHUCK BIGGER

AN ISOLATED ISLAND IN ECUADOR OFFERS A UNIQUE LOOK AT THE CHALLENGES COMPASSION FACES TO MEET CHILDREN’S GREATEST NEEDS WHEN FIRST ARRIVING IN A COMMUNITY.

Take a look around! Download Compassion Magazine for free on your iPad to experience an immersive video from this story.
The Island of Pampanal de Bolívar is covered in muck.

Near the Colombian border, the Ecuadorian village rises from muddy shores of an isolated Pacific inlet. Children in the village spend their days splashing and digging in puddles.

Their toys are the thousands of walnut-size crabs that skitter sideways through the mud. Their playground is a dirt soccer field with patches of soggy grass. Their public elementary school is a small concrete building where teachers sometimes discipline children with wallops across the face.

Their homes are balanced on stilts to keep out high tide and twice-a-month flooding. Their drinking water is rain collected from rusty metal roofs. There is no sewer system, so toilets are the marshy fields or holes in porches of homes. There is no trash service, so people drop garbage on the ground or burn it.

Because Compassion is new here, Pampanal provides a glimpse into the types of needs that require Compassion’s intervention, and the challenges that local church partners face — especially in the early days of the program — to help children. This is where the Church and Compassion need to be.

In 2011 Compassion formed a unique partnership with Stadia, a U.S.-based church-planting nonprofit. The alliance enabled Compassion to build a child development center and church, Roca de la Eternidad, in Pampanal last spring. Compassion’s church partner has begun offering Bible lessons, drinking water and nutritious food for kids at the center, which has indoor toilets and sinks.

“Offering Bible lessons, drinking water and nutritious food for kids at the center, which has indoor toilets and sinks.”

This Compassion church partners live in San Lorenzo, a city only 12 minutes away by motorboat — but a world away for most villagers, who have no money to get there. Even before the Stadia-funded church and Compassion center were built, Pastor Jorge spent more than a year cultivating relationships with villagers. During that time he earned their trust and began to address problems that affect them and their children, such as domestic violence and worklessness, a culture of exaggerated masculinity that encourages men to act aggressively.

Jorge began holding Sunday services at the new church. Most adults who come to church aren’t Christians, the pastor says. But they come. On a recent Sunday, Jorge preached in Spanish from his Bible as a dozen or so children ran around the church. About 50 women sat in white plastic chairs. The men were at a retreat that Jorge organized to teach nonviolent strategies for coping with frustration and relationship issues, which are in no short supply. One sponsored child’s mother bears a scar on her forearm, a harrowing reminder of her husband’s machete blade.

Diego Nicolalde, Compassion’s Partnership Facilitator for the region, says he suspects that every child on the island has been abused in some way. “We have to work — and we are trained to work — quickly in the program to solve these situations, because people just see these kinds of things as normal,” he says. “So this is the big struggle.”

In addition to struggling with violence, Compassion’s church partners struggle to keep the village’s children engaged in the church. This is where the Church and Compassion need to be.

When the community’s children aren’t at the child development center, many of them wander the village un supervised because their parents are busy gathering food. Women dig for mollusks, men fish for seafood to feed their families. They’re thirsty for clean water and attention. They run — many of them barefoot — across a ground littered with plastic bags, glass bottles and fishing nets to jump into the arms of Bertha, director of Pampanal Child Development Center. Others grab the hands of Pastor Jorge Tafur and his wife, Liz.

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healthy. Some kids’ legs are speckled with sores caused by insect bites that become infected when the children play in puddles or swim in the pond that families use for laundry water.

“We are teaching parents to really help the children not to walk and get inside the mud or to swim in those little puddles, which are full of dirty water,” says Bertha, the program director. “And also to use repellent and to wash their hands all the time before they eat.”

To treat sickness, some villagers go to witch doctors instead of the government-appointed physician who works on the island. “Our strategy is just to educate the community in many, many situations — like this one, the witchcraft, that they should not trust and follow these types of beliefs,” Diego says. Along with that education, Compassion provides proper medical attention for registered children’s ailments.

But illness seems far from children’s minds when they arrive at the child development center for songs, Bible lessons and lunch. The night before each program day, volunteers cook food for the 208 registered children. The next day, Jorge, Bertha and church volunteers load pots of the food onto a motorboat in San Lorenzo, along with bottled water and school supplies. Once on Pampanal, they haul them to the center. Because it is a work in progress, the center doesn’t yet have a kitchen. Jorge is still building trust in the community and fears break-ins if the building were fully outfitted.

Meeting the children’s immediate physical needs is a crucial first step toward realizing even bigger dreams.

Jorge, Bertha and Diego have many dreams for the children of Pampanal. Bertha hopes to bring a child psychologist and dental clinic to the island. Diego is working with the public school to allow children access to its proposed computer lab during Compassion program time. Compassion is encouraging local authorities to move forward with plans to build a high school.

“We are ready to face any challenge,” Diego says. “Whatever the Lord wants to bring to us, we are ready.”

The challenges here are great. And the changes happening since Compassion’s programs started in Pampanal last year are not always obvious when trudging in rubber boots through the mud.

TO REALLY SEE HOW THE CHURCH HELPS ANCHOR FAMILIES AMID THE TUMULT REQUIRES AN INVITATION TO ENTER THE HOMES OF THE FOLLOWING COMPASSION-ASSISTED CHILDREN.
The bridge of wood scraps to Claudia’s home is shaky. She wraps her arm around her 5-month-old, Dallana, and carefully steps over the loose boards. This walkway is a fragile barrier against the sewage and trash slopped below her home. It is also a picture of Claudia’s life before Compassion — a time when she did not take such tender care of her children. Her husband, a fisherman, was gone for long stretches of time and there was nobody to help her. Claudia was depressed — and began to drink.

As Claudia drank, Steevan, her 2-year-old, withered. He was malnourished, anemic and dehydrated. And Dallana, just 2 months old at the time, spit up all the milk she drank, creating a serious health crisis for the fragile infant. Just as Claudia sank deeper into despair, she heard about the Child Survival Program from her neighbors, who urged her to register the children. She did, and Yina, Compassion’s health specialist in the community, helped her take the children to a hospital. STEEVEN UNDERWENT ORAL REHYDRATION therapy and other medical interventions. He quickly recovered, but Dallana’s situation was more complicated.

After several hospital visits, X-rays and tests, doctors learned that Dallana’s stomach and small intestine were joined together. She needed surgery immediately, hundreds of miles away in the capital city of Quito. So Claudia left her other children with her husband and anxiously boarded a plane to Quito with her sick baby. “I cried. I cried so much during that time,” Claudia says. Yina traveled with Claudia and stayed with her during every tense moment. Claudia says Yina’s support gave her strength.

Today, after a successful surgery, Dallana is healthy and nursing well. Yina comes every Monday to support Claudia. She shows Claudia exercises for her baby, checks Dallana’s and Steevan’s health, and shows Claudia how to prepare healthful meals for her children. Each month Yina distributes food bags to Claudia and others in the program. Yina has also started a campaign to clean up garbage around homes every other week — an important step in helping keep away disease-carrying mosquitoes. Claudia, who quit drinking, goes to church to meet with other women for Bible studies and fellowship.

Elsa’s sparkly pink boots are a shining reminder of what can happen when a group of caring Christians rally around a child to protect her. They are a testament to the powerful presence of her sponsor, Amy Dierker — even though she is thousands of miles away in Ohio.

Elsa’s barrier against the grit and grime is also a testament to the months of committed care that pastor Jorge, his wife, Liz, and Jorge’s church staff have invested in Elsa and other children in her community. They know each child by name and invest their time in the community to see and address the children’s needs.
The home Elsa lives in, her grandmother’s, is crammed with nine people. Wooden stilts raise the home just enough to keep out the tide that fills the area under the house with about 5 feet of water each afternoon. Elsa’s mother and sister, Melanie, pictured here, share this look with her. Elsa’s healing and encouragement are possible because her sponsor has committed to pray for her and to send sponsorship support for her each month. But perhaps the most powerful encouragement is Elsa’s letters and photos from her sponsor. Elsa keeps her sponsor’s sponsor. What have you learned about his dreams, about what his family trusts in God and His Word. Can you share these with others — including to your sponsored child. 

As Christians who care about helping others, our efforts to reach out can have positive, limited or negative results. Our effectiveness may depend on mindsets or views of others and how to work with them. I believe this to be true in ministry as a child sponsor.

First, Continue to choose a biblical view of others. Effective, Christ-honoring ministry requires that we view others through the image in which God created them: His own. Galatians 3:26-28 says that we are all God’s children through our faith in Christ. “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” So, the biblical way to view others is as our equals, even as we serve them.

At Compassion, we strive to be trusted partners of local churches in the developing world with whom we ally to serve children. We believe that the future of our children will get you there.” In Lewis Carroll wrote, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.” In ministry relationships, it is crucial to communicate about the wisest path to reach a desired destination. It is also vital to understand the intended length of work and what can be achieved in that time. As these commitments are worked out, it’s equally important to deliver on them in a way that builds trust. Compassion focuses significant effort on the selection of church partners and the best ways to launch and manage those relationships. We talk openly about shared vision for the Church and how it will look when she’s vibrant and thriving. We establish clear accountabilities and agreements about the best ways to reach our common objective of releasing children from poverty in Jesus’ name.

Similarly, consider the child you sponsor. What have you learned about his dreams, about what his family trusts in God and His Word. Can you share these with others — including to your sponsored child. 

Second, commit to empowering others. Because you view them as equals through our faith in Christ, it is easier to think about how you can minister in a way that unleashes possibilities for others. Compassion seeks to empower pastors and staff in partnering churches to own and grow their ministries in their communities. It’s not Compassion’s child ministry, but the church’s. Through long-term partnership, our goal is to enable the local church to develop ministry vision, better leadership, greater ability to mobilize resources, and higher capacity to manage all of their church programs.

In your role as a sponsor, you can commit to empowering your sponsored child as you help her see and take hold of God’s promises for her life. Be real with your sponsored child about what his family trusts in God and His Word.

Third, begin with the end in mind. Lewis Carroll wrote, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.” In ministry relationships, it is crucial to communicate about the wisest path to reach a desired destination. It is also vital to understand the intended length of work and what can be achieved in that time. As these commitments are worked out, it’s equally important to deliver on them in a way that builds trust. Compassion focuses significant effort on the selection of church partners and the best ways to launch and manage those relationships. We talk openly about shared vision for the Church and how it will look when she’s vibrant and thriving. We establish clear accountabilities and agreements about the best ways to reach our common objective of releasing children from poverty in Jesus’ name.

Here are three choices I believe anyone can make to enable more effective ministry in any context. Whether you’re a major organization or a ministry team of one, consider these ideas as you reach out to others — including to your sponsored child.

Three choices for effective ministry

1. As Christians who care about helping others, our efforts to reach out can have positive, limited or negative results. Our effectiveness may depend on mindsets or views of others and how to work with them. I believe this to be true in ministry as a child sponsor.

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Compassion’s effectiveness depends on church partners — not just the frontline churches in developing countries who minister directly to children, but also churches in the U.S. whose leaders inspire their congregations to make sacrifices for children in poverty. These are some U.S. churches demonstrating the power of Christ:

**Pastor Albert Tate, front right, visits a child development center in Kenya.**

**Pastor Albert Never Leaves His Congregation Questioning Just How Important It Is To Help The Poor.**

“The Word of God is all about people,” Albert says. “It’s not about projects; it’s not about programs. It’s about people meeting Jesus.”

But Albert’s outreach hasn’t stopped in Kenya. His congregation has teamed up with Stadia, an organization that plants churches, with the goal of starting a church in every metro L.A. neighborhood. The congregation is also raising money to open a church and child development center in Ecuador through Stadia’s partnership with Compassion.

The conviction behind that message deepened when Albert traveled to Kenya not long after starting Fellowship Monrovia in January 2012. In one Kenyan community, Albert witnessed families scavenging in landfills.

“My mother is in her early 60s. She has had the opportunity to travel around the world, but she’s never been to the developing world, so she’s never been immersed in experiencing poverty,” Albert says. “I was able to see what my monthly donation would do to make sure kids weren’t on the front line of poverty. When we drove by it, there were grandparents digging for trash. That image blew me away.

“Kids were climbing on that heap of trash looking for food and looking for nourishment,” Albert remembers. “And one of our [trip] leaders … said those kids that are now there now know their fathers there, and those fathers saw their fathers there. So there was this generational poverty that’s been passed down. When we drove by it, there were grandparents digging for trash. That image blew me away.”

But he didn’t have to travel far to see some hope. “Just a few hundred feet away from there, you drive in and there’s a church there. Compassion International has partnered with them, and they’ve been able to build space for a classroom, for education. … I was able to see what my monthly donation would do to make sure kids weren’t on that pile of trash and make sure they would break the cycle of poverty for the next generation.”

After seeing the proof of Compassion’s effectiveness, Albert returned to Monrovia and hosted a Compassion Sunday that he called “A Miracle in Africa.” He spread out 256 child-information packs on the church stage and told his congregation he wanted every child sponsored by the end of the service. The church responded: All 250 Kenyan children found sponsors. “It blessed our church to be able to do such an amazing outreach for the kids in Kenya,” Albert says.

**Matt Keller**

**Next Level Church**

**FL**

**As The Lead Pastor Of A Growing Church With A Young Staff, Matt Keller Has Observed A Change Across The Church World Today.**

“It is all about relationally connected ministry,” says Matt. “That’s why an issue like global poverty is hard to tackle. It feels big and faceless. But Compassion has figured out a way to hammer global poverty in a personal, one-on-one way.”

Matt and his family began sponsoring a Compassion child about five years ago. “I was already a fan of the ministry. I loved the way it made missions real for my kids,” Matt says. “But after talking with a member of Compassion’s church team at a conference, I began considering what it would look like to engage my entire church family with Compassion.”

Next Level Church already had a missions strategy in place. The church supported missionaries in Kenya and Guatemala, so Matt was interested in exploring those countries further by sponsoring Kenyan and Guatemalan children. “I’d rather our ministry be a mile deep and an inch wide than the other way around,” says Matt. “When Next Level attenders think of global poverty and the lost, I don’t want them to think it’s out there somewhere where they can’t see it. I want them to think of a community and a culture. I want it to feel personal.”

So Matt’s church members began sponsoring children. While they prayed for and wrote letters to their sponsored kids in Kenya and Guatemala, Matt knew that not everyone would have the capacity or resources to take an international missions trip. Yet based on his own experience, he knew how powerful a missionary trip can be. So when Matt’s church had the opportunity to host the Compassion Experience in the church parking lot, he jumped at the chance.

The Compassion Experience is a mobile, immersive display that provides an up-close encounter with the sights and sounds of poverty through the perspective of a child. “It is as close to a real missions trip as you can get,” says Matt. “It is transformative. Yet I don’t think anyone knows how it would grip my family. My mother is in her early 60s. She has had the opportunity to travel a lot. But she’s never been to the developing world, so she’s never been exposed to real poverty conditions. When my parents walked through the

**Matt Keller with his sponsored child in Guatemala.**
PASTOR KEN BURKEY’S PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION ON A VISIT TO MEXICO IN 1994 HAS IN TURN AFFECTED THOUSANDS OF OTHER LIVES. “It’s a trip that changed me forever,” he says. During that trip to Mexico City, Ken and his church team worked with children living in both spiritual and physical poverty, he says. “First of all, in a city of 50 million people, the chaos, the poverty, the hunger, the sick were all around. It was very overwhelming to see the seas of people struggling to survive.”

The most heartbreaking scene unfolded when Ken’s team drove to a town constructed on a vast garbage dump. “It was as if we were on another planet,” Ken says. “The living were barely surviving, and many were dying of hunger as we tried to feed them. … None of the kids knew there was a world outside of the dump. There was no hope. It was not fair!”

That night, Ken wept in his hotel room. His internal struggle continued as he worshiped God with the community there. “These people were truly grateful and content. And obviously it wasn’t because of their material possessions or their career dreams. It came from within,” Ken says. “I learned two things. One, contentment only comes from God and knowing that we are His children and nothing else. Two, I am responsible to use the material blessings of my life, not to try to find contentment — because it won’t work anyway — but use those material blessings to help and serve those in need.”

And that’s what Ken has done. It wasn’t an overnight change, but he says that over the next few years, “My broken heart began to mess with my conscience.” He wanted his entire church to change.

Ken found a way to channel that value when he heard about Compassion from Jim Copeland, who attends Green Valley Community Church. As a Compassion Advocate, Jim volunteers to raise awareness about kids living in poverty and about Compassion’s ministry. Ken was interested, but it wasn’t until Jim returned from a sponsor trip to Bolivia with such a passion for what he saw there that Ken was persuaded to act. “I knew then we needed to partner with Compassion.”

Since then, Ken has traveled to several countries to see how Compassion changes lives. He’s blogged about meeting his sponsored children in Haiti and Burkina Faso. And his advocacy for Compassion has inspired his church to sponsor about 1,500 children. He says that Green Valley congregants discovered was that ending extreme poverty and serving the poor is not an event, a project or a trip, but a lifestyle where we’re simplifying our lives and changing our priorities to take care of the poor both locally and globally.

That understanding, Ken says, “has changed the question of how we use our resources, from ‘What do I need to give to help the poor?’ to ‘What do I get to give to help the poor?’ and ‘How can I simplify my life so that others can live?’”

“I went to Mexico City to help poor children, and what I discovered was rich children and my poor soul.” — Pastor Ken Burkey

THE POWER OF PREVENTION

Poverty increases a child’s vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. Compassion helps protect children from harm.

WHAT IS TRAFFICKING?

UNICEF defines child trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation.”

PREVENTION THROUGH COMPASSION

Compassion has child development centers in India, but not in neighboring Nepal. Because an estimated 5,000-10,000 Nepalese girls are trafficked to India every day, Compassion has increased advocacy in Nepal. As a result, the Nepalese Church has been educating, rescuing and restoring children.

In 2012, church leaders in Nepal:

- EDUCATED 2,997 adults and 5,344 children about trafficking
- RESCUED 185 trafficked children
- RESTORED 150 trafficked children to their families

HIGHLY VULNERABLE CHILDREN

To address critical needs, Compassion created an initiative to identify Highly Vulnerable Children. These are children with special needs, or those who have experienced neglect, abuse or exploitation.

Church partners advocate for these children to offer:
- foster care
- legal aid
- nutritional assistance
- shelter renovations
- trauma counseling
- medical help

FIND OUT MORE: compassion.com/LearnAboutTrafficking

THE PROBLEM IS BIG

- 1.2 MILLION children worldwide are trafficked each year.
- 168 MILLION children worldwide are engaged in child labor.
- $32 BILLION is made each year in the underground human-trafficking industry.
CHILDREN GAIN PROTECTION ALONG WITH LEGAL STATUS

Compassion and International Justice Mission are working with churches in Thailand to protect nearly 2,000 children in Compassion's program whose lack of Thai citizenship makes them more vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation and abuse.

Traffickers find their slaves by preying on the most vulnerable. Lack of legal status, closely tied to poverty, compounds this threat and also excludes a person from social programs. Some of the most vulnerable people live along the border between Thailand and Myanmar. They include hill tribes who have lived in the mountains between Thailand and Myanmar for generations, and refugees who have fled oppression and violence in Myanmar and now live in camps hosted by the Royal Thai Government.

Without citizenship, they are denied access to health care, permission to travel between districts, legal protection from abuse and access to education.

Since 2011, Compassion Thailand has been helping stateless children and their families to seek citizenship. Compassion Thailand and International Justice Mission work with local churches to determine whether these families are eligible for legal status and prepare documents to submit to the government.

While the effort is ongoing, it has already improved the lives of children such as 13-year-old Yutthasak. His family’s lack of citizenship had limited the children’s educational opportunities — some weren’t even able to attend secondary school — and restricted the family from traveling without government permission. With their newly acquired citizenship and identification, his family can travel freely, and the children receive the same educational benefits as other Thai students.

NATIONS MAKE STRIDES IN CUTTING POVERTY

Many countries working to reduce suffering by 2015 have made significant progress, a new report shows. But with 1.2 billion people still living in extreme poverty, there’s a lot to be done by next year.

In 2000, leaders from every country committed to reach eight Millennium Development Goals by September 2015. Each year, the UN issues a progress report. The 2013 report shows mixed results in regions where Compassion works.

A Few Findings of the UN’s Progress Report:

Africa
• Growth outpaces poverty reduction.
• Africa has the most child and maternal deaths.
• Overall, Africa has halted the spread of HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. But some regions saw increases in the diseases.
• Food insecurity is affecting other health goals.

Asia-Pacific
• The percentage of people living on less than $1.25 per day has fallen from 50 to 22 percent.
• The number of people without access to safe drinking water is down from 856 million to 466 million.
• The region appears unlikely to meet goals for eradicating hunger, reducing child mortality, and improving maternal health.

Latin America and the Caribbean
• Education coverage and access have improved.
• Gender equality is slowly progressing.
• Only a third of countries appear likely to reduce their infant mortality by 50 percent by 2015.

The number of annual deaths among children under 5 worldwide dropped from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012. But the promising trend doesn’t discount those 6.6 million who died.

Their main killers are pneumonia, preterm-birth complications, other childbirth-related complications, diarrhoea and malaria. And undernutrition contributes to 45 percent of deaths in kids under 5.

Preventing child deaths requires more than just a focus on children — it requires care for mothers, too. Compassion’s Child Survival Program combats child deaths by offering prenatal care, education and encouragement, nutritious food, spiritual nurturing and ongoing health care for mothers and their babies.

Here are a few ways that Compassion partners help prevent child deaths:

• The Child Survival Program teaches mothers the importance of breast-feeding. Children who are exclusively breast-fed for the first six months of life are 14 times more likely to survive than children who aren’t breast-fed, according to UNICEF.

• Compassion teaches mothers practical skills such as how to prevent illness, and also offers the chance for illiterate women to learn to read and write. Children of educated mothers — even mothers with only primary schooling — are more likely to survive than children of mothers with no education.

• Compassion church partners make regular home visits for hands-on, one-on-one training and encouragement. Trained workers monitor health and maintain records for each child and mother, ensuring that children are immunized against diseases. Early postnatal home visits promote healthy behaviors that reduce child deaths, according to the World Health Organization.

Hungry children are more vulnerable to disease and die at a slower rate than their well-nourished counterparts. Nearly half of all child deaths are caused by malnutrition. Children who aren’t breast-fed, according to the World Health Organization.

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ABOUT THE COVER: Jorman Andrés Becerra, a 7-year-old sponsored child, lives in the fishing village of Pampanal de Bolívar with his mother, Silvia, and two siblings. The family moved to the Ecuadorian island to escape pervasive gang violence and political unrest in nearby Colombia. After Jorman broke his arm last year, the family couldn’t afford medical treatment. But because Jorman is in the Child Sponsorship Program, Compassion was able to pay for his arm surgery. Now Jorman can write and play again because his arm has healed.

“COMPASSION SUNDAY”
TELL A CHILD
“I’m here for you”

JOIN IN
May 4, 2014

“I’M HERE FOR YOU.”
FOUR SIMPLE WORDS THAT CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

Children living in extreme poverty not only endure the pain of hunger and disease, but many have also come to believe they are worthless.

You have given hope to your sponsored child, and this Compassion Sunday you can give hope to many, many more.

Share Compassion with your church and encourage more people to say, “I’m here for you” to children who need to know they matter.

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