

## THE TRUTH ABOUT WORLD VISION

-V. K. Shashikumar

**MISSIONARY FINANCE:** How much money is collected? How is it spent? Who profits and who loses? The financial world is divided into 1) funds acquirers 2) funds utilizers

**1. Funds Acquirers:** Organizations such as World Vision, Catholic Charities claim to be secular charities often having 'who's who' in their boards. This helps them acquire funds. They have campaigns to raise funds during many disasters by running benefit shows, cricket matches and corporate events. They usually don't maintain ground force to serve the needy. They usually donate to organizations which are usually mission agencies. This way they are insulated from all the nefarious activities of various church groups and missionary workers. For example; during Indian Ocean Tsunami, World Vision and International Cricket Council (ICC-cricket.org) organized a Tsunamic benefit match wherein the proceeds would go to World Vision. The distribution of funds is at the discretion of World Vision who donate only to Christians.

**2. Funds Utilizers:** These are the mission agencies and churches with ground force.

**World Vision**, the world's largest Christian church mission agency, has traditionally been closely linked with successive American governments. The former US Ambassador for International Religious Freedoms, Dr Robert Seiple, was World Vision chief for 11 years till 1998 when he was picked by former president, Bill Clinton, to head the office of International Religious Freedoms. Around the period when Seiple was the president of World Vision, its vice-president from 1993 to 1998 was Andrew S. Natsios. He is now the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). For more than 40 years, USAID has been the leading government agency providing economic and humanitarian assistance to developing countries.

**World Vision's** focus is children and community development. It is involved in more than 162 projects in 25 states. It projects its community development programmes as "holistic development". This is implemented through Area Development Programmes (ADP). Each ADP works in an area that is contiguous geographically, economically or ethnically. These programmes provide access to clean drinking water, healthcare, education and setting up of income generating

projects. But infused with such development works is the spiritual component - Bible classes.

**In India**, World Vision projects itself as a "Christian relief and development agency with more than 40 years experience in working with the poorest of the poor in India without respect to race, region, religion, gender or caste." However, Tehelka has in its possession US-based World Vision Inc.'s financial statement filed before the Internal Revenue Service, wherein, it is classified as a Christian church ministry. In any case, its mission statement is self-explanatory: **"World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in working with the poor and oppressed, to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the Good News of the Kingdom of God."**

**Though** World Vision has consultative status with UNESCO and partnerships with UN agencies like UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR and ILO, the fact is that its financial records reveal that it has funded evangelical activities all over the world including India. World Vision uses its international clout and its close links with the US government through USAID to network with governments and corporate entities in the developing world.

**World** Vision has an ongoing channel of interaction with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII); in its 2003 financial report it states that "the Rural Development Department of the Government of Assam recognized World Vision India as a leading development agency in the state and has recommended that World Vision be the choice for receiving bilateral funds. The government has also sought World Vision's assistance in creating a proposal for US\$ 80 million for development work in the state."

**The** income and expenditure account for the year ended September 30, 2002 shows that its total income was Rs 95.5 crores, which included foreign contribution of Rs 87.8 crores. For an organisation that claims to be only involved in development and relief work, it is quite secretive about its positioning and exact nature of activities. When approached by Tehelka as part of its undercover operation for an interview, World Vision India's national director, Dr Jayakumar Christian, after having agreed to the interview backed out because he wanted copies of the fictitious Christian magazine that Tehelka claimed to be representing.

**However**, what goes unnoticed by the governments and the corporate world is World Vision India's evangelical missions as part of its development agenda. Proselytisation (conversion of faith) is an integral part of its provision of development services under its much-touted ADP programmes. Though none of the literature published by World Vision India even mentions its evangelisation missions, foreign publications of World Vision India proudly proclaim its "spiritual" component.

**Take**, for instance, World Vision New Zealand's report (4 September 2002) on the funding of ADP in Dahod, Gujarat. Under the head, "spiritual development" the report states:

"Held a vacation Bible school for 150 children from different villages. The children participated in games, Bible quizzes, drama and other activities. Organised a one-day spiritual retreat for 40 young people and a children's Christmas party. Each of Dahod's 45 villages chose five needy children to attend the party." In Dumaria, Banka district, eastern Bihar, "the ADP supports local churches by running leadership-training courses for pastors and church leaders."

**What** has an Area Development Programme (ADP) got to do with running leadership training courses for pastors and church leaders? Incidentally, World Vision New Zealand funds ADP programmes in the tribal pockets of India. The New Zealand Government's Voluntary Agencies Support Scheme (VASS) jointly fund the two-year project, the NZ government matching World Vision contributions on a 2:1 basis. There are many other instances of evangelical programmes run by World Vision India.

**In** the Gajapati ADP, situated in Gumma Block of Orissa's Gajapati district, a World Vision report admits that "Canadian missionaries have worked in the area for just over 50 years and today 85-90 percent of the community is Christian. However, local church leaders had little understanding of the importance of their role in community development. ADP staff build relationships with these leaders to improve church co-operation and participation in development initiatives." Here World Vision organised two training camps for local church leaders in holistic development.

**In** Mayurbhanj, again in Orissa, World Vision regularly organises spiritual development programmes as part of its ADP package. The World Vision report says: "Opposition to Christian workers and organisations flares up occasionally in this area, generally from those

with vested interests in tribal people remaining illiterate and powerless. World Vision supports local churches by organising leadership courses for pastors and church leaders.”

**In** India is active in Bhil tribal areas and openly admits its evangelical intentions: “The Bhil people worship ancestral spirits but also celebrate all the Hindu festivals. Their superstitions about evil spirits make them suspicious of change, which hinders community development. ADP staff live among the Bhil people they work with, gaining the villagers’ trust and showing their Christian love for the people by their actions and commitment.”

**This** being the case it is not surprising that World Vision India was honoured with the 2003 Mahatma Gandhi Award for Social Justice. This award is hosted by the All India Christian Council. Incidentally, Joseph D’Souza who was AICC’s President during that year also heads an evangelical network, Operation Mobilisation, in India. Operation Mobilisation, again, is an American missionary organisation. It was founded by Georg Verwer and today is a global ministry “committed to working in partnership with churches and other Christian organisations for the purpose of World mission.”

(SOURCE:[Hamsa.org/](http://Hamsa.org/) *The author is a noted investigative journalist for Tehelka. This article was prepared by him forIBNLive.com (the online arm of CNN-IBN, owned and funded by the Southern Baptist Church in the US) under the title “Preparing for the Harvest”, which IBNLive so far has not published as it exposes World Vision’s Christian missionary activities in India. Donors to World Vision India - Rs 256 crores collected in 2008 - believe it to be the premier NGO working in India for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. In fact it is the premier Christian missionary organisation working in India for the harvesting souls for Jesus. Since the killing of Swami Lakshmanananda and the resultant communal violence in Orissa in August 2008, World Vision’s funding and missionary activities have come under the scanner of the Home Ministry in New Delhi. -- Ishwar Sharan)*

**Somebody should bell the cat!**

**-Dr. Mrs. Hilda Raja**

I know about World Vision personally because many of my students were recruited to work in it. But invariably at the interview the

question which they asked is about "evangelisation". Even a friend of mine who had applied for a chartered accountant post in response to an advertisement, was asked not of his professional and knowledge skills but about evangelisation. He came home and shared this with me and wanted to know if World Vision was a purely a development organization or one for evangelisation. Poor fellow does not know that development is the cover up for its evangelisation.

At a public meeting I raised this issue in Chennai. I had even responded to Mani Shankar Iyer who stated that to his knowledge there is not a single Christian development agency involved in evangelisation. I reacted to that by citing the case of World Vision. It was published in the papers. I can cite quite a few examples. World Vision will not recruit a single non-Christian, no matter the competence. They will not even recruit a Catholic because they do not trust the Catholics.

They once offered one of my Catholic students a job provided she leaves the Catholic church and joins in a Protestant church. She did convert because she was in dire need of a job for financial support. Two Brahmins were converted to the Protestant church and placed in high official positions.

In fact World Vision looks out for Brahmin converts to make them show pieces. These head the various departments which is highly remunerative. This is my own micro-level first hand knowledge. So what will it be on the all India level?

World Vision has a narrow, myopic vision of the world where their main agenda is evangelisation. The government of India must be aware of it. I have been always advocating for a ban on foreign funds. China, France and so many countries will not tolerate what India not only tolerates but even abets. The fight against terrorism will be futile unless and until foreign funds for "development" are monitored and banned.

(Dr. Mrs. Hilda Raja is a retired professor of social sciences from Stella Maris College, Chennai (Madras). She is Catholic by religion and an outspoken critic of religious conversion as it is practiced by Christian missionaries in India.)

**Source: [www.crusadewatch.org](http://www.crusadewatch.org)**