

# CRISIS UPDATE

Moving forward in the face of challenge ► July 1995

## Why risk my son's life?

by Jennifer Myhre, Bundibugyo, Uganda

**O**ur first son Luke was born prematurely in the United States. It was a hard pregnancy. After long weeks of bedrest and medication, late-night trips to the hospital to stop labor, and the prayer support of countless friends he arrived safely. Our second child, we knew, had a 50% chance of also being premature. His birth, however, would take place in rural Uganda where even the basic medication and equipment, like oxygen and an incubator, were an arduous day's journey away. We had to consider the real possibility that we might not be able to stop early labor. If that *was* the case, he most likely would not survive.

What does faith mean in this situation? Is faith the confidence that God would give us a healthy term baby? Certainly I prayed and hoped for that, but should I expect it?

Well, Caleb Scott Myhre made his way into the world in the spartan surroundings of a mission hospital in Kenya. Let me share two insights gleaned by struggling to be faithful to our calling as missionaries to Uganda and as responsible parents at the same time.

**The risk is real** The risk we incur with our children is not theoretical. Living in primitive and isolated conditions in rural Africa, it is disturbingly, palpably real. This goes against the deeply imbedded American cultural norm of expecting a nearly risk-free life. Does faith mean the assurance of protection from that risk? Does God guarantee health and life and happiness for His children? I had confused faith with a presumptive optimism, a confidence that God would work all things for the good I deeply longed for. Then I lost three children by miscarriage and had to re-examine my understanding.

As I prayed for Caleb within me, I was tempted to feel that God owed me the favor of saving my baby. After all, I had given up family, friends, material comforts, medical career, all to serve him here in Uganda.

In Hebrews 11, a long list of believers are commended for their faith. Yet not all of them fit our conception of "triumph" - they were beaten, jeered at, imprisoned, mistreated and misunderstood, even killed - in spite of their faith.

If this is true, then I must accept the reality that serious illness and death are possibilities for my children here. The risk is real, and faith does not erase it.



Dr. Jennifer Myhre with Luke and Caleb Scott at home in Bundibugyo.

**The ultimate goal** If the hoped for object of faith is not a healthy baby, what is it?

The author of Hebrews points to Abraham as an example. In one of the most disturbing stories of the Bible, God commands Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham obeys, and as he raises the knife God stops him, satisfied that Abraham's commitment to his Lord is so all-encompassing that he would not withhold even the one thing most precious to him, his son.

What could be worth risking the life of my son? Only that for which God risked, even lost, the life of His own son - a life lived in the incomparable joy of

**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of things not seen. The ancients were commended for this. . . By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his one and only son.**

Hebrews 11: 1-2, 11

**AFTER  
DARKNESS**



**LIGHT!**

\$255,795.66

His presence. A life that never ends.

Jesus is the object of our faith, not health or success or happiness or even life itself. He endured greater suffering than I could ever know, for the joy of saving me. Following Him must be the absolute priority of my life, even if it means putting my precious, irreplaceable children at risk. He gives me a glimpse of how much He loves the Babwisi of Uganda by showing me that their lives are worth even losing Caleb.

In the final accounting, there is no risk to obedience - not even death will separate Caleb from the love of God. He promises that our apparent loss is truly eternal gain. ■

I am the true vine,  
and my Father is  
the gardener. He  
cuts off every  
branch in me that  
bears no fruit,  
while every branch  
that does bear fruit  
he prunes so that  
it will be even  
more fruitful

John 15:1-2

## Finding grace and mercy in time of need

by Clyde Godwin, Chairman of the  
Board, World Harvest Mission

**T**ill the New Era trouble, World Harvest has been like the beautiful Crepe Myrtle tree in our backyard. Recently it grew well at the top, but because the roots of the tree were not strong enough to sustain the tree, it began to lean and had to be held in place by a rope. The cure was simple. After the spring flowering, I pruned it back. Since then the tree has quickly and firmly rooted itself and the top-heavy leaning is gone. Now instead of a leggy, lopsided tree, the Crepe Myrtle is straight, flourishing with new growth.



Through the New Era experience, God is pruning us. With every cut, He is enabling us to send down roots deeper into the gospel. Every clean stroke of the pruning hook guides us into dependence on Christ and prayer that seeks, in the end, God's glory, that we might do the greater works of Jesus (John 14:12). ■

## Spending forever with a friend

*Correspondence from a supporter*

by T. M.

**I** received the Crisis Update in the mail today. It was a reminder to reply to your first letter of May 23rd., so I am sitting down immediately to respond.

Although I received the notice of financial loss before the end of May, I didn't open the letter for more than a week. When I read it I was hit by feelings I needn't describe to you. You either had them yourselves, or other donors have shared them with you already. (These feelings were not warm and uplifting).

Two things happened however, that have put that emotional response into perspective for me.

### 1) My dear friend Jan's new life.

Jan has gone to church all her life. She would have responded positively to any scriptural question on whether she knew the Lord. She has recited the historical Christian creeds many times at church services. Well, my friend Jan understood her need for Christ and accepted him into her life on Memorial Day! The Lord had been calling her for some time, but Jan at last understood the gospel while reading a pamphlet by Jack Miller, published by World Harvest entitled, *Completely Forgiven*. Thank God for every word of that pamphlet.

**2) Reading Philemon** I was reading Paul's letter to Philemon and these words hit me: "If he has done anything wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back - not to mention that you owe me your very self."

The New Era problem is awful, in more ways than one, but I owe you. I am sending what I can financially. I'll be spending forever with my dear friend because of your ministry. ■

## Light through the windows of heaven.

by Paul Miller, Associate Director

**W**hen we first undertook this campaign of raising \$1 million, we shook our heads and said, "God will have to open the windows of heaven, and perform some real miracles". He has! The first miracle occurred when the staff of the

