

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL: WHAT IS IT UP TO IN SOUTHERN AFRICA?

By Jeffrey Marishane

To many of us, the presence of World Vision International (WVI) in South Africa and several other countries of our region may appear to be just one more humanitarian aid agency. But a quick look at its history, activities and links with mainly the U.S. military and intelligence community in the recent past and different parts of the world suggests a sinister role. This, obviously, is in stark contrast to the largely false image it has cultivated about itself as a "Christian Third World Relief and Development" agency or a non-governmental and non-profit making body helping to make "people independent of charity", as its regular expensive advertisements in various British and South African publications put it.

Founded in 1950 by Robert Pierce, a US evangelical priest under the pretext of providing assistance to orphaned children during the height of the Korean War (1945 - 1953), its chosen field of activity is a mixture of missionary work, relief aid and the teaching of self-reliance skills for small-scale enterprises especially among ^{the} rural population, displaced people and refugees. In 1981, World Vision raised a total amount of 123 million U.S.dollars for its overall work. Two thirds of the funds were raised in the U.S. itself and the rest in South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The organisation raises more money per capita in the latter two countries than it does in the U.S. while its South African subsidiary is the fastest growing of all its members. (1) In 1983, World Vision's own publications reported an income of 108 million U.S.dollars. Though its staff is reluctant to reveal the identity and contribution size of its donors, it is generally believed that apart from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the bulk of its funds come from ^{wealthy} U.S. businessmen and their families as well as their private foundations. In a statement released in Lusaka in August 1988 Tom Houston, World Vision's current International President announced that his organisation was spending 4 million U.S.dollars in South Africa to groom a new leadership and develop self-reliance skills within the black community for a post-apartheid South Africa. But World's Vision's activities in other parts of the world raise very serious questions about its real motives and goals in South Africa.

Unlike most other private voluntary organisations from the United States and other western countries, World Vision does not see the need to make a distinction between humanitarian aid and missionary work. Whereas a U.S. National Council of Churches' Church World Service (CWS) worker who tries to make use of aid to convert recipients is clearly violating agency rules, for a World

Vision worker this does not present a problem. The two go hand in hand and the search for converts among aid recipients is therefore permissible. As a result thereof, its history is filled with accusations of using relief and in particular food aid as ^{an} instrument of coercion to win converts to charges of collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as well as tacit support to dictatorial and repressive regimes around the world.

When it began to operate in Vietnam in the mid-60's, World Vision decided to put its large headquarters across the street in front of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. Writing in ^{the Christian Century} Michael Lee, U.S. journalist states that World Vision was openly supportive of U.S. intervention in South East Asia and enjoyed the support of the U.S. Army as evidenced by its use of American military trucks and helicopters during its field programmes. "The CIA", Lee added, "used information obtained by the group's field workers as a part of its normal intelligence function". (2) In fact, this was not the first time that such a strong accusation was made against World Vision. On 1 August 1975,

the National Catholic Reporter (Kansas City), basing itself on a New Asia News dispatch published in the Far East Economic Review^{held} reported that World Vision was getting "million dollar annual subsidies from the US government for highly valued political and military intelligence."

Though largely unsubstantiated, misplaced and repeatedly denied by World Vision, such charges cannot be taken lightly. In fact, there are enough indications in the events of the period, subsequent developments, World Vision's methods and style of work since then and today to suggest that those initial charges are true.

In addition to making use of US Army trucks and helicopters during its field programmes, it is public knowledge that at least 75 per cent of its operations in Kampuchea during the period of US intervention in South East Asia was funded by the US Agency for International Aid (USAID). The latter⁺ was set up by Washington in 1961 to serve as a cover after the CIA's role in the US Bay of Pigs' invasion against Cuba was exposed. Since then, USAID has come to play an extremely active and negative role in furthering the interests of US foreign policy under the guise of "aid programmes"

During the height of the Vietnam War, USAID, together with the CIA, US Information Agency (USIA)/US Information Services (USIS) and military units of the US puppet regime in Saigon used to form part of the so-called Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), the structure which was entrusted with the task of planning and carrying out a comprehensive counter-insurgency programme against Ho Chi Minh's National Liberation Front (NLF).

The programme included the combination of the development of self-reliance skills with the provision of relief aid to peasants, displaced persons and the rural poor, police training, psychological warfare and paramilitary operations by both uniformed small units and ununiformed ones in the form of vigilante groups and secret death squads. The programme had a "carrot and stick" approach and therefore a dual purpose. Nevertheless, its long-term goal was to reshape the local societies of South Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea in the image of the United States and along lines that would be of major benefit to US imperialism. While those who cooperated with US interests were rewarded through hand-outs from the "humanitarian aid" projects those who opposed them were to be politically isolated and ultimately eliminated through imprisonment, torture and plain murder. At the height of this, a total of 26 369 innocent civilians suspected of having sympathies with the NLF were assassinated and 33 350 suffered torture and

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... mutilation while imprisoned in US-built 'provincial interrogation centres' during the notorious Phoenix Programme between 1966 and 1969.

It is important to note here that ^{it is} ~~that~~ was at the height of the Vietnam War, and almost exactly the period in which the 'retired' Major-General John K. Singlaub, served for two years (1966 - 1968) as commander of the US Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force, also known as MACSOG, in South Vietnam. Though he denies it and would only say that his presence there was related with other 'security matters', Singlaub has obviously played a major role as both one of the founders and on-site commanders of the Operation Phoenix. After Vietnam, Singlaub went on to become chief of staff of the US Command in South Korea until 1978 when he was dismissed by former US President Jimmy Carter after he publicly voiced his objections to the US Government plans to reduce its troops in the occupied territory and openly criticised it for its delay in developing the neutron bomb.

Thereafter, the next major move which Major-General John Singlaub (who is also chairman of the right-wing US Council for World Freedom) made was to become chairman of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) as well. The WACL is a world-wide terrorist organisation founded by the dictator regimes of Taiwan and South Korea in 1966 with CIA funds and which has former Nazis, fascists, Latin American vigilante and death squads leaders as its most prominent members and receives open support from the Reagan Administration. For instance during the 1984 WACL Conference, ^{the} US President sent a message which in part says:

"It is an honor to send warm greetings to all those gathered for the 17th Annual Conference of the World Anti-Communist League in San Diego.

The World Anti-Communist League has long played a leadership role in drawing attention to the gallant struggle now being waged by the true freedom fighters (Nicaraguan Contras, UNITA, MNR etc) of our day. Nancy and I send our best wishes for every future success".

Some two years after attending his first WACL in 1980 Maj.Gen. Singlaub, whose experience as an 'expert' in unconventional warfare dates back to his career as an officer in the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) - forerunner of the CIA - during the Second World War was to expose the terrorism which is inherent in US tactics of warfare against the national liberation movements and progressive governments when he described 'unconventional warfare' as follows:

"The term 'unconventional warfare' includes, in addition to terrorism, subversion and guerrilla warfare, such covert and non-military activities

as sabotage, economic warfare, support to resistance groups, black and gray psychological operations, disinformation activities and political warfare".

During the contragate enquiry in the US Congress, Maj.-Gen Singlaub himself admitted that as the chairman of both the WACL and the so-called US Council for World Freedom (USCWF), he used to receive not just the greenlight but also guidance of the White House and US National Security Council for his activities in support of the Nicaraguan contras. This was after the US Congress ^{had} decided to cut off official aid to them in 1984. The link man in this plan was the now disgraced Lt. Col. Oliver North. As it has already been made public, part of this covert aid has found its way to both UNITA and the MNR through a complex arrangement made between the apartheid regime and the CIA in which South Africa, in exchange for Saudi Arabian oil, provided funds, weapons, air transport, pilots and other support to the Nicaraguan contras via Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras. Since he became chairman of the WACL, Singlaub has been held responsible for the wide proliferation of vigilante bands and death squads in Central America, Southern Africa and the Philippines. In the Philippines, he is reported to have played an active and leading role in organising armed vigilante bands in both Angeles City, the home of the Clark Air Force Base and Olongapo, the site of the Subic Naval Base to persecute ^{harass} and ^Λ opponents of the US military presence there.

According to a statement made by Professor Miles before the US Congressional Subcommittee Hearings on Human Rights in Nicaragua in June 1976, the man who used to supervise CORDS projects in South Vietnam between 1966 - 1968 went on to become USAID Director for Nicaragua. As expected, he was engaged in projects of a similar nature there. And just as in South Vietnam, the USAID projects in pre-revolutionary Nicaragua had as their target those areas of actual or potential major guerrilla and insurrectional activity. Nearer home Ted ^(Doubt it?) Morse, Director of USAID in Zambia since 1986 was 'recalled' to Washington in April 1988 under suspicious circumstances. Soon after this, he surfaced as coordinator of USAID 'humanitarian' assistance to the Nicaraguan contras in cooperation with the various 'private' aid networks active in Honduras and the other Central American countries. Ted Morse was replaced as USAID Director by Cap Dean, alias Captain Leslie Dean, a veteran of the Vietnam War. Several other USAID staff members in Lusaka, including some Vietnam veterans, are strongly believed to be CIA agents.

Looking back on the counter-insurgency programmes he has helped to supervise in the three South East Asian countries most directly affected by the US intervention Douglas ^{Blair and,} ^Λ a former CIA Chief of Station noted that:

"All of this was done under the formal rubric of refugee emergency assistance and resettlement, and of rural

development, in order to conform to AID categories of approved activity. In actual fact, it constituted the civilian front of an unconventional war which could not have been prosecuted without the aid program"

Not even John Gilligan, Director of USAID during the Carter Administration could deny the role of his agency as a cover for CIA activities and channel for its secret funds. This, of course, is in addition to the fact that since they are both agencies of the US government, they basically pursue the same aims and serve the same interests, even if under certain circumstances and particular periods of history they may differ over the means. In an article written by George Cotter for the Christian Century, Gilligan was quoted as saying:

"At one time, many AID field offices were infiltrated from top to bottom with CIA people...The idea was to plant operatives in every kind of activity we had overseas - government, volunteer, religious, every kind."

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To be sure, there is nothing_A to be found in these admissions. For many years now, several governments and leading politicians considered to be hostile to US interests have been accusing the USAID of being a front for CIA activities. This has since been confirmed by former CIA officers such as Phillip Agee and Victor Marchetti. What is most revealing about the above admissions is that unlike the latter two, it is being made by people who, as far as it is known, have not parted company with the major tenets of US foreign policy.

In both Vietnam and Kamp^uchea, the reports further say, World Vision worked only in those projects which were approved by USAID and therefore had to follow its rules. This included the obligation to submit regular reports about its operations to USAID and the provision of humanitarian aid and relief to only one side of the conflict. To rub salt into the wound, it is also_A ^{reported} that a picture of Nguyen Van Thieu, the puppet ruler of South Vietnam at the time, used to be prominently displayed at the World Vision headquarters in Saigon. The picture was autographed "to my good friend", the Director of World Vision there.

Since the Reagan Administration assumed office in January 1981, the use of USAID as both a cover for CIA activities and an instrument of US foreign policy continued on an unprecedented scale. In fact some time before, the Republican Party Platform had made it quite clear to those who still harboured the illusion that US assistance somehow pursues purely humanitarian aims when it stated:

"America's foreign economic assistance is not a charitable venture... United States foreign economic assistance... should only be extended when it is consistent with America's foreign policy interests. America's foreign assistance programme should be a vehicle for exporting the American idea."

During the same month that the Reagan Administration took over the reins of political power in the United States, the Pentagon also found it necessary to enunciate its policy and approach to the role of US foreign assistance within its counter-insurgency programme. For this purpose, the Pentagon issued the US Army Field Manual 100 - 20 which, among other things, openly identifies "foreign aid programs, development assistance, humanitarian aid and security assistance" all together as part of "US Operations for Domestic Defence in Foreign Countries."

Just at a time when it might have been thought that world public opinion has forgotten about its links with the USAID, CIA and US Army during the cruel Vietnam War, World Vision found itself involved in yet another scandal, this time in Central America, where it has been operating since 1976. In 1980, the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, after consultation with the Honduran authorities appointed the Evangelical Committee for Development and National Emergency (CEDEN—its acronym in Spanish) to coordinate the distribution of U.N. aid to refugees in Honduras, a country with a predominantly Catholic population. CEDEN was at the time the main indigenous Protestant umbrella body involved in humanitarian and relief aid and representing the various denominations in Honduras.

The following year in 1981, most aid agencies, CEDEN included, decided to stop registering refugees with the Honduran regime because of suspicions that their names were being reported to the Salvadoran death squads directed by Major Roberto D' Aubuisson, a leading light in the WACL and to the Honduran security and intelligence services. In reprisal to the decision taken by the aid agencies, the Honduran regime began creating all sorts of difficulties and putting obstacles to impede their humanitarian work, including direct interference in the running of the refugee camps, the arrest and subsequent expulsion from Honduras of several members of CEDEN and Caritas, the international Catholic aid body respectively on the basis of false and misleading reports circulated secretly and widely by World Vision staff that they ^{are Marxists, Communist in their work and} sympathise with the Farabundi Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN), the leading guerrilla movement in El Salvador.

As it happened during the Vietnam War, World Vision ignored the decision taken by the other aid agencies and continued to register the names of refugees with the Honduran regime. This led to a situation wherein the other aid agencies were on the one hand criticising the Honduran regime for human rights abuses

World Vision on the other continued to strengthen its already close links with the mainly US-trained Honduran intelligence ^{services} and security police.

For example by 1982, it emerged that World Vision had a curious team as its staff in Honduras. The man in charge of the 14 refugee aid workers under World Vision employment, the Reverend Mario Fumero, was both a Pentecostal preacher who once directed World Vision's 'love brigades' crusades and a fiery anti-Communist Cuban traitor assisted by about six camp co-ordinators. Four of these were 'former' soldiers in either the Honduran ^{or} Salvadoran Army. According to the testimony of Father Fausto Milla, a Honduran priest who once worked with refugees but was later forced to go into exile in Mexico by death threats two of these, while parading under the cover of reservists in the Honduran Army were each actually members of the Division of National Investigations (DNI), the Honduran security police and the Public Security Forces (FUSEP), the national police.

As if this were not enough, Fumero is known to have been a close friend of Colonel Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, chief of FUSEP from 1980 until 1982 when he was made a general and promoted to chief of staff in the Honduran Army. A graduate of an Argentine military college where one of his instructors was Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla, now serving a life sentence for ordering the murder of many hundreds of Argentine patriots by secret death squads, Gen. Alvarez has the dubious credit of being the creator of the Honduran death squads and has been described by other observers of the Central American situation as "the CIA's errand boy". In fact, his meteoric rise to power ^{is} directly related to the assistance ^{to him} given by some leading figures of the WACL, including Col. Bo Hi Pak, the right-hand man of the self-styled Rev. Sun Myung Moon and president of CAUSA International, the political arm of the Unification Church (Moonies), who gave him a 50 000 US dollars cheque at the launch of his so-called Association of Progress for Honduras (AFROH) on 14 January 1983.

It was through Col. Alvarez as chief of FUSEP that Rev. Fumero managed to get an appointment with the then Honduran Minister of Defence and after discussions, was allowed free and safe passage to the common border areas between Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua for World Vision staff. This was at a time when such access was being denied to the other aid agencies.

Things came to a head in May 1981 when ~~one~~ evening two Salvadoran refugees, fleeing the genocidal regime in their country, arrived in Limones No. 2 camp, one of the refugee camps run by World Vision along the Honduran border with El Salvador. Almost immediately, the camp co-ordinator reported their names to the local authorities. The next day, Honduran soldiers came in a jeep and took away the two refugees for interrogation. Some two days later, they were found dead with torture marks on their bodies by the Lempa river which forms the border line between Honduras and El Salvador.

The above turned what has all along been a simmering pot of tension into a full rapping battle between many of the aid agencies on one side and World Vision on the other, and with CEDEN and Caritas taking the lead in denouncing the tragic incident. As a result thereof, World Vision was forced to relinquish direct control of its refugee camps for some time, though it continued to carry out its proselytising activities in them until February 1982. But before it could do this, World Vision had made sure to take some retaliatory measures against CEDEN in particular.

A few days after Geoff Renner, a World Vision staff member in Costa Rica had sent a misleading cable to the US National Council of the churches of Christ (NCCC) talking of a "direct turnover of all World Vision operations in Honduras to CEDEN" ^{and} promising that World Vision's regional staff would attend the forthcoming CEDEN extraordinary assembly as observers to support the content of a letter to be sent to Honduras confirming the above, World Vision staff in Honduras engineered a successful internal right-wing coup d' etat against the liberal-minded leadership of CEDEN towards the end of January 1982. In the aftermath of this Noemi de Espinoza, the director of CEDEN and about 55 of her staff and field workers were forced to resign en masse and the body was taken over by a highly conservative leadership. Once under the control of the new conservative leadership, CEDEN decided to break off its ties with the World Council of Churches and announced that henceforth it would take donations from only two sources: World Vision and USAID. ⁽⁴⁾ At the end of the day Eugene L. Stockwell, then Associate General Secretary of the NCCC and now Director of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was left wondering "whether the purported support of CEDEN was based on prior knowledge that CEDEN was going to be in very different hands soon anyway". ⁽⁵⁾

Despite denials to the contrary, the conduct of World Vision staff prior, during and after the extraordinary assembly is highly questionable and would seem to indicate that this was in fact the case. First, there is the complete silence which World Vision maintained in ^{the} face of accusations that the many press reports slandering CEDEN as Marxist, mismanaged and incompetent emanated from its Honduran staff; secondly three World Vision staff members, namely ^{Dr.} Lee Huhn, Benjamin Esparza and Rev. Miguel Alvarez are reported to have violated their status as observers and either addressed or made comments in the assembly and finally the attempts made by World Vision's headquarters to brush aside this serious meddling in the internal affairs of an independent organisation by acknowledging this simply as "some mistakes" and "initial ineptness" on its part.

In defiance to the takeover of CEDEN by the conservative leadership and their expulsion, Noemi de Espinoza and her supporters decided to form a new indigenous aid agency, the Commission for Development and Emergency (CODE). The new body, which by 1986 had over 50 programmes in four regions of Honduras, including 20 in the border areas with El Salvador represents 13 denominations and maintains regular contact with the Roman Catholic Church's Delegates of the Word. From its inception, CODE challenged CEDEN's style of work and in particular, its proselytising activities among aid recipients. Inevitably, this led to an even more serious tension between the two bodies.

It was not long before the UNHCR had to intervene, removing World Vision from the camps along the border with El Salvador. By March 1982 the Honduran regime had to reluctantly accept CODE as the official distributor of UNHCR aid while World Vision transferred the last of its refugee camps to the new CEDEN in November. This was after the UNHCR had sent a delegation to review the whole refugee situation in Honduras and evidently found that the charges against the undue involvement of world Vision staff in ousting Noemi de Espinoza and proselytisation among aid recipients have some basis.

In June that year, the Honduran office of another international humanitarian aid agency issued a three-page memorandum based on reports by several other aid groups accusing a World Vision camp co-ordinator of having handed over the two murdered Salvadoran refugees directly to Honduran soldiers. The memo further charged that:

"-A World Vision worker in Colomoncagua is misinforming the military, accusing the workers of other organisations of being collaborators with the guerrilleros;"

"-Many of the world Vision field workers originally worked for the DNI (Division of National Investigation) and FUCEP (Forces of Public Security);"

"-If the refugees (in the Limones camp) are too sick to work, they are denied their food rations and/or threatened with deportation to Salvador;"

"-The refugees express their constant state of insecurity because of the attitudes and threats of members of World Vision";

In addition, the memo mentions a world Vision staff member with the name of Ruberto Gregorio Javier, a right-wing evangelical Protestant minister employed by World Vision to "carry out evangelical programs" as having "said that if the refugees cooperate with W.V. they will live well, if not they will be expelled because 'we have pull with the Honduran military.'" *The response of World*

Vision's headquarters was to issue a 47 - page report merely denying these charges through a deliberate distortion of the issues raised or evading them by giving elusive answers in a manner which can only be described as using the 'plausible denial' method. This includes the letter which its former International President, W. Stanley Mooneyham, wrote in a response to Eugene L Stockwell's expression of serious concern about the activities of World Vision worldwide. In denying the very serious charges on World Vision's links with the CIA, Mooneyham simply dismissed them as "the lowest and cheapest criticism which could be spoken against anyone, requiring no courage and no intelligence, for it can neither be proved nor disproved" and in addition stated that his organisation has "never been aligned with, knowingly used by, had any agreement with or worked alongside any such agency as the CIA".

For anyone familiar with the workings or methods of the western intelligence services and the CIA in particular, World Vision's denials and protestations are just not convincing at all. In fact, they only serve to reinforce the suspicions. What this article has tried to show is that for World Vision to be accused of working for the CIA, it does not have to be that direct and formal. As one Canadian Anglican official put it, at World Vision:

"You are dealing with people whose culture and way of life (involves) moving with elites and embassy officials. I have no doubt about their information feeding into a CIA pipeline, without it having to be all that direct. What you 're dealing with is the style and the way of life of right-wing evangelical Protestantism"

What is even more strange is the deliberate attempt by World Vision's former International President to side-step the real issues by calling attention to a letter which Geoff Renner wrote to the Evangelical Ministerial Association (AMEN) assuring critics of World Vision's purported dedication to the ministry of Christ among the poor and needy. AMEN is a body which brings together conservative pastors under the wing of World Vision and whose purpose, among other things, is to initiate and organise seminars and workshops for youth leaders. The events are mainly addressed and run by World Vision's staff and have a very narrow and limited focus. This is in addition to their content being highly critical of liberation theology and ecumenism. *After the... an anti-communist side and having*

the Honduran incident, the next major but not so much published blot linking World Vision with U.S. foreign policy interests was in Southern Africa. When Mozambique began to buckle under the triple burden of drought, famine and the cruel war of destabilisation carried out by the South African-sponsored MNR terrorists, it found itself having to turn to the western countries for economic assistance. The United States was willing to provide this but in line with its position that "foreign aid is not a "giveaway" but an indispensable tool of U.S. policy", demanded a price for this. The price for this was that the Mozambican government had to agree to reach some sort of rapprochement with Pretoria and at the same time allow various western organisations to operate in its territory. Foremost among these was World Vision and Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Since then, World Vision's operations in Mozambique are financed by USAID.

To be foisted on a sovereign and independent country in such manner is not only despicable, but is also an odd way to assist the poor and downtrodden. Not even its announcement that it has rejected an offer made last year by Thomas Schaaf, head of the so-called Mozambican Information Office (MIO) in Washington to meet MNR representatives in Mozambique can dispel these suspicions about World Vision. As far as one can see it, its refusal to meet with MNR representatives has more to do with the need to avoid the unnecessary embarrassment of being seen as having too close an association with ^{the} MNR at a time when the Mozambican bandit group had through its own actions exposed itself to the whole world as a truely terrorist group controlled from outside and without any popular support inside Mozambique. The above was followed, among other

cases, by the capture of a Ghanaian vessel that was secretly smuggling weapons into Ghana in an attempt to topple the Government of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings by the Ivory Coast authorities in September 1986 after a tip-off. Very soon ^{in the world} it transpired that the ship, called Hercules One, belonged to a Ghanaian exile group led by Lieutenant General Joshua M. Hamidou, former Chief of Staff of the Ghanaian Army and now Regional Director of World Vision International based in Nairobi, Kenya. Lt. Gen. Joshua Hamidou is also Vice-President of the so-called Association of Military Christian Fellowship (AMCF) for the Africa region, which has about ten ^{African} countries represented ^{in it}. The AMCF is largely a US-Taiwan-South Korean-sponsored body which brings together right-wing military officers from the armed forces of such dictator and repressive regimes as Taiwan, South Korea, Chile, Paraguay, South Africa and Zaire to share experiences and exchange information on the national security doctrine and plan strategies on how to implement anti-communist evangelical crusades *throughout the Third World.*

The claim once made by Stanley Mooneyham in 1980 that World Vision "does not work directly for change in power structures" *but instead it* ^{serves} *to* "avoid political entanglements" in the face of so much evidence to the contrary can only serve to fuel more suspicion on the real motives and goal of its proselytisation activities. While writing these misleading words, Mooneyham was heavily involved with Bill Bright, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker and others in organising the 1980 "Washington for Jesus" march. Publicly paraded as a rally to bring Christ's message to the U.S. capital ~~the~~ rally, as John Jones Jr. the communications director of Bright's Campus Crusade was later to admit, represented a huge political ploy to unseat liberal Democratic Party legislators and replace them with fundamentalist right-wing Republican ones in the U.S. Congress. That the march was a political event rather than a merely religious one was perhaps illustrated most eloquently by "Pat" Robertson, its co-chairman when he stated: "We have enough votes to run the country. And when people say "We've had enough", we are going to take over".

The suspicion on World Vision's involvement with groups which play a specifically assigned role within U.S. foreign policy interests under the cover of religious philanthropy extends to sharing speaking platforms, sources of funding and training and exchange of information and expenses with bodies such as the Living Bibles International (LBI), Christian Broadcasting Network/ Continental Broadcasting Corporation (CBN/CBC), Wycliffe Bible Translators/ Summer Institute of Linguistics (WTB/SIL) etc..

For instance in April 1987 the LBI held its International Council Assembly in

Nairobi, Kenya. Several prominent members of World Vision attended the Assembly. Luis Palau, an Argentinian-born right-wing evangelist preacher known for his close ties with Anastasio Somozo, the former Nicaraguan dictator, was invited to address and participate fully in the Assembly. This was his first-ever trip to Africa. Previously, he had toured various Latin American countries and offered "Presidential breakfasts" on television and was seen standing approvingly with military dictators.

These included the former Guatemalan dictator, Efraín Ríos Montt, with whom he became great friends and embraced before a crowd of 70 000 people in a stadium and called a "genuine born again Christian" in 1982. Ríos Montt has been a convert of the Eureka, California-based fundamentalist sect, Gospel Outreach and a member of its Church of the Word Since 1978. It is symptomatic of his rule that when he came to power on 23 March 1982, he declared a state of emergency, suspended the constitution and imposed a strict press censorship. It also is symptomatic of his regime that during his first year in office (March 1982 - March 1983), about 4 000 poor Indian and Ladino peasants were killed by the Guatemalan security forces, 40 pastors were made to disappear, 35 assassinated, 10 imprisoned without fair trial and many others forced to go into exile because of their opposition to the massacres carried out during Ríos Montt's almost successful counter-insurgency programme. This is no mere accident, Ríos Montt is a graduate of the US Army's special warfare schools at Fort Bragg near Fayetteville in North Carolina, Fort Gullick in the Panama Canal Zone and a former director of studies at the Inter-American Defence College in Washington.

Luis Palau comes from a wealthy Argentinian family and was recruited to the United States to be groomed and trained in mass media techniques, especially 'hard sell' advertising methods. This was done with the deliberate aim of enabling him to put across his message, which is essentially a gross distortion of the Christian faith, with much efficiency to his unsuspecting audience. This brand of Christianity preached by Luis Palau around the world is made up of carefully selected bits of the Bible quoted out of context and used in a distorted way.

During his stay in Kenya, Luis Palau is reported to have preached to a crowd of about 4 000 people at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church and after urging them to "dream great dreams, plan great plans and pray great prayers," told them that "the lord is saying to Africans, South Americans and Asians to obey the great Commission of taking the Christian Gospel to other parts of the world." This show of 'Third Worldism' on the part of Palau is not accidental nor a passing phenomenon. It is being preached in the face of a clear and open recognition of declining support for the church in Western Europe, the US and Canada and of a deliberate decision and concrete plans by right-wing evangelist and fundamentalist groups to reverse this trend by winning more and more members from among the established or mainstream churches, non-Christian believers and the 'Bibleless tribes' or the 'unreached peoples'. ^{mainly in the underdeveloped world.} Their determination to achieve this is so strong that any means used is acceptable, even if it means engaging in activities which are inimical to the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of a country and people. World Vision shares this line of thinking with the other major evangelical fundamentalist groups.

For example Tom Houston, the current International President of World Vision seems to share Luis Palau's concept of "Third Worldism" and thereby strenghtens our suspicion\$ on the role of his body in U.S.foreign policy when he called attention to the need to recruit people from U.S. ethnic minorities and mainly underdeveloped countries to be used in evangelisation work in "Third World situations" since "the message they could convey would be correspondingly more sensitive and acceptable than that of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) missionary."

Houston further wrote that:

"If we can even take some steps in this direction, then the whole image of the United States in the world would begin to change"

For its part the Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARC) Newsletter (7), a World Vision publication, stated:

"There is a strong belief that Latins cannot only reach those countries where Spanish and Portugese are the national languages, but also to move into countries where First World missionaries are no longer welcome."

Previously Ted Engstrom, the President of World Vision, member of the Alberto Mottesi Evangelistic Assiocation Board of Reference and Paul Landrey, the Division Director of its U.S. Ministries are known to have shared the same platform with Luis Palau at the Hispanic Congress of Evangelisation held at the Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, California in October 1985. The Congress was organised by Alberto Mottesi, another Argentine-born fundamentalist evangelical preacher who in May 1986 told an audience in Santo Domingo that the problems facing Latin American people are not political nor economic. Rather, "the problem in the whole region...is a deep spiritual one and only Jesus Christ has the answer." Mottessi was Chairman of the Congress and Paul Landrey acted as its Vice-Chairman. The other special guests on the speaking platforms included Bill Bright, founder and President of the Campus Crusade for Christ and also a member of the Alberto Mottesi Evangelistic Board of Reference, Efrain Rios Montt and others.

The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) is another body associated with World Vision through joint seminars, workshops and conferences held regularly at its CBN University. CBN is a US-based organisation with about 65 offices/missions around the world including one in the nominally independent South African bantustan of Bophuthatswana. In 1985, it had an operational annual budget of 230 million US dollars. The major portion of these funds is donated by "sympathetic corporations" and wealthy families as well as their foundations rather than CBN's individual viewers. Its head is Marion Gordon "Pat" Robertson.

an ex-U.S. Marine Lieutenant, Yale-educated lawyer and a leading right-wing televangelist known for his open support for the Reagan administration, CIA and repressive regimes in various parts of the world. Robertson's ideological position is perhaps most clearly reflected by his assertion that "free enterprise is the economic system most nearly meeting humanity's God-given need for freedom." (8)

Pat Robertson is on record for having once described the CIA as "a company of angels" with a couple of potential CIA agents watching over him after a CIA officer sent from the U.S. Embassy helped CBN television crew retrieve a film confiscated by the Pakistani intelligence service. A week had hardly passed after Rio Montt was brought to power by a military coup when Robertson urged his television audience to "continue to pray, if you would, and don't stop, round the clock, because he's going to need all of our prayers continually". When Guatemala's image on human rights in the US was in tatters ^{because of the cruel massacres carried out by his Army}, Rio Montt sent Francisco Bianchi, his top deputy to brush it up in June 1982. Once there, he held a dinner meeting with Frederick Chapin, the US Ambassador to Guatemala, Edwin Messe, Jerry Falwell and on other trips with Bill Bright. After this, donations in the form of money, food, medicines, tools, tents etc. began to arrive in Guatemala to be used by his Army in its campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of the poor and landless peasants during its counter-insurgency war.

CBN is also reported to be among the biggest contributors to the CIA-trained and sponsored Nicaraguan contras. It is listed along with groups such as the Florida-based Gospel Crusade, Friends of the Americas and other right-wing political and fundamentalist organisations as having mobilised more than 17 million U.S. dollars worth of aid in money, food, medicine, military uniforms and equipment to the contras along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border after the U.S. Congress cut off official aid to the Nicaraguan terrorists in 1984. Almost 7 million U.S. dollars worth of supplies were collected by Operation Blessing, CBN's relief arm and transported by the U.S. Navy through Project Handclasp, a U.S. government programme to send relief goods to conflict and disaster areas abroad. In addition, 3 million U.S. dollars in cash was donated by Operation Blessing to the so-called Nicaraguan Patriotic Association, a body whose vice-president, Juan Sacasa, is a prominent member of the ^{so-called} Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the largest contra group. Another group which benefits from CBN contributions is a joint CIA-FDN outfit called the Nicaraguan Refugee/Relief Fund (NRF). According to Edgar Chamorro, former director of FDN, the NRF was formed at the initiative of the CIA as a means of circumventing the U.S. congressional ban on both direct and indirect funding of the contras by the Reagan administration. (9)

Another important indicator of World Vision's role as a tool of U.S. foreign policy interests hiding its real intentions behind the cloak of religious philanthropy are its links with the Wycliffe Bible Translators /Summer Institute of Linguistics (WTB/SIL) through the California, Pasadena-based Fuller Evangelical Association (FEA). Founded by Charles E. Fuller, a California citrus fruit farmer in 1943, the FEA serves as a conduit for channeling U.S. corporate funds to what it calls its "outreach ministries", including World Vision, WTB/SIL and the Enterprise East Africa Team. The FEA is directly linked with the Fuller Theological Seminary, also founded by Charles E. Fuller in 1947 and a major beneficiary of the Berry (Lowell W.) Foundation. The Fuller Theological Seminary's Board of Trustees boasts of prominent figures from the U.S. military industrial complex like Stanley Burris, President of Lockheed Missiles and Space Co.; Paul Crapuchettes, Vice-President of Litton Industries; J. Lawrence Kulp, President of Teledyne Isotopes; Sean E. Stephan, Vice President of Chicago Bridge and Iron Co.; Herbert J. Taylor, Chairman Emeritus of Club Aluminium Products Co. as its members. (10) Early in March 1988 Roberta Hestenes, chairperson of the World Vision International board was invited to be a special guest speaker at a major conference organised by the Fuller Theological Seminary Lowell Berry Institute for Continuing Education in Ministry.

Long before World Vision started operations in South Vietnam, the WTB/SIL was already engaged in a vast "pacification" programme financed by the U.S. government among the Montagnard and Nung ethnic groups. The "pacification" programme involved the use of bi-lingual missionary work among these two groups with the final aim of incorporating them into the counter-insurgency war of the U.S. puppet regime against the Vietnamese patriots led by Ho Chi Minh. As a result of this, more than one third of the nearly 900.000 Montagnards recruited into the CIA's paramilitary groups were *used* as cannon fodder in the Vietnam war.

Before the war could end, it had come to light that the WTB/SIL had received a

total of more than 160.000 U.S. dollars from the U.S. Alliance for Industrial Development) was soon thereafter exposed as a CIA-front organisation in Indo-
to do its pacification/missionary work among the Montagnards. The US Alliance for Industrial Development
china. (11) → *mcnd*

During the 1970's and the 1980's, WTB/SIL was back into action engaged in highly controversial and questionable activities. These involved forceful conversion of indigenous tribes to its brand of Christianity in several Latin American countries; links with both U.S. Army units and those of the local armed forces; spying for the CIA; smuggling as well as serving as an advanced guard for transnational corporations such as the Shell Oil Company in their search for oil and gas and helping them to clear the indigenous tribes off the deposits sites. This culminated with the killing of Chester Allen Bitterman^{III} after he was kidnapped by the April 19 Movement (M.19) guerillas in Colombia on 7 March 1981 while working

as "God's special envoy to Colombia, sent there on a secret, short-term mission" by the WBT/SIL's. During the same year Jaime Roldos, then President of Ecuador, cancelled a contract with WBT/SIL. But then World Vision moved in to fill the gap left behind by WBT/SIL's departure. Since then, World Vision's activities around that country have been followed by harsh criticism made by the local press, church and human rights organisations. Some of the critics have gone so far as to accuse it of being an "outpost of imperialism" in Ecuador. In recent years, World Vision and the WTB/SIL were to be found working together in the Atlantic coast area of Honduras where Nicaraguan contra bases and refugee camps are located. The above cases simply makes one wonder about what are the real motives of World Vision's presence and activities in both South Africa and the southern Africa region.

End

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