

***Reaching Children in Need*** by Patrick McDonald with Emma Garrow,  
Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, UK (2000) (25 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

## **1. Children at Risk**

Children and childhood are at risk as never before. At the turn of this millennium almost one-third of the world's population are under the age of 15; that is 1.8 billion children. Of all children born today 80 percent live in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and some parts of Europe where extreme poverty is prevalent. (Page 21)

## **2. Children at High Social Risk**

It is anticipated that between 1998 and 2025, 4.5 billion children will be born. As 97 per cent of world population growth takes place in the developing world, multitudes of children will endure a life of high social risk. (Page 21)

## **3. 100 to 200 Million Street Children Worldwide**

Given their transitory nature and the different terms used to define a street child, there is a perpetual disagreement about the actual number of children on the streets at any one time, so reliable statistics are hard to come by. Nevertheless, it can be said that somewhere between 100 and 200 million children worldwide are at least working, if not living on the streets. (Page 23)

## **4. Fear of Street Children**

A Baptist pastor from Costa Rica, once started a shelter for children in San Francisco de dos Rios near the capital of San Jose. He told me how he had come to understand the issue of fear in these children. When they came to his shelter, they were each given their own mattress and their own blanket and there in the safety of his little Baptist church the children slept peacefully and, mostly, for a very long time. Almost without fail, however, most of them would wet their mattress on their first night in the church, as in the safety of shelter they finally relaxed. (Page 24-25)

## **5. Death of Children and Worse**

Between 1985 and 1995, 2 million children were killed, 5 million were disabled or brain damaged and 12 million lost their homes as a result war in their countries. In 35 lands, children were conscripted into the armed forces. (Page 29)

## **6. Children Worriers**

300,000 children are fighting in armed conflicts in at least 31 countries. (Page 30)

## **7. Children Workers Worldwide**

UNICEF estimates that there are between 100 and 200 million child workers worldwide. (Page 31-32)

## **8. Supervised Children Workers Laudable**

Children are cheaper to hire than adults, and in many countries it is culturally acceptable for children to be employed in some way. Few would complain about a child earning pocket money from an after school or weekend job, or even about a child working alongside his or her parents, learning their skill. Work in itself, where it is well monitored, can serve a healthy purpose, and where it does not interfere with a child's education it can be laudable. But when children are forced to work to survive, are exploited, placed under insufferable conditions, and denied education and healthcare by people or circumstances, then the world must protest. (Page 33)

## **9. Children Exploited Worldwide**

An estimated 7 Million children work in Brazil.

As many as 300 million children under the age of 15 are being exploited for their labour Worldwide. (Page 34)

## **10. 80 Per Cent of Girls are HIV Positive**

The Center for the Protection of Children's Rights in Thailand estimates that 80 per cent of girls under 17 who have been rescued from brothels are HIV positive. (Page 39)

## **11. State of the World's Children**

It is estimated that 33,000 under-five-year-olds die from preventable disease every day. (*The State of the World's Children, [UNICEF 1998]*) That is 25 children every second we live. UNICEF estimates that 2 million children die each year because they have not been immunized. (Page 43)

## **12. Sex is Strongly Associated with Death**

By 1994 alone, approximately 1.5 million children had been infected with the HIV virus. The next generation is learning that sex is strongly associated with death. The AIDS virus has made sex a potential killer, while pregnancy often results in death either

through abortion or risk to the impoverished and malnourished mother. Babies born to HIV positive mothers may be abandoned as the shame and fear that accompany the disease causes the breakdown of family relationships. One-third of the children born to HIV-positive mothers are infected with the virus, and of those, 80 per cent die before they are five years old. As more women become infected with the virus, so do more children. What is more, children born to sufferers of AIDS will in time become orphans. In Brazil, for example, it is estimated that 27,000 mothers will die of AIDS by 2002, leaving their children at risk and displaced. Eight per cent of those children will be infected themselves. With such a poor start in life, those who do survive have little chance of a comfortable life. Orphaned children have no one to advocate for them, no one to provide healthcare or ensure they get an education. They are unlikely to inherit land or money to establish them in life. They are alone. (Page 44-45)

### **13. Malnutrition Accounts for Millions of Children's Deaths**

Malnutrition accounts for 55 per cent of all child deaths each year, which means that 17 million children are dying every year because they are hungry and therefore susceptible to death from usually non-fatal diseases. Malnutrition is more than just suffering from hunger. If the body fails to receive vital micronutrients a child will either die or develop serious problems. (Page 45)

### **14. AIDS in Zambia**

Every day 400 to 500 Zambians are infected with the AIDS virus. (Page 47)

### **15. Evil Triumphs if good men do Nothing**

As the eighteenth-century philosopher, Edmund Burke, said, "It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph." (Page 49)

### **16. Church Involvement Huge for Children's Needs**

According to Dr. Peter Brierley, Director of the Christian Research Association, there are at least 2.3 million local congregations across the world. A vast number of these are as yet unmobilized in the area of children in need. The potential for growth in terms of church involvement is huge and at the rate of church growth itself is high, especially in the Two Thirds world, the opportunity for new ministries to emerge is increasing. (Page 69)

### **17. Working with Children at Risk**

Establishing a professional childcare project among children in need is not dissimilar to establishing a small business. The death and closure of most projects can be traced

back to the mistakes made in the first couple of years of their existence. Exact figures are unknown. but my own research and consultation around the world has led me to believe that the majority of new projects, perhaps as much as 75 per cent of indigenous ministry, collapse within the first 24 months. The stress and strain of pioneering work with children at risk more often than not gets the better of the pioneers' goodwill as, overworked and disillusioned, they acknowledge that the conditions for their project were just not right. To begin work with children in need is a tall order, but to do so in isolation, with no useful contacts or experience, is nothing short of a miracle. (Page 72-73)

## **18. Networking with people in training children**

Viva Network has sought to develop multiple networks for issues of a local, continental or global nature by bringing together people whose sphere of influence fits into that context. There are also networks of people involved in training childcare workers, people working with sexually exploited children and people working with children at war.

Networks are not about leaving people out, but about ensuring that the right people are talking to each other. (Page 104)

## **10. Network Hub for Childcare Information**

It is only through an active network that information can be passed on to where it is needed. I envisage one-stop shop in each country for children's projects; a hub of information, a place both those who have information and those who need information can go; a meeting place with one meeting room for 'bakers' and another for 'butchers', a forum for frontline case workers and another for site administrators.

One point of centrality within the Christian childcare community has been established, the task of information sharing becomes infinitely easier. To be effective, such a hub would need to be staffed by 'networkers', a new breed of Christian childcare workers able to serve as diplomats, facilitators and convenors—people like Josefina Gutierrez in the Philippines. A networker would respond quickly and appropriately, sorting information into relevant categories based on their knowledge of the childcare community. (Page 104-105)

## **20. Strategic Planning Needed for Christian Childcare**

Whether geographically (locally, regionally or globally), topically (for example, street children, children at war) or terms of performance-related issues (training, accountability, recruitment), a crying need exists for strategic planning of Christian childcare. What's the plan? (Page 107)

## **21. Empowering**

The Christian movement is one of the largest civic movements on earth today and its congregations worldwide have three things in common. First, they share a heritage of working among children in need that dates back to the early church. Second, they share a faith with those whose current commitment to the requirements of children in need is phenomenal. While children rarely have been the focus of international missions, at a grass-roots level Christian efforts have almost always been substantial. Third, they share a command from God, through the Bible, to care for the needs of others, especially children.

These are three good reasons why the local church should be involved in responding.  
(Page 110)

## **22. Childcare First Church Planting Second**

Two of the people on my shelf of heroes are Georgina and Stuart Christine, church planners in Brazil. They went to Brazil solely to set up a church and had little interest in children other than their own. However, as they researched their new community they discovered a need for pre-school and after-school clubs for local children. These poor and often bedraggled kids were invited to come along for a simple snack, a bit of education and a lot of fun. The results were astonishing.

‘Our credibility soured and our level of contact with local people was unprecedented,’ says Stewart. “For every child we helped we also touched 30 adults. We didn’t have any funding or much idea of how to go about what we were doing, but Georgina constructed a curriculum and we began.’ Georgina adds:

We suddenly had a presence in the community every day of the week and not just on Sundays. Soon we were involved in every aspect of community life and were called on for advice, prayer and practical help. The childcare programme became the first in a long string of community – programmes which we developed as they were required – programmes such as teaching adults to read, helping pregnant mothers, educational reinforcement and much more.

Eight years after moving to Brazil, more than 1,000 children have been through the Christines’ programme and 15 churches have been planted.

‘When I came to San Paulo I wanted to start churches,’ Stewart explains. “I did, but I realized that the best way to preach the gospel was by meeting people and helping them where they were. The children were the most obvious people to start with, and the result has been staggering.

Stuart now shares his model with other groups worldwide. His approach is an obvious one, but it would seem that it is still largely ignored by some church planters and agencies. This is more than an opportunity lost—it has an effect on the very credibility of Christian witness. (Page 115-116)

### **23. Holistic Response to Children**

A holistic response to local needs is the loudest way of saying that we care. Discipleship only becomes meaningful when it leads to service. God gives every man and woman the inherent ability to care for children, and childcare provides an obvious entry point to holistic ministry for a local church. What is more pertinent than hungry, hurting children dying on our door steps? How can we preach a loving God if we leave these children without a family? As an African proverb states. “A hungry stomach has no ears.” (Page 116)

### **24. Viva Network and Liaison Groups for More Information**

Viva Network is a constituency-based network organization and faith in Christ is a prerequisite for membership. We readily acknowledge that many non-faith-based groups are doing excellent childcare work and we hope to serve more and more as an effective liaison or bridge to these groups to increase meaningful exchange of information and responses. (Page 155)

### **25. Opportunity to Extend His Kingdom**

It seems to me that Christ provides each generation with specific challenges and opportunities with which to extend his kingdom. These opportunities represent potential turning points for the church and her witness to the world, and I am convinced that the challenge of reaching the multitude of children in need is just such an opportunity. I believe that opportunity is ours to grasp by the power of Christ and his Holy Spirit. If not us, who? If not now, when? (Page 161-162)