



Seeing Beyond

HIV/AIDS

V I S I O N L E D D



Mobilizing churches...
Transforming communities



A Transforming Vision

The burden of pain hanging over Africa is not shifting. Experts on the pandemic agree that the HIV/AIDS crisis is no longer just a development issue – it's a global disaster.

TearFund, the leading Christian development agency in the UK, reports the number of children orphaned by AIDS is nudging towards 15 million. Many of these girls and boys have not only lost their biological parents, but grandparents, aunts and uncles as well. Children, some as young as ten years old, are left to fend for themselves.

My heart breaks for these little ones who've had no choice but to watch parents, aunts and grandmothers die leaving them alone to navigate through the pain, confusion and loneliness of AIDS.

When we began Visionledd in 1999, I was shocked at the condition in Africa. Only one question came to my mind – what is the Church doing?

The answer is simple: Not enough.

The Church is the most transformative force available; yet the Church is like a sleeping giant, seemingly paralyzed by inaction. To effectively impact change, the Church must become a Mother Teresa.

I heed the words of the apostle Paul addressing the body of Christ: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26 NIV)

Pastors in Africa are overwhelmed. In mentoring them I see the same devastating challenges surface again and again – congregations reeling from grief, an abundance of funerals, grannies struggling to care for orphaned grandchildren, children without basic care and AIDS sufferers who barely have the most basic necessities of life.

We, the Church world-wide, have no choice but to ramp up our intensity and move forward in terms of our capacity, our scope of operation and our range.



I have never been more determined. Visionledd continues to extend our transforming focus to four specific areas:

- 1. Bring the message of justice and righteousness to churches throughout the world as well as an increased awareness of HIV/AIDS*
- 2. Comprehensive HIV/AIDS education and the tools to respond to the pandemic*
- 3. Infrastructure development and care for those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS*
- 4. Volunteer mobilization to provide home-based care to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS*

Friends, we have gained substantial traction in southern Africa. God has enabled us to help thousands of churches in Africa and our care for orphans and vulnerable children has doubled.

This has been possible through your gifts and the exciting sponsorship opportunities through WOW (Women for Orphans and Widows).

We cannot let up. I have a vision to see 1 million orphans receiving care by 2015. **I believe it's possible**, but only as the Church rises up and takes its rightful place as a leader against the pandemic.

Never cease to pray. We are the hands and feet of Christ – together we can mobilize churches and transform entire communities, bringing hope to the fatherless and the widow.

Jim Cantelon
Founder and President, Visionledd



Kathy and I believe God's call for us is clear: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
(James 1:27 NIV)



Mobilizing Churches... Transforming Communities

Visionledd is built on the vision of a world where the Church globally act as the hands and feet of Jesus. We see men, women and children who love God faithfully ministering to orphans, widows and those caught in the devastating turbulence of HIV/AIDS. Visionledd, through preaching and teaching, reaches out to churches in North America, Central America, Europe and Africa. Each time we meet with church leaders and church communities, we begin to light the fire of change, helping churches understand the issues and work out a plan to contribute to community transformation.

We call this mobilization.

Our prayer is that when church leaders, community leaders, government organizations and faith-based organizations begin to work together, true transformation can happen – transformation

in communities of wealth and privilege and in communities of poverty and need.



Above all, Visionledd exists to build the capacity of church and community leaders to be the hands and feet of Jesus in practical and relevant ways for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

We have made a significant footprint in Africa and among many churches in North America. Men and women are getting excited about the possibilities and seeing transformation happen before their own eyes.

Our goal is to become partners – not donors. In every community, we work alongside the people, as brothers and sisters. Our model of mobilization has already had significant success and we look to multiplying its effectiveness by using the same template in



communities around the world that are struggling with HIV/AIDS.

Visionledd is called to motivate, educate, equip, empower and facilitate connections between those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and those that can help. **We are working so those struggling for life can live and experience the love of Jesus through His Church.**

WOW is a ministry of Visionledd calling North Americans to reach out to orphans and widows. WOW focuses on transformation. Through practical service like caring for the sick, orphaned and widowed in their homes and providing food, housing and economic opportunities to sustain life, WOW supporters are helping to transform entire communities.

WOW is the heartbeat of Visionledd – men and

women throughout the world, are sharing their love, their resources, their time and their prayers to reach out to entire communities affected by HIV/AIDS. WOW gives men, women and their families the opportunity to engage in a partnership with a community – even visiting the community personally, praying with a young mother who has just discovered she has AIDS, providing food for an orphaned family, or helping to construct a school or community care centre.



The synergy between Visionledd and WOW works to mobilize and transform entire communities! We walk alongside the people, bringing them back to the central teaching of Jesus: justice and righteousness (Isaiah 28:16, 17). Our prayer is that the Church – worldwide – would take the lead in reaching those who are struggling with the effects of HIV/AIDS.



As leaders begin to pray, teach and reach out, people within the community begin to take action. These community members then incorporate practical acts of service into their daily lives, becoming the salt of the earth. In communities of desperate need, Christ's love through the hands and feet of His servants are transformed by hope and new opportunities.

There are unlimited practical ways that WOW community partners impact communities – by providing essential food in times of desperation; by

building community care centres and schools that help educate the entire community; by drilling a well and providing a community with a safe water source; by praying, teaching and sharing with men and women who are dying; by helping women, men and young people within the community learn job skills that will help increase the economic stability within the community.

The extraordinary love of Christ is being poured out by ordinary women and men committed to taking the mandate of Christ seriously.

In a world of incredible medical advances on the AIDS issue, it ever remains the hearts and lives of children, now orphaned, and mothers, now widowed, who pick up the pieces of life. Jim and Kathy Cantelon are voices calling us not only to remember but to provide life-giving support to lives so tragically ripped apart so they can heal. It's as prophetic as Old Testament prophets had in mind.

-Brian C. Stiller, Board Chair for Visionledd
President, Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto



The Church acting as the Church

In James 1:27 we read that “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

What is the role of the Church in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis?

It’s not that complicated.

Worship in God’s eyes – worship that cannot be criticized – is to care for those who are unable to care for themselves. Worship is looking out for the vulnerable. **Worship is bucking the wisdom of our world and reaching out to those who are weak and vulnerable.**

The impact of HIV/AIDS is far reaching. Nine thousand children, women and men will die today from AIDS. In highly infected communities, death is a daily occurrence. Children are orphaned multiple times, losing their father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt and uncle. Many children shoulder

the burden of caring for their dying parents even though they are only children themselves.

Local churches are ill-equipped to shoulder the overwhelming burden of care. They see the face of death every day and the uncertainty of – what next? It’s not uncommon for pastors to have 2 or 3 funerals a week while spending countless hours counseling the bereaved.

While pastors try to counsel the bereaved, a community of orphans and widows living in pain needs individual care. Much of this practical care falls in the arms of dedicated church volunteers. These home-based care workers are the unsung heroes of the pandemic, the soldiers in the trenches who see the scourge of HIV/AIDS in homes and the face of sickness and death every day.

This is love in the purest sense – volunteers walking house-to-house doing chores, helping with cooking, providing spiritual encouragement and doing whatever they can to shine a little



Katondo home-based care volunteers, Kabwe, Zambia

light in their dark lives. If only there were more volunteers. Many home-based care volunteers are needy themselves, some are on the brink of exhaustion.

and righteousness to their congregations. And from there, the army of church volunteers can move out with a clear and compassionate mandate of encouragement and love.

Often governments and funding agencies fail to understand the power that exists within churches.

Each church is personally linked to orphans and widows affected by HIV/AIDS – they are the closest to the issue. The Church is a wealth of potential, but HIV/AIDS is still the disease of the poor and churches in the poorest regions of the world have little access to the resources they need to serve the suffering.

Visionledd invests in the local church. Pastors receive mentoring and are partnered with mature Christian leaders. Once pastors are equipped, they are able to cast a renewed vision of compassion



Visionledd has begun this process in several regions of Zambia, Malawi and South Africa. The model is working – we just need the resources to expand.

One of the biggest challenges facing Visionledd and our work among African churches is the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS. Reinforcing the traditional stigmas linking HIV with promiscuity further alienates those with HIV and discourages people from taking HIV tests.

Sadly, there is still a gap between what is preached and what is acted upon. Many pastors are acting

on their own sexual impulses and grieving the Holy Spirit while fragmenting their congregations. With training from experienced Christian leaders, African pastors can learn to talk openly about sex and provide leadership with integrity.

The Church in Africa has a wealth of potential. But it needs to be mobilized.

With the partnership of the North American Church, vital prayer and continued hard work on the field, the Church can rise up and confront the greatest orphan and widow maker in history.

But it starts with the body of Christ truly living-out its identity. Visionledd is building a network of churches that are influencing change. It's a network that will have a sustainable and powerful impact on the world.

Working alongside pastors, Christian leaders and home-based care workers, Visionledd gives support and encouragement to communities affected by HIV/AIDS. In North America we are raising a body of faithful partners who are standing beside communities affected by HIV/AIDS.

What does that mean?

Most people living in poverty survive on less than a dollar a day. But financial resources are just a beginning. We have so much we can share. Our nations are rich in knowledge. Farmers, nurses,

doctors, teachers, builders, engineers, dentists, bookkeepers, computer scientists and gifted men and women share their knowledge in communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Our vision is to partner churches with communities so that they become intimately acquainted with the needs of that community. The Church in North America can then respond by sending the right people, the right resources and the finances that will impact the community for Jesus Christ.

Few people even own a book! Imagine what can happen when a child receives their first book of Bible stories? Imagine what can happen when a widow receives a book of the Psalms? Imagine what can happen when a teenager from North America prays for a young person in Africa?

Our lives are indescribably richer when we care for the orphan and widow – when we personally engage in caring for the child who has no parent, the woman who is dying and without a home. Even a little can do much.

In summary, our vision is to get churches on their feet, acting in response to God's call to the vulnerable. Our prayer is that churches will begin true partnerships – one body working towards the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth where the Church is truly living in justice and righteousness.

Visionledd is a leading responder because of its unique design of leveraging local churches in Africa to take care of their own. This method gives Visionledd significant scope and reach that it otherwise wouldn't have been able to fund or manage. The most exciting element is that Visionledd is capturing the interest and imagination of people who can really help further the impact of the organization - and that involvement will touch the lives of many.

-Laurie Lowe, Visionledd Board Member

Visionledd works to see churches become like Mother Teresa, working among the poor in selfless devotion to Christ.



Churches Mobilized

There are several ways churches can get involved right now:

1. *Mission trips*

Visionledd offers a variety of overseas experiences including vision trips for men and women; teaching opportunities for pastors and teachers within African communities; church mission teams to engage in community work and specialty work for professionals to impact a community on a short-term basis. By forging relationships with North American churches, indigenous pastors are able to tap into longer-term relationships they can draw on – especially when times are difficult. WOW and Visionledd offer trips that not only change African lives but the lives of those who travel from North America.

2. *Prayer*

As people from around the world rise up and pray, hearts will change, the Church will come together, doors will open – and most importantly, orphans and widows will know the peace of Christ that passes all understanding.

I believe that Visionledd is truly “led” by a pure and clear “Vision”, whereby God’s agenda is allowed to supersede our own. Our prayer is that even just one more life would be saved through our humble efforts to motivate and enable the African Church as a caregiver and partner with God’s Holy Spirit.

*-Doug Mckenzie,
Visionledd Board Member*

3. *Financial Support*

Visionledd is funded by private donors who have chosen through special or monthly gifts to help mobilize churches. WOW’s community sponsorship program links donors with a specific community, helping them overcome the hurdles HIV/AIDS presents. Each year churches participate in a special Christmas Party and Patch Party for communities affected by HIV/AIDS. To find out how you can get involved, call Visionledd today or visit our web site at www.wowmission.com.



Transforming their lives... and yours

Short-term missions are life changing. A woman cannot pray with a widow dying of AIDS and not be changed. A young man can't hand-dig a foundation for a community care centre without understanding the importance of a simple, brick school house. A teen can't hold a child dying of AIDS without being reminded of their own privilege.

Visionledd believes transformation happens when people engage and interact. Through WOW and visionary trips through Visionledd, communities in North America are getting to know real people with desperate needs in regions affected by HIV/AIDS. We encourage a long-term relationship between communities. We help churches partner with specific communities. Each relationship is unique, designed to transform lives.

"Visionledd has the ability to challenge churches regarding their responsibility and to mobilize resources and partnerships needed to respond effectively to the devastation of HIV/AIDS. The most exciting element of Visionledd is that it can be a leader in linking northern churches with southern churches, thereby expressing the unity of the Body of Christ and bringing hope to a hurting world."
Kelvin Honsinger,
Visionledd Board Member

If your church is not ready for a partnership with a specific community, but you still want to share your gifts with an African community, WOW conducts regular mission trips. Each trip is about 2-3 weeks long and is centered in one of the WOW communities. Mission workers work together with home-based care workers, delivering essential care to communities. Each team ministers to a WOW community differently depending on their gifts and talents.

For those with a deep sense of calling and commitment, WOW, together with our partner Hands at Work in Africa, offers a one year missions experience through their Footprints program. The program begins with extensive training and preparation in rural South Africa before travelling to a desperate community.



Focus on Missions

“You can’t put a value on short-term missions. Going and seeing these children running around in ripped clothing – they have nothing. They don’t know when they’ll eat. As a woman you look at your children and grandchildren. You are motivated, you have to do something. I’m trying to get women together to go on these trips. If we all did our part this wouldn’t be happening in Africa or anywhere in the world.”

**-Sharon Roberts
Markham, Ontario
WOW Mission Trip
Participant**



The experience will be different for each short-term missionary. Each one will be called on to use their unique, God-given gifts to bring hope and healing to those affected by HIV/AIDS. The foundation of our work in Africa is home visits and home care. This includes simple housekeeping and personal care tasks, prayer, delivering food and other essentials, teaching and simple medical care.

Visionledd is a leader in the response to HIV/AIDS in Africa because it works with local groups and agencies and assists in increasing their capacity to respond. Visionledd brings their expertise in building organizational infrastructure to facilitate the development of African grassroots groups.
-Gundy Jackson, Visionledd Board Member



Ordinary women... Extraordinary love

WOW (Women for Orphans and Widows) was born out of the passionate love of mothers, daughters, sisters and grandmothers who share a desire to stand alongside orphans and widows.

WOW concentrates on providing holistic support to individual communities devastated by HIV/AIDS. By partnering with local churches, WOW is able to undertake projects that lead to transformation within the community. WOW partners contribute \$35 a month to provide essentials to a community affected by HIV/AIDS.

We respond to the unique needs of each community. This includes providing food and basic medicines for people suffering from HIV/AIDS; providing safe water; building schools and community care centres to help educate and train; and providing income generating projects to help build economic stability.



One of our exciting projects is helping women generate income through a sewing project in Lilongwe, Malawi. WOW is partnering with Somebody Cares, a home-based care organization that helped us identify women in the community who would benefit from skill development.

The pilot project selected 8-10 women with HIV/AIDS. WOW helped fund a professional seamstress to mentor these women and teach them to sew. Their excitement was contagious. As they learned their new skills, other community women gathered around to watch with hopes that they too might someday receive training. Most importantly, the blankets are special gifts for children and their family. While the days are warm, the temperature at night plummets – few children have a blanket.

The PATCH PROJECT is an intriguing link between Africa and North America. Women in



North America are creating and designing quilt patches that are sent to the African women to sew into blankets. Each patch will not only provide warmth for a young child, but is also a symbol of the prayers of compassionate women determined to pour the love of Christ on every child.

The KATONDO COMMUNITY SCHOOL is another exciting community project WOW supports in Kabwe, Zambia. WOW is helping build a complex that will house a community school, a home-based care ministry, the New Life Christian Centre and an exciting new pottery centre.

The POTTERY CENTRE helps young girls receive vocational training, learning a trade that will empower them to earn a living. Many young girls face the pressure of supporting their sick families. These valuable skills will protect them from the sex trade and give them a future. If WOW can even save one girl from having to sell her body for food we have been successful. Our prayer is that a whole community can be empowered to earn a livelihood.

WOW believes ordinary women can pour the extraordinary love of Christ on orphans and widows.

By committing to support an individual community for only \$35 a month, partners pour the love of Christ on communities that need it so badly.

As a community sponsor you help to provide essential resources to meet the specific needs of those affected by HIV/AIDS. Often the primary need is nutritious food. Once the primary need for food is met, your contributions help to provide things like safe water, education, vocational training and support for cottage industries. In addition, your support helps to provide blankets and mosquito nets. The needs of the people within the community are simple – yet poverty prevents them from even basic things like adequate food, water and shelter.

Volunteer home-based care workers are the foundation of our work. They see the shadow of



HIV/AIDS every day and bring the face of love to each broken soul. Door-to-door they walk, providing care for the orphans and widows. These are the unsung heroes that you support when you choose to sponsor a WOW community.

Women across North America are pouring the love of Christ on communities overwhelmed by the burden of HIV/AIDS.

We invite you to join us in sharing the message of WOW to your church and communities through exciting events like WOW Patch Parties, coffee times, church events and other imaginative ways to show our care for orphans and widows.

WOW believes whole heartedly that love never fails – never. Not even in the face of HIV/AIDS.

To find out more about ordinary

women and the extraordinary love that's being given to orphans and widows please visit our website: www.wowmission.com.

I invite you to join us.

Ordinary women are doing extraordinary things. Pour the love of Christ on orphans and widows and watch your own life be transformed by God.

For more information about WOW mission trips write to us at info@wowmission.com.

“When you put your money and your prayers behind what WOW is doing, you are supporting volunteers walking the streets making a difference in Africa. The volunteers are doing this for nothing. They need to know that at the very least, women across the world are praying for them. If we don't help, who will?”

**-Terry Ruth Eissfeldt
WOW supporter,
Port McNeill, BC**



V I S I O N L E D D

When Joy Visited

When we first met Alpha in 2005 he had a terrible fungus all over his face, wasn't sleeping properly, and wasn't receiving proper care. HIV/AIDS stole the life from this little boy. A boy so young shouldn't be plagued with sorrow, he should be playing hide and seek, kicking a soccer ball with his friends and running about without any cares.

But this is Africa.

We met Alpha when a colleague asked us to visit him. Alpha was dying from AIDS.

We realized Alpha desperately needed medical attention. Fortunately our home-based care volunteers were with us and they began a long term relationship with Alpha and his mother. Because of their call, Alpha now receives pediatric ARV's.

The medication is helping Alpha live with hope. You can see the startling effect of home-based care from the photos. Your support helps to empower home-based care workers. As they continue to support and encourage Alpha and his mother, we experience the miracle of love in action.



Alpha's not sure exactly how old he is, no one has recorded his birth, but he is about 8 or 9 years-old. Alpha's laughter is a gift of hope – his life has had too many dark corners.

"From its earliest beginnings, Visionledd's deepest roots have been all about Vision – God's Vision. I truly believe this organization and its people have been allowed a tiny glimpse of the amazing things God will do if churches are fully motivated. Visionledd is different than most relief agencies in that it empowers a vast armada of churches, both at home and overseas, to bring a solution to the AIDS pandemic. The economies of scale here are overwhelming. Thousands of churches, actively involved, can sustain far more relief than any single person or group can. Unlimited potential. Visionledd has always been driven by creative opportunity. As doors open, we've been able to trust God to provide the means to walk through them. Our vision is tiny compared to His." – Kent Lester, Visionledd Board Member

Learn more at www.visionledd.com