

# A worldly outlook on helping others

Red Blog Blc.

Homer, Karen

If it's true that your eventual life's reward will reflect your contribution to the betterment of others, Karen Homer will retire a spiritual millionaire.

Homer is the staff journalist with World Vision Canada, a Christian humanitarian organization headquartered on Mississauga's Turner Valley Rd. The Canadian branch of the international network in 1988 raised \$45 million to finance the development of Third World nations; Canada is one of 12 "have" countries in which Christian members of World Vision attempt to finance the battle against poverty in 80 under-developed nations.

Homer, 33, is also a Christian — born again, for lack of a better term, more than 10 years ago — who doesn't measure her job satisfaction according to the contents of her weekly pay envelope.

A graduate of Ottawa's Carleton University, it occurred to Homer during her final school term there may be more to be had

from life than a good job, a good marriage and loving children, a big home and two cars in the garage.

She turned to God for some direction, and He sent her out to find some answers. Her personal mission began at the Yonge St. Mission, as public relations director, working with the inner city poor and street kids.

She also worked as editor of the Markham-based Christian News for almost 18 months before being hired on with World Vision a year ago.

"I was actually working in the public relations department for a major corporation when I began to question what life was all about," Homer said this week. "I certainly hadn't found the answer through education, but I had found that God was what was missing from my life. At that point, I started to think about how I could serve God through my chosen profession."



REF

Gerry Timbers

If she needed positive reinforcement to strengthen her professional commitment to God, she got more than she could ever need in Rob, a 22-year-old university student who Homer maintains will soon emerge as one of Canada's most-gifted new writers. Homer remembers this future Ernest Hemingway more as a troubled, violent refugee from a broken home who landed in Toronto's Evergreen youth Drop-In Centre at the Yonge St. Mission, by invitation of the provincial criminal court.

Rob was a lucky boy. His sen-

tence required him to perform mandatory community service work under Homer's guidance.

"I've seen people's lives change by the Lord, and through what people who serve the Lord do for them," she said. "People who work for charitable organizations often don't make a lot of money, but I wouldn't trade my experiences for a \$40,000-a-year job."

Most recently, Homer returned from a three-month stint in Ethiopia, filing stories for World Vision Canada publications to document improvements since the disastrous famine of five years ago.

World Vision Canada pours \$1.5 million annually into Ethiopia towards long-term development.

"I was speechless the first few days after arriving," she said. "No amount of television or reading can prepare you for that type of poverty. It's totally shocking."

"People were living in houses

made from four poles and rags strung around them. Street kids here are millionaires compared to the homeless children in Ethiopia.

"The first few days, you just want to give all your money away. You feel so guilty, and with good reason. But giving your money away is no answer; you have to ask yourself what you can do to really make a difference."

Mississaugans can make a difference Feb. 16-17, by participating in World Vision's "30-Hour Famine."

It's simple enough; you fast for 30 hours to earn pledge money. Last year the project raised \$750,000. This year, Mississaugans Kelly Gruber and Tony Fernandez from the Toronto Blue Jays are among the celebrities who will promote and endorse the "30-Hour Famine."

Anyone interested in participating this year should call the Famine Hotline at 268-3953.

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