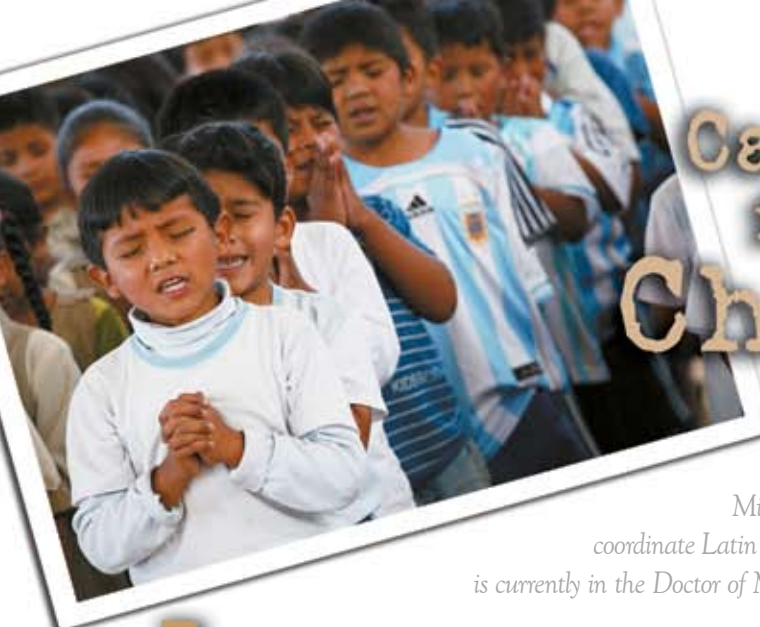




Hands of Christ

Alumni Show Compassion
to a Hurting World



Caring for the Children of Bolivia



Missionary Steve Potutschnig (M.A. 1992) and his wife, Lori, coordinate Latin America ChildCare (LACC) in Bolivia, South America. Steve is currently in the Doctor of Ministry Program at AGTS.

LACC Bolivia is a compassion and development ministry that provides hope to needy children through Christian education, medical care and nutrition. It integrates the biblical principles of evangelism, church planting, community building, education and social responsibilities for development of good health. Presently, LACC Bolivia has 6 schools with more than 2,800 children. One school is close to a prison: 220 children leave the prison and their parent(s) each day to attend classes. There they receive education

and a hot meal, only to return to the prison to sleep at night. Another school, Light and Truth of Cochabamba, exists on a former garbage dump. Of the nearly 1,400 children there, the majority come from makeshift homes with no indoor plumbing. Almost 10 percent are orphans or street children.

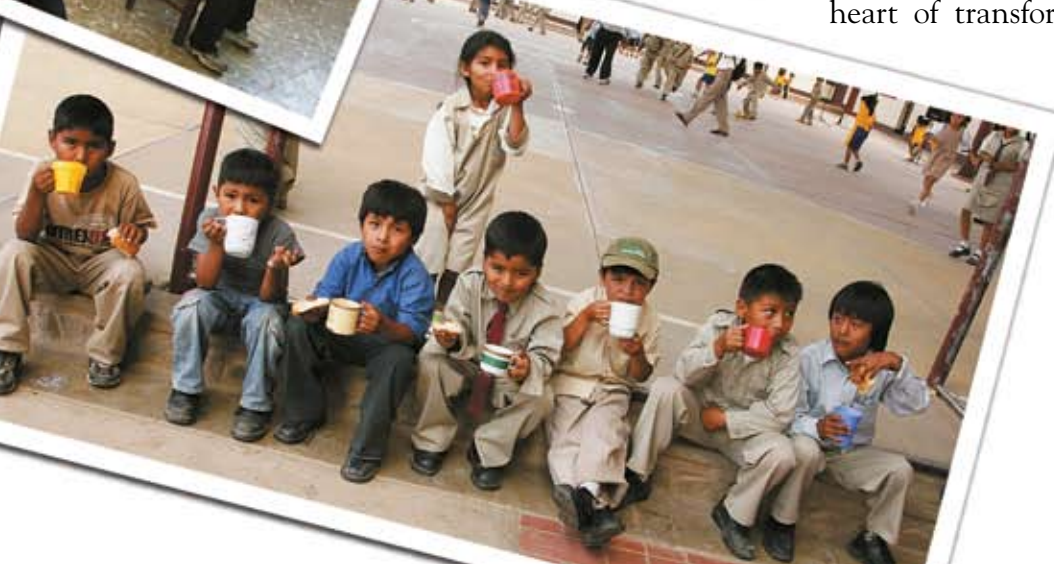
Pastor Teófilo, of the church at Light and Truth School, grew up on the streets of La Paz, Bolivia. After a miraculous healing and conversion, Teófilo became a pastor and church planter. He subsequently started a school. I have worked with Pastor Teófilo, applying knowledge gleaned from my studies at AGTS to coach him and help him devise ways to reach more students.

LACC strives for transformational development. At the heart of transfor-

mational development is the local church. The goal is for the local church to develop into the center of the community.

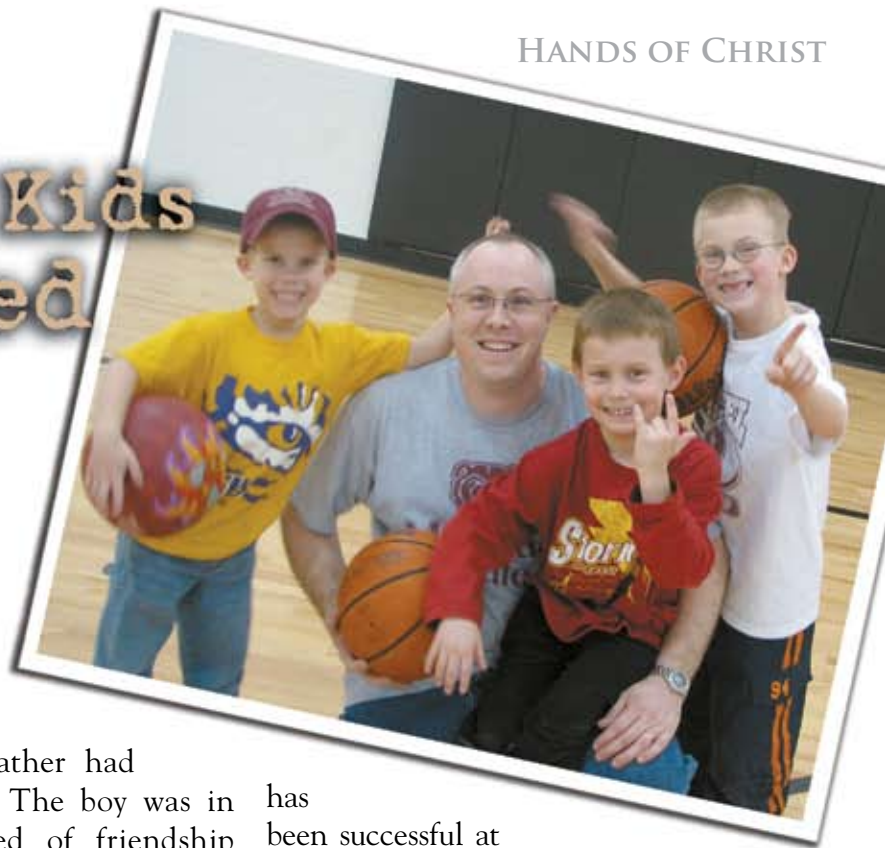
For example, Light and Truth Church seeks to serve the community by establishing technical-training workshops. Presently, the church conducts computer, sewing and hair-styling workshops. Plans are to establish masonry, metal-work, carpentry, confection and microenterprising workshops as well. They are part of an integrated developmental plan that respectfully empowers the body, spirit, soul and social aspects of the individual. These workshops will be a tool to bring about holistic transformation in the people who attend the church.

Poverty is a complex problem. No matter where you encounter it, however, it exists as a result of broken relationships—in families, in communities and with God. We sense a special presence of God at the schools. Today's challenge is to minister and love the whole person—spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally. LACC is a ministry that is rising to this challenge.



Mentoring kids with Incarcerated Parents

Jeff Dorn (M.Div. 1999) is the mentor support coordinator for the Shapes Mentoring Program (www.shapes.ag.org), based in Springfield, Mo. Jeff is in the Doctor of Ministry Program at AGTS.



In 2005, God gave me an opportunity to impact the life of a fourteen-year-old boy—an opportunity which greatly impacted me as well.

I saw a video at my church one Sunday morning describing a new AG ministry—the Shapes Mentoring Program. Funded by a faith-based grant, the program provides mentors to children of incarcerated parents.

I signed up as a mentor immediately. I was trained and within a few weeks was meeting with a boy whose stepfather

was in prison and whose grandfather had died recently. The boy was in desperate need of friendship and support.

Children of incarcerated parents often are neglected. Classmates and even teachers expect little of them. The Shapes Mentoring Program shows them that someone out there believes in them and their ability to succeed.

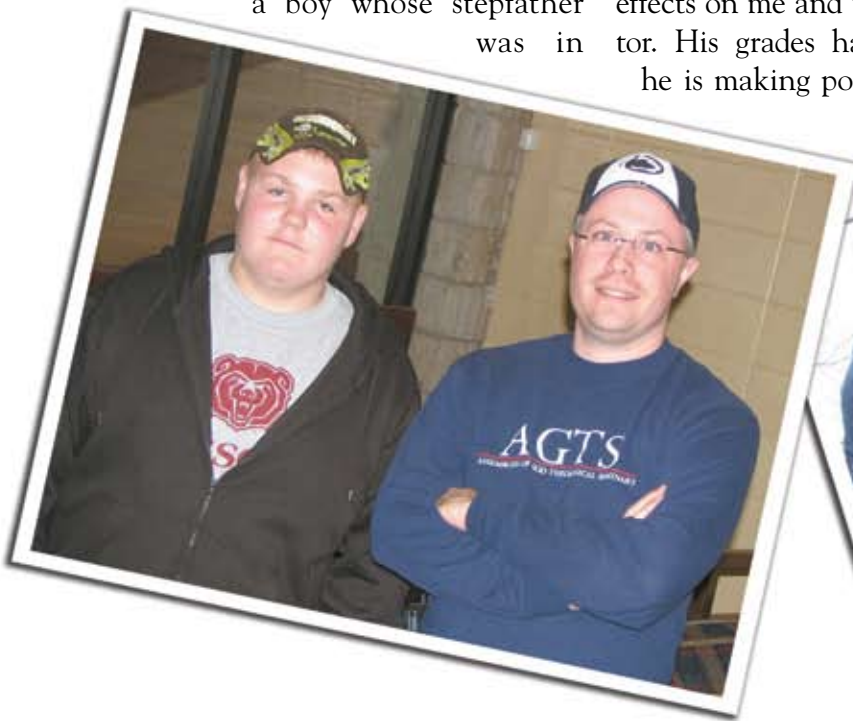
Two years of fishing, talking and hanging out have had profound effects on me and the boy I mentor. His grades have risen, and he is making positive life decisions. He also

has been successful at his first part-time job.

As I spent time in the program, I began to sense that volunteer work would not be the extent of my involvement. In January 2007, I was hired as mentor support coordinator. It is thrilling to be a part of this powerful ministry by which God's hand is obviously at work in the lives of children. His plans for them are unimaginable!

Missouri

★ **Springfield**



Unmasking Sexual Abuse

Barbara Strickland (D.Min. 2007) and her husband, Bill (M.A. 1980), are missionaries to Honduras, Central America, where they have started a ministry to raise awareness of the problem of child sexual abuse. Barbara's doctoral project focused on this topic.



A few years ago, while attending a weekend retreat for the church we serve in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, I sat in disbelief as I heard testimonies of young teens describing their childhood abuse.

- “When I was five years old, my father allowed three uncles to rape me.”
- “In exchange for education, I accepted the friendship of an older man who later came to ‘collect’ through violent sexual abuse.”
- “My parents worked long hours, and I was a lonely little boy. The teenagers next door gave me the attention I craved, but that attention soon turned to sexual abuse. I began to act out in homosexual behavior, and it soon became my lifestyle.”
- “The man next door raped me when I was very small. I never told

anyone. The damage he did to me has affected my marriage and all of my personal relationships.”

These victims found healing and deliverance as they yielded themselves to the work of the Spirit. They since have found places of ministry in the church—their testimonies are helping others.

Sexual abuse statistics in Honduras (population 7 million) are among the highest in the world. A recent survey by a nongovernmental organization reported that 10,000 children in our largest cities currently are victims of commercial sexual abuse. Minors disappear daily—kidnapped or deceived into use in the sex trade.

Historically, the subject of sexual abuse has been taboo in Honduran society, perpetuating the secrecy surrounding it. This silence must be broken—beginning in the church.

In addition to ministering to adults who were victimized as children, we are working to increase awareness. Through seminars across the country, we teach the biblical principles related to sexual abuse and the church's need to minister to victims. We have distributed to 34 different church, social and government agencies, seminar materials that highlight the symptoms and consequences of abuse, appropriate responses and community resources for reporting and counseling. We also have scheduled seminars to educate children about abuse.

As the church continues its compassionate response, the need for refugee centers for minors rescued from sex trafficking is becoming evident. We look forward to this next challenge.

