

**Day of prayer for children at risk planned;  
Growing role of Christian agencies in Children's work praised**

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

LAM News Service

**Miami, FL** (LAMNS)--Of all children born today, around 80% live in parts of the world where extreme poverty is prevalent. Children may suffer from exploitation, sickness, malnourishment, abandonment or war.

In the face of these difficult facts, Christian organizations together make up the largest body working with these children at risk.

To help raise consciousness among Christians concerning these children, the LAM-related ministry, Viva Network, is organizing a worldwide day of prayer on June 2 for children at risk.

"We are asking both individuals and churches to set aside some time to pray for children on that day," says Bill Gibson, a missionary with the Latin America Mission who publishes a monthly magazine for Viva Network's Latin American office. "We hope that churches will go beyond just encouraging individuals to pray and will put together an event that will allow people to learn about and pray for children," he said.

According to Gibson, Christians in Peru combined the day of prayer with a March for Jesus last year that drew a large crowd. And, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, an event was held that brought together a broad spectrum of Christian organizations together for prayer.

(Information on children at risk and the day of prayer can be obtained at Viva Network's web site [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org), or by writing to Viva Network, Michelle Butler, KidsLinkUSA, PO Box 7, Lexington, SC 29071. Tel: 803-358-0572; Fax: 803-957-6101; [usakidslink@aol.com](mailto:usakidslink@aol.com)).

Meanwhile, nearly 300 leaders and senior staff of 158 international and major national Christian organizations working with children at risk met at the De Bron Conference center near Dalfsen in the Netherlands from March 17-22 to participate in the third International Cutting Edge conference. They came from 55 nations and represented work with more than 6 million children at risk worldwide.

Through plenary sessions, workshops and networking opportunities, participants considered how to create 'Effective Service in a Broken World'. They recognized the immense challenge of ministering to children at risk across the world, but also celebrated what God is already doing through his people. Networking was a priority, and participants explored ways in which they could work together in their own countries and fields of interest to increase effectiveness.

"One amazing statistic from the conference is that the groups there represented work with at least 6 million children - at the last conference it was 2 million, and only half filled in their questionnaires this time, so it was probably far more," reflected Katharine Miles who serves with the Latin American office of Viva Network in Costa Rica. "It was personally, extremely impacting to be in the same room with people

from as far and wide as Kazakhstan, Bulgaria and Brazil who are all reaching children in the name of Jesus.”

“People have found a voice together, found ways of helping each other improve their work, ...reducing cost and amplifying activity,” said Patrick McDonald, Director of Viva Network, which organized the conference in partnership with the Council of International Children’s Ministries, and Compassion Netherlands.

Particular attention was given in plenary sessions to key issues, such as strategic global trends affecting children at risk, child rights, child protection, and the need for a stronger biblical foundation for ministry with children. “The Bible shows children at the very center of God’s work,” said Keith White, of Mill Grove, London, UK, one of the plenary speakers. “Jesus used children to teach his disciples lessons about faith.”

“We left the conference with new friends, refreshed and energized with a renewed passion for Jesus Christ, His church and the needy children of the world,” said one participant, Doug Nichols, International Director of Action International Ministries.

Participants and organizers went away with a mandate to establish working groups to form a framework of biblical theology for work with children, and to look further at global trends that could affect their ministries. They also left with a commitment to work together more closely for the benefit of children at risk. Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. LAM is seeking to place new missionaries throughout the region. The U.S. headquarters can be reached at Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL 33152, by e-mail at [info@lam.org](mailto:info@lam.org), or by calling 1-800-275-8410. The mission’s web site may be found at <http://www.lam.org>. LAM’s Canadian office is at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

Deborah de Kock of Viva Network contributed to this story.

Related web sites:

Latin America Mission [www.lam.org](http://www.lam.org)

Viva Network [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org)

Viva Network Latin America [www.redviva.org](http://www.redviva.org)

USAKidsLink [usakidslink@aol.com](mailto:usakidslink@aol.com))

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