



Mrs. Lucille Dixon was recently honored by Second Calvary Baptist Church for her outstanding work with the Missionaries. She is shown above with her husband, Mr. Carl Dixon



Child Watch

With
Marian Wright Edelman

When you think about victims of AIDS, we usually do not picture children. But there are already hundreds of children -- most of them minority children -- suffering from this disease. Their numbers are expected to grow as the disease spreads in the heterosexual population.

Approximately 500 cases of AIDS among children have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control. Minority children make up a staggering 80 percent of this group. But medical experts tell us that many more children -- possibly numbering in the thousands -- are probably carrying the disease.

How do children get AIDS? In over three-quarters of all cases nationwide, the child was born with AIDS because its mother had the disease. Most of the mothers contracted AIDS through the use of intravenous drugs or from their sexual partners. Most of the rest of the children were exposed to the disease through exposure to blood or blood products, and a few were infected due to sexual abuse by a person carrying the disease.

Children who have AIDS deserve our compassion and help. Often their mothers are sick themselves, and do live long after the child's birth. It is then difficult to find foster or adoptive care for infected infants,

though there is every reason to believe that such care can be safe if precautions are taken. Through our churches and community organizations we can provide help and support to afflicted children and families.

We adults can also help prevent more children from getting AIDS. First, since most infants contract the disease through their mothers, we can help by stopping the spread of the disease in the adult population. We

must avoid very risky behaviors like having heterosexual or homosexual sex without a condom, especially with multiple partners. Those with a drug use problem must not share needles during the use of intravenous drugs.

Second, we can help by telling our own children about the risks of drugs, especially intravenous drugs, and the consequences of premature sex, especially sex without a condom and with multiple partners.

Finally, we must urge our government to increase its efforts to take effective outreach steps to give minorities and children the information they need to help save their own lives.

An excellent 18 minute film or video for teens, entitled "Sex, Drugs and AIDS" can be rented for \$75 or purchased (\$400 for film, \$325 for video) from O.D.N. Productions, Inc., 74 Varich Street, #304, New York, NY 10013 (212) 431-8923.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for children.

Upcoming Promotion

Mother's Day Page

May 5, 1988 Edition

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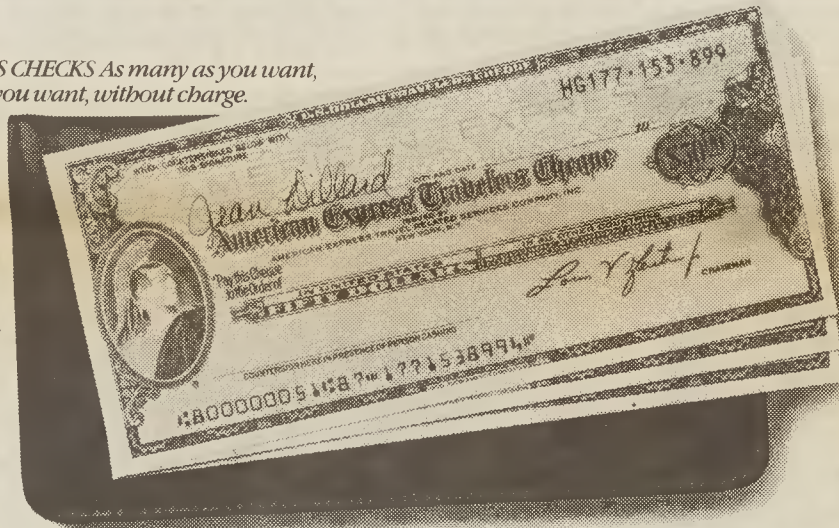
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