

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

Poverty and Population:



A Question That Won't Go Away

by Stephen Schmeltekopf

art by Louise Britton

The earth's six billionth inhabitant was born last October 12. At least, that is what the experts hypothesized. The significance of the event, however, went unnoticed by the majority of our planet's population. There were no bells or sirens to mark such an arbitrary event; the significance lies much deeper, in policy and sustenance.

How can we sustain a population which is growing geometrically (1X2X3) with only additive increases (1+2+3) to land/crop yield? Thomas Malthus addressed a similar question when writing an essay in response to the English Poor Laws of 1798. He deduced that British policy-makers, who were attempting to increase household incomes by enacting the Poor Laws, would cause opposite effects from the ones intended. Malthusian theory maintained that, as income levels increased, fertility rates would subsequently increase. More available income, then, would lead to younger marriages and higher birth rates.

Malthus further concluded that incomes would increase until the growing population flooded the fixed labor demand market. Wages would then fall back to the market level—the same level of wages prior to the government policy that initially attempted to raise wages. Moreover, food prices would rise from shortages due to the swollen population—causing widespread hardship. (This is a weak and brief explanation of Malthusian theory, but hopefully it will suffice for our purposes here.)

Scholars understand now that the foundations of Malthusian theory were built on unstable assumptions. Population grows geometrically—which Malthus decided would overcome the limited additive growing process of food and land production, resulting in starvation and poverty.

However, since Malthus's time, agriculture has become more productive through advances in technology. The global food supply (putting aside the problem of distribution) has been abundant and prices have remained steady. Secondly, Malthus did not foresee the upcoming Industrial Revolution, which redefined labor efficiencies through technological improvements. Our ability to "institutionalize" the process of technological innovation in order to improve our efficiency (even though it didn't solve the world's food security problems) was the fall of Malthusian theory.

Our current population is six times higher now than it was during Malthus' generation. We are currently on pace to top eight

(continued on page 2)

In this issue:

Poverty and Population: A Question That Won't Go Away by Stephen Schmeltekopf.....	1-2
How to Start Caring and Keep Caring by Katie Cook.....	3
Hunger in the Suburbs? a report from Second Harvest.....	4
Resources.....	4-5
Newsfront.....	6-7
An Offering Prayer by Kyle Matthews.....	8

art by Erin Kennedy

Poverty and Population

(continued from page 1)

billion by 2010. This figure is down substantially from previous statistical evidence. It is the result of a slightly decreasing or stagnant fertility growth rate in the majority of the world.

Will technological improvements be able to sustain such a mammoth population? Will inventive and entrepreneurial people be able to surpass today's efficiencies with tomorrow's inventions and products? The probable and pleasant scenario will hopefully be that, yes, they will be able to do so. Nevertheless, the question that faces us now is "How can we slow the growth down to a level we can sustain (given the use of today's technologies and limited natural resources)?"

The many current population-growth and reduction theories vary in shape and size as they incorporate different assumptions of future population growth trends. However, there are some basic facts about population demographics worth highlighting. It is significant that a younger population in developing nations contrasts the emergence of an older population in the developed nations.

In 1995, the population distribution from developed to less-developed nations was one to every four persons. This seemingly benign fact has incredible policy implications for developing nations and their governments. Providing for an increasingly dependent population with most resources currently maximized will almost guarantee future hardships. When a large proportion of a population is composed of "dependents" (people younger than 16 years), then it puts more stress on the remainder of the population to produce resources to sustain the younger population, which is consuming but not contributing to gross production. Poor nations will become poorer as their populations become larger.

The popular theory concerning why developed nations have managed to avoid the population explosion, in most cases, is the demographic transition theory. According to this theory, as nations go through the stages of development from an agrarian subsistence economy to an industrial economy, they undergo a demographic transition. The overall income increases as the birth rate decreases. The transition is initially characterized by an increase in population due to falling death rates, which is caused by improvements in sanitary and health services—as well as stable or declining birth rates.

In developing countries, there are few examples of success in attempting to remedy the population dilemma—without first raising household incomes and bringing a majority of the population out of the poverty cycle.

Why have wealthier nations comparatively had falling birth rates? First, increased opportunities for women have had a substantial effect. As the workforce absorbs women and opportunities for education increase, "the opportunity cost" of bearing children increases. Women now have choices. Traditionally, in developing nations, the woman's primary role is child-bearing, with little opportunity existing outside of the home.

However, even in wealthier cultures where women are forbidden to engage in the majority of societal endeavors, we observe high birth rates. In Saudi Arabia, for example, incomes are high according to the world standard, yet the fertility rate is about six children per woman. Therefore, we can deduce that it is not merely high household income that decreases fertility rates. That comes from a combination of circumstances—including the number of opportunities available to women.

Within poorer households there are few material possessions. By increasing the size of the family, one can increase one's capital. One has created future wage earners to support the family. This model serves as a modern social security system in many places.

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Conversely, wealth will almost always change the choices in family planning. The choice between the quantity or quality of children arises. Contrary to Malthusian theory, parents will not necessarily choose to conceive more children because they attain the financial means to do so. They may opt for fewer children with a higher quality of life, taking into consideration things like better health, career opportunities, and education. These qualitative changes raise the costs associated with having children. (For instance, my parents could have easily had a dozen children, given their incomes; however, they chose to have four children and offered each of us chances of attaining a higher education.)

In conclusion, there are various reasons why poverty-stricken countries are increasing in population. It is not always due to lack of family planning information or contraception. We have heard this question for decades: "Why do they have more kids when they are so poor already?" I hope now the answer is clearer. It is not simply the poor choosing to become poorer. This topic is laden in policy and cultural implications that go beyond simple answers and solutions. —*Stephen Schmeltekopf is a recent graduate in global economics from Baylor University. This article was prepared with contributions from Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, assistant professor of economics at Baylor University and a native of Ghana.*

How to Start Caring



...and Keep Caring

by Katie Cook

art by Erin Kennedy

Thinking about hunger can be thoroughly depressing. We all feel a strong temptation to ignore the whole issue, for several reasons. First, we don't feel that we can do anything to make hunger go away in the world. It's like coming to the edge of a huge ocean when we aren't really sure we can swim. Also, we have a tendency to feel guilty. Religious people are really skilled at fixing guilt on ourselves, although many of us are now trying to train ourselves not to fall into those patterns. So, as a reflex, we cry out, "What do you want *me* to do about it? This is not my fault!"

By the time our interest in hunger issues is strong enough to get us to read something like *Hunger News & Hope*, we are aware of the strong, ubiquitous words from the Bible about feeding the poor. We're convinced that this is what God wants us to do. What we need now is to learn to look at the issue without feeling guilt, or confusion, or depression. The first step in doing that is to find some way to respond that fits each one of us. The second step is to understand that our response is *not* going to be a drop in that huge ocean—that it *really counts*.

Then, once you begin to take small steps, you want to be able to stay with it. You want to keep caring. This could be even more difficult than starting out. It's hard to keep caring about all the hungry people in the world, day after day...after day. It's sometimes hard even for those people who have devoted their entire lives to it.

"compassion burnout." The truth is that many of us didn't know how to keep from becoming weary, depressed, and demoralized.

So how do you and I prevent this from happening to us? Two friends of mine* effectively addressed this issue in the pages of *Seeds Magazine* and the supplement *Sprouts* several years ago. They suggested three secrets for avoiding burnout:

(1) The first is to **remember what our motives are**. You and I, hopefully, have a head start on this one. Those of us who have a spiritual beginning for our compassion have a source of energy and strength that others do not have. I frankly don't know how people who have no faith are able to stay with the struggle.

The church is there to allow us to rest, re-create ourselves, and get our batteries charged for the next effort. We have access to an inner strength that only comes from faith. Our motive comes from the fact that we love God and want to do what God asks. Our strength comes from our gratitude to God for caring about us, and the hope that God will be with us in our efforts to care for others.

(2) The second secret is to **know what's going on in the hunger world**. Find out what the issues are, where the "hot spots" are, and what are the most effective ways to help. This insures that you are not wasting

In the last decade or so, we in the "anti-hunger world" started hearing that some of our leaders were dropping out of the "movement." These were people who had worked for years to bring an end to hunger, people who cared *passionately* about the cause. We called it "compassion fatigue" or

your time or money. You feel better about your gifts of yourself and your resources, because you know they are being used well. You didn't just throw money at the first appeal you saw on TV (mostly to get rid of your guilt). You responded intelligently. You're part of the solution!

(3) The third secret is to **give of yourself and your resources regularly**, not just when a disaster strikes somewhere. We all have a huge temptation to respond to victims of hurricanes, earthquakes, or fires. We all feel the urge to help the "refugees of the week." But, after a while, we lose the energy to crank ourselves up for the fray. A better way is to put our offering aside day by day and send it in monthly, to work at the food pantry an hour every week—not just at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

If we do that, when disaster strikes badly enough somewhere for the TV newspeople to cover it, we won't feel like we've got to scamper around and come up with a response. We've been responding all along. And our resources are ready to be used when those catastrophes come. The teams who move in to disaster areas won't have to come to us and ask for food and blankets. They'll already have ours.

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If you can remember these three secrets, and try to keep them on track, you can avoid burnout. Never forget how important prayer, meditation, and fellowship with God's people are to keeping up your strength and hope. And never forget how important humor can be.

This is a quest, an adventure. Working for the end of hunger is like looking for the Holy Grail. You and I have been commissioned by God to go forth and slay the dragon. It can be exciting. It can even be fun. *Howard Hartman works for Church World Service, and Joe Haag works for the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

—Katie Cook is the *Seeds of Hope* editor.

We cannot love God unless we love each other.
 We know God in the breaking of bread,
 and we know each other in the breaking of bread,
 and we are not alone anymore.
 Heaven is a banquet, and life is, too
 — even with a crust —
 as long as there is companionship.
 We have all known loneliness.
 We have learned that the only solution is love.
 And love comes with community.



— Dorothy Day, founder of the
 Catholic Worker movement

Hunger in the Suburbs?

A Report from Second Harvest

The hidden nature of hunger and poverty makes us less aware of its prevalence in the suburbs, but hunger does exist in the suburbs and it is growing. Here are some disturbing facts:

- Nearly 90 percent of all poor Americans live outside of urban ghettos. Most poor Americans live in mixed income cities and suburbs.
- In 1970, only one in five poor Americans lived in the suburbs. Today, one-third of the poor live in suburbs. Since 1990, the suburban poverty rate has grown by nine percent.
- The growth in poverty and hunger in the suburbs is caused by the lure of job growth, the revitalization of central cities making city life too expensive for many poor people, and the creation of cheaper housing in “inner ring” suburbs, as middle class people move further out.
- Suburbs are seeing increased numbers of children participating in free-school meal programs. Local charities are also seeing increased hunger needs. The greater Boston Food Bank distributed 50 percent more food to Boston suburbs last year. Harvesters Community Food Bank in Kansas saw an eight-percent increase in hunger relief services in suburban counties.
- Welfare case loads and food stamp participation have declined at rates far greater than the drop in poverty. At the same time, demand for hunger relief services has grown by 14 percent in the past year.

—*America's Second Harvest, based in Chicago, is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization with a national network of nearly 200 regional food banks which distributes one billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually.*

Offering of Letters for 2000

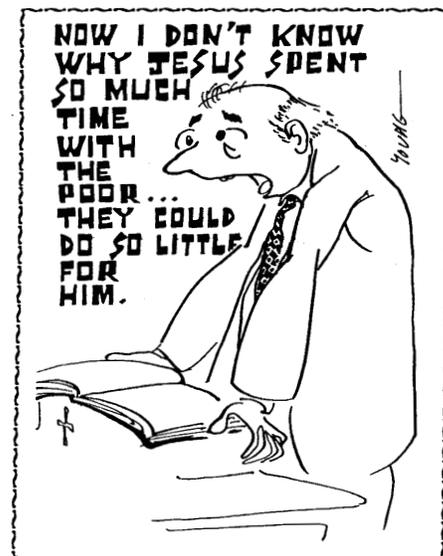
The Bread for the World Institute will release their **Offering of Letters** kit this February. The focus this year is on passing the Hunger Relief Act and raising the federal minimum wage by \$1 over a two-year period. The kit contains everything you need for your congregation's Offering of Letters: background information, planning tips, worship aids, bulletin inserts, a nine-minute video and more. A 16 x 20 color poster and a video are also included. All of this will be available for \$7.

The Hunger Relief Act would reduce hunger among U.S. working people and their families by strengthening the Food Stamp Program, assisting food banks, and changing the role of immigration status. Housing expenses would be given greater consideration in the calculation of food stamp benefits. All of this is part of a bill known as Fair Share: Working to End Hunger.

BFW's Annual Report on Hunger

Also available in February is *A Program to End Hunger*, a timely resource on domestic and international hunger and poverty issues that are especially critical during an election year. According to this informative report, hunger is a problem that can be solved. The report outlines specific strategies for reducing hunger worldwide. To obtain a copy of this report or the **Offering of Letters** kit, contact Bread for the World at 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000; Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone: 301/608-2400; Web: www.bread.org.

—*Bread for the World is a nationwide Christian citizens movement seeking justice for the world's hungry people.*



Resources

The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life

This new publication from Orbis Books provides a holistic vision of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation. It is an essential guide for Christians on how to achieve personal, ecclesial, and social transformation in the year of Jubilee. With the start of a new millennium, *The Biblical Jubilee: An Invitation to Personal, Ecclesial, and Social Transformation* helps us to understand the problems we face and provides a spiritual foundation for commitment and action. Written by Ross and Gloria Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee* calls for canceling debts, giving rest to the land, restoring justice to the poor, and returning in faith to the promises of God. To obtain a copy, call 800/258-5838 and ask for Dept. AUT.

Who's Risen from the Dead, Anyway?

Who has risen from the dead, anyway? The Easter bunny? Spring? Alternatives for Simple Living has issued an expandable collection of past materials for Lent and Easter, which encourages us to look within ourselves to see how we have confused popular cultural values with Christian faith. It contains five sets of reflections on the Gospel Lessons for Lent and Easter (covering all three liturgical sets), each with activities. Also, Passover and Easter Seders and a generous variety of bulletin inserts, posters and 40-day calendars all come ready for a three ring binder for \$10. For more information call 800/821-6153 or 712/274-8875.

More Than Houses

Since the beginning of Habitat for Humanity in 1976, Millard Fuller has published six books about the various aspects of this house and community building venture. His seventh book, however, focuses more on the lives that the organization has changed rather than the communities. *More Than Houses* is a book about impact, change, and transformation. There are testimonies of the transformation of families all over the world, of the revitalization of neighborhoods, of the renewal of churches and spiritual lives, and even some stories of romance. *More Than Houses* is set for release early this year from Word Publishing in Nashville, TN.

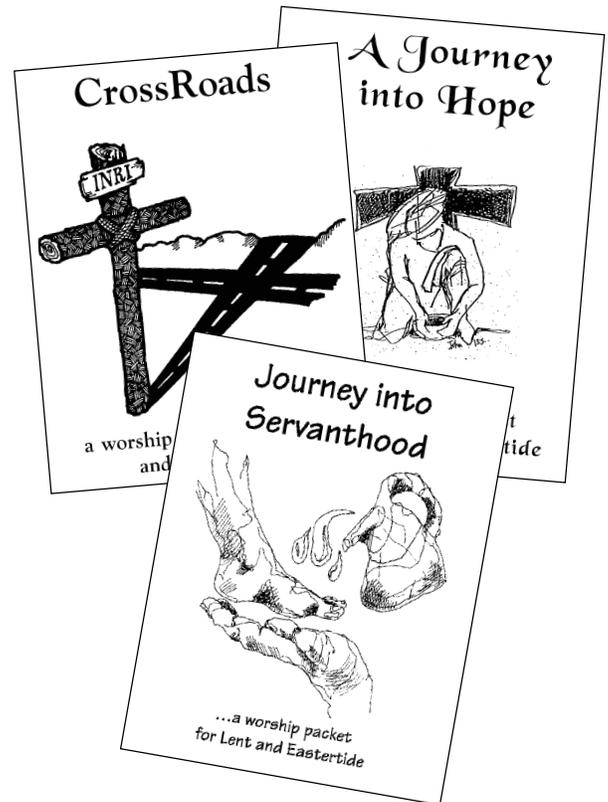
Resources from Search Institute

Kids Have A Lot To Give: This workbook by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain is designed for congregations to work together as they learn to nurture habits of giving and serving for the common good. In a time when people of all ages make many choices based on "what's in it for me," young people need to be guided, motivated, and challenged to think beyond themselves and discover what they can offer the world around them. Each lesson provides discussion questions as well as new ideas, which offer some concrete ways that leaders in congregations can be more intentional and effective in nurturing a generous spirit in youth.

Building Assets in Congregations: This resource, also by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, combines solid theory about healthy youth development with practical strategies and approaches. Because all youth in a community need greater developmental-asset strength and because all social institutions have a role to play in asset building, congregations become viewed as teammates—not adversaries—in unleashing the capacity of the community to nurture healthy youth. Contact the Search Institute at 800/888-7828 for more information about these two resources.

Resources for Lent

with a peace and justice emphasis,
from Seeds of Hope.



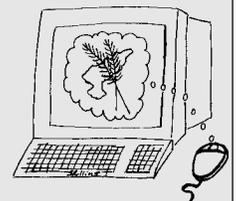
Four 20-page packets each year filled with prayers, litanies, sermons, activities, art, and more. \$50 per packet or \$120 for all four. To order, call 254/755-7745; fax 254/753-1909; write 602 James, Waco, TX 76706; e-mail seedshope@aol.com

We have a web site now.

For those of you who were readers of *Seeds and Sprouts*, for those of you who are now *Hunger News & Hope* readers, or for those of you who are looking for a web site that gives you lots of different perspectives on hunger issues, we've finally done it. We've gotten a web site that includes excerpts from *Hunger News & Hope*, inspirational pieces from our worship packet series, updated versions of the popular "Volunteer Opportunities" and "Your Next Mission Trip" features from *Seeds*, some samples of award-winning journalism from the *Seeds* archives, and other features that you won't find anywhere but on our web page. So check us out at

www.seedspublishers.org.

—from the folks at Seeds of Hope Publishers



art by Sharon Rollins

News Briefs



art by Robert Darden

Economic Gap Widening in Japan

Japan, which has long regarded itself as the most egalitarian industrialized nation, is seeing a widening gap between the rich and the poor, spurred by extensive economic and social changes. Where once everyone was treated more or less the same, now—due to factors such as longer life spans, women in the workforce, and pay based on performance rather than seniority—a stark contrast can be seen between the wealthy and the poor. This increasing income stratification raises potentially troubling questions for Japan, where sameness, or the perception of it, greatly contributes to the social harmony that Japanese people have historically prized.

Government officials concede privately that greater income disparity is inevitable as the economy becomes more competitive. But they fear that differences between the rich and the poor will lead to more theft, petty crime, and a host of other social problems.

Politicians fear that a wider income gap could threaten the power of the Liberal Democratic Party, which has governed Japan, virtually unchallenged, since World War II. Several economists and policy makers, however, believe that government fears may be overblown.

“A less egalitarian attitude is spreading because the average level of income has continued to increase,” said Hiromitsu Ishi, president of Hitotsubashi University and a member of the prime minister’s tax panel. “In Japan, extremely poor people don’t really exist now—although after the restructuring of the labor market, that may change and with it tolerance.”

The disparities that exist between the classes in Japan, however, are far less pronounced than they are in the United States and Britain. An average chief executive in a large Japanese company makes roughly US\$350,000 a year. An average worker’s salary is around \$56,000. By comparison, total compensation in 1998 for chief executives at the 500 largest American companies was about \$8 million.

The Japanese government is now pushing for a change in tax policies. They hope that such changes will benefit the wealthy and push less affluent citizens to pay more. Not surprisingly, wealthy Japanese welcome the changes.

Tadashi Nakamae, a prominent economist, thinks that as long as the rising tide lifts all boats, greater income disparity will be

accepted. “Look what happened in England,” he said. “Income disparity increased, but mostly people’s incomes rose and everyone felt they were better off.” By paying more for performance and increasing expectations of employees, the government hopes to be giving everyone a fair chance to accomplish their dreams.

—From The New York Times

Study Shows American Apathy Toward Poor

A recent survey by the Barna Research group has revealed that a large percentage of Americans are indifferent to the concerns of poor people. While a majority of Americans have sympathy for the poor, few take action. Although more than 70 percent agreed that society has a moral obligation to help the poor, only 33 percent said they have volunteered time in the past year to help the poor, and only 42 percent said they have donated money to non-profit organizations serving the poor either in the U.S. or other countries.

Equally disturbing in the survey was the number of “soft” responses from people concerning their compassion for the poor. “Regrettably,” said George Barna, President of the Barna Research Group, “many quietly believe the poor have somehow ‘asked for it’ or ‘gotten what they deserve.’” Only 31 percent of those surveyed disagreed strongly with the statement that “most poor people don’t work very hard to become self-sufficient,” and 41 percent disagreed strongly with the statement that “most people are poor because they have made bad choices.” The rest agreed or were less sure.

The survey did show some glimpses of American generosity: 57 percent said they either donate money or volunteer time to help the poor. However, only 19 percent said that they both give and volunteer to help the poor.

Nearly one in five U.S. children lives in poverty, and one in six children goes hungry for lack of food. Meanwhile, more than half the world’s population lives on less than \$2 a day, and about 1.7 billion people lack access to clean water. Robert Odom, an executive at World Vision, asks this very poignant question: “If people won’t help at a time of unparalleled prosperity in America, when will they?”

—Food Journal, the newsletter of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc. (TACAA), World Vision

North Korea Still Facing Food Shortages

The nutritional situation in North Korea remains fragile in spite of the country’s efforts to redress chronic food problems, according to the latest comprehensive food assessment report of the United Nation’s food agencies. Living standards in North Korea have significantly declined in the last four years as the availability of food per person has shrunk, while serious health problems have increased because resources, drugs and essential supplies are unavailable. Because of these problems, a vicious circle of poor nutrition, compounding poor health and vice versa, has become deeply entrenched.

According to the UN report, there was some improvement in rice production in 1999, but these gains were more than offset by a sharp reduction in maize output. There are signs, however, that economic sanctions on North Korea by leading industrialized countries may be further relaxed, which could lead to recovery in the economy and rehabilitation of the agricultural establishment.

“Given the scale of the problem and its root causes, future food supply prospects are almost entirely contingent on international

food and rehabilitation assistance, economic growth, and the ability of the country to integrate itself into the global economy,” the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) said in a report on their recent joint mission to North Korea.

—*Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme*

Study Reveals Realities of Former Welfare Recipients

The Urban Institute recently released a study entitled *Families Who Left Welfare: Who Are They and How Are They Doing?* The report describes “leavers,” their jobs and wages, the public support programs they used (such as Medicaid, food stamps, and child care), their similarities to other low-income workers, and their most pressing concerns.

One third of those who leave welfare are under 25 years old. Their educational level is similar to that of the working poor, with 28 percent having less than a high school diploma and 37 percent having a diploma or GED. More than 60 percent of leavers are single or without a partner, compared with 32 percent of non-welfare families.

Most women who leave welfare are working in service jobs in the low-income market. Of those who left welfare, 69 percent left for a job, 10 percent left for administrative reasons, seven percent no longer wanted assistance, and six percent left due to a change in family status.

Of the leavers, one third to one half have reported serious economic struggles in acquiring food. Welfare leavers use food stamps at a higher rate than non-welfare families living at the poverty rate.

The study does not have a clear picture of the 39 percent of households who have left welfare and are not working. It is known that about 14 percent of the overall total rely on earnings of a spouse or partner. Of the 25 percent remaining, 26.8 percent say they are ill or disabled and unable to work; 25.8 percent say they are caring for family members; 15.1 percent state they cannot find work; 11.7 percent lack child care or transportation; 8.9 percent report being in school; 1.1 percent cite no desire to work; and the remaining 9.6 percent noted a variety of reasons.

—*From the Urban Institute, Food Journal, the newsletter of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc. (TACAA)*

Census Report Shows Reduction in U.S. Poverty: Rates Still Higher Than Earlier Decades

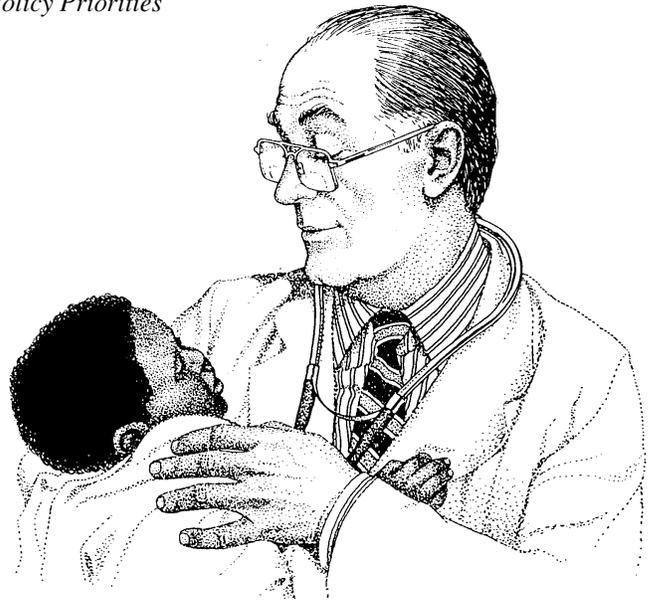
Recent census reports reveal continued economic growth led to a significant reduction in poverty in 1998, as the poverty rate declined to 12.7 percent. However, despite this good news, challenges remain. The poverty rate last year was still higher than it had been in nearly all of the 1970s, even though the unemployment rate was considerably lower last year than during the 1970s.

In addition, child poverty continues to be higher in the U.S. than in most other industrialized nations, including Canada and most western European countries. Further, more than one in every three African-American and Hispanic/Latino children in the U.S. remain poor.

The improvement of economic conditions among poverty populations in 1998 appears to be primarily due to the strength of the economy. The 1998 unemployment rate of 4.5 percent was the lowest since 1969. The year 1998 was also the first year that the increase in the minimum wage to \$5.15 per hour was in effect.

Not all of the news related to low wage workers in 1998 was positive, however. Income inequality has continued to grow wildly since 1989. In 1998, the richest fifth of households received nearly half—49.2—of all national before-tax incomes. The remaining four-fifths shared the other half. Furthermore, from 1989 to 1998, the income of the poorest fifth of households increased a mere \$23 despite the tremendous growth of the economy. In all, the number of full-time, year-round workers with incomes below the poverty line increased to 459,000 in 1998, as the poverty rate among these workers rose.

—*From Food Journal, the newsletter of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc. (TACAA), Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*



Nobel Prize Goes to Doctors Without Borders

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1999 to Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres), in recognition of the organization’s pioneering humanitarian work on several continents. Since its foundation in the early 1970s, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has provided emergency medical assistance to at-risk populations in more than 80 countries. In countries where health structures are insufficient, MSF works in the rehabilitation of hospitals and dispensaries, vaccination programmes and water and sanitation projects. All this is done with the objective of rebuilding health structures to acceptable levels.

MSF has also strictly adhered to the fundamental principle that all disaster victims, whether the disaster is natural or human in origin, have a right to professional assistance, given as quickly as possible. National boundaries and political circumstances or sympathies must have no influence on who is to receive humanitarian help. By maintaining a high degree of independence, the organization has succeeded in living up to these ideals. In critical situations, marked by violence and brutality, the humanitarian work of Doctors Without Borders enables the organization to create openings for contacts between the opposing parties. At the same time, each fearless and self-sacrificing helper brings a human contact to each victim, respects and protects that person’s dignity, and is a source of hope for peace and reconciliation.

—*From the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway*

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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable, and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Editorial Address

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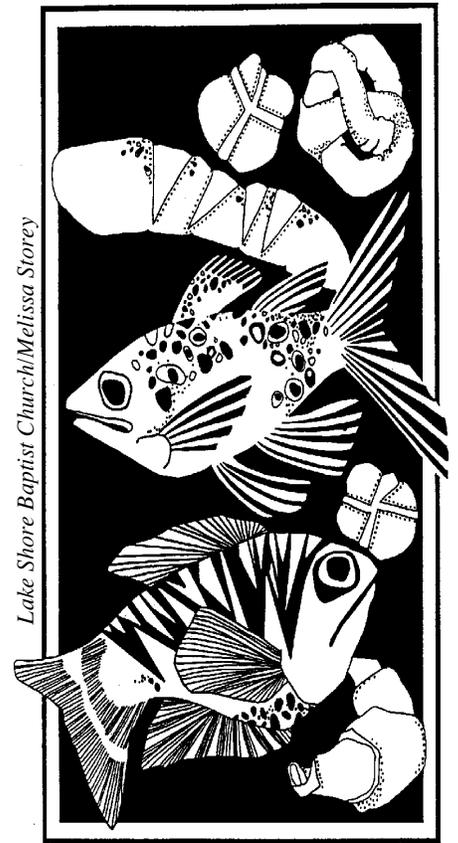
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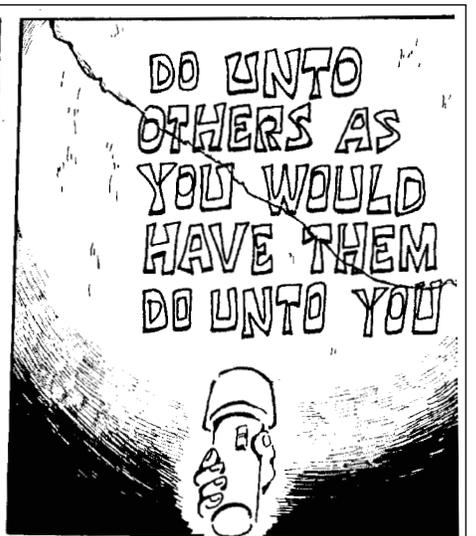
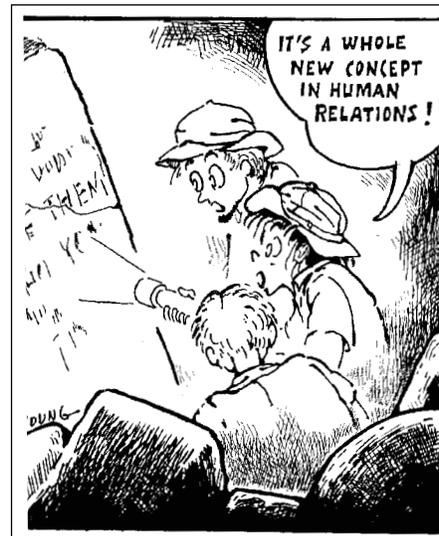
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 we the people
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 come before you today
 to confront the truth:
 that our deepest need is not met
 by possessing something,
 but by being a part
 of something—
 something bigger than ourselves,
 something beyond
 the borders of our world
 and beyond the reach
 of our control.

Take these gifts from our hands
 and do with them
 what we cannot do alone.
 Elevate our material offerings
 to the realm of spiritual things,
 from unworthiness to worthiness.
 allow us to be a part of making
 the crooked straight,
 the blind to see
 the lost found
 the dead alive again.
 Amen.

—Kyle Matthews,
 singer/songwriter



Lake Shore Baptist Church/Melissa Storey



cal year—with an economic justice attitude. These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art, and drama.

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