

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

Kids Cafe: New Hope for U.S. Children

by Kelli M. Martin

Hunger is a grim reality for many children in the United States. Maybe you knew that one in five children lives in a family that receives food stamps. And maybe you knew that one in three children will be poor at some point in their childhood. But did you know that one in 12 lives at *less than half* the poverty level?

"It is ironic that in this time of unprecedented economic prosperity, nearly 14 million of America's children are hungry or do not know where their next meal is coming from. Whenever the future of a child is stolen by hunger, the future of our nation is made a little less bright," said Deborah Leff, president and chief executive officer of the Chicago-based America's Second Harvest (ASH).

A child faced with hunger has to deal with much more than a growling stomach. Most people realize that malnourished children are vulnerable to disease and physical difficulties. But there is more. Children without adequate nutrition are at a greater risk of not reaching their full potential. They have more trouble concentrating in school.

Studies show that poor performance early in school is a major factor in the teen dropout rate, and that educational attainment is probably the biggest indicator of job and income mobility. This is compelling evidence that childhood hunger will affect a child's entire life.

In 1989, two young boys from Georgia were discovered in the kitchen of a development project where they lived. They had



broken in to get food. This event caused a Second Harvest food bank in Coastal Georgia to create the first Kids Cafe. Since that time, Kids Cafes have appeared all over the United States.

"Currently, we have 302 Kids Cafes in operation in 29 different states across the country," stated Maurice Weaver, media relations manager for ASH. "Each Cafe serves an average of 40 kids. Annually we serve around 1.4 million meals." As recently

as March of this year, a new Kids Cafe opened in San Francisco.

Kids Cafes also provide a nurturing environment where children can receive nutritional counseling, mentoring, and educational training. "Kids Cafe is not only good for the children, but for their families as well," Weaver confirmed. "It gives the children of working families a place to go after school and provides them with a meal." The program also gives children hands-on experience. In fact, the Kids Cafe in Denver, Colorado, is run by the children themselves.

Kids Cafe is largely sponsored by ConAgra. The Feeding Children Better program, started by ConAgra, is the nation's largest corporate initiative, solely dedicated to attacking childhood hunger in the United States. The program, according to Weaver, consists of three major components: expanding the Kids Cafe endeavors, instituting a Rapid Food Distribution System (RFDS) in conjunction with ASH, and launching a

U.S. public awareness campaign. With continued support from ConAgra, Weaver said that Second Harvest leaders expect 75 to 100 new Cafes over the next three years.

Weaver added that many precautionary measures are taken to ensure the safety of the food served in the Cafes. "Every Cafe is affiliated with an agency," he said, "which guarantees the safe delivery of food to the site."

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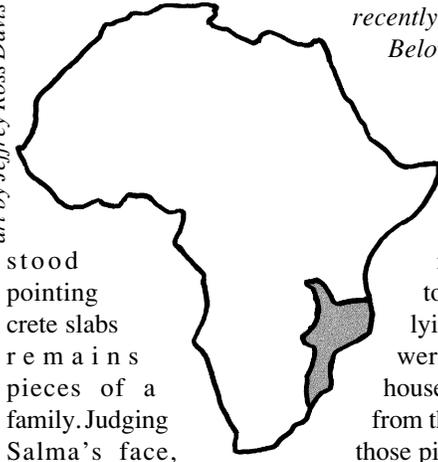
MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE—Beginning in early February, torrential rains and flooding created a disaster in Mozambique which killed more than 600 people and affected the lives of two million others. Over 14,000 were rescued by helicopters; thousands were taken to safety by boat. More than 650,000 people have received temporary food assistance.

Action by Churches Together (ACT), a world-wide network of churches and church agencies responding to disasters, has been assisting the people of Mozambique since the beginning of the flooding. ACT's response is coordinated by the Mozambique office of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), an organization that has worked with victims of political conflict in the country since 1977. In responding to the flooding, LWF Mozambique is working closely with the Christian Council of Mozambique and the National Ecumenical Committee.

To date, more than 20 churches and church agencies from around the world have pledged or contributed more than \$2.2 million to support a unified relief effort—including crisis food assistance, temporary shelter, water supply, air transportation of relief supplies, and the resettlement of homeless families. ACT has also assisted victims of flooding in neighboring South Africa, working through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the South Africa Council of Churches. The organization recently issued an appeal for almost \$800,000 to support relief work in South Africa.

Below is one of several reports from Elaine Eliah, the ACT press officer in Maputo.

art by Jeffrey Ross Davis



stood pointing concrete slabs remains pieces of a family. Judging Salma's face, only significant pieces of her world, but the very foundation of life as she and her family knew it.

Salma Augusto Mathe in the midst of wreckage, to the green and blue con- lying at her feet. The toppled were hardly identifiable as house that had once sheltered a from the expression that crossed those pieces of concrete were not her world, but the very foundation

Trevo, the once vibrant residential community in the Mozambican capital of Maputo, still bustles with activity during the day; but when the sun sets, hundreds of people return to temporary shelters for the night.

After living in Trevo for nearly forty years, Salma declared that she didn't want to spend another night there, even if she had a house to come home to. "Now, even if there is a little rain I'm afraid after what I've seen." When Salma awoke at four AM there was water swirling around her bed. "I was quite asleep. I awoke to the house cracking. Water was already in. I watched clothing and articles washing away. My neighbor Manuel Tchauke knows how to swim. He pulled me and the children out one by one and helped us reach safety."

But Salma is lucky. She won't have to stay in Trevo any longer. She and her family have been offered a building plot in a newly planned community. This suburb of Maputo will be known as Congolote and will become the new home for 1500 families who lost their homes to flooding in Maputo last month.

"I want to be in a place where I will never see water again," Salma said.

Congolote is certainly at a higher altitude than the informal settlement area of Trevo was. The city of Maputo has already demarcated 15m x 30m plots for three thousand families and has begun drilling boreholes for new residents. About fifty families already live there in tents—one of which has been turned into an informal market—provided by the municipality.

Engineers Andreas Koestler and David Banks, from Norwegian Church Aid, recently arrived in Mozambique to help upgrade sanitation and prevent water-born disease.

Mozambique: Nightmares into Dreams

By Elaine Eliah

Since the flood occurred, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been distributing food and emergency non-food items to Mozambique. A nearby cement factory has provided a temporary shelter for 84 families adopted by LWF.

Armenio dos Santos Jorge, proprietor of the factory, has proved to be extremely helpful during the crisis. Despite flooding and still falling rain, Armenio drove out to buy bread for the community. He has delivered firewood to people and helped them with transportation. He also set up an informal food distribution center for LWF in his factory complex.

Many Maputo families are ready to be transported to their new home sites as soon as plot numbers are assigned. However, since few building materials are available in the Congolote area, many fear that they may not have much to call home for some time. When they move, they'll take only plastic sheeting and cooking kits—along with memories of heroes like Manuel and Armenio, and nightmares of the forceful waters that overtook their communities.

Salma's family, however, will take with them something special—a new baby granddaughter, born just one week after Salma's daughter evacuated her home in the middle of the night. The family chose to name the baby "Sheila" to remind them of "Cheia," which is Portuguese for "Flood."

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Meanwhile, in Other Parts of Africa...

The threat of starvation is severe in parts of eastern Africa with nearly 16 million people in need of emergency food assistance, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned Monday.

Areas including south-eastern Ethiopia, northern Kenya and several parts of Somalia have been particularly affected, due to successive years of poor rains with loss of large numbers of livestock. Hardest hit is Ethiopia, where more than 8 million people are at risk.

In Kenya nearly 2.7 million people are facing severe food shortages. Civil conflicts are also disrupting food production and distribution, triggering food shortages and mass population displacements.

The food supply situation remains bleak in the Great Lakes region because of civil strife, insecurity, shortage of input, and erratic rainfall. Food supplies are limited in

Burundi following a reduced harvest last season, which was precipitated by dry weather and population displacement.

The food and health situation is particularly critical for some 800,000 displaced people, most of whom do not have access to their fields. The Burundi government recently began closing some of the camps in which these people live.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, severe food shortages and malnutrition are reported among large numbers of displaced people, mainly in north-eastern Katanga and South Kivu areas, which remain inaccessible due to civil unrest.

In Rwanda, despite a significant improvement in food production last season, food supply difficulties persist in some parts.

In these traditionally food-deficient provinces, the sharp reduction in cereal production will be compounded by the loss of

farmers' food and seed stocks. As a result, food security for the affected populations is likely to remain precarious until the next harvest.

In Madagascar, heavy rains and high winds from two consecutive cyclones destroyed property and infrastructure, and left some 10,000 people homeless. Preliminary indications point to serious damage to coffee plantations, fruit trees, and paddy crops in low-lying areas.

FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions are scheduled to visit these countries soon, to assess the impact of weather hazards on food production and food supplies. They also plan to estimate cereal import requirements, including food aid, for the next marketing year, which begins in April 2000.

(continued on page 4)

I'd Like to Do Something, But...

by David Tatum

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

"What should we do, then?" the crowd asked.

John answered, "The [one] with two tunics should share with [the one] who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

Luke 3:7-11 (New International Version)

...I have a couple of coats. My favorite, a blue one, hangs on the coat rack in the corner of my living room. The others are just old coats buried deep in boxes stored in the attic. I thought about getting them down the other day, but was sidetracked by a television show about Mother Teresa.

It's not hard to find people who could use those coats; I see them every day. They walk around my city collecting aluminum cans or whatever else looks like it will buy food or shelter. As I drive past them I pray that we might find a solution for this problem of hunger and homelessness. I know that God hears me, but people still freeze to death every winter and go hungry every day.

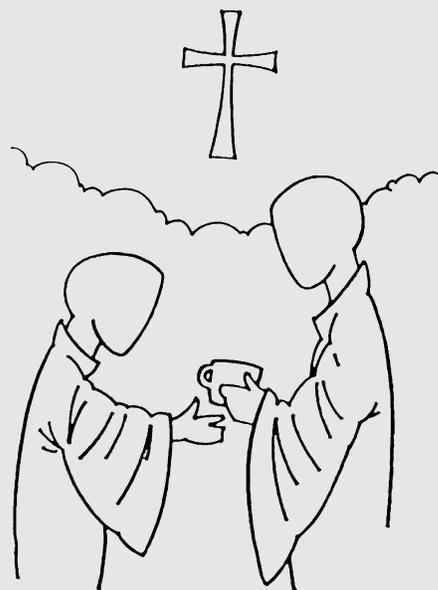
The thought overwhelms me. The problem is so complicated that it seems the answer must come in thunder and lightning. So I wait for thunder and lightning. Sometimes when I'm waiting, I

hear this funny little voice, it's nothing but a whisper and it tells me that the answer is buried deep in a box in my attic.

*Oh mighty God,
grab me with your
loving hands
and shake me
awake.*

*Awake to the souls
whose bodies
walk this earth
naked and hungry.
Awake to govern-
ments that ruth-
lessly
satisfy their own
needs while
sacrificing
the people they
were created to
serve.*

*Oh grace filled and
loving God,
shake me awake to
Your voice.*



—David Tatum is a furniture maker in Greensboro, North Carolina.

art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Resources

We Can Do That, Too!

Hunger Education Activities That Work

This is 20-page collection of easy-to-use worship materials, simulation games and dramas for congregational and community education settings. Great for youth groups, camps, CROP events, Minutes for Mission, Bread for the World events. A sequel to *We Can Do That!* with all new material developed by hunger educators here and abroad.



—produced by Church World Service. \$1.00 each (includes shipping). CWS, PO Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. 800/297-1516

Hunger Report

The Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy in Boston has released the most comprehensive analysis of hunger among U.S. families since federal welfare reform measures were signed into law in 1996, *Paradox of Our Times: Hunger in a Strong Economy*. The study indicates that the nation has entered a new era in which a strong economy no longer has its historical capacity to feed U.S. families. *Paradox of Our Times* was written by a team of analysts who evaluated annual federal hunger and food insecurity data, numerous state and local research studies, recent reports by emergency food programs across the nation, and economic trends.

—Call 617/627-3956 for more information on the report.

Simple Living 101

Toolbook for Sharing the Joy of a Simpler Lifestyle

The new Spring catalog from Alternatives for Simple Living introduces, among other superb resources, *Simple Living 101*. The book's purpose is to empower people to take three specific steps toward voluntary simplicity: changing oneself, sharing with others and changing systems. *Simple Living 101* is a practical set of tools for "making change happen."

"Anyone who is modestly articulate and has enthusiasm for simpler living can use this resource," says Gerald Iversen, ASL national coordinator. "It offers hope by putting concern into manageable steps toward change." The 8 1/2 x 11, 80-page format comes three-hole punched for \$10, or with a binder made of recycled materials for \$15. Each section contains additional resources.

—for more information contact Gerald Iverson at PO Box 2857, Sioux City, IA 51106; Phone: 712/274-8875 or 800/821-6153; E-Mail: Alternatives@SimpleLiving.org; Web: www.SimpleLiving.org.

"Waging Peace" Video from the Carter Center

The Carter Center recently unveiled a new version of the video "Waging Peace." Updated last summer and narrated by television news veteran Walter Cronkite, the tape conveys The Carter Center's goals of waging peace, fighting disease, and building hope.

—from the Carter Center; to request a copy of "Waging Peace," call 404/420-5117.

World Food Day Teleconference

Featuring Nobel Prize Winner Amartya Sen

October 16, 2000

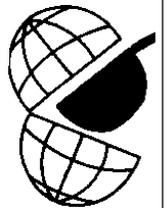
This year's World Food Day teleconference will feature a conversation with Professor Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics, in a wide-ranging discussion on the relationship of hunger and poverty—the subject of many of his books.

All teleconference components, written and audiovisual, will be offered worldwide. Simultaneous interpretation from into Spanish and French will be available for international sites.

A Study/Action Packet will be distributed to all participating teleconference sites. Single, reproducible copies of the packet will be available free of charge to sites from the National Committee office in early summer.

The program will be broadcast live from the studios of George Washington University in Washington DC, Monday, October 16th, from noon to 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time. There are no restrictions on videotaping.

—For additional information, contact Patricia Young, National Coordinator. 2175 K Street NW, Washington DC, 20437; Phone: 202/653-2404.



from Seeds of Hope:

Resources for Pentecost & Ordinary Time

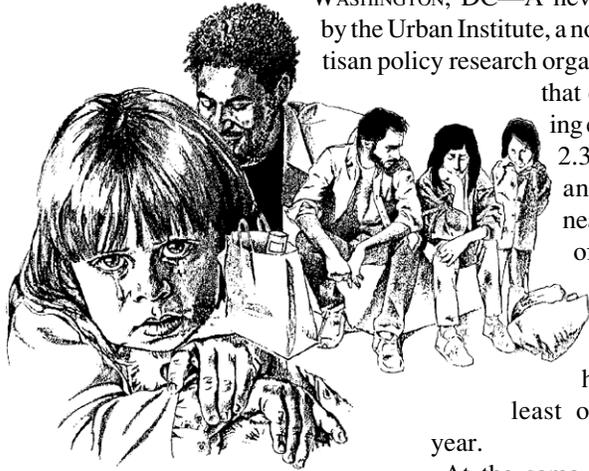


with a peace and justice emphasis

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

Millions Homeless Despite Booming Economy

WASHINGTON, DC—A new study released by the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research organization, reveals that even in a booming economy, at least 2.3 million adults and children, or nearly one percent of the U.S. population, are likely to experience a spell of homelessness at least once during the year.



At the same time, there is a larger and more diverse network of homeless services than in 1987, when the Urban Institute released earlier national estimates of the homeless population.

Key findings of the study include:

- **A High Seasonal Variation in Homelessness.** During an average week in February 1996, researchers estimated that 842,000 adults and children were homeless. During October of the same year, they estimate only 444,000 homeless people.
- **A Likely Increase in the Size of the Homeless Population since 1987.** The Urban Institute gathered two different estimates on the homeless population in 1996. These estimates fell on either side of the 1987 estimates. Considering all assumptions, the researchers conclude that the higher estimate is more representative.
- **A High Proportion of Poor People Likely to Have a Homeless Spell.** Between 2.3 to 3.5 million people are estimated to experience homelessness at least once a year.
- **A Tremendous Growth in Homeless Services.** The nation's shelter and housing capacity within the homeless assistance network grew by 220 percent between 1988 and 1996. Much of the growth is due to new funding and to priorities placed on developing transitional and permanent housing.

—For additional information, visit <www.urban.org>, or contact the Urban Institute at 202/261-5278.

Airlines Workers Instigate Food Rescue Program

In 1997, Susan Powell, a flight attendant with Delta Airlines, gathered with some of her fellow workers and spearheaded the idea for a food-recycling program. From 1997 to 1999, the effort grew to include 12 cities, including Boston, Dallas/Fort Worth, New York, and Los Angeles. A new fall campaign added Denver, Honolulu, Las Vegas, Newark, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, St. Louis, Tampa, Washington, DC., and West Palm Beach.

During flights to these cities, Delta attendants take recycling

bags throughout the cabin, giving passengers the opportunity to donate any of their unopened, uneaten bistro meals. The rescued food is collected by Dobbs International Catering representatives at the end of each flight and taken back to the Dobbs site, where it is retrieved on a regular basis by the local food-rescue program. Atlanta's Table currently collects about one ton of donated food from Delta each week.

TWA kicked off a similar program in St. Louis last January. TWA partnered with Pepsi-Cola to produce special bags for their food-rescue efforts. They are also working in conjunction with Dobbs International, Foodchain and Operation Food Search, the food-rescue program in St. Louis.

Yvonne Ward, manager of Dining and Standards at TWA, said the consensus from employees at all levels of the airline is that food rescue makes sense. "It's a shame to waste good food," she said. "TWA wants to do its part to help fight hunger and reduce food waste."

—from *FeedBack*, A quarterly publication of *Foodchain*, a national food-rescue network

Epidemic Proportions of Hunger and Obesity

Although the economy in the U.S. is reported to be more prosperous than ever before, lines at soup kitchens and shelters continue to grow longer. However, even as the number of people in nutritional need increases, U.S. medical professionals also report a national epidemic in obesity—sometimes in the same population.

A report published by Tufts University, entitled *Childhood Hunger, Childhood Obesity—An Examination of the Paradox*, unveiled some staggering statistics:

- 36.2 million Americans live in food insecure households.
- 14 million children live in food insecure homes.
- Nearly 73 percent of households experiencing hunger are at or below 85 percent of the poverty line, a common income-eligibility cut-point for federal food programs.

In addition, the report says that children from food insecure homes are more likely to intake lower amounts of vitamins, minerals, trace elements, and fiber. They also consume fewer dairy products, so they are less likely to meet the Required Daily Allowance for calcium. These reductions in nutrient intakes increase the risk for various chronic diseases.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the rise of childhood obesity. From 1963 to 1970, a study found that 4.3 percent of all children aged six to 18 years were overweight (from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey or NHANES). The study was repeated for 1988 through 1994; the second study revealed that the number had more than doubled.

Adverse effects of obesity may include:

- Increased risk of glucose intolerance and diabetes, including the "adult onset" type;
- Increases risk of cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol;
- Psychosocial consequences, including low self-esteem and discrimination; and
- Less common problems such as hypertension, sleep apnea, and orthopedic problems.

Strategies to cope with food insecurity, such as reliance on high-fat foods, may contribute to body fat gain, especially when this occurs on a cyclical basis in response to periodic food shortages. In one study from Minneapolis, preschool children classified as “hungry” or “at risk for hunger” consumed more soda or other sugared drinks than non-hungry children.

The study concluded that childhood hunger is a serious problem associated with poor health and lower academic achievement.* Other conclusions were that

- Hunger and food insecurity are problems particularly among poor households and often lead to suboptimal diets.
- Poor children are more disadvantaged in terms of their options for obtaining healthy foods and engaging in regular activity.
- Being overweight is not necessarily more common among poor children, but for some groups of children, hunger and obesity may be interrelated.

—from the *Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University* * See also the *Kids Cafe* story on page 1 of this issue.

AIDS: A Disease of Poverty?

MIAMI, FLORIDA—Isabelle Hill, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker in Miami, Florida works as a case manager at the nonprofit agency Community AIDS Resource. Most of her 80 or so clients living with HIV or AIDS are at or below the poverty line—which in the U.S. means an annual income of \$8,000 or below per person.

They are an eclectic group—African-American, Haitian, Hispanic and Anglo. They are gay and straight, male and female. Hill has discovered, though, that poverty—not AIDS—is their major burden.

Miami has 26.3 percent of Florida’s AIDS cases with only 15 percent of Florida’s population. African Americans make up 20 percent of Miami’s population, but 53 percent of the AIDS cases.

Paul Farmer, who wrote the article “Women, Poverty and AIDS” for an MCC publication, argues that poverty and other forms of social inequity—including discrimination based on gender—are leading factors in the spread of AIDS.

“Poor people are vulnerable to the disease because they are unable to obtain good health care, they lack education, and they lack choices regarding sexual partners and practices. As well, many poor people with mental illnesses are not assessed and treated early enough, and can go on to substance abuse, which clouds their judgment in sexual practices and increases their risk of acquiring AIDS.”

—from *A Common Place, a publication of the Mennonite Central Committee*

Oakland Reverend Organizes Big Changes

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—One Sunday, when Rev. Ernestine Reems was opening her urban Oakland, California, church for service, a prostitute had posted herself in front of the building, waiting for a customer.

“I told her, ‘Honey, you can’t do that here—this is a church,’” Reems recalled. When the young woman told Reems that she was

hungry and needed money for food, Reems felt her calling from the Lord. The message she heard was: “Open a transitional home for women in crisis.”

With private donations along with federal and city funds, Reems purchased and refurbished a squalid motel nearby. In 1992, she opened the home—which offers job-training and child-care programs—and named it for her mother, Matilda Cleveland. Reems also founded the E.E. Cleveland Manor for seniors—named for her father—as well as Hope Academy, a training center for young people.

Today Reems, the third of nine children and daughter of a Pentecostal minister, manages more than \$18 million for economic-development and social-service programs. She has transformed the neighborhood near her church. In an area where squealing tires, blaring music, and occasional gunshots were once common, low-income residents now live in a peaceful, gated community of 120 apartments.

The rejuvenation of this neighborhood is just one example of the many things that Reems has done. “More people should follow her example,” said Elihu Harris, the former mayor of Oakland, who worked closely with Reems. “She’s a practicing evangelist and has a strong belief system. That’s how she achieves her goals.”

—from *Parade Magazine*

Japan Joins G7 Countries in Debt Relief

TOKYO, JAPAN—Just before press time, the Japanese government announced it would join other G7 countries by agreeing to cancel up to 100 percent of a portion of the debts owed to it by the world’s most impoverished countries. It also announced that it would increase its contribution to the HIPC trust fund to \$200 million.

—from *Jubilee 2000/USA*

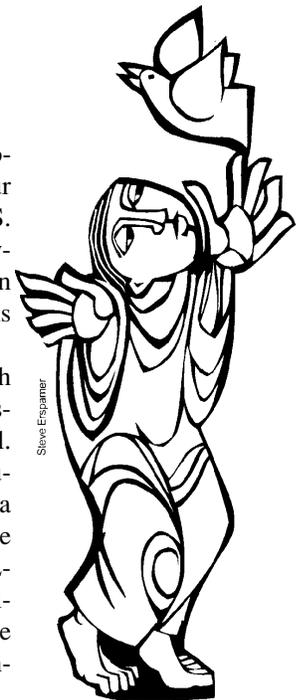
March in Washington Increases Jubilee Momentum

WASHINGTON, DC—Thousands of protesters formed a human chain for four and one-half hours around the U.S. Capitol on April 10 to convince policy-makers of the need to break the chain of poverty for underdeveloped nations around the world.

The human chain was filled with protesters carrying links made of newspaper, cloth, ribbon and aluminum foil.

The protestors, organized by Jubilee 2000/USA, assembled under a large banner that read “Cancel the Debt, Now.” Speakers included AFL-CIO President John Sweeney; President Clinton’s economic adviser, Gene Sperling; and the archbishop of Honduras, Oscar Rodriguez.

—from the *Washington Times*



art courtesy of Jubilee 2000 USA

