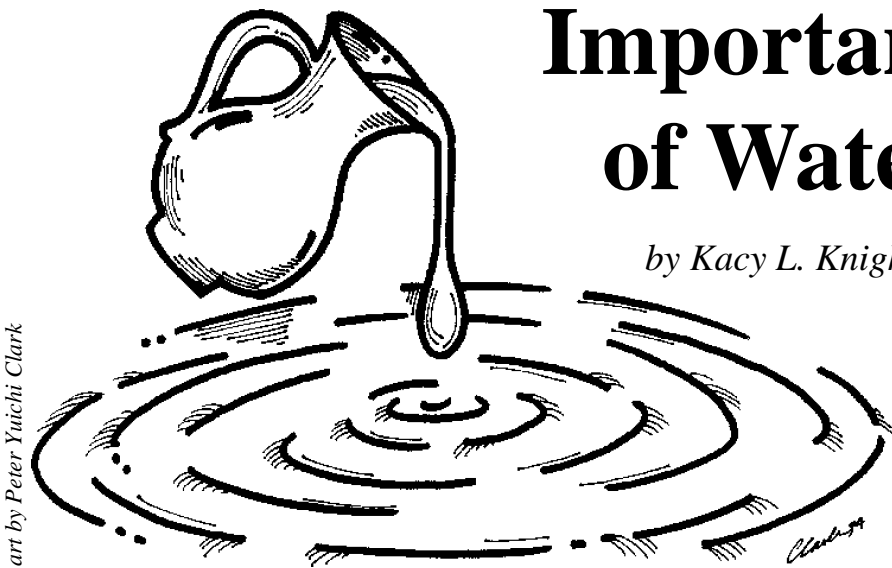


Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

The Importance of Water

by Kacy L. Knight



art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Nearly 450 million people in 29 countries currently face severe water shortages. This figure from World Hunger Year illustrates just how urgent the issue of water scarcity has become in today's world. Robert Svadlenka of World Hunger Year says if the water shortage is not addressed quickly "global water resource limits will be reached in a few decades." Though these realizations seem stark, many of the world's citizens do not realize just how water scarcity is affecting the daily lives of millions of people.

Svadlenka explains that the major problem with industrialization exists not in the cities but for agrarian communities. Water shortages cause problems for many of the world's farmers. Most of the world's food supply (55 percent) currently comes from rain-fed farmland. Svadlenka, however, reports that, in the future, the world will be dependent on irrigation-fed agriculture for 70 percent of its food supply. The problem for many

rural citizens is that they do not have access to irrigation or the means to purchase the equipment needed to start an irrigation project.

Svadlenka notes that in order to expand rain-fed agriculture extensive areas of forests and savannas would have to be cleared. According to World Hunger Relief's Lee Piché, this type of clearing has, in many instances, caused a change in weather patterns and climate that have kept rains away from several areas of the world.

Piché says that in his experience with Haitian agrarians, most cannot afford the pumps that are needed to irrigate their crops. When they cannot rely on natural rainy seasons to water crops, they must search for other means. However, Piché witnessed many Haitians who simply did not grow their regular crops because they could not pay for well drilling and pumps to move the water onto the fields. "When it hadn't rained in seven months, people were eating immature mangoes,

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- Resources
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- Et Cetera *About Your Letter to Congress...*

Latin American Farmers Beginning to Recover from 'El Niño'

SITIO MEJÍA, ECUADOR—Farmer Ethiel Brieones lost everything in 1998 when the weather phenomenon El Niño hit hard in Ecuador. Now he is getting back on his feet

“Now I produce again,” farmer Ethiel Brieones, 60, says with a smile as he looks over his land. Three years ago he grew cacao, coconuts and lemons on two fertile hectares. But in 1998 the weather phenomenon El Niño hit hard in the Manabi Province of Ecuador where Brieones lives with his wife and five children.

“It rained every day for 10 months. Water and mud came down from the mountains,” said Mr Brieones, pointing to the hills behind his farm in the village of Sitio Mejía. “It almost reached the windows of our house. All my trees died.”

All the water canals in the area were filled with infertile mud that also covered hectare after hectare of land. The rain was followed by months of drought, and Mr Brieones' field—along with fields in the rest of the province—was left grey and hard as cement. Many farmers lost all they had, and a year of extremely low production followed.

But now Mr Brieones' two hectares are green again, covered with papayas, peppers, beans, bananas and maize. In response to the reduced soil fertility and motivated by a project initiated in 1999 in the province by the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), Mr Brieone and 530 other farmers have changed crops and cultivation methods. As a result, last year he had a good harvest and was able to produce more food for his family.

Before El Niño hit, Mr Brieones could sell parts of his surplus on the local market. Now he produces primarily to meet his family's food needs. With the help of the SPFS project, he has recently installed an irrigation system on a small plot of his land, enabling him to produce more and better crops.

A few weeks before harvest, he pointed to plants in the irrigated field, weighed down by bulging green peppers, and said, “It looks as if it is going to be a good harvest.” His plan

is to sell the peppers, so that next year he might be able to irrigate an even bigger plot of land.

Mr Brieones' situation is a reflection of overall conditions in Latin America as presented in The State of Food and Agriculture 2001 (SOFA 2001), FAO's annual report on current developments affecting world agriculture.

“Among the developing country regions, the strongest performance in 1999 was recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean,

where growth in agricultural output strengthened significantly to an estimated 4.6 percent, after a growth rate of only 1.8 percent in 1998,” the report says.

The report reviews recent agricultural performance at world and regional levels. The Latin American growth rate in 1999 was twice the worldwide rate of 2.3 percent. Brazil, Ecuador and Peru performed especially well in 1999.

—from a story by K. Iversen, Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N.

art by Robert Darden

Whatever your life
situation might be,
find some way to be in
immediate contact
with the little ones,
the nobodies.
Get in touch with the
people
who are of no account,
who haven't made it into
the great American
midstream.
Maybe they don't talk 'right'
and smell 'right.'



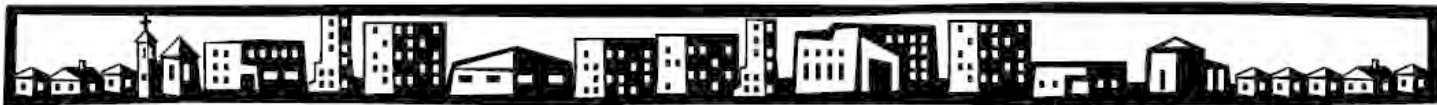
They may not seem to be part of the 'in' group.

...

There is a reason we push all these people
far away and far apart:
They represent
everything we fear
and everything we deny
about ourselves.

Yet to be touched by these people
is to discover
the deepest recesses of our life.

—Richard Rohr



Habitat San Francisco Goes ‘Condo’

by Helen Humphrey

The San Francisco affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International has come up with creative solutions to overcome the unique challenges that it faces by virtue of its location.

Jim Lowder, executive director of Habitat San Francisco, said San

are,” Lowder said. In all, it costs \$150,000 to \$175,000 to build one single-family house, “about four times the average Habitat cost to build one house,” Lowder said.

In addition, Lowder said the affiliate has had a hard time finding enough skilled labor—such as that of construction workers, many of whom are already busy with other building projects.

To make matters worse, the city’s stringent building code requires four times the amount of staff and volunteer labor as other cities, Lowder said.

11 homes in its nine-year history, compared with some affiliates, who build 20 or 30 homes every year. San Francisco’s unique housing market, Lowder said, means that “building 10 houses here [in San Francisco] is equal to 40 houses elsewhere.”

One resource that isn’t in scarce supply for the affiliate is volunteer workers. HSF has around 4,000 volunteers each year; about half that many are turned down, according to Lowder, because there isn’t enough “unskilled” work to do.

Though HSF, like all affiliates, raises its own funds, it does promote and participate in programs of Habitat for Humanity International—such as requiring all new homeowners to take First Homebuyer Education classes and complete “sweat-equity” hours. In addition, like all affiliates, HSF donates 10 percent of its funds to the international programs.

The San Francisco affiliate is also working on its second “Women Build” home. The Women Build program is an international program that opens up more opportunities for women to build Habitat houses. The program was started as a result of women’s being resisted at construction sites, Lowder said.

Lowder was a Baptist preacher for 10 years before becoming director of Dolores Street Ministries—a San Francisco neighborhood ministry—in 1981, and he moved from there to working for Habitat several years ago. He said he sees his role as still “basically a preacher,” with Habitat as his parish.

“It’s a vocational thing; it’s not a job,” he said. “It’s something you live, you eat, you breathe.”

—Helen Humphrey, a native of Oklahoma City, is a journalism student at Baylor University. The art on this page is courtesy of Habitat for Humanity.

It costs \$150,000 to \$175,000 to build one single-family house in San Francisco, about four times the average Habitat cost to build one house.



Francisco’s extremely competitive housing market has forced the cost of homes to escalate.

Unfortunately, because of the city’s booming economy and high cost of living, it is difficult to find land upon which to build houses or money with which to do the building, he said.

“In recent years the growing economy has intensified the housing crisis in the city,” Lowder said. He said it is hard to keep up with the economic development of the Bay Area. Though San Francisco is only 49 square miles, its population is more than 750,000.

“The single most limiting factor affecting houses in San Francisco is scarcity of land,” Lowder said.

He said the demise of the “dotcoms” has eased the housing crisis some, but Habitat San Francisco still struggles to find land on which to build houses.

He said the cost of land is also an issue. “Our land costs are higher than some Habitat affiliates’ entire house costs

these problems, Lowder said the affiliate has taken a number of creative steps. Habitat San Francisco will break ground on a five-story, eight-condominium building in May or June.

The building—one of the tallest buildings Habitat has ever built as new construction—will be located in the heart of downtown on Mission Street.

Lowder said the fact that 150 families applied for the eight residences in the Mission Street building is not an unusual occurrence.

The new condo building is a first step toward overcoming the land shortage in the Bay Area. City agencies also are helping by donating sites.

Over the next 15 months, Habitat San Francisco will begin building 15 housing units on land that the city has donated. That saves the affiliate at least \$30,000 per lot, Lowder said.

Habitat-San Francisco’s goal is to build 50 houses over the next five years. The affiliate at press time had completed

The Importance of Water

continued from page 1

and getting very sick,” he said. “The rice crop was a complete loss and there was nothing in the market.”

With an ever-increasing population, agricultural analysts note that these water problems are serious because of their effects on food security. “While food security affects all nations, the threats to food security will be experienced most severely by countries that are the most vulnerable to rapid population growth, drought, social upheaval, and economic stagnation,” said Svadlenka.

Piché, who spent several months in Haiti drilling wells for citizens and has returned on several occasions, says the irrigation problems can be solved. He says, “If the farmers just had a couple of water pumps, they could share them.” On one trip to Haiti, he saw the

With an ever-increasing population, agricultural analysts note that these water problems are serious because of their effects on food security.

distribution of pumps that were supported by very small taxes on the local peoples. These small fees paid for wear and tear on the equipment. However, Piché said it was difficult to collect the taxes, and without them the pumps could not be kept in repair.

Piché suggested that what people suffering from water shortages need most is financial support for well drilling, hand pumps, irrigation projects, and reforestation to increase rains. “If it would rain again, they wouldn’t need pumps and wells,” he said. He also called on U.S. citizens and concerned people around the world to conserve the water they use. He said, “I think the average American uses something like 120 gallons of water a day, while the average Chinese person uses only 3-5 gallons each day.”

Some examples Piché gave for cutting down on water usage were taking shorter showers and using compost toilets. “The average person flushes the toilet five times a day,” he said, “and with a five gallon toilet,

that’s twenty-five gallons of water right there.”

Svadlenka says that people need to develop “a more respectful attitude toward water and the ecosystems that provide for it.” He calls on the world as a whole to conserve and preserve water and to think differently about how we treat it. “For too many decades, we have treated the planet’s water system irresponsibly, drawing unsustainable amounts from the environment, returning it degraded in quality, and na-

ively expecting it to return again and again in a usable, almost pure state.” Piché, agreeing with Svadlenka, says the competitive way people use and abuse water must be stopped. “There are no pristine sources of water left out there that no one is using. That’s a scary thought,” he said.

—Kacy Knight is a Baylor University professional writing major from Amarillo, Texas. Sources: *World Hunger Year*, *Food First*, and an interview with Lee Piché, executive director of *World Hunger Relief, Inc.*

A Passion for Marginalized People

David Modiega, general secretary for the Fellowship of Christian Churches in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) since 1996, is driven by a passion for justice. His formal training is in finance, but experiences in his youth with impoverished people made such an impression on him that he eventually gave himself completely to the work of social and economic justice—particularly on the behalf of marginalized people.

When he was growing up, many of Modiega’s relatives were catechists in the Catholic church. His uncle was an Archbishop in the Anglican church. Young David accompanied these relatives, as they ministered, into neighborhoods where people lived in abject poverty.

“I was amazed that these people seemed to be living happily in spite of their poverty,” he says. “Somehow their spirits had closed their minds to their situation—to the fact that they could not change their lives for the better. But I knew that was not the way it should be. I knew that this reality called for somebody to say to the state, ‘These are your people; you must look out for them.’”

Because his burden for marginalized people would not go away, Modiega made a career move ten years ago from banking to social work, eventually ending up working for FOCCISA. One of his goals for the group is to give a voice to the marginalized people in the region. Some of this work has involved mediation between the government of his own Botswana and the “Sand People” who live in Botswana’s bush country.

“We have taken the Sand People to the government to express their own feelings about how they are being treated,” he says. “And when that happens you get a sense of achievement—even if the government does not respond. You feel that you have accomplished something because the Sand People were bold enough to go to the politicians and say, ‘This is who we are.’”

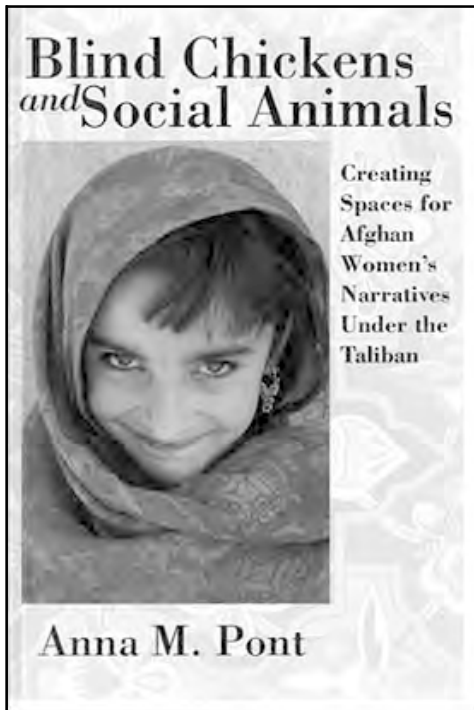
This kind of work, of course, is difficult to sustain because one sees a great deal of human misery. “I have been to Rwanda and I have seen what has happened to people there,” he says. “I have been to Angola and I have seen the instability there. I work with refugees. I have seen the pain and suffering that they go through. And I know that the human body was not meant to suffer like that.”

Asked what keeps him going in spite of the emotional toll, Modiega says that his motivation is a spiritual call. He adds that prayer is the only thing that keeps him from breaking down.

—The above is taken from an interview conducted by Katie Cook with Modiega in Harare, Zimbabwe.



art courtesy of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches



Blind Chickens and Social Animals: *A Book about Afghan Women*

This simple paperback book is a window into the shrouded world of Afghan women's issues—told not by outsiders but in their own words. Gain understanding, not just of the limitations imposed upon women in Afghanistan, but of the

dreams, hopes and strength they carry within. A powerful study by Anna M. Pont, published in partnership with Mercy Corps.

Blind Chickens and Social Animals is available for \$14.95 and can be purchased online at www.gearthatgives.com, an electronic shop affiliated with The Hunger Site. With every purchase, The Hunger Site will help provide 25 cups of food to hungry people.

The Music of Mike Stern: *All Colors, Shapes and Sizes*

Do you ever wonder what you would say to a hippopotamus if you ran into him in the wilderness? What about a giraffe? Well, worry no more. Michael Stern has the album that will answer all the questions that are keeping you up at night. Okay, maybe you're sleeping fine, but it may help your children. Stern's CD, *All Colors, Shapes and Sizes*, uses both humor and warmth to create an inspiring set of songs for children. Through the use of a banjo, guitar and a variety of other vocal and instrumental backups, Stern provides a joyful celebration for children and their families. The recording features a number of original songs that are sure to quickly become family favorites and guaranteed to make you smile, no matter how old you are.

Michael Stern is probably more well-known in the Pacific Northwest to those who work with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Physicians for Social Responsibility and numerous other peace and community groups. The influences that these organizations have had on Stern blend harmoniously throughout the recording.

For those of you who are not children, but are interested in music, Stern's *Not In My Wildest Dreams* is sure to satisfy and bless you. Stern wrote the lyrics to many of the songs on this recording after a trip to Africa with Habitat for Humanity. Featuring songs like "Everyone Of Us Deserves a Home," and "Blessed Peace," the CD allows Stern's listeners to experience the joys of serving those in need through his music.


Formerly a preschool teacher, pediatric nurse, and foster parent for children with special needs, Stern is presently a poet/songwriter, family nurse practitioner and the father of two teenagers. He has performed over the last 18 years throughout the U.S., in Central America and as part of a singing Habitat for Humanity group in Zimbabwe and Malawi. His music has been welcomed not only in religious settings, but secular as well.

For interviews or information on Michael Stern's ministry, please call 206/633-3647 or send an email to mstern@u.washington.edu or mikesongs@earthlink.net. You can also find information on Stern's web page: home.earthlink.net/~mikesongs.

—Review by Kelli Martin

Christ

fools for



art by Sally Lynn Askins

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Aid Groups Face Setbacks in Afghanistan

TERMEZ, UZBEKISTAN—As winter began in Eastern Europe, aid groups outside of Afghanistan wondered how they would get desperately needed food and supplies to Afghans inside the country's borders. Over the last three years many of Afghanistan's people have suffered famine and malnutrition. Today, various aid groups are attempting to provide the badly needed food to these Afghans, yet are running into problems of security and an increasing number of bandits.

As winter deepens, many within the aid communities continue to be concerned that Afghans are not receiving the food and other supplies they need to survive. Nico

Heigenberg, a medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, said that the people were "absolutely not ready" for winter.

At the beginning of winter many Afghans had already been living in tents for several months and, due to the years of famine, some have had to eat grass just to stay alive.

The threat of winter is compounded by the fact that much of the aid set aside for Afghanistan remains outside the country. Bandits have become a problem for many of the groups attempting to deliver supplies. In one instance, five U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) trucks on their way to Herat in western Afghanistan were stopped by "unidentified gunmen." The food was unloaded and taken to a nearby village where it was dispersed among villagers. Christiane

Berthiaume, spokeswoman for WFP, said, "There is a lot of banditry right now—people who try to take advantage of the fact that there is a kind of vacuum."

According to Burt Herman of the Associated Press, one aid group from Germany, Agro Action, said that it had sent 140 metric tons of aid across the border to Afghanistan. However, "more than four times that amount is sitting in warehouses or trucks" in Tajikistan. Herman also noted that many aid groups in Tajikistan say "red tape" bureaucracy and a lack of coordination between the Tajik and Afghan authorities has kept their supplies out of the hands of Afghans.

—from a story by Burt Herman of the Associated Press

Pakistan Seeks Financial Aid for Afghan Refugees

KARACHI, PAKISTAN—Pakistani leaders have asked for \$200 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help support the increasing crowd of Afghan refugees who have crossed the border in recent weeks.

Although refugee rehabilitation is not a part of the ADB charter, Pakistan has already received financial assistance from the U.S. and has stressed that the money would be spent on development projects for improving refugee-affected areas. "We are planning to expend part of the proposed funds on such medium-term civic development projects along the areas which have come under pressure with the influx of thousands of refugees," said Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs official Arif Azim.

Thousands have fled to the region of Chaman and Quetta in southwestern Pakistan since U.S. military strikes began on October 7. Although the terrain is rough and drought-stricken, the living conditions are deplorable, and there is extensive overpopulation, the refugees continue to come. There are currently more than 2 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. The refugee history reaches back to 1979 when Soviet occupation began, leading to a civil war. In recent years, Afghans have fled due to severe drought and now U.S. bombing campaigns against the Taliban government.

—from the African Free Press

Afghan Refugees Before and After September 11

The UN and several international aid agencies recently painted a grim picture of the future for Afghan refugees, according to a recent *Sojourners* report. The total number of Afghan refugees before the attack on the World Trade Towers in New York on September 11 was 2 million in Pakistan and 1.5 million in Iran. Since September 11, 10,000 more have moved into Pakistan, even though the border is officially closed. As many as 1 million more may pour into Pakistan, another 500,000 into Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Before September 11, one million persons were internally displaced in Afghanistan. Since the attack, that number has increased by 150,000. Sources say that between 50 and 70 percent of the population of Herat, Kabul, Jalalabad, and Kandahar have fled to rural areas since the start of the bombing.

Because of these alarming increases in the numbers of displaced people, food security has reached a crisis level. The total Afghan population, before bombing began by the U.S. and its allies, was 26 million. Out of this number, 2.5 to 3 million Afghans are in immediate danger of starving this winter. A total of 7.5 million will need assistance to get through the winter.

To make matters worse, in October, only 24 percent of the food aid required was delivered into Afghanistan, and only 21 percent distributed to those in need. The agencies providing direct relief in Afghanistan at press time were Christian Aid (www.christian-aid.org.uk/index.htm), Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk/donation/afghanistan.html), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (www-secure.ifrc.org/donation/donate.asp), Mennonite Central Committee (www.mcc.org/afghancrisis/index.html), and Mercy Corps (www.mercycorps.org).

—from *Sojourners*. Their sources: United Nations, Christian Aid, Oxfam, and the Norwegian Refugee Council.



U.S. Census Bureau's Latest Figures on Poverty

WASHINGTON, D.C.—According to two reports from the Commerce Department's Census Bureau, the poverty rate in the U.S. dropped from 11.8 percent in 1999 to 11.3 percent in 2000. The real median household income level did not change from 1999 to 2000, but the \$42,148 figure was the highest ever recorded for the median household range.

"The drop in the poverty rate belongs to a larger story of economic recovery since the last recession," said Daniel Weinberg, chief of the Census Bureau's Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division. "Poverty rates tend to peak soon after a recession. For instance, following the most recent recession in 1990-91, the poverty rate peaked in 1993. However, since that time, recovery has been wide-ranging as each racial, ethnic and age group has experienced declines in their poverty rates."

The reports also contained other information about poverty rates in America.

- About 1.1 million fewer people were poor in 2000 than in 1999—31.1 million versus 32.3 million.
- The poverty rate in 2000 was the lowest in 21 years—not statistically different from the rate in 1979 or the record low of 11.1 percent set in 1973. In addition, the number of poor families fell by nearly half a million over the period, to 6.2 million in 2000.
- The poverty rate declined more for 18- to 24-year-olds than for any other age group—a three percentage-point drop from 17.3 percent in 1999 to 14.4 percent in 2000.
- Averaging 1998 to 2000, New Mexico statistically matched Louisiana and the District of Columbia for the highest poverty rate.

- Based on comparisons of 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, ten states (Arizona, California, Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon and Pennsylvania) and the

District of Columbia showed decreases in their poverty rates.

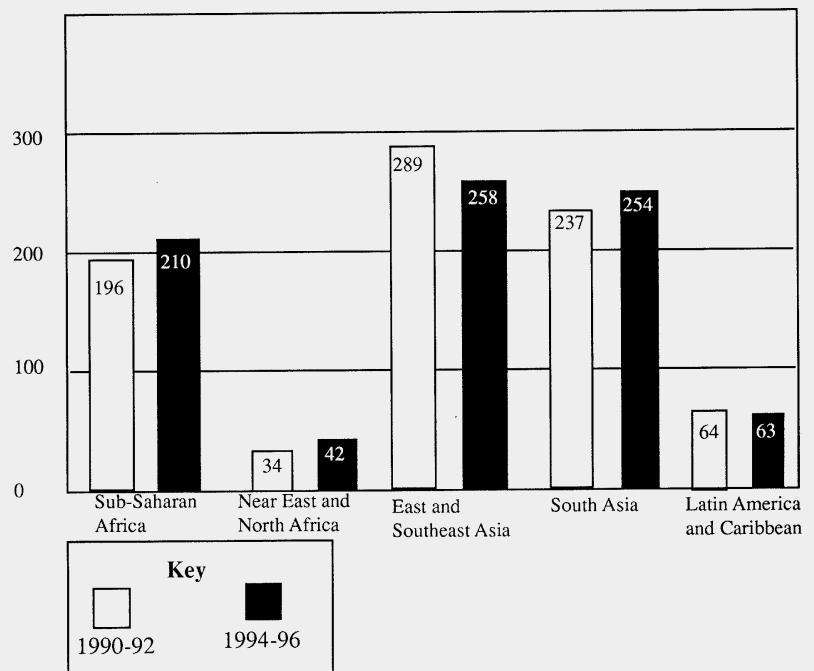
—from the Food Journal, published by the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc.

Global Outlook: Number of Hungry People Rising

800 million people are undernourished. Most of these are the landless poor, pastoral nomads, and members of small fishing communities. Among poor people women, children, the elderly and the sick are most likely to suffer from undernutrition. The first cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty. People fail to eat enough food because they cannot afford to produce it or buy it. The largest number of chronically undernourished people rose between 1990-92 and 1994-96 in three out of five developing regions of the world. The largest number of undernourished people is in Asia.

—adapted from Telefood, a project of the Food and Agriculture Administration of the United Nations

*Number of Undernourished in
Developing Countries by Region (millions)*



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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.

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Seeds of Hope Publishers also produce quarterly packets of worship materials for the liturgi-

et cetera

Your Letter May Make More Difference Than You Think

Atlanta, GA—U.S. Senator Paul Simon once said that, if a person were to sit down and write one letter to Congress about hunger issues, it would almost certainly be saving a life. Atlanta resident Guy Pujol found out last summer that the Senator was right.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, HR-1810 is a bill to close what was formerly called the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. At the beginning of June, Pujol checked the list of cosponsors—specifically checking for congress members from his own state—and he found that there were no co-sponsors to the bill from Georgia. “Imagine that,” he wrote. “The school’s located in our state, and there were no sponsors from here.”

So Guy wrote to his House representative, Cynthia McKinney, and asked her to become a cosponsor.

“Within in seven days of my letter, she had signed on. I thought, ‘Great, but it’s probably just coincidence about the timing.’” While it would have been nice to think that Representative McKinney had made this fantastic decision based solely on Guy’s well-crafted letter, he knew better. Or he thought so.

At a peacemaking conference in Oberlin, Ohio, Guy was collecting some last-minute information for the internet advocacy workshop he had agreed to lead. He called McKinney’s office in the District of Columbia and asked to speak to the aid handling this issue. “I told the aid I was calling to thank Rep. McKinney for cosponsoring HR-1810. I said, ‘By the way, can you tell me how many people contacted Rep. McKinney about this issue?’”

“The aid replied, ‘Two. One email and one letter—both asking her to cosponsor. She read them both and agreed to cosponsor.’”

“One of those two was mine,” Guy said. That’s proof that communicating with our legislators can be effective. “The fact is,” he said, “that they receive very little correspondence on issues, and a few letters, phone calls, faxes, or emails can make an impact.”

—lkc



This art was created by Van Darden as an interpretation of Hebrews 13:1-3: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

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

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