

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

The Food Crisis in Malawi: A Report from the Inside

by Patrick Mawaya

Although Malawi's political leaders deny it, the country has plunged into a major food security crisis over the last few months. Oddly, the fact that many people are now going to bed hungry has not seemed to affect the few people in the highest level of government. These few seem content with the exorbitant prices now charged for grain.

At many restaurants in Malawi urban centres, I have seen one of the signs that our country has reached a crisis point: women crowded around the entrances with babies on their backs, begging for a few crumbs of food.

In February, the priests of the Lilongwe Catholic Diocese met at Bethany Prayer House in Capital Lilongwe to discuss the situation. They noted, in a press release issued immediately after the meeting, that "famine is touching practically all

the country." They went on to say, "In some of our parishes, elderly people, who haven't left their villages for a long time, now struggle to get to our churches, where they sit down, saying that they have come to die. They have no food and no means to buy food."

In Dowa District, 50 kilometres from Capital Lilongwe, people are feeding themselves by digging up roots and eating leaves, sometimes with disastrous consequences. In Nauchi Village, Madisi, a mother and four children died because of jealousy. They still had some food, while others did not, so they were poisoned. On Estate 21 of Press Agriculture in Kasungu District, 120 kilometres from Capital Lilongwe towards the Northern Region of Malawi, a tenant went to buy husks. What he was sold was mixed with sawdust. He and his family barely reached Madisi Hospital in time to escape death from eating the mixture.

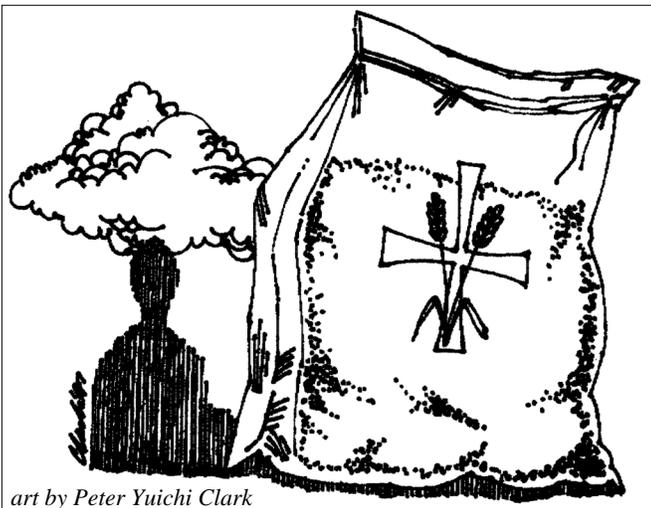
In late winter, a number of funerals were conducted for people said to have died of hunger in Kambudzi Village in Linthipe, which is 60 kilometres from Capital Lilongwe on the way to Blantyre in Malawi's southern region.

The number of children running away from villages because of hunger has increased, according to Sr. Rita Hieble, coordinator of Tikondane Project for Street Children (a project of the Lilongwe Diocese) These children, she said, prefer

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art by Peter Yuichi Clark

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to be on the streets of the cities. Traditional coping mechanisms have not worked in this situation. Working for food is hardly possible when there is so little food available.

This is not the only problem. Farmers have been forced to sell off their livestock—at a reduced rate. Chickens, which would fetch more than 100 *kwacha* (US\$2), are now selling for 30 to 40 *kwacha* (less than US\$1). Goats are going for less than 300 *kwacha* (US\$6). And cattle are bringing in as little as 1500 *kwacha* (US\$30). Moreover,



“...the situation is much more serious than the usual starvation many Malawians experience every year. What we are experiencing is a real human disaster, a famine.”

—the priests of Lilongwe Catholic Diocese

except for low prices charged for livestock, money is no longer being treated as an acceptable form. People have begun to trade their livestock in barter fashion. For instance, a farmer might be paid a pail of maize in exchange for one goat.

The Scarcity of Maize

To make matters worse, the supply of maize has reached a crisis level. While maize is still available in some markets, it is offered in such small amounts that it can only be bought in very small quantities. People often spend time queuing up to get their turn to buy 10 or 20 kilograms of maize. Others are hoarding and selling at exorbitant prices, sometimes for as much as 1400 *kwacha* per 50 kilograms.

Earlier in the year, there were hopes that maize supplies would not be a problem; the government had ordered supplies from South Africa and Uganda. However, reports also appeared indicating that maize was being sold off at night, in various Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporations (ADMARC) depots, so that rural people had nothing to buy the following morning. Some officials suspected foul play.

This happened after the government banned all private maize traders and mandated ADMARC with the responsibility to ensure that maize was available to all rural areas. But it never reached the rural areas.

In late winter, the National Bank of Malawi's (NBM) *Economic Newsletter* reported, “The availability of food remains one of the immediate major economic problems the country faces and tough measures leveled against the private sector will breed corruption. Bottlenecks in transportation and distribution of maize still remain and official ban imposed on private traders has worsened the problem of availability...”

The NBM said that the government must allow private traders to get back into business and remove the surtax on maize

flour until harvest time to address the ongoing food crisis. Traders are bringing in maize flour from South Africa and the government is

charging a 25 percent surtax, increasing the price even further. The NBM *Newsletter* reported that in such situations “...a parallel market develops, and there is scarcity, which makes it a fertile ground for corruption.”

Response of the Religious Community

Many religious institutions have responded to the crisis, with a number of initiatives, including feeding programs in religious headquarters and health centres. St. Gabriel Mission Hospital (a mission of the Lilongwe Diocese) at Namitete has stopped charging user fees for its services and is offering free food to all patients.

According to Sr. Justina Morn, a Missionary Sister of the Carmelite Order, and a spokesperson for St. Gabriel, the hospital started the feeding programme in February and it will run until people have harvested their crops. The 100-bed hospital, is providing free *likuni phala* in its 11 mobile clinics and to all outpatients.

Since the introduction of these services, the hospital has treated hundreds of people from surrounding areas, most suffering from malnutrition. Morn said, “It is both adults and the young ones who are suffering from malnutrition. A poor diet causes all sorts of diseases. We are hoping that our gesture can make a little difference in their lives.”

In Mchinji District, on the western bor-

der with Zambia, the Christian and Muslim communities have set up an emergency feeding centre where both Christian and Islamic groups work to distribute food.

The priests of Lilongwe Diocese wrote: “*With the small means at our disposal, we have been doing what we can. In our parishes and hospitals, our clinics and convents, we are assisting the hungry. This is sometimes done in cooperation with other faith communities and civic organisations. But the situation is much more serious than the usual starvation many Malawians experience every year. What we are experiencing is a real human disaster, a famine. It is killing many people, especially in the rural areas.*”

Insensitivity in High Places

Despite the concerns of religious leaders, President Bakili Muluzi has shown insensitivity to the situation. On his return from a recent three-week visit to the U.K. and U.S., Muluzi denied that people were starving. He was responding to a question from a reporter who noted that a large number of people were dying of starvation, and wanted to know what the government planned to do. The president said that the media was merely spoiling the good name of the country.

This is not the first time that Muluzi has been insensitive to the people's plight. At one time when people complained of the high cost of living and runaway commodity prices, the president said he did not own a grocery or a shop—so it was not his fault.

In contrast, Vice President Justin Malewezi, in an interview with the BBC, acknowledged that on his recent tour of some parts of the country, he had been learned that people were dying of hunger.

Political analysts say the contradictions coming from the high offices of the country puts the integrity of the government under serious question. The president does not believe that people are dying, and others believe that he is committing injustices.

Special Appeal from Lilongwe Priests

The priests of the Lilongwe Diocese have called for special government intervention. Among the things that the priests have proposed are that all Members of Parliament should report the real situation in their constituencies, that the government declare the famine a national disaster, that the govern-

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Afghanistan: Twenty Years of Food Insecurity

HERAT, AFGHANISTAN—Even though the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Afghanistan did not reach the estimated millions after last September 11, human conditions are abysmal for the 180,000 who did leave their homes. Aid workers have warned for some months that the Mashlakh camp is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster.

Located 30 miles west of Herat, the camp is home to more than 350,000 displaced Afghans. Since this spring 100 of them have been dying each day of exposure and starvation. Mashlakh, in English, is translated “slaughterhouse.” It is named so because the camp is located on the grounds of an abandoned slaughter plant—a name that one writer called “eerily apt.”

Ian Lethbridge agrees. In more than 15 years of working in humanitarian disasters, Lethbridge, executive director of a European charity called Feed the Children, says Maslakh is among the worst he has experienced. “I always judge everything by what I have seen in Africa,” he said. “And this is on the scale of Africa. I was shocked at the living conditions of the new arrivals.”

Aid workers say most of the world does not realize that the recent political conditions that have displaced people have come on the heels of a three-year drought—not to mention two decades of armed conflict on their soil.

Even before the U.S. air strikes began against the Taliban, Afghanistan was suffering from one of the worst humanitarian crises on the planet. According to the UN, the infant mortality rate was 161 deaths per 1,000 births. Last year the country experienced a 2.2 ton cereal deficit. One-fifth of the population (more than five million people) were dependent on outside food assistance. According to a Church World Service (CWS) spokesperson, the country has had a food security problem for 20 years.

CWS project workers, most of whom are Afghan, have reported to the organization’s New York headquarters that some free food aid has caused a negative impact on the local food market. Although the debate on this continues among NGOs, Church World Service workers have begun to focus on supplemental foods (particularly for infants and children) rather than staples.

Meanwhile, NGOs from around the world are working on the reconstruction of homes, as well as emergency assistance for food and warmth. And many agencies are beginning to talk about what they will do if another harvest fails.

Rural families have come to camps such as Mashlakh only to find that conditions there are worse than what they left behind. Some families huddled through the winter by digging foxholes in the frozen earth and scavenging for a few tattered blankets or torn plastic sheets. A stone’s throw from these foxholes is one of the many graveyards on the camp’s edges. And now that the harsh winter is behind them, the ones who survived still face harsh deprivation.

Izzah Burza, 38, and her family have been at the camp for a month. Escaping the war and drought, they were drawn by the rumor of food, only to be disappointed. “We traveled more than 125 miles to this camp,” she recently said to a reporter. “When I arrived I had four children, now I have two. We’ve had nothing to eat for a week.”

Fresh arrivals to Maslakh find themselves in a vicious cycle. They cannot get help until they are registered as refugees by the World Food Programme staff. But they cannot register without help. And at the moment, the WFP has only a skeleton staff at Maslakh, not nearly enough to deal with the thousands already there, let alone those who continued to show up daily in early spring.

But IOM (the International Office of Migration) launched a massive program of reorganization in

the spring, directing new arrivals to a new camp, and reregistering the present inhabitants. Those who are not yet registered—and do not receive food aid, warm clothing or wood-burning stoves—are forced to make do outside the camp itself. They pitch whatever shelter they can muster on a barren plain littered with human waste.

Although little fighting took place in Herat during Western strikes against the Taliban, little aid reached the Mashlakh camp. The refugees there have become discouraged, and, in some cases, bitter toward Westerners who, they think, could be helping them. “You are just taking pictures,” one woman at the camp said to a photographer from *The Guardian*. “You are not here to help. We can’t eat pictures.”

—compiled by Kimmy Scott. Sources include: “Hunger and Vengeance Haunt Afghanistan’s sprawling tent city” by Suzanne Goldenberg, *The Observer*, “Desperation grows in Afghan Camp” by Anthony Shadid, *Boston Globe Online*, “The Condemned” by Mohsen Makhmalbaf, *The Guardian*, *Church World Service*.

Women’s Project Brings Hope

A hopeful note for the Afghanistan/Pakistan refugee situation comes in the form of a quilt-making income-generation initiative begun by an NGO in Pakistan. Through the project, which is based in Quetta, refugee women put together quilts for other refugee women. According to Church World Service, many of these women are the primary wage earners for their families. The quilts they make are purchased and then used in shelter kits for other refugees. More than 400 women have benefited from this project.

—For more information, contact Church World Service, PO Box 968; Elkhart, IN 46515 or look on the web site: www.churchworldservice.org. (art by Peter Yuichi Clark)



art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Getting Off Welfare Harder in Recession

Since March, 1.2 million people in the U.S. have lost jobs because of the recession, which raises questions as to how effective the 104th Congress's welfare reform, which was implemented in 1997, really is. Many of those who have lost jobs are also now facing the five-year time limit the reform imposes on its recipients.

Overall, caseloads nationwide had dropped as of last summer, though some states experienced increases in welfare cases. But every state has seen its caseloads drop. Since 1994—when the number of welfare recipients was at its peak at 12.9 million—by the end of last June, the number has fallen 58 percent to 5.38 million.

Critics say the present system doesn't necessarily keep people working or give them a wage a family can live on. The cycle continues, leaving many recipients poor or alternating between jobs, returning to government assistance over and over.

"What this recession will demonstrate is that much of the success of welfare reform is due to a strong economy and not to policies resulting from the '96 act," said Mark Cohan, litigation director at the Welfare Law Center in New York.

In one response to this situation, the Bush administration proposed that Congress restore food stamps for approximately 363,000 legal immigrants. The proposal came as part of a Farm Bill that was signed into law in May, shortly before press time. The law will allow non-citizens with low income to qualify for food stamps after living in the United States legally for five years.

"We believe that this will go a long way toward meeting the needs of a number of children and adults...and allow them to have access to nutritious foods," a senior U.S. official told reporters, saying the average monthly benefit will be \$47.

Advocacy organizations praised the President's part in the measure, while others are wary. Representative Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado), chairman of the

Immigration Reform caucus, fears it will "entice people to come to the United States to be on welfare." Tancredo vowed to contest the measure.

According to Wade Horn, a child psychologist and the new welfare chief in the Bush administration, the key is for the

government to direct more efforts toward aiding children so they do not grow up in poverty, and to help former welfare recipients get enough training and support so they can move beyond low-wage jobs.

—from an Associated Press story by Robert Tanner (compiled by Kimmy Scott)



I know that You know all my burdens and worries. I have given them to You numerous times. I have allowed Your spirit to seep into me many, many times to form... to cause brokenness. And yet, something lies as a barrier to where I feel inadequate. What do I need to do? What do I need to subtract or add to my life so that I'm on track with You? Not in front of You, not behind You, but with You... beside You. I confessed all the sins that I'm aware of, and even some that I'm not. So, I know there is no equation to You. I can't mathematically put this together because You are not about math or science or reading or any other subject, except for faith.

There's a lot going on in my life which I can't control but I know You can. So, I give it to You. I'm not unhappy, but happy and content. I simply don't understand why I'm not in the midst of spiritual bliss right now. Tell me what I need to do to obtain such bliss. It's just hard to wait for others' wants, needs and desires, if I'm having trouble continuously finding you in the process. Amen...

—The above is a prayer written by a homeless man named Ishmael who lives in downtown Washington, DC. Used with permission from Ishmael. Art by cartoonist Norma Young, who is also a missionary in Japan.

Remember the Poor

*The Challenge to Theology
in the Twenty-First Century*

by Joerg Rieger

Even as Capitalism claims victory in the global marketplace, the reality of poverty, suffering, and pain continues to grow throughout the world—including the so-called “First World.” This new book explores the challenge to theology of the increasingly emphatic cries of the people at the margins. 241 pages, \$18.95 from World Vision Publications; MARC; 800 W. Chestnut Ave.; Monrovia, CA 91016-3198; Phone: 800/777-7752 or 626/301/7720; Fax: 626-301-7786; E-mail: MARCpubs@wvi.org; www.marcpublications.com.

Never Again a World Without Us

Voices of Mayan Women in Chiapas, Mexico

by Teresa Ortiz

Travel with Teresa Ortiz from the highlands to the rain forest of Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, and listen to what indigenous women are telling her about their lives. Ortiz lays out her own perspective to the reader, helps to set the context, then turns the “floor” over to the women, who confide in us their hopes and struggles in the midst of a hidden war between the indigenous Zapatistas and the federal government of Mexico, between landowners and peasants. 207 pages with photos, \$14.95 from Epica (Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean) Publications; 1470 Irving Street, NW; Washington, DC 20010; Phone 202/332-0222; Fax: 202/332-1184; E-mail: epicabooks@igc.org; web: www.epica.org.

AIDS Pins from South Africa

Offer a Gift of Hope to HIV-Positive Women.

HIV-positive women fashion hand-beaded pins in the Sinikithemba (Zulu for “we give hope”) Center in Durban, South Africa as a part of an income-generating project sponsored by Church World Service. The attractive pins, done in traditional Zulu bead work, hold the shape of a banner and feature the international red AIDS ribbon with the South African flag on the bottom. They come with a full-color gift card that briefly describes the staggering challenge of the global AIDS crisis and the ways CWS is responding, along with in-country partner groups.

For example, one of the creative CWS AIDS-response efforts involves the use of the Moringa tree as a local, easily-available, low-cost nutritional supplement in several African nations. The Moringa’s leaves, pods, and flowers contain a number of vitamins and minerals which are missing in the diets of many Africans, and are particularly important for HIV-positive individuals.

If you send a contribution of \$5 or more to CWS AIDS-response efforts, they will send you the pin with the card. For more information, contact CWS at PO Box 968; Elkhart, IN 46515; Phone: 800/297-1516; Web: www.churchworldservice.org.

Hunger No More

Hunger Curriculum for Congregations

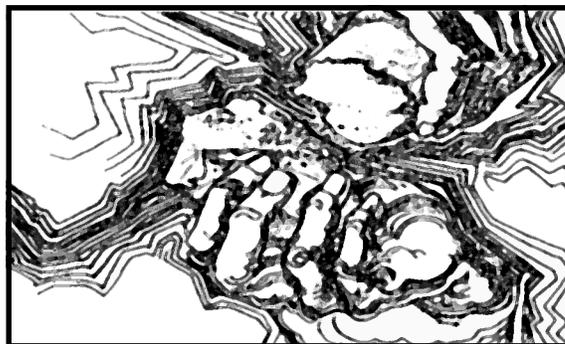
Here is a curriculum that will help you present important U.S. hunger and poverty issues to study groups in your congregation, social action committees, youth or children’s committees, or even ecumenical groups. Inspired and sponsored by the same denominational hunger leaders who bring you *Hunger News & Hope*, this resource has been created for Christian, Jewish, and Islamic communities.

Hunger No More includes six sessions for adults and youth, along with a separate set of materials for children and youth that can be used simultaneously with the former or separately. The Leader’s Guide includes a 48-page magazine that describes each session, and six leaflets that can be used as bulletin inserts, printed in congregational publications, or distributed as handouts.

The sessions cover current welfare programs and nutritional programs, as well as issues for low-income wage earners and discussions of how U.S. public policy affects poor people.

Order from Bread for the World, 50 F Street, NW, Suite 500; Washington, DC 20001; Phone 800/82-BREAD or 202/639-9400; Fax 202/639-9401; www.bread.org. The curriculum can also be downloaded from the web site.

In the Breaking of the Bread



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Justice Group Lauds Major Victory for Poultry Workers

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS—The National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice (NICWJ) recently commended the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for taking steps to recover back wages owed to poultry workers and insisting on future compliance from employers in major poultry companies. In May the Perdue company agreed, under pressure from the DOL, to pay employees millions of dollars in back wages. The department also began a suit against the Tyson company.

The Perdue company has agreed to pay over \$10 million in back wages to approximately 25,000 workers. In addition, Perdue's managers will commit resources to finding the workers to whom they owe money. This is one of the largest settlements the DOL has ever made.

In addition, Perdue agreed to bring all its plants into full compliance of labor laws—

specifically the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)—within a one-year period.

Because the Tyson poultry company refused to settle the issue, the DOL has pursued a suit against them and is seeking a national injunction restraining the company from future violations of the FLSA labor law. The suit is filed on behalf of workers in Tyson's Blountsville, Alabama plant. Suits have also been filed by private attorneys on behalf of workers in other Tyson plants.

Kim Bobo, executive director of the NICWJ, says that the DOL is committed to winning this case and should be able to bring Tyson into full compliance. "Eventually," Bobo said, "There should be settlements for back wages and future compliance for Tyson workers that will result in tens of millions of dollars for poultry workers."

Furthermore, the DOL has announced that it will seek additional settlements with other poultry companies, which will likely result in tens of millions of dollars more in back

wages and future wages for workers.

—For more information about the work of the NICWJ, contact them at National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice; 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., 4th Floor; Chicago, IL 60660; Phone: 773/728-8400; Fax: 773/728-8409; Email: info@nicwj.org; Web: www.nicwj.org.

World Food Summit: Five Years Later

ROME, ITALY—This summer the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will host a meeting of world leaders to review the progress achieved towards ending hunger in the last five years.

Five years ago, heads of state from 185 countries and the European community pledged their commitment "to achieving food security for all and to an on-going effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present

level no later than 2015."

The first summit took place in Rome during the middle of October 1996. The event brought together 10,000 participants and provided a forum for debate on the eradication of hunger.

"The World Food Summit: Five Years Later" will be held in conjunction with the 28th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The CFS will consider two main items directly related to the Summit: the *Assessment of the World Food Security Situation* and the *Report on Progress in Implementing the World Food Summit Plan of Action*.

Seven commitments make up the World Food Summit Plan of Action. Commitment One ensures an enabling political, so-

• Legislative Update • Legislative Update •

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families:

Republican Bill Passes House, Goes to Senate

On May 16th, by a vote of 229 to 197, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill (H.R. 4737) that reauthorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) but makes significant changes in work requirements, establishes broad executive branch authority to waive rules in many low-income programs, including in the Food Stamp Program, and allows up to five states to opt for a Food Stamp block grant. The Republican bill largely follows recommendations from President Bush. The bill includes stricter work requirements on welfare recipients and a waiver allowing states to seek exemptions from certain laws and rules that govern welfare, food stamps, public housing, child care, and other programs for low-income people. The House voted against a Democrat-sponsored alternative by a vote of 222 to 198. The Senate Finance Committee is expected to mark up its bill in June.

—from the *New York Times* and *Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)*: www.frac.org.

Recently Passed Farm Bill Expands Food Stamp Funding

Minority Caucuses Work Together to Support 2002 Bill

Members of the U.S. Congressional Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Caucuses, groups which often have felt pitted against one another, recently formed a coalition with a policy agenda based on education, economic empowerment, health care, and immigration. One of the coalition's recent successes was getting expanded food stamp eligibility in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act that was signed into law in May. A letter from members of the Black and Hispanic caucuses to the House Agriculture Committee while the bill was in conference said "[w]ithout a strong and comprehensive nutrition title that addresses the specific interests of both caucuses, there is little reason for many of our caucus members to vote in favor of a farm bill." More than three-fourths of the "legal" immigrants who lost food stamp eligibility in 1996 live in California, Texas, or Florida. The new law will restore food stamps to an estimated 390,000 immigrants in the U.S.

—from the *New York Times*, the *Houston Chronicle*, and the *Dallas Morning News*

cial, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty. Commitment Two plans to implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all.

The third commitment aims at pursuing participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies and practices in high and low potential areas. Commitment Four strives to ensure that food, agricultural and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system.

Commitment Five hopes to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies. The sixth commitment promotes optimal allocation and use of public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas.

The seventh and final commitment states, "We will implement, monitor, and follow-up this Plan of Action at all levels in cooperation with the international community."

The World Food Summit web site offers all the major summit documents (see www.fao.org and look for World Food Summit or Committee on World Food Security). A World Food Summit CD ROM is also available.



Sudanese Women and Girls Learning to Read

BLUE NILE, SUDAN—Because of a project of Church World Service and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), women and girls in some parts of Sudan are learning to read.

Ongoing civil war in Sudan has had a devastating affect on lives and families, as

well as on the country's economy and likelihood of development. In the Blue Nile and Nuba Mountain areas of southern Sudan, 90 percent of the women are illiterate. Families have been separated by the fighting and, in many instances, women have become the main contributors to their families' livelihoods—yet they are largely excluded from leadership, planning, and decision making.

Among the factors that have contributed to the low development of women are a preference for boys' education over girls', high rates of poverty and insecurity, women's traditional responsibility for domestic chores; and arranged marriages for girls while they are still quite young.

By promoting women's literacy, the NSCC looks forward to a transformed Sudan. This new Sudan would be a country at peace,

where there is full and equal development of all people regardless of gender, race, or religion.

Initially, 200 women and girls in the Blue Nile and Nuba Mountain areas are learning to read, write, and do math. They will be able to better manage their income generating projects and more fully participate in community life.

By the second year of the project, the plan is that 400 women and girls will have gained literacy and math skills through these classes. In turn, these women will share their knowledge and insights with others within their communities and regions.

The project includes instruction, construction of classrooms, and the provision of textbooks and other equipment.

—from *Church World Service*

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ment exercise price controls (to slash the price of maize and subsidize the maize price through the extra revenue from sales of fuel levy) and that the international community to hurriedly assist the Malawian population in this crisis.

The priests named the following actions (or inactions) as causes for this disaster:

- the practice of those who, having bought maize at very low prices, are now reaping huge, illegal, and immoral profits;
- the fact that maize has been sold to people of means and to other countries while it was known that harvest predictions were very poor;
- the actions of international financial organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which pressured ADMARC to sell the country's strategic reserve of maize and use the proceeds to pay off debt rather replace the maize with a fresh reserve stock, thus showing more regard for macroeconomic principles than for food security; and
- the fact that in the face of this famine, the government is unwilling to reduce the price of maize through subsidies.

Fr. Angello Belotti and Sr. Victoria Chirwa, in an open letter to the *Episcopal Conferences and Churches in the Nation* newspaper said, "We believe it is urgent that you speak out for your flocks, especially those who feel neglected and are now desperate for food."

The letter goes on to say:

"... We cannot afford to wait until there is nothing left to sell or until [people] die of hunger. We are in an emergency situation and we need to take urgent measures for both short and long term. In the short term, the government must ensure that the maize imported is the cheapest on the market and reaches the remotest villages in the countryside. In the long term, the government must start thinking about the future."

The truth is that the hunger situation has become a politically sensitive issue. If President Muluzi remains adamant and insensitive to the situation, this may mark the end of an era. For the time being, Malawi is in dire need of assistance to alleviate the human tragedy of hunger.

—Patrick Mawaya is a Malawian journalist who specializes in humanitarian and justice issues, particularly in southern Africa.

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 - Reformed Church in America
- United Methodist Committee on Relief

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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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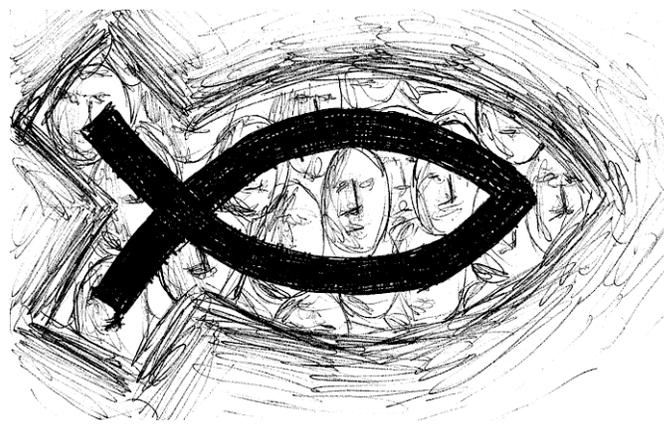
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et cetera

So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. [Jesus] always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on...
—*Hebrews 10:23-24 (The Message)*

The body of Christ should live out, for all to see, the meaning of being trustworthy stewards of God's creation. This will be seen in how we view our possessions, in our style of living, in how we respond to global economic injustice, and in how we show love for one another by sharing ourselves and what we own. If we belong to one another spiritually, then economic bonds must join us. And if we have been deeply touched by God's compassion, we will naturally feel a call to help the hurting world God so loves.

—*Senator Mark O. Hatfield*



Why indeed must "God" be a noun? Why not a verb?... the most active and dynamic of all?
—*Mary Daly*

Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop with her companions on earth, yet she will never fly with them to Heaven; but when both are joined together, then doth the soul mount up to her eternal rest.
—*J. Beaumont*

To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And one who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.
—*Mahatma Gandhi*

Seeds of Hope Publishers also produce quarterly packets of worship materials for the liturgical year—with an economic justice attitude. These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art, and drama.

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