



Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

The Gender Fishbowl

by Lee McKenna

Editor's note: Lee McKenna is minister and a Conflict Transformation specialist. Lee, who lives on a farm in Ontario, travels around the world—South Sudan, Uganda, Northern India and the Philippines, to name a few—training people to be peacemakers in areas where there is great conflict. Lee leads people, who have little hope, into re-imagining themselves and their lives, largely by means of what she calls “peace games.” She refers to one of these activities as “The Gender Fishbowl.” The following is a description of what happens during one of these games.

Typically, one of the ways by which we raise issues of gender is a “fishbowl.” This consists of two concentric circles of chairs with women in conversation in the middle and men on the outside listening.

We ask two questions. The first is, “What is the ideal woman in your culture?” A sigh moves across the tight knees-to-knees circle of women. The men lean in. It

See “Gender Fishbowl” on page 2



Above: Lee McKenna (inner circle, just left of center) leads a Gender Fishbowl activity during a Conflict Transformation training in Nagaland, in Northeast India.

Photo courtesy of Lee McKenna.

What You'll Find Inside:

- 2 Gender Fishbowl, continued
- 3-7 Special Section: Women & Poverty
- 8 Three Books about Women & Poverty
- 10 Resources & Opportunities:
 - Bread for the World Offering of Letters
 - Meeting Women's Personal Needs with Dignity
- 12 Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



Gender Fishbowl

continued from page 1

doesn't matter whether the question is being posed in Toronto or Timbuktu, San Francisco or Santo Domingo, Manhattan or Manila. Women say some variation of the same thing. The rule of men is the common narrative, with local distinctives.

In South Sudan, they say,

Girls are not for educating—what for? Our role is to bring cows into the marriage, to have babies, to fetch water, grind millet, tend the livestock, till the gardens. You don't need an education for that! We are to stay home, keep quiet. Men beat us and we're supposed to be grateful; when the next wife arrives, we are polite. Our work begins even before we are big enough to tie our baby brother or sister on our backs—and carry water on our heads and hoe the sorghum.

Bought and sold for cows, lots of cows, into polygamous arrangements, their genitals mutilated at puberty (to "keep

By the end of a training like this, through their conversations with one another, both men and women understand this fact: Any society that marginalises half its population sentences itself to permanent underdevelopment and a permanent warrior culture.

them from wandering"), women are little more than slaves. The illiteracy rate of women in South Sudan is second only to Afghanistan.

We ask the second question. "Is this okay with you?" This time the sigh is more like a groan. The men are getting restless; they're not sure what to do with what they are hearing. They're figuring out that they are eavesdropping on a conversation that would otherwise not be held within their hearing.

We have no say. Decisions about our village, about our lives, are made without us having anything to say. My work never ends. He is in the village common, drinking tea and talking. The boys are playing football amongst the eucalyptus trees; the girls are washing clothes, stoking fires, stirring pots.

We play other games throughout the course of a training, designed to help participants to understand the dynamics of their culture. They will unpack emotions that surround the horrors they have experienced. They will come to understand the "other" through these exercises.

The Gender Fishbowl is one of the most profound of the games. By the end of a training like this, through their conversations with one another, both men and women understand this fact: *Any society that marginalises half its population sentences itself to permanent underdevelopment and a permanent warrior culture.*

With the sound turned off, it might look like silly games. But what it turns out to be is the rending and mending of the heart and soul in the service of peace. "Aren't we all tired of war?" they want to know. "Can we trust peace negotiation processes that are played out against all-male displays of militarised prowess? Where are the points of intervention in the cycle of violence?" But also they want to know what can be modelled in a place of exile, right here and now—in new ways of being with one another. They want to know how to intervene in conflict before it turns into violence.

At the end of the training in Uganda, the joy—the jumping, laughing joy—is startling in its exuberance. Sudanese in exile from their homes in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile state celebrate alongside their Ugandan hosts, who are now friends. It is only the beginning. They will take their certificates to hang on the walls of their modest shelters to remind them of their commitment to peace, and to help them share these concepts with others.

In Sudan, we began a two-week training, this time with all Christian participants living in Internally Displaced Persons camps, with a worship service gathered around the carved wooden image of a kneeling, pregnant, praying, weeping woman as the symbol of gestating wisdom awaiting the labouring of birth.

This is, indeed, symbolic of what occurs during these trainings. We wrestle repeatedly with the Bible and its mixed messages of redemptive violence and radical peacemaking. Trained as trainers, they will return to their temporary homes to train others, multiplying the experience, building peace from the family level to the government level.

—For more information about Lee McKenna's work, go to www.partera.ca.



Special Section

Women & Poverty

by Linda Freeto

Poverty is not a new phenomenon. Even Jesus claimed that we would "have the poor with us always." (Matt. 26:11). But that doesn't mean that we aren't supposed to do anything about it.

Poverty reaches around the world. No nation, no state, no county, no town escapes the fingers of poverty. Also, poverty is not about numbers and places but about people—people who struggle every day to make a living, to feed their families, to survive another day. Everywhere there is poverty, we can find malnutrition, starvation, inhuman living conditions and death.

According to Bread for the World, about 795 million people, or one in nine of the world's population, go to bed hungry each night. This is a number most of us cannot fathom. Now consider that the largest group of people forced to meet these challenges, day in and day out, are women and girls.

Development organizations report that women and girls do a vast majority of the work in the world, yet they earn only a puny percentage of the world's wages, and they own an even smaller percentage of property.

Drawing an international poverty line is difficult. The World Bank, which gathers data on income from people around the world, defined absolute poverty as "living on less than US\$1.90 per day."¹

However, according to the ONE Campaign (a campaigning and advocacy organization taking action to end extreme poverty), 43 percent of people in the world's poorest countries live on less than US\$1.25 a day. This is compared to 13 percent in developing countries.² Again, we must remember that the largest group of people in these groups are women and girls.

A young woman from New Delhi, India, was asked about the dreams for the future.

"I don't have any dreams," she said. "What's the point? I'm poor. I don't have any skills. I wash the utensils in the [restaurant] kitchen. That's what I do. But I like the girls I work with. We make fun together. I tell jokes. They tell jokes. I'm happy. It's my nature."³

Cultural Realities

Five-year-old Gilma lives in Guatemala. She is taught that girls eat last, they eat less, and, in times of scarcity, they may not eat at all. A researcher from Bread for the World Institute met Gilma in the Dry Corridor region of Guatemala, an area currently suffering even more frequent droughts than usual because of climate change. Food aid was sent to families in the Dry Corridor, but what Gilma's family received was not enough for everyone.

Gilma is one of five children. Her siblings are all boys, so, to put it bluntly, they got to eat while she starved. Gilma had already reached a deadly stage of hunger—severe acute malnutrition—when she was rescued, thanks to Save the Children, a US food-aid implementing organization.

Gilma is an illustration of the discrimination that girls experience in many parts of the world. Gilma almost died, not because she is a poor child in a region where food is often scarce, but because she is a poor girl child.⁴

This is not an isolated story. This kind of gender discrimination occurs all over the world.⁵

Most women beyond American borders depend on agriculture to support their families. Women and girls, at a very young age, toil in the fields—using primitive, low-tech

continued on page 4





tools like shovels, hoes, pickaxes, machetes and their bare hands—causing backbreaking pain and exhaustion.

It is true that men and boys also struggle in many places in the world to provide food, shelter and clothing for their families. Men and boys also sacrifice. They love their families, but they are caught in the same cycle of poverty that grinds away at their confidence and ability to do more.

There are many men who want to, and feel they should, be involved in caring for their children, but they admit that they are inhibited by cultural norms. And those cultural norms are instilled at an early age. Bread for the World sent a researcher to talk with some boys in Rwanda. Here's what they said:

"What do you boys think about this man washing a baby?" asks the researcher.

"People would say he is mad. Why would he wash a baby when there is a woman?"



"Do fathers here cook?" asks the researcher.

"No; they don't cook?"

"Why?"

*"They will lose their dignity."*⁶

Cultural norms around the world determine the fate of women and girls. Women carry water to cook and clean with; women take care of their families and extended families; women cook, clean and care for their children—and, many times, their grandchildren.

No matter where you travel in the world, including the United States, another major problem women face every day is work pay inequality. If women work for minimum wage, how do their families survive?

Women and the US Working Poor

Poverty doesn't only occur in countries like Guatemala, India, Africa and Ethiopia. It exists in the United States as well.

In the US, women are expected to care for the family, maintain the family home, and, in many cases, work outside the home. Even though there has been an increase in the minimum wage, women continue to struggle to maintain a home while living in poverty.

The US minimum wage in 1997 was \$5.15 per hour. The minimum wage in 2000 was still \$5.15 per hour. Despite the soaring cost of living following gas price hikes in 2008, nothing was changed until 2016, when most states increased their minimum wage rate. According to the US Department of Labor, a few states made no changes. Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee have no state minimum wage laws. (See the chart on page 6.)

People who receive these wages are the working poor. They are people who work every day—sometimes two people in the household, yet they cannot make a wage substantial enough to provide the necessities of life for their families. They have to decide between food and medicines. They live in inadequate housing and their children's education suffers.

And it's worse for women.

Mrs. Thorne grew up in East Germantown, PA, the oldest of 13 children, six of who survived to adulthood. She described her childhood as harsh. She was forced to leave school after the sixth grade to care for younger siblings.

"That's why I had to leave school so early. I had to take care of each one that was born. I was not allowed to have any friends. I was not allowed to associate with

anybody. I was just home to do whatever had to be done. I took care of the kids. Everything was dumped on me.”⁷

Poor working women have to deal with many hidden costs while they try to live on minimum wage—including a lack of quality, affordable childcare and high costs for rent.

Marianne and her boyfriend pay US\$170 a week for a one-person trailer. Tina and her husband pay US\$60 a night for a room at a motel. Joan lives in a van parked behind a shopping center at night.⁸

Violence Against Women and Girls

Another hidden cost of poverty among women is violence. Melka, who grew up in rural Ethiopia, arrived home from school one day when she was 14 years old to be told that she was to get married that very day to an elderly man she had never seen before. “After the wedding they took me to his house in the next village,” she said. “He started pushing me toward the bedroom. I didn’t want to go inside, but no one would listen to me.”

Months later, the marriage was annulled, after Melka was beaten so savagely that she ended up in the hospital for 30 days and a nurse informed the police. Child marriage has been illegal in Ethiopia since 2004, although the law is violated in thousands of cases each year. After the marriage ended, Melka found herself shunned by her family.

Married children—virtually all are underage girls married to older men—are vulnerable to rape and other types of violence.⁹

In the United States, one in four homeless women are homeless as a direct result of domestic violence, and more than 90 percent of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.¹⁰

Violence against women in the United States and worldwide is an enormous problem. Young women with children living in poverty

have few options when it comes to leaving the abuser.

In 1993, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women provided a framework for action on the pandemic. According to UN Women, the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality, an estimated 35 percent of women

continued on page 6

10 Facts about Women & Hunger

Women have a crucial role to play in defeating hunger. As mothers, farmers, teachers and entrepreneurs, they hold the key to building a future free of malnutrition. Here are 10 facts from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) that explain why empowering women is so important.

1. Protracted crises undermine food security and nutrition. Women are more likely than men to be affected, and their access to aid can be undermined by gender-based discrimination.
2. Yields for women farmers are 20 to 30 percent lower than for men. This is because women have less access to improved seeds, fertilisers and equipment.
3. Giving women who are farmers more resources could bring the number of hungry people in the world down by 100 to 150 million people.
4. Surveys in a wide range of countries have shown that 85 to 90 percent of the time spent on household food preparation is women’s time.
5. In some countries, tradition dictates that women eat last, after all the male members and children have been fed.
6. When a crisis hits, women are generally the first to sacrifice their food consumption, in order to protect the food consumption of their families.
7. Malnourished mothers are more likely to give birth to underweight babies. Underweight babies are 20 percent more likely to die before the age of five.
8. Around half of all pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic. This causes around 110,000 deaths during childbirth each year.
9. Research confirms that, in the hands of women, an increase in family income improves children’s health and nutrition.
10. Education is key. One study showed that women’s education contributed to 43 percent of the reduction in child malnutrition over time, while food availability accounted for 26 percent.

— This information is taken from Facts about Hunger and Malnutrition (www.wfp.org), as well as the following from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (www.fao.org): The State of Food Insecurity in the World, Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development, The Role of Women in Rural Development, Food Production and Poverty Eradication, Report of the Committee on Food Security, The Female Face of Farming. See also Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children from the United Nations Emergency Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (www.unicef.org).



worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual abuse from an intimate partner. According to the UN Women report, 119 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, 125 have laws on sexual harassment and 52 have laws on marital rape. However, even with these laws in place, they do not meet international standards.¹¹

Continued violence toward women and girls has become a public health problem and violates women's human rights. Violence promotes low education levels and low levels of confidence. It exposes children to family abuse, causes an increase in alcohol abuse, and takes away a woman's voice.

I believe that all of us know of someone who has been or is in an abusive relationship. I know a woman who was physically and mentally abused for years; and yet, she kept it from her family. Once she decided to leave her husband, she told me,

Hourly Minimum Wage Increases by State

	2000	2016
Colorado	\$ 5.15	\$ 8.31
Idaho	\$ 5.15	\$ 7.25
Kentucky	\$ 5.15	\$ 7.25
Maryland	\$ 6.00	\$ 8.75
Massachusetts	\$ 6.00	\$10.00
South Dakota	\$ 5.15	\$ 8.55
Texas	\$ 3.35	\$ 7.25

US Department of Labor: Wage & Hour Divisions (WHD) changes in basic minimum wages in non-farm employment under state law.

I was always walking on eggshells trying not to upset him.... He talked me into coming back to him. He said he had changed. For a while everything went well until he came home drunk. The abuse was worse. He beat me, leaving me with a black eye, a split lip, and a swollen face. I left again and never went back.

This woman is now living with physical and mental complications, unable to work to support herself, lives on Social Security Insurance and in Section 8 housing.

How Can We Help

How can we help women and girls who continue to face absolute poverty, abuse and neglect? Here are a few ideas:

1. Many of the women living in poverty serve in restaurants, clean in motels, work at national companies like Wal-Mart and Target, and in fields and outdoor markets. We expect a lot from people who serve the public. The first step we can take is to treat these women with respect and kindness. Their jobs are difficult, exhausting and hard on one's feet and back.
2. When we have enjoyed the services of the women in restaurants and motels, we can also give a generous tip. It will make a difference.



photo courtesy of Lee McKenna

3. Once we recognize the feminization of poverty, we need to support world leaders who will work for the rights of women. . An increasing number of women and girls around the world and in the US live in poverty. They struggle to make ends meet. They struggle to raise their children. They struggle to provide the basic necessities of life for their families and themselves. In order to change this, we must challenge our leaders to reduce world hunger, increase education for girls, close the wage gap between men and women and eliminate discrimination against women and girls.

4. If you live in the US, contact your Senators and Members of Congress to vote for laws that will include equal pay for equal work. Get a group together and write letters encouraging the leaders in the country, state and community to promote laws that will help people in poverty situations.

5. Support nonprofit organizations like Bread for the World (www.bread.org/institute), or Save the Children (www.savethechildren.org), or The Self-Employed Women's Association (www.sewa.org).

6. Participate in your local CROP Hunger Walk, which will benefit Church World Service, an international development organization, and also a local anti-hunger organization. If your community does not have a CROP Walk, consider organizing one. Go to www.crophungerwalk.org to find out how.

7. Put a group together and build a house with Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org) for a family living in poverty. Habitat builds houses in the US and all over the world.

8. Look around your community. Where are the needs? Where can you lend a helping hand? Get your church or school to collect food for a local food pantry or toiletries for a women's shelter. Take items and household items to thrift stores where poor people can shop.¹²

The numbers of women and girls living in poverty are staggering. They are the least fed, least educated and least reached of any people in the world.¹³ God is calling us to get involved, to learn more about the plight of women and girls around the world, to serve somewhere in the world or in your country. Now is the time to begin healing the poverty of women in our world.

—Linda Freeto is a minister in the Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Linda has worked for and with a number of agencies that assist people in poverty. A former member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and a former volunteer Business Manager for Seeds, she lives in Waco, TX, with her husband.

Endnotes

1. Max Roser, 2016, *World Poverty*, published online at www.ourworlddata.org.
2. The ONE Campaign (www.one.org)
3. ONE Campaign: "Photos that Tell the Real Story of Poverty around the World" (see above).
4. Bread for the World, 2015 *Hunger Report: When Women Flourish, We Can End Hunger*, page 14. To see the report, go to www.bread.org.
5. For more about this, see "The Gender Fishbowl," by Lee McKenna, beginning on page of this issue.
6. 2015 *Hunger Report*, page 89.
7. Helen K. Black and Robert L. Rubinstein, *Old Souls: Aged Women, Poverty, and the Experience of God*, published by Aldine De Gruyter; 2000, page 32.
8. Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (NOT) Getting By In America*, published by Henry Holt and Company; 2001; page 26.
9. 2015 *Hunger Report*, page 20.
10. Ibid, page 159.
11. UN Women: www.unwomen.org.
12. You could participate or organize a group that prepares hygiene totes for homeless women (see Meeting Women's Personal Needs with Dignity" on page 9.) For more ideas about what you can do, get a copy of this year's *Sacred Seasons* 40-day Hunger Calendar from Seeds of Hope. Email seedsseditor1@gmail.com for a free pdf.
13. Sisters in Service: www.sistersinservice.org.



photo courtesy of Lee McKenna

Resource Reviews

Three Books about Women & Poverty

reviewed by Linda Freeto

Nickel and Dimed

Ehrenreich, Barbara, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America*; Picador under Pan Books Limited, copyright 2011; 238 pages.

In this book, Barbara Ehrenreich moves through the life of American women trying to make a living working at minimum wage. *Nickel and Dimed* is a first-hand account of life among the lives of women who eke out a living working as waitresses, house cleaners, nursing home aids, hotel maids and as Wal-Mart "associates." Ehrenreich worked side-by-side with these women, whose work, though underappreciated, is essential to the US way of life.

Ehrenreich is a bestselling author of sixteen books, including *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America* (2009) and *Bait and Switch: The (futile) Pursuit of the American Dream* (2005), and countless articles and reviews.

In 1998, she began to ask herself the question that many of us ask: How does anyone live on the wages available to unskilled people? She wondered, in particular, how the roughly 4 million women who were about to be booted

into the labor market by welfare reform were going to make it on \$6 or \$7 an hour (or less)? So she went undercover in Florida as a low-wage female worker to find out.

Nickel and Dimed, a description of Ehrenreich's three-month experiment, is easy to read, although it is not easy on the heart. It is a frightening look into the lives of hard-working Americans. Tamara Straus, in a *San Francisco Chronicle* review, said that policy makers should be forced

to read the book. I have to agree. The year 1998 may seem like a long time ago, but little has changed for working women.

Ehrenreich's experience, it must be said, was not a total immersion. There was always an "open door" that she could

walk through if things got too hard—a door that her colleagues and writing subjects did not have. She could always go home.

"I set some reassuring limits to whatever tribulations I might have to endure," she said. First, she would always have a car. (Most of the women she worked with did not have cars.) In Key West, she drove her own; in other cities she used what she called "Rent-A-Wrecks," which she paid for with a credit card rather than her earnings. (Most of the women she worked with did not have credit cards, and, if they had a car, they had to pay for it with their "earnings.")

Her reason for keeping a car, she wrote, was that she figured that a story about waiting for buses would not be very interesting to read—although it would be enlightening for some who have not had to rely on sketchy public transportation.

Second, she ruled out homelessness as an option. (This was not an option for some of the women she worked with.) The idea was to spend a month in each setting and see whether she could find a job and earn, in that time, enough money to pay a second month's rent. (The women she worked with did not have this freedom. Most of them had families to care for.)

Still, even with those limits in place, her experience was profoundly revealing about a huge segment of the US population. *Nickel and Dimed* is full of information that should lead us, and especially our policymakers, to make compassionate decisions. It should cause us to take a long, hard look at the society we live in.

The Social Justice Handbook

Cannon, Mae Elise; *Social Justice Handbook: Small Steps for a Better World*; InterVarsity Press, 2009; 302 pages.

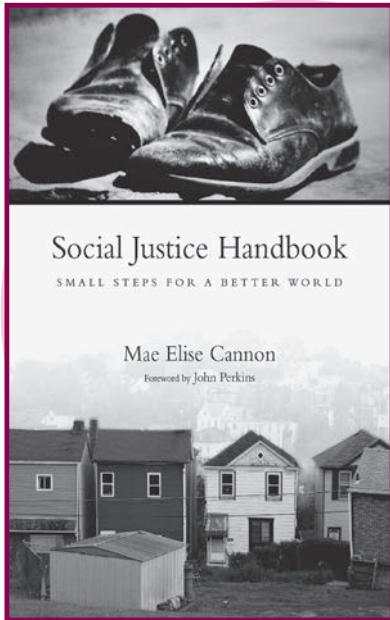
"If you care about the world, you care about justice." Social justice is not a new topic. This is a conversation that has gone on since ancient times. Who do we care for? What do we do? The early Church in Acts 2 was responsible for the needs of widows and orphans, and the call "to do likewise" remains with us today.

Mae Elise Cannon took on a massive project to gather information about how we can help people in need. In the book's introduction, she wrote,

I read books. I went to seminars. I met individuals who will be crowned with many jewels in heaven because of their activism and effort on behalf of the gospel. I was exposed to some of the greatest leadership and wisdom about the questions of social justice.... I still came away from those encounters

Resource Reviews

feeling somewhat discouraged—there didn't seem to be a place where the questions I was asking for myself and on behalf of my church were being addressed.



In the study, she defines "social justice" and leads the participant through important steps of Christian responsibility and action.

I highly recommend this book as a resource for everyone who has a heart for other human beings. It will give you tools that we all need to make the world a better place, one small step at a time.

Old Souls

Black, Helen K. and Robert L. Rubinstein, *Old Souls: Aged Women, Poverty and the Experience of God*; Aldine De Gruyter, publisher, copyright 2000, 235 pages.

Because of that quest, Cannon has provided us with a comprehensive resource: *Social Justice Handbook: Small Steps for a Better World*. We as individuals cannot do everything, but each of us can do something. She has gathered information on topics from abortion and HIV/AIDS to urban decay and the working poor.

At the beginning of the book is a study that Cannon developed for individuals or groups. In

Old Souls is a book about older women and their living situations. The women were interviewed by Helen Black and other researchers from the Philadelphia Geriatric Center for over a period of four years. The project was entitled "Chronic Poverty and the Self in Later Life."

The book describes interviews with 50 Caucasian and 50 African-American elderly women who were poor. Each woman was over 70 years old. They were all either divorced, separated or widowed.

Old Souls explores the causes of poverty and its effect on elderly women and their relationship with family and God. I highly recommend this book. The stories of these women give us insights into the aging process, and how life-long poverty affects the human spirit.

—Linda Freeto is a minister in the Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Linda has worked for and with a number of agencies that assist people in poverty. A former member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and a former volunteer Business Manager for Seeds, she lives in Waco, TX, with her husband.

Old Souls

Aged Women, Poverty, and the Experience of God

Helen K. Black
Robert L. Rubinstein

Developing a Heart for the Hungry...

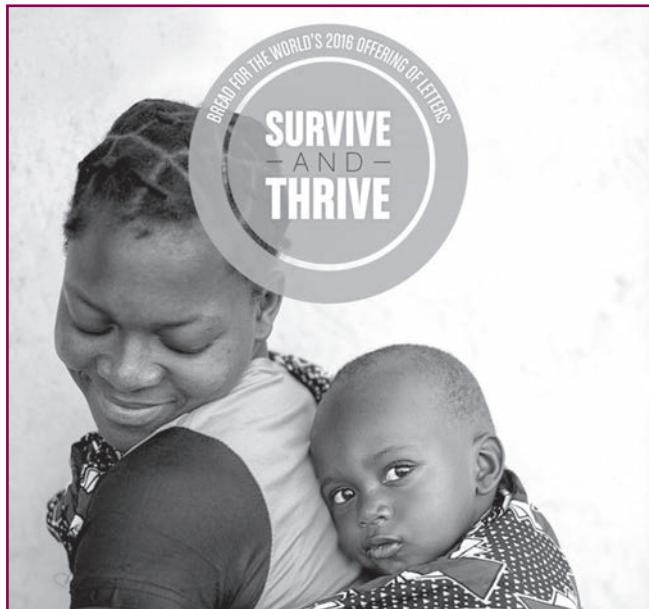


...a hunger emphasis primer for beginning churches

Is the idea of a Hunger Emphasis new to your congregation? If so, email seedseditor1@gmail.com or go to www.seedspublishers.org to get your copy!

Resources & Opportunities

2016 Bread for the World Offering of Letters Focuses on Women & Children



This year's Bread for the World Offering of Letters is focused on nutritional development for women and children. People are encouraged to write letters to Congress asking for the increase in funding of \$115 million to \$230 million in the Global Health Account of the US State Department Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.

This funding will go towards providing the right nutrition to women and children at the right time. Adolescent girls need a diet with sufficient calcium and iron. Women who are pregnant need more folic acid. Lactating women need more calories in order to provide sufficient nutrients to their babies. And newborns need healthy breast milk and children under the age of two need foods that complement breast milk rich in vitamin A, zinc and iron.

Unfortunately, many women and children around the globe are unable to get these nutrients that they need, because of geographical location, finances or cultural gender discrimination.

The US is one of the largest donors to global programs for mothers and children, and has led the international community in awareness and donations toward this cause. With the goals set by the US government to save the lives of 15 million children and 600,000 women by 2020 in 24 countries, this campaign can make an impact all around the world.

In many countries, where gender discrimination is more significant because of cultural beliefs or social norms, people do not see the worth that women hold, or the impact they have on others or the culture itself. "Women are dying because

societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving," says Mahmoud Fathalla, the former head of the International Federation of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Societies across nations do not always consider women worthy of food or nutritional attention.

However, women bring new life into the world. They hold generations to come in their bellies. They have brains full of ideas and bodies full of strength, but some are denied food to nourish those brains and bodies. When women are denied nourishment, children are denied nourishment. When women and children do not get what they need to survive, they are being denied the human right to realize their own potential.

Since 1990, the number of children under the age of five who have died from preventable causes such as diarrhea, malnutrition and stunting has decreased from 12 million to 5.9 million. US Agency for International Development (USAID) programs have found ways to save millions of lives, preventing causes of death including complications that can occur during a woman's pregnancy or childbirth.

However, millions of women and children still suffer from malnutrition and hunger, and there is something that the US Congress can do about it.

—Compiled by LeAnne Kerr, a native of Shreveport, LA, who is a Professional Writing major at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern. Information is from Bread for the World, a united, Christian voice encouraging US legislators to end hunger in our nation and around the world. For more information about the "Survive and Thrive" campaign or information about how to conduct an Offering of Letters in your area, go to www.bread.org/offering-letters.

We're collecting sermons about hunger.

Thanks to a grant from the H.C. Gemmer Christian Family Foundation, we are planning a second edition of *Speaking of Hunger*, our popular collection of hunger sermons.

If you have preached or written a good sermon about hunger and the church's call to respond—or if you've heard a good one—please let us know. Contact us at seedseditor1@gmail.com.



art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Resources & Opportunities

Meeting Women's Personal Needs with Dignity

by LeAnne Kerr

When we give to charities or food banks, we often consider the main necessities for life: food, water, shelter and clothing. But for women, there is an extra necessity for maintaining hygiene every month.

The fact of this need would not occur to many of us, but Take Heart Ministries, a nonprofit in Waco, TX, is hoping to change this. Not only does it provide needed products to homeless women, but it also provides dignity and hope.

The Take Heart people recently created a program called "Love Totes." In each reusable, purple drawstring bag is a month's worth of tampons and pads, a bottle of water and granola bars. These Love Totes are distributed to community agencies, who give the bags out to any woman who receives their services.

Each tote costs US\$10, but the founders, Amanda Haygood and Pam McKown, write on their website that this small price "supplies a woman with a lasting hope and chance for change."

Another nonprofit is looking to carry out dignity for women on an international basis. In countries like Uganda, Kenya, Japan, Denmark and Italy, some women miss up to five days at school or work because of their monthly flow and lack of hygiene products. This program, Days for Girls, is one that creates reusable, washable products that can last a woman up to three years of use.

"Days for Girls" kits are handmade drawstring bags that provide a woman with two moisture barrier shields, a travel-sized soap, a visual instruction sheet, two pairs of underwear, a washcloth and eight absorbent tri-fold pads. These materials can be washed with very little water, and laid out to dry. They

do not look like regular disposable pads, so the women who receive them are not embarrassed to carry them.

These Days for Girls kits, like the Love Totes, are meant to ignite a sense of self-worth in each woman, so that she can continue her studies, work and daily life without the anxiety of embarrassment or humiliation for simply being a woman. These kits and totes are designed to instill dignity, hope and love for women everywhere.

For more information about Love Totes in Waco, visit the Take Heart Ministries website (www.takeheartministry.org). To donate or create a Days for Girls team in your area, visit www.daysforgirls.org for more information.

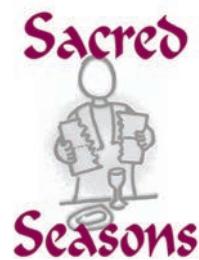
—LeAnne Kerr, a native of Shreveport, LA, is a Professional Writing major at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.

Teach Justice through Worship.



Ask for a free promotional copy of a Lent, Advent or Hunger Emphasis worship packet from Seeds of Hope.

Sacred Seasons is a series of creative worship tools to help raise awareness of hunger and justice issues. A year's subscription of US\$100 includes Advent/Christmastide, Lent/Eastertide and a fall Hunger Emphasis resource. To order, call 254/755-7745 or e-mail seedsseditor1@gmail.com. Single packets are US\$40. (Non-US subscriptions are US\$115; individual packets are US\$50.) For more information, go to www.seedspublishers.org.



Would you like to receive free electronic copies of **Hunger News & Hope** as they come out? Email seedsseditor1@gmail.com to add your name to the e-list.

Hunger News & Hope is published quarterly by Seeds of Hope Publishers, in partnership with the following denominational groups:

- Alliance of Baptists
- American Baptist Churches USA
 - Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Christian Reformed Church in North America
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Reformed Church in America

Staff and Volunteers

Editor.....L. Katherine Cook
Acting Business Manager.....John Segrest
Editorial Assistant.....LeAnne Kerr
Copy Editors.....Ellen Kuniyuki Brown,
Deborah E. Harris
Social Media Editor.....Chelle Samaniego
Library Assistant.....Bill Hughes
Artists.....Robert Askins, Sally Askins,
Peter Yuichi Clark, Robert Darden,
Van Darden, Jesse Manning,
Erin Kennedy Mayer, Lenora Mathis,
Kate Moore, Sharon Rollins,
Susan Smith, Rebecca Ward

Seeds of Hope

Council of Stewards

Sara Alexander
Guilherme Almeida
Sally Lynn Askins, Vice Pres.
Meg Cullar
Derek S. Dodson
Deborah E. Harris, Corresp. Secretary
Sandy Londos, Recording Secretary
B. Michael Long, President

Board of Advisors

Dale A. Barron
H. Joseph Haag
Kathryn Mueller
Jo Pendleton
Jacqueline L. Saxon
Jon Singletary

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 seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and hungry people; and to affirm, enable

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

When a destitute mother starts earning an income, her dreams of success invariably center around her children. A woman's second priority is the household. She wants to buy utensils, build a stronger roof, or find a bed for herself and her family. A man has an entirely different set of priorities. When a destitute father earns extra income, he focuses more attention on himself. Thus money entering a household through a woman brings more benefits to the family as a whole.

—Muhammad Yunus, Banker to the Poor

But the economic meltdown should have undone, once and for all, the idea of poverty as a personal shortcoming or dysfunctional state of mind. The lines at unemployment offices and churches offering free food includes strivers as well as slackers, habitual optimists as well as the chronically depressed. When and if the economy recovers we can never allow ourselves to forget how widespread our vulnerability is, how easy it is to spiral down toward destitution.

—Barbara Ehrenreich, Bright-Sided

"Some of the best people that ever lived have been as destitute as I am; and if you are a Christian, you ought not to consider poverty a crime."

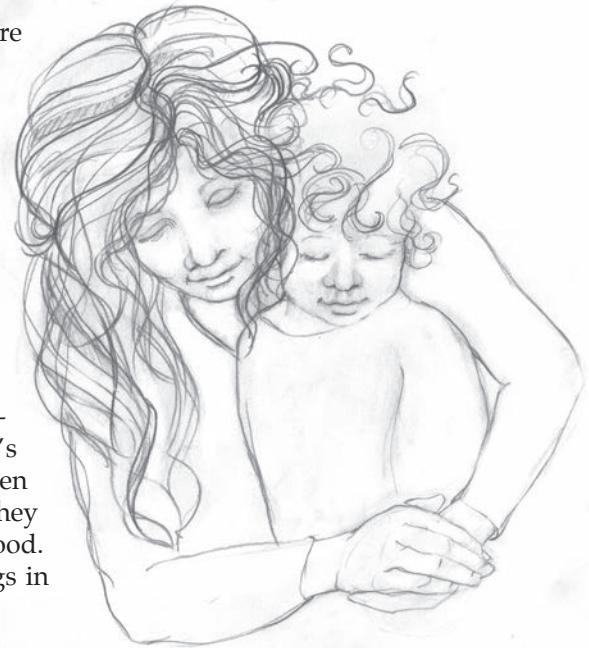
—Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

Becoming attached to a country involves pressing, uncomfortable questions about justice and opportunity for its least powerful citizens.

—Katherine Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers

"Last time I talked to her she didn't sound like herself. She's depressed. It's awful what happens when people run out of money. They start thinking they're no good.

—Barbara Kingsolver, Pigs in Heaven



art by Sally Lynn Askins

and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Editorial Address

Seeds is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James Avenue, Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2016; ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status.

Seeds of Hope also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for the liturgical year—with an attitude “toward justice, peace and food security for all of God’s children.” These include litanies, sermons, children’s and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version, Copyright © 2003 by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.