

# Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

## Millennium Development Goals: *How Far Have We Come in 8 Years?*

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND—Back in September 2000, in Copenhagen, the United Nations (UN) agreed to adopt eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A council of 189 nations, including the United States, signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration, affirming an international set of development goals focused on the devastation caused by global hunger and poverty.

The aim is to end this type of affliction around the world. The UN believes these goals are achievable and, with the help of economist Jeffrey Sachs, has established indicators to mark and monitor progress along the way.

Many countries face limited or scarce resources. Despite these difficulties, many countries are still making progress.

The initiative shown by countries facing major resource oppression might be encouraging, but all efforts will be for naught if additional supplies and funding are not offered.

To make matters worse, drastic hikes in food and fuel prices have sparked a serious global food crisis. Food riots have broken out around the world. [See "Soaring Food Prices" on page 5.]

It is obvious that, if we continue at our current rate of progress, none of the MDGs will presently be met by their projected dates.

The eight goals range in ambition from ending poverty, increasing education to minorities (especially women) and ending the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The anticipated date of completion in 2015 requires the effort of all world leaders and members of every country around the globe.

In the Millennium Declaration, all UN member states pledged to:

1. *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*
2. *Achieve universal primary education*
3. *Promote gender equality and empower women*
4. *Reduce child mortality*
5. *Improve maternal health*
6. *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*
7. *Ensure environmental sustainability*
8. *Create a global partnership for development*

"We will have time to

reach the Millennium Development  
*continued on page 5*

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# Study Says Neglected Tropical Diseases Can Be Treated Simultaneously

by Katherine Ramirez

BOSTON, MA—According to the Hebrew SeniorLife Institute for Aging Research, there are 13 infectious tropical diseases that affect up to 1 million people worldwide. This group, known as neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), includes hookworm, trachoma, elephantiasis, cholera and leprosy.

These diseases mostly affect people living in extreme poverty because their immune systems are more susceptible to infection—and most do not have health care. Unsafe water, along with poor sanitary and living conditions, contribute to the spread of these diseases.

Effects from NTDs can be disability, disfigurement and possibly early death. Although inexpensive medicine is available to treat NTDs in developed countries, accessibility is not easy for the population that is most affected.

This population typically lives on less than \$2 a day per person; because of this, other priorities eclipse the importance of medications.

However, Dr. Madhuri Reddy, along with several colleagues, recently published a study that says NTDs can be remedied by treating two or more diseases simultaneously for only pennies per dose. Dr. Reddy is a geriatrician at Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston, Massachusetts. The study was printed in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*.

One dose of these combined drug treatments is estimated at a cost of \$.40 per person. However, Reddy maintains that few people in the medical community even know about the treatments, and there is little public awareness of the problem.

The number of people affected and deaths per year from tropical diseases is almost as high as HIV/AIDS, but does not receive the same amount of media attention.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Center for Disease Control have identified six NTDs as “targets of opportunity” in the effort to improve global health.

There are initiatives in progress to find ways to bring these treatments to the people who need them. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has donated \$46.7 million in grants, the US government has committed \$15 million and pharmaceutical companies are pledging an unprecedented \$1 billion in drugs and cash support for NTD control. Although these efforts help, Dr. Reddy points out that treatment alone is not enough to com-

pletely cure NTDs, but joined with better public health measures—such as health services and clean water—they constitute a real step towards the eradication of neglected tropical diseases.

—Katherine Ramirez, a native of Floresville, Texas, is a recent graduate from the Baylor University Professional Writing program. Sources: Science Daily ([www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com)), Neglected Tropical Disease Coalition ([www.neglectedtropicaldiseases.org](http://www.neglectedtropicaldiseases.org)), Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (<http://gnntdc.sabin.org/index.html>)

## Six “Targets of Opportunity”

- Leprosy
- Lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis)
- Onchocerciasis (river blindness)
- Schistosomiasis
- Soil-transmitted helminthes (intestinal parasites)
- Trachoma

## The Collective Impact of NTDs

- Generally non-fatal, but base diseases of poverty that cause enormous chronic disability and suffering as well as greater susceptibility to other often-fatal diseases
- Over 50 million future years of disability-free life lost (or, in comparative terms, over half of the global disease burden from HIV/AIDS)
- Endemic in over 100 of the poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America—most often with multiple diseases affecting any given community
- Over 3 billion children, women and men at risk
- Over 350 million people already disabled or severely impaired, with many more infected
- Tremendous costs for medical treatments that drain resource-scarce health systems
- Equally high social and economic toll, as physical incapacitation limits school attendance and impairs work productivity, at a cost of over \$10 billion annually

\* *The Six “Targets of Opportunity” are identified by the WHO and the CDC. Source: The Neglected Tropical Disease Coalition; art from the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases*



# The US Responds to Millennium Goals

by Brittany Brady

WASHINGTON, DC—In response to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, the United States government created the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). This account allocates US assistance in poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. This assistance is based on a set of indicators to help determine where the US can most effectively distribute funds.

The MCA is administered by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a US government corporation. Since 2004, the MCC has been seeking out countries that meet specific criteria in areas of governance, control of corruption and investment in people.

Since spring 2007, the MCC has signed five-year contracts with 11 countries. These contracts total close to US\$3 billion and, upon completion, will affect the lives of 22 million people currently living in poverty.

Thirteen other countries have been allocated approximately US\$3 million through the MCA Threshold Program. This program helps countries that come close to meeting the MCA selection criteria in order to improve their areas of weakness.

The MCA has made tremendous impact nationally and globally. Some examples include:

- Madagascar. Almost 2,000 local farmers and enterprises have received technical assistance from six new agricultural business centers. Technical assistance in production makes it possible for farmers to respond to market opportunities.
- Republic of Georgia. Work has begun on restoring municipal water supplies in two cities, providing for 230,000 residents.
- El Salvador. In order to improve its eligibility for the MCA, El Salvador has reduced the number of days needed to start a business from 115 to 26. New business registration has increased by 500 percent.

• Lesotho. This country has made progress in gender equality in order to meet a requirement of the MCA compact. For example, Lesotho's parliament has granted married women individual rights as adults.

—*Brittany Brady is a journalism student at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern. Sources: Bread for the World Institute, Church World Service.*

## *President Bush Pledges More to Fight NTDs*

ACCRA, GHANA—On a trip to Ghana this spring, US President George W. Bush pledged to send US\$350 billion, over five years, to help fight Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). This initiative will aid people not only in Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America.

While only 10 countries are currently receiving aid to fight NTDs, the hope of the new initiative is to increase that number to 30 countries by 2013. It will focus largely on seven major NTDs: lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis); schistosomiasis (snail fever); trachoma (eye infection); onchocerciasis (river blindness); and soil-transmitted helminthes (STHs – hookworm, roundworm, whipworm).

This commitment is an amendment to an earlier initiative in which the US dedicated \$15 million. The goal of the action is to target all regions of the world that are heavily affected by NTDs. The long-term goals are to improve the quality of life for children in these regions, as well as to reduce poverty.

This donation will cover the costs of drugs to help fight these target NTDs, most of which can be fought with pharmaceuticals. Providing these simple, effective treatments will reduce the number of deaths in these regions, as well as reduce the number of children who must stay out of school and the number of adults who have to stay home from work.

This initiative is also a call to other developed nations of the world to pledge resources for the fight against NTDs.

—*Compiled by Crystal Goolsby. Sources: the US White House (www.whitehouse.gov), the One Campaign (www.one.org) and the office of the Republican Party (www.gop.com.)*



art courtesy of Brown University  
Hunger Program

# UN Launches Campaign to End Violence Against Women

art courtesy of the Franciscanos CruzBlanca



against women stands on par with other critical development goals,” said Joanne Sandler, interim director of UNIFEM, the UN development fund for women.

The anti-violence program will also help reach the third UN Millennium Development Goal to reduce the gender gap in education and employment. Women in developing countries find it nearly impossible to break the cycle of poverty when lacking a proper education.

Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours and produce half

the world’s food, yet still earn only 10 percent of the world’s income and own less than one percent of the world’s property. An estimated 70 percent of people living in poverty are women.

Ki-moon also hopes to increase funding for gender equality advocacy. Investing in women and young girls will boost productivity, efficiency and economic growth in poorer areas of the world.

—Compiled by Rebecca LaFlure. Sources: UNIFEM, BBC, The Millennium Campaign ([www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org))

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## Corporate Champions Join Global Fund to Fight Diseases

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND—International Women’s Day on March 8 introduced a renewed opportunity to increase awareness of gender equality around the world and to address the urgent need to end violence against women and girls.

“It [violence] takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families and on society as a whole,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said. “Most societies prohibit such violence—yet the reality is that, too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned.”

At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in her lifetime. A 1994 World Bank study revealed that rape and domestic violence were a higher risk to women than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria.

Ki-moon announced the United Nation’s campaign *UNiTE to End Violence Against Women* on February 25. The program was created to aid in eliminating the global epidemic.

“This campaign will add value and visibility to the efforts that governments, women’s and other civil society organizations, UN and donor partners are making to combat gender-based violence and send the message that ending violence

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND & SAN RAMON, CA—The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a UN-backed organization, announced earlier this year the launching of the Corporate Champions Program. Its purpose is to encourage global corporations to provide large investments in the fight against these three targeted diseases. Chevron Corporation, the program’s premier Corporate Champion, pledged \$30 million over the course of three years toward supporting the Fund’s initiatives in Asia and Africa.

Beyond the charitable motives of its participants, the Corporate Champions program also aids those corporations in their financial interests. They have the opportunity to invest in the health programs of the countries in which they operate. Assisting these countries in their personal needs is a key component in solidifying their business interests with these nations and expanding the companies’ areas of operation. Corporate Champions acts as a method of unification between public and private sectors.

A further goal of the group is to improve communities by allowing the corporations to provide management skills and effective business methods to help these countries develop their own strategies to fight AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. All Corporate Champions must exhibit long-term commitments to fighting these diseases.

The Global Fund, which was created in 2002, has provided approximately 20 percent of US national aid in the fight against AIDS and two-thirds of international investments in the fights against tuberculosis and malaria. It has prevented 2 million deaths through its distribution of treatments for AIDS and tuberculosis and its broad distribution of mosquito bed nets to ward off malaria-carrying insects.

AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are significant problems in many areas where the Chevron Corporation currently operates, making them a prime candidate to act as the fund’s first Corporate Champion.

—compiled by Crystal Goolsby, a Baylor University English student and a *Seeds of Hope* intern. Sources: the United Nations ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)), Reuters, Chevron ([www.chevron.com](http://www.chevron.com))

# Global Climate Change and Hunger

Will global warming or climate change contribute to the global hunger epidemic?

Scientists fear that rising temperatures from heat-trapping gases will melt ice caps, raise sea levels and bring more droughts and storms. Roughly 500 million people worldwide already face hunger, but rising levels of greenhouse gases could make the problem worse.

“We expect climate change to aggravate current problems of the number of millions of people at risk of hunger, probably to the tune of 50 million,” said Professor Martin Parry of the Hadley Centre of the UK Meteorological Office.

Global warming would increase the amount of land in the developing world classified as being either arid or insufficiently moist.

In Africa, by this year, the amount of this type of harsh land could increase by as much as 90 million hectares, an area nearly four times the size of Britain. “The greatest proportion, about three-quarters of that number, will be in Africa,” Parry added.

A major international report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to be released later this year, estimates that between 1.1 billion and 3.2 billion people will be suffering from water-scarcity problems by 2080, and between

200 million and 600 million more people will be going hungry.

Over the past decade, scientists, politicians and environmental advocates have helped to raise awareness of the affects of global warming. The truth is, our environment effects agriculture—and therefore, food production. The hunger problem can indeed be exacerbated by the effects of global warming. Individual adjustments in lifestyle could reduce the effects of the problem dramatically.

Global warming will negatively effect future generations. However, by acting now, the damage can be lessened. The United States is currently responsible for consumption of 80 percent of the world’s resources and is, for now, the least likely to make drastic adjustments to help stop the problem.

One of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals is to ensure environmental sustainability. By educating ourselves and understanding how we can reduce our negative environmental consequences, we can each individually contribute to a very important global development goal.

—Compiled by Brittany Brady. Sources: Planet Ark ([www.planetark.com](http://www.planetark.com)), the Presbyterian Church USA ([www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)), Canada Free Press ([www.canadafreepress.com](http://www.canadafreepress.com)).

## Soaring Prices Spark Global Food Crisis

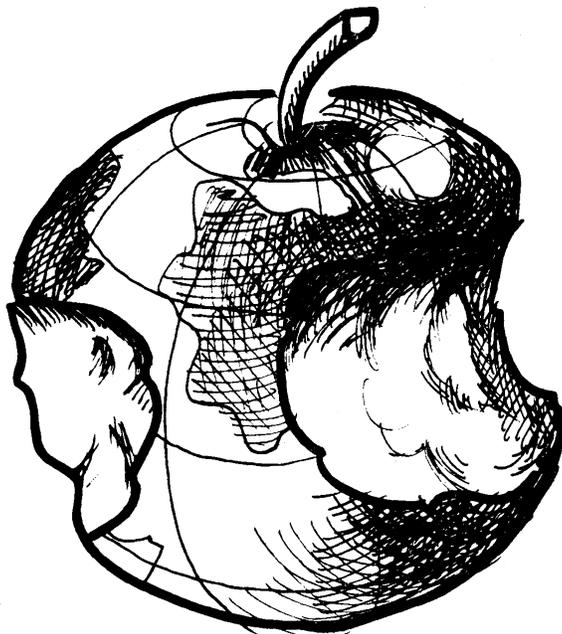
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND—With the price of food at record highs and world food supplies decreasing, hunger and malnutrition risks are greater than ever for millions of people.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), says an urgent and effective response is needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals set in 2000 and cut hunger and poverty in half by 2015.

Prices of wheat, corn and rice have gone up 50 percent in the past six months. Causes include the rapid industrialization of China and India, extreme weather conditions and high oil prices that have increased transportation costs.

Already food riots have erupted from West Africa to South Asia. Afghan president Hamid Karzai recently requested \$77 million to provide for the more than 2.5 million people

greatly affected by the rising costs. The average Afghan household currently spends 45 percent of its income on food, as opposed to 11 percent in 2006.



Meeting the Millennium Development Goals is critical, and the UN has set forth a plan to improve conditions around the world.

First, humanitarian needs must be met. The World Food Program plans to feed 73 million people globally. The program needs an additional \$500 million to cover the rapid rise in food prices.

UN programs must be strengthened and early-warning systems developed to reduce the impact of natural disasters. Building drought and flood defense systems can help communities adapt to climate change.

The UN also hopes to boost agricultural production by introducing, to developing countries, new science and technologies that offer permanent solutions for the problem of hunger.

—Compiled by Rebecca LaFlure. Source: Washington Post

# Plumpy'nut: Curing Malnutrition in Niger's Children



NIAMEY, NIGER—Niger now holds the lowest malnutrition rate in Africa, after being the highest two years ago. This is because of one product: Plumpy'nut.

Plumpy'nut is a peanut-butter paste with powdered sugar, powdered milk and vitamins and minerals added in. It is equivalent to one glass of milk and a multivitamin.

The children of Niger cannot seem to get enough of it because of the sweet taste. This product was created to overcome a number of obstacles in Niger: no electricity, no refrigeration and no clean water.

For Niger's children, Plumpy'nut is the equivalent to the "miracle" of penicillin in the United States during the 20th Century. Dr. Susan Shepherd, the pediatrician who runs the Doctors without Borders operation in Niger, says they'll be able to treat more than 120,000 children this year.

"Moms treat their children at home and come back every week for a weight check," Dr. Shepherd told TV's Anderson Cooper in an interview.

The hospitals in Niger have gone from overflowing with people to having empty beds—because of Plumpy'nut. Children get back to a healthy weight in three to four weeks, and it only costs \$1 to make a daily dose for a child.

Dr. Milton Tectonidis, chief nutri-

tionist for Doctors without Borders, said, "In three weeks we can cure a kid that looks like they're half dead...it's a spectacular response."

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is also a strong supporter of Plumpy'nut. Last year they purchased 130 tons in Africa for the children of Niger.

"They call it the magical product," said Regional Humanitarian Advisor Jan Eijkenaar of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO).

A Niger gravedigger, Salifu Ibrahim, told Cooper that, two years ago, he dug

an average of seven graves a day for children. Now he usually digs only one a day.

Plumpy'nut is known as a ready-to-use therapeutic product (RUTFs) and Doctors without Borders is calling for more products like it.

With this success in Niger, doctors are hoping that the United States and the European Union will spend some of its food aid to allow more companies to make Plumpy'nut for the children.

—compiled by Laura Sorrell. Sources: UNICEF, CBS News, *Médicins Sans Frontières* (Doctors without Borders.)

## Jubilee Act for Debt Relief Moving Forward in Congress

WASHINGTON, DC—The US Congress is currently moving forward with the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanding Debt Cancellation, arguably the most important piece of debt legislation in seven years.

The act, which has 98 legislative cosponsors, serves "to provide for greater responsibility in lending and expanding cancellation of debts owed to the United States and international financial institutions by low-income countries."

This bill will help achieve the Millennium Development Goals set forth by the United Nations to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015.

Since the efforts of the Jubilee 2000 movement a few years ago, which called for the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to cancel the debts of the poorest countries in the world, 23 countries have obtained nearly full cancellation of their debts. Debt relief has helped millions of children in Zambia and Tanzania return to school and receive basic medical care.

Still, more than 40 poor countries wait to receive debt relief. If their debt payments were eliminated, their national budgets could be invested in health care, clean water and education. At press time, the bill had been passed by the House and was going into the Senate for debate.

Jubilee USA Network is a partnership of more than 80 religious denominations, human rights, environmental, labor and community groups that advocate the cancellation of debts to poverty-stricken countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

—Compiled by Rebecca LaFlure. Sources: *Global Solutions* ([www.globalsolutions.org](http://www.globalsolutions.org)), *Jubilee USA* ([www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org))



# Praying toward the Millennium Development Goals

From Bread for the World  
Adapted by Jon Singletary

As we consider ways our nation and others can support the Millennium Development Goals, let us hear what they mean and how we can use them to pray:

## **MDG 1 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.**

Fact: More than 1 billion people around the world live on less than a dollar a day, and most of them are not sure where they will find their next meal. As a result of extreme poverty, more than 10 million children die each year.

*Prayer: Loving God, you love us more than we can comprehend, and you weep because of the world's injustices—whether they are rooted in hunger or poverty, ignorance or violence, pollution or disease, discrimination or apathy. Give us the strength to struggle for justice for all people. Amen.*

## **MDG 2 is to achieve universal primary education.**

Fact: Children of women with five years of primary education have a 40 percent higher survival rate than children of women with no education. AIDS spreads twice as quickly among uneducated girls as it does among those with minimal schooling.

*Prayer: Gracious God, help us to share our blessings of health, education, food and clean water with all of your people, offering a more hopeful life for millions of your children. Amen.*

## **MDG 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women.**

Fact: According to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, more than

850 million people in the world do not have the opportunity to learn to read

and write. Two-thirds are women.  
*Prayer: The Apostle Paul writes that*

*continued on page 8*

## 2008 Bread for the World Offering of Letters: The Global Poverty Act

WASHINGTON, DC—Bread for the World (BFW) is inviting churches, campuses and other organizations to participate in the 2008 Offering of Letters to Congress. They hope to increase the US budget for programs that give citizens in low-income countries the opportunity to focus on areas such as agricultural development, nutrition, clean water, health care and primary education.

In the past several years, Congress has increased funding for poverty assistance by about \$1 billion per year. Bread for the World requests that Congress increase funding by \$5 billion per year.

BFW, along with the ONE Campaign—an organization founded by rock singer Bono—supports the passage of the Global Poverty Act (S. 2433), passed by the House of Representatives in 2007. This act would be a significant step toward completing the first Millennium Development Goal set forth by the United Nations (UN) in 2000—to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. At press time, the bill had been endorsed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) consists of eight individual goals created to improve conditions in poor areas of the world. Bread for the World urges the US government to help meet these goals by 2015.

BFW is encouraging concerned citizens to write personal letters and e-mails to their legislators, asking them to increase poverty-focused development assistance by \$5 billion, and finalize the Global Poverty Act. This will make a critical difference in lives of the 980 million people who survive on less than \$1 per day.

Send letters to:

US Senate

Washington, DC 20515

US House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Capitol Switchboard: (202)224-3121

—Compiled by Rebecca LaFlure from Bread, a publication of Bread for the World, the BFW web site ([www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)), and the ONE Campaign ([www.one.org](http://www.one.org))

there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Precious God, enlighten us to provide women everywhere with equal dignity and opportunity. Inspire every society to oppose violence against women and strengthen gender justice. Amen.

**MDG 4 is to reduce child mortality.**

Fact: More than 25 percent of children under age five in developing countries are malnourished.

Prayer: "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me" (Mark 9:37). Loving God, we pray for the tens of thousands of children who will die today as a result of poverty and other preventable causes. Strengthen us to not tolerate this reality. Give us the compassion to meet their basic needs for food, clean water, health care, education and freedom from exploitation. Amen.

**MDG 5 is to improve maternal health.**

Fact: A woman in sub-Saharan Africa has a one-in-16 chance of dying in pregnancy. This compares with a one-in-3,700 risk for a woman from North America. More than half a million women die each year from pregnancy-related causes.

Prayer: Dear God, lead us to advocate for suffering mothers and families around the world, whose health, dignity and choices are in jeopardy because of illness, poverty, hunger and violence. Amen.

**MDG 6 is to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**

Fact: Every day, 8,000 people die of HIV/AIDS. Every 30 seconds an African child dies of malaria, a treatable disease. Education and low-cost prevention programs can drastically decrease these statistics.

Prayer: "[Jesus] welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed

healing" (Luke 9:11). Compassionate God, open our eyes to the plight of people, especially children, who will lose their lives today because of HIV/AIDS and malaria. Empower us to be instruments of your healing by advocating for affordable medicines for our brothers and sisters who do not have the means to cope with their illnesses. Amen.

**MDG 7 is to ensure environmental sustainability.**

Fact: More than 2.6 billion people—more than 40 percent of the world's population—do not have basic sanitation, and more than 1 billion people have no access to safe sources of drinking water. Forests—which contribute to the livelihoods of more than a billion people living in extreme poverty—continue to shrink in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia due to unsustainable practices.

Prayer: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). Creator God, thank you for the earth and for its beauty and abundance in which we partake. Help us return this gift by being good stewards of your creation. Equip us to seek justice for your creation and for the world's poorest people. Amen.

**MDG 8 is to develop a global partnership for development.**

Fact: Although trade generates a larger share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than ever before, global

trade has yet to yield sustainable benefits for a majority of the world's poorest countries. Low-income countries account for only three cents of every dollar generated through exports in the international trading system, and the world's poorest countries have seen their share of global trade decline over the last 25 years.

Prayer: Reflect on Proverbs 31:8-9, our charge to speak up for the poor and hungry. God of Justice, inspire us to urge our government to take this charge to heart and commit the United States to take seriously a commitment to care for our neighbors. Great Spirit, may the world be ONE in solidarity with our neighbors who are hungry and poor. Amen.

— Jon Singletary is a professor in Baylor University's School of Social Work and member of the a Seeds of Hope Council of Stewards.

Coming this summer...

# Hope is in Our Hands



**Lessons & Activities about Hunger for Children & Youth**  
from Seeds of Hope Publishers and the Alliance of Baptists

Watch for this resource at [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org)

art by Lenora Mathis

## Resources

# *Finding Grace: The Face of America's Homeless*

Photography by Lynn Blodgett  
Reviewed by Crystal M. Goolsby

*"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty."*

—Mother Teresa

This is the quote preceding the photographs in Affiliated Computer Services CEO Lynn Blodgett's photography book, *Finding Grace: The Faces of America's Homeless*, published last year.

Geared to show the humanity in the faces of America's homeless, the 100-plus black-and-white images hide no secrets about their disheveled and weather-beaten subjects.

Though the book began as a leisure photography class project, Blodgett continued to photograph the homeless as he traveled for work with his photography coach, Andrew Eccles. They produced hundreds of images of forgotten and rejected people, the best of which are bound in this book. Blodgett says of his experience:

*In fifty shoots, I photographed more than 1,500 homeless men, women, and children...[M]any possess fierce grace—despite pain of every kind and ever-increasing reasons for despair.*

When I first opened the book, I was stunned by the beauty in many of the faces that stared back at me from each page.

Every subject seemed to have a story to tell that no one wanted to hear. Each accessory—a lunch box, a piece of jewelry, a tattoo, a hat—is a token of the life left behind, the last and most cherished of their worldly possessions.

Moreover, the many heart-wrenching images of beautiful children tell tales of innocence needlessly stripped away by lives of hardship.

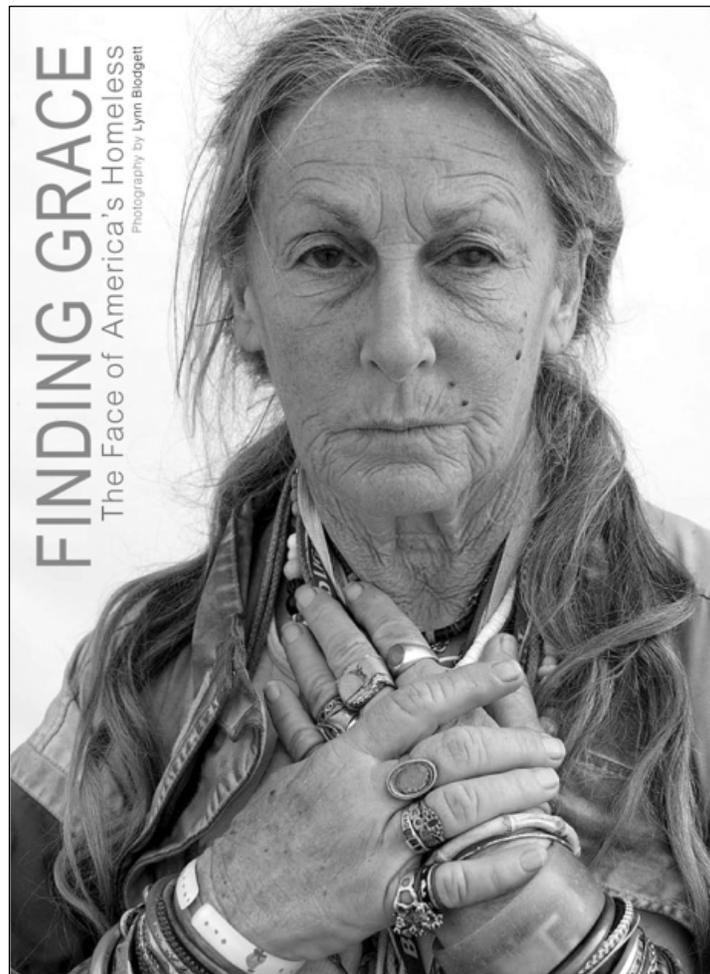
Families—married couples, siblings, mothers and daughters, even a mother with a newborn—all act as frightening reminders that such a life could be any American's fate, though those of us not standing in the lines at shelters continually choose to look away.

The grace of Blodgett's photography style is another noteworthy aspect of the book. He photographs his subjects without any background, revealing all of their street battle scars and mementos, asking them to remove clothing when necessary.

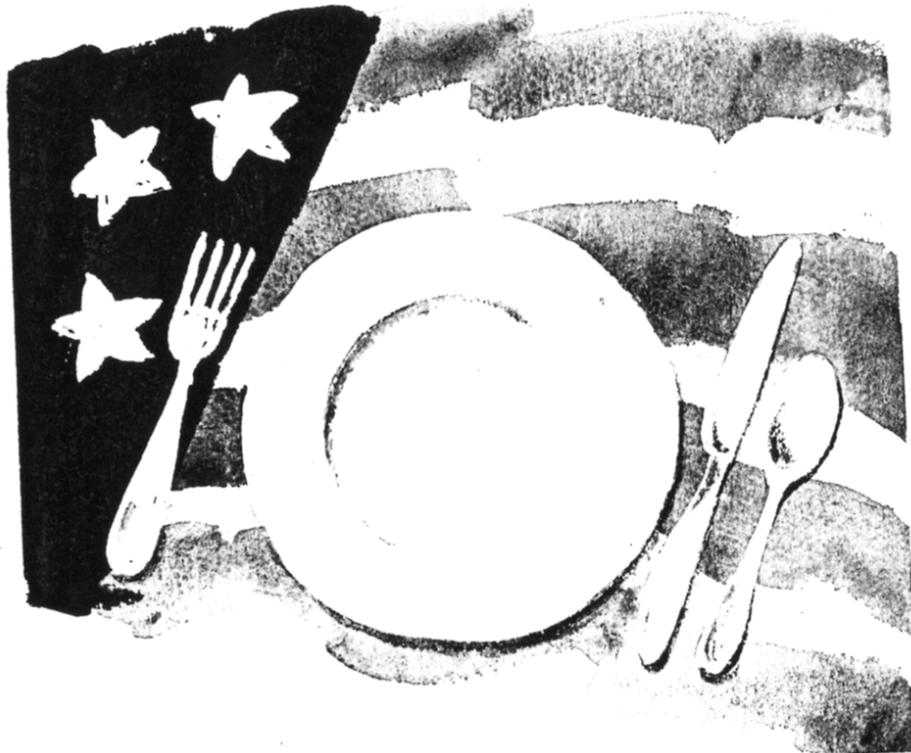
However, he photographs them in such a way that he allows the subjects to tell their own stories, without his affirmation or condemnation of their desolate situations. All he asks is that they are genuine.

Blodgett portrays true humanity, strength—and, of course, grace—in the face of one of America's largest and most overlooked societal ailments, and he only asks that those who see his book see the people in his photographs as he does—as people.

—Crystal Goolsby, a native of Los Angeles, CA, is a recent graduate in English from Baylor University. She served as an intern for Seeds of Hope this past spring.



# Hunger in the US



## US House Adopts Resolution to Cut Poverty in Half

WASHINGTON, DC—Last January, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution by the Progressive Caucus declaring a national goal of cutting poverty in half.

It has proposed a set of initiatives focusing on reducing poverty in the US. Its biggest action, called the Alternative Budget, will be headed up by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA).

The Alternative Budget hopes to expand high-quality child-care assistance and to make Child Tax Credit fully refundable to families with little or no income.

The Budget also expects to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to provide new block grants to states to develop broad anti-poverty strategies—including targeted grants to states for low-income

families that have a parent or child with a disability, reverse cuts in child support enforcement and other steps.

Other goals include creating 2 million new housing vouchers and ending restrictions on access to public benefits for legal immigrants.

The Progressive Caucus hopes to rebuild and reinvest in a more competitive economy while renewing the attention of the United States to internal structural problems. The Caucus also emphasizes misplaced objectives of the federal government in recent years.

They hope to renew a commitment to reduce poverty and promote prosperity with new policies and budget priorities.

—From *Food Research and Action Center*

## US Budget for 2009 Not Good for Domestic Nutrition Programs

WASHINGTON, DC—Preliminary analysis by Bread for the World (BFW) experts indicates that the proposed FY2009 United States budget would increase international poverty-focused development assistance but does little to strengthen domestic nutrition programs.

The proposed budget includes only \$16.48 billion for poverty-focused development assistance programs that most directly address the root causes of poverty. Overall, however, poverty-focused development assistance received a \$1 billion increase over what was appropriated for FY2008.

The preliminary analysis found an encouraging reversal in the trend of cutting long-term sustainable development programs. President Bush asked for \$15 million more for the “Development Assistance” account to provide clean water, agriculture training and basic education to the poorest communities of the world.

“We have a long way to go to meet our commitment to reduce global hunger and poverty,” said Rev. David Beckmann, BFW president. “According to our polls, the American people want the Administration and Congress to do more.”

However, Bread for the World opposes the President’s proposal that limits certain food stamp categorical eligibility requirements to households that receive Supplemental Security Income or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

“This proposal would hamper states’ efforts to move families from welfare to work by eliminating the critical support they need through this transition,” Beckmann said.

Under the FY2009 budget, funding for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is \$6.1 billion and is

*continued on page 11*

# Hunger in the US



## Congress Overrides Veto to Enact Farm Bill

WASHINGTON, DC—The 2008 US Farm Bill has been a long time coming. The law expired on September 30, and only a sequence of extensions kept the country from reverting to the conditions of the original bill from the 1930s.

In January, the Bush administration publicly warned the joint House-Senate committee that the President would veto the bill unless Congress stripped out “new taxes and trade-distorting policies, and reform income-support payments.”

Legislators from both the House and the Senate reported that they were trying to limit the kind of financial support to which the President was referring, but they were also trying to come up with a document that protected poor people in the US, as well as farmers here and abroad. The bill was designed, in part, to combat hunger and malnutrition in the US.

The number of people living at the margins of hunger has increased by more than 4 million since the last census. Advocates for the 35.5 million people living in poverty in the US have continually stressed the importance of nutrition initiatives, as well as the parts of the bill that cover commodity assistance, conservation, trade and energy programs. Nutrition programs like TEFAP, the Food Stamp Program, and the Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) lower the number of food-insecure households, and save federal money in the long run.

Advocates for farmers in developing countries have stressed the need to include measures that would bring about fair trade practices for farmers abroad, as well as US farmers.

In a major bipartisan effort, the House of Representatives passed the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 on May 14 with a vote of 318-106. The bill passed in the Senate with a vote of 81-15 the following day.

On May 20, Congress sent the bill to President George W. Bush, who kept his promise to veto it. But with overwhelming support from the American people, Congress overrode the President’s veto. The House vote, taken on May 21, was 316-108. The Senate vote, taken the next day, was 82-13. Fourteen titles were thus enacted into law.

However, because of a clerical error that occurred when the document was being prepared for signing, the bill did not contain the trade title. Congressional leaders explained that the trade title was included in the conference report passed by Congress, but was inadvertently left out of the official copy of the bill.

These leaders said that both houses are working to correct the unintentional omission and ensure that the entire Farm Bill is enacted into law swiftly. The House has already passed it as a stand-alone bill. At press time, the Senate was expected to take similar measures.

—Sources: Colorado Journal-Advocate, *Food Research and Action Center*

## How Far Have We Come?

*continued from page 1*

Goals—worldwide and in most, or even all, individual countries—but only if we break with business as usual,” said Ban Ki-Moon, the United Nations Secretary-General. “We cannot win overnight. Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline.”

The UN, world hunger and equality organizations around the world, supporting citizens and peacemaking individuals from all countries are issuing a call to action and support for these goals.

—Compiled by Brittany Brady. Sources: *Bread for the World*, the United Nations ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)), *National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO)*, Washington Post, USA Today.

## 2009 Budget

*continued from page 10*

expected to serve a caseload of 8.6 million women, infants, and children in 2009.

However, preliminary analysis by BFW experts indicates that it includes two harmful proposals—one that caps funding for nutrition services and administration, and another that limits automatic WIC eligibility for Medicaid recipients.

“We need to do all we can to help families who are struggling to pull themselves out of poverty,” Beckmann said.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice that urges decision makers to end hunger in the United States and abroad.

—From *Bread for the World*

Note: Most of the US Hunger News stories on pages 10-11 were compiled by Brittany Brady.

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- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
  - Presbyterian Church USA
  - 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**

Seeds of Hope is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church.

## *Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings*

Let every congregation adopt one person who lives on the streets. Ask no questions as to their worthiness. Who among us is worthy? Just find them lodging, a job, friends—give them hope. That would solve the problem of people living on the streets.

—Will Campbell

I met this preacher from Australia  
 He'd read the Bible searching for its dominant themes  
 And he counted 87 times when Jesus said, "Follow me!"  
 Well you know that got me thinking  
 Maybe that's the bottom line of what "Christian" means.  
 'Cause "I follow Jesus" is deeper than "I believe"  
 'Cause it don't take much to mentally agree  
 With a set of beliefs written down in some creed.  
 Now, don't get me wrong. We need to know what we believe  
 But lately I've been wondering...

—Bryan Sirchio

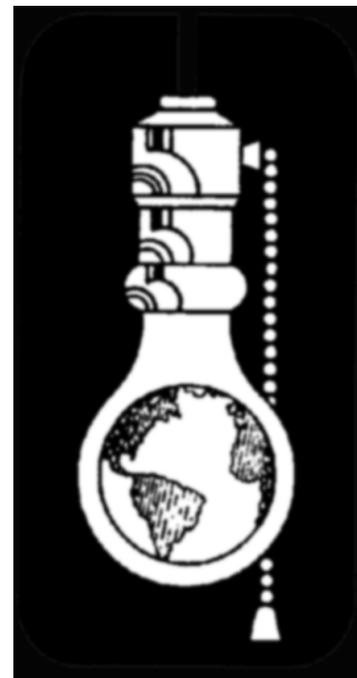
I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge—

Myth is more potent than history—  
 Dreams are more powerful than facts—  
 Hope always triumphs over experience—  
 Laughter is the cure for grief—  
 Love is stronger than death.

—Robert Fulghum

In the most obscure and sordid place,  
 in the most hostile and harshest,  
 in the most corrupt  
 and nauseating places,  
 there You do Your work  
 that is why Your son  
 descended into hell,  
 in order to transform what is NOT  
 and to purify that which IS BECOMING.  
 This is hope!

—Julia Esquivel, a Guatemalan refugee



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Seeds of Hope also produces *Sacred Seasons*, quarterly packets of worship materials for the liturgical year—with an economic justice at-

titude. These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art, and drama. Many of these resources are available at [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org) for no charge.

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