

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

Upheaval in Haiti: *Political Turmoil Ravages Hemisphere's Poorest Country*

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI—In late February, after weeks of violent protests and looting across the nation of Haiti, and under increasing diplomatic pressure from the United States and other allies, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled into exile.

Following Aristide's resignation, a 3,000-member UN-sanctioned force arrived in Haiti to stop the violent protests and looting that had been going on for weeks. The force included troops from the US, France, and Canada.

A US military aircraft carried the displaced Aristide and his American wife, Mildred Trouillot Aristide, to the Central African Republic, where they stayed for a short time.

Before leaving, the couple sent their two daughters to New York City, but were reunited with them in Jamaica for up to 10 weeks while they decide on a permanent home.

In a letter explaining his resignation, the former president said that he was stepping down to prevent further bloodshed and to ensure that the new government would conform to Haiti's Constitution.

[The Constitution] should not be drowned in the Haitian people's blood. This is why tonight, if it is my resignation that will prevent a bloodbath, I agree to go with the hope that there will be life and not death.

However, since leaving Haiti, Aristide phoned several US political leaders, claiming that he was forced out by US and French leaders.

According to *The Independent*, Aristide plans to bring legal actions against the French and US governments, saying that he was kidnapped and taken out of the country against his will.

Under a US-backed plan, Haiti's new Prime Minister, Gerard Latortue, was to name some Cabinet members to help form a transitional government uniting former enemies from Aristide's Lavalas Family party and a disparate opposition coalition. Shortly before press time, Haiti's chief justice of the Supreme Court, Boniface Alexandre, was sworn in as the leader of a transitional government until elections can be held in 2005, as defined under the Haitian Constitution.

Latortue attempted to soften the blow Monday of having troops from France—Haiti's former colonizer—on his nation's soil in the year the world's first black republic was supposed to celebrate the first and only successful slave rebellion, with a defeat of Napoleon's army. "I know a lot of you are wondering in the 200th year of independence why foreign troops have come to our country," Latortue said. "They didn't come to occupy us, they came to help us. We were not able to solve our problems ourselves."

After the international force secured the capital of Port-au-Prince, French Marines moved to Cap-Hatien, the second-largest city, to oust rebel fighters who were still in control there shortly before press time. According to a United

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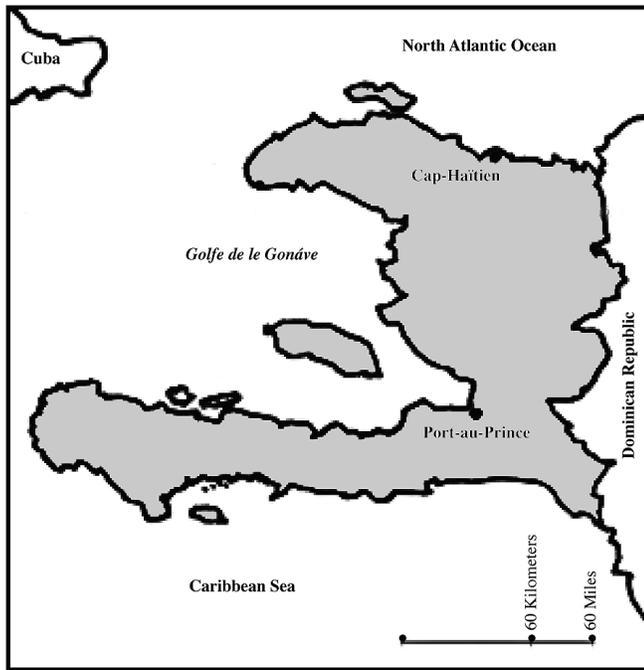
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Haiti: A Long History of Violence



In 1492, when Christopher Columbus landed on the island where the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic are now located (about 60 miles from the Florida coast), the island became known as La Isla Española (Hispaniola). It was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Arawak, a native American tribal group who most commonly called their island *Ayti* or *Hayti*. The Arawak, or Taino, were virtually annihilated over the next 25 years—especially after Columbus and his brother were forced out by impatient Spanish settlers.

In the early 17th century, French explorers established a presence on the island and, in 1697, Spain ceded to the French the western third of the island. The French colony, based on forestry and sugar-related industries, became one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean, but only through the heavy importation of African slaves and considerable environmental degradation.

In 1804, after a prolonged and bloody struggle, nearly half a million slaves accomplished what the US Library of Congress calls the only successful slave rebellion in world history. The rebels, inspired by the French revolution, declared independence, and Haiti became the first black republic in modern times.

The only independent nation in the Western Hemisphere older than Haiti is the United States. Over this 200-year span, however, the country has never known a period free of tyranny, repression, political conflict, racial animosity, or economic hardship.

Even the few national leaders elected by popular vote, such as Dumarsais Estimé (1946-50) and François Duvalier (1957-71), rejected constitutional procedures in favor of retaining personal power. In 1986, a people's revolt deposed the repressive "President for Life" Jean-Claude Duvalier (1971-86).

In 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a former priest and advocate for the poor, was elected president. Many Haitians hoped that Aristide, a former priest, would end the painful cycle of oppression and violence. Aristide was overwhelmingly popular among the very poor and among most of the progressive groups in Haiti.

Immediately after his election in December 1990, before he had even assumed power, there was an attempted *coup* launched by the forces of the old Duvalier dictatorship and one of the leaders of Duvalier's Tonton Macout death squads. That attempted *coup* failed because people from the lower-income groups literally placed themselves between the presidential palace and the rebels.

However, several months later a successful *coup* forced Aristide into exile. This time the military leaders cut off the palace from the slums to avoid resistance from that population. From 1991 to 1994 the military dictatorship launched into a period of repression against any organization of the people. During that time the US began an embargo, which put an already failing economy into a tailspin.

In 1994 US troops reinstated Aristide, and he finished the end of his five-year term. However, this time he was forced to adjust to international pressure and to cater to business interests that were sometimes linked to the old Duvalier regime. Fearing another coup, he disbanded the army and replaced it with police units. What followed was a fragmentation of *Lavalas*, the movement that Aristide had originally led.

The embargo was lifted at Aristide's return, and, instead of being relieved, the Haitian economy suffered another blow from the import of subsidized goods, particularly rice. Some observers also pointed out that government officials were enjoying a standard of living vastly different from the abject poverty of most of the citizens. The president's popularity eroded.

Aristide was elected to a second term in 2000, and took office early in 2001. However, that same year, because of questions about legislative elections, the US and the European community began withholding humanitarian aid from Haiti. Many critics claimed that the elections were marred by corruption. A coalition of political parties, civil societies, trade unions and business associations boycotted the Congress, and refused to cooperate in any government initiatives until Aristide resigned.

At the same time, armed rebel groups—not linked to the political opposition groups—began violent clashes with government supporters, especially in the North. In late February, Aristide was persuaded by the US and France to step down as president. Meanwhile, a new administration has taken office in Port-au-Prince, with US, French, and Canadian troops remaining as an "interim international force." Haiti once again faces an uncertain future.

—from the *Library of Congress*, MacNeil/Lehrer productions, and an interview with Robert Fatton, a Haitian-born political science professor at the University of Virginia, by Eric Ruder in the *Socialist Worker*.

Economic Factors in Haiti

photo by Erika Walter

- Haiti's economy faced serious economic and ecological obstacles to development in the late 1980s. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 1987 was approximately US\$1.95 billion, or about US\$330 per capita, ranking it as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and as the twenty-seventh most impoverished nation in the world.

- About 80 percent of the population lives in abject poverty.

- Agriculture's role in the economy fell sharply after 1950. Highly inefficient exploitation of the scarce natural resources of the countryside caused severe deforestation and soil erosion and constituted the primary cause of the decline in agricultural productivity.

- Still, nearly 70 percent of all Haitians depend on the agriculture sector, which consists mainly of small-scale subsistence farming and employs about two-thirds of the economically active work force.

- Manufacturing became the most dynamic sector in Haiti during the 1970s, as the country's abundant supply of low-cost labor stimulated the growth of assembly operations.

- Tourism expanded rapidly in the 1970s, but it contracted during the 1980s because of political upheaval and news coverage that erroneously identified Haiti as the origin of AIDS.

- Throughout most of Haiti's history, the mulatto elite dominated the capital, showed little interest in the countryside, and exhibited outright disdain for the black peasantry. Disparities between rural and urban dwellers worsened during the twentieth century under the dynastic rule of François Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier.

- By the 1980s, an estimated 1 percent of

the population received 45 percent of the national income, and an estimated 200 millionaires in Haiti enjoyed a life of unparalleled extravagance. In stark contrast, three out of four Haitians lived in abject poverty, with incomes well below US\$150, according to the World Bank.

- Haiti has depended extensively, since the mid-1970s, on foreign development aid for budget support. The United States has been the largest donor, but it has frequently interrupted the flow of aid because of alleged human rights abuses, corruption, or election fraud.

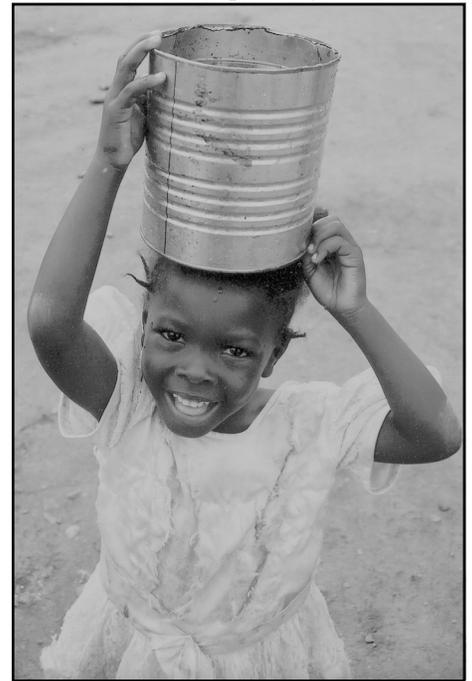
- Although the major development agencies have provided the bulk of foreign funding, hundreds of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also played a prominent role in development assistance. These NGOs, affiliated for the most part with religious groups, have sustained hundreds of thousands of Haitians through countrywide feeding stations and have taught Haitians to advocate for themselves.

- Prospects for development improved temporarily following Jean-Claude Duvalier's 1986 departure; important economic reforms took place, and the economy began to grow. However, renewed political instability forestalled continued reform.

- Following legislative elections in May 2000, fraught with irregularities, international donors suspended almost all aid to Haiti.

- The economy shrank an estimated 1.2 percent in 2001 and an estimated 0.9 percent in 2002. The shrinking was predicted to continue in 2003.

—from the *US Library of Congress, MacNeil/Lehrer Productions. The art with this story is by Haitian artist Prosper Pierrelouise.*



Haiti's Child

by Erika Walter

Her eyes haunt me.

With her tiny arms wrapped around my waist, her father spoke words I won't forget.

"Take her to your country," he said.

...

Rose's father knew the difference a plane ride could make in his little girl's life.

So he asked me again.

Speechless, I felt my legs go weak. Everything in me wanted to say "yes." But I calmly explained the practical reasons why she couldn't go with me. Even I didn't believe the reasons myself.

I turned and cried. I felt sick. Rose held my hand.

I sat down and tried to convince myself I'd done the right thing.

...

Rose lives in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. According to the CIA website, about 80 percent of Haitians live in abject poverty.

For example, most Haitians don't have access to safe drinking water. Unclean water leads to diarrheal diseases and ma-

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Upheaval in Haiti, continued from page 1

Nations agreement, the troops will remain no longer than three months, at which time they will be replaced by UN peacekeepers. In an action that has caused some humanitarian outcry, US Coast Guard ships have been stationed offshore to pick up Haitians trying to flee the violent nation.

—MacNeil/Lehrer Productions, Associated Free Press, Associated Press, The Independent

Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church: Running More Than a Food Bank

by *Evangeline Myrick*

On any given Saturday in the town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is a very popular place to be. People of diverse backgrounds come from all over the area to stand in line to buy food. Some may call this program a food bank, but it is actually much more than that.



People arrive at the church to stand in line early Saturday morning in order to get a ticket to purchase food.

Nearly 25 years ago a member of Eastern Avenue CRC noticed a local grocery store throwing out produce that they had not sold that week. She realized that the food being thrown out was still good. She asked that store if the church could have the produce instead of it being wasted in the trash.

Today the church receives food donations from over 40 different wholesalers, grocery stores, and local farmers. One school even grows sweet corn to donate.

But at this food bank, the food is not just given away. People arrive at the church to stand in line early Saturday morning in order to get a ticket to purchase food. The price of the food ranges from five cents for an apple or orange to a dime for a loaf of bread. The money brought in from the sales goes to maintain a truck used by the program and to purchase food if they are short on Saturdays. None of the money goes to the church—it is used only to keep this food program going.

Director Roland Rusticus has been with the endeavor for fifteen years, and he says it feeds approximately 250 families per week.

“We have them purchase the food so that they have respect for what they are getting. It also gives them a chance to say ‘Okay, I own this; I purchased it,’” Rusticus explained.

But the families are not the only ones benefiting from the program. Several hundred people volunteer from all different avenues of life. Some volunteers are church members, youth groups, local residents, and there is one group of people who are performing court-ordered community service.

“There are no hardened criminals here. We have people who have done minor things, like traffic tickets, do their community service with our program.” Rusticus said.

The church sees this as another outreach program—a wonderful opportunity for church members to form relationships with people in the community. Members feel that they can be a good influence on people who may have gotten into a little trouble.

Before the actual sale opens, the group holds a 25-minute Bible study in Spanish. No one is required to attend, but it is open to anyone interested, including the court-appointed volunteers. An English-as-a-Second-Language class is held prior to opening—also free to anyone who is interested.

Rusticus explains this is not as a way to persuade people to join the church, but rather a “ministry of mercy.” The people who come to the sale are not necessarily destitute, but they live on very tight budgets. He says they may be affected by unemployment or just going through a tough time.

The amazing part of this program is not only all of the families that it feeds, but also all of the lives it affects. The volunteers, the church members, the families, and the food donors all profit from the program. This is more than just a food bank; it is a place for Christian ministry. Church members are able to interact with people in the community who they may not otherwise ever meet. —*Evangeline Myrick is a professional writing major at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.*

special section:

Globalization Revisited

In his book, *In Defense of Global Capitalism*, Johan Norberg advocates a free and open society, claiming that “People who have acquired a taste for freedom will not consent to be shut in by walls and fences.

interest rates and market volatility, while the larger, more secure nations move on to bigger issues, seems to fail in the light of freedom and democracy.

An article about the positives of globalization and free trade seemed to

one day sustain themselves independently, globalization began with positive foundations. The installation of freedom and democracy, as well as environmental safety and preservation also exist as goals of globalization. So, where did it go wrong?

In the midst of high ideals and hopeful aspirations, globalization failed to see its projects to fruition. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, countries like the US implemented high-tech programs in this region, but did not provide sustained help.

Therefore, in terms of poverty, hunger, and violence these countries have come out worse than before. They were left somewhat empty-handed, without the needed information to keep these programs running efficiently.

Interestingly enough, globalization marks a success in places like Central Asia. In Korea, poverty has been strongly combated, literacy made a high ideal, health standards made a priority, and the life expectancy has increased. The prosperity of Korea is due in large part to their own regulations, though, as they independently absorbed technological knowledge and depended upon export growth. Korea, along with other Asian countries, showed that globalization can and will work when regulated and utilized properly.

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Don't Abolish Globalization; Fix It

by Claire McKeever

“They will work to create a better existence for themselves and to improve the world we live in. They will demand freedom and democracy. The aim of politics should be to give them that freedom.”

Globalization is not an easy issue. It is one that calls into question the motives of large, developed countries, as well as the rich and powerful people. It is an issue that sometimes threatens the poor and oppressed and at other times supports and helps them. It is a complicated and undefined issue that needs work.

But, as Norberg asserts, freedom is the main goal and issue concerning globalization. It is for freedom that both the rich and the poor strive, and, if one agrees with Norberg, once people gain a glimpse of freedom, it will be an arduous fight to keep them from wanting more.

Hanging on my wall is a sign that says “Capitalism must be destroyed.” So when given the assignment to write an article about the positive side of globalization and free trade, I faced a great challenge. Are there positives of globalization?

A system that creates poverty, that forces children in underdeveloped countries to work producing products from which they will never enjoy the benefits, can hardly be considered positive. A system that leaves developing nations with high

possess no real basis, much less any credibility. Poverty, homelessness, and hunger prevail throughout the world; thus, globalization clearly is not working—at least, not yet.

As these thoughts pervaded my mind, the article continued to loom in the distance. There seemed to be no way any article highlighting hope for globalization and free trade could result from the work of my hands. The debate over globalization is, no doubt, a difficult one. Globalization supporters seem to only care about profit, and globalization dissenters seem to care about the poor and disenfranchised in developing countries. It is truly a debate of the good against the bad.

However, I wonder...if globalization were looked at somewhat differently, if the movement returned to its initial motivations and plans...I wonder if there couldn't be a common ground upon which all could stand. I wonder what would happen if globalization accepted responsibility and regulation. Could it exist as a positive system of profit, not only for the rich, but also for the poor?

The initial goal of globalization, at least for US Americans, was to bring prosperity to all countries in the world. Hoping to provide underdeveloped countries with the means and knowledge to



special section on globalization

Globalization works when the larger country, in entering a smaller country, provides information and resources for the longevity and sustainability of the particular project. Too often, large countries such as the US depend upon the wealth of smaller countries.

What products and resources a smaller, developing nation can produce become, all

Globalization is not an easy issue... It is an issue that sometimes threatens the poor and oppressed and at other times supports and helps them...

too often, what a developed nation depends upon. If larger countries learn how to live within their means—taking more responsibility for their own actions—globalization and a global, free market economy would work.

What people fail to recognize is that all systems are imperfect. No one program or entity is able to provide everything to all people. But, as interdependence between countries, both large and small, is valued and respected, the problems of globalization will decrease.

So, what are the positives of globalization? According to the Cato Institute (CI), as freer trade and globalization have spread throughout many countries, so too have civil liberties and democracy. Freedom House reports that the number of the world's population that enjoys civil and political freedom has jumped from 35 percent to 44 percent since 1972.

The institute claims that the most economically open countries today are three times more likely to enjoy full political and civil freedoms as those that are economically closed. Also, they say, those countries that remain closed are nine times more likely to completely suppress civil and political freedoms as those that are open.

Though many would argue that there exists an ever-growing gap between the

rich and the poor, free trade and a global economy actually help to implement a growing middle class. CI reports that countries that remain open to free trade tend to produce a growing, politically aware middle class. As many studies show, the middle class is the foundation of a country which works towards political freedom. By encouraging the middle class, globalization and free trade emphasize the importance of freedom and democracy, which spreads civil society and its ideals throughout the world.

The question is this: What are we fighting about? Why does there exist so much tension between those who support globalization and free trade and those who do not? If, as Cato reports confirm, countries engaging in free trade enjoy political and civil freedoms, as well as civil liberties that decrease the shared living situations and the poverty rates in these countries, why do so many of us oppose it?

Why is there disagreement even within the ranks of those most dedicated to eradicating poverty? Is there not a middle ground upon which those from both sides can stand?

No one can deny that poverty continues to exist in every country in the world. Whether in the United States, Mexico, or Zimbabwe—somewhere, tens of thousands will go hungry. This is a reality and a fact that neither globalization supporters nor its adversaries cannot deny. But globalization and the advocacy of free trade with countries such as Chile, South Korea, and Taiwan are more likely to decrease these poverty rates than not.

Take this scenario, for instance. The United States and Australia establish a Free Trade Agreement, opening trade negotiations concerning sugar. This creates more jobs, more currency, and better relations between the two countries, not to mention a decrease in sugar prices for both Australians and Americans.

Australia no longer exists as an isolated entity, but rather now exists as an open, free country willing to delegate and communicate through trade with other countries. As long as the corporations

controlling the free trade of sugar between Australia and the United States remain regulated, problems will decrease, rather than increase.

Does globalization have its problems? Of course it does. However, because of an imperfect world, run by an imperfect system, problems will always exist. Therefore, the question should not be why we should abolish globalization, but, rather, how can we decrease the existing problems of globalization to make it the helpful system that it should be?

The goal of globalization should never be to exploit cheap labor in underdeveloped countries. Sadly, these evils happen too often. The goal of globalization, rather, should be to implement free and sustained societies throughout the world. Globalization should advocate democracy, as well as civil liberties that strive to create knowledge and independence in developing countries.

It should help decrease poverty by creating more jobs for those who know a particular trade. Globalization should seek to integrate close relationships between all countries and help to establish a global market that is both responsible and secure in its motivations and purposes. Working towards freedom, globalization is something that, when implemented correctly, definitely works.

—*Claire McKeever, a native of Abilene, Texas, is a professional writing student at Baylor University.*

For more information about globalization from this perspective, go to www.globalization.com, www.freedomhouse.org, or www.globalenvision.org. On the latter website, you can click on the "Articles" link for a list of articles and book reviews dealing with globalization, free trade, and poverty issues. See also *In Defense of Global Capitalism*, by Johan Norberg, distributed by the Cato Institute, 2003; www.cato.org.

Make People the Priority, Not Money:

A Hard Look at the World Trade Organization

by Evangeline Myrick

At first glance, the World Trade Organization seems like a good idea. Started in 1947, the WTO was once called the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT, and it began as a way to reduce trade barriers through negotiations. About 50 years later, in 1995, the GATT changed its name to the World Trade Organization. Today there are 125 member nations. China continues to be excluded from the list of members.

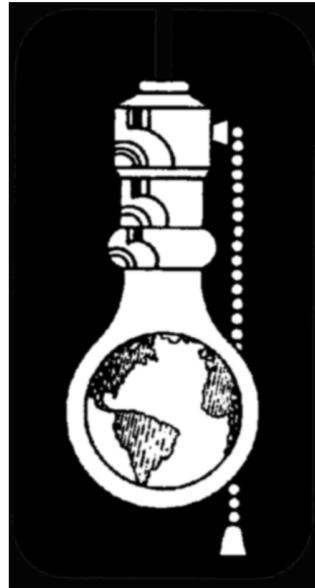
The WTO began solely to reduce tariffs on manufactured goods in order to increase trade among countries. This was supposed to help the economy of all nations. The organization began to spark controversy when it began venturing out in other areas. It now can affect regulations other than tariffs, such as health and environmental factors.

Today, more than ever, conflicts abound over trade—not just in the United States, but all over the world. In both wealthy and poor nations, leaders are deciding to become stricter about what products they will make easy to trade, and to what products it will become more difficult to gain access.

A closer look into the World Trade Organization reveals several problems. These problems negatively affect the poor and hungry people of the world, while increasingly benefiting the wealthy.

For example, unelected international officials run the WTO. While these unelected leaders are allowed to consult with nongovernmental committees in order to make decisions, many people believe that the process remains unfair because these committees are tainted.

The committees have an unequal balance of interests represented. Lobbyists and people from large labor unions and



environmental groups with seemingly unlimited budgets are over-represented, while small farmers and regular citizens from various countries are grossly under-represented. So, although WTO officials can consult with these committees, the people with whom they are consulting almost certainly have agendas of their own.

On the website of the WTO, there is a statement that says that the WTO is “the

Why do we have people heading organizations like the WTO who have never experienced poverty?

only international organization dealing with global rules of trade between nations.” Its role is to, “insure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.” The fact is, the WTO is concerned with interest rates, deficits, and rules of trade while large populations of the world

are concerned with barely eating once a day. The question that many raise is this: do these people really see the benefits from a global organization whose focus is on some given country’s interest rate?

Many of these same people are concerned with military insurgencies; some are not able to sleep through the night for fear of being woken with a gun in their face. Their sons are pulled from their homes to fight for causes that they don’t understand. Their daily problems are so critical that they do not have the luxury of analyzing economic reform.

One of the reasons for the uneven balance is that wealthy countries enjoy economic stability and can quickly bounce back from economic crises, while poor countries remain poor and have slow economic development.

Perhaps getting rid of an international trade organization is not the answer to these problems, but major reforms must occur in order to give help where help is due. Thomas L. Friedman, a columnist for the *New York Times*, says that there are two types of protesters against the WTO. The first type deal with *whether* we globalize. They want to stop globalization in its tracks. The second type concentrate on *how* we globalize. Others respond by seeking out “fair trade” products—a practice in which the buyer is assured by a certification process that the farmer who grew those coffee beans or the person who crafted that tablecloth will receive a fair price for the goods. (*See the sidebar on page 8 for more on fair trade.*)

Whether we approve of globalization and organizations like the WTO or not, they will probably always be there. So perhaps we should take on the responsibility of encouraging reform in a way that

How 'Lantern Slides' Brought Change for Nineteenth-Century New York Slums

Known as the "Emancipator of the Slums" at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jacob Riis worked diligently with the urban poor to expose the dirty slums, unfit living conditions, and poverty-stricken inhabitants of New York City. Riis was himself an immigrant from Denmark and lived in poverty until gaining a job as a police reporter for the New York Tribune.

In the 1880s, his work turned to reform in order to help the thousands of immigrants flocking to New York City. Though he started with the written word, he soon found that this was not enough.

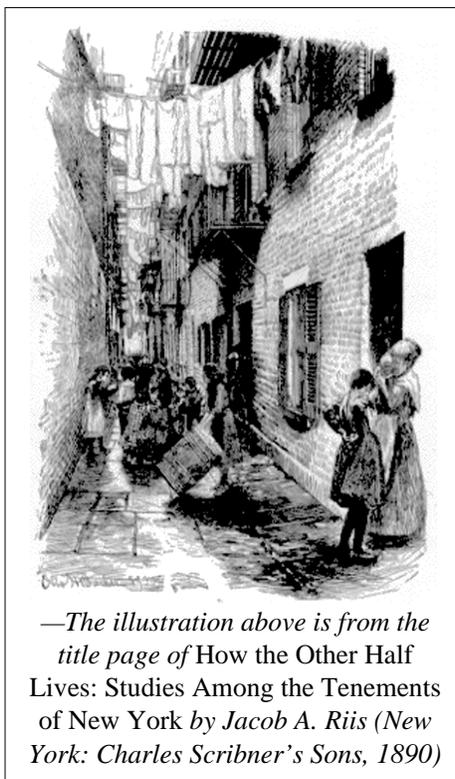
Riis began to take photographs of the slums, hoping that a visual encounter would create a more lasting effect upon the public. Riis stated that his purpose was to make a collection of "lantern slides" to show "as no mere description could, the misery and vice that he had noted in his ten years of experience...and suggest the direction in which good might be done."

Theodore Roosevelt praised Riis for his work, calling him "the greatest citizen of New York City." Roosevelt offered him a job working with him. Riis refused the position, preferring a more creative, free, and open lifestyle in which to continue producing material calling for reform among the urban poor.

Riis's collection, *How the Other Half Lives*, documents the squalor of immigrant

life, as well as exposing the horrid conditions of slum living. A man devoted to reform, change, and improving the quality of life, Riis leaves history with photos that tell a story of tenement, immigrant, and slum life.

—compiled by Claire McKeever. Sources: www.historytelevision.ca/archives/gangsNY; see also www.masters-of-photography.com



—The illustration above is from the title page of *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* by Jacob A. Riis (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890)

Raise Hunger Awareness through Worship. Subscribe to Sacred Seasons, a worship resource from Seeds of Hope.

Sacred Seasons is a quarterly series of creative worship tools to help raise awareness of hunger and justice issues. A year's subscription includes Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time, and a fall hunger emphasis resource. To order, call 254/755-7745; fax 254/753-1909; write to Seeds Publishers at 602 James, Waco, TX 76706; or email seedshope@aol.com.

Single packets are US\$50. (Non-US subscriptions are \$135; individual packets are \$60.) For more information, see www.seedspublishers.org.

Sacred

Seasons

America's Second Harvest Launches Third US Hunger Awareness Day

In December 2003, the number of unemployed persons in the US was 8.4 million, or 5.7 percent of all Americans. Many of these people have reached the end of their savings and are stretching impossibly tight budgets to put food on their tables.

The slow economy has added stress to the growing problem of poverty in this country. For instance, the number of people living in poverty in the US suburbs alone rose from 12.1 million in 2001 to 13.3 million in 2002.

To respond to this problem, America's Second Harvest and a number of sponsoring organizations—along with feeding programs, faith groups, and individuals—will observe National Hunger Awareness Day on Thursday, June 3. This will be the third year for the observance, which is designed to serve as a platform for domestic hunger-relief organizations to raise the level of awareness about the issue of hunger in the US.

See www.hungerawarenessday.org for information about the events planned across the country by member organizations and other interested groups. You can also download a toolkit to help you plan your own event.





Bipartisan Efforts in US Congress Bring Hope to a Hungry World

Senate Adds \$300 Million to International Affairs Budget

WASHINGTON, DC—The bipartisan leadership of US Senators Lugar (R-IN), Durbin (D-IL), and DeWine (R-OH) brought about a last-minute change which added \$300 million to President Bush's international affairs budget for FY2005. The vote, which took place in early March, will insure that funds will be targeted for chronically malnourished people and people suffering from HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. At press time, the House was still deliberating on its version of the budget.

—from *Bread for the World*

US House Passes Bipartisan Child Nutrition Program Bill

WASHINGTON, DC—In late March, an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the US House of Representatives (419-5) approved the Child Nutrition Improvement and Integrity Act (HR 3873). This bill, a child nutrition reauthorization bill, was reported out of the Education and Workforce Committee by a 42-0 vote earlier in March. It will expand the availability of nutritious meals to more children in school, in outside school hours programs, and in child care.

The bill makes vital improvements in the nutrition programs, such as expanding successful paperwork reduction pilots in the Summer Food Program that have

already resulted in more low-income children receiving nutritious meals during the summer months; extending eligibility for snacks and meals to children in homeless and domestic violence shelters up to the age of 18; making it possible for more low-income children from military families to receive free and reduced price school meals; allowing for-profit child care centers that serve significant numbers of low-income children to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; providing migrant children with automatic eligibility for free school meals; creating new ways to improve the nutrition environment in schools; and making the application process for school meals easier for many low-income families.

According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), the bill will provide greater access to important child nutrition programs for many low-income children. This will translate into more hungry children becoming better nourished and ready to learn. At press time, anti-hunger advocates were urging the Senate to follow suit as soon as possible with similar positive action on the child nutrition programs, including, in the words of a FRAC representative, "additional improvements, in order to ensure that the nation's low-income children and their families can benefit from the constructive and hard-won provisions in this child nutrition bill."

—from *Food Research and Action Center*

Global Study Says Women Suffer More from Joblessness

GENEVA—A study released in March by the International Labor Organization (ILO) said that joblessness around the world affects women more than men. The global unemployment rate for last year was 6.4 per cent for females, 6.1 per cent for males.

The report said that more women work today than ever before. Last year 40 percent of the world's 2.8 billion workers were women. This represents an increase of nearly 200 million women in the past 10 years.

However, women around the world,

like women in the US, face higher unemployment rates and lower wages. The ILO said that, in addition to the 77.8 million jobless women, women represent 60 percent of the world's 550 million working poor. In the six occupations studied, women still earn less of what their male coworkers earn, even in "typically female" occupations such as nursing and teaching.

The study found that while the gap between the number of men and women in the labor force has been decreasing in all regions of the world since 1993, this decrease has varied widely. In East Asia, the ratio of workers is 83 women to 100 men. However, in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia, female workers do not fare so well. There the ratio is 40 women to 100 men.

—from the *Canadian Press*, *International Labor Organization* (www.ilo.org)

Unemployment Benefits Running Out for Record Numbers

WASHINGTON, DC—The Center of Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) recently released an analysis predicting that 375,000 jobless people in the US would run out of unemployment benefits in January. This is the highest number for that month in the US during the thirty years that unemployment figures have been counted. The CBPP predicted that an additional 2 million people will have exhausted their benefits by June of this year. The report counted the loss of 2.8 million manufacturing jobs in the US in the past 41 months.

In spite of talk in the nation's capital about job growth, only 1,000 jobs were created in December. Congress had voted in 2002 to extend unemployment benefits for 13 weeks. In fact, Congress extended the benefits twice. However, those



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extensions expired just before Christmas 2003.

—from the *Washington Post*, *Food Research and Action Center*, *Center for Budget Policy and Priorities*

Low-Income People Find High-Calorie, Less Nutritious Foods More Affordable

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON—A report from the Center for Public Health Nutrition (CPHN) at the University of Washington concludes that low-income people tend to choose more high-calorie, low-nutritious foods because they provide more energy for the dollar.

Adam Drewnowski, CPHN's director, said that energy-dense foods "composed of refined grains, added sugars, or fats may represent the lowest-cost option." He said that people probably choose these kinds of foods simply to save money.

Ironically, the report also found that women from food insecure households were less likely to get enough fruits and vegetables and, on average, weighed about 10 pounds more than women from food-secure households.

Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), said that parents in food-insecure households buy enough to "make their kids not hungry." He said that these people realize their meals are not as nutritious as they should be. A report from FRAC stated that food stamp benefits are not adequate to provide a well-balanced diet.

—*Los Angeles Times*, *Food Research and Action Center*

GO BEFORE US

Singing and Working for Justice

Bernadette Farrell

Go Before Us expresses a commitment to social justice, challenging us all to think, to pray and especially to act in ways that bring peace to our broken world. Hymns, psalms, songs suitable for children and music for the liturgy throughout the year. Adult and children's choirs, soloists, 12 instrumentalists. 13 selections, \$17. GBU

—Order from Alternatives at www.simpleliving.org/catalog/music.html

AGAPE

The Stories and the Feast

Marty Haugen

Based on the Mass, this phenomenal work uses music from many cultures and the prophetic voices of our day to bring alive a story of struggle, hope and celebration. Written for adult and children's choirs, soloists and instrumentalists, and audience participation as well. The gospel-style communion song "O Taste and See," and Iona's "Halle, Halle, Halle" have become favorites along with the strong eucharistic acclamations. 14 selections, \$17. AGAPE

—Order from Alternatives at www.simpleliving.org/catalog/music.html

FACTS HAVE FACES

Hunger in a World of Plenty

Uprooted Peoples

Church World Service has just released two new fact sheets in their superb *Facts Have Faces* series. "Hunger in a World of Plenty" offers statistics, quotes from around the world, stories of hope, and a capsule on the roots of hunger. "Uprooted Peoples" is an excellent resource for introducing people to the realities of displaced persons, including a glossary, facts about refugees, and stories of hope. The first copy of each is free; additional copies \$.20, with bulk discounts available.

—Order from www.churchworldservice.org or 800-297-1516.

ELECTIONS MATTER:

Vote to End Hunger

This is a 22-page booklet from Bread for the World on how to engage with the US election process. It includes a number of "how-to" chapters, questions for candidates, a special page for youth, and worship resources.

—Download the booklet for free at www.bread.org or call 1-800-82-BREAD.

Haiti's Child, continued from page 3

laria, both of which can cause death. People starve because of the lack of food production.

Nothing is trash. Haitians are forced to use everything they have as a resource. Dogs wander the streets sniffing for a scrap of food. There are no scraps.

...

Rose's father pled his case with me 10 months ago. But I still think about them every day. We have much more to learn from the Haitians than they could ever learn from us. Their kindness,

their resilience and their faith are unmatched. They believe.

And so they changed my life forever. Through the Haitians,

God strengthened my heart for the poor and for the kingdom.

Somehow, Haiti seems a forgotten place.

But Rose's eyes still follow me, even in my sleep.

—Erika Walter is trained as a photojournalist, but is also working with children at a mission in Peru. The words above are excerpts from a longer piece that she wrote after returning to the US from a mission trip to Haiti.

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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.

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quotes, poems, & pithy sayings

Various sources report over 200,000 calls to the network and other agencies [over Janet Jackson's and Justin Timberlake's "wardrobe malfunction" during the halftime of the Super Bowl]. There has been speculation that in the days that followed there were as many as ten million complaints. Is it not a sad commentary on our culture that we are more upset over an uncovered breast than we are an unfed child? Why do not millions of outraged Christians call to protest the neglect of children? Thirty-five million people in the United States, fourteen million of them children, live in poverty in the richest nation in the history of the world. What would disturb Jesus most, an uncovered breast or an unfed child?

—Raymond Bailey, a pastor in Waco, Texas

How can you say you have fulfilled the law and prophets, when it is written in the law that you should love your neighbor as yourself? Look, many of your brothers, sons of Abraham, are covered with filth and dying of hunger. Meanwhile, your own house is filled with goods, and not a thing goes out of it to them.

—Origen, third-century theologian in Alexandria

Christ didn't say, "Love humanity as thyself," but, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and do you know why? Because your neighbor, by definition, is the person nearby, the man sitting next to you in the underground who smells, perhaps, the man next to you in the queue who maybe tries to barge ahead of you; in short, your neighbor is the person who threatens your own liberty.

—Luciano De Crescenzo

During my second year of nursing school, our professor gave us a quiz. I breezed through the questions until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely this was a joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Before the class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our grade. "Absolutely," the professor said. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello." I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

—Joanne C. Jones

Few are the giants of the soul who actually feel that the human race is their family circle.

—Elizabeth Wray Taylor



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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

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