

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

G-8 Debt Agreement: A Step Forward, But Not Enough

from Jubilee USA

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND AND WASHINGTON, DC— As G-8 leaders concluded their summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, in early July, debt activists characterized their deal on debt cancellation as a precedent-setting first step. However, they say that it falls short of what is needed to address the world's crisis debt. The summit, marred by terrorist attacks in London, nonetheless produced statements on debt cancellation, increased aid, and climate change. G-8 leaders endorsed the plan put forth by their Finance Ministers in a June meeting in London.

The leaders met amid growing global dialogue and pressure from rock stars, civil society groups, and protestors, all demanding that the G-8 leaders must do much more to address the crisis of poverty in Africa and elsewhere.

"While the G-8 agreement is a step forward and sets an important precedent...our campaign

for freedom from debt for impoverished nations has only just begun," said Jubilee USA's Neil Watkins, in Edinburgh for the summit.

Watkins and others are concerned about statements by some governments indicating that the G-8 debt deal would effectively end the debt crisis faced by impoverished nations.

While the debt agreement adopted in Gleneagles would cancel 100 percent of 18 impoverished countries' debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and African Development Bank, it excludes other impoverished nations and debt to other significant creditors, does not address odious and illegitimate debt, and preserves economic conditionality.

The Jubilee USA Network produced a 14-page analysis of the G-8 debt agreement, entitled "First Step on a Long Journey: Putting the G-8 Deal on Debt into Perspective." The report highlights the benefits of the G-8 debt agreement, while detailing its limitations, and provides recommendations for possible next steps.

Some of the key findings of the analysis are as follows:

1. Debt Cancellation Will Save Lives. The agreement, in addition to setting the important precedent of 100 percent debt cancellation for some nations to some creditors, will release close to \$1 billion annually in resources poor nations can use for development. (The Zambian

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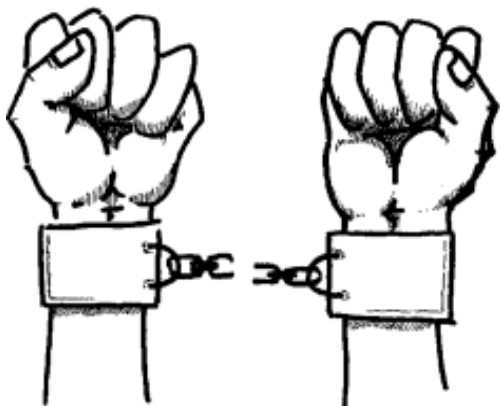
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art by Van Darden

A Look at the Cocoa Trade

by Jessica Garza

The Human Cost of Making Chocolate

All the public usually hears are catch phrases like “They melt in your mouth, not in your hands.” Consumers are mostly unaware of the human costs of making chocolate treats.

The majority of the world’s chocolate is manufactured along Africa’s northwestern coast. Companies like Nestle, Archer Daniels Midland, and Cargill own production facilities for cocoa beans there.

Chocolate manufacturers generally grow cocoa beans in Africa and ship them to the US for manufacturing. This is partly because a suitable growing environment does not exist on the North American continent.

Another reason for growing the beans in Africa is the cheapness of the labor. A large number of the people who farm the cocoa fields of the Ivory Coast are children—children as young as six years old.

Sadly, the majority of these children are employed involuntarily. Many of the workers have been kidnapped and sold into slavery. They are taken from slums and ghettos in the cities and sold to farm managers for about US\$30. A significant portion of this slave trade seems to be taking place in Mali.



Above: A cocoa tree. This farm is located just outside of Kumasi, Ghana. Photo courtesy of a Ghana cooperative called the Xtreme Team, with thanks to Ben Bryant.

Nearly 15,000 children are estimated to be producing half of the world’s chocolate. Advocates say that most of them never see a penny of the money they have earned. They are helpless to ask for their wages, or their liberty. They have no voice.

Many of these young slaves are given machetes and expected to harvest cocoa beans with no training, so they come back from the fields with gaping wounds. They also experience heat exhaustion. They carry 30-pound sacks of cocoa that leave scars all over their backs. They are malnourished—many of them seriously so.

In Mali—a Western African country next to the coastal countries of Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea—officials have set up a foundation to help end the forced servitude. The

Divine Chocolates

In answer to the problem of unfair trade practices in the cocoa industry, a co-op of small farmers in Ghana formed *Kuapa Kokoo* in the early 1990s. The name means “good cocoa farmers.” The company seeks to harvest, transport, and market their own cocoa beans. The mission of *Kuapa Kokoo* is to ensure proper trade practices and avoid exploiting growers.

The Good Cocoa Farmers also work to nurture partnerships. An alliance formed by such partners allowed the Day Chocolate Company to enter the European Market for mainstream consumers with the Divine Chocolate bar in October 1998. The company uses cocoa produced in Ghana, which they claim is of the highest quality [see the photo of Ghana cocoa on this page]. In the past year, the company gained the ability to ship the chocolate year-round.

In addition to marketing fair-trade chocolate, *Kuapa Kokoo* also publishes resources to educate consumers about fair-trade practices and the global cocoa business. *Kuapa Kokoo* leaders say that they would like to be successful in the confectionery world, but that good ethical business is of supreme importance. (Source: *Divine Chocolate.com*, *World Hunger Relief, Inc.*)

Recent estimates reported that the chocolate industry produced cocoa beans from Western Africa totaling 344 million dollars. Some of these are complicit in the slave trade and some of them are not.

“Save the Children Fund” works to bring about global awareness of the problem. Their aim is to get consumers of the world to think about what they are buying.

These officials, however, say that they are finding among consumers a lack of interest in the welfare of cocoa workers. A foundation publication says, “If the will [were] there, the problem could be fixed within a month.” In spite of this obstacle, the group is optimistic about educating the world’s consumers to save Malian children.

At least some officials at major chocolate makers in the US are aware of the problems in the cocoa fields. Companies like Hershey's and M&M/Mars signed international protocol documents agreeing to regulate the practice of child labor by July 2005.

However, activists say that this agreement, known as the Harkin-Engel Protocol, will not ensure that the chocolate from those companies is not harvested by children. At press time, a few weeks since the deadline, analysts say that fair-trade chocolate is on the rise, but see little progress in the child labor issue. [For the full text of a recent report, see www.globalexchange.org.]

Just two years ago, the chocolate industry produced cocoa beans from Western Africa totaling 344 million dollars. Some of these are complicit in the slave trade and some of them are not.

Some chocolate manufacturers, like Divine Chocolate [see the sidebar on page 2] produce certified fair-trade chocolate. It is important that those of us who are interested in a more just world find out how our chocolate got to us.

Several church organizations, such as Lutheran World Relief, have launched fair-trade chocolate projects. Many others include chocolate in larger fair-trade projects.

—Jessica Garza, now a youth minister in North Dallas, is a recent graduate of Baylor University's professional writing program. Sources: BBC News; Global Exchange, Lutheran World Relief (www.lwr.org/chocolate), Divine Chocolate, Jubilee Chocolates. For practical ideas, see "Ten Ways to Support Fair Trade" at www.witherspoonsociety.org, a Presbyterian web site.

Jubilee Chocolates

“Real People; Amazing Chocolates.” That's the slogan for Jubilee Chocolates, a Philadelphia-based company started by John and Kira Doyle.

Kira Doyle was overseeing gardening projects for inner-city schools when John started the chocolate company. Immediately the couple saw a gardening project as one way to keep their ingredients free of unfair trade practices, while involving local children.

Jubilee Chocolates has become a big sensation to students at Drew elementary school. Almost all children love chocolate, but this is not the reason they support the company. The school is partnering with the Urban Nutrition Initiative, which has organized a number of gardening projects with several schools, to grow mint for them.

The Drew Elementary mint garden is not the only way the Doyles participate in fair trade. They use ingredients from local farmers on a regular basis.

The actual chocolate comes from a special blend from Valrhona beans, along with three other types of fair-trade brands. The Doyles refuse to purchase any cocoa from countries still employing child labor. (Sources: Chocolates.com; article by Jane Kendall in Greenwich.)

One in Six Countries Facing Food Shortage

Global Climate Change Cited

ROME, ITALY—According to UN scientists, one in six countries in the world face food shortages this year because of severe droughts that are connected to global climate change.

In a stark message for world leaders shortly before the July G-8 summit, Wulf Killman, of UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) climate change group, said that recent droughts across Africa, central America, and southeast Asia are part of an emerging pattern.

The global food shortage monitors of the FAO and the US government agree that 34 countries are now experiencing droughts and food shortages, and others could join them. These groups say that up to 30 million people will need assistance because of droughts and other natural disasters.

The UN says the worst affected countries include Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Eritrea, and Zambia, a group of countries where at least 15 million people will go hungry without aid. Niger, Djibouti, and Sudan also face food shortages. Many countries have had their worst harvests in more than 10 years and are experiencing droughts more frequently.

Climate change could also trigger the growth of deserts in southern Africa, as global warming causes the Kalahari to spread. A report published in *Nature Today* predicts shifting sands across huge tracts of Botswana, Angola, Zimbabwe, and western Zambia.

Severe droughts have also badly affected crops in Cuba, Cambodia, Australia, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Morocco, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. According to the UN's early warning system for famines, 16 countries—including Peru, Ecuador and Lesotho—face “unfavourable prospects.”

In Europe, one of the worst droughts on record has hit Spain and Portugal and halved some crop yields. Both countries have applied to the EU for food assistance. In Morocco the same regional drought has devastated farming. Researchers are reporting a general drying of the land and growth of desertification in the Mediterranean region. “The 20-year average clearly shows a dramatic increase of desertification and drought,” said Professor Giovanni Quaranta, an agricultural economist at the University of Basilicata in southern Italy.

—from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, a story by John Vidal and Tim Radford in *The Guardian*



Preaching to Myself

by Jonathan Hal Reynolds

I played Jesus in a Christmas pageant while I was in college. I wasn't a member of the church that sponsored the pageant, but I worked with their youth during the school year and in the summers.

In the weeks leading up to the pageant, I had this radical fantasy that I would unexpectedly jump down from the cross (without telling the director or any of the other actors beforehand) and preach to the congregation—full of businessmen and lawyers who knew very well the color of money—in a way that I believed Jesus would talk to the Church today.

My fantasy went something like this: I would be standing with my arms stretched out on the cross about to say my final words to God before I died, "It is finished." But instead of saying, "It is finished," I would say, "It's...not finished."

Then I'd freak everybody out by hopping down off the cross, walking out into the crowd, and preaching to them about how ridiculous it was that they paid \$15,000 for a Christmas pageant when there are starving children downtown who could have eaten all year with that money.

And then I would have told them that it was absolutely ridiculous for them to spend \$8,000,000 on a new sanctuary when they weren't even filling up the sanctuary they had right now.

And who needs a workout arena in your church? I mean, come on! You

can join the Y! (Can you imagine Jesus telling someone to go join the Y?)

But then I started thinking again. By preaching to the Church, I would have been preaching mostly to myself. I have just as many, if not more, useless possessions and selfish spending habits as anyone else I know.

What was, and is, holding me back from selling my DVD player, my truck, my guitars to feed the hungry? What holds us all back?

Anyway, when it came time for the Christmas pageant, I didn't live out my fantasy. I was a good boy and said my lines the way they were written, "It is finished."

—Jonathan Reynolds, a recent graduate of Baylor University's professional writing program, spent two semesters writing for Seeds of Hope Publishers. This story is part of an article titled

I would be standing with my arms stretched out on the cross about to say my final words to God before I died, "It is finished." But instead of saying, "It is finished," I would say, "It's...not finished."

"Homelessness, Christmas Pageants, and the Color of Money" printed in the Summer 2005 issue of Baptist Peacemaker. The first part of the article, "My Weekend on the Streets," appeared in the spring 2005 issue of Hunger News & Hope.

The Seeds Hunger Emphasis worship packet for 2005...



...introducing the art of Curtis Cannon (above), plus all the worship resources you have come to expect from Sacred Seasons.

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. US subscriptions are \$120. Single packets are US\$50. (Non-US subscriptions are \$135; individual packets are \$60.) For more information, see www.seedspublishers.org.



hunger resources

Ending Hunger Now: A Challenge to Persons of Faith

George McGovern, Bob Dole,

Donald E. Messer

0-8006-3782-8

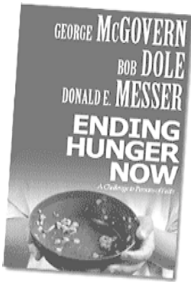
Paperback, 128 pages, \$12.00

Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005

Available October 1

This October, Fortress Press will release a new book by Senator George McGovern, Senator Bob Dole, and Donald Messer entitled *Ending Hunger Now: A Challenge to Persons of Faith*.

This book brings together three powerful voices behind a shared conviction: that helping the millions who lack basic provision of food has become a religious imperative and human priority. Writing for congregations and individuals of faith, these bipartisan leaders appeal to the biblical, theological, and ethical foundations of action against hunger. Informative, inspiring, and filled with practical suggestions and discussion questions, the book encourages personal involvement and political commitment to the cause.



Order from Augsburg Fortress; 100 South 5th Street Suite 700; Minneapolis, MN 55402; Email: (Bob Todd) toddb@augsburghfortress.org; Phone: 612/330-3234; Fax: 612/330-3514; Web: fortresspress.com

The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time

Jeffrey D. Sachs

Foreword by Bono

ISBN: 1-59420-045-9

Hardcover, 396 pp

New York: Penguin Press, 2005

Lane Vanderslice, editor of *Hunger Notes* (www.worldhunger.org), writes that Jeffrey Sachs's new book, *The End of Poverty: Economics for Our Time*, is an interesting and worthwhile discussion of

how to help the world's poorest people. "It combines an intellectual history of Sachs, and how he came to understand key development factors, an introduction to economic development issues, an explanation of why the poorest people and countries need assistance...and a call for action for those of us living in developed countries to do more."

Sachs, described in the March 14 issue of *Time* (with an excerpt from the book) as a "celebrity economist," has worked in Bolivia, Poland, Russia, and Africa, and is involved with promoting the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

He presents three substantial barriers that the poorest people of the world must overcome to survive: health barriers (crippling diseases such as HIV and malaria); agricultural barriers (unproductive land with no money to buy fertilizer or other improvements); and educational barriers. He insists that developed countries should help, but they (we) are not willing to ante up the money and instead blame the developing countries for their plight.

Vanderslice writes, "Sachs is angry about the current state of affairs—a minimal world response to a vast number of desperately poor people. He has written a well-reasoned book saying why this should be changed. This is by no means a perfect book, but it is a valuable one."

Hunger for the Word: Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice

Year B

Larry Hollar, Editor

ISBN 0-8146-3008-1

Paperback, 219 pp incl. Scripture Index



Last fall, *Hunger News & Hope* reviewed for you *Hunger for the Word*, a collection of weekly meditations on hunger issues for Lectionary Year A. Now editor Larry Hollar has compiled another edition, this time for Year B. Passages are based on both the Revised Common and Roman Catholic Lectionaries.

Each reflection includes a reflection on the lectionary passage, a children's sermon concept, and suggestions for music. The diversity of the contributors gives the reader a colorful array of perspectives. The book is an invitation into a new mindfulness of world hunger. It is also a guide into how God's word can nurture our pursuit to feed the hungry. It is an excellent resource for teaching and worship planning, but also provides guidance for creative and mindful individual reflections on hunger and justice issues.

Another volume, written for Lectionary Year C, is forthcoming. For more information, go to www.bread.org.

The 2005 World Food Day teleconference

REFLECTIONS ON FIGHTING HUNGER:

Roads not Taken; Goals not Met; the Journey Ahead

October 14, 2005

For 25 years, the US Committee for World Food Day (WFD) has provided a timely, informative national teleconference near October 16. This year author and critic Frances Moore Lappé will offer perspective on the human-made causes of hunger and the significance of our everyday choices in creating a world free of hunger.

Components of the event include (1) a Study/Action Packet with bibliography; (2) the three-hour telecast; and (3) the teleconference report. Continuing Education Credits are available. For more information, go to www.worldfoodday.org. The site offers details on this year's subject and speaker, 25 years' worth of WFD cartoons by Tom Wilson, and other WFD art [see the art on this page by Ted Egri]. To participate in this year's event, contact Patricia Young at 202/653-2404.



Boycotts Can Make a Difference



NC Mount Olive Pickle Boycott Brings Precedent- Setting Agreement

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA—In September 2004, after a five-year boycott led by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO (FLOC), the committee reached a groundbreaking agreement with the North Carolina Grower's Association (NCGA) and the Mount Olive Pickle Company.

More than 8,000 "guest" farm workers in North Carolina became the first such workers in the history of the US to win union representation and a contract. It is the largest union contract in North Carolina's history.

The contract will allow the union to oversee the employment of more than 8,000 workers from Mexico who will work in North Carolina with H-2A visas through the US Department of Labor. FLOC representatives said the standards set by this agreement are significant because of the agricultural industry's almost exclusive use of un-

documented workers. The agreement will cover more than 1,000 North Carolina farms.

A "side-bar agreement" will extend the influence of the contract as far as Ohio, as a pact with the Mount Olive Pickle Company increases wages to workers and prices to growers by more than 10 percent over the next three years. Most growers who contract with Mount Olive are also members of the North Carolina Grower's Association (NCGA).

The NCGA has long been accused of blacklisting workers for supporting the union and for complaining about workers' rights. To prohibit this, the agreement between NCGA and FLOC will develop a system of seniority based on number of years worked, growers' requests, and union membership.

The agreement is a new initiative to bring the North Carolina's agricultural industry together to work on issues that require investigation and long-term development. Standing committees with the NCGA and other public entities will improve housing and health care, and will examine issues of fair trade.

The Union and the NCGA will work with the Mexican government to eliminate graft, bribery, and blackmail committed by recruiters and Mexican police.

FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez stated that the agreement will set an important standard for the rest of the agricultural industry. "Everyone else almost exclusively utilizes undocumented workers and the conditions of those workers are tragic and shameful."

Labor Office Opened in Mexico

MONTEREY, MEXICO—On March 17 in Monterey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, leaders of the Ohio-based FLOC and the California-based United Farm Workers of America (UFWA) opened an office to educate Mexican guest workers in North Carolina about their newly-won rights under the 2004 agreement.

FLOC president Baldemar Velasquez and UFWA president Arturo Rodriguez marked the opening of FLOC's Monterey office as the first concrete step in making the contract reality. Representatives from several US states were also on hand.

FLOC is now overseeing the applications of more than 7,500 Mexican farm workers requesting visas to work in North Carolina. The Monterey office will inform the workers about their rights under the H-2A program in North Carolina and enforce their seniority and recruitment rights.

FLOC members in North Carolina are now the only H-2A guest workers entitled to file complaints through a grievance procedure that protects agricultural laborers and lets them quickly resolve their concerns. Grievances may also be filed in Mexico during the off-season.

—*from the National Farm Workers Movement (www.nfwm.org) and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee*

Church Groups Lead the Way to Better Conditions for Tomato Pickers

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY—Three years of boycotts and protests at Taco Bell

restaurants across the nation—organized to support Florida tomato pickers in seeking better wages and living conditions—came to a successful end last spring.

In March, the Louisville-based Yum! Brand announced that it would pay a penny more for each pound of tomatoes it uses at its Taco Bell restaurants, that it would buy only from growers who agree to pass the surcharge on to the field workers, and that it will now play a leadership role in making conditions better for all Florida tomato pickers.

The price hike of a penny per pound doubles the wages for more than 100,000 Immokalee workers, most of whom are immigrants. Women who worked seven days a week will now be able to take weekends off.

Organizers for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) say that the lives of the laborers will still be difficult, but that Yum! Brand's decision is a real victory.

Taco Bell's new code of conduct forbids indentured labor and calls for surprise inspections to see that human rights standards are being met. Although this will add \$100,000 per year to Taco Bell's expenses, representatives say this will not be passed along to the customer. (YUM! made over \$9 billion last year from Taco Bell alone. The company also owns Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut.)

The company promised to work with the CIW and their supporters to influence the Florida state legislatures to pass laws requiring fairer treatment of all migrant agricultural laborers—long abused by Florida's growers with near impunity.

A protest, planned for March 8, was turned into a celebration in front of the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church USA—in recognition of the leadership role the PCUSA has played in the struggle. The group was instrumental in involving the National

Council of Churches and several other mainstream Protestant denominations in the boycott.

Also on hand were the members of the Jefferson Street Baptist Community at Liberty, a small Louisville congregation. Some months before the boycott ended, the church had received a promised reimbursement of \$527 from Yum! Brands for what they had spent at a local food bank to feed homeless men and women.

When the CIW marched through town to publicize the Taco Bell boycott, the church voted to publicly present the \$527 to the coalition.

—from a story by Michael Westmoreland-White, a member of the Jefferson Street Baptist Community at Liberty in Louisville

CIW Targets Farmworker Slavery in Northeastern Florida

For the past several years CIW has been tracking instances in Florida of agricultural workers being lured into servitude and held captive. The latest report, released by the Associated Press (AP) and several other news sources, came out in June 2005.

The report cited what CIW calls slavery among workers in the white potato and cabbage fields of northern Florida. According to Laura Germino, a CIW leader, the coalition was contacted by workers at the camp, who reported the case to federal authorities.

The AP report said CIW aided authorities in the prosecution of five previous cases of farmworker slavery as well. In the most recent case, homeless men—mostly African-American—were lured to East Palatka, Florida with promises of work and held there by giving them narcotics “on credit.”



Boycott Success Leads to Fair Food Campaign

According to the CIW, the success of the Taco Bell boycott represents a significant step toward social responsibility in the fast-food industry. But Taco Bell is only one major buyer among many, so the CIW is launching a Fair Food Campaign, aimed at the entire industry.

On June 1, the National Council of Churches (NCC) executive board issued a call to McDonald's, Burger King, and Subway to follow the lead of Taco Bell in ensuring the human rights of the tomato pickers in their supply chain.

As former endorsers of the Taco Bell boycott, the NCC and their 45 million members from across the US have thrown their weight behind the Fair Food Campaign.

The group has called for all US fast food chains to take responsibility for the sub-poverty wages for farmworkers, as well as inhumane working conditions. (For the full statement, go to www.nccusa.org/news. For information about the letter-writing campaign, go to www.ciw-online.org/news.)

—from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (www.ciw-online.org), Associated Press, The Guardian, New York Times.



Appalachia Cuts Poverty But Prospects Still Limited

In the last 41 years, Appalachia has eliminated poverty among its population of 23 million by half and increased high school graduation rates by 70 percent. In 1965, there were 223 “distressed” counties whose number has been reduced to 82.

Forty years and billions of dollars in public and private investments have made the difference. But unemployment, the absence of roads, and inadequate water and sewer connections have remained the largest factors limiting the region’s ability to grow. The migration of high school graduates in search of better jobs is also a challenge that undermines Appalachia’s prospects for future prosperity.

—from *Food Research Action Center and the Louisville Courier-Journal* (“*Appalachia Then and Now*,” www.courier-journal.com)

Emergency Food Stamps Issued in Florida

Hundreds of Santa Rosa County, Florida residents came for a one-time issuance of food stamps after Hurricane Dennis struck in July. The Department of Agriculture (USDA), along with local agencies, implemented a disaster Food Stamp program, distributing \$149 for a single person and \$499 for a family of four, valid for 90 days.

Eligible persons were mailed an electronic benefit card to buy groceries. The program applies to people impacted by disaster but who do not normally receive food stamps, and people who were already food stamp recipients when the storm came but need further assistance.

—from *Food Research and Action Center and the Pensacola News Journal* (“*Santa Rosans to Recoup Some Losses with Disaster Food Stamps*”)

House Reps Fear Food Stamps May Be Cut

Leaders of a US House of Representatives panel are in a series of sessions concerning the reduction of farm spending by \$3 billion. Some lawmakers, especially Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-North Dakota), worry that the House could target the Food Stamp Program.

The group, led by House Agriculture Committee chairman Bob Goodlatte, will assemble a package of cuts in early September based on a “vast array of options” for reductions over five years. Rep. Pomeroy is concerned that the ad hoc committee is “an unacceptable shortcut” of committee work in public session that could lead to “backdoor deals leading to nutrition cuts.”

Earlier Rep. Goodlatte and Senate Agriculture Committee chairman Saxby Chambliss received a letter from the Food Research and Action Center, America’s Second Harvest, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, opposing the cuts.

—from *Food Research and Action Center*. See also “*As Congress Cuts USDA Budget, Food Stamps Eyed*,” *Reuters*, July 28)

Priest Finds Ways to Help People Get Fresh Start

Father Paul O’Brian’s anti-hunger campaign, dubbed Labels Are for Jars, has had an unprecedented success in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Fr. O’Brian discovered that in this impoverished area many people have difficulty getting a fresh start in life and suffer from unemployment and poverty because they have been “labeled” by their previous experiences.

He sells T-shirts with common pejorative labels (“Homeless,” “Addict,” “Geek” etc.) packed in jars, which the purchasers are asked to fill with money to fight hunger. While making a point about people being too often defined based on the labels society gives them, Fr. O’Brian stresses that hunger is much more pervasive than people realize: “If you go to schools, you’ll hear about children who can’t concentrate; in hospitals, evidence of malnutrition.”

—from *onphilanthropy.com* (“*Beating Hunger with the Help of Some Friends*,” July 22)

First Mobile Program for Homeless Children

The Parent-Child Home Program of Suffolk County in New York has the nation’s first mobile early childhood outreach program to serve homeless families who live in shelters and other emergency housing arrangements. The program sends teachers to shelters to help children and parents prepare for school.

The first strategy the program uses for children in at-risk families is to reduce hunger and improve access to health care. The program, serving 5,000 children in 145 sites nationwide, is designed to prepare children for school and help them overcome language and literacy barriers.

—from *Newsday.com* (“*Giving Homeless a Head Start*,” July 17)

FAO Concerned about Food Shortages in Malawi and Zimbabwe

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) is concerned about semi-permanent climate changes in 34 countries [see “*One in Six Countries Facing Food Shortage*” on page 3], but are particularly concerned about the drought situations in Malawi and Zimbabwe.

In Malawi, a government report suggests more than 430,000 tons of maize will be needed to avert the second food shortage in three years, and one in three people are expected to need help by the end of the year. Thousands of people died in 2002 and 2003 in a famine that affected the poorest and remotest people.

In Zimbabwe, where the effects of drought have been exacerbated by a deteriorating political situation, 4 million people may need help this year, according to the US government’s famine early warning system.

Neighboring South Africa had a surplus this year, and many are willing to share, but distribution becomes increas-

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G-8 Debt Agreement: A Step Forward, But Not Enough

continued from page 1

government has promised to use debt relief proceeds to provide Anti-Retroviral drugs to 100,000 HIV/AIDS patients.)

2. The G-8 Plan Includes Too Few Countries. The 18 countries that qualify immediately represent less than a third of countries (at least 62) that need full cancellation to meet the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs.) The MDGs seek to halve extreme poverty in the world by 2015.

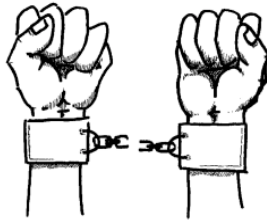
The \$40 billion to be cancelled by this agreement represents less than 10 percent of the debt cancellation required for nations to meet the MDGs. The plan does not include heavily-indebted and impoverished middle-income countries. The African Union has called for all African nations to receive debt cancellation. The G-8 agreement applies to only 14 nations.

3. The G-8 Plan Contains Onerous Conditions. The economic policies mandated by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative will continue under the G-8 debt agreement, including privatization of government-run services and industries, increased trade liberalization, and budgetary spending restrictions.

These policies have not been proven to increase per capita income growth or reduce poverty, as documented by both World Bank and civil society economists, and should be abandoned.

4. The G-8 debt agreement is an important first step towards a world where external debt no longer diverts resources from impoverished people or constrains policy choices. But Jubilee USA will work for debt cancellation for more countries (such as impoverished countries not included in this deal, middle-income countries with large impoverished populations, and those with odious/illegitimate debts) and creditors (such as the Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, bilateral, and private creditors) not included in this year's initiative. [For the

complete paper, go to the Jubilee USA web site: www.jubileeusa.org.]



World Bank Report Undermines Hopes

WASHINGTON, AUGUST 3—In early August, a leaked World Bank staff report caused concern among debt activists. A Jubilee USA statement said the report called into question “the implementation of the already limited G-8 debt agreement.”

Analysts are concerned that, combined with possible IMF proposals to curtail the scope of the G-8 agreement, the World Bank proposal would undermine a key precedent of the G-8 deal—100 percent debt cancellation for 18 impoverished countries.

The World Bank argues that the 18 initially eligible countries should receive debt cancellation based on harmful economic conditions, thus causing the G-8 proposal to be revocable. “Any backtracking on the G-8 deal would result in serious consequences for those populations in the 18 initially eligible impoverished countries,” a Jubilee USA statement said. The statement said these countries urgently require the resources that would be released through full debt cancellation.

“At the conclusion of their July summit, the G-8 nations endorsed their plan to cancel the debt of 18 countries immediately, with an additional 9-20 countries being eligible for cancellation in the near future,” said Debayani Kar of Jubilee USA Network. “Now, this already limited agreement...looks to be under fire.”

—The July 8 story is from Jubilee USA's Debayani Kar in Washington and Neil

Watkins in Edinburgh. The August 3 story is from the Jubilee staff in Washington. For more analysis and resources, go to www.jubileeusa.org.

See also “The G-8 ‘Commitments’ on Africa: Mostly Hot Air with Little Substance,” by Charles Abugre of Christian Aid, on the World Hunger Notes home page (www.worldhunger.org.) For more information about the relief-advocacy events leading up to the G-8 summit, see “Odd Alliance Brings About Debt Relief,” by Elizabeth Becker, New York Times News Analysis, June 11, 2005.

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ingly difficult as President Robert Mugabe adds more and more roadblocks between the people and aid.

—from The Guardian (see also the FAO web site: www.fao.org)

Malnutrition Cases on the Rise in Niger

Doctors Without Borders/Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reports that they treated nearly 10,000 severely malnourished children in Maradi, southern Niger in 2004—and that the number of children arriving with severe malnutrition continues to climb in 2005. In some villages MSF recently visited, one out of every five children already shows signs of malnutrition.

—from Doctors Without Borders (www.doctorswithoutborders.org); see also “The Rise of a Market Mentality Means Many Go Hungry in Niger” by Craig Timberg, Washington Post, August 11.

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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 Publishers are housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James, Waco, Texas 76706; Phone: 254/ 755-7745; Fax:

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art by Robert Darden



This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing

that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

—Oscar Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador

254/753-1909; Email: seedshope@aol.com.
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