

# Hunger News & Hope

## US Hunger and Food Security: A Primer

... a Seeds of Hope publication

The United States government, particularly the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), uses two main terms to describe the levels of hunger problems one usually finds in this country. *Food security* is a term used to describe “assured access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life, with no need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet basic food needs.”

*Food insecurity* refers to the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times, because the family lacks the financial resources to obtain food. There are different levels of food insecurity.

### *How Do We Measure Hunger and Food Insecurity?*

In the 1980s, because of a combination of cuts in social services and a nationwide recession, many communities across the country experienced an enormous increase in demand for emergency food, often among families with children.

Community leaders wanted to document this growing problem so that policymakers would recognize its severity and do something about the hunger they were seeing. Out of this expressed need developed the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) developed the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP), the first nationwide survey measuring the extent of hunger among families with children, the results of which were released in 1991 and 1995.

At the same time that CCHIP was being conducted, FRAC worked with a broad coalition of national organizations to get national nutrition monitoring legislation through Congress—legislation that required the federal government, among other things, to develop a measure of food insufficiency that could be added to the national nutrition monitoring system. Using CCHIP’s methodology as a foundation, the USDA and the Census Bureau developed a food security module to be included in the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Since 1995, the US Census Bureau has conducted an annual survey of food security among a nationally representative sample of people living in the US, using the food security module in the CPS. Questions center around anxiety that the household budget is inadequate to buy enough food; inadequacy in the quantity or quality of food eaten by adults and children in the household; and instances of reduced food intake for adults and for children.

The survey (called the “food security module”) is widely regarded as a reliable indicator of household well-being and serves as the basis for evaluating our

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nation's progress in reducing food insecurity. This is one of US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin's health objectives for the nation for the year 2010. The goal is to increase food security from 88 percent of all US households (1995) to 94 percent.

In 2006, the USDA Economic Research Service asked the National Academies of Science to carry out an independent review of this survey methodology. They concluded that the survey and the methodology to measure food insecurity were appropriate and that it was important to continue monitoring food security. However, they felt that the descriptions of categories should be revised to better convey the levels of household food insecurity.

As a result of the scientific panel's review and subsequent recommendations, USDA introduced new labels for the survey results. These are intended to measure the full range of food insecurity as experienced by households.

### What About Hunger?

*Hunger* is defined as "the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food." While the word *hunger* has been removed from the description of the results of the survey, FRAC urges that people should not interpret this to mean that there has been a major shift in the incidence of hunger. Countless people in the US face hunger every day.

The new terms used in the survey to describe food security are listed below:

1. *High Food Security*: These are households that did not answer 'yes' to any of the food insecurity questions.
2. *Marginal Food Security*: This term captures families that answered 'yes' to one or two of the food security questions, meaning they have had some difficulties with securing enough food. Previously, they would have been categorized as "Food Secure."

These two groups together will describe food insecurity. The new terms used in the survey are as follows:

1. *Low Food Security*: This term replaces "Food Insecurity without Hunger." Generally, people that fall into this category have had to

make changes in the quality or the quantity of their food in order to deal with a limited budget.

2. *Very Low Food Security*: This term replaces "Food Insecurity with Hunger." People that fall into this category have struggled with having enough food for the household, including cutting back or skipping meals on a frequent basis for both adults and children.

According to the results of the Census Bureau survey, those at greatest risk of being hungry or on the edge of hunger (i.e., food insecure) live in households that are headed by a single woman, Hispanic or African-American or with incomes below the poverty line.

Overall, households with children experience food insecurity at almost double the rate for households without children.

Geographically, food insecurity is more common in central city households. The survey data also show that house-

holds are more likely to be hungry or food insecure if they live in states in the Midwest and South.

### What Are the Implications of High Hunger Rates?

The ability to obtain enough food for an active, healthy life is the most basic of human needs. Food insecure households cannot achieve this fundamental element of well-being.

They are the ones in our country most likely to be hungry, undernourished, and in poor health, and the ones most in need of assistance. A high number of food insecure households in a nation of economic plenty means that the fruits of the US economy, and the benefits of public and private programs for needy people, are not yet reaching millions of low-income people who are at great risk.

— Sources: Food Research and Action Center, US Census Bureau, US Department of Agriculture, *Feeding America*.

When we talk about hunger in the US, we refer to the ability of people to obtain sufficient food for their household. *Hunger in America 2010*, a comprehensive study from Feeding America, reports that food insecurity is increasing at an alarming rate among the 37 million people served by the organization's food bank network.

These people find themselves skipping meals or cutting back on the quality or quantity of food they purchase. This recurring and involuntary lack of access to food can lead to malnutrition over time.

In some developing nations where famine is widespread, hunger manifests itself as severe and very visible clinical malnutrition. In the US, hunger manifests itself, generally, in a less severe form. This is in part because established programs—many of them federal nutrition programs—help to provide a safety net for many low-income families.

While starvation seldom occurs in the US, children and adults do go hungry and chronic mild undernutrition does occur when financial resources are low. The mental and physical changes that accompany inadequate food intakes can have harmful effects on learning, development, productivity, physical and psychological health, and family life. These are particularly acute for children.

Professor Jack Shonkoff, a physician and the director of the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, says that poverty in early childhood "poisons the brain." According to a Harvard report, excessive levels of stress hormones disrupt the formation of synaptic connections between cells in the developing brain—and even affect its blood supply.

The report says that stress hormones literally disrupt the brain architecture. "The earlier you intervene," Dr. Shonkoff says, "the better the outcome in the end, because the brain loses its plasticity as the child becomes older."

— Sources: Food Research and Action Center, *Feeding America*, Harvard Center on the Developing Child

# Celebrated Cell:

## *The Unsung Story of Henrietta Lacks*

by Audrey Cary

**H**enrietta Lacks, most famously known as HeLa, is a legend in modern science. She continues to live almost 60 years after her death. She is the unwitting donor of human cells that allowed medical knowledge to reach new depths, find new cures and save thousands of lives.

This poor African-American tobacco farmer's nickel-sized tumor carved a place for her in an unmarked grave in her hometown of Clover, Virginia—but it also carved a place for her in global history.

*Henrietta's cells have saved thousands of lives and made thousands of dollars, but Henrietta's family, who remains poor to this day, has never seen a penny of profit.*

Playing the lead role in an intricate story of sickness, research, medical marvel and bitter irony, Henrietta and her HeLa cells have changed the face of medicine forever.

The story is chronicled by Rebecca Skloot in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Crown Publishers). Henrietta showed up at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center with what she called a "knot on my womb."

The tumor was eventually collected by Johns Hopkins' Dr. George Gey, who then cultured the cells and was astonished at their inability to die. In fact, these tumor cells would continue living, growing and replicating for at least 59 years after their host passed away.

The cells that formed cancerous tissue in Henrietta's cervix, ultimately killing her at age 31 in 1951, are the same

cells that may someday aid in the research that could cure cancer altogether.

HeLa cells have an impressive resume, including space travel, aiding in the development of the polio vaccine, gene mapping, cloning, invitro fertilization and being the first cells to be commercialized.

Today, HeLa cells are sold for \$2,000-\$10,000 per vial to hospitals and researchers all over the world. Henrietta's cells have saved thousands of lives and made thousands of dollars, but Henrietta's family, who remains poor to this day, has never seen a penny of profit.

Henrietta, other than being a ground-breaking contributor to medicine as we know it, was wife to David Lacks and a mother of five children. Upon learning about the existence of their mother's cells, Henrietta's children, especially her daughter Deborah, began to wonder how little pieces of her mother had been sent all around the world without consent and without compensation.

"I always have thought it was strange," Deborah says, "if our mother's cells have done so much for medicine, how come her family can't afford to see no doctors?"

Although Henrietta would, in death, provide her own daughter with some of the medicines she needs, that isn't enough to pay for the medical bills accumulated after her son Sonny's bypass surgery.

At one point, one of Henrietta's sons was living homeless on the streets of Baltimore. Regardless of their mother's cells' multi-billion-dollar industry, Henrietta's family is in poverty today, without health insurance or medical coverage.

The lack of compensation isn't the only thing bothering the family, though; they wish for more recognition for their mother's life and contributions.

They hope that a wing at Johns Hopkins hospital could be named after

Henrietta. After all, the closest Henrietta has to a memorial are the little vials labeled HeLa that humbly assume the unwritten epitaph: "In death, she gave life to thousands."

—Audrey Cary is a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: *Smithsonian.com*, *Baltimore CityPaper*, *CBS News Sunday Morning*



# A 'Social Entrepreneur':

## The Story of Blake Mycoskie and TOMS Shoes

by Katie Minchew



Blake Mycoskie, the 33-year-old internet entrepreneur and creator of TOMS shoes calls himself “chief shoes giver,” since his company has given away 400,000 pairs of shoes to people in need all over the world.

What sets TOMS shoes apart is their incredible promise: “With every pair you purchase, TOMS will give a pair of new shoes to a child in need.”

According to a CBS News story on Mycoskie’s booming business, TOMS, short for “Tomorrow’s Shoes,” is making an especially large impact in Ethiopia, where 1 million out of 85 million residents have a devastating disease called Podoconiosis.

The disease causes extreme swelling of the feet and legs and is sometimes so painful that the sufferer is unable to walk. Recent discoveries show that Podoconiosis is caused by prolonged exposure to the Ethiopian soil, which contains volcanic ash that aggravates the skin.

Luckily, the disease can be cured by regularly washing the feet and by wearing proper shoes. Which is where TOMS comes in.

Mycoskie says that TOMS is, indeed, a fashion statement, but is “making a statement about your inside, not your outside.”

Mycoskie calls himself a social entrepreneur, which he defines as “having the entrepreneurial gift and spirit to create something out of nothing, but doing it for other reasons than just making a profit—doing it for the social well-being

and the betterment of whoever you are focusing on.”

Mycoskie began traveling in 2002 when he and his sister were on the popular reality television show, *The Amazing Race*. He says that, during that experience, his eyes were open to how many of the people in the world live. And it seems that, after that first taste of traveling, he couldn’t stop. He now delivers his shoes to countries all over the world.

He recently gave away most of his belongings and now lives in a Los Angeles harbor on a sailboat named *Apargata*, after the original Argentine shoe with which TOMS started its business.

When asked about his chosen lifestyle, Mycoskie replied, “It might sound too good to be true, but the truth is, once you’ve seen the happiest people you’ve ever seen in your life who have nothing, you really start rethinking about

what the world and society tells us we need to be happy.”

The TOMS trend is booming on high school and college campuses around the US. Zachary Daniel—a student at Baylor University in Waco, TX, who has sported TOMS shoes for three years—said, “TOMS are great because they are utilitarian and fashionable yet serve a greater purpose.”

In order to help spread awareness TOMS set up a “One Day Without Shoes” event. People around the country go for a day, or even just a few hours or minutes, without shoes. To find the upcoming “One Day Without Shoes” date and join the movement, or just to look at shoes, go to [www.toms.com](http://www.toms.com).

—Katie Minchew is a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: [theselby.com](http://theselby.com), CBS News Sunday Morning, [cbsnews.com](http://cbsnews.com), [toms.com](http://toms.com).

**Captivate me, Lord  
Till the last of my days,  
wring out my heart  
with your hands  
of a wise old Indian  
so that I will not  
forget your justice  
nor cease proclaiming  
the urgent need  
for humankind  
to live in harmony.**

—Julia Esquivel,  
Guatemalan resistance poet

# UN Summit to Accelerate Progress on Millennium Development Goals

by Katie Minchew

## *The Goals and Their Background*

In September 2000, the United States of America and 188 other nations of the United Nations adopted a set of international development goals to be achieved by the year 2015. As 2015 draws near, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend a summit in New York, NY, September 20-22, 2010 in hopes of accelerating progress toward these goals.

## *The Goals and Their Targets*

### **1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

- a. Target One: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day
- b. Target Two: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- c. Target Three: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

### **2. Achieve universal primary education**

- a. Target 1: Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

### **3. Promote gender equality and empower women**

- a. Target 1: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

### **4. Reduce child mortality**

- a. Target 1: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

### **5. Improve maternal health**

- a. Target 1: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
- b. Target 2: Achieve universal access to reproductive health

### **6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**

- a. Target 1: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- b. Target 2: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it
- c. Target 3: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### **7. Ensure environmental sustainability**

- a. Target 1: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- b. Target 2: Reverse biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- c. Target 3: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- d. Target 4: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

### **8. Develop a global partnership for development**

- a. Target 1: Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states
- b. Target 2: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- c. Target 3: Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt
- d. Target 4: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- e. Target 5: In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications



Indeed, these are lofty goals and, with the global tragedies that have occurred over the past few years and the obstacles that have arisen, some in the anti-hunger community may be losing hope. However, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put it, "We must not fail the billions who look to the international community to fulfill the promise of the Millennium Declaration for a better world. Let us meet in September to keep the promise."

Before the September Summit, a separate G8/20 Leaders Summit will be held in Huntsville, ON, in Canada. This summit could have a substantial impact on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit planned for September in New York. The G8 (Group of 8) includes senior officials and heads of state and government from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to The Micah Challenge, the G8 and the G20 will be focusing on the recovery of the world economy and strengthening of the financial system at the June summit.

### *How Are We Doing?*

"Not so good," writes an analyst from Bread for the World (Bread), a Christian advocacy group whose goal is to end world hunger. The United Nations' 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report, published by Bread, documents a slowing of progress in almost every area, and regression in some of the most important ones. The report says this is the result of the global recession.

According to the report, "Progress towards the goals is now threatened by sluggish—or even negative—economic growth, diminished resources, fewer trade opportunities for developing countries and possible reductions in aid flows from donor nations. At the same time, the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent, with a potentially devastating impact on countries rich and poor."

The UN showcases their data updates on the progress toward the Millennium Development Goals at MDG Monitor ([www.mdgmonitor.org](http://www.mdgmonitor.org)). There one can see a compilation of information from the UN Statistics Division, in close collaboration with agencies and organizations within and outside the UN system—including the Statistics and Population Divisions of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Reports, and the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

Through this database one can see that, until 2006, the MDGs were well on their way to being met. However, with recent gas price hikes, food shortages and growing economic crises, progress has been dramatically slowed.

This is why UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for the summit in September—in order to grasp what we have left to do, and to make plans to do those things.

Recently, singer/songwriter Bono, of the rock group U2, interviewed President Barack Obama about the June G8 and G20 Summit in Canada. An article in Toronto's *Globe and Mail*

### **Good News about Goal 3:**

*Promote gender equality and empower women; achieve universal primary education*

One man in particular stands out among the rest when it comes to the targets of the third MDG. Greg Mortenson is essentially killing two birds with one stone through his passion for the betterment of the young women of Afghanistan.

In 1993, Mortenson travelled with a group to Pakistan to climb K2, the second-highest mountain in the world. This peak, which sits on the border between Pakistan and China, an incredible challenge for intense climbers. After a harrowing rescue of one of the group, Mortenson took a wrong turn on the descent and ended up in a tiny village at the base of the mountain, where he was cared for by the people while he recovered.

Seeing what few resources the people of the village, especially the girls, had, Mortenson promised them he would come back and build a school. He then dedicated his life to promote community-based education and literacy programs.

He co-founded the nonprofit Central Asia Institute (CAI), which had built, by February of this year, 131 schools throughout remote mountainous regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The CAI focuses on education for girls, because "adolescent girls are uniquely capable of raising the standard of living in the developing world. Girls are the most likely agents of change, but they are often invisible in their societies and to our media."

Mortenson also started Pennies for Peace, which aids in teaching American children about the world beyond their experience and how they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. Through these two organizations and more, Mortenson is making a huge positive difference in the world, "one child at a time."

You can read more about his achievements, foundations, and ways you can get involved by reading his best-seller books, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace and Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs in Afghanistan and Pakistan*. You can also visit his web site at [www.gregmortenson.com](http://www.gregmortenson.com), where you will find links to CAI, Pennies for Peace, and both of his books.

quotes Obama as saying, "At this year's summit, we need to recommit ourselves to making serious and sustainable progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. We can, and should, celebrate the progress we've made, but we also need to be frank about where all of us—developed and developing countries alike—have fallen short."

If we do not meet these goals, what kind of legacy will we be setting up for ourselves, our children, and their children? That is why everyone needs to be aware of these goals. The MGDs are not just "a government thing" or a problem for our world leaders to deal with. The MGDs are goals for each and every one of us to participate in. We are all responsible to take part and help.

### *What Are Others Doing and How Can YOU Take Action?*

Taking action to help meet the eight Millennium Development Goals is one of the greatest things you can do to make our world better. Here are some organizations in which you can get involved to help the United States and countries around the world join together to meet the goals:

#### • *United Nations*

On the United Nations web site, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), you will find a tab at the top titled "Taking Action." The options range from campaigning and signing petitions to designing advertisements against poverty, to participating in photo contests and playing computer games. There is a way for everyone to participate and every voice counts.

#### • *Micah Challenge*

Micah Challenge is a global coalition of Christians whose vision is to see a world free from extreme poverty. This vision is based on the biblical passage Micah 6:8, which urges the reader to "do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah Challenge maintains an extremely educational web site ([www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org)) that is full of ways to get involved in fulfilling the MDGs. You will find ways to get involved in the global and national Micah Challenge campaigns, and you will find other small ways to be involved in making a difference to end global poverty.

Also on the Micah Challenge web site, you will find two excellent Bible studies based on the book of Micah. It is a

central resource for those who want to pray, promise and act against global poverty, aiming to halve it by 2015, which is in sync with the Millennium Development Goals. The studies are *Just Mercy* by Joel Edwards and *Who Is Our Neighbor?* by Steve Bradbury.

#### • *Bread for the World*

Bread for the World calls itself "a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad." On their web site ([www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)), you can find descriptions of the organization's battle against world hunger. One specific event, the Offering of Letters, invites church members, students—people across the US—to write personal letters and e-mails to Congress on important issues. If writing letters, organizing groups of people or speaking to congregations is not your style, Bread for the World has a link where you can donate any amount of money to whichever cause you choose.

### **Good News about Goal 6:**

#### *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases*

**B**ono, lead singer for the rock band U2, is widely known for his activism in fighting AIDS and HIV in Africa. He co-founded several organizations to further the cause: DATA (Debt AIDS Trade Africa) in 2007, the organic clothing line EDUN in 2005, the ONE Campaign to fight extreme poverty and preventable diseases, and Product Red, which raises money for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The DATA foundation, co-founded with Bill Gates, has made immense strides of progress in fighting HIV / AIDS. According to the Liberty Medal web site, DATA and other campaigners around the world helped to persuade the G8 nations in 2005 to reach an unprecedented agreement. The agreement included \$25 billion in additional development assistance for Africa by 2010, broad debt cancellation, universal access to education, and near universal access to AIDS and malaria treatment and prevention.

DATA has been monitoring the G8's progress on keeping these commitments and holding government leaders to public account. A statement on the Liberty Medal web site says, "If the promises are kept, they will save millions of lives and mark a turning point in the West's relationship with Africa."

The Gates family of Seattle, WA has been busily fighting HIV / AIDS for a number of years, bringing the world one step closer to meeting the MDGs. The Bill & Melinda Gates foundation works to expand effective preventive programs all over the globe. In 2003 the foundation began a large HIV prevention program to curtail the spread of the HIV virus in India. This program was initially called the India AIDS Initiative, and is now known as Avahan. In its first five years, Avahan has successfully built a large-scale HIV intervention program. It operates in six Indian states, which have a combined population of 300 million people.

—For more information about the foundations that Bono helped to found, go to [www.joinred.com](http://www.joinred.com), [www.one.org/data](http://www.one.org/data), [www.edun.com](http://www.edun.com), and [www.one.org/us](http://www.one.org/us). For more about Bill and Melinda Gates's work to fight HIV/AIDS, go to [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org).

• **End Poverty 2015**

At End Poverty 2015, you can sign up to join “Stand Up 2010,” a set of global actions that will take place for three days leading up to the September summit (September 17-19th) in support of achieving the MDGs. Visit [www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org) for more information.

• **MDG Monitor**

At MDG Monitor ([www.mdgmonitor.org](http://www.mdgmonitor.org)), you can find a countdown to 2015—to the second. At this writing, there are five years, 192 days, 12 hours, 51 minutes, and 42 seconds until these goals need to be met. Five years and counting may seem like a long time, but it will be here before we know it. On this web site you can be encouraged by reading more about each goal in detail and then reading success stories for each.

Another way to get involved in the accomplishment of the MDGs is to “blog” about it on MDG Monitor. The UN has set up a weblog specifically to hear the public’s opinions on these issues, and to keep them up-to-date on events and progress made. The blog is at [www.mdg-gateway.org/MDG-Blog](http://www.mdg-gateway.org/MDG-Blog). (Note: You must register for the blog before you will have full access to it. Simply go to “home” and “register,” then follow further simple instructions.

**Your Own Voice**

Perhaps the most important of all ways you can help is not through any single web site or blog site, but through your own word of mouth. Although there is a vast array of articles in the media about the MDGs, very few people actually know anything about them. Many have never even heard of them.

Needless to say, if our world is expected to meet these goals, we should at least be aware of them. Word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing tool. So spread the word about the MDGs to your friends, your kids, your parents and your congregations, so that we can all work together to end poverty, hunger, sickness, inequality, lack of education and environmental destruction.

**A Little Extra Push**

What if, in 2015 our nations really could look to our brothers and sisters north, south, east and west of us and know that we all came together to realize what seemed to be an overwhelming set of goals?

What if we could look around us and see less poverty, less hunger, more equality, better education and better health? This is such an exciting time in the world—let’s finish strong and push to succeed!

—Katie Minchew, a native of Frisco, TX, is a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: United Nations ([un.org](http://un.org)), End Poverty 2015 ([endpoverty2015.org](http://endpoverty2015.org)), Bread for the World, ([bread.org](http://bread.org)), the Micah Challenge ([micahchallenge.org](http://micahchallenge.org)), Millennium Development Goals Monitor ([mdgmonitor.org](http://mdgmonitor.org)), Interagency Coalition on Aids Development ([icad-cisd.com](http://icad-cisd.com)), Toronto Globe and Mail ([theglobeandmail.com](http://theglobeandmail.com)). The art on page 5 is courtesy of the US Committee for World Food Day.

**Good News about Goal 7:  
Ensuring Environmental Sustainability**

One program, located outside of Elm Mott, TX, has been working for decades toward ending hunger in the world, and also toward the goal of environmental sustainability. World Hunger Relief, Inc, is “a Christian organization committed to the alleviation of hunger around the world.” At the WHRI Training Farm, people come from all over the world to learn sustainable agricultural techniques and appropriate technology.

Most of their interns and live-in volunteers scatter to exotic parts of the world to work in communities where they can equip the locals with the same sustainable farming knowledge. Volunteers and interns learn economical and efficient ways to do things. They learn how to raise goats for meat and dairy, how to grow and use fruits, vegetables, and herbs—even pecans, how to fertilize and compost, and how to properly nourish the human body.

WHRI also educates people in their local community on methods of conserving and sharing resources. For example, at the April 2010 Spring “Farm Day,” adults and children came from all over Central Texas to learn how to make fertilizer and how to use recyclable paper to make seed planters. They also learned about the immense possibilities of recycling.

A unique aspect of WHRI is that the Training Farm is a classroom where interns learn not only how to produce food, but also how to run a small business. They also host tours of the farm for all ages, teaching people about the implications of poverty and world hunger and how everyone can help make the world a better place. The staff has developed curriculum for elementary school children, who learn the material during hands-on visits to the farm.

The folks at WHRI believe that, by educating school-age children, community groups and churches of the plight of the poor and the broader issues of global hunger and poverty, they can “create an awareness of the problem of hunger in Central Texas and throughout the world.”

Because the insulation of the affluent society in the US keeps us from understanding the overwhelming prevalence of hunger, WHRI has developed a weekend experience called “Living on the Other Side” (LOTOS). Originally designed for youth groups, LOTOS is a global poverty simulation program that is now designed for youth and adults both.

For more information, go to [www.worldhungerrelief.org](http://www.worldhungerrelief.org).

# A Distressing Disguise

a film review by Audrey Cary

Gerry Straub knows the meaning of sacrifice. A former daytime TV producer, Straub traded his high-paying job for a more rewarding one—creating documentaries about people in need and challenging the world to discover what true sacrifice is.

Through the San Damiano Foundation, Straub uses the medium of film to initiate awareness and inspire people while raising money for the subjects of his documentaries.

One of his most recent films is called *A Distressing Disguise*, a title inspired by the idea that a homeless person is Jesus in disguise and that we should love them accordingly. *A Distressing Disguise* is a condensed version of *Rescue Me*, a film Straub released a few years ago.

The film focuses specifically on the homeless people of the neighborhood known as “Skid Row” in Los Angeles and on the efforts of the Union Rescue Mission to help those people.

As the only shelter in LA that accepts women without a limit on the number of children they have, the Union Rescue Mission gets pretty crowded. They have provided more than 37,000 nights of emergency shelter to children.

Skid Row is a fifty-block area in downtown LA where around 11,000 homeless people live with no more belongings than would fit in a sack or a shopping cart. This is where Straub spent six months making the original epic film in 2003.

With the release of *A Distressing Disguise* last year, Straub hoped to show his viewers the daily lives of people living in cardboard boxes or tents and to give his viewers a more accessible look into homelessness in America.

“Who are these people we so easily judge and dismiss?” Straub asks, before he introduces us personally to a few individuals whose homes consist of a five-foot area of sidewalk. He tells us their stories, gathering our sympathy, and then he reminds us that what is needed is something far more than sympathy—that we need to be moved into action.

Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, Straub believes that in order for us to better understand the lives of those who “can’t hide from the reality of their poverty,” we should reassess our own lives and our own attachments to worldly things.

He reminds us that security is “an illusion” and that loving the homeless is the closest we can come to having the love of Christ in our hearts.

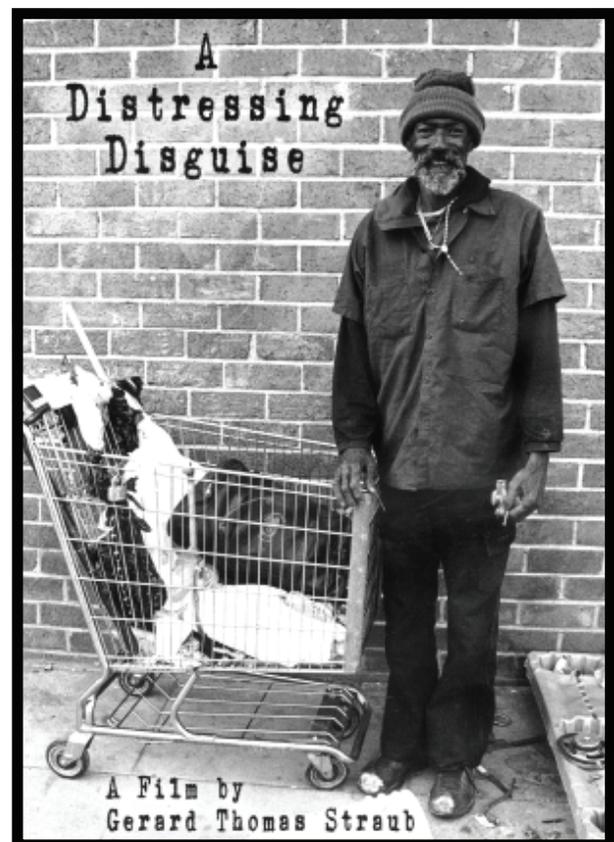
In this 103-minute film, we see the immense lack of respect and humanity that most of us show towards people living on Skid Row. They are judged for their position in life as they are forced to pick through piles of trash in search of anything they can sell. Some suffer from addiction, mental illness or disease, and they have no privacy whatsoever.

But this moving film doesn’t focus solely on human suffering. It is part documentary and part spiritual reflection, with meaningful quotes by spiritual luminaries like Jean Vanier, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, Thich Nhat Hanh, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and St. Francis placed on screen between the video footage.

Straub has also artistically collaged several series of powerful black-and-white images set to emotional music. Along with the film’s display of harsh reality, *A Distressing Disguise* includes hopeful images and joyful faces of those people living on the streets, proving that God’s love is more powerful than we know or believe.

Straub encourages us to harness that love, not only to change the lives of homeless people, but to model ourselves after the homeless in the way that they have been “stripped of all pretentiousness” and “they know who they are and what they are.”

—Audrey Cary, a native of Henderson, TX, is a professional writing student at Baylor University. For more about the excellent films by Gerard Thomas Straub, go to [www.sandamianofoundation.org](http://www.sandamianofoundation.org).



# The Original 'Undercover Boss'

by Katie Minchew

The CBS reality television show *Undercover Boss* is not the first instance in which the head of a company boldly retreats back to the trenches. In 1914, sickened by the death of 17 of his workers as a result of an employee strike at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. resolved to get to the bottom of the problem.

He did this by collecting first-hand experience as a worker in Ludlow, CO. He lived with the miners and their families, deciphering one issue after another, improving living and work conditions for the people.

Rockefeller's motivation came from the partial blame he received for the catastrophe, known as the Ludlow Mas-

sacre. During the tragedy, members of the Colorado National Guard fired on sit-in strikers, killing 17, including some of the miner's families.

Thus began Rockefeller junior's journey into philanthropic devotion. His father, John D. Rockefeller Sr., once said,

*God gave me my money. I believe the power to make money is a gift from God to be developed and used to the best of our ability for the good of mankind. Having been endowed with the gift I possess, I believe it is my duty to make money and still more money and to use the money I make for the good of my fellow man according to the dictates of my conscience.*

However devoted to his philanthropic pursuits John, Sr. might have been, his causes were carried out one-hundred-fold by his quiet, conservative son. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was a pivotal member of American society in the 1900s.

Rockefeller was instrumental in the decision to locate the United Nations headquarters in New York City, NY, with a donation of land. He gave people work during the Great Depression by starting construction on Rockefeller Plaza in New York. He created many philanthropic institutes and he constructed low-rent housing in impoverished areas of New York City.

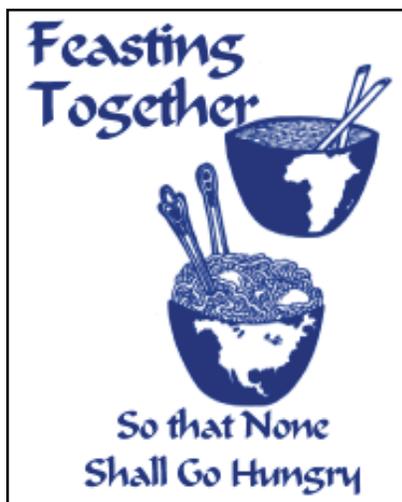
Because of young Rockefeller's moralistic background, he disliked the harsh business world that his father occupied. He engaged himself with his father's estates and philanthropic enterprises, such as the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the General Education Board, the latter of which was chiefly concerned with improving education for African Americans in the South.

One of Rockefeller's largest projects was a big gamble. He built New York's Rockefeller Center in the 1930s, during the biggest depression of the 20th century. During a time when jobs were incredibly scarce, Rockefeller created 75,000 jobs, paying the over \$80 million ticket out of his own pocket. The center cost about \$120 million before it was completed.

Later, Rockefeller held New York State offices and made a bid for his party's nomination for US President. Although the leaders of his political party came to eschew his values, he continued to maintain his commitment to economic justice and civil rights to the end.

*continued on page 11*

## Coming Soon from Seeds of Hope:



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# ShelterBox Provides Thousands with Polyester Sanctuaries

by Audrey Cary



*Shelter boxes are carried by donkeys to a remote location in Pakistan.  
Photo courtesy of the office furniture company Seatability.*

When a natural or man-made disaster leaves you homeless, what are your most essential needs? Tom Henderson, from Cornwall, England, says that shelter, warmth, comfort and dignity would help people endure the devastating circumstances.

With his creation of ShelterBox in 2000, he has assisted in providing homes and hope to more than fifty different disaster-stricken countries, one ShelterBox at a time.

ShelterBox's response to Haiti's earthquake in recent months was substantial; its people constructed durable tent cities from the ground up, temporarily housing more than 100,000 people. More recently, 400 Shelterboxes were distributed to Brazil in the wake of devastating floods there.

One ShelterBox, worth about US\$1,000 dollars, includes a custom-made, ten-person tent, a water-purification kit, insulated sleeping mats, rope,

tools, a stove, cooking supplies, coloring books and crayons, collapsible water containers and mosquito nets—not to mention the little seed of comfort and reassurance that is planted when a tent becomes a home.

Along with a picture of the British flag, adorning each tent is the Rotary Club logo, displaying the original supporters of the ShelterBox efforts.

ShelterBoxes have been carried on wheelbarrows, camels and donkeys—and on the backs of men—in order to fulfill the needs of the people quickly

and efficiently. Volunteers and workers will do whatever it takes to respond to disasters within 24 to 48 hours.

The tents' uses range from being a shield against rain, wind, and sun to being a safe place for a pregnant woman to give birth, to becoming a makeshift medical room for housing patients. Each tent has the potential to save and change lives. And where a congregate of ShelterBox tents arises, a sense of community seems to arise as well, and suddenly the vast devastation seems a little bit more bearable.

*ShelterBoxes have been carried on wheelbarrows, camels and donkeys—and on the backs of men—in order to fulfill the needs of the people quickly and efficiently.*

It is those changes, the hope, and the compassionate aid offered through ShelterBox that resulted in Henderson's appointment by Britain's Queen Elizabeth as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his exceptional contribution to humanitarian work.

—Audry Cary is a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: TIME.com, ShelterBox.org, and Rotary.org.

## Rockefeller, continued

Through the life of this man, we gain inspiration to learn from our mistakes, to always look out for people who are less fortunate, and to give in abundance and without complaint. In Rockefeller's own words, we should "Think of giving not as a duty, but as a privilege."

—Katie Minchew is a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc. (INC), the Biography Channel, the History Channel, Answers.com, brainyquote.com, thinkexist.com.

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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

## *quotes, poems, & pithy sayings*

I don't take my sermons too seriously. I don't think the preacher is the most important part of a church. The people here are baby Christians. I concentrate my messages on application. They can see that biblical characters aren't perfect, and learn from it. The poor don't need to be fixed; they need to be empowered.  
—Jimmy Dorrell, pastor of the Church Under the Bridge in Waco, TX, and author of *Trolls & Truth: 14 Realities about Today's Church that We Don't Want to See* (reported by Chad Shanks in the Baylor Lariat)

When Christians help hungry people, they earn the right to share the gospel—not only with people in need, but also with a skeptical society.

—Jim Denison, theologian-in-residence for the Baptist General Convention of Texas

To you, Creator of nature and humanity,  
of truth and beauty, I pray:  
Hear my voice, for it is the voice  
of all children who suffer  
and will suffer  
when people put their faith  
in weapons and war.  
Hear my voice when I beg  
to instill into the hearts  
of all human beings  
the wisdom of peace,  
the strength of justice,  
and the joy of fellowship.  
O God, hear my voice,  
and grant unto the world  
your everlasting peace.  
—From a prayer by Pope John



art by Deborah E. Harris

to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

### **Editorial Address**

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

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