

**Fall 2004,
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Ordinary people make an
extraordinary difference

NEXUS



Never doubt that a small group of concerned citizens can make a difference, indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

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It is overwhelming to address the issues of global concern. Where even to begin? In dealing with poverty and oppression, it is easy to feel like a small animal facing a huge wild beast. Image how the oppressed feel. One of the biggest reasons poor countries remain so economically challenged and cannot provide decent health care and education is that they are stuck in a cycle of debt owed to the IMF and World Bank. This NEXUS features the insight of Hank Zyp on Globalization and the Creation of Poverty, an article that he wrote at the turn of the century in support of the cry for "people before profits" and "renewal of the earth" in the Jubilee Year 2000. We publish it to keep Hank and ROHFC's dream alive to create a just global community and to remind our readers why, in spite of only marginal success thus far, ROHFC joined other NGOs around the world to petition the meeting of the world's richest finance ministers in Washington this October for the forgiveness of debt of the world's poorest countries. The very word "forgiveness" of debt is condescending when most countries paid back double, triple, even higher the principal borrowed. Nigeria, for example, borrowed \$5 billion, has paid back \$15 billion, and still owes a staggering \$32 billion (NY Times, Oct 1, 04).

It appears the rich nations are finally beginning to admit this is wrong and have started in 1996 and in 1999 to eliminate \$100 billion of the debt. But their actions have been far too limited and debt continues to cripple many poor nations. At the October 2004 meeting, the finance ministers pondered a renewed cry to cancel completely the debt of the world's 30 poorest nations. With the United States request for the G7 nations to forgive the debt in Iraq, there is pressure to support a broader debt elimination program. Canada announced it will forgive a sizeable chunk of debt in Iraq and a modest \$9 million in Sengal, Ghana, and Ethiopia. While some governments are offering to pay down more debt, sadly most of the funds are coming from existing development budgets, thus making little impact on economic growth of poor countries. While we vigilantly continue to call for the debt elimination of the poorest nations, we must at the same time demand it not be at the expense of existing development funds and that the World Bank bear the brunt of the burden from its outrageous profits. It would be a step in achieving the Bank's founding mandate to reduce poverty in the world and a taming of the beast.

It is hard to be brave," said Piglet sniffing slightly, "when you are only a very small animal."
Rabbit, who had begun to write very busily, looked up and said: "It is because you are a very small animal that you will be Useful in the adventure before us."
-From The Te of Piglet, by Benjamin Hoff

-George Bunz, President



Profits as high as an elephant's ears.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE CYCLE OF POVERTY - by Hank Zyp

Economic globalization dates back to the days of colonization when Europeans began exploitation of the New World, filling their coffers with plunder of gold and silver, profits from spices, silk and tobacco and slave trade. Barred from a direct route to the orient, they sailed west to circumnavigate the globe and were obstructed by an unknown continent. This new territory proved to be pivotal in a global economic system built on warfare, violence and death perpetuated by the state and sanctioned by the church. Great empires were built on the tears of indigenous peoples and wars were fought between colonial powers to secure markets, raw material, and labor. Only recently this ended after two world wars and 500 years of foreign occupation.

Declarations of independence followed, but it became soon apparent that former colonies, stripped of the means of self-sufficiency, remained dependent on the old empires and the new empires of the US and the soviet bloc. At the same time, the rich depended on the poor for their wealth. The struggle for hegemony developed into the Cold War, the global arms race and the appointment of puppet dictators to protect the economic interests of the new imperialism.

The new phase of globalization continues the cycle of dependency. The first world needs cheap resources and cheap labor to maintain its affluent lifestyles, while the third world depends on handouts, loans and first world technology to maintain a subsistence lifestyle. Poverty is created and maintained to perpetuate this unjust relationship.

In the 70s, when there was a glut of money in European and American Banks, large sums were loaned to dictatorial regimes, ostensibly for development purposes but more often for military expenditures to keep populations under control. Interest went through the roof, creating our current debt crises. The new colonialism is characterized by rapid advances in technology and international trade agreements which reduce trade barriers between countries. In this borderless world, goods and services are produced where costs are lowest and regulations least.

Deregulation of the financial markets meant that money could be moved around the globe by the flick of a computer switch 24 hours a day. Over 90% of transactions in this world are not related to goods and services but to currency speculation. This gambling on the future value of local currency can make or break a nation. Sovereign governments are pressured to lower their debt to attract investment from speculators.

The IMF and WTO impose structural programs to promote favorable investment climate. This includes currency devaluation, privatization, export promotion and spending cuts on health, education and social services.

The neo liberal ideology, overseen by the WTO, has made a mockery of national sovereignty and democracy and idolized the self regulating powers of the global marketplace. Countries that depend on the export of agrarian and other primary commodities have seen their incomes go down, even as they stepped up production. At the same time, in relative terms, manufactured goods and technology prices have gone up. It takes more tons of bananas to pay for a tractor than it did 20 years ago, increasing disparity between the rich and poor nations.

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As farmers no longer can make a living off the land, agribusiness takes over, concentrating the wealth in the hands of a small minority. Irrigation, mechanization and fertilization of mono culture cash crops for export generates foreign currency, but it depletes the land, pollutes the water and displaces huge numbers of landless peasants who move to the city slums without services or employment opportunities.

Fierce global competition has resulted in the bigger is better concept. Corporations merge into huge transnational conglomerates. They adopt new robotics, cybernetics and advanced technologies to increase production and lower their dependency on the labor force. The gap between high skilled, high wage jobs and the low skilled sweat jobs is growing. With health and education budgets cut, the poor cannot catch up. Entire countries and continents are left out of the globalized economy.

To maximize profits, corporations are encouraged to downsize. The CEOs are rewarded in relation to the number of workers they lay off. The average CEO salary is now 314 times larger than that of their workers. At the same time workers are forced to compete globally with each other on a downward spiral towards lowest wage demands to stay employed.



Let us not close our ears to the cry of people before profits and the call for renewal of the earth, and let us continue to strive for a just and humane global family.

As labor intensive industries have gone by the wayside in favor of profit and efficiency, the outcasts increases. This especially affects women and children who are forced into prostitution and petty crime to make ends meet. Elsewhere, children are engaged in full blown warfare as factions of impoverished populations are recruited in a dog fight for power or survival. These tensions heighten animosities between ethnic and religious groups, furthering the impoverishment of peoples.

While it is true that most of us in the first world have benefited from the situation with availability of cheap goods and returns on RRSPs and pensions,

it is also true, even in our rosy world, that 75% of the stock market is owned by only 5% of the richest people.

The fact that less than 400 billionaires now are worth more than what half of humanity can scrape up to keep body and soul together indicates that at the bottom of our relationship with the poor there is an unsettled question of justice that charity alone cannot alleviate.

What is required to obtain a measure of greater equity is a concerted and committed effort to transform the sinful structures which perpetuate poverty and ongoing violence against the dignity of the human person.

COMMUNITY OF ARCOIRIS-ESPAÑA EL SALVADOR DIGGING FOR LIQUID GOLD - Letter to ROHFC



Hitting boulders is the hardest part of digging.

Receive a cordial and fraternal greeting on behalf of the community ARCOIRIS-ESPAÑA wishing good health and success in your daily labor. We give thanks for your generous solidarity with us. We feel proud to be your friends. Your friendship has been a gift from God and we ask God to bless each of you in your humanitarian efforts. We want to communicate that we would like to use your donation in the following manner: We formed work groups made up of two men and one women to work for two days and then rotate other groups to dig the well. We will assign \$8 per day per person for their labor. Any left over funds would be used for complementary needs for the well, such as wash sinks, tubes to bring the water closer to our homes in the glorious even we hit water. Thanks for your kindness.

ROHFC especially wishes to Blessed Kateri School in Edmonton for donating \$1000 towards the cost of digging this well.

PARADISE POISONED BY THE FRUIT OF CORRUPTION by Father Shay Cullen

To our Friends Rainbow of Hope for Children,

More and more skilled and educated Filipinos are fleeing these "islands of paradise" because they are a paradise only for the rich and favored. The middle class and poor are living on the compost heap of the so-called "Garden of Eden" with only rotten fruit left to eat. They get poorer by the day as the rich reap the fruits of globalization and so called "free trade".

"Supranational" companies manipulate Philippine government officials by giving investment opportunities and partnerships to the rich families with whom the officials are connected by marriage or business. In other words the Philippine government is a democracy of the rich, by the rich, for the rich. When there is political or violent turmoil it is mostly the rich fighting over the positions of power or the spoils of winning an "election". To get a government position is for them "an entitlement".

The dominating families see that their relatives are strategically placed in the army, police and key cabinet and department positions. Their wealth built on patronage, corruption and abuse cannot be curbed because they control the department of justice.

Recently prosecutors dismissed police charges against the sons of two wealthy families. They had a big shoot-out on a Manila street - movie style complete with flashy cars and SUVs providing cover as they emptied their high-powered automatic guns at each other. Despite the testimony of witnesses, the wounded rushed to hospital, bullet riddled cars and the empty shells littering the road, the prosecutors said that there was insufficient evidence to charge the suspects.

If that was a fisticuff between street boys here, they would have been arrested, beaten and jailed within the hour and left for weeks and even months without decent food, legal aid or reprieve. Once in government, they give themselves and their relatives big jobs in government corporations, massive perks and huge tax credits.

The head of the government social security corporation listed as number 8 of the government "fat cats", gave himself a salary of 5.6 million pesos (US\$100,000). The annual pay of a middle level manager in a small business is \$3,500. The system pays a pittance to widows of deceased government employees, but these have been cut to the bone.

Last August it was revealed that a number of private companies with close

government connections got illegal tax exemptions worth over 1.1 billion pesos and despite overwhelming evidence against them all 22 cases were dismissed because the Bureau of Customs did not prosecute the cases. More than likely because of a massive pay off. Every day there are reports of one scam or another.



This Child in Prison photo was sent to us by the PREDA Foundation in the Philippines. It is not an uncommon scene in the playground of the rich and powerful.

The government operated National Power Corporation has debts so astronomical that they comprise one third of all national debt. Much of this is because of massive stealing of power mostly by the corporations of the rich. Instead of paying the bills fully, if they pay a bribe and their bills are allegedly reduce substantially.

For us, and the poor, we have to pay the most expensive electrical rates in Asia after Japan, and if we fail there is an immediate fine and then we are cut off. The president and director of the National Power Corporation are among the "real fat cats" who purr their way to their bank - preferably abroad. Higher electrical bills are due to be increased to pay the debts. Meanwhile the officials have just retired.

The massive losses have been incurred through building unnecessary and overpriced power lines or transformer stations that benefit the corporations of prosperous well-connected families while our villages and towns have little or no electric power. Kickbacks to high officials have bloated projects. One example of this corrupt practice happened right outside PREDA children's centre, where I work since 1974 in child protection.

The government of Olongapo City led by the former mayor, now a senator, and the National Power Corporation decided to erect a power line on massive pylons along the highway in 1996 despite the fact that a perfectly good 96 Kv. power line passed safely over the hillside. It was one of the most suspected corrupt deals of the decade. But there was money for them all in this new project - making it massively expensive with a 250 Kv. Line that is 200% over designed and has a daily power loss due to line resistance. It is close to the children's home where the electromagnetic field could cause disease.



In spite of threats to his life, Father Shay Cullen and the PREDA Foundation continue to rescue children from abuse in the Philippines, especially from the rampant international sex tourism industry. ROHFC is a long time supporter of the PREDA, hosting a tour in 2002 of 9 Filipino youth telling their sad story of abuse to Canadians through the use of theatre and engaging our youth in dialogue on the issues. Donations to the work of PREDA can be made through ROHFC..

energy. It went ahead anyway. We can't stop the greed and avarice that infects the hearts of the government officials and their dynastic family enterprises. But we have to continue to oppose evil and keep the candle of hope glowing in the darkness as we do all we can to help change the corrupt system without getting snuffed out ourselves.

Guardian Angel Global Awareness

The broken wing and tear symbolize the suffering of abused children



Rainbow of Hope
for Children

PREDA
Foundation

Father Shay Cullen founded PREDA in Olongapo City in 1974 to help Filipino children and youth and to promote human rights and peace. They provide advocacy, networking, preventative education on child abuse and HIV/AIDS and rescue children from abuse. They also operate a therapeutic home for sexually abused girls. In 2001, PREDA received a Nobel Peace Nomination from British and German parliamentarians, and the City of Weimer granted them its Human Rights Award.

NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS IN GUATEMALA



ROHFC's new director Moe Rajotte (right) passes the keys of the truck donated by supporters for Fr. Gerry's work in 65 of the poorest communities in Guatemala. We first met Fr. Gerry accompanying 4 Mayan teachers from Cunen, Guatemala on a tour of Western Canada hosted by our NGO in Fall 2003 to help them build a teacher training school. We installed Calgary Flames floor mats as a remembrance of the hockey game that he and our visitors enjoyed, compliments of social justice advocates, Jack and Fay Locke of Calgary. In typical Fr. Gerry style, he gave one of the mats to Jon, who absolutely loved the game, and he has it on display for all to see in Cunen.

Fr. Gerry informed ROHFC that Elaine Sukava of SUNTEP First Nations in Prince Albert visited Cunen last summer. Moved by what she saw, she is working on a CIDA application to (IPPP), the Indigenous Peoples' Partnership Program. We are delighted that Canada's First Nation is supporting the aboriginal people of Guatemala in this way. We pray that CIDA will approve the project if they apply. ROHFC is committed to support a share of the costs.

We also wish to inform those who met Maria that she is the mother of a baby boy, Pedro (ix). The Mayan name IX means Jaguar. Born the day of the Jaguar, according to the Mayan calendar, is a good day because the infant will have the characteristics of that valiant animal, but will have to be educated well so he will not fall in the trap of misusing the aggressiveness of the Jaguar.



THANKS TO THE ALPHONSE GERWING CHARITABLE FOUNDATION AND THE WHOLE GERWING FAMILY

The Alphonse Gerwing Charitable Foundation was established just a few years ago, and it is already making a difference in the lives people less fortunate. This past year the Foundation made sizable donations to ROHFC and to our friends, Change for Children. The ROHFC funds have been designated to new projects in Brazil where Al (or Thomas as they call him) has helped thousands of people improve their lives. Al is making another visit this January with our NGO and a self-supporting group of eight Canadians to visit the people and programs. Special thanks to the Gerwing family, the whole gang of you, for setting up and supporting the Foundation.

Dear ROHFC supporters,

I want to send you a warm thank you for the generous contribution you made in purchasing a Pick-Up truck for our Guatemalan Oblate Missions. A special thank you to George and Moe who went out of their way looking for a good deal, which at the end resulted in an excellent one, gracing us with a 1999 Chevy half ton with only 42,000 km. My Oblate companion Jose Manuel and I had a pleasant 7-day drive down to Guatemala with the Pick-Up which drove like a new vehicle. We crossed US boarder at El Paso, TX into Ciudad Juarez and then stopped in Guadalajara, Mexico, to pick up a load of books from the Philosophy Seminary Library to bring to Guatemala, for the Seminarians from Mexico and Guatemala.

This truck will be a multi-purpose vehicle to be used for the missions. It will also serve the Pre-Novices when we go out to retreats, workshops and vocation promotion tours. Currently, I have 8 young men getting ready to enter the seminary. The interest is high among the youth here to serve the Church and the people. God is calling young people to this specific vocation; our challenge is to answer with a solid formation process to prepare them for their future ministry. For this extremely important work, we need the support of your prayers.

*- Your friend & servant,
Fr. Gerry Le Strat*

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Send to: A.G. Foundation, P.O. Box 149
Lake Lenore, SK SOK 2J0

or

ROHFC designated to the Foundation.

From Here and There We Keep in Touch with Each Other

Our K-12 school again collected juice boxes, pop cans and bottles all year and would like this donation to be used for the Pastoral da Criança in Brazil. It was great to have Sr. Claire here for a visit and she felt that there is a great need for poor children and families.

*-Sr. Lenore Moldenhauer
Muenster, Sask.*

Dear George and Friends at Rainbow of Hope. Please accept our small contribution to help make life a little easier for the poor people of Brazil and el Salvador. We always read your news letter and it is so heart warming to know there are people who really care like yourselves. God bless you and all your efforts.

*-Edwin & Annie Bunz
Muenster, Sask.*

Dear Rainbow of Hope:
I appreciate the dedication you show to your projects in Latin America and the informative and enthusiastic way you involve the supporting people here in North America. Both aspects are vital, and it changes the world for both giver and recipient. May God bless you and work through you.

**-Wes Reimer
Steinback, MB**

ROHFC - Peace and well being, Ouricuri is the name of the city where I live. We have been without rain, rain so much needed and yearned for by our people. The life of those born here, those who live in this region we call the "Sertao" is this: Very little rain, but sun in abundance. We have done our praying (over this drought) and have initiated some social actions to alleviate the suffering of our people such as the Pastoral da Criança in Marechal, outreach to the aged, course for trades to earn a living. We would like to know how the early childhood/adult education centre proposal is going, and if you will support the project. Fraternally,

-Frei (Friar) Gutemberg

We would like to give a donation to your organization for the Cunen College in Guatemala. Last year, we met the people from there. They are working towards building a school for the children and we wish to support this very worth while project.

**-Sister Alice le Strat of Les Filles
De La Province**



Dr. Arns (Centre) with Frei Gutemberg, Sisters Louise Hinz & Claire, Novecosky, a Pastoral team worker and child.

To Rainbow of Hope for Children and the Pastoral da Crianca Centre: I wish you the best. May you build the way to peace, to health and education for all. God give you courage, spirit and happiness. Here is testimony of our 90-year old "patriarch" in the community of Mucuri: "This community likes to share a simple supper after their monthly Eucharist. Each family brings what they have to offer- a plate of sweet potatoes, bread, shrimp, coffee, whatever they might have on hand... It is an enjoyable moment in our lives. When there is sharing, no one goes hungry."

**-Dr. Zilda Arns
Founder of the Pastoral da Criança program in Brazil**

Thanks Sr. Lenore. The Pastoral da Criança in Marechal Deodoro can use all the funds it can get. We hope to drop by your school when we visit AI and thank your students personally, also show a power point slide presentation. Please watch for a feature story of this remarkable program in the Christmas NEXUS. Also, thanks Edwin and Annie. You both are always so willing to help the less fortunate of the world. Wes, we sincerely appreciate your on going support and kind words. You are very right. Every time that we visit our southern friends, it changes the world mutually for us and them, and we leave with much more than we give. We carry home with us their hearts, and we try to share their warmth, love, dignity, suffering, cries for human rights, and their thanks with all our supporters who care for them. Frei Gutemberg, by now you have received a first installment of \$20,000 US funds, and you have communicated that the people are well on the way building the ECS/Adult Education Centre. The Wild Rose Foundation approved \$25,000 towards the project. We also will feature your community's project in ROHFC's Christmas NEXUS. Please send us some photos to share with our supporters. Al Gerwing and our team will see you in January. Sr. Alice, we are so pleased with your kind donation to the Cunen project. The College will cost \$500,000 Canadian, so you can see it requires CIDA support. CIDA Regional Office thought this project fits the Indigenous Peoples' Partnership Program. Because this is a good opportunity for our First Nations people of Canada to support the indigenous people in the south, we approached them to apply to CIDA for funding. You have read inside this NEXUS that it looks like our First Nations friends are going to proceed with the application for funds. ROHFC is offering support of the local costs, and we thank you and all who are continuing to support this project. Dr. Arns, what a privilege to hear from you. We are humbled by the words of your 90-year old Patriarch - "When there is sharing, no one goes hungry." Thank you for responding to the call of the United Nations to do something for malnourished children in Brazil. We have witnessed your remarkable holistic high nutrient supplement-health-education program that you developed, and we cannot say enough about the work in the Centre that ROHFC funded in Marechal with the help of CIDA and the Wild Rose Foundation. Bless you, your people, and all our supporters. - ROHFC

DENTAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT DONATED TO PASTORAL DA CRIANCA CENTRE IN MARECHAL DEODORO IN BRAZIL

On 2003 visit to Brazil, Coordinator of the Pastoral Centre, Sr. Ana Lucia, showed Al Gerwing and our team the room they were developing into a dental clinic. It had an old chair stored in the corner and a few bits and pieces of tools scattered on a table. She asked if we might be able to find someone in Canada who would donate some equipment to refurbish their clinic. Eureka! On retiring his practice, Dr. Mike DeAbreu of Killam, AB contacted ROHFC that he would like to donate most of his entire inventory of tools, supplies and equipment. The materials are in immaculate condition and Al and our self-supporting team will bring most of the supplies to the Centre on our January visit. Yes, we will have extra luggage, so donations are welcome. ROHFC received word from Sr. Ana Lucia last week that the Centre and the municipal Health Services are excited about receiving this equipment, especially the X-ray, as they do not have such luxury in their municipality - remember the UN report that this was one of the poorest municipalities in Brazil. The Dept. of Health Services, as poor as they are, agreed to cover the on going maintenance and certification costs of the machine. This is a major in-kind donation by our supporter, Dr. DeAbreu, and we thank him with all of our hearts for his thoughtfulness and kindness. - GB



Dr. DeAbreu came to North America in 1956 from Guyana, north of Brazil. He practiced his profession in Killam 1962-2003 and served as Chairman of the Catholic School Board there for several years. His daughter, Rene, teaches at Blessed Sacrament School in Wainwright, where she is an advocate for the Advent Project supporting ROHFC.



Each family brings what they have to offer - a plate of sweet potatoes, bread, shrimp, coffee, whatever they might have on hand - It is an enjoyable moment in our lives. When there is sharing, no one goes hungry."

-90-year of "Patriarch" of the Pastoral Da Criança, Brazil

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On behalf of all the children and communities in a world in need of transformation, we thank you for your continued generous support to enable the poor to help themselves. Your donations are much appreciated and acknowledged with an income tax deductible receipt.

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