

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

February 2009

UN Millennium Goals

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

GLOBAL SLAVERY AND THE PLAGUE OF POVERTY IN THE MAJORITY WORLD



A Southeast Asian teen, the eldest daughter in her family, agreed to leave home in the company of her aunt. She was promised a job to help alleviate the poverty of her family.

The girl soon found herself in the hands of a man who transported her into another country, where she was entrapped into prostitution. Her only recourse was prayer. Years passed, but she continued to trust that her prayers for deliverance would be answered...and they were.

During a conference at the First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, this same young woman told her story. Her plea to the participants, in concern for those still enslaved, was: "Please, please, hurry! Go save them!"

Speakers from Southeast Asia, Latin American, India and Africa – each of whom are spending their lives in efforts to free women, men and children from today's form of slavery – presented examples of entrapment, as well as the various approaches used in attempts at abolition in their respective areas.

Persons who lack resources for food, potable water, sufficient shelter and adequate healthcare are easy prey for traffickers. The "plague of poverty" is the basis of entrapment for those desperately seeking ways to provide for their families.

We may tend to assume that North America and Western Europe are "the majority world." In actuality, the vast majority of persons live in impoverishment, subsisting on as little as a dollar a day. What we take for granted in terms of food, water, shelter and medicine are simply unavailable to

the vast majority in the world.

It is in this regard that our embrace of the principles of the Earth Charter and the promise of the Millennium Development Goals flows into our focus on human trafficking. Working toward the alleviation of poverty is vital to striking at the roots of human enslavement.

We have enough for everybody's need. But not enough for everybody's greed.

Mahatma Ghandi

No man should be allowed or forced to die, because he cannot afford to live.

Emmanuel F. Ogbunwezeh

If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin.

Charles Darwin

The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practice of cannibalism at the dawn of civilization, when men ate each other because they had not yet learned to take food from the soil or to consume the abundant animal life around them. The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

A great resource is: freetheslaves.net



Prepared by the Peace and Justice Committee