Editorial

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Published online: 11 September 2008
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The poorest one third of the human population, some 2.2 billion people, are continually subjected to hunger and are forced to drink unsafe water. Pollution (especially water and food pollution, due in part to contaminating sewage) reaps havoc on their health and lives. These people do not have access to health and family planning services, and consequently they do not know where to turn when sick, and they give birth to far more children than they can love, care for and support, thus exasperating all of their problems. What's worse, and much more difficult to evaluate, they live in environments that lack essential infrastructure for maintenance of conditions that most of us consider essential for meaningful human life.

For various reasons, most of which have nothing to do with their own capabilities, and over which they have no control, the poorest world citizens lack adequate

housing and clothing. Consequently they are exposed to harsh environmental conditions that of course sap their energies and render them less able to care for their families. They simply do not have the opportunity to be productive individuals living satisfying lives. They live in countries where they cannot even reap nourishment from the agricultural efforts of their fellow countrymen because the government is more concerned with the money that can be made from food exports than they are with the welfare of their citizens. Moreover, poor people lack access to transportation and thus can not take advantage of job opportunities that might otherwise be available to them.

Poverty stricken people lack and may not have access to the education that would allow them to contribute to and benefit from economic and social opportunities commensurate with their physical and intellectual abilities. Moreover, they lack the knowledge that would allow them to recognize the planetary responsibilities that could help us create a sustainable world through birth control and resource utilization limitation. Poor people can not be concerned with the future if they must be thinking constantly of the next meal. And they can not even plan capably for the next meal if they are starving. Without birth control availability, they have no hope of controlling their fertility. Only if the basics are available can these people expect to raise their unfortunate and miserable existences out of the poverty that has been unfairly inflicted upon them.

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Health care and the means for disease prevention are not available to almost all of these folks. The poorest nations of the world can not and do not provide even minimal care for their people. In fact, numerous detailed studies have shown that money spent for health care, private and public combined, is an exponential function of national wealth. The one most valuable contribution towards overcoming disease and poverty is birth control and abortion services so everyone can voluntarily restrict their family sizes. **NO WOMAN HAS FREEDOM IF THESE SERVICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO HER!**

Contaminated water alone has been estimated to kill well over 2 million people annually. With 2.5 billion people lacking basic sanitation infrastructure, this is probably an tremendous underestimate. These people live on the equivalent of two or less US dollars per day, and the recent decrease in this number is due to the declining value of the American dollar than to any improvement in their living conditions. In fact, the poorer countries of the world are not showing appreciable signs of economic growth at all.

Poverty stricken world citizens suffer every second of every day of their lives because of the crushing conditions under which they are trying to survive. They have no way to escape their plight. As need throughout the world increases, due to resource depletion and the consequences of global warming, the need of these people to migrate to other parts of the world will not decrease but increase the misery of the vast majority of them. No one wants to leave his or her home; poor people do so only out of necessity. And the consequences of mass migration will negatively impact everyone including those in the most affluent nations. In spite of strict and harsh immigration restrictions, these latter nations will not be able to control the human flux. Everyone will lose. There must be a solution! And there IS a solution provided that we are willing to help.

Due to hunger, mal-nourishment and the consequent ill health, poverty stricken people can not function optimally. They consume an insufficient number of calories for healthy growth and development. By contrast, in today's world, the wealthiest 1/5 of the human population consume an estimated 86% of all goods and services; the poorest one fifth consume about 2%. This imbalance is inconsistent with the needs of the either the rich or the poor. The

need for a healthy world should promote feelings of sympathy, compassion and practical applications aimed at helping others. Anyone with a conscience will agree.

Consider what would happen if each of the poorest people on Earth were provided the equivalent of one additional dollar per day in supplies such as clean water and food as well as services providing birth control and abortion opportunities. In today's world, this would cost people in the affluent nations less than the price of a cup of coffee. It would easily provide a billion dollars of assistance per day, or 365 billion dollars annually. Estimates are that a mere 30–40 billion dollars per year would suffice to provide the entire world population with universal birth control and abortion services. And just imagine the benefits! Countries such as the U. S. and Japan as well as the EU countries would no longer need to spend billions of dollars on military and security. Instead of thinking from the standpoint of greed, we must be thinking of long lasting peace and prosperity—for all. There is no other way. Without it, the wealthy countries will only get poorer while the poorest will remain poverty stricken with strife abounding—everywhere.

With a little human compassion, North Americans and Europeans alone could raise the standard of living for the world's poorest without sacrifice. They could more than double the living standards of our poverty ridden brothers and sisters. All this for just a cup of coffee, or one dollar per day. This amount of money is insignificant compared to the amounts wasted on wars, conflict and destruction. Greed, dictatorships and crime would be less formidable problems. We would not have a world basing its politics on fear and greed. It would result in saving incomprehensible to any of us. And the richest of us must be the ones most in need of realizing the desirability and benefits of giving.

Americans spend 33 billion dollars annually on weight loss products. That for a very significant fraction (but not all) of the 300 million Americans. What about applying a little constraint and just consuming less? Who would benefit most? The very people who think they are making sacrifices! They will benefit from the knowledge that they have actually done good rather than undermining their own health and that of our only planet. And the benefits would be immediate!