

# Kids Korner



Kids, this month we are going to fill in the blanks from the following scriptural texts about the poor and those in need. Particularly, what God says about them and how He tells us to treat them.

## Deuteronomy 10:18

He defends the cause of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

## 1 Samuel 2:8 (first part)

He raises the \_\_\_\_\_ from the dust and lifts the \_\_\_\_\_ from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.

## Proverbs 11:24

One man gives \_\_\_\_\_, yet gains even more; another \_\_\_\_\_ unduly, but comes to poverty.

## Proverbs 14:31

He who oppresses the poor shows \_\_\_\_\_ for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy \_\_\_\_\_ God.

## Ezekiel 16:49

Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; they did not help the poor and needy.

## References:

1. Ric Edelman, *The Truth About Money*, Rodale, 2004, pages 39-40
2. Robert J. Samuelson, *Defining Poverty Up*, Newsweek, June 7, 2010, page 23
3. Daniel Gross, *Today's Culture of Poverty*, Newsweek, April 7, 2008, page 18
4. Philip Mangano, *Abolishing Homelessness In Ten Years*, Christianity Today, May 2009, pages 52-53.

*"The great thing about serving the poor is that there is no competition."* • Eugene Rivers

**Distributed by:** Alaska Conference Stewardship Ministries. **Director:** Sharon Staddon. Pacific Union Conference Stewardship Department. **Director:** Gordon Botting. **Design/Assistant Editor:** Julie Cunnington Masterson.

# The Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward

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## HAND OUT OR HAND UP

By Gordon Botting, DrPH, CHES.

It has been said that if the world were shrunk to a village of 100 people, 70 would be illiterate, 80 would live in substandard housing, 50 would suffer malnutrition, and 6 (all from the United States) would possess 59% of the entire village's wealth. Or using the entire human population: 30,000 children die every 24 hours of preventable diseases, 800 million people are malnourished, 1 billion cannot gain access to fresh water, 8 million are refugees from civil wars, and 15 million children are orphans from the scourge of AIDS. This is the picture of international poverty. Are there any solutions?



## Answer to International Poverty

We all know it is far better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish. Handouts in third world countries continue to keep families in the bondage of poverty. However, in 2002 students at La Sierra University designed a Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) Project as a part of several international micro-loan projects in the village of Karandi, India. Twenty families each received a cow they could use to produce milk for themselves and sell to generate income. The cow loan is repaid in full with the birth of the first female calf, which is then given to another needy

family. Also, members of the University of Ghana SIFE taught the Kpomkpo villagers to make soap from local natural resources, thus developing a soap business. Before, the participant's salary was just under \$2 per month but with their new soap business that salary grew to over \$20 monthly. When visiting Mozambique in Africa as a part of the Maranatha International Church construction project, I discovered not only have 800 churches been built, but the blessings of these buildings carry on in other ways. Over 80% of the people are illiterate so during the week these striking

Stewardship is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality and finances.

“Poverty is no disgrace to a man, but it is confoundedly inconvenient,” Sydney Smith. • “Poverty is a virtue greatly overrated by those who no longer practice it,” Barnaby C. Keeney. • “Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue; it is hard for an empty bag to stand upright,” Benjamin Franklin.

red brick buildings become learning centers for the local villages. Like the little red school houses of 19<sup>th</sup> century America, the citizens learn to read and write. These houses of worship have also become gathering places for the distribution of food, clothing, medicine and vitamin supplements.



Another blessing is that these churches not only present the Good News and Jesus as the Water of Life, but a newly-dug well now provides fresh, flowing water for these rural communities. Now, what about the American poor?

### Who are the American poor?

There is no conclusive definition of “poor” in the United States. Some would define it due to their net worth or range-of-income. The Agriculture Department estimates the cost of a bare-bone-but-adequate-diet and multiplies it by three. This figure is adjusted annually for inflation,<sup>1</sup> The latest poverty threshold is \$21,834 for a four-member family with two children under the age of eighteen. Interestingly, of those families defined as living below the poverty line, 91% have microwaves, 79% have air-conditioning and nearly 50% have

cell phones.<sup>2</sup> Poverty can also be defined as a societal phenomenon or an attitude that fosters self-defeating behaviors such as bad work habits, little to no education and dysfunctional family lifestyles. Chiefly noted are the teenage unwanted pregnancies as well as the wide-range of addictions from alcohol and drugs to aberrant behaviors. Finally, some poverty is the result of misfortune like large companies downsizing or rising medical debts due to accidents or disabilities.<sup>3</sup> It is the author’s observation that in developed countries the best solutions for the poor are simple and practical. Relief and development agencies inform us that if we don’t begin to partner with those who are destitute and disadvantaged, the above mentioned statistics will remain overpowering for the next fifty years. The key is to find an integrated, practical and effective approach to working toward the eradication of the American poor. Here are a few effective practical and realistic procedures.

### Answer to Domestic Poverty

In his book *The Age of Abundance*, author Brink Lindsey describes the difference between the desperate poor and the blissful rich in order to contrast long-term consequences. Often people find themselves underprivileged and destitute because they are persistently and desperately working just to provide

food, shelter and/or schooling for their families. One solution could be to NOT buy their groceries at the local corner convenience store but to walk a few more blocks and purchase their essentials at a supermarket where limited finances go further. The poor often do not have the opportunity to learn how to prepare simple, inexpensive home cooked meals verses grabbing the fast food snack. If all our Adventist Community Service (ACS) centers would let their clients choose their provisions from the different food groups, using colors to identify them, such as vegetables from the shelves marked in **green**, fruits from the ledge marked in **red**, whole-grain foods from the **brown** shelf, etc., they would be learning about nutrition and well-balanced meals instead of just picking up the presorted bags from their local food bank. (Some ACS centers have been using this teaching opportunity with success).

Another way to assist America’s growing poor, particularly as more families fall



into the homeless faction because of job loss and foreclosures, is to spotlight solving the root-causes of these societal irregularities rather than affixing the easy, surface bandage. In an article entitled, *Abolishing Homelessness In Ten*

*Years*, Philip Mangano asserts, “We [must] reframe the issue in business and economic terms. For example, the cost to maintain a homeless person is more expensive than solving the homeless crisis. Should I spend \$35,000—\$150,000 per year on emergency rooms, police, fire, public defenders, for a chronically homeless person or, would it be better to spend \$13,000—\$25,000 on housing, thus creating stability for the person?”<sup>4</sup>

### The Bottom Line

Just giving aid to the less fortunate is not enough, but “partnering with the poor” could result in the elimination of poverty in this country and around the world. Ellen White informs us that “Christ came to this earth to walk and work among the poor and suffering. They received the greatest share of His attention.” *Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education*, p. 23.

Today in your Sabbath School class, around your dinner table or in your churches’ small groups, discuss and plan practical initiatives that you and your church family can do to tend to



your area’s poor because Ellen White continues, “And today, in the person of His children, He visits the poor and needy, relieving woe and alleviating suffering,

“*ibid*, p. 23, emphasis supplied.

“Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to make and mend their own clothing, how to nurse the sick, how to care properly for the home.” *Adventist Home*, p. 485