

July 2007

The Poverty Program

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

AUG 12, 2PM BELLEVILLE CHURCH AIDS/HIV - Movie *FACING AIDS*

**SEP 16, 2 PM BELLEVILLE CHURCH, chairperson Helen Hatcher
UN Peace Event- Movie *PEACE ONE DAY***

OCT 13, 10 AM - 4 PM: VOLUNTEER JOB FAIR AT THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, chairperson Rob Burnham The Volunteer Job Fair will take place in the lower main hall of the FRS Unitarian Universalist Church at 26 Pleasant Street in Newburyport. We will provide a table for literature and exhibits. We will set up a screening room just off the main hall and will run short films or slide presentations throughout the day. Please let me know if you have a presentation for the screening room. Thanks for your participation! For more information or to participate, contact Rob Burnham at jrcdburnham@verizon.net or 603-501-9549.

NOV TBA: Discussion and Planning for 2008

If you would like to become involved with any of the programs, email povertyprogram@gmail.com.

HIV and AIDS AUGUST 12, 2 PM, BELLEVILLE CHURCH

Pandemic, Facing AIDS: "Rarely have we seen such unique and personal stories of people living with AIDS than in this highly acclaimed film from award-winning filmmaker Rory Kennedy. Narrated by Danny Glover, this theatrical version of the five-part HBO series goes beyond the statistics to tell five remarkable stories from across the globe, revealing the heartaches and triumphs of real people coping with the stigma and effects of this devastating epidemic. From people like Sergei and Lena (Russia), young parents whose previous drug use has left them HIV-positive, to Alex (Brazil), a 27-year-old gay man who is trying to rebuild his health and get back to living a full and productive life, their stories are both heartbreaking and uplifting, providing a window into a world that so many of us have never fully understood. With an intimacy and sensitivity unparalleled by any other account of the AIDS crisis to date, there is no question that PANDEMIC: FACING AIDS is a "must-see" film for all." Documdrama.com

Let's all try to attend the August 12th presentation!

NEWSLETTER: Letters to the editor, articles, calendar events may be submitted by the 15th by mail: 280 High Street, Newburyport, MA or email: povertyprogram@gmail.com. If you would like to receive the newsletter or stop receiving it, please contact us.

www.povertyprogram.com **Please help spread the word about our website!** Charities: if you would like to be listed or linked, or list volunteer or donation needs, please email (povertyprogram@gmail.com) or call Catherine at 978-463-0507. Events for the calendar may be submitted at any time.

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Genocide: and the World Said “Never Again”

(maybe, perhaps, if it is economically or politically in our interests to intervene...)

Genocide, defined by the United Nations: The following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Rabbi Sadinsky of the Congregation Ahavas Achim began by stating that Ahavas Achim means “loving together” and that Shalom means “peace” and that he hopes that one day these simple words will be a reality in our world for everyone. He gave an overview of genocides that have happened: the Holocaust when 6 million Jews were murdered; the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918, when a million and a half Armenians were killed and the politics of “who, when, where and how is raging on now in regards to Turkey’s entry into the EU”; the early European immigrants in their land quest had a policy of systematic genocide of the American Indians, in some cases without actually directly killing anyone but for example, by killing off the buffalo herds, they managed to “decimate the native American tribes through starvation.”

The movie, *Ghosts of Rwanda*, “concerns itself with the Rwandan Genocide but also, touches upon what is happening in Darfur”. In Darfur, 200-300 thousand have been slaughtered and is “Sudan acting alone and are they solely responsible for these atrocities?” Rabbi Sadinsky asked. “There is a host of so-called civilized countries acting in our interest allowing this outrage to continue. That WE derive specific benefit and profit from allowing the blood-letting to continue is to our shame. We like to think that the Sudanese government is solely responsible but we are all responsible as individuals, corporations, and as nations for allowing and abetting what is happening in Darfur today.”

“Why is it that the black Africans, sitting there being slaughtered by the thousands, get nothing? Why is it when a bunch of white Europeans get slaughtered in Yugoslavia you can't put enough capability in there?”

Captain Romeo Dallaire, Commander UN forces in Rwanda.

were’n’t taking action in Darfur. Egypt for example is “leery of pushing Khartoum because of their need for access to the Nile”; the UN “troops in Darfur could signal the return of colonialization in Darfur”; China is a major provider to Sudan and also receives 70% of Sudan’s oil exports, ignoring the sanctions. Some are calling for the Chinese Olympics to be called the Genocide Games or the Olympics of Shame hoping to put pressure on China.

“CIA intelligence, oil, access to the Nile. These are the reasons, the contributing factors, for the murder, the slaughter, and the rape of Darfur villages. We have all been complacent. We have found it important to DO NOTHING! The policy of inaction is because it serves OUR private, our own best interests!” Rabbi Sadinsky stressed that each of us has a responsibility to speak out and asked that we all call our

So why aren’t countries voting to go into Darfur with a UN peace keeping mission? Rabbi Sadinsky went on to explain the complexities of governmental self-interest in staying out of Darfur. The United States: Sudan has been secretly spying in Iraq for the United States and while the US government condemns the killings in Darfur, the condemnation is simply “window-dressing”. Rabbi Sadinsky stated that “the realities of the world after 9/11 is that the US government is relying on the Sudanese government for intelligence gathering and the US has compromised our position on genocide in the pursuit of intelligence gathering.” Here in Massachusetts there is a bill to divest the MA state pension fund from Sudanese investments but it has “reached an impasse as some are calling it unconstitutional and it is more financially rewarding to keep the money in Sudan”. Rabbi Sadinsky looked at other countries as well for reasons why they

Congressmen, Representatives and Senators and ask that they take action on Darfur. One member of the audience recommended checking out investments on www.sudandinvest.org to see whether any of our personal investments are in Sudan and if so to divest.

The presentation was followed by the movie *Ghosts of Rwanda*, a PBS Frontline documentary of the 100 days of slaughter through interviews with politicians, bureaucrats, military, aid workers and victims. The politicians' and bureaucrats' hollow words of horror -- spoken after the slaughter of over 800,000 Rwandan, primarily Tutsi men, women and children -- brought agonizingly home the politics and bureaucratic excuses of not sending UN troops to Darfur today. The horrors of genocide are happening today, are happening as you read this and each of us needs to stand up and take action, make phone calls, write letters and refuse to stand by while another genocide happens. For if genocide can happen to the Jews, to the Armenians, to the Tutsi, to Muslims in Bosnia, to innocent children in Darfur, why not to us? Kofi Annan said in 1994: "If the pictures of tens of thousands of human bodies being gnawed on by dogs do not wake us out of our apathy, I do not know what will." Apparently, nothing.

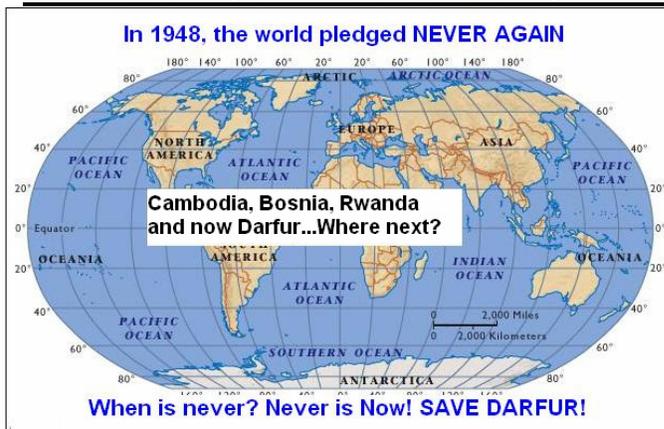
"My soul is in those hills, my spirit with the spirits of all those people who were slaughtered. ... Lots of those eyes still haunt me, angry eyes, or innocent eyes. But the worst eyes that haunt me are the eyes of those people who were totally bewildered. They're looking at me with my blue beret and saying, 'What in the hell happened?'" General Romeo Dallaire, Commander of the UN force in Rwanda

"If hundreds of thousands of Europeans or Americans were being killed in the way that Rwandans were being killed -- do you think the world would not have intervened? I think it's because they were Africans." Mark Doyle, BBC

By the time the genocide was over, I was so angry at America -- America the beautiful, America the brave. One day, we brought a load of water to them ... and as I pulled in the parking lot, here is a younger brother to the orphanage director. ... I said, "Where's your brother?" and he says, "They came last night. They killed some people. They said they're coming back to finish us all off today, and [my brother] has gone to try to find help, to try to find food." As we're talking, this counselor for the area comes ripping in his little stolen Mercedes station wagon. As he got out of his car, I looked around, and here surrounding the orphanage, just materializing -- it's about 50 militia guys [with] camouflage jackets or camouflage pants, but all of them with machine guns...Who's going to believe someone who goes to court and says, "Well, actually I asked [the prime minister] to help me save some Tutsis?" Who's going to believe that? ... That's why the thing about this is we've got to recognize in each one of us, there's such a potential for good and there's such a potential for evil. ... Carl Wilkens, Adventist Development and Relief Agency International

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2005/03/word-games-un-and-genocide-in-darfur.php>

During the genocide in Rwanda, reporter Alan Elsner famously asked State Department Spokesperson Christine Shelley "how many acts of genocide does it take to make genocide?" Now, it appears we must ask the UN, "How many individuals have to act with genocidal intent to make genocide?"



FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.savedarfur.org/>

<http://www.genocideintervention.net>

<http://www.hrw.org>

<http://www.darfurisdying.com/>

<http://www.usmmm.org/googleearth/>

<http://www.globefordarfur.org/>

<http://www.eyesondarfur.org/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darfur_conflict

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/darfur.htm>

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear :

I am deeply concerned about the continued suffering of civilians in Darfur, Sudan, and eastern Chad. More than four years on, the conflict has led to some of the worst human rights abuses imaginable. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed by deliberate and indiscriminate attacks, and more than 2.5 million civilians have been displaced. Time has run out.

I strongly urge you to use the authority of your office to:

- Set a timeline and benchmarks for the deployment of the UN peacekeeping force in Darfur;
- Protect displaced civilians in neighboring eastern Chad and support a UN presence there;
- Ensure sufficient support for African Union and UN peacekeepers to protect civilians and stabilize the region.

I urge you to stand with other world leaders to actively work to protect human rights in Darfur today.

Statement from Congressman Tierney on the continuing genocide in Darfur

"Thank you for contacting me with questions regarding the paths I am pursuing to bring peace to Darfur. I am pleased to share with you the varying ways I am working on a federal level to both alert my fellow policymakers to the urgency of the problem and to bring aid and peace to the region. I am glad to know that Darfur is an issue of interest to The Poverty Program, as it is only through sustained interest in Darfur on a Federal, State and Local level that we will truly have hope of bringing peace.

I believe that sustained action in Darfur is necessary, and I will continue working hard until peace in the region is no longer a dream, but a reality. It is estimated that, over the past two decades, 2 million Sudanese have died due to war or famine and millions more have been displaced from their homes. Sudan's 21-year civil war has remained a major contributing factor to the nation's persistent humanitarian crisis and further complicates relief efforts in the region.

I have worked vigorously and through a variety of means to enact change in Darfur at a federal level. I have consistently pressed the Bush Administration and other parties to actively engage upon the issue. I have also long been a supporter of increased U.S. funding for efforts to provide aid to the region. In addition, I am a cosponsor of the Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007 (H.R. 180), which would support state, city and university efforts to divest funds from, or restrict investments in, companies that conduct business operations in Sudan. H.R. 180 is currently under consideration by the House Committee on Financial Services and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, on which I serve. Be assured I will continue to press for passage of this important measure.

Finally, as Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, I convened a hearing on June 7, 2007, entitled "Darfur and the Olympics: An International Call to Action." This hearing included testimony from two panels of witnesses. The first panel consisted of two Massachusetts high school students who started an online pledge drive and raised over \$300,000 to help Darfuri refugees. The second panel consisted of two Olympic athlete/activists, a Darfuri refugee who was captured and tortured in Darfur while interpreting for a Chicago Tribune reporter and foreign policy and humanitarian crisis experts. The hearing examined the steps that China, the United States and a united world can take to end the horrific, ongoing tragedy in Darfur by further pressuring the Sudanese government to allow a full deployment of the hybrid African Union/UN forces in the region and bringing all parties of the Darfur conflict together to craft a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement. As a result of the hearing, I am currently working on an effort for Members of Congress to contact major sponsors of the Olympics asking that they use their influence with China to encourage China's action in Sudan.

I strongly believe the international community must do everything in its power to stop the ongoing genocide in Darfur. I will continue working hard to bring light to the issue and to ensure everything possible is done on a federal level to end the violence that is ripping apart so many communities, families and lives," said Congressman John F. Tierney (D-MA).

Thanks to the many people who made this program a success!

VOLUNTEERING

Be the change you want to see in the world.

~Mahatma Gandhi~

Amnesty International's Merrimack Valley Local Group 708

Amnesty International's Merrimack Valley Local Group 708 meets on the third Thursday of every month at the First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist Church, 26 Pleasant Street, Newburyport, MA from 7-8PM. Local groups are community-based volunteers who work as a team for the promotion of human rights. They are representatives of Amnesty International in their communities. They work with local media, lobby public officials, produce events, work in coalition with other organizations, and raise money for AIUSA. Local groups work on AI's human rights campaigns, action files, and also adopt cases of individual prisoners of conscience.

Founded in London in 1961, Amnesty International is a Nobel Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than two million members worldwide. Amnesty International undertakes research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights. Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is the U.S. Section of Amnesty International.

Warm Holiday Hearts by helping the Homeless Families

Every year in Massachusetts there are 10,500 families facing homelessness, leaving nearly 40,000 children this year without a place to call home during the holiday season. These are truly tragic statistics, but at the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless we are working hard to find stable, safe housing for every man, woman and child in the Commonwealth, putting an end to statistics like these. However we cannot do it without the support of individuals and congregations like yours.

Through the generosity of Edelweiss Pastries, the Coalition is selling Bishop's Cake, a lemon flavored bundt shaped cake, perfect for mornings with coffee or as a dessert served with berries and cream. The cake is wrapped and tied with a beautiful ribbon and card making it a perfect gift for a hostess, teacher, colleague or to keep for yourself to serve at a holiday party. Edelweiss Pastries, a commercial bakery in Medford, donates the cakes free of cost allowing the Coalition to receive 100% of the proceeds. Last year alone, with the help of all of the individuals, congregations, and organizations the Coalition was able to raise nearly 20,000 dollars.

We are once again asking congregations and individual volunteers to consider helping with this project. We will work with you on making sure the cakes arrive on time and are perfect for each person who is receiving them. If you would like to participate in the wonderful project, please contact Katie Rosengarten at 781.595.7570 x19 or katie@mahomeless.org.

PETTENGILL HOUSE & SALVATION ARMY

Poverty in our area is increasing. Please help.

The Pettengill House and Salvation Army are serving more people this year - more than 12,000 more meals at Pettengill House - and are in need of our assistance in restocking their pantries. Please make a monetary donation or donate food (pasta & sauce, canned goods, mac & cheese, juice, cooking oil, condiments) or toiletry items to these organizations. The Salvation Army can also accept fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables.

ACTION ALERTS

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

If you would like to submit a question for candidates in the upcoming election, the Poverty Program will submit to each candidate a selected list of questions and post all the responses on the website. To submit questions, email povertyprogram@gmail.com, or mail them to 280 High Street, Newburyport, MA. Please put "candidate questions" in the subject line.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Three Cups of Tea: *One Man's Mission to Fight Terrorism and Build Nations...One School at a Time.* By Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

Reviewed by Brenda Marshall

Greg Mortenson turned failure into a success for the children of Pakistan. After getting lost attempting to climb K2, Greg was taken care of by the people in a remote Pakistani village. He promised to return and build a school, and after sending letters to hundreds of people, he finally found someone to help support him in his efforts. The problems he faced were almost insurmountable. His courage helped to encourage me to deal with my little problems. His manner of immersing himself in a foreign culture is to me the way we can truly bring peace to the world. He is a Christian, but he did not force his religion upon those he met. Rather he respected the people and learned that there are other ways to accomplish a project that prove to be more efficient in the long run. The book was non-fiction but was so interesting that it read like a novel.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events must be submitted by the 20th of each month.

WEEKLY PEACE RALLY

Every Sunday at noon at Market Square.

POVERTY PROGRAM HIV/AIDS

AUG. 12, 2 PM BELLEVILLE CHURCH

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEETING

AUGUST 16, 7 PM (THIRD THURSDAY MONTHLY)

POVERTY PROGRAM PEACE DAY

SEPT. 23, 2 PM BELLEVILLE CHURCH

THE DARFUR/DARFUR EXHIBIT

COMING TO BOSTON SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

Samantha Powers to speak, YoYoMa will do a closing piece.

DARFUR/DARFUR is a traveling exhibit of digitally-projected changing images that provide visual education about the richly multi-cultural region while exposing the horrors of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. [darfurdarfur.org](http://www.darfurdarfur.org), <http://www.thedevilcameonhorseback.com/home.html>

THREE CUPS OF TEA

NOVEMBER 8, 2007, 7 PM

Cambridge Public Library, 359 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

more information: <http://www.gregmortenson.com/welcome.php>, <http://www.threecupsoftea.com/Intro.php>

Children's news

PENNIES FOR PEACE: What is the value of a penny? What can it buy? Here in America, not much but in Pakistan, it can buy a pencil and a pencil can be the start of an education for a child. Why not consider asking your teachers or religious leaders if you can start a Pennies for Peace fund raiser. All the information you need is on the website: <http://www.penniesforpeace.org/home.html>

Cat in the Hat is turning 50! Dr. Seuss only used 236 words in the Cat in the Hat and to celebrate the books birthday, a new project, Project 236 has started to promote and support literacy. One recent study showed that in middle class neighborhoods children have on average 13 books per child whereas poor children had only one book for every 300 children. For more information on what you can do to support literacy, go to: http://www.seussville.com/CITH_50th/

Youth Editor:The Poverty Program Newsletter is looking for editors and reporters -- either an individual or group of young people who would like to work together to write, edit, and contribute articles, pictures to this section of the newsletter. Please email povertyprogram@gmail.com or call 978-463-0507 if you are interested.

ARTICLES

Farm Fresh or Chemicals?

By Jessica Stensrud

You definitely are what you eat and mostly likely you don't want to look like a bag of potato chips or a donut – or a box of cereal made of moldy grains. People are eating food that will last on some shelf for YEARS and no rat would eat it. Companies set limits on "acceptable numbers of rat hairs" or probably acceptable levels of mold and preservatives. Do you really want to eat that stuff and trust that it won't impact your health somehow that will hit you hard later? Crackers, Velveeta, Hostess cupcakes?

We have an obesity and diabetes crisis in America where people are encouraged to eat "food products" that are about as sustaining as cardboard, addictive because of all the sugar and God knows what that has been added to it and damaging to human health. We have packaged food companies that argue for their RIGHTS to have vending machines full of their products in schools. What about the rights of children to NOT become obese and diabetic? Yes, I know that fresh food at markets is expensive, but someone on my email list reminded me that there is CSA, Community Supported Agriculture. Whole families can sign up and let me tell you, it is a LOT of food: fresh greens, beans, collards, tomatoes – each item coming into stock as it grows. I had a share when I lived in MA and I could barely cook all of it.

There is a box on this website (<http://www.localharvest.org/csa.jsp>) above where you can type in your zip code and get information on the closest farms to you – all over the country – I just found a farm near me that I never knew about! If I wanted to, I could take a city bus there! This next website (<http://www.farmfresh.org/>) lists all the places in RI where you can get locally grown fresh produce, find U-pick places and all sorts of information, recipes, etc. so that you can get food that you can identify, doesn't need labels, hasn't been processed and is FRESH! In MA, the link to farm stands is: <http://www.massfarmstands.com/> or Farmer's markets: http://starchefs.com/features/farm_fresh/html/massachusetts.shtml

I just learned that there is a farmer's market somewhere in Providence every day of the week. Since the Stensrud household is full of lettuce, herb and veggie eaters, I am committed to get the freshest stuff - or Beezy, my rabbit, just turns up his nose and sends out, "What's this? Wilted?" vibes. I personally want to support the smaller local farmers and farms instead of the immense agri-businesses .

The other thing about fresh fruits and vegetables opposed to chips, burgers and fries is that these fresh foods fill you up and make you turn your nose up to the processed stuff. Plus you can think and feel better. Once you are "off" the processed stuff, you'll wonder why you ate it in the first place and the answer is that Corporate America made it addictive. They don't care how people feel or if they're healthy – they just want us to buy their stuff. I myself am "pre-diabetic" and had to wean myself off bad foods. I grew up thinking it was good and that it was a reward treat, but it is instead, actually, a silent killer. Sounds extreme, but it is true. Start small with eating an apple or two a day. I even make wraps using steamed collard greens – they are extremely healthy for you, full of fiber and filling. KNOW what you're eating and who "processed" it: God or some corporation. You're worth it

SAMPLE LETTER TO SEND TO CONGRESS (http://go.sojo.net/campaign/farm_bill/iukknwi2am65njn?)

Dear:

As a constituent, I urge you to prioritize the needs of poor farmers - in the United States and abroad - as you craft the 2007 Farm Bill. The current subsidy system is broken, benefiting big agribusiness interests and absentee landowners (like David Letterman and Scottie Pippen!) instead of legitimate small family farmers. And it wreaks havoc on the lives of farmers in developing countries by encouraging the overproduction of a handful of crops and driving down prices in the world market.

I urge you to reform the commodity title of the Farm Bill. Instead of paying subsidies to those who don't need them, we should be investing in other programs that promote nutrition (such as food stamps and school lunches), rural economic development, and conservation. Continuing the 2002 Farm Bill is simply not an option - you must take this opportunity to reform the Farm Bill so that it is fair for both those who farm and those who eat. Thank you for your consideration.

ODDS AND ENDS

The Hunger Site: Spread the word! Here's an easy, free way to make a difference every day: www.thehungersite.com. Just click a button and you can help feed the hungry. There are also tabs on top that take you to similar affiliated sites: The Child Health Site, The Breast Cancer Site (funds free mammograms), The Literacy Site (free books), The Rainforest Site, and The Animal Rescue Site. They make the money from the advertising, so try to click on the ads as well sometimes.

LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**Have a monthly family lights out night: play board games,
read out loud: save electricity and help the environment.**

“The world is a dangerous place, not
because of those who do evil, but because
of those
who look on and do nothing.”

~Albert Einstein~
