

Jubilee USA Network Media Kit

1. Sample Opinion Editorial. Op eds appear on the right-hand side of the last page of the A section in the newspaper. This space is reserved for community leaders to express their views on timely subjects. A good op ed is about 700 words long. Op eds are more likely to be published when they are tied to something happening in the news or some event on the calendar. Most papers like to have about seven days to review your submission. Contact Debi Kar in the Jubilee USA national office if you need help finding contact information for your local newspaper opinion page: debi@jubileeusa.org or (202) 783-0215.

Ending Global Poverty

By Name of Person

"I am happy that I do not have to think of how I will pay my child's school fees any more. I can now spend a bit more on food for the family."

Those are the words of Frazer Mayaba, who runs a barber's shop in Zambia. Before Zambia's debts to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank were canceled, the African nation spent more money on servicing debt than on taking care of its people. Debt relief has helped the country spend money on schools, hospitals, roads and anti-poverty initiatives.

Around the world, one in five people live on less than one dollar a day – extreme poverty that is unimaginable to most Americans. We can help our neighbors in the impoverished nations of the Southern Hemisphere by asking Congress to pass new debt legislation that builds on the historic G8 agreement of 2005, which immediately cancelled the debts of 18 impoverished countries. A new deal on debt is urgently needed to provide debt cancellation for more nations struggling to take care of their people.

In the 1970s, developing nations borrowed money often with unfairly high interest rates and sometimes to the benefit of dictators rather than their people. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most impoverished region but carries \$201 billion in debt, despite repaying more than 90% of the \$294 billion received between 1970 and 2002. Today, they remain burdened with \$14 billion in annual debt service.

The demands of powerful creditors force developing nations into a downward spiral of deepening poverty by forcing them to prioritize debt payments over clean water, adequate housing, AIDS prevention, basic health care, and schooling for their people. Many of these debts can be classified as odious and illegitimate because often these debts were contracted by undemocratic regimes such as the Duvaliers in Haiti, Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor in Liberia, Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Suharto in Indonesia.

Every day, 30,000 children die of easily preventable diseases due to malnutrition and lack of adequate medical care. One person in seven has no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. Around the world, 104 million children do not go to grade school because their parents cannot afford fees, books or uniforms.

The quickest and most just solution is debt cancellation. Social spending in countries that have received debt relief has increased by 75% on average. Three billion dollars in debt relief has enabled Tanzania to increase funding for poverty reduction by 130 percent over the last six years. Their investments in education enabled approximately 1.6 million children to return to school almost overnight. Debt relief has enabled Mozambique to make strides in combating HIV/AIDS. By 2002, 24 testing and counseling offices were opened; 50 offices will be operating by the end of this year.

Twenty nations in Africa and Latin America have had their debts to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and African Development Bank cancelled, but this is only the beginning of what is needed. Only one in ten people in the developing world will benefit from the debt cancellation provided to date.

In 2007, people of faith are calling on world leaders to observe a Sabbath Year by focusing particular attention on the need for cancellation of unjust debts of impoverished nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia claimed by wealthy countries and institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

[for placement Sunday, January 21, 2007] Today is Jubilee Sunday when congregations across the country, including [insert participating congregation] will read from Luke 4:14-21, a key Jubilee scripture in which Jesus declares a jubilee or “year of the Lord’s favor” by proclaiming God’s liberation for all oppressed and impoverished people.

In Biblical times, Sabbath Year observance required that debts be cancelled, those enslaved because of debt be freed, and equal relations among community members be restored. In modern times, Sabbath Year observance means that our prayers and actions must be focused on righting relationships between nations and alleviating the extreme poverty that pervades the southern hemisphere.

As Americans, we enjoy so much good fortune, and we understand that from those to whom much has been given, much is also required. We can start by increasing our efforts to end the suffering of people who live in unimaginable poverty. If we care about the future of the world community, we must all do our part – starting by asking our elected officials in Washington, D.C. to pass bold and prophetic debt legislation which would provide debt cancellation to many more countries that need it. When even one person is sick or hungry, it diminishes us all. This is not something we do for them. This is something we do for us -- for all of us.

Name of Person is Role at Name of Affiliation.