

Neighborliness—An Individual and Worldwide Matter

Natural disasters make us pause and remember our responsibility for our neighbor who is suffering and in crises. This is a shared matter for the whole world. However, this responsibility touches each of us personally as well. As people accustomed to a high standard of living, we're not always able to understand the problems of developing countries. All crises do not make the headlines as readily as natural disasters and other catastrophic events. Nonetheless, problems of poverty, political strife, disease and hunger incur as much suffering as well-publicized events. In all crisis areas children suffer most from serious illness as well as a lack of food, clean water and security.

Under the direction of the United Nations, political leaders are committed to reducing developing countries' neediness. But achieving this goal is very far off. For example, in order for agreed aid targets to be met, the contribution from developed nations would need to double, which is difficult in a time of economic stagnation. An especially great challenge is changing the emphasis of aid from catastrophe relief to sustained preventative development, where basic educational and agricultural activity is emphasized.

The individual can help bear this responsibility in many ways. In addition to governmental development assistance activity, other charitable organizations founded on voluntary giving help complete this work. One of the better-known organizations is the Red Cross, which comprises a worldwide network for providing assistance. The LLC Humanitarian Aid Fund also directly assists people experiencing difficulties in developing countries.

Diaconal work is important, and it reaches out to a suffering world. Love guides us to see our neighbor, and seek different opportunities to follow the steps of the Good Samaritan. Christians want to help those suffering temporal distress by sharing the gifts God gave us.

Translated from *Päivämies*