

Holy Wisdom Reporting



United Nations Affairs- Syrian Orthodox Church in America

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**UN CHRONICLE E-ALERT****The Inequality Predicament**

During the 2005 World Summit, world leaders devoted a special session to financing for development, emphasizing the urgent need to go beyond words to lift hundreds of millions of people to have a greater voice.

**The Inequality Predicament**

By Jomo K. Sundaram

Macroeconomic policies, financial globalization, and changes in labour market institutions have exacerbated inequality in recent decades: not only in income and wealth, but also in an array of factors has conspired to worsen the transmission of inequality from one generation to the next, even within communities experiencing rapid economic growth. This context as surveyed in The Inequality Predicament, the United Nations' Report on the World Social Situation 2005, few countries, rich or poor, have proved immune to the global trend of rising inequality. There is no simple causal relationship linking poverty and inequality to violence. Nevertheless, disparities and the sense of deprivation do contribute to resentment and social instability. Nor is there a simple explanation of what causes poverty. Clearly, however, poverty arises from various complex conditions, requiring multidimensional approaches. It is hard to imagine

H.E. Ms. Tarja Halonen was elected the eleventh President of Finland in February 2000 - the country's first woman head of State - and in September that year co-chaired the

**World Summit devotes special session to financing for development**

Mexican President Vicente Fox 14 September 2005 – In a special session devoted to financing for development, World Summit leaders today emphasized the urgent need to go beyond words to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Mexican President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico, speaking as leader of the host country of the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, called for more aid. Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that there remained "an enormous backlog of deprivation," requiring more and better aid, trade policies that give a fair chance to developing countries. "We have an opportunity to save tens of millions of lives over the next decade, and to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty," he declared. "We must not disappoint them." Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who is President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2005, noted that there was already broad agreement on development and equitable trade and good global governance.

World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz called for developing countries to improve performance and developed countries to fulfil their promise to increase aid. "The direction we take now is crucial. The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Rodrigo de Rato, shared the results of recent assessments of economic policy for assistance to low-income countries. "We need more aid," he said.

Among the other 35 world leaders who addressed the topic, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Percival James Patterson, spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 Developing Countries and between what was available and what was needed to meet development targets. "We cannot cross this development financing chasm by any series of small steps," he said. "We need more aid."

Hilary Benn Speaking for the European Union, Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom Hilary Benn said: "The EU remains strongly committed to supporting country-led sustainable development through actions on aid volume, aid effectiveness, debt relief, innovative financing mechanisms, trade and the environment."

President Obasanjo Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, on behalf of the African Union, said that African leaders realized their primary responsibility for addressing development challenges. "I stand on this podium today, therefore, to remind us of the commitments we have all made including Monterrey and to call on all parties to fulfil their commitments in a spirit of partnership." "Innovative ways to help the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are greatly appreciated but the international community must not be distracted from commitments already made," said the Prime Minister. Representing the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Navinchandra Ram Goolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, appealed for special attention to the unique needs of SIDS. Rafael Bielsa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina said, on behalf of the South American Rio Group said that development is a priority.

On behalf of the Caribbean region of CARICOM, Prime Minister Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis appealed for the narrowing of gaps in technology, trade and human development. "Primary responsibility to achieve MDGs rests with developing countries, but international support is critical, especially for the poorest countries and for countries handicapped by natural disasters." Lengsavat

BRAZILIAN AND CHINESE PROFESSORS JOIN ANNAN'S GROUP ON ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS  
 New York, Dec 14 2005 3:00PM

Professor Candido Mendes of Brazil and Professor Pan Guang of China became the final members of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's high-level group on Alliance of Civilizations. Set up in July, the movement also aims to advance mutual respect for religious beliefs and traditions, serving as a coalition against extremism.

The high-level group is chaired by Federico Mayor of Spain and Professor Mehmet Avdin of Turkey - the two countries which called for the

Other members are Iran's former President, Seyed Mohamed Khatami; Her Highness Sheikha Mozah of Qatar; Mohamed Charfi, former Education Minister of South Africa; France's former Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine; British religion historian Karen Armstrong; and Vitaly Naumkin, President of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Professor John Esposito of the United States, the Founding Director-Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding-Georgetown University and the Brookings Institution; Dr. Nafis Sadik of Pakistan, former head of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA); Shobana Bhartiya, Managing Director of the Hindustan Times.

Damascus, 7 Dec. (AKI/DAWN) - A report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, has revealed that almost half of the Iraqi refugees in Syria who have asked for temporary asylum.

The UNHCR report stressed that "half of the registered refugees profess the Christian faith, even though Christians represent only 5 percent of the population."

Among the reasons cited in the report for his high percentage of Christians among refugees, is the fear stemming from attacks against churches in various Iraqi cities. Other reasons the report cited include the loss of jobs and property.

Most of the Christians in Iraq belong to the Assyrian and Chaldean Catholic denominations. Other groups include Syrian Orthodox or protestants. During Saddam's secular regime they were persecuted.

Since the US-led invasion, growing religious intolerance and sectarian violence have prompted many Iraqi Christians to flee abroad.

### Orthodox News:

A CALL for global action to combat poverty went out yesterday from an Indian Christian leader visiting Bahrain. Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere, said one of the speakers. People cannot develop their families or nation without developing their neighbours, said Dr Mar Osthatios, who is a social reformer and founder of several orphanages and other charitable institutions.

2005-Dec-28

Kazinform - Astana, Kazakhstan

MOSCOW-ASTANA, December 28. KAZINFORM. - A Russian-Iranian theological commission on the dialogue between Islam and Eastern Orthodox Christianity will hold a conference in Astana.

2005-Dec-27

Press Trust of India - New Delhi, India

The faithful congregated in large numbers at midnight masses held in cathedrals and churches of various Christian denominations across the state.

Senior prelates and priests led the mass, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

Churches were illuminated and tastefully crafted cribs and Christmas trees decorated the church yards...

2005-Dec-21

NewKerala.com - Ernakulam, Kerala, India

Mallappally, Kerala: An eighty feet high and 40 feet wide, Christmas star has been put up by a church here and the church authorities claim it to be the largest ever made Christmas star.

The gorgeous star stands before the four-storey building of the St Joseph Industrial Training Centre with a collage of pictures in each of its wings, sending forth messages of peace and goodwill.

Malayala Manorama - India

Parumala: The President, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, on Sunday stressed the need for research in paediatric cardiac services to avoid occurrence of cardiac problems in children, especially in the poor.

Among those present on the occasion were finance and excise minister Vakkom Purushothaman, fisheries minister Dominic Presentation and the Catholicos of the East Baselios, Mar Theophilos.

Mmegi - Gaborone, Botswana

In an overwhelmingly Hindu population of one billion, India's 50 million-plus Christians are considered a minority. Hence, it is not strange that many do not really link Indians with Christmas.

However, the Christian presence in India is very strong and Father Kuriakose Kozhikkadan of the Holy Cross Catholic Church in Gaborone is a living testimony in Botswana. He greets the Christmas season with joy.

01 November 2005

US remembers rights pioneer Parks who was readied by her church

New York (ENI). The United States has been paying tribute to Rosa Parks, the retired seamstress whose refusal in 1955 to give up her seat for a white passenger on a segregated public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, led to the start of the civil rights movement.

Parks died on 24 October aged 92 and was to be buried on 2 November in Detroit. Her arrest and fine for not giving up her seat led to a boycott of the Montgomery bus system led by a young Baptist pastor, Martin Luther King Jr.

segregation.

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## ICON Digest

### Ecumenical News International Highlights

**Dec 19, 2005**

WTO breathes relief at pact, but Christian, civil activists unimpressed

Hong Kong (ENI). The 149 members of the World Trade Organization, after days of protests during their Hong Kong talks, breathed a sigh of relief.

**Dec 14, 2005**

Pakistan churches to have day of prayer against blasphemy law

New Delhi (ENI). Churches in Pakistan are to observe 20 December as a "day of fast and prayer" to demand the repeal of a law about blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad. The National Council of Churches of Pakistan, which groups four major Protestant denominations.

Relatives want those who ordered murder of US nun in Brazil court

New York (ENI). Relatives and fellow members of the order of a US nun active in a movement to help landless Amazon peasants who was murdered the late Dorothy Stang, 73, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and a long-time resident of Brazil, but they said they would like to see the Czech churches deplore 'communist' law on religion

### Dec 13,2005

Warsaw (ENI). Churches in the Czech Republic are considering an appeal to the country's constitutional court about a law on religious freedom secretary of the Czech Ecumenical Council, about the measure signed into law by President Vaclav Klaus on 6 December. Churches challenge British government on climate change

London (ENI). A church-backed campaign on climate change has challenged the United Kingdom government to state its policy for future negotiations. The 29 November to 9 December talks in Montreal aimed to start discussions on a long-term strategy to safeguard climatic stability after

From China to Nepal, human rights at risk says Asia inter-faith group

Manila (ENI). The rule of law does not exist in most parts of Asia, thus denying the basic human rights of many citizens in a vast continent to the hard work that has been undertaken to create an awareness of human rights," said the inter-faith Religious Group for Human Rights, which is linked to the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission.

### December 9, 2005

Asian Christian leaders say WTO has not reduced poverty

Hong Kong (ENI). Christian leaders from many parts of this planet have grave doubts the World Trade Organization (WTO) will deliver on it for the 6th Ministerial Conference of the WTO to lobby, badger and protest for more justice in the way humanity goes about a large part of

### Newindpress - Chennai,India

... In a letter to the Church Synod on Sunday, Mar Thoma Mathews II had expressed his desire to abdicate owing to advanced years

United Nations, November 17, 2005 – The Secretary-General's study on Violence Against Children focuses on raising awareness about violence against children in five settings: home, school, community, workplace and conflict zones.

The study is organized to include more than 250 public submission and research based on over 2000 existing reports. An impressive global response showed the interest and willingness of governments, NGOs and the public. Consultations had three goals: to provide input, to mobilize political commitment, and to set an agenda for action. Child participation was visible, integrated and valuable.

Nine final conclusions resulted from the Regional Consultations which were held in Slovenia. They are: create an action plan to prevent violence; ratify relevant treaties; give high political priority to violence against children; strengthen legal frameworks; improve data collection; and ensure that foreign media played an important role in supporting the cause and raising public awareness.

To conclude the Secretary-General's study, three publications will be presented in 2006. The first would be a 30-page final report to the Secretary-General and General Assembly. The second would be a child friendly version of the report. The third publication would be a child friendly version of the report.

United Nations, November 21, 2005 – The United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held the fourth DPIC seminar on the 1948 Genocide Convention from the 1994 genocide.

The seminar coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the Nuremberg

Trials, which judged the accused war criminals of Nazi Germany. Unanimous affirmation of the Nuremberg principles by the United Nations in 1947 implied a promise that "never again." Dr. Benjamin B. Ferencz, a former Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials of 1947, described the defense of Dr. Otto Ohlendorf, husband and father of five children, responsible for the genocide. "The law of force cannot be replaced by the law of force."

Human rights activist Louise Mushikwabo, author of "Rwanda Means the Universe," a multigenerational family memoir set against the backdrop of the 1994 genocide spoke of witness Rwanda. She also spoke of returning home to her country and the problem of facing one's neighbors and schoolmates who are also murderers.

Dina Temple-Raston, a journalist and author of "Justice on the Grass: Three Journalists, Their Trial for War Crimes, and A Nation's Quest for Redemption," explored the role of media in Rwanda. The "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar series was launched by the Outreach Division of the DPI on June 21, 2004 in order to examine different manifestations of intolerance and explore ways to prevent them.

United Nations, October 27, 2005 – The DPI/NGO section held its regular weekly NGO briefing focusing on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.

The discussion centered on the "triple threat" in that state: HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, and the diminishing capacities of the state to deliver basic services to people of Zimbabwe. The current humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe is characteristic not only of Zimbabwe, but also of many of its neighbors in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United Nations, its agencies and NGOs are actively addressing the situation in Zimbabwe. The government has been working in good collaboration with the United Nations in fighting HIV/AIDS. The current per capita income in Zimbabwe was 72 USD per person. Meshack Kitchen, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, said that HIV/AIDS funding should not be political. Twenty years ago, the nation was hailed as an African success story and dubbed "the breadbasket of southern Africa." Today after controversial land reform policies, food insecurity is a major problem. *Operation Restore Order* is the government's widely condemned demolition of illegal shantytowns which left a growing number of internally displaced people. Nearly 300,000 people were displaced. HRH Prince Charles of England during his visit to the United Nations on November 1 briefly mentioned that he was present when the nation declared independence twenty years ago

United Nations, Nov. 1, 2005 – The United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations and the United Nations Development Program in association with The Prince of Wales International The Secretary-General and HRH The Prince of Wales first met in 1997 to discuss the need of business to become more involved in the work of the UN. Together they organized an HRH The Prince of Wales told those gathered, “Indeed, I am glad that the whole approach toward partnerships is now far higher up the UN agenda, and seen as vital to making progress. Creating full and productive employment for young people is key to promoting sustained economic growth, alleviating poverty and delivering the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

Encouraging and supporting youth enterprise is a central element in promoting youth employment. Working together, business, governments and civil society can unleash the capacities of young people. HRH The Prince of Wales also encouraged mentoring young people: “I also believe many young need constructive help with personal development and self-confidence and in particular Enterprise development is also a key priority of the United Nations Development Program. UNDP encourages developing countries to recognize the role of business in creating domestic

United Nations, New York, October 13, 2005 – In observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, the United Nations Department of Public Information From Cambodia to Uganda to Bolivia, one small loan can change a family; several can strengthen a community; thousands can transform an entire economy. A loan could be used to boost economies to flourish.

Seeking to boost microcredit and microfinance programs around the world as a new way of improving the lives of the poor, the United Nations General Assembly has designated 2005 United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has underscored the importance of microfinance as: “...an integral part of our collective effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals in sectors that help people improve their lives.”

In a world where most poor people are women, studies have shown that access to financial services has improved the status of women within the family and the community. Women have

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## THE MASS AS TRANSFORMATIVE

These personal reflections were activated by the Mass attendance problems discussed in the *Staten Island Advance* recently. I celebrate Mass every Sunday at nine. Rarely has any one from the community who is the Ignatius University chapel; the University is primarily distance learning so that would explain its lack of attendance.

So I am grateful in some ways that I do not have a parish assignment because I would then be under serious obligation to bring people to attend. I would like people to celebrate with me but they haven't. So in my parish, I did some of the things Father Pastor did including all the things the other priests suggested in the articles and much more. But all of these may not have been such good ideas; I forgive myself now and

People who do not attend Mass, do not attend because they don't want to be there.

Pure and simple and bottom line. And it is not necessarily the fault of the pastor, the bishop or even the pope. From Adam and Eve on, some people liked to celebrate the Sabbath. Others did not. That is why we have been endlessly with how to connect with the sacred in a non-sacramental universe.

Now we had ways of getting the not so religious to attend Mass. We told them they committed a mortal sin by being absent and they, unrepentant, would merit eternal damnation in the fires of hell. Do we really believe that. I wonder about the faithful in general for that matter.

And please, this has nothing to do with Vatican II. While it was a monumental Council, it did not have the power to change the psyche of the world. The world goes its own way in spite of kings, queens, presidents all the councils which have met and will meet.

Faith is a free encounter with the Wholly Other and cannot be dictated nor induced through fears and gimmicks. In fact, some of those suggested in the articles may, in the long run, do a real disservice to religion.

Some churches are doing really well with Sunday services which resemble rock concerts and theatre and old time religion which is not my personal style. Other churches blessed with great attendance, do well go there and for whatever reason, they want to be there. And for all we know, there may be an encounter between the human and the divine. The people attending experience something meaningful to them and

No cleric can be expected to turn back the clock a thousand years and change the contemporary psyche. The contemporary psyche is also the manifestation of Spirit moving through time. “All the king's horses and

We want to bring people to an encounter with the Wholly Other. We can create an environment in our church in which that might take place. But we cannot make it happen; happenings are of the world of grace and

Pastors have a lot of work to do. But don't try to force or impose from the top. We are not seeing the problem realistically. We have to begin from the bottom. Create the environment in which the heart and the mind can experience which far transcends our media. But we have to connect with the idiom from which each person is coming. “Beginning from sensible things (sensing), we will ascend to the super-sensible (above sense)

Carl Jung, who passed away on the day of my first mass, wrote an article which I came upon in a New Hope book store on an anniversary of my first mass, *The Mass as Transformation*. (So much for synchronicity) up the environment in which grace has the opportunity to act. If the salvation of souls, is the supreme law, then this is the positive first step taken before all else - even the fixing of a leaking roof.

These reflections may offer another option besides those suggested in the *Advance* articles. And ultimately, this is a mystery. And we can only do so much from the human perspective. And happily, pastors are

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(Father DeLuca is Rector of Ignatius University, Ambassador at the United Nations and Dean of International School for Mental Health Practitioners )

UN EXPERT URGES STATES TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF RELIGION FOR ALL PRISONERS New York, Oct 24 2005 2:00PM All countries must respect and protect the rights of prisoners to freedom of religion and

The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Asma Jahangir, has received a “growing number” of reports of alleged abuses of these rights against persons deprived of their liberty, according to the

The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that a person's detention or incarceration may not include deprivation of his or her right to freedom of religion or belief. “These standards must be applied to every prisoner and

Ms. Jahangir also recommends that the principles pertaining to the right to freedom of religion or belief be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities and that that issue be heavily stressed during the

“The religious beliefs of a detainee should under no circumstances be used by the authorities against the detainee in order, for instance, to extract information from him or her,” she declares.

Citing the deaths of several people following allegations earlier this year that the Koran had been desecrated in detention facilities, she emphasizes that “the respect of religious freedom has an impact that is

According to the report, the Special Rapporteur has contacted 35 countries in 75 separate communications concerning violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief. Half went to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Ms. Jahangir lists 15 States that she'd like to visit and thanks four – Bangladesh, China, Israel and Mauritius – for responding with invitations. She voices hope that the remaining countries – Azerbaijan, the Philippines, and the United States – will also respond positively. The Special Rapporteur earlier this year joined forces with other UN experts, including those dealing with torture, the independence of judges and arbitrary detention, to ask the United States for permission to visit. Special Rapporteurs are unpaid experts serving in an independent personal capacity who receive their mandate from the UN Commission on Human Rights and report to back to it.

#### **AMBASSADOR'S PRINCIPAL SCHEDULE:**

October 6, Meeting at United Nations with Dr. Veccio, School of Practical Philosophy  
 October 11, Vespers for United Nations(SCOOCH/SCOPA), Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
 October 14, Honoring Sister Charlotte, St. Joseph Hill Academy, Excelsior Grand, Staten Is.  
 October 18, Meeting Barry Steingard, School of Practical Philosophy  
 October 15, Wedding Reception  
 October 22, Wedding Reception  
 November 10, Informal Informals, Second Committee of the General Assembly  
 November 15, EvenSong and Reception, Anglican Observer to the United Nations, NYC.  
 December 1, Informal Informals, Second Committee of the General Assembly, United Nations  
 December 8, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of People with Mental Disorders, United Nations.  
 December 22, United Nations, General Assembly passes resolution for debt relief for Poor Mountain Countries (DeLuca worked with Second Committee '04 & '05 on this issue)  
 December 24, Christmas Midnight Mass, Ignatius University Chapel, Staten Island, NY  
 December 31, Wedding Reception  
 January 5, Meeting, Counselor, Malaysia Mission to United Nations  
 January 13, Staten Island Community in Crisis Forum.  
 January 18, 8th Annual Staten Island Church Unity Service, Zion Lutheran Church.  
 JANUARY 18 Special Meeting, Rev.Sayarayne, Liberia, Pastor, Christ Assembly Lutheran Church on parish education satellite.  
 Special Meeting, Canon Andrews, Rector Emeritus, St. Thomas Episcopal church, NYC  
 January 19 Meeting, Mr. Manuel Eduardo, Counselor Angola Mission to UN  
     Meeting, Mr. Cyril Thomas, St. Vincent & Grenadines Mission to UN  
     Meeting, Dr. Vera Mehta, UN Secretariat  
     Fra Angelico Exhibit, Metropolitan Museum of Art  
     Colloquium, Dr. Peter Gay, New Perspectives in Psychoanalysis