Patriarchy: A System Past Its Prime

Gretchen Gundrum

“Patriarchy,” asserts author Sue Monk Kidd, “is neither men nor the masculine principle; it is rather a system in which that principle has become distorted.” For 2,500 years, the patriarchal system was the very air that everyone breathed. Males were privileged in society, fathers knew best, and the social and economic hierarchies put men at the top, women next, followed by slaves, animals, plants, and inanimate objects. This unquestioned social order seemed to be divinely ordained. Although both were created in God’s image, man was created first. Woman was a derivative, fashioned from his rib.

The Bible and Greek philosophy are two of the root causes for the entrenchment of the patriarchal system in Western culture. God created the sexes of male and female, but humans have constructed gender, the roles that women and men play in society.

Religious literature is an important unifier of consciousness. It reflects and reinforces the beliefs and values that ruling elites hold dear. In the biblical creation story, God gave naming rights to Adam (Gen. 2:19-23). Whoever has naming rights, controls the culture. The writers, redactors, and editors of the Bible were likely only males, since women did not have access to education. Thus, men controlled the symbol system and made decisions about which stories were the “inspired word of God.” They chose masculine God-language and God images over feminine ones, and whether intending it or not, clearly communicated female inferiority. There are feminine and gender-neutral images and metaphors of the Divine in scripture (for example, El shaddai, Sophia—God’s wisdom, God as a mother hen protecting her chicks, God as rock and living water), but masculine images of God continue to dominate our consciousness and our prayers.

The creation account explains that evil came into the world through a woman’s curiosity and a desire for more knowledge. The snake seduced Eve but she gave in to temptation and brought Adam along for the ride. By listening to the voice of his wife, Adam got into a lot of trouble with God.

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher who shaped Western scientific thought and impacted the theological understanding of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, assumed as a given that “women are incomplete and damaged human beings of an entirely different order than men.” Greek mythology made another woman responsible for unleashing evil in the world; her name was Pandora.

Religion shapes culture and culture reinforces religious messages. One subtle visual reinforcement of female inferiority can be found in the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo’s magnificent painting of the creation of man has become iconic in Western consciousness. The powerful creative God—the old man with the beard—reaches across the heavens to touch the tip of Adam’s finger, thus transmitting creative authority to him. God and man are almost in the same plane of the fresco. In a smaller, different place in the vault of the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo depicts Eve’s creation as coming out of the sleeping Adam. Here, however, Eve is a supplicant, with bowed posture and hands folded toward God. God’s right hand is slightly extended in a benevolent gesture.
way toward her, but He doesn’t touch her. Woman is lower and beseeching. The visual captures woman’s need to please—the ingrained tendency to seek approval and permission. This is a form of internalized oppression, which undercuts woman’s ability to value her own experience and use her voice with confidence. Michelangelo’s art reflects and promulgates theological thinking, thus supporting patriarchy.

With the two powerful forces of biblical teaching and classic philosophy undergirding Western understanding, the stage for women’s sense of internalized inferiority was set. If a person gets a recurrent message that she’s not good enough, smart enough, capable enough, shouldn’t think or act in certain ways, she will believe it. Hierarchies with men at the top became entrenched in the church, family, marriage, workplaces, and all systems of thought. Men dominated and women were dependent. Women needed the protection of powerful males to survive and thus unwittingly colluded in their own diminishment.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, societal changes brought educational and economic opportunities for women. Women gained a sense of perspective, and equipped with the skills to study and excavate history (including the ancient languages that the Bible was originally written in), they found voices and authority to question the status quo. The patriarchal system would never quite be the same.

In Kristof and WuDunn’s compelling text, Half the Sky, the authors note that gender inequality in poor countries is often lethal. There are many stories of men working creatively to end discrimination and violence against women and to promote gender equality. Here are just a few!

White Ribbon Campaign
Twenty years ago, a group of Canadian men decided they needed to speak out against domestic violence. They chose the white ribbon as a symbol. Within six weeks, 10,000 men across Canada wore a white ribbon. Today the campaign is in over fifty-five countries. Ninth grader Richard Liles recently wore a white ribbon at his Virginia high school. “My mom, my aunts, and my grandmother have all been victims of abuse,” said Liles. “If I can break the chain of generational abuse, it will be better for me, my wife and my kids.”

Men, I’m Talking to You
Dallas Cowboys football player Jay Ratliff recently recorded a public service announcement aimed at raising awareness about sex trafficking. “It has recently come to my attention that American children are being bought and sold for profit and pleasure and I’m mad. Men, I’m talking to you,” Ratliff states somberly in the ad. The father of two young girls, Ratliff plans to recruit other teammates to join the campaign.

Together for Transformation
“Both men and women are suffering in this system and they need to join hands to bring about transformative change.” Those are the words of a joint statement—“Together for Transformation: A Call to Men and Boys”—drafted by a group of men from 17 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East who recently finished a two-year training program on gender and nonviolence organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. “We strongly speak out against gender inequality and discrimination towards women in all forms and show our deep commitment towards gender sensitive active nonviolence as a way of life.”
in a way that it is not in America. When girl babies aren’t as valued as much as their brothers they don’t receive the same medical treatment, they don’t get as much food, and they are aborted just because of their sex. The authors focus on three abuses flowing out of female devaluing: “sex trafficking and forced prostitution; gender-based violence, including honor killings and mass rape; and maternal mortality, which still needlessly claims one woman a minute.” 

While some of the stories are horrendous, there are also hopeful signs of improvement in the status of women as educational opportunities increase, access to medical care improves, and women achieve economic success through micro-lending endeavors. Supported by other budding female entrepreneurs, women gain respect as they become more financially independent; they are also more protected from abuse. 

As women become better educated and empowered around the world, something important is happening to religious imagery and to relationships between women and men. There are signs of a growing sense of the Sacred Feminine in religious thought and language. Earth is our mother; Earth is our home. Our task is to protect Earth, not dominate it. Women and men are realizing their call to co-creativity with Divine Energy. Networked through economies, technology, and instantaneous communication across the globe and even in outer space, we need each other. The patriarchal system no longer serves our evolving understanding of who we are.

Through the power of mutual respect and partnership we can support each other in becoming all we are meant to be by Divine intention. May it be so. 

1 Sue Monk Kidd, The Dance of the Dissident Daughter, 59
2 Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy, 178
3 Ibid, 10
4 Kidd, 60-61
5 Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Half the Sky, xvi
6 Ibid, 187
The Story of Mama J

Sadia Hameed

I will never forget Mama J. When you first meet her it is beyond belief that this woman greeting you with big smiles and cheerful song has experienced trauma that most of us barely have the strength to hear about, let alone survive. Yet Mama J was not just surviving—she was living, healing and rebuilding.

I met Mama J at a vocational training program set up by a network of women’s human rights groups called Synergie based in Goma, North Kivu. Synergie has provided urgent medical care, legal assistance and vocational training for countless survivors of sexual violence in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A brutal war has been raging in the region for over a decade, claiming close to six million lives due to killings, displacement, preventable disease, famine and sexual violence.

During the course of this deadly conflict armed groups use rape as a weapon of war to gain control over mineral rich territories, exploiting Congo’s natural wealth for their own personal gain. The price paid by civilians is shocking. Attacks are deliberate and well planned, villages are burned, men are killed or taken as forced labor, children captured as child soldiers or orphaned and women brutally assaulted, stripped of their dignity, family, livelihood and home.

Mama J, a mother of seven, was asleep in her bed, next to her husband and children when seven armed men forcibly entered her home. She watched as her husband and two young children were slain in front of her, after which she was subjected to repeated brutalities by four of the armed men. She thinks it lasted for hours. Desperately in need of urgent medical care she fled to Goma on foot with her remaining five children. She was treated at the hospital and given a safe space to recover. It was here that she found out that the rapes had resulted in HIV.

I was moved by the incredible strength and resilience that she demonstrated, certain that I would never manage it in her place. She talked about physically, mentally and emotionally recovering from the terrifying violations she sustained, how she prays not to die from HIV as her children have no other guardian, how she still deeply grieves the deaths of her husband and children, how she misses them, how much she loved them and how she has no idea what “home” will be like without them.

She asked me to tell her story to anyone who would listen...

She asked me to tell her story to anyone who would listen, that she was one of thousands of Congolese women who are surviving grave violations, and that anyone who learns about this conflict should speak out for peace and justice. I hugged her and promised I would. She whispered to me that we would meet again in her village in her home that she dreamt of that day and believed it would come. She then took my hand and sang and danced with me till we left. Who could ever forget Mama J?

More than ten years after the UN Security Council’s passage of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, the women of Congo are still being brutalized by armed conflict with little reprieve in sight. Stories of the horrors endured by women like Mama J, make it obvious that the international community has not yet delivered any form of real peace or security to Congo’s women.

Sadia Hameed is the Raise Hope for Congo campaign manager with the Enough Project.
The peace that Congo’s women need is not simply words written on paper or agreed to by war mongers. They need a peace that returns their sense of security and peace of mind, a peace that eliminates the stigma of surviving rape and reinstates them to their rightful position in society.

If we are committed to helping deliver this kind of peace we need coordinated action from stakeholders at the national, regional and international level. Action to remove the economic incentives to wage war replacing them with incentives favoring peace and stability, such as a minerals certification scheme that eliminates the world market for conflict minerals sold by war criminals. Action that removes war criminals from the ranks of the armed forces and submits them swift punishment under the law. Action reducing threats posed by armed militias lingering in Congo’s bush. Action that ensures women have a seat at the decision-making table and are able to ensure the delivery of a peace that truly returns peace back to them.

**Demand Conflict-Free Electronics**

Tell the biggest electronic companies that you want death, rape and violence driven by the illicit trade in conflict minerals to stop. Visit www.RaiseHopeforCongo.org to take action!

This is the kind of peace that Mama J dreams of and this is the kind of peace that we have the responsibility of helping to deliver for Congo and its women.

---

**GROWING SECURITY**

In 1993, a group of Honduran women fed up with domestic violence in their community decided to do something about it—form a coffee cooperative. "We realized that until women are economically empowered, they will not be empowered to escape abuse for good," said Dule Marlen Contreras. Today more than 250 women grow and sell coffee through the Coordinadora de Mujeres Campesinas de la Paz. They have increased their economic independence; domestic violence rates have also reduced drastically within the community.

© Creative Commons 2.0/John Doughy

_Gloria grinding coffee in Honduras_
Co-Designing Water Solutions

Beth Robertson

Women in Bimbilla, Ghana—and women all over the world—are the cornerstones of their communities. They shoulder the burden of water-harvesting, spending countless hours fetching and managing water for drinking, agriculture and cooking. Local women are also key to improving access to safe drinking water in their communities.

In 2010, two powerful women leaders from Ghana—Florence Idrisu and Fulera Mumuni—participated in a training through the Global Women’s Water Initiative. They were introduced to four different area appropriate technologies designed to address issues of water and sanitation. Following the training, these women leaders developed an action plan to construct a rainwater harvesting system that would serve the women’s dormitory at their local high school. Florence and Fulera chose Bimbilla High School for their project because, like many schools across Africa, it was not equipped with ample water facilities. Students and teachers would often have to bring water to school or fetch water during class time, limiting time devoted to studies. Florence and Fulera’s pilot project brought tremendous change to Bimbilla, decreasing the hours that female students have to walk in search of water. The female dormitory at Bimbilla High School now has a complete rainwater harvesting system that serves 210 female students, providing them improved access to potable drinking water at the school. Today, Florence and Fulera continue to spread knowledge of low cost, effective solutions to inadequate sources of water in other areas in their community.

Safe drinking water is a human right and the participation of women in conceiving technologies to address issues of water and sanitation is essential. The Global Women’s Water Initiative (GWWI), a program of Women’s Earth Alliance in partnership with Crabgrass, embraces the idea that local women leaders who understand the needs of their community can co-design solutions to address these challenges.

Local women understand the needs of their community...

Global Women’s Water Initiative participants celebrate after building a rainwater harvest tank.

*Source: UN Statistics Division, 2009*

**TIME POVERTY**

It is estimated that women and children in Africa alone spend approximately 40 billion hours each year fetching and carrying water—"a figure equivalent to a year’s labor for the entire workforce of France." This results in “time poverty,” limiting the productive potential of women and the time their daughters can devote to studies.

**WATER COLLECTION**

(Average time in minutes per trip to drinking water source)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Time (minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Carribean</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 UNIFEM, Progress Report on Gender Source: UN Statistics Division, 2000
WALKING FOR WATER

3.7 miles ... that’s the average distance women and children walk each day to collect water in Asia and Africa. Walking for Water is an awareness and fundraising event where school children walk 3.7 miles carrying 1.5 gallons of water in their backpacks. The event, started by the Dutch NGO Aqua for All in 2003, has spread across the globe. Walks for Water take place around March 22nd—World Water Day. In 2010 18,000 students raised $1.6 million for water relief organizations. Aqua for All has kits available to download to organize your own event. www.walkingforwater.eu

Students rest after walking with 1.5 gallons of water in their backpacks.

not only improve the health of a family, but it also provides an opportunity for girls to go to school, and for women to use their time more productively.”¹ Women are the stewards of their natural resources in their communities and therefore hold the key to improving access to safe drinking water.

Florence and Fulera’s model succeeded because of its bottom-up, grassroots nature. Top-down, dependency driven development solutions have failed communities too many times. Co-designing solutions based on local vision rather than outside wants are the foundation for sustainable development. It is important to invest in existing leadership and the knowledge of women who know what their communities need most. This approach avoids the pitfalls of top-down practices and outsider-generated attempts at assistance that can fall short or even reinforce damaging dynamics. For sustainable development to take root, we must rely on the local, environmental stewards and community caretakers to identify and co-design solutions that address issues of water and sanitation. Local women understand the needs of their community; all they need are the resources and confidence to design solutions and engineer change. For more information visit www.womensearthalliance.org.  

¹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, A Gender Perspective on Water Resources & Sanitation

IN SERVICE FOR JUSTICE

“It’s so easy to fall into a trap of hopelessness when you’re reading about the tragedies and horrific conditions which women and children are dealing with around the world,” says Clara Leeways, a Senior at Seattle Preparatory School. “But nothing is going to happen if the whole world sits back and waits. The most important thing is just to take action.”

Clara took action when she traveled to the Dominican Republic in June 2009 with ten other students as part of a service trip organized by Education Across Borders. The students lived with host families and built homes in Batey Libertad, a community of Haitian migrant workers and their families. The experience was so profound, she went back in 2010. “I had formed these unconditional bonds with the people,” she says. “There was no way I couldn’t go back.”

One of those bonds was with a six-year-old girl named Emily. Clara and Emily played games together, and Emily stayed close to Clara as she worked. One particularly hot day, after strenuous work digging foundations and mixing cement, Clara went to refill her water bottle only to find that the jug was empty. “I wasn’t feeling well, so I sat down on this rock and was very upset.” Thoughts of going home raced through her mind. “And right then, I was looking down and I saw this hand with a cup of water. It was Emily—she was offering me her ration of water.” Clara didn’t want to accept the water, knowing that it was Emily’s. Clean drinking water is scarce and rationed in Batey Libertad. “I ended up drinking the water, and I know that a cup of water couldn’t make me feel better, but it was the action of her giving it to me that was really profound. It showed that the littlest things make the biggest difference.”

When Clara first went to the Dominican Republic, she was oriented toward service. Now, she wants to spend the rest of her life working for justice and peace. “Because there is hope.”
Women Farmers Cultivate Abundance

Danielle Nierenberg

In the middle of Kibera, the largest slum in sub-Saharan Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya, where nearly one million people live in an area just over half the size of Manhattan’s Central Park, there is a surprising amount of abundance.

Appearing among the makeshift shacks, the street vendors selling tennis shoes and food, the piles of trash, and the herds of goats, are lush home gardens sprouting spinach, kale and tomatoes. These “farms” don’t look like the corn and soybean crops we see across the American Midwest or Brazil. Instead, the food from the Kibera farms are peeking out of tall sacks filled with soil, and they are grown by landless women’s groups.

These self-proclaimed “self-help” groups, made up mostly of women, are present all over Kenya—giving youth, women, and other groups the opportunity to organize, share information and skills, and ultimately improve their well-being. It is an important service, especially when one realizes that the majority of the world’s food producers are actually women. (See below)

At the same time, women receive less than 10 percent of credit provided to male farmers and in many parts of the world aren’t allowed to own land, get credit, or make financial and banking transactions. Despite research that shows that women are much more likely than men to invest their improved income back into their families and the community, they receive only about 5 percent of global agriculture extension services.

Yet the benefits of investing in women farmers can be found all over the world, even in the most hopeless seeming of places, like Kibera. Currently more than 1,000 women and their families are growing food in the vertical gardens—something that Red Cross

...more than 1,000 women and their families are growing food in the vertical gardens.

areas, but most residents didn’t go without food because so many of them were growing crops—in sacks, vacant land, or elsewhere.

Even though the people here don’t own the land where they live and work—making their existence a very tenuous one—and they can be often evicted from their homes (most of them wooden shacks with tin roofs), people are thriving. And more than that, they are helping people around them thrive in unexpected ways.

On a vacant lot just across from Kibera, a group of about 20 farmers—again, made up mostly of women—are growing traditional African vegetables, including spider plant, squash, and amaranth. With the help of the organization Urban Harvest, the farmers are not only growing these vegetables to eat and sell, but, they are also becoming a source of seed for rural farmers. Using very small plots of land, about fifty square meters, and double dug beds, the farmers can raise seeds very quickly. Fast-growing varieties like amaranth
Women and girls globally have a new champion at the United Nations. “We are here to serve half the world,” said Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women and former President of Chile. UN Women, the new agency dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, officially began its work on January 1, 2011.

“UN Women will significantly boost UN efforts to promote gender equality, expand opportunity, and tackle discrimination around the globe,” according to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The agency emerged from an agreement by member states that more energy and resources must be focused on promoting equal rights and opportunities for women. UN Women consolidates four existing parts of the UN system dedicated to the advancement of women and provides additional resources to accelerate progress on realizing the rights of women worldwide. The agency has a minimum annual budget of $500 million.

“This is a time of great promise,” said Bachelet. “We have a historic opportunity to accelerate the achievement of what champions of gender equality have worked towards for years.” The work of UN Women will center around five priorities:

- Expanding women’s voice, leadership and participation in all sectors
- Ending violence against women
- Strengthening implementation of the women’s peace and security agenda
- Enhancing women’s economic empowerment, security and rights
- Making gender equality priorities central to national and local planning, budgeting and statistics

The agency has outlined an ambitious 100-Day Action plan in each of these areas. Learn more at www.unwomen.org.

Books


Reports

Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)

Report on men’s attitudes and practices in 6 countries on a wide variety of topics related to gender equality.

http://tiny.cc/evolvingmen

The World’s Women 2010

Trends and statistics highlighting the differences in the status of women and men in eight areas –families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty.

http://tiny.cc/women2010

© UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

Executive Director Michele Bachelet at press conference outlining priorities of UN Women.

Websites

IPJC Legislative Action Center
Use your voice to advocate for Federal legislation that promotes justice for women in the US and globally. www.ipjc.org

Mary’s Pence
Invests in projects that support women’s well-being in the Americas and Caribbean. Funding decisions are rooted in a Catholic tradition of social justice together with feminist values. www.maryspence.org

Women Thrive Worldwide
Diverse coalition of over 50 organizations that advocates for US foreign policy which empowers women to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. www.womenthrive.org

Women Watch
Information and resources on gender equality. www.un.org/womenwatch
Maternal Health: Learning from Others

Mary M. Hennigan, MPH

Statistics are great for sounding an alarm about how bad things are for children and mothers around the globe. “Fifty – three percent of children in Malawi are too short (stunted) for their age.” “Two hundred and ten women out of 100,000 of Ghanaian women die during childbirth.” But what about the forty seven percent of Malawian kids who are growing at a normal rate, or the other women in Ghana who survive childbirth? The question that merits asking is: What are some mothers and children doing differently from others that helps them stay alive and thrive?

In the field of health, parents of healthy children or mothers with successful pregnancies are called “positive deviants” because their behavior deviates from others with the same level of income and the same access to food and services. Unlike their peers, positive deviants decide to take preventative malaria treatments while pregnant, get pre-natal care, eat better while pregnant, and exclusively breastfeed their babies until the age of six months. So what pushes some women to adopt these life-giving behaviors and not others?

We all know from our personal experiences that knowing the right thing to do is not a guarantee that we’ll do it. The women that Catholic Relief Services (CRS) works with around the world are just like us—they struggle with putting into practice some very fundamental behaviors. To help them, CRS is investigating the barriers that prevent some women from doing the positive behaviors and finding ways for them to learn from the positive deviants within their communities.

In Malawi, CRS is developing a network of thousands of volunteers—including fathers—focused on peer learning. These volunteers are able to share what the positive deviant households do and address some of the traditional beliefs that prevent people from adopting positive behaviors.

Cultural belief that a malnourished child is the result of one parent being unfaithful to another. Malnutrition is therefore considered a household matter, not a community problem. The network of volunteers has been able to break down the myth of malnutrition and engage the whole community on maternal and child nutrition. These Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions help mobilize communities to take action to improve maternal and child health and teach caregivers how to better prepare and pre-

Missing Women

Source: University of Munich/DEG Cologne

‘Missing women’ refers to those who have died as a result of discriminatory treatment in access to health and nutrition as well as due to sex selective abortions or insufficient care given to girl infants.

- China 41 million (3.15% of population)
- India 39 million (3.38% of population)
- All other nations 7 million (.23% of population)
- Sub-Saharan Africa 6 million (.75% of population)
- Pakistan 5 million (2.94% of population)
- Bangladesh 3 million (1.85% of population)
- Egypt 1 million (1.2% of population)
serve food. A similar community-based approach is undertaken in Honduras, where CRS’ work has shown that the number of deaths during childbirth can be greatly decreased simply by involving the community in supporting women to give birth with trained birth attendants.

In Ghana, where women tend to give birth at home, CRS is facing an additional challenge: How to encourage women to deliver at a health center with trained nurses without alienating the well-respected elderly birth attendants that the community is used to? Even though the attendants are untrained and ill-equipped to handle obstetric emergencies, they hold a place of importance in the community. Instead of pushing them aside, CRS and the community leaders are finding ways of involving them during both the pregnancy and during transportation to the health center when women give birth.

While knowledge may be powerful, practice is essential for maternal and child health.

Learning and modeling the strategies of positive deviants can lead to big improvements in the lives of other women, their children and their households. After all, it’s not usually the rock star or the fancy lecture on health that motivates us to do something—we’re more likely to follow what our peers are doing. Sometimes we just need help in recognizing who the positive peers are!

Mary M. Hennigan is a Senior Technical Health Advisor for Catholic Relief Services.
Kathy Morefield

**Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.** (Matthew 15:28)

The new preschool in Pang Na, Cambodia, is in its second year. Three years ago a preschool there was unimaginable. Today it is a reality because of the perseverance and tenacity of one woman, Prak Srey Neang. Like the Canaanite woman in Matthew’s gospel who demanded what was right and just for her child, Srey Neang wouldn’t give up her dream to provide a head start for children in her impoverished village in rural Cambodia.

Srey Neang was eleven years old when she started first grade. Her education was punctuated with long absences because her parents needed her help with the younger children and farming. Despite these obstacles she completed school and was able to attend a two-year vocational school run by Salesian Sisters in Phnom Penh.

After graduation, Maryknoll hired Srey Neang to work with children with HIV/AIDS in Phnom Penh. She eventually became the head preschool teacher in that program but never forgot the children in her village. They were always in her heart and mind and she wanted them to have something she never had—a head start in life and a sound education. She lobbied the elementary school principal in her village for a preschool whenever she visited. She eventually wore him down and he said yes, he would start a preschool, hire a government teacher and enroll all the preschool children in the village if he had the space for it. Could Srey Neang help with this?

Srey Neang lives in one room in a run down area of Phnom Penh with her younger brothers whom she brought to Phnom Penh to educate. They barely scrape by with very little money for food, clothing and transportation. But this didn’t stop Srey Neang. She began to talk to everyone about her dream and the need for a small building to make this possible. I shared her story in a letter with family and friends and one day a friend of a friend called and said that she and her husband wanted to help Srey Neang build the preschool. Others offered generous donations to furnish and supply the classroom and cover training expenses for the new teacher.

The entire village joined in, the parents cleared the land and laborers in the village built the school. The principal hired Karaney, a government-trained teacher, and sent her to Phnom Penh for a month to learn from Srey Neang about pre-literacy and other activities, and to make lesson plans and create materials for the new school. The principal and assistant principal, village chief and community leaders joined with us to make our dreams possible.

---

$16 billion a year in aid would send all children to school in low-income countries. (about 1/2 of the amount Europeans and Americans spend on ice cream annually—31 billion)
Community members helped Karaney and Srey Neang set up the class-
room and the preschool opened in
November 2009.
When we asked Srey Neang this year how the preschool was
doing, her face lit up and she
told us that it was going better
than she had ever dreamed. The
first grade teacher told her that
the children (last year’s preschool
graduates) were more advanced
than any class she’d ever taught.
They knew how to hold a pencil,
make shapes, use scissors and
crayons, listen and cooperate.
They were learning the Cambo-
dian alphabet and characters in
the first week of school.
Only 13% of Cambodian chil-
dren participate in pre-primary
education\(^1\) and most of these are
from wealthy or middle class fam-
ilies. Srey Neang with passion,
determination and perseverance
has made pre-primary education
possible for all of the children in
Pang Na village.

\(^1\) UNESCO Institute for Statistics,
www.stats.uis.unesco.org

---

**Creating Opportunities**

In the villages surrounding Suchitoto, El Salvador, young women graduating from high school find very limited opportunities for employment or further education. “Jobs are a problem,” says Sister Margaret Jane Kling, CSJP. “I read the want ads and there is some work available, but so many want English.”

27 year old Noemy dreams of studying tourism at the local technical school, but her lack of English proficiency is a barrier. Noemy attends the advanced English classes offered by Sr. Margaret Jane at the Centro Arte para la Paz in Suchitoto. “At least this is a step in the direction of my dreams.”

“Young people here just need opportunities,” says another student, 21 year old Rosaura. Her mother, who has a third grade education, has encouraged her children to stay in school. Equipped with her advanced English skills, Rosaura recently received a scholarship to study Psychology at the technical university in San Salvador.
Latina Conference

160 Latinas from 25 Cities Proved that ¡Sí Se Puede!

On March 5th 160 Latinas gathered in Sunnyside, WA for the first Justice for Women: Latinas Connected for Change Conference, co-sponsored by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center and Nuestra Casa. These inspiring Latinas from 25 cities across Washington state filled the room with energy to discuss personal and community power to create social change. The women supported, motivated and urged each other to act for justice. The conference concluded with a lively sing-a-long and the women committing to do work that will benefit their communities.

Addressing Human Trafficking

From the streets to the classrooms, hotels and skies, IPJC and the Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI) work to end human trafficking:

- Monthly vigils are held in downtown Seattle, St. Joseph Residence and Holy Names Convent in Los Gatos
- Webinars for students on trafficking debuted in March
- Young adults discussed forced labor in recent Justice Cafés
- NWCRI and a collation of shareholders moved Delta Airlines to adopt The Code to protect children from sexual tourism (www.thecode.org)
- Hyatt Hotels responded positively to NWCRI’s request to adopt a human rights policy that prohibits child labor; protects children from sexual exploitation; and prevents the use of its hotels for human trafficking

Join us in this effort:

- Participate in or organize a monthly vigil
- Thank Delta Airlines and Hyatt Hotels for their leadership in addressing human trafficking

Jubilee Economics

Fear & Greed vs. Generosity & Joy

IPJC provided a workshop for Protestant ministers on the scriptural and spiritual foundation for understanding economic justice, presented by Darel Grothaus

Journey to Justice Day

Over eighty people gathered from nine parishes for a Journey to Justice Day in February. The day included an opportunity to be with people from seven local and national Catholic Campaign for Human Development sponsored projects. Consider your parish sponsoring a Justfaith group.
Celebrate with us!

April 12, 2011
6:00pm—Seattle University

- Dinner $50
- RSVP by March 30th
  www.ipjc.org or 206.223.1138

Junior High Webinars
Over 100 students from:
- Holy Family, Kirkland,
- St. Anthony, Renton,
- St. Joseph, Seattle

participated in our pilot Webinar on Human Trafficking. The webinar is a way for schools from different cities to exchange with one another through the use of technology.

Students learned about the issues of children working in the cocoa fields and wrote letters to the chocolate companies to address the issue of child labor.

Call us to schedule a webinar in any city!

When you join us for our anniversary dinner you make possible:
- Corporate Responsibility ministry with over 25 corporations annually
- Justice Circles, grassroots community organizing in Spanish & English
- Workshops for schools, parishes & community groups on a multiple topics
- Parenting for Peace and Justice Program
- Justice Cafes: Community, justice & spirituality program for young adults, national & global
- Resource materials & publications on a diversity of issues
- Our Justice Journal A Matter of Spirit distributed to 4000
- Advocacy tools: coordinating meetings & federal advocacy on line
- Web resources
- Speakers & conferences held around the Northwest
  ... AND SO MUCH MORE!!

Stations of the Cross in Spanish
If you are looking for Spanish materials or would like to have a bi-lingual opportunity for your faith community, this resource is available in English as well.

Immigration Workshops
Call us to schedule a workshop for your parish. 206.223.1138 or ipjc@ipjc.org (Portland workshop pictured below)
Reflection Process

Invite a small group for contemplation and conversation about the status of women. Ask them to read this issue of AMOS prior to the gathering.

Set Up
Arrange chairs for participants around a small ritual table. Put on the table a cloth, candle, and symbols or pictures of women.

Reader: Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight.

When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.”

Jesus answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham and Sarah whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?”

When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things he was doing. (Luke 13)

Facilitator: Let’s take some quiet time to reflect on this reading in light of the stories of the global status of women you read in this issue of AMOS. During the quiet, I invite you to reflect on the status of women in your family, neighborhood, nation, and global community. What continues to keep women “bent over” and unable to stand tall today? Consider your own role/situation. What one decision can you make personally or communally to help ensure gender equality?

Sharing
- One reason women are “bent over” and unable to stand tall today
- One decision you can make personally or communally to help ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

Response
After each person shares, all respond by saying:
- “Woman, you are set free!”