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More Than a Helping Hand

Many volunteers are pitching in to rebuild the Gulf Coast. But what else is needed to build a just society?

Churches debate the role of government
by E.J. Dionne Jr.

A biblical perspective on the common good
by Ronald J. Sider

Plus:

Megachurch leaders Lynne Hybels and Kay Warren battle AIDS in Africa

Why King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech still rings true

Is Jimmy Carter wrong about Israeli "apartheid"?

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Between the Lines

By Rose Marie Berger and Jonathan Mendez

Poverty Goes Suburban

Since the industrial revolution, cities often have been seen as the domain of low-income residents, while their surrounding

STATS suburbs have been home to middle- and upper-income people. But a new report from The Brookings Institution says that, for the first time, some suburbs in America have become poorer than inner cities. In 1999, according to *Two Steps Back: City and Suburban Poverty Trends 1999-2005*, about the same percentage of poor people lived in the suburbs as in the cities, but with an economic downturn and concentrated job losses in the Midwest, poverty rose in the suburbs in 2005.

- **12.6 percent:** U.S. poverty rate in 2005.
- **4 million:** The increase in Americans living below the poverty line between 1999 and 2005.
- **18.8 percent:** The poverty rate in large cities in 2005—twice as high as in the suburbs (9.4 percent).
- **54:** The number of large U.S. cities out of the top 100 where poverty rates increased between 1999 and 2005.
- **7:** The number of large U.S. cities out of the top 100 where poverty rates declined between 1999 and 2005.
- **17.6 percent:** The U.S. child poverty rate in 2005—up from 16.6 percent in 1999.

Source: "Two Steps Back: City and Suburban Poverty Trends 1999-2005" (The Brookings Institution, December 2006); Census 2000; 2005 American Community Survey.

Beads are rolled out of magazine pages and other recycled material (right). The BeadforLife community includes Christian and Muslim Ugandan women working together to benefit all (below).



Beauty, Bracelets, and Brainpower

BeadforLife has helped roll hundreds of Ugandan families out of poverty by training HIV-positive women and refugees in the art of bead rolling.

UGANDA They also help connect Ugandan bead rollers with buyers around the world. Not only do women generate income, but the project's expansion also has helped pay school fees for 60 children, given 90 beaders training to help them start other businesses—such as vegetable stands—and funded the testing and treatment of malaria.

For every \$10 spent on one BeadforLife product, according to the organization's Web site, \$4.30 is reinvested into community development projects that focus on health care, life skills training, vocational training, and affordable housing. "Many churches featured BeadforLife this past holiday season as a way to give a gift that also helped someone in Uganda," co-founder Devin Hibbard told *Sojourners*. Beaders now make an average of \$850 a year in a country where, according to the International Monetary Fund, the average per capita income is \$300 per year.