

The Dollar

By Nancy Martz

An estimated one billion people in our world are suffering from hunger. Two U.S. dollars could feed one of them for a day. World-wide, there are 946 billionaires according to the March 2012 Forbes Report. Their combined worth is 4.6 trillion in U.S. dollars. So, fewer than 1000 people in this world, 946 individuals, have enough money to feed all of the billion starving men, women and children world-wide for 10 years if they would contribute an average of \$30 million each to this cause. They would not suffer hunger themselves because they would still retain an average of \$10 billion each.

What can their remaining \$10 billion dollars each purchase? Based on a generous food budget of \$40 daily for each person, each billionaire could feed his family of four the best available organic dairy, vegetables, fruits, grains, steaks, poultry, seafood and delicacies for the next 160,000 years.

When I think about the disparity here, I wonder how many of these billionaires claim belief in some religion. I couldn't find figures on the Internet, but I found estimations that most of them are Christians, Jews, Mormons, and Muslims. Few are atheists. I am interested in their beliefs because my familiarity with world religions indicates to me that hoarding not just immense, but unfathomable wealth for oneself which can never be spent in 100 generations of one's descendants, when a thousand million of one's neighbors cannot help themselves, cannot drink clean water, cannot afford inoculations, cannot find something to eat, defies religious ethics.

Some of these wealthy individuals defend their acquisitions as legally gained, as the fruits of their honest labor, their wisdom, their rightful inheritance, their successes. All right. They have whatever their hearts desire in this life. It isn't that I care how they got their piles. It's that they have more than anyone needs for one hundred life times while so many others cannot live into adulthood.

Dollars are not fairly shared in our world, and intelligence and potential cut across class. In fact, it is certain that the occasional beggar lying outcaste in a Calcutta gutter possesses an I.Q. higher than one or more of our world billionaires. Who could he be, should the accident of his birth have allowed him to be well-fed, well-sheltered, well-clothed, well-socialized, well-educated, well-endowed with his parents' riches. Yet he lies outcaste and will be dead about the time a few more million are added to some billionaire's bank account.

It is a botched system that allows such horrific gain and loss to our world. Will there be a savior like Zoroaster, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Joseph Smith, Gandhi, who will arise among us? Will we kill her?