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Personal Contact Leads Sister to Tackle Human Trafficking

“Eugenia Bonetti, a Catholic sister in Rome, is tackling a tough social evil: human trafficking. Following a 1993 encounter with a Nigerian woman who had been trafficked into Italy, Sister Bonetti took up the fight against the violent and dehumanizing global trade in sex slaves. ‘The first girl who introduced me to this world changed my life,’ Bonetti, 69, told *Inside Catholic*. ‘She ran away from her captors and came to us to ask for help. She was Christian, and asked us to pray. Hearing her story, the sufferings she endured, opened to me this world of modern-day slavery.’”

Now her religious order, the *Consolata Missionary Sisters*, has 250 members working full-time to provide shelter, security, and physical as well as spiritual and psychological care for people caught in the human slave trade.... ‘Prostitution is not a new phenomenon,’ Bonetti told *Sojourners*, ‘but what is new is the development of a global and complex trade which exploits the extreme poverty and vulnerability of many women and minors who have emigrated. They have become 21st-century slaves.’”

“Freedom Songs” by Joey Ager, *Between the Lines*, *Sojourners Magazine*, Mar 2009.

An Immigrant’s Sacrifice for Her Family

“It was the first time Domi had been home in more than eight years. It was never her dream to go to the U.S. But a time came when it cost Domi’s father more to plant his corn seeds than he could sell them for after the harvest. Someone had to sacrifice for the family. As the eldest, it was Domi’s responsibility.

Domi has a son, Jose Manuel. When she had last seen him, he was seven years old. Now he was fifteen. She didn’t get to watch Jose Manuel grow up into the adolescent he’d become. Domi wasn’t there the first time he lost a tooth or on his first day of school. Instead, Domi was in fields from Iowa to North Carolina, working from sunup to sundown. She was helping to harvest someone else’s crops, in someone else’s land, because she was told they needed workers in the fields in the U.S. And [the U.S. still does]. Last year, fruit rotted on the trees for lack of laborers to pick them off in time.

Domi, like many, came without papers. She lives in fear that she might wake up to a raid by immigration agents and be put in prison. And for what? What is the crime in working in backbreaking labor every day, in an honest job that pays her sub-poverty wages. In living in housing conditions few...could even imagine; in supporting her family so her siblings can go to school and her parents can create new kinds of work since farming isn’t an option anymore. When did survival become a crime?”

Appeal Letter, *National Farm Worker Ministry*, Spr 2009.

Destruction of Amazon Is a Human and Ecological Tragedy

“The *Amazon Rainforest* is the largest remaining tropical forest in the world. Extending some three million square miles, an area nearly the size of the continental U.S., the rainforest is host to the planet’s most *biologically diverse ecosystem*. Nearly 10 percent of the world’s mammals and 15 percent of the world’s plants are found in the Amazon. One acre of the forest can feature over 150 different species of trees.

Yet, the Amazon Rainforest continues to be slashed and burned to make room for industrial cattle farms and soy plantations. The *destruction of the Amazon* has made Brazil the world’s fourth largest greenhouse gas emitter, with 75 percent of its greenhouse gas pollution being the direct result of deforestation. Forests capture and store greenhouse gases, like carbon, to keep our climate stable. They are the very lungs of our planet. When forests are cut down and their ancient soils are disturbed, massive amounts of carbon are released into the atmosphere.

Not only is the destruction of the Amazon an ecological nightmare for our planet, it is driving the Amazon’s wildlife to extinction and impoverishing its forest communities. In Brazil, the Amazon is home to some *20 million people* and over 180 indigenous nations. They rely on the ancient forest for their way of life.”

“Save the Amazon, Save the Climate,” *Greenpeace Update*, Sum ’09.



Christian Leaders Promote Poverty Reduction

“Christian leaders and policy experts from across the political and religious spectrum released a set of proposals February 17 [2009] that they say will, if adopted, ease the strain on the poor and those facing poverty. Members of [The Poverty Forum](#), an 18-member committee headed by the [Rev. Jim Wallis](#), president of the progressive Christian network [Sojourners](#), and [Michael Gerson](#), a syndicated columnist and former chief speechwriter to President George W. Bush, outlined a plan that calls on lawmakers to:

- Increase the minimum wage.
- Establish ‘lifetime savings accounts’ that would provide funds to low income Americans to pay for college or to buy a home.
- Promote other tax measures to spur investment in small businesses by the economically marginal.
- Provide those leaving prison with support in the community.
- Boost funding for housing vouchers, which allow low-income families to rent apartments through private landlords.
- Fund ‘healthy marriage’ and ‘responsible fatherhood’ initiatives.
- Expand the [Earned Income](#) and [Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits](#).
- Continue coverage of unborn children under the [State Children’s Health Insurance Program](#).
- Increase funding for AIDS treatment and testing programs.”

“Christians, Left, Right, Center, Promote Poverty Reduction” by Alice Popovici, [National Catholic Reporter](#), Mar 6, 2009.

Wisconsin’s First Time Bank Store: Members Provide Services for Each Other, without Money!

“What if time really were money? At the [Time Bank Store in Dane County](#), Wisconsin, it is. The store is the first of its kind in Wisconsin, and the unusual thing about it is that your U.S. currency is completely useless inside. The Time Bank Store is a project of the Dane County Time Bank — based in Madison, Wisconsin, and surrounding communities — which aims to connect community members so they can provide services for each other. It’s kind of like old-fashioned bartering, except through a highly organized exchange system that eliminates the quid pro quo aspect. In other words, you don’t always get a service from the person you serve.

Through the Dane County Time Bank — part of a network of Time Banks across the country tracked and supported by [TimeBanks USA](#) — every hour an individual or organization volunteers to help another member of the bank earns a ‘Time Dollar,’ which s/he can then spend on receiving an hour of service from anyone else in the network. Volunteer services can range from giving someone a ride to the doctor or on errands; helping with home repair, child care, or cleaning; home visits for the elderly; or even activities such as going out dancing or playing games with someone who needs a partner.”

“From Greed to Green—Local Currencies to Build Resiliency: Time Dollars” by Natasha Abbas, [Green American](#), [Green America](#), Spr 2009.

