

4 CARING FOR THE POOR: HERE AND THERE

By Dr. David Cole

Think poverty does not exist in America? Learn why Dr. Cole believes otherwise.

5 CHRISTIANS AND POVERTY

By Jennifer Ruisch

Having worked in inner city Chicago, author Jennifer Ruisch has seen her share of well-intentioned-yet-failed attempts at eliminating poverty. Nonetheless she insists that true Christ-followers will deal with this issue.

6 THE SECRET INGREDIENT

By John Geissler

Hunger and homelessness foster hopelessness, yet one man determines to stop the cycle.

7 RESTRUCTURING OPEN BIBLE

By President Jeff Farmer

Discover what changes Open Bible might enact in June 2007 to increase effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission.

9 THAT NONE SHOULD PERISH

By Randy Grimes

One man's attempt at making a good impression leads him to a life-changing encounter with the Lord.

12 GLIMPSES OF GOD IN INDIA

By Leslee Simmons

Spending the summer with Open Bible's beloved John Paul family, a college student encounters glimpses of God's authority and character.

Plus Much More!

Bless the Generous



ANDREA JOHNSON/Editor

As I stood behind a little table in a Super Value store, frying up and handing out samples of sausage to passing customers, I was

amazed at how much food people bought. Customers struggled to navigate the aisles, their carts loaded with food – healthy food, junk food, even pet food. At home we had no food except a little flour. My husband had lost his job and we had to move, forcing me to leave mine. Thus, I had gotten this temporary job, hoping to make enough money to pay the woman caring for my baby and eventually buy some groceries myself.

I disdain sausage, yet my stomach growled at the aroma. When my shift was over, the supervisor offered to let me take home the rest of the partially cooked package as well as the juice that had drained from the meat. I don't know how he knew we needed even the grease. That night, biscuits and gravy had never tasted so good.

One would think I had lost all my pride at that point. Yet a few years, a failed marriage, and another move later, I found myself applying for food stamps. I would rather have starved, but now I had two more mouths to feed. Whenever I bought groceries I searched for the longest checkout line, hoping no one would come behind me and see me using the coupons. This was not how I had imagined my life. Like most people, I had planned to be on the giving end of the poverty spectrum, not the receiving. I had worked hard, gone to college, tried to make good choices. My dream had been to serve as a missionary in an orphanage. Now I couldn't even support my own children. Finding a well-paying job

as a single parent with a theology degree seemed impossible. Life felt hopeless.

During this time, the stability in our lives came from our church. I had a hard time attending at first, especially since many people did not know my whole story. I expected judgment. Instead I received incredible support. Immediately the child care director gave me a job that allowed me to be with my children before and after school. Dear friends revamped their basement so we could live with them until we could afford other housing. Later the church provided a better paying job with medical benefits. After my car broke down miles from home, leaving me and my children stranded, members not only came and rescued us, but went back the next day to retrieve the car and take it to a garage. When I tried to pay the bill, approximately \$300, the mechanic told me it had already been paid. I argued with him, knowing I had not paid it. He simply said, "Merry Christmas." Once I returned to my desk from lunch to find Christmas gifts for my children someone had snuck in. These acts of kindness, including many more, told me people believed in us. They were willing to invest in us – a ray of hope.

We don't know people's stories. God doesn't require that of us. Nonetheless, throughout the Bible we are commanded to give to the poor, by whatever means God shows us. "He who is generous will be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9). May God abundantly bless those who have been so generous to us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea".

Andrea Johnson,
Managing Editor