

MAKING THE SENSE OF THE MILLENIUM

Article summary

The article I read was published in National Geographic in January 1998. Its title is "Making sense of the Millennium". It is made up of six topics, but I chose two of them - Population and Human Culture because they are pretty much attached to each other.

They are about immigration and exploitation of children.

A number of immigrated people and mass starvation is the consequence of global overcrowding. That has been incorrectly predicted for hundreds of years. Population growth is nowadays one of the most pressing issues. In 1798 there were supposed to be 800 million people living on the Earth as a British economist and demographer predicted. That number is now more than 7 times higher; thanks to improvements in farming and public health.

A very good example of the effect of population growth is Carlsbad, California, a city of 70.000 inhabitants in northern San Diego County. Made up of empty canyons and arid hills until the 1960s, the county is expected to be a home to more than 5 million people by the middle of the next century.

Most people coming to Carlsbad are Mexican. But you can find also people from other parts of the USA coming to Carlsbad. They are drawn by the mild climate, striking scenery and proximity to growing cities like San Diego.

In Carlsbad Mexican men can earn more in hour than for a whole day's work in Mexico. These men can find work especially on farms growing tomatoes, flowers and strawberries. They usually sit on the rocks. If someone comes near them, they immediately approach him smiling and ask him for job. Some hills round Carlsbad are covered with camouflaged sheds and clotheslines. Carlsbad, however, voted in 1986 to set zoning requirements that have the effect of limiting population growth, but that vote seems quite futile.

On the other hand, there are children, who MUST work, like slaves or support their large families.

There are some organisations and people who try to end the exploitation of children, but in a brief period of time we cannot expect any drastic results.

One of the most eager fighters against exploitation of children is 17-year-old Craig Kielburger from Toronto. He read a newspaper story about Pakistani boy who was sold by his own family. Later on, he died at age of 12, because of his efforts. That prompted Craig and his friend and

they formed an organisation called free the children. His house is full of letters, faxes, newspapers; overnight delivery envelopes and brochures filled the kitchen, living room, family room and dining room. His projects include letter-writing campaigns to governments and corporations to stop employing children.

Some children have not seen their families for 5 or 10 years. They have to herd cattle or work in factories doing the hardest works. Their masters often beat them, they have lousy payments, and however, they are exploited in all possible ways.

Children exploiting and selling is most common in developing countries of Asia and Africa. There work about 250 million children, nearly half of them full - time, according to the International Labour Organisation. That situation also exists in developed world. In the USA for example thousands of children work illegally in agriculture where many are exposed to hazardous pesticides.

My personal opinion is that childhood is a wonderful thing and it should not be disturbed by anything. But this is the world we live in, and just a few people and organisations will never change the world. Only that matters is community.

20 Unknown words

1. TO SUPPLY (v) - to provide something that is needed, or to provide something that is needed to someone. *He's been accused of supplying drugs.*
2. TO HERD (v) - to herd animals is to make them move together as a group. *A woman was herding the goats up the mountainside.*
3. EQUIVALENT (adj) - having the same amount, value, purpose, qualities, etc. *This whole sandwich has the equivalent number of calories as a small chocolate bar.*
4. BONDAGE (n) - the state of being another person's slave. *The slaves were kept in bondage until their death.*
5. ARID (adj) - having little rain, very dry. *The desert is so arid that nothing can grow there.*
6. TO DRIFT (v) - to move slowly, esp. as a result of outside forces, with no control over direction. *She watched the balloons as they drifted up into the sky.*
7. FUTILE (adj) - having no effect or achieving nothing, unsuccessful *It's quite futile trying to reason with him - he just won't listen.*
8. PROXIMITY (n) - the state of being near in space or time. *The house is in close proximity to the shops.*

9. TO EMERGE (v) - to appear by coming out of something or out from behind something. *They emerged from the bushes looking rather embarrassed.*
10. PLYWOOD (adj) - wood that consists of several thin layers of wood stuck together, and which is usually not of very good quality. *A cheap plywood door*
11. TO DISTINGUISH (v) - to notice or understand the difference between two things. *It's important to distinguish between business and pleasure.*
12. TO CURTAIL (v) - to stop (something) before it is finished, or to reduce or limit (something). *The last government severely curtailed trade union rights/freedom of speech/public spending.*
13. CAMOUFLAGED (adj) - leaves, branches and paints for hiding people or equipment. *Using smoke as a camouflage, the army advanced up the hill.*
14. TO SCRATCH (v) - to cut or damage (a surface) slightly with or on something sharp or rough. *We scratched the paintwork trying to get the bed into Martha's room.*
15. TO BULLDOZE (v) - If you bulldoze someone to do something you force him or her to do it although they might not want to. *She bulldozed her daughter into buying a new dress.*
16. TO REHABILITATE (v) - to return (someone or something) to a good or healthy condition, state or way of living. *The prison service should try to rehabilitate.*
17. A PLEDGE (n)- a promise, or something that is given as a sign that you will keep a promise, esp. one to give money or to be a friend. *When you make a pledge, you should always try to honour/fulfil it.*
18. AN ABACUS (n) - a square or rectangular frame holding an arrangement of small balls on metal rods or wires, which is used for counting, adding and subtracting
19. A COMMUNITY (n) - the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, background or nationality. *He's well known in the local community.*
- 20 A COUNTY (n) - a political division of the UK or Ireland, forming the largest unit of local government, or the largest political division of a state in the US. *A county usually consists of several towns and the rural areas, which surround them.*