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## **Making the World a Better Place to Live** **By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA**

I'm reading a book right now entitled *The End of Poverty* by Jeffrey Sachs. It is very exciting. For the first time in history, we are making significant inroads into eliminating poverty in the world. This is quite a change in thinking from thirty years ago. I can remember when I was growing up, the general sentiment was that poverty was just a part of life. There was also a widely held view that any aid sent to developing countries was a waste of resources. The poorest of countries just seemed to be destined to suffer.

Well, apparently all that is changing. According to Sachs, we can eliminate poverty, not in our children's lifetime, but in ours. He states that eight million people a year die because they do not have enough to eat, but that number can be cut in half in the next ten years. In fact, over the last ten years, the two most populated, and historically poor counties in the world, China and India, have made huge strides in eliminating poverty. Another example is Bangladesh. Thirty years ago Henry Kissinger called that country a "basket case". Its name was synonymous with poverty and misery. But their economy has grown at an annual rate of 5 percent over the last ten years and they are well on their way to eliminating poverty.

One of the reasons that all of this is changing is that there are now workable solutions that are being implemented, and for the first time, people are noticing; and just as importantly starting to believe that we can win the war on poverty. For instance, the man who won the Nobel Peace Prize this year, Muhammad Yunus, pioneered the use of micro loans to extremely poor people as a means to extricate themselves from poverty. Unbelievably, the repayment on these loans is extremely high. This process now has the world of finance excited about finding similar solutions for more third world counties.

Another example is the foundation that Bill Gates has set up to address world health problems. There is now over \$60 billion in that fund, and they are finding creative and cost-effective ways of solving health problems that undermine the poorest economies in the world. There is a long way to go, but they are making real progress in this area.

I am sharing this with all of you because I find it terribly exciting. Even though there are still enormous problems in the world, I believe that we can overcome them. I think this is

critical for all of us to believe. We have to have hope to work toward a better future, to believe in ourselves. There seems to be increasing amounts of evidence that leading, working hard, and caring about one another is paying off.

**Action items:**

You may ask, what can I do to help in this fight to make the world a better place to live? I'm just one person. Here are some thoughts about how you can do things in your daily life to make a contribution. Don't underestimate your contribution. You can make a difference:

- 1) Start with yourself. Are you treating yourself with the kindness and respect that you deserve? You cannot give what you do not have. Make time every day to charge your own batteries.
- 2) Take care of your family. I am convinced that good families are the foundation of a better future for all of us. The love we share with our families has a ripple effect around the world.
- 3) Get involved in your community. Do what you can to make a difference there. It will make you feel that you are making a contribution.
- 4) Donate what you can to causes that are aimed at giving hope to those in need. Every little bit helps.
- 5) Don't allow yourself to become cynical. When you do that you become part of the problem. Resolve to be a part of the solution, no matter how small.
- 6) Believe in yourself and believe in others. Believe that we can create a world for our children that is better than the one we live in now. It is my belief that human beings can accomplish anything they put their minds to. We can do this!

