

The majority of world population lies in the developing areas, where starvation, disease and ignorance are, unfortunately, the facts of life. Poverty and pain make a mockery of what humanity should be. Poor countries cannot produce enough to earn the income needed to produce more and so it becomes a vicious circle. The widespread poverty has a serious effect on the economics of the rich industrialised nations. It is now realised that poverty in most countries is not due to lack of resources, material or human, but is the result of resources remaining untapped.

In most areas of the world, malnutrition in early life is directly or indirectly responsible for more deaths among children than all the other causes combined. In some countries, as many as a third of their children die before reaching the school age and recent evidence has indicated that deficiencies in nutrition not only affect physical growth but also produce irreversible mental and emotional changes. The high percentage of blindness among children is due to malnutrition. Half the blind population of the world is in Asia, which is also significant.

There are today more than 410 million people who are illiterate, and the number is increasing. There are more than two billion people in the world who are undernourished, and most of them are children.

Every day in this world 190,000 babies are being born, and the population of the world is multiplying at a rate of 2 per cent per year. The main cause of concern is that developing parts of the world are responsible for an 85 per cent annual increase in the population of the world.

The picture, on the whole, is not a happy one, but we are a band of workers, who believe in the future, and who are determined to take up this challenge threatening destruction to our civilization.

We must also remember that we are living at an age of tremendous progress, scientific and otherwise. Some of these problems are the offshoots of progress, such as the decrease in the mortality rate, due to better health care, public health techniques, antibiotics and disinfectants. The rate of food production has gone up and the green revolution has started in many developing countries, giving a very high rate of yield for agricultural lands. The advance in various fields has not, however, been able to further progress in the true sense in many parts of the world. It has been unable to keep pace with the population increase and its related problems and has thus failed to bring about proper adjustment between the main aspects of human life. All these factors make us realize that we have to strike a balance. The

contributions of member Societies of A.C.W.W. in various parts of the globe, in the fields of nutrition education, literacy education, betterment of economic conditions through handicraft and leadership training, have been extremely worthwhile and significant. The building up of a system of rendering help through this world organization, with the aid of U.N. Agencies, like UNICEF, F.A.O. and UNESCO to countries where the need is great, has been of great practical value. In developing countries our idea has been to assist at the grass root levels of social service, and to help our members to help themselves. It has been a constructive approach. In other parts of the world our member societies are working to widen the horizon of knowledge and to render help to those who need it. But in spite of all our efforts of the past, we must face the fact that we have yet to go a very long way and the journey has only just begun. There is no more time to lose.

The problem that faces possibly all the countries of the world today, is what is known as the "generation gap," leading to youth unrest. The expression "generation gap" is not a new idea. It has always been there through the centuries, but the link was maintained in the past through respect for tradition.

Modern thinking has brought radical changes to concepts of the past. Expressions like "love," "loyalty" and "nationalism" have taken a new meaning in the present day. Young people question the values of the past generation and are often confused by the disparity between our words and actions. This has led to disillusionment for all that is traditional. They have lost faith in past values and have become rebels. The people of our generation seem to forget that our activities have lost that freshness of approach which only a different outlook on the world and life can provide. Through the ages, we, the people of the world, have worked hard to build something better for our children. Particularly in materially developed parts of the world (having reached what was for many the best of all possible worlds), the new generation turn round and say, "This is not what we want." Let us search our minds and find out — have we tried to understand them? What has been our contribution to their growing minds? Let us also stop romanticizing about the past, our yesterdays, and tune in the way we can face the needs of the present. Let us not run away from realities and blame the new generation. We think so often of material needs, but it is just as important to bridge the gaps created by spiritual needs. We, as women, have to give back the faith to the new generation through communications, based on better understanding between