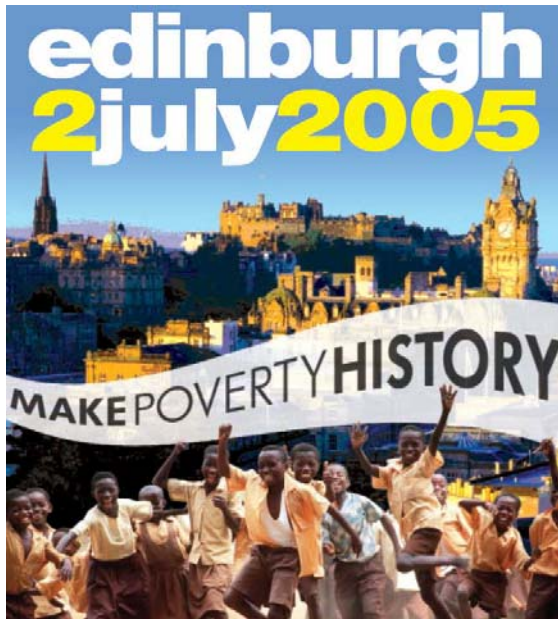


July 1st 2005

Make Poverty History

By Dónal Thompson



“When I give bread to the poor, they call me a Christian,” someone once said. “But when I ask why the poor have no bread, they call me a communist!”

Feeding the poor is neither religious nor ideological. It's human.

The gap between the rich and the poor on our planet is greater than ever. Malnutrition, wars, debts and badly administered aid are common features of many, many people's ordinary lives.

There are no laws of physics or chemistry that make this inevitable. It is all man-made. Big and powerful countries make the rules that govern trade. Not surprisingly, these rules are unfairly favourable to the rich countries.

These rules oblige poor countries to open up their markets to imports and businesses, and

sell off public services like electricity - even when this isn't in their interest. Poor countries can't support their farmers with subsidies. Rich ones can. Is that fair?

Why don't we change these rules? We can afford it.

Many Third World countries spend more money paying off their debts to the rich countries than helping their own people. They pay more to us than to their own starving poor.

Why don't we cancel the debt? We can afford it.

Eight million lives could be saved every year if minimal healthcare was available in developing countries. One woman dies every minute as a result of problems in pregnancy or childbirth. Of these, 99% are in developing countries. A child dies every 15 seconds from water-related diseases.

Let's give more aid. We can afford it.

On July 2nd 2005, the G8 [the most powerful men on the planet] are meeting in Edinburgh in Scotland. The United Kingdom government also begins its presidency of the European Union. We can't afford not to make history and make poverty a thing of the past.

Eight men in one room to stop 30,000 children dying every single day of extreme poverty. If they were American children or European children, the solution would be found before those men even took off their coats.

I just thought you should know. If you'd like some more information, try the following websites:

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org>
<http://www.live8live.com>