

Re: An interesting view on how 'green' CFLs really are:

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- *From:* Kris Krieger <me@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 30 Jul 2008 16:12:21 -0500
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"Michael A. Terrell" <mike.terrell@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in news:vq6dnfJPK7-8Xg3VnZ2dnUVZ_tHinZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx:

Kris Krieger wrote:

Also, from all I've read and heard, there is a US policy of not exporting birth control to the poor in various nations, a policy which is not based upon the would-be recipients own needs, desires, or choice, but rather, upon the personal beliefs regarding morality of people here.

Over the years I have seen a bunch of news stories about attempts to provide birth control pills in poor African nations. They provided the pills and classes on how to use them, then ome back to find they weren't taken properly, or the women made jewlery out of them. It's just like drilling wells and providing modern farming tools. They tach them how to farm, then the next year they just eat the seed corn and let the tools rust away.

I haven't read that this happens after the proper usage of the thigns has been explained. One forblem with condomns BTW is cultural – although, in some cultures, a woman's desire to have fewer children and/or space them out better is considered to be irrelevant, and/o the use of a condomn is seen as "unmanly". It's how they were brought up, and it's nto some simple matter to get around cultural beliefs.

Some people don't want a better life, if it means they have to do anything for themselves. that is why thye live like they do. It's the same, all over the world. If those people were in the US, they would be trailer trash. If they wanted a better life,

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they would move to a town where they could find work, better food, and a better life. You just can't help some people.

I think that's both incredibly harsh, and at best inaccurate. Yes, "some" people choose to live in ways that are self-destructive. But you're treading perilously close to implying that anyone who, for example, lives way out in the countryside of a poor nation, who has never had access to an education, and leads a hand-to-mouth existence, is only that way by choice. Not everyone has access to the things that would even make them aware they might have a choice, never mind to the things that would allow them to actually implement a choice to change their situation.

It's also inflammatory, and not relevant, to claim that someone would be "trailer trash" if they lived in the US, because:

(1) unless you know specific cases, it's an unprovable accusation; and

(2) it ignores the cultural, environmental, political, and material realities that exist in other parts of the world – not everyone can simply move to a town, and a great many towns/cities are worse than the villages because of extremely high unemployment, poverty that can't even be relieved by planting something, due to there being no land, and an overall dismal quality of life.

If you want to question whether any nation has an obligation to support people in another nation, then address *that* question, but don't justify an unwillingness to help/educate/etc. by merely implying that people choose to live in countries such as Burma, where the military dictatorship takes pretty much everything away from them, or in countries where roving armed bands randomly commit acts of robbery and genocide, and so on, and so forth.

At the same time, it's well-known that brain development suffers when a child doesn't receive (or can't be given) adequate nutrition. When this is combined with lack of education, and/or a damaging upbringing, it can make "choice" *extremely* difficult. Now, I am a big believer in choice, because of my own life, but I also know that there are a lot of circumstances that make choice difficult. And in the case of, say, the people victimized by situations such as that in Darfur, the only "choice" is to stay, or walk across the desert – they cannot "choose" to not be poor.

As for education, anyone involved in education must take into account the previous experience, education level, nutritional situation, culture, and other aspects of the lives of the people being educated. One can't just go in to some traditional village, give a short talk, and claim to have "educated" the people – even under the best circumstances, education is a *process* that requires understanding, openmindedness, and creative thinking on the part of the educator. Any fool can stand in front of a group of well-nourished, well-reared children with above-average

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intelligence, and have them parrot back pretty much whatever is presented, regardless of how it's presented. When one goes into a group of disadvantaged children/adults, however, it's an entirely different, and very challenging, situation.

It's one of those things that seems obvious, but runs head-on into very deeply-held beliefs which oppose voluntary population reduction – curiously, a great many people seem to oppose birth control *far* more bitterly than they oppose war...