

SLOGANEERING HELPS NO ONE

Helping the vulnerable is a noble goal, but when those who champion its cause resort to sloganeering, it discredits their efforts. Here are two recent examples.

On August 19, Religion News Service published a glowing interview with the 89-year old founder of Bread for the World, Art Simon. A former Lutheran pastor, there is no reason to doubt his sincerity in combating poverty. The problem is that the organization that he founded has never given a dime to the poor, or provided services for them.

Bread for the World is a lobbying organization that pressures the Congress to provide more welfare programs for the poor. Its goal is to educate the public, especially lawmakers, about hunger in the United States and abroad. It also analyzes public policies designed to end poverty. What it does not do is to touch the lives of the poor.

There is a better way to tackle poverty than to help more middle-class bureaucrats police the poor in Washington. That is the Mother Teresa way. She was not opposed to government programs instituted to help the poor, but she saw their role as secondary. She knew that the poor needed food, clothing and shelter, as well as medicinal care. But that was not enough: They needed love.

When Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher boasted to Mother Teresa that Britain had a fine welfare system, the saintly nun replied, "But do you have love?" For Mother Teresa, helping the poor is ideally a personal exchange, an ongoing relationship between two parties; it is not a "program."

Vijay Prashad was born and raised in Calcutta. He became a Communist and an ardent defender of government programs. But he praised Mother Teresa for her work with lepers and children. She and her fellow nuns "certainly brought relief

for many people, not in medical terms,” he said, “but with love and affection.” This is particularly important when dealing with the sick and dying.

On August 19, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed a bill that committed the state to respect “the human rights and dignity” of every person, including respect for “the sanctity of every human life.”

This is pure nonsense. The bill has nothing to do with respecting “the sanctity of every human life.” Just ask those who throw out the trash in abortion clinics. The wording of the bill deals exclusively with putting more restrictions on the police when dealing with life and death situations. The “sanctity” of life that Newsom wants to protect refers to thugs out to kill the cops.

Newsom likes abortion so much that on May 31 he invited women from across the country—make that the world since he doesn’t believe in borders—to come to California to get their abortions.

Sloganeering about the poor is a cheap way to combat poverty. Sloganeering about the sanctity of human life, while actively working against it, is more than hypocritical—it is despicable.