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An Invitation to Violence

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AN INVITATION TO VIOLENCE

The ability to read is an essential element for living in today's world. Yet illiteracy is far more extensive than has been commonly thought. In the United States alone there are an estimated 3 million adults who are totally unable to read and write and another 20 million who read so poorly that they are classified as functionally illiterate. Throughout the world the number of adult illiterates is actually increasing at the rate of 30 million persons a year. The enormity of the problem becomes evident when we realize that illiteracy is related to ignorance, crime, unproductiveness, and strife. If we want to win the battle against hunger, poverty, disease and unrest in the world, we must conquer illiteracy.

Illiteracy is a subtle but very real threat to world peace. Those of us who live in advanced industrialized nations must realize that the future welfare and security of the world depend upon the prosperity of developing countries. U. Thant, General Secretary of the United Nations, stated shortly before his death that failure to diminish the gap between rich and poor countries "is an invitation to violence." As Goodings and Lauwerys have said, "The only differences of any importance are not those between the communist and the capitalist, but those between the hungry and the affluent, between the educated and the illiterate." One of the most important tasks of our present generation is the struggle to overcome illiteracy.

Dorothy J. McGinnis
Editor