

Your gift today can make the difference to little children and elders, to the working poor and the unemployed in some of the hardest-hit communities in the nation. You can help put food on the table for rural families served by our food pantries and in Selma, at our Bosco Food Kitchen.

Please keep our rural poor in your prayers, as we keep you in ours. We believe in the power of prayer—and the compassion of good-hearted Godly people like you, who generously give to the “least of these.”

May we add to this our expression of our heartfelt gratitude for your continued kindness and generosity which has brought us the privilege of conducting your mission here in the South. —Father Frank Casey, 1937.

Edwin receives a plate of food at the Bosco Food Kitchen in Selma.



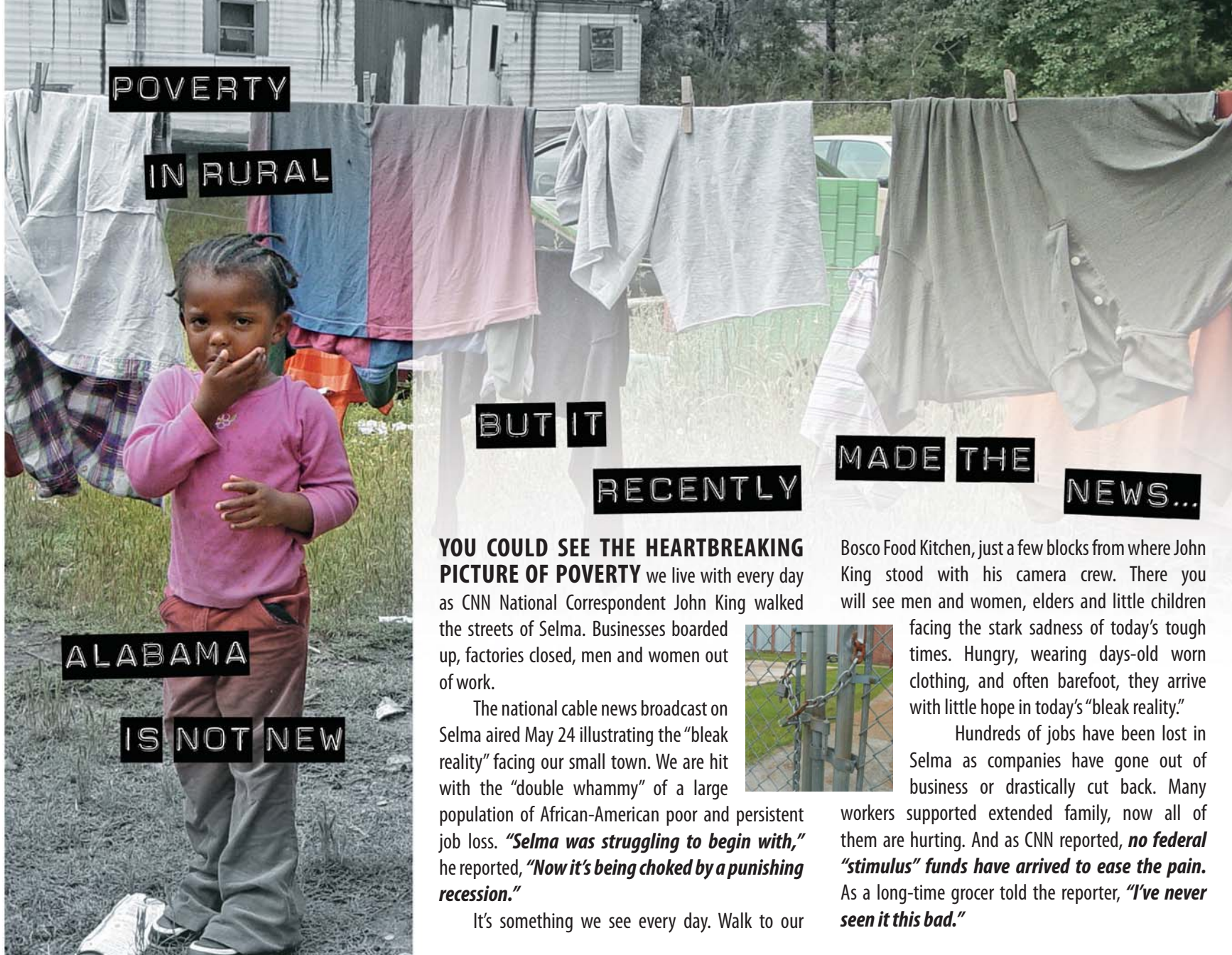
Jeremiah with pail of soup, a package of sandwiches from Father Frank Casey, 1937

“Serving the poor in rural Alabama since 1937”



edmundite missions

1428 Broad Street • Selma, Alabama 36701
334-872-2359 • www.edmunditemissions.org



POVERTY

IN RURAL

BUT IT

RECENTLY

MADE THE

NEWS...

ALABAMA

IS NOT NEW

YOU COULD SEE THE HEARTBREAKING PICTURE OF POVERTY we live with every day as CNN National Correspondent John King walked the streets of Selma. Businesses boarded up, factories closed, men and women out of work.

The national cable news broadcast on Selma aired May 24 illustrating the “bleak reality” facing our small town. We are hit with the “double whammy” of a large population of African-American poor and persistent job loss. **“Selma was struggling to begin with,”** he reported, **“Now it’s being choked by a punishing recession.”**

It’s something we see every day. Walk to our

Bosco Food Kitchen, just a few blocks from where John King stood with his camera crew. There you will see men and women, elders and little children facing the stark sadness of today’s tough times. Hungry, wearing days-old worn clothing, and often barefoot, they arrive with little hope in today’s “bleak reality.”

Hundreds of jobs have been lost in Selma as companies have gone out of business or drastically cut back. Many workers supported extended family, now all of them are hurting. And as CNN reported, **“no federal stimulus funds have arrived to ease the pain.** As a long-time grocer told the reporter, **“I’ve never seen it this bad.”**





It's even tougher in the remote communities where little children, like one little girl, suffers from a toothache and can't get to the doctor because mom's car is out of gas and the nearest clinic is 34 miles away.

The broadcast cited numbers: the central rural region of **Alabama is suffering unemployment rates twice the national average.** There is 18 percent unemployment in Dallas County where Selma is based; 22 percent unemployment in rural Wilcox County, where we also serve.

That doesn't tell the whole story. There are also people clinging to low-paying jobs with drastically cut hours. Ethel cleans at a local nursing home; her fulltime job was cut to three days a week. She can barely pay her bills while also caring for a young daughter, who suffers diabetes. While she qualifies for rent assistance, there are no funds available.

The poverty is news, but not new. Edmundite Missions Founder Father Frank Casey, S.S.E., was overwhelmed by the hardship faced by the African American poor when he first arrived in 1937. He



came to start a church—which he did—but he was so moved by the needs of the poor that he immediately began giving out sandwiches and soup, clothing and medicine. Father Casey wrote:

"What keeps running through my mind is our Lord's promise, 'As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me.'"

(MATT. 25:35)

As we suffer through these tough times, hard decisions must be made to determine what programs and services to cut. It's tough to reduce ministries just when the poor are suffering most.

But as you can see in the CNN broadcast, we are hard-pressed on every side. Our donors are struggling, and so are we. For the hundreds we serve who were already distressed, barely getting by, it's disastrous.

