San Jose State University

From the SelectedWorks of Gil J. Villagran

September 1, 1999

Needed: Global Recognition of the Value of Human Life

Gil J. Villagran

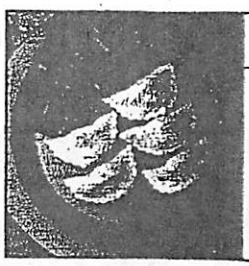
Available at: https://works.bepress.com/gil_villagran/66/

SPORTS

SJSU Football's 'Body Bag' Games
Why a weaker team offers its soul . . . for a price/1D

BUSINESS

Apple Unveils Super-fast G4
New Mac claims to be faster than Pentium III/1C



SILICON VALLEY LIFE

The Parable Of The Plum Pierogi
Did you know boiled dough could taste so good?/1E

San Jose Mercury News

FINAL EDITION
5 CENTS

Serving Northern California Since 1851

WEDNESDAY
.... SEPTEMBER 1, 1999

WWW.MERCURYCENTER.COM

Needed: global recognition of the value of human life

VOICES *of our* TIME

GIL VILLAGRÁN
Social work administrator

From your perspective, what have been some of the most important developments of the 20th century, and how will the world be different 100 years from now?

The 20th century is an age of tremendous technological innovation. Mass production, interchangeable parts, division of labor, electronics and robotics free humans from labor-intensive, menial tasks. Biotechnology will increase length and quality of life.

However, every innovation that improves living also casts a shadow on these human marvels.

Technology increases our ability to communicate with each other across the planet, but it also increases the ability to manipulate vast numbers of people with disinformation — computer-generated images and voice duplication can make words come out of our mouths that we never said.

Technology and pharmaceuticals also enable genocide as a practical option. In the past, only rulers of many could commit genocide. In the present, any lone madman can kill hundreds if not thousands.

But the most vital development in the 20th century is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948. This remarkable document states that all human beings are of one human family, and have inalienable rights to freedom, justice and peace which no government, no army, no dictator can disregard.

In the 21st century, humankind must develop the wisdom to share knowledge and technology for the benefit of all.

At the close of the 20th century we live in a world with almost 6 billion hostages to global economic inequity; a pantheon of brutal dictators, corrupt politicians, transnational corporations insidiously exploiting workers and consumers at every opportunity. Only a total global commitment to valuing every human life, in balance with valuing our incredibly beautiful planet, will pull our human family out of the social madness and ecological collapse we face as we enter the next 100 years.

Social work administrator Gil Villagrán of San Jose designed and directed the Santa Clara County gang-prevention program Nuestra Casa Youth Leadership.