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# LIGHT

Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

## WORLD HUNGER: whose problem is it?

**Foy Valentine**  
Executive Secretary

The Apocalyptic black horse of famine has galloped full speed into the present age.

Hunger has now combined with the Malthusian malignancy of overpopulation to plague today's world with a special vengeance.

The quiet and awful violence of human starvation is one of the grossest obscenities of this age.

World hunger is one of the grave moral problems of our time.

Whose problem is it?

### World hunger

## A both/and approach

**David R. Currie**

What mental images do the words hunger and starvation create in your mind? Most Americans who have grown up in relative affluence, have trouble comprehending starvation. Our struggles do not involve food. We worry about insurance and car payments—not our next meal. Therefore, for us, it is hard to picture the absolute poverty under which one billion people live today. For people in absolute poverty, the biggest worry is having food to survive. This is true not only abroad, but here in America as well. It is estimated, for example, that in Nashville, a city of 460,000, there are over 49,000 hungry people.<sup>1</sup>

We must see this reality and commit ourselves to changing it. And we can change it. According to Robert McNamara, president of the World Bank, "There is no cause for despair. There is every reason for hope. In the past few generations the world has created a productive machine capable of abolishing poverty from the face of the earth."<sup>2</sup> But we must move quickly. Mr. McNamara wrote those words five years ago. Today the problem is still acute.

The response I propose to change this situation is a Both/And Approach. It involves both direct ministry and committed action. It involves both immediate and long-range answers. It affects both personal lives and public policy. It seeks both to minister to the hungry in their present plight and also to free them from their oppression. It attempts to feed the hungry now and help them to feed themselves tomorrow.

One of the two major aspects of the Both/And approach is support of reliable relief and development agencies both domestically and abroad.

One such "agency" for domestic hunger relief should be the local church. Through a variety of programs, a number of churches are making a consistent, corporate witness in providing food to the



Is hunger just the problem of underdeveloped countries, or the arid regions of earth, or the overpopulated nations, or the conquered, or the weak, or the poor? Is hunger just the problem of governments, or economic systems, or competing ideologies, or the churches? In Southern Baptist life, is hunger just the concern of the local churches, or the state conventions, or the Foreign Mission Board, or the Home Mission Board, or the Sunday School Board, or the other agencies?

Hunger is everybody's problem.

All of us have a stake in hunger's challenge.

The Christian Life Commission, as the Christian social concerns and Christian social action agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, has a special stake in hunger's challenge. The Commission views hunger as a moral concern of such awesome magnitude as to demand heavy and continuing involvement.

As yet, the Commission has not done nearly enough, not nearly as much as should have been done.

The Commission, however, mailed, in 1976, a carefully prepared and reasonably comprehensive World Hunger Packet to every pastor, minister of education, and denominational worker in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Commission has sponsored and supported the development of a variety of materials and projects to heighten Southern Baptist awareness of world hunger and to encourage a Christian response to the challenge. The Commission joined the Brotherhood Commission, the Woman's Missionary Union, and several other agencies in spearheading the effort to put World Hunger Day on the Southern Baptist official denominational calendar. And the Commission secured the initial financial commitments from the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board, and the Sunday School Board which guaranteed that plans for a Southern Baptist Convocation on World Hunger would become a reality. The Commission intends to continue to give Southern Baptists the strongest leadership of which we are capable in this pressing moral concern, expanding current efforts to the limit of our ability.

This issue of LIGHT on world hunger is prepared with the earnest hope that it will help to stir God's people to greater zeal in the bold doing of the gospel of Christ. A significant response to the challenge of world hunger on the part of Southern Baptists can now undergird every part of our work and witness in the Bold Mission Thrust to which we are committed.



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# WORLD HUNGER: the ethical challenge

W. David Sapp

A few months ago the Christian Life Commission invited Millard Fuller to address its national seminar about appropriate economic lifestyles for Christians. Fuller is a formerly wealthy businessman who gave away his fortune and is now part of a Christian community known as Koinonia Farm. In preparing his remarks, Fuller asked the advice of Ethel Dunning, a poverty-stricken black woman who lives near him. This is what Mrs. Dunning told Fuller he should say to a gathering of Southern Baptist leaders: "You tell them there ain't no way you can live in big homes with lots of money and plenty of food and they is po' folk all around them living in shacks and hongry and God is going to be happy with them."

In a capsule, that is the ethical challenge of world hunger. As Southern Baptists, we need to look squarely at that challenge and the biblical teachings about it, even if we must squint a bit; and we must begin to search for ways to respond.

## The Ethical Challenge of World Hunger

Hunger has been one of the most persistent horrors to confront mankind. It did not begin in 1974 in the Sahel, and it certainly did not end there. It has shifted its painful presence to new locales; it has hidden in darkened tenement houses and in mud huts; and it has successfully evaded the few impotent attacks to which society has subjected it.

Human ingenuity has obliterated diseases, invented awesome machines, and provided fantastic luxury for the wealthy. Yet it has been completely stymied by the unrelenting presence of hunger. Sometimes, as at present, hunger seems to recede. But it never disappears, and it always returns. It waxes and wanes with a will of its own, oblivious to our meager efforts against it.

The first ethical challenge of world hunger, then, is its challenge to our ability to stop it. But isn't this a technological rather than an ethical challenge? Won't the solution to the hunger problem ultimately come from such developments as birth control, advanced agricultural and storage techniques, and chemical discoveries? No. People are starving in spite of the fact that we are now producing (and likely will continue to produce) enough food to meet the needs of every human on earth.

The real answer is not in increased production alone. It is in a new willingness to share. The stark reality of death by starvation is a product of personal, corporate, and national greed. Unjust trade policies, the lack of adequate reserves, and the obesity of the affluent all witness to this greed. When developing nations use the bulk of their arable land to produce coffee or bananas for the United States while their own masses starve, sin is on the prowl. When nations with plenty do not set up adequate grain reserves to assist nations with little in years when crops are lean, Christian morality has failed. When foreign aid serves to increase dependency of poor nations on rich ones, when crop production is deliberately reduced in the face of starvation in order to protect prices, our priorities as a nation are badly out of kilter.

We desperately need a word from the Lord. Our ability to stop hunger hinges on our ability to get persons and structures to act lovingly and justly—and that is an ethical challenge.

A second ethical challenge of world hunger is its challenge to the meaning of faith. The viability of the Christian faith hinges on

whether the gospel can be applied to every aspect of human life. A faith which will not feed the hungry is a faith which does not help people live. It obviously has no meaning for life and will soon lie buried alongside the starving masses. We are Christians because we believe our faith can meet this challenge. But a hungry world must see it happen.

The existence of hunger offers a third challenge: a challenge to our lifestyles. Many of us live in relative affluence. One analysis says we have doubled our standard of living since 1962, when most of us were already living quite well. We could choose to live more simply and still enjoy quite comfortable lives, but we do not. Instead, we listen to the world which tells us we can measure our worth by our wealth. While we enjoy our relative affluence, we seldom consider the fact that our personal overconsumption bears a direct relationship to the personal suffering of other human beings. We keep searching for security in what we consume, and thereby we rob both ourselves and our neighbors of the very security we seek.

The existence of hunger calls us to re-examine such lifestyles. Does God intend for us to accumulate all we can for ourselves and to live in the grandest luxury available while 10,000 people a day starve to death? Or does He call us to live responsibly for others, motivated by godly love and dependent on His promise to provide all our needs?

All three of these moral challenges can be met. But they will only be met successfully when the teachings of the Bible are brought to bear on the contemporary problem of hunger.

## The Bible Speaks on Hunger

Many contemporary moral problems are not specifically addressed in the Bible. The Bible was written in the midst of a different set of social problems. In cases where the Bible offers no specific word, it is necessary to study carefully the spirit of the Scripture and then to apply its broad principles to the confusing dilemmas we face. But with hunger there is no such difficulty. Hunger and poverty are old, old problems. The Bible speaks clearly and specifically about them.

One of the most basic teachings of the Bible relative to hunger is this: Every human being has a God-given right to an adequate diet. Southern Baptists have affirmed this right to food in the Declaration of Human Rights passed last June in Atlanta. The right to food means that every person who has more than he or she needs has a moral obligation to share with the hungry.

Whether or not we accept this particular teaching of the Bible is highly significant for the kind of response we make to the ethical challenge of world hunger. Most people (though not all) believe that sharing with the poor is a nice thing to do. But not all people believe that feeding the hungry is a requirement of the godly life. The Bible teaches that it is. Just as we cannot claim to be followers of Christ if we leave hungry people to die in Africa or Asia or Europe or America or the Philippines. Feeding the hungry is not just something the Christian can do for extra credit; it is basic—fundamental to the Christian life.

What then is the biblical evidence for this belief? First of all, the laws God gave the Israelites very clearly assert the rights of the needy. Every third year the poor, along with the Levites who had no inheritance, were to receive the agricultural tithe (Deuteronomy

14:28-29; 26:12). Owners of the crops were urged always to leave part of their harvest for the poor (Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22). The Sabbatical Year (when debts were cancelled and the land lay fallow) and the Jubilee Year (when land reverted to its original owners and slaves were freed) were established to prohibit unjust deprivation of the helpless in the Hebrew society.

An even more direct statement pertaining to the right to food is found in Deuteronomy 15:11: "... Therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land." This is not a word of encouragement to do something which is merely commendable. It is a *commandment*. Similarly, Isaiah 58:6-7 (NEB) says, in part: "Is not this what I require of you ... sharing your food with the hungry?"

***If we could call forth a commitment from millions of Southern Baptists around the world to adopt sharing and sacrifice as the style of their lives, then Southern Baptists could well become the salt and light which would arouse the rest of the world to banish the evil of starvation from this earth.***

Again, Scripture clearly supports the right to food: "Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees ... to rob the poor of my people of their right" (Isaiah 10:1-2). This judgment is harsh on those who do not share: "They know no bounds in deeds of wickedness; ... they do not defend the rights of the needy. Shall I not punish them for these things?" (Jeremiah 5:26-29). Or, again in the New Testament we hear, "But if a man has enough to live on and yet when he sees a brother in need shuts up his heart against him, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in him? My children, love must not be a matter of words or talk; it must be genuine, and show itself in action" (1 John 3:17-18, NEB).

The familiar story of the rich man and Lazarus may be the most graphic illustration in the Bible of how strongly God feels about the right to food. Having turned deaf ears to Lazarus' begging for crumbs, Dives finds himself in torment begging in vain for a drop of water (Luke 16:20-31).

God's overwhelming compassion for the hungry is seen again and again. In Mary's great Magnificat, she exults, "... he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away" (Luke 1:53). And Jesus himself said, "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied" (Luke 6:21). What can establish a right to food if it is not the compassion of God Himself?

But God does even more than have compassion for the poor and hungry. He identifies with them. "I was hungry," he said, "and you fed me" (Matthew 25:35, Moffatt). That is the most powerful claim to the right to food which there is. God has become hungry. Our response to the starving does not grow out of our response to God; it is *our* response to God!

Parenthetically, we should note that this profound biblical idea of the right of the hungry to food speaks strongly to a current heresy which is being perpetuated in many quarters: the heresy of lifeboat ethics.

The lifeboat ethic is based on the idea that if too many people get into a lifeboat, it will sink and save no one. Applied to the current food situation, this means that we should not feed the hungry since they will only produce more people for whom there is no room in "the lifeboat." Since there is not enough food for the multiplied offspring of the hungry, the lifeboaters say, "We should simply let the hungry starve."

Many effective criticisms have disproven the presuppositions of this idea. But the most basic reason the Christian has for rejecting lifeboat ethics is that the whole concept runs counter to the Bible's teaching that every person on earth has an equal right to be in the lifeboat. Second Corinthians 8:13-15 (NEB) says, "There is no question of relieving others at the cost of hardship to yourselves; it is a question of equality. At the moment your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus. The aim is equality; as Scripture has it, 'The man who got much had no more than enough, and the man who got little did not go short.'"

### **Toward a Southern Baptist Response**

As Southern Baptists seek to meet the ethical challenge of world hunger, we have a number of strengths which may help us. First, we have traditionally been "a people of the book." This denominational heritage can be of great help to us as we call our people to Christian responsibility. Our commitment to the Bible can serve as a motivating force to activate the concern for the hungry which already exists among our people. Bible passages like those listed above can correct our errors when we view our responsibility to the hungry too casually or deny that it exists at all. It can provide the sustaining authority which we will need if we are to persist and ultimately succeed in the hard task of eradicating hunger from the earth.

A second strength we have is a history of identification with the poor. Only recently have Southern Baptists in some parts of the world risen to positions of affluence and power. By and large, we have been, and in many cases still are, a denomination of poor people. If we do not forget that heritage, it should give us a unique empathy with the "have nots" of the world.

And finally, Southern Baptists are strengthened by the fact that we now are spread all over the world and, for the first time, have the power with which to help the starving masses. The hungry need food; Southern Baptists have it. The hungry need agricultural expertise; Southern Baptists have it. The hungry need public policy shaped with their needs in mind; Southern Baptists have the power to help shape it. The hungry need to know of God's concern for their plight; Southern Baptists are spread throughout the world and are there to tell them.

How, then, shall we use this strength we have been given in a hungry world? Perhaps we can begin to think and pray together so that all our best insights and action can be applied to the ethical challenges of hunger outlined above.

How can we meet the challenge to our ability to stop hunger? We know there is enough food in the world to go around. Why can Southern Baptists not be instrumental in redistributing it? Through our relief programs we are already making an effort. But why can we not significantly enlarge these efforts? And why cannot some of us use our influence with governmental decision-makers to call

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for just trade and aid policies on the part of all nations of the earth? Many key decision-makers sit in our congregations. Have they heard the words of Scripture which we have heard here? And why can Southern Baptists not aid in increasing food production through an expanded agricultural missions program?

There is much we can do, but a sure word from the Lord must be voiced from our pulpits if our people are to act. They need to hear their marching orders from God and they need instruction in their task.

How can we best act on hunger's challenge to the meaning of faith for life? Southern Baptists will meet this challenge only when they meet the challenge to stop hunger. When Christians are busy putting an end to the suffering of starvation, then the meaning of faith for life will become obvious. We can talk about applying the gospel all we like, but until we act to make it happen, faith will remain an abstract quality sealed up in our churches to be visited and examined on Sundays.

How should we respond to the challenge of hunger to our lifestyles? This is the tough part. Sending food is easy. Writing letters to policy makers is not so hard. Preaching is words. But making changes in our lifestyles for the benefit of the hungry is sacrifice. Of course, there are those who claim that lifestyle changes are unimportant since a hamburger not eaten cannot be fed to a hungry person. Political and economic barriers to the redistribution of food must be destroyed, but so must the barrier of overconsumption. It is unlikely that there will ever be enough food for all as long as some of us have more than a just share.

This is a dangerous message to proclaim. Sometimes it will make people angry. Often it will be ignored. Occasionally it will be called idealistic and impractical. But it is a message which we should be proclaiming loudly in our pulpits, in our literature, and in our behavior.

We must begin by honestly facing the question of the kind of lifestyle we can justify for ourselves as Christians living in an age of hunger. If we could call forth a commitment from millions of Southern Baptists around the world to adopt sharing and sacrifice as the style of their lives, then Southern Baptists could well become the salt and light which would arouse the rest of the world to banish the evil of starvation from this earth.

God calls Southern Baptists to face these challenges. Hungry people may sometimes (but only sometimes) live far away, but they are, every one, our neighbors. Their suffering has a claim on the power we now possess. Those of you reading these words may well be the key to how selflessly Southern Baptists of the world will use this power.

A final word: This is not an idle call to action. For hundreds of thousands of people it is a matter of life and death. How can those who have tasted the bread of life turn a deaf ear?

W. David Sapp is director of organization for the Christian Life Commission. Among his responsibilities is directorship of the Commission's efforts related to world hunger.



## WORLD HUNGER: a basic resource list

### Books

Barbour, Dan (ed.). *Finite Resources and the Human Future*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1976. Essays on hunger, development, and future growth by leading scholars and politicians.

Brown, Lester R. and Eckholm, Erik P. *By Bread Alone*. New York: Praeger, 1974. One of the best. Clear analysis and easy reading.

Brown, Lester R. *The 29th Day*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978 (World Watch Institute).

Dunn, James; Loring, Ben; and Strickland, Phil. *Endangered Species*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1976. A great study book. Well written.

Freudenberger, C. Dean and Minus, Paul, Jr. *Christian Responsibility in a Hungry World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976. Good suggestions for response.

Hessel, Dieter (ed.). *Beyond Survival*. New York: Friendship Press, 1977. A collection of very good essays.

Lappe, Francis Moore and Collins, Joseph. *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977. Food self-reliance. Excellent. Provocative. Great for educating people to the complexities of the hunger problem.

Lappe, Francis Moore and Collins, Joseph. *World Hunger: Ten Myths*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1977. An easy to read, greatly abbreviated version of the basic material presented in *Food First*.

Lertz, Catherine and Jacobson, Michael (eds.). *Food for People Not for Profit*. Ballantine Books, 1975. A thought-provoking collection of critical essays.

Lucas, George, Jr., and Ogletree, Thomas (eds.). *Lifeboat Ethics: The Moral Dilemmas of World Hunger*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976. Good ethical study of hunger and moral responsibility.

Mincar, Larry. *New Hope for the Hungry*. New York: Friendship Press, 1975. Particularly helpful in understanding the World Food Conference and development efforts of the United Nations.

Mooneyham, Stanley. *Come Walk the World*. Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1978. Personal stories concerning hunger.

\_\_\_\_\_. *What Do You Say to a Hungry World?* Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976. Written from a distinctly evangelical perspective. Good book to start with.

Owens, Owen D. *Stones Into Bread*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1977. A theological look at hunger and specific action strategies.

The President's World Hunger Working Group. *World Hunger and Malnutrition: Improving the U.S. Response*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978. Raises the major issues related to U.S. Government support for international food and agricultural policies. Suggests actions to improve U.S. responsibilities in this area.

Schumacher, Dennis. *The Global Connection: Local Action for World Justice*. New York: Friendship Press, 1977. Good study for church groups.

Schumacher, E. F. *Small Is Beautiful*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973. An important new perspective on economic ethics.

Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1977. The best development of the biblical case for response.

Simon, Arthur. *Bread for the World*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975. Focuses on the role of public policy and the necessity of public impact concerning these policies.

\_\_\_\_\_. and Simon, Paul. *The Politics of World Hunger*. New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1973. A strong critical analysis of U.S. aid and trade policies.

Sommer, John. *Beyond Charity*. Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1977. Excellent book on development.

### Periodicals

Several periodicals concentrate on concerns of hunger and international justice. The following three are free of charge.

*Seeds*. A newsletter for Southern Baptists concerned about hunger. Sponsored by the Hunger Committee of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga. 30030.

*United Nations Development Forum*. Center for Economic and Social Information, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017. No charge. A monthly publication that reports on various United Nations development-related programs.

*War on Hunger*. United States Agency for International Development, State Department, Washington, D.C. 20523.

### Agencies

**Educational and Research**  
*American Freedom from Hunger Foundation*, 1625 I Street, Washington, D.C. 20036. Information and fund-raising organization. Some materials available on request.

*Center of Concern*, 3700 13th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017. A group committed to international justice. Newsletter and occasional papers deal with various international issues.

*Overseas Development Council*, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. A respected research group that speaks to policy makers and others. Responsible research continually being made available.

**Political Information**  
*Bread for the World*, 207 E. 16th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Seeks from a Christian perspective to influence U.S. policy on hunger. Regular newsletter is available along with other pamphlets. Membership \$10.

*Friends Committee on National Legislation*, 245 Second Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Regular newsletter called *The Washington Newsletter* is available. Well-respected for accurate political information. Membership \$10.

*Impact*, 110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Interfaith network to inform citizens concerning public issues. Works closely with Washington Interreligious Staff Council. Current political information available. Membership \$5 and \$10.

*Network*, 224 D Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20005. A Catholic group committed to social justice. Good political information on hunger issue. Membership \$5 and \$15.

**Related Government Organizations**  
*United Nations*, 1028 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. A general UN information center.

*United States Agency for International Development*, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20523. Information is available.

*United States Department of Agriculture*, Washington, D.C. 20250. Information is available.

*United States Inter-American Foundation*, 1515 Wilson Boulevard, Rosslyn, Va. 22209. Materials available.

*World Bank Group*, 1818 "H" Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433. Publications are available.

**Relief and Development Agencies**  
*Agriculture Missions Foundation, Limited*, Post Office Box 368, Yazoo City, Miss. 39194. An excellent film is available.

*Baptist World Alliance*, 1628 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

C.A.R.E., 660 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Catholic Relief Services, 1011 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Church World Service, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027.

CROP, Post Office Box 968, Elkhart, Ind. 46514.

Lutheran World Relief, 315 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Oxfam-America, 302 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass. 02116.

World Vision International, 912 West Huntington Drive, Monrovia, Calif. 91016.

**Southern Baptist Convention Agencies**  
*Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs*, 208 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

*Brotherhood Commission*, 1548 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

*Christian Life Commission*, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tenn. 37219.

*Foreign Mission Board*, Post Office Box 6597, 3806 Monument Avenue, Richmond, Va. 23230.

*Home Mission Board*, 1350 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

*Woman's Missionary Union*, 600 North 20th Street, Birmingham, Ala. 35203.



# WORLD HUNGER:



## An interview with Art Simon

*One of the nation's most consistent, insightful, and respected voices on issues related to world hunger is Arthur Simon, founder and executive director of the Christian citizens' lobby Bread*

*for the World. Simon, a Lutheran clergyman, is the author of Bread for the World, described by Nobel Prize economist Gunnar Myrdal as a "clear and convincing" analysis of world hunger. Following are excerpts from a recent interview with Simon conducted by William M. Tillman, Jr.*

**WMT:** Mr. Simon, how were you awakened to the problem of world hunger?

**AS:** I guess my awareness goes back quite a number of years and comes from my brother, Paul, who is now a Congressman in Southern Illinois. Paul has been deeply interested in this issue for several decades and has done some writing, and I was aware of it because of him.

Back in 1960, I became pastor of a small Lutheran congregation on the lower east side of Manhattan, which is a very crowded, old slum neighborhood. My involvement in the parish and the neighborhood forced me to deal with the problem of urban hunger and poverty in the 60s. It was really out of some of the experiences with the congregation that I was encouraged to take a leave of absence to do some writing in the area of domestic and world hunger. From that came a book that I did for Harpers called *The Politics of World Hunger*, co-authored with Paul, and that led to the formation of Bread for the World.

**WMT:** How essential are lifestyle changes among Christians if hunger is to be eradicated?

**AS:** I think that lifestyle changes are both inevitable and essential. It is important that Christians begin to deal with their own pattern of living, to consume less and share more. I would add to that a word of warning: that is that lifestyle changes in themselves don't transfer food or resources automatically. To cut back and, oh, eat a hamburger a week less or turn down the thermostat, none of this is going to give food or money to hungry people. Along with that there have to be some mechanisms of transfer used. That primarily, I think, points us in the direction of dealing with the public policies that hopefully bring about these transfers.

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William M. Tillman, Jr., managing editor  
David B. Wilkinson, production editor

**WMT:** Something that has particularly interested me: Has recent concern for world hunger tended to minimize the problem of hunger within our own country?

**AS:** No, I don't think so. I think quite the contrary. Concern about world hunger has an inescapable spill-over effect of making people more aware and concerned about hunger in this country. I think where you have concern, it is going to work both ways. It is not an either/or; it is a both/and. If we go backward on one way, we go backward on the other. If we go forward on one, we will go forward on both.

**WMT:** What are some of the primary frustrations a person can expect to encounter in trying to do something about world hunger?

**AS:** I think there is one overwhelming frustration. That is that the problem is so massive. People can begin (assuming they do begin to get involved) by working at some lifestyle changes, contributions to hunger relief, and a year or two later, they say, "Well, the problem hasn't gone away," and they begin to think, "Well, what I do isn't making any difference." That is really the problem of despair, and despair is unbelief. So, that can't be the Christian's answer. In the face of that frustration, we need to draw on the resources of our faith in Jesus Christ; and, by living in that faith, really know that anything we do consistent with the vision that our Lord gives us is never wasted but can make a difference.

**WMT:** What hopes do you have for the Presidential Commission on World Hunger that was recently appointed by President Carter?

**AS:** I hope that it is going to be a serious effort. It could lead simply to postponement for a year to allow for initiative by the President, or it could lay the groundwork for some really serious and comprehensive steps. I hope it is going to be the latter. I have a concern that there is on the commission only one representative from the religious community, and it is going to be very important for those of us in the church who follow this issue, and who feel deeply about it, to make our suggestions known to members of the commission.

**WMT:** What specific changes in public policy related to hunger would you support?

**AS:** I would single out several of the especially significant ones. I think there is, first of all, the need for a comprehensive approach to food policy. Right now, it is very fragmented. In the administration we have a couple of dozen different agencies handling different aspects of the problem.

Second, I think there is a need for a fairly thorough reform of our food and development assistance program, so that it truly points in the direction of self-help development and self-reliance on the part of the recipient country. For example, food aid, important as it is, can be a substitute for the country's developing its own agricultural capacity. Then it becomes a disincentive rather than an incentive to self-reliance.

Third, I would say we need to offer trade preferences to the developing countries to encourage them to develop their own primarily labor intensive industries. And fourth, and much related to the trade issue, is full employment here in the United States. I would say that is probably the single biggest domestic hunger issue. It not only affects the hunger situation here, but as long as we have a lot of unemployment we are going to have a built-in resistance to the adoption of trade policies for developing countries that might give them an opportunity.

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# WORLD HUNGER: the political agenda

**William H. Elder, III**

In light of the obvious corporate and structural dimensions of the hunger problem it is essential that any plan of action be conceived and executed with primary attention being given to the arena of public policy. And determining the relevant areas of public policy is no small task, for the elements of the global food crisis are integrally related to almost every facet and sector of societal organization. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that one area cannot be affected without significantly altering others, a fact that makes comprehensive planning and cooperation among problem-solving groups all the more necessary.

If we are to attack the problem at its systemic level our approach will have to correspond in complexity and force to the societal situation which created the problem in the first place. On the road to developing that kind of perspective, as Christian citizens we need to be sensitive to hunger ramifications in at least three governmental areas: domestic legislation, foreign legislation, and the efforts of the United Nations.

## Hunger and Domestic Legislation

Poverty can cause hunger. In spite of our vast resources, approximately 26 million Americans are forced to live impoverished lives each year. Obviously, the whole area of economic justice merits our best attention. It ought to be possible for any able-bodied person to find meaningful employment and for those prohibited from working by health, age, or family circumstances to have sufficient economic assistance to live with dignity.

The Humphrey-Hawkins Bill (H.R. 50, The Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act), passed by the 95th Congress, is a step in the right direction though some of its impact was weakened in the amending and redrafting process. President Carter's "Welfare Reform" package (H.R. 9030) along with the House Subcommittee on Welfare Reform's bill (H.R. 10950) was not dealt with in the last session of Congress due to the Senate leadership's decision not to take it up.

This bill and other measures, such as tax reform, national health insurance, hospital cost containment and the whole complex area of curbing inflation, deserve our best "hunger-oriented" attention when the 96th Congress treats them.

In the interim, while we work for structural change, hunger emergencies exist which require legislative action. Adequate nutrition is the focal point, and the groups needing attention are especially the aging and low-income women with infants and children. The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, a part of the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act (PL 94-105), now needs reauthorization and expansion so that three million more needy, unserved people can be included in this effort to provide essential nutrition to children and expectant mothers. Also the Child Care Food Program which expired this October needs to be continued and recruitment for the program expanded.

As to the elderly, Title VII of the Older Americans Act, which provides nutritional meals for shut-ins, needs to be re-authorized, but the funding level needs to be significantly increased. Action in this area will focus in the Senate's Human Resources' Subcommittee on Aging (Sen. Thomas Eagleton, D-Mo., chairman).

## Hunger and Foreign Policy

As with domestic hunger, the problem of hunger in the less developed countries (LDC's) must be confronted from both the perspectives of handling emergencies and effecting more

substantive structural change. To handle food emergencies, an adequate U.S. grain reserve system is essential. Establishing such a reserve also would help lead the rest of the world toward creating an international network of food reserves. Furthermore, many farm economists are claiming that a reserve system has great potential for helping small farms to survive in American agriculture. Activity in the 96th Congress on this issue will center in the Senate and House Agriculture Committees.

Instead of talking about foreign aid in these days of public resentment of so-called "giveaway" programs, many legislators now refer to "development assistance." The thought behind this shift in wording is potentially significant in that there seems to be a desire to help the developing nations to make the structural adjustments to become self-sufficient.

In light of the fact that every nation has the natural resources to meet their food needs if they are able to develop those resources, this kind of legislative thinking merits encouragement. Substantive legislation in this direction will have to negotiate some very rough terrain, however, because enabling the developing countries to develop their own resources will require changes and self-limitation in the way the U.S. has been doing business internationally. The tendency will probably be to talk about development but continue the old, cold war period, foreign aid policies which foster dependence rather than self-reliance.

## Hunger and the United Nations

In the effort to bring about structural change which can eradicate the systemic causes of world hunger, the role of the United Nations cannot be minimized. The hunger issue is found as an integral concern in many of the continuing program operations such as the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the World Food Council, the UN Conference on Science and Technology, the Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Conference on International Economic Cooperation, and the recent emphasis on the Law of the Sea. All of these deliberative bodies are focusing upon the possibility of creating a format for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which obviously involves structural analysis, planning, and change.

This spring the UN Conference on Science and Technology is hosting an international conference in Geneva. Its major aim will be to examine the question of appropriate technology for developing nations. As long as this doesn't turn into "technocrats on parade," the potential for substantive insight is great.

All in all, the UN potential for alleviating world hunger through insightful international dialogue and planning is significant and merits the attention and encouragement of every Christian.

Much is happening, but much more needs to happen. Given the mammoth dimensions of the problem, it is clear that political involvement of Christians in the hunger issue is essential if governmental problem-solving resources are to be brought to bear.

In light of the structural changes that will have to take place if we are to successfully resolve the world food crisis—changes which will inevitably cost us—we can understand something of what the rich young ruler must have felt when he was told by Jesus to sell all he had and give to the poor. Being willing to risk ourselves as we push for political change to help alleviate world hunger is a mark of true discipleship.

*William H. Elder, III joined the staff of the Christian Life Commission Sept. 1 as director of Christian citizenship development.*

# A both/and approach to the world hunger problem

Continued from page 1

hungry. Some cities also have local private and/or government agencies which are working to help the domestic poor.

For hunger relief and development abroad. Southern Baptists can give money to the Foreign Mission Board. Through its hunger relief fund, the Foreign Mission Board channels money directly to areas of need through its missionaries. When designated to hunger relief, these funds are used not only to feed hungry people but also in development—digging irrigation wells, purchasing seed and

fertilizer, and helping rebuild villages. While we may not be able to go ourselves, we can share our resources in a continuing commitment to relief and development through these organizations.

Other excellent relief and development organizations include the Agriculture Missions Foundation, headed by former SBC President Owen Cooper, and World Vision International, directed by former Billy Graham associate, Stanley Mooneyham.

The second major aspect of the Both/ And Approach is committed Christian social action in affecting hunger-related public policy. Our lifestyle changes and gifts to the hungry in the form of relief are significant; but ultimately those public policies which exploit people must be changed. Mooneyham supports this, saying, "The heart of the problem of poverty and hunger are human systems which ignore, mistreat, and exploit man . . . If the hungry are to be fed, . . . some of the systems will require drastic adjustments while others will have to be scrapped altogether." <sup>2</sup> Christian principles must be applied in the political arena where trade policies, aid, investment, and military spending all directly or indirectly affect the destiny of millions of people throughout the world.

There are several Christian citizens' lobby groups which will help one to be an effective activist on behalf of the poor and hungry. Among these are Bread for the World, Impact, and The Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Hunger is neither a simple nor an insignificant problem. It is truly a matter of life and death for one-fourth of the world. Christians committed to the Both/ And Approach will realize the extreme seriousness of the problem, while at the same time believing in the God of hope. Hunger is a battle which can be won.

<sup>1</sup> This figure is supplied by MANNA INC., 1502 Edgehill Avenue, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

<sup>2</sup> Robert McNamara, *One Hundred Countries, Two Billion People* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> W. Stanley Mooneyham, *What Do You Say To A Hungry World* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1975), p. 116.

*David R. Currie is the special project coordinator for correlating Christian social action and Christian social ministries for the Christian Life Commission and the Home Mission Board.*

## An interview with Art Simon

Continued from page 6

**WMT:** How much effect do you think the individual concerned citizen can have on public policy?

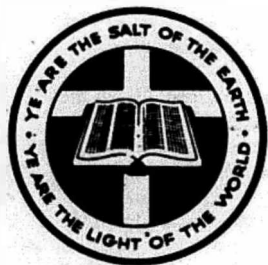
**AS:** Working alone, the individual citizen can't affect it very much, but working with others in an orchestrated fashion, the concerned citizen can exercise an impact far out of proportion to the individual numbers added up. I would cite as an example our own experience with Bread for the World. We have been able to get Congress to pass right to food resolutions that we have drafted which laid the groundwork, I think, for many policy decisions.

Some of our goals were also included last year in the farm bill, the 1977 Farm Act, and the grain reserve legislation that was drafted for the House. So we now have a very sizable farmer-held grain reserve that I think is a very important piece of world food security. And, yet, it happened, really, because a lot of concerned Christians around the country got letters to Congressmen.

**WMT:** Is the issue of world hunger just another humanitarian fad, or does it appear to be a long-term effort to deal with the problem?

**AS:** Well, to a lot of people, it is a humanitarian fad that lasts for a year or two and that's that. Until there's a famine in the news, people think the problem has gone away. Obviously, the problem hasn't gone away, and it's getting bigger, not smaller. It will take a long time to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth. I think it depends on three things: first, on our perception that we are in a long, difficult struggle; second, in the sense that we can and should do something about it; third, it depends on letting this thing become a genuine expression of our faith in Christ.

We are born anew, St. Peter tells us, to the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Without that we too easily give up; but I think acting in faith we can stick with it.



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