

RESOLUTION ON THE TIME OF FAMINE

Adopted by the General Board, February 21, 1968

Part I

The time of world famine has begun.

Seven persons die each minute from hunger and malnutrition.

One out of every three children now living will carry through life some of the irreversible effects of food deficiency.

Each week a million new mouths must be fed with only little more food than was available for the total world population the preceding week.

Authorities differ as to whether famine will reach disaster proportions as early as 1975, or conceivably as late as 1988, but at some point in the next two decades, unless present trends are drastically altered, additional millions of human beings will find release only through death by starvation.

We are engaged, then, in a battle for physical survival on our small planet. The war on hunger cannot possibly be won in less than a generation, but it will certainly be lost if our generation does not begin now to take the struggle with immediate seriousness. Hunger and malnutrition are symptoms of a deeper illness of economic inequity and social injustice, but the shortage of food is so grave, and the future prognosis so dangerous, that time must be bought in order that the large and more basic problems may be faced and be solved.

There are three fronts in this war:

1. Family Planning

World population will grow inexorably during the next twenty years because of increased longevity, and the presence of larger numbers of women of child-bearing age. The best programs combining agricultural assistance and family planning cannot hope to bring food demand and food supply into stable balance in less than a generation. Unless radical and innovative measures of family planning are started immediately at all levels of society and in all parts of the world, the geometric progression of applied procreative power will confront our children's world with monstrous problems which will inevitably lead to such horrors as mass starvation, perpetual warfare and even genocide.

2. Food Aid

Christian compassion dictates that large transfers of food from the fat to the hungry areas are essential now. For a few years more the world can be fed if the U.S. and other developed countries produce for need and invest sufficiently in shipping and the other distributing mechanisms to get food where it is needed. This will require a new and expansive stance on U.S. farm policy, including domestic farm programs which give adequate price incentive to producers.

External food aid can only be a stop-gap strategy while developing countries increase their own food production. Long-continued reliance on food aid will stunt indigenous agriculture and personal initiatives.

3. Food Production

In the spirit of one who told his disciples to feed the hungry, major emphasis must be placed on expanding and diversifying the production of food in the developing countries themselves, and in education to use it properly.

New methods of food production have received wide publicity, but appear to require long-term development and may have narrow usefulness in the 20-year crisis ahead. They may however provide significant help before the climax of the population explosion is reached. Unconventional sources of animal protein, fresh and ocean water farming, development of high protein varieties of grain, culture of single-cell organisms of high protein content, and even synthesis of food offer long-range promise if heavy investment in research and development is made immediately.

Especially intensive efforts must be urgently directed to increasing the production of milk and expanding utilization of fish. Most important is the expansion of the production and use of legumes where these animal protein foods are in short supply.

The basic need is for the transformation of subsistence agriculture in Africa, Asia and Latin America into an efficient productive varied enterprise by research, technology and market development. Agriculture is a keystone of economic development; this necessitates priority allocation of resources to agriculture by local governments and international agencies.

The problem is not a simple one. Long-term solutions will require adequate international development assistance and changes in trade policies to enable developing nations to grow enough food of their own, and export their own products on such favorable terms as to earn the foreign exchange to buy agricultural inputs and other necessities. Possible actions include the subsidy by developed

nations of food flow between developing nations, or the provision of funds to hungry nations for them to buy on the world market what they require for their nutritional needs.

Part II

Christians are under scriptural injunction: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." We are reminded that faith, without works of mercy and justice, is dead.

Since the passage of a Resolution on World Hunger by the General Board in 1965, a number of commendable steps have been taken:

- The U.S. government's emphasis on child feeding and support of family planning programs; Agency for International Development contracts resulting in effective assistance to cooperatives in developing countries; the completion of the President's Science Advisory Committee study on The World Food Problem; the establishment of an office for the War on Hunger; expanded participation in international programs such as the World Food Program.
- The DOM's completion of the "Food with Dignity" study of existing church programs with recommendations for the future publication of a Church World Service Handbook on Nutrition and a Church World Service study on family planning in the Caribbean; launching a program of nutrition education to reach women overseas; testing and use of new high-protein foods.
- Sponsorship by missions and churches of consultations on the churches and rural development in Costa Rica (for Central America), Nigeria (for West Africa), Philippines (for Southeast Asia), Thailand, Liberia, and India.
- Doubling of the number of persons benefited by CWS feeding programs in India; helping to establish and support AFPRO in its \$1,500,000 program of well-drilling, fertilizers and technical guidance as a joint Catholic and Protestant effort in India.

Yet the threat of famine grows. In this time of hurt and want and strife, the Church of Jesus Christ cannot stand unconcerned or uncommitted. For the churches it is an issue of early priority.

Part III

Therefore, the National Council of the Churches of Christ calls upon its constituent communions and individual Christians to join in these essentials of a comprehensive action program.

A. With respect to Constituent Communions and their individual members, the National Council of the Churches of Christ calls upon the Christian forces of this country:

1. To undertake energetically the creation of a national conscience on the matter of world hunger. The purpose is two-fold: a) the formation and communication to our government of an articulate expression of individual and corporate opinion, and b) the mobilization of widespread and adequate support of voluntary efforts to alleviate world hunger through international cooperation.
2. To urge communions to double by 1970 the current average of one percent of total denominational income being spent to combat world hunger and to increase proportionately the assignment of personnel to related functions. Major emphasis must be placed on church-related programs of cooperatives, credit unions, community development, agricultural extension, nutrition education, mother-child care, and family planning through overseas churches and bodies.
3. To place special emphasis on the One Great Hour of Sharing and similar appeals and to encourage the second-mile effort of CROP, the community hunger appeal of Church World Service.
4. To double each year, for the next three years current overseas efforts of the churches in support of wider and more effective family planning through Church World Service, medical mission programs, the educational and social programs of the churches, and the efforts of individual Christians.
5. To lay upon the conscience of each Christian with competence in areas of food production, processing, and distribution, the challenge of offering his service to inter-governmental and voluntary agencies, especially those of the churches, in their programs to combat world hunger.
6. To explore and implement the investment of U.S. Church capital funds in overseas enterprises related to food production in developing countries.

B. With respect to the programs of the National Council of Churches itself:

1. To encourage expansion of international coordination with the World Council of Churches Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, with indigenous churches and their national councils and liaison with agencies of the United Nations.
2. To direct the General Secretary to encourage the Office of Communication,

the Office of Planning and Program, and each of the program Divisions to examine current activities and thinking with a view to giving education and action with respect to world hunger and development a high priority, both within the peace emphasis and other programs of the Council.

3. To advise utmost economy in Council funds and manpower to the end that urgent priorities in respect to world hunger and other crucial needs at home and abroad be respected and programs relating to them be strengthened.
4. To urge its program units, while continuing their efforts to move quickly and effectively to prevent famine, to initiate and experiment with new methods to attack root causes of hunger, and to do so in cooperation with national and international government agencies, with private business and technical organizations, with universities, with other Protestant groups, with the Roman Catholic Church, and with members of other faiths.

C. With respect to the Government:

1. To call upon the President to seek and the Congress to enact responsible foreign aid legislation involving sufficient funds (at least one percent of the Gross National Product annually) over a time period commensurate with urgent needs. Foreign aid grant and loan funds must be increasingly focused on overseas agricultural and economic development and to be channeled increasingly through UN agencies and in multilateral programs.
2. To urge the U.S. Government to support a specialized, semi-autonomous and adequately funded international corporation aimed at helping people in Asia, Africa and Latin America to double food production in the next twenty years. This corporation, which might well be designed after the American pattern of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Commodity Credit Corporation, or the National Aeronautics and Space Agency, could contract with companies, universities and government departments of various nations to do the applied research and development and testing necessary to the objectives. Ample resources to meet targets of immense cost and complexity must be guaranteed.
3. While commending the U.S. Government for giving major attention to family planning programs, to urge that this priority be given increased emphasis.
4. To urge an emergency increase of food aid through adequate production and purchase of food-stuffs. Food aid in a time of famine is a national priority. Food producers in the U.S. must be given adequate price incentives.
5. To encourage the Government to extend the Food for Freedom Program

(Public Law 480) and to broaden and extend its authority for the sale and donation of commodities and purchase of high protein foods. It should make such food aid available to needy people, through governmental, intergovernmental, and voluntary agencies, without discrimination because of ideological or cold war consideration.

6. To call upon the U.S. Government to work toward world commodity agreements and to encourage freer trade and liberalization of policies which artificially restrict the movement of foods and inputs for agricultural production, especially within tightly protected trading blocs such as regional common markets. One purpose is to improve the trade position of food-deficit and agrarian countries, especially in the sale of raw materials and the purchase of equipment needed in agricultural development such as fertilizer, fertilizer equipment, tractors, well drilling rigs and grain storage facilities. An essential measure to secure greater benefit from aid money is the progressive removal of "Buy American" purchase restrictions which prevent more economical procurement in other countries.
7. While commending the U.S. Agency for International Development on its aid to farmer cooperatives and agricultural education through technical assistance contracts with organizations, such as the Cooperative League in the U.S.A., CUNA International and the land grant colleges, to urge the doubling of this kind of aid to food-deficit countries with a view to increasing local technical and managerial leadership at all levels of agriculture.
8. To encourage the U.S. Government to emphasize and aid developing countries to improve their storage, transport, and distributing mechanisms.

D. With respect to American Business and Industry:

1. To urge individual and institutional shareholders in corporations to ask their officers and directors to undertake ventures aimed at assisting developing countries, and to re-invest as much of the profit as possible within such countries, so that these ventures serve the long-term interests of the developing nation itself, under its basic control. The annual return on investment and operations must be held within reasonable limits.
2. To recommend that business engaged in overseas operations related to agriculture place priority emphasis on the training and education of indigenous manpower.