

# 'REMOVE THE YOKE FROM AMONG YOU' HUNGER

PROPER 16, YEAR C

**Lectionary Texts:** Isaiah 58:9b-14 Jeremiah 1:4-10 Psalm 71:1-6; 103:1-8  
Hebrews 12:18-29 Luke 13:10-17

**Focus Text: Isaiah 58:9b-14**

<sup>9b</sup> If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup>The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

<sup>13</sup>If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; <sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

NRSV

## ADDITIONAL TEXTS

*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.*

Leviticus 19:9-10

*O give thanks to the LORD, for [the LORD] is good; for [the LORD'S] steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those [the LORD] redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and [the LORD] delivered them from their distress; [the LORD] led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town. Let them thank the LORD for [the LORD'S] steadfast love, for [the LORD'S] wonderful works to humankind. <sup>9</sup> For [the LORD] satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry [the LORD] fills with good things.*

Psalms 107:1-9

*When Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.*

Matthew 14:14-21

*When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.*

I Corinthians 11:20-29

## SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

BY CHRIS LIU BEERS, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE,  
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For millennia, Isaiah 58 has stood as a harrowing text, reminding its readers of the dangers of divorcing worship from justice. "Shout out, do not hold back," the Lord tells the prophet, "Announce to my people their rebellion..." (58:1). In contrast to some other prophetic texts, the sins of the people in this case are neither blatant idolatry nor the failure to observe religious practices such as prayer and fasting. Rather, the people of Judah are engaged in the worship of the true God without faithfully reflecting God's commitment to the justice and peace of the community. The people inquire of God, "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" (58:3). They claim to be religiously observant, and God seems not to respond. To this complaint, God responds through the prophet: "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry..." (58:6). Faithfulness to Torah – the "weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith" (Matt. 23:23) – cannot be conjured by religious ceremony alone.

Our passage is constructed as a series of conditional statements: "If you offer your food to the hungry... then your light shall rise in the darkness..." (58:10). There is something powerful at stake in *how* the people worship God; it is the clear contrast between a community of violence, hunger, oppression and strife (see 58:3-4) and one in which the Lord satisfies the needs of everyone (58:10), restores the broken foundations (58:12) and feeds the people with "the heritage of your ancestor Jacob" (58:14). While worship apart from the practice of justice threatens the very life of the community, worship characterized by justice will be a light and a witness of God's love and mercy to all nations. This theme resonates throughout the writings of the prophets, from Micah (6:1-8) to Amos (5:21-24) to Jesus (Matt. 23:23, Luke 11:42).

Hunger plays a central role in Isaiah 58, because the prophet's indictment of the people hinges in particular on their practice of fasting – abstaining from food in order to devote themselves to prayer. To obtain favor from God, the people are fasting (choosing to go hungry for a time) even while they deny food to their sisters and brothers who are actually starving! In other words, they are simulating hunger for the sake of religious piety while ignoring the real hunger around them. Rather than being drawn into solidarity with the hungry, the oppressed, and the marginalized, the people are merely serving "their own interests" by their fasting (58:3, 13). This passage makes clear that God has little room for such vacuous "spirituality," as the prophet calls his people back to a worship that is not self-serving but genuinely directed towards the divine and neighborly Other. Some Christians misread such passages as an authorization for abandoning rituals – such as fasting or Sabbath – that seem to detract from a more immediate kind of spirituality. Such a reading is foreign to the prophets, however, who continually call their people not away from Sabbath but into a deeper practice of the Sabbath that weds works of piety with works of mercy, out of which flow springs whose "waters never fail" (58:11).

## PASTORAL REFLECTION

BY ED KING, MEMBER, CHAPEL HILL  
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SERVICE/CROP PROGRAM, 1979-1995

If ever there was an unambiguous prophetic signpost for the people of Israel that would show them the way to a restored relationship with Yahweh, Isaiah's message in Chapter 58:10 was it: "....."If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noon-day....."

While so many of the Old Testament prophets' messages are filled with jeremiads of doom and gloom, this positive passage is exceptional in that it holds out the conditional promise of personal and community restoration and reconciliation, expressed poetically as a "watered garden" (v.11). The condition was clear: first the Israelites had to feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, and treat their neighbors as they would themselves like to be treated.

The power of this poetic passage speaks volumes for the spirit of love, compassion, and neighborliness which God expects God's people to demonstrate as they go about feeding the hungry in their communities. The hungry were not to be subject to a "means" test, speak only one official language, or show documents to prove they were not "illegal" before they were to be fed. They were to be fed simply because they were hungry.

God does not say here, "The poor you have with you always, so relax, take your time, pay your bills, balance your budget, play the lottery, fill up the SUV, take a vacation, and, if there are any crumbs left on the table, offer pennies to the hungry." Rather, God clearly gives feeding the hungry top priority on the daily agenda of God's people rather than fighting terrorism and protecting one's job security, life insurance, college savings program, or retirement investment.

The bottom line in this text from Isaiah is not maximization of profits, but feeding the hungry and comforting the afflicted. This has both individual and national implications in that it is also a mandate not to add to the growing number of the hungry, the indebted, and the afflicted by supporting policies which widen the gap between the rich and the poor. In present day terms, it is an invitation for individuals and institutions to embrace the values and priorities of Rabbi Michael Lerner's Tikkun community and Jim Wallis' ecumenical Sojourner movement, both of which advocate for a paradigm shift in the bottom line of American culture, as well as in church budgets.

What if we refocus from "making a killing" to "making a living"? What if we think about global solutions to hunger that are not dependent on gigantic institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and corporation-enriching NAFTA globalization treaties? To create a level playing field for rich and poor alike, why not support an alternative network of proven

smaller nonprofits like the Grameen bank or small relief and self-help development agencies like Church World Service, Habitat for Humanity, and Heifer Project International to better empower the poor and end world hunger? This measure alone would dramatically improve life for low income communities worldwide and eliminate the huge, crippling debts resulting from World Bank and other large commercial bank loans. Instead of staying dependent on humiliating handouts or remaining hopelessly burdened by draconian World Bank loan repayment terms, poor communities worldwide would be given a hand-up and a chance to be in control of their own destiny.

Ending world hunger is clearly a matter of political will, not technological know-how. Delegates to the 1996 World Food Summit pledged to decrease world hunger by half by the year 2015. They further stated that since humankind has the means and the know-how to end hunger, its persistence in the world is a scandal of global proportions. USAID said in 1998 that the cost to the United States to end both world and U.S. hunger by 2015 would be only \$35 billion per year. U.S. consumers spend \$50 billion a year just going to the movies. This means that Americans would not even have to sacrifice anything vital in their standard of living to end hunger worldwide. However, they would have to vote for political candidates with a heightened hunger consciousness and the political will to get the job done. Above all, war-spending and large military budgets would have to decrease. With the \$1 trillion we have spent thus far on the wars in the Middle East we could have ended world hunger many times over, plus saved our reputation for compassion, justice, and peaceful resolution of conflict, a reputation now lost in the international community.

Hunger statistics are fickle instruments when it comes to understanding the traumatic reality of what it truly feels like to be hungry every day. Large numbers tend to numb our minds and blunt our resolve to stay focused on the mission of ending world hunger. Arthur Simon, founder of Bread for the World, says that another way of looking at the situation is to realize that one child dies of hunger somewhere in the world with every breath we take. Except in places like Darfur and Calcutta and Mozambique, you won't find "starvation" written on the death certificates as the cause of these children's deaths. Nevertheless, it is clearly daily chronic undernutrition that has weakened their bodies so much that death comes like a thief in the night from diarrhea or disease.

If one had to come up with the single most all-encompassing cause of hunger throughout the world, the answer would surely not be climate change or insufficient global food production. There is enough global grain production alone for every man, woman, and child to have 2,720 calories a day, five hundred calories more than the recommended daily minimum requirement for normal nutrition. But either that food is not available where hungry people live, or hungry people can't afford to buy it at the free market price. Poverty and powerlessness are the chief causes of world hunger.

Therefore, the best opportunity for ending world hunger is to reassert political will and abolish the systems which cause chronic maldistribution of food and income. Jim Lehrer's "News Hour" probably won't analyze the situation in this way, but it is truly a values priority problem. The free market system values profit maximization more than ending world hunger. This means that profits for some take priority over everyone having enough. If hungry people worldwide just had enough cash or credit, they could buy food in their local markets and not have to sit around helplessly watching as their children slowly die from poor nutrition. Why don't the world's hungry have cash or credit or a living wage so they can buy food, if available, in local marketplaces? A long list of self-evident and not-so-obvious obstacles would include unemployment or underemployment, loss of land or water rights, or other natural resources preventing the hungry from growing their own food, violence and war, famine and drought, disease, and many other factors.

What the world's hungry do not lack is the willingness to work hard and sacrifice for their families. Most students of world hunger now agree that hunger actually causes population explosions rather than fewer people. Only when poor parents are confident that their firstborn children will survive to adulthood and that they will be protected by those same surviving children in their old age will they stop having more children. In an agricultural economy without access to more land, water, tractors, and other labor-saving implements, the only way hungry parents can expect to harvest enough food to feed their families is to have more hands working in the fields. Children are also the only sign of God's grace left to these parents. Helping these children to survive may be the last best opportunity for rich folks living in the affluence of the suburban West to escape our empty lives of mindless consumption and entertainment. It may be the hope for own spiritual rediscovery of what truly matters.

## WORSHIP AID - 'REMOVE THE YOKE FROM AMONG YOU'

### RESPONSIVE READING

#### **Remembering God's Provision for Us**

O God, our Provider, you created us and fed us. (Gen 1:26-31)

**You called us out of slavery into a land of milk and honey,**

And fed us in the desert on the long journey into that abundance. (Ex. 16:1-36)

**You established your covenant with us that we might receive the bounty of your blessings as we dwell in harmony and justice.**

"Obey all the Lord's laws and commands and you will have all you want to eat and will live in safety." (Lev. 25:18-19)

**In your wisdom, you arranged periodic corrections of our tendency toward accumulation and injustice.**

"Every third year, set aside a tithe of food for the Levites, who have no inheritance, the aliens, orphans, and widows, that they may eat within your towns and be filled." (Deut. 14:28-29 and Deut. 26:12-13)

**"Every seventh year, cancel the debts of those who owe you money." (Deut. 15:1-6)**

"The fiftieth year shall be a Year of Restoration, a Year of Jubilee, when slaves will be returned to their families, debts forgiven, property restored to original owners, and freedom proclaimed to all inhabitants of the land." (Lev. 25:8-10)

**In your special caring for the marginal ones, you established a safety net to provide for those falling through the cracks.**

"When you harvest, leave some for aliens, orphans, widows." (Deut. 24:19-22 and Lev. 19:9-10)

**"When a countryman becomes poor, be generous to him. The poor will be with you always, so be generous to them." (Deut. 15:7-11)**

When we lost sight of your justice, thereby rendering our worship empty, your prophets spoke out to correct us.

**"Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke,**

**"To let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"**

**"Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,**

**"And bring the homeless poor into your house?" (Isaiah 58:6-7)**

**Your son began his public ministry proclaiming the Year of Jubilee, the freeing of the oppressed and good news to the poor. (Luke 4:18-19)**

He cared for the hungry in feeding the multitudes. (Matt. 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17 and John 6:1-14)

**And was willing even to violate the law so that his disciples would have food to eat. (Matt. 12:1-8)**

**Make us aware, O God, of our responsibility to carry out your will in provision for those in need.**

**Amen.**

*(from the National Council of Churches "Poverty March 2003," [www.nccusa.org/poverty/povmarch-2003-week-3.html#Resources](http://www.nccusa.org/poverty/povmarch-2003-week-3.html#Resources))*

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Watchful God, we confess there is so much we do not know about the economy of food – how it is grown, who harvests it, who transports it or how it is distributed. We eat what we are served. We select from the shelves at the store. An enormous system has developed around what was once a simple act. We used to grow the food we ate. We used to barter for the food we ate. Once, we knew the cost. Help us today to recognize the hidden costs of our food. We want to see injustice clearly, the way Jesus did. We want to be awakened from our apathy, to be enraged by injustice, as Jesus was. Through Your grace we will learn, act, reflect and change. God be with us. **Amen.**

*(adapted from the National Council of Churches "Poverty March 2003," [www.nccusa.org/poverty/povmarch-2003-week-3.html#Resources](http://www.nccusa.org/poverty/povmarch-2003-week-3.html#Resources))*

### SUGGESTED HYMNS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ❖ <i>For the Fruit of All Creation</i>          | UMH 97/BH 643/PH 553/TH 424/<br>MW 449/CH 714/NCH 425 |
| ❖ <i>Christ for the World We Sing</i>           | CM 37/UMH 568/MW 640/AM 565                           |
| ❖ <i>For the Healing of the Nations</i>         | CH 668/NCH 576/MW 685/UMH 428                         |
| ❖ <i>Through All the World, a Hungry Christ</i> | NCH 587   |
| ❖ <i>Cuando el Pobre</i>                        | PH 407/MW 689/UMH 434/CH 662                          |
| ❖ <i>Bread for the World</i>                    | GA 827  |

#### ◆ *Hymnal Legend* ◆

- † AM – African Methodist Episcopal
- † BH – Baptist Hymnal
- † CH – Chalice Hymnal (Disciples of Christ)
- † CM – Christian Methodist Episcopal
- † GA – Gather Hymnal (Roman Catholic)
- † LW – Lutheran Worship
- † MW – Moravian Book of Worship
- † NCH – New Century Hymnal (UCC)
- † PH – Presbyterian Hymnal
- † TH – The Hymnal 1982 (Episcopal)
- † UMH – United Methodist Hymnal

### ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

#### **Our Daily Bread**

Generous, loving God,  
We ask you to give us today our daily bread.  
Creator of the world,  
Give us today our daily bread.  
As we store the crops,  
And fill the barns,  
Stack the shelves,  
Pile high the tins,

And wander the aisles,  
Of supermarket choice,  
Show us how to see the world  
Through the eyes of the hungry.  
Teach us how to share with all  
Our daily bread.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
Who taught us how to pray, Amen.

*(from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, "Our Daily Bread," [www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship/liturgies\\_and\\_services/parish\\_liturgies/our\\_daily\\_bread](http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship/liturgies_and_services/parish_liturgies/our_daily_bread))*

## A Prayer for the Hungry

Living God, our strength and help, we turn to you in our distress. May the spirit of compassion comfort and protect your people. In the parched lands and failed harvests we see you hungry. May the shadow of that hunger be broken by the light of your hope. In our hearts we hold a vision of a better world. May we, by our actions bear witness to your love.  
**Amen.**

(Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, "Comfort and Protect Your People,"  
[www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship/prayers/prayers\\_about\\_hunger/comfort\\_and\\_protect](http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship/prayers/prayers_about_hunger/comfort_and_protect))

## A Litany for World Hunger

In this time when people continue to suffer without adequate food and water, let us call to mind the prophet's vision:  
If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,

**You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.** (Isaiah 58:10a,11b)

God of our salvation, through the waters of the sea you rescued your people from slavery and through the baptism of death Christ freed us from death's hold. May we who have passed through baptismal waters know ourselves to be blessed with power and grace;

**That all might share at the feast of the Lamb!**

Risen Lord, victorious over death, in compassion for your troubled friends you appeared in many places, that they might dare again to trust. In a world of dire hunger and shattered faith, strengthen us also with signs of your presence;

**That all might share at the feast of the Lamb!**

Lord Jesus, hidden traveler along the road, at your companions' request you stayed for supper, and they recognized you in the breaking of the bread. Open our hearts to the words of those who walk beside us; move us to ask new friends to table,

**That all might share at the feast of the Lamb!**

God, whose will is well-being and life, you gave your apostles power to heal and to witness boldly before the rulers of the age. Inspire us also to speak with power for the sake of the hungry and the poor,

**That all might share at the feast of the Lamb!**

Gracious God, whose mercy is everlasting: your followers in Jerusalem acted with one heart and soul, owning all things in common and dividing their goods that none might be in need. As we gather like them for the breaking of the bread, give us freedom from our belongings and glad and generous hearts,

**That all might share at the feast of the Lamb!**

O God, creator of all that lives and grows upon the earth, as springs of water refresh a garden, the waters of baptism have renewed your people so that we might flourish in beauty and give you praise. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, that we might pour ourselves out for the hungry, and rich and poor alike may feast in joy. In the name of Jesus we pray,  
**Amen.**

(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "World Hunger," [www.elca.org/hunger/resources/ideas/prayers3.html](http://www.elca.org/hunger/resources/ideas/prayers3.html))

## ADDITIONAL HELPS

### ▣ QUOTES ▣

*When you give food to the poor, they call you a saint. When you ask why the poor have no food, they call you a communist.*  
Archbishop Helder Camara

*Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Poor nations are hungry, and rich nations are proud; and pride and hunger will ever be at variance.*  
Jonathan Swift

*If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one.*

Mother Teresa

*There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.*  
Mahatma Gandhi

*Because there is global insecurity, nations are engaged in a mad arms race, spending billions of dollars wastefully on instruments of destruction, when millions are starving. And yet, just a fraction of what is expended so obscenely on defense budgets would make a real difference in enabling God's children to fill their stomachs, be educated, and be given the chance to lead fulfilled and happy lives.*  
Desmond Tutu

*Thirty-five million people in the U.S. are hungry or don't know where their next meal is coming from, and 13 million of them are children. If another country were doing this to our children, we'd be at war.*

Jeff Bridges

▪ **PERSONAL VIGNETTE** ▪

**THE WAR ON HUNGER: ONE CHURCH'S STORY**

**BY REV. STEVE HICKLE, PASTOR, FAIRMONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH;  
MEMBER, NC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES EXECUTIVE BOARD**

It's all out war. People the world over are fighting for their lives. Unfortunately, 30,000 of them "lose" each day, dying from hunger-related causes. Defeat is not inevitable, however, and congregations have the power to be at the forefront in the battle against hunger.

Fairmont United Methodist Church is in the N.C. State University neighborhood at the edge of downtown Raleigh. The church has clearly heard Jesus saying, "I was hungry and you fed me." With neighbors at West Raleigh Presbyterian, the church offers bag lunches to those who come in search of food. With dozens of other congregations in Raleigh, Fairmont UMC receives regular "durable" food offerings for Urban Ministries of Wake County where over four tons of food are distributed each week. The church's annual Christmas Eve feast entertains residents of several of Raleigh's facilities for homeless people, a gift to congregants and guests alike. The church also shares meals with homeless guests who stay in the building several weeks each year through the Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network.

The church has been "CROPWALKING" since the first Raleigh walks of the 1970's. Now a 5K stroll through downtown, the CROPWALK raises funds and awareness, educating the community about world hunger as well as efforts by local agencies which are supported with 25% of each walk's proceeds. Fairmont also participates in Church World Service's Blanket Sunday (Mother's Day) and Tools of Hope (Father's Day), basic tools for relief and for rebuilding lives torn by disaster.

Since 2000, Fairmont has been home to Stop Hunger Now ([www.stophungernow.org](http://www.stophungernow.org)). With a bare bones staff, SHN has addressed hunger in over 55 countries, putting in place over \$100 million in life saving assistance. With low overhead, rapid response, and on-the-ground partners in far flung places, SHN has been able to respond quickly to the Asian tsunami, the war in Afghanistan, flooding in Mozambique, and other affected areas. Fairmont's congregation has been supportive through several specific and ongoing campaigns and has found special life in the current "Operation Sharehouse" initiative. This hands-on endeavor invites volunteers to assemble 400 gram packets of a highly nutritious soup mix with a shelf life of at least 3 years and portability for delivery around the world. The first "Sharehouse" is in Raleigh, a second has opened in Virginia, and others are planned for Asheville, NC and Mississippi, as well as for international sites that will greatly speed disaster response. In the first year, over 1.7 million servings were prepared utilizing 4,500 community volunteers.

There is much we all can do. Any church can distribute bag lunches, host guests for church meals, walk for the hungry, or volunteer for "Operation Sharehouse." The hungry are fed, one person at a time.

## ▪ CONTACTS AND OTHER RESOURCES ▪

- ✦ [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org) – *America's Second Harvest* is the national food bank network that provides the connection between local and regional food banks. It is the nation's largest charitable hunger-relief organization, with a network of over 200 member food banks serving all 50 states. By securing and distributing over 2 billion pounds of food annually, America's Second Harvest provided food assistance to over 25 million people in 2006, including over 9 million children and about 3 million seniors.
- ✦ [http://secondharvest.org/zip\\_code.jsp?zipcode=&state=NC](http://secondharvest.org/zip_code.jsp?zipcode=&state=NC) – *Network of Second Harvest Food Banks and food rescue organizations in North Carolina*. Go to this website and enter your zip code to find the nearest agency serving your county. There are seven North Carolina Second Harvest organizations: Food Bank of the Albermarle (Elizabeth City), [www.afoodbank.org](http://www.afoodbank.org); Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina (Fayetteville), [www.ccap-inc.org/sharvest.shtml](http://www.ccap-inc.org/sharvest.shtml); Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina (Raleigh), [www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org); Inter-Faith Food Shuttle (Raleigh), [www.foodshuttle.org](http://www.foodshuttle.org); Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina (Charlotte), [www.secondharvestcharlotte.org](http://www.secondharvestcharlotte.org); Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina (Winston-Salem), [www.hungernwnc.org](http://www.hungernwnc.org); and MANNA Food Bank (Asheville), [www.mannafoodbank.org](http://www.mannafoodbank.org).
- ✦ [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) – *Bread for the World* is a nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying America's decision makers. They offer numerous resources for churches and denominations to become more actively involved in the effort to generate the political will to end hunger.
- ✦ [www.alliancetoendhunger.org](http://www.alliancetoendhunger.org) – *The Alliance to End Hunger* seeks to engage diverse institutions more deeply in an effort to win shifts in U.S. public opinion, institutions and policy that could dramatically reduce hunger in the United States and internationally. The Alliance includes religious bodies, businesses, universities, civil rights groups, labor unions and many others.
- ✦ [www.pcusa.org/hunger/downloads/resource\\_justeatlead.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/downloads/resource_justeatlead.pdf) – *Just Eating* is a comprehensive, Scripture-based teaching publication of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which focuses attention on the complex causes of hunger. This 85-page guide includes units on such topics as "Food Sharing as Sacramental," "Nurturing the Body," "Hunger," "Food and the Environment," and "Creating Community With Food" and incorporates such spiritual practices as *lectio divina* – a sustained reading and study of Scripture in community. (Many other denominations have hunger education materials and hunger relief programs.)
- ✦ [www.centeronhunger.org](http://www.centeronhunger.org) – *The Center on Hunger and Poverty* is a research center which focuses on hunger and food insecurity at the national, state, and local levels; promotion and expansion of the child nutrition and food stamp programs; development of nutrition education materials specifically designed for low-income families with children; and program design and evaluation for innovative community initiatives in the hunger/nutrition field.
- ✦ [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org) – *Oxfam America*, an affiliate of Oxfam International, is a non-profit organization that works to end global poverty through saving lives, strengthening communities, and campaigning for change. Oxfam works on the scene, helping people gain the hope, skills, and direction to create a new future. It is also active in the global arena, addressing social injustice through our advocacy, public education, and emergency assistance programs.

## KEY FACTS

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ❑ Between 2002-2004, an average of 13.8 percent of North Carolina's households experienced food insecurity; this represents over 430,000 households with a total population of more than 1 million people. Overall, almost 5 percent of North Carolina households experienced hunger along with food insecurity – over 150,000 households with a total population of almost 400,000 people. In other words, during the last year almost 400,000 people in North Carolina went hungry or missed meals at some point.<sup>1</sup>

## Understanding Hunger: Key Terms<sup>2</sup>

**HUNGER:** A condition in which people do not get enough food to provide the nutrients (carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals and water) for active and healthy lives.

**MALNUTRITION:** A condition resulting from inadequate consumption (undernutrition) or excessive consumption of one or more nutrients that can impair physical and mental health and can cause or be a consequence of infectious disease.

**UNDERNUTRITION:** A condition resulting from inadequate consumption of calories, protein and/or nutrients to meet the basic

physical requirements for an active and healthy life.

**FOOD INSECURITY:** A condition of uncertain ability to acquire safe, nutritious food in a socially acceptable way.

**FOOD SECURITY:** Assured access for every person to enough nutritious food to sustain an active and healthy life including food availability (adequate food supply), food access (people can get to food), and appropriate food use (the absorption of essential nutrients).

- ❑ According to the USDA, the percentage of households facing food insecurity in the U.S. rose from 11.3 percent to 11.9 percent from 2003 to 2004. Food insecurity means that the risk of hunger is real and that “access to enough food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.” In about one-third of food-insecure households, one or more members are hungry as a result.<sup>3</sup>
- ❑ North Carolina’s percentage of households with food insecurity is significantly above the national average. North Carolina ranks 5th-worst in the nation in terms of households facing hunger.<sup>4</sup>
- ❑ Over 47 percent of all food-insecure households have incomes over 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, thus generally making them ineligible for food stamps.<sup>5</sup>
- ❑ According to the Food Policy Institute, about 26 million tons of food waste are generated each year in the US. *This is equivalent to roughly one ton of food waste for each food-insecure individual.*<sup>6</sup>
- ❑ Worldwide, 852 million people across the world are hungry, up from 842 million a year ago. In addition, every day, more than 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes – one child every five seconds.<sup>7</sup>
- ❑ While hunger is in essence the most extreme form of poverty, where individuals or families cannot afford to meet their most basic need for food, hunger manifests itself in many ways other than starvation and famine. Most poor people who battle hunger deal with chronic undernourishment and vitamin or mineral deficiencies which result in stunted growth, weakness, and heightened susceptibility to illness.<sup>8</sup>
- ❑ Countries in which a large portion of the population battles hunger daily are usually poor and often lack the social safety nets found in industrialized nations, such as soup kitchens, food stamps, and job training programs. When a family that lives in a poor country cannot grow enough food or earn enough money to buy food, there is usually nowhere to turn for help.<sup>9</sup>

1. *Bread for the World*, “Hunger Report 2006: Data Table 7,” [www.bread.org/learn/hunger-reports/hunger-report-pdfs/hunger-report-2006/Data-table-7.pdf](http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-reports/hunger-report-pdfs/hunger-report-2006/Data-table-7.pdf). See also U.S. Census Bureau, “Quick Facts: North Carolina,” <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>.

2. *Bread for the World*, “Hunger Report 2006: Introduction,” [www.bread.org/learn/hunger-reports/hunger-report-pdfs/hunger-report-2006/2006-Introduction.pdf](http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-reports/hunger-report-pdfs/hunger-report-2006/2006-Introduction.pdf).

3. U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Household Food Security in the United States, 2004,” [www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err11/err11.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err11/err11.pdf).

4. *Center on Hunger and Poverty*, “Bulletin October 2005: Hunger and Food Insecurity Increase for 5th Straight Year,” [www.centeronhunger.org/pdf/Oct2005Bulletin.pdf](http://www.centeronhunger.org/pdf/Oct2005Bulletin.pdf).

5. Ibid.

6. *Food Policy Institute*, “Food Waste Management,” [www.foodpolicyinstitute.org/research/waste.html](http://www.foodpolicyinstitute.org/research/waste.html).

7. *Bread for the World*, “Hunger Facts: International,” [www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics/hunger-facts-international.html](http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics/hunger-facts-international.html).

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.