

# Hunger News & Hope

... a Seeds of Hope publication

## The US Budget Control Act of 2011: How It Will Affect Poor and Hungry People

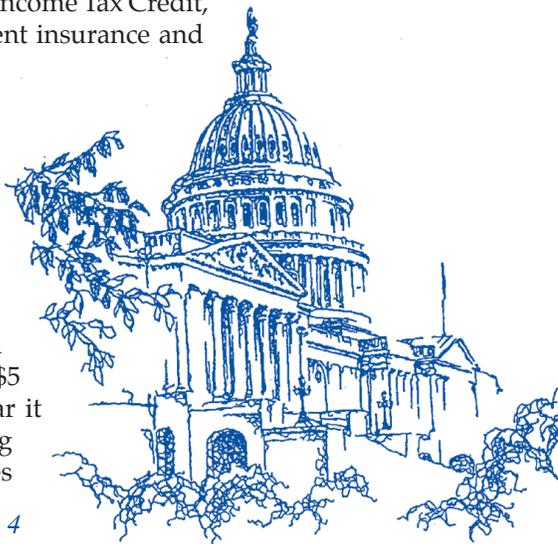
As one BBC reporter said, "The crisis is over. The struggle isn't." After a long and bitter battle between political parties, the US Congress passed the Budget Control Act of 2011 on August 2, shortly before press time. US President Barack Obama signed it into law the same day. The Act, a compromise with which neither side was entirely satisfied, will raise the US debt ceiling, narrowly avoiding a default of financial obligations that would have had catastrophic consequences at home and around the world. Those consequences—like the effects of all disasters, natural and human-made—would have been particularly devastating to poor and hungry people.

The Budget Control Act also provides for budget-deficit reductions, the details of which will be hammered out by a bipartisan "supercommittee" in the coming months. In the first round of cuts, some social-assistance programs will be protected. These include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp program), Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, unemployment insurance and Medicaid.

### Domestic Poverty Programs at Risk

Domestic programs that are especially at risk include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC, which has proven in the past to save \$5 in the long run for every dollar it spends), Head Start, job-training programs, Community Services

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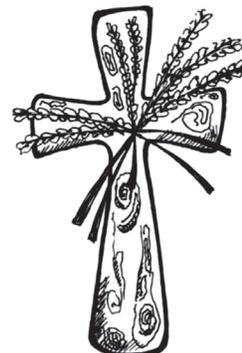
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# Edge Outreach:

## Teaching Health & Hygiene with a Bit of Fun

by Derek Sommer

Edge Outreach, a nonprofit organization based in Louisville, KY, came onto the scene in 2002 with a new, sustainable solution to the struggle to supply clean water to developing nations and disaster zones. Its founders created a mini-water treatment plant that can be set up on site at a local church, and—with simple maintenance and a steady supply of salt and electricity—it can produce enough drinkable water to support a town long after the Edge team has left.

It wasn't until two years later that, returning to the sites where they had given aid, Edge realized it needed to do more than just supply people with clean water. It needed to show them why clean water was better, and how to use it to lead healthier lives. With this goal in mind, the Edge Outreach Health and Hygiene Task Force was born.

Marcia Hogg is Edge Outreach's Health and Hygiene coach. In the reality of a developed country like the US, where clean water is abundant and basic hygiene is ingrained from childhood, it is Hogg's job to give incoming volunteers a new perspective on luxuries developed countries take for granted.

"When we stand in front of a group that needs to be trained in the United States to go out, we ask them, 'Who taught you to wash your hands?'" Hogg said. "Everyone, of course, says 'mom and dad.' ... Well, if you're part of an environment where that was not passed down because of the lack of clean

water, it's not taught. It's not because of a lack of caring...it's because the facilities are not there to accommodate this."

Pam Pusty, the director of the Health and Hygiene Task Force, explained that Edge takes a down-to-earth approach to their hygiene presentations to villagers in foreign countries.

"You don't come in as that all-knowing American," Pusty said. "I always make sure before I begin teaching to let them

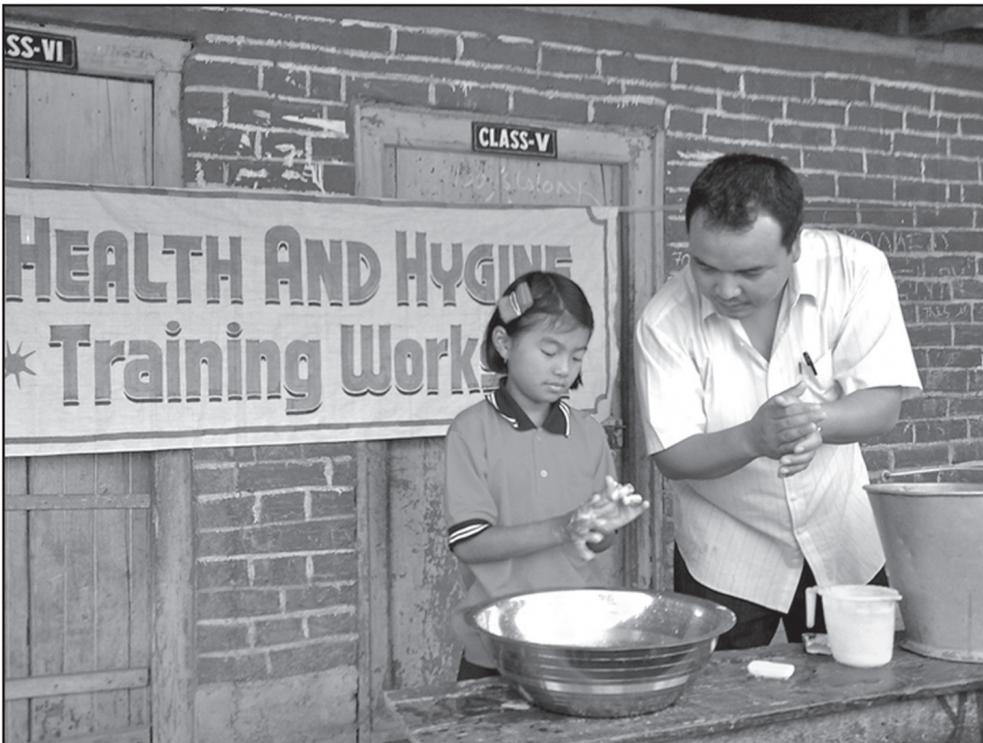
*Two years later, returning to the sites where they had given aid, Edge realized it needed to do more than just supply the needy with clean water. It needed to show them why clean water was better.*

know that I am no one special, that I am just an average woman as they are—most of the people we teach are women—and that women all over the world, no matter what color they are or what kind of language they speak, all have the same basic drive: we want our families to be healthy and safe."

When working to improve their hygiene program, one of Pusty's and Hogg's major focuses is making the program fun. One of their more successful techniques is a skit that illustrates the problems caused by bad hygiene and the benefits of clean water. Five of the roles in the skit are for germs.

"We do this skit one time, and all of the children want to be the germs," Hogg said. "They all want to die dramatically at the end when we start doing everything with safe water. It's a lot of fun, because you know they're not only having fun doing it but also, because they're repeating it often, that they're also learning about it, too."

Pusty emphasized Edge's efforts to avoid becoming what she called "talking heads"—lifeless instructors



*Left: A Hygiene Task Force volunteer works with a young trainee in India. Photo courtesy of Edge Outreach.*

simply relaying information. "The thing that we always try to train into people [who are volunteering] is to leave your inhibitions at the door, and act as crazy and stupid as possible," Pusty said.

"The more animated you are, the less self-conscious you are when you're doing the skits and the songs. The more crazy you can act while you are teaching some really important stuff, the more it's going to sink in. We aren't just standing behind a table as a group of people and just talking."

Part of the reason such animation is needed is because some of the practices Edge is combating are ingrained into the societies they work with. "[Use of unclean water] has been going on for generations," Hogg said. "Everyone assumes this is just the way it is: 'Grandpa drank from that lake, we all drank from that well for so long.' But as soon as they see us Westerners purifying that water, and then putting our bottles

underneath that water—and we drink it—then they're like: 'Oh my gosh, this is good.'"

As with everything that Edge does, the hygiene program is highly compact and mobile. The entire health and hygiene kit, which has all of the educational equipment needed for the team as long as they are out, can fit inside a small suitcase.

"Everything we do is small, transportable," Pusty said. "To get us in, to get us to do what we need to do and help the people we need to help."

—Derek Sommer, a native of Dallas, TX, is recent graduate from Baylor University's Professional Writing program. For more information about Edge Outreach, go to [www.edgeoutreach.com](http://www.edgeoutreach.com). See also "Edge Outreach: Giving the Gift of Clean Water" in *Hunger News & Hope*, Volume 11, No 4, pages 6-7, and "Edge Outreach: A Sustainable Solution for the Water Problem in Haiti," by Derek Sommer, in *Baptist Peacemaker*, Vol 32 No 2, page 18.

## 'Food Not Bombs' Standing against Florida Laws

Three members of a group called Orlando Food Not Bombs (FNB) were arrested in Orlando, FL, in June, for feeding homeless people in the park. Police said they violated a city ordinance that restricts group feedings in Orlando's public parks.

Jonathan "Keith" McHenry, a co-founder of the international Food Not Bombs movement, was one of three people arrested on June 2.

Food Not Bombs is an international volunteer movement (with more than 400 local organizations) that began in the early 1980s. Its members share vegan or vegetarian meals with anyone who is hungry. The meals are served in public areas, as a protest against war and poverty. The local groups work to "call attention to poverty and homelessness by sharing food in public places" and facilitating public gatherings of poor and homeless people.

Most of the food served is rescued from local stores and bakeries or donated by local farmers. Some is even obtained by "dumpster diving."

Some FNB groups have also served food to people involved in anti-war protests since 2003. The movement's "in your face" attitude has caused consternation from federal anti-terrorism officials across the country, but most of the consternation seems to be from city governments in Florida.

According to a story by Susan Jacobson in the *Orlando Sentinel*, the local group lost a court battle in April, clearing the way for the city to enforce the ordinance. It requires groups to obtain permits for feeding more than 25 people, and limits each group to two permits per year, for each park within a two-mile radius of City Hall.

The FNB group fed 40 people on the day of the arrest.

A spokesperson for Orlando FNB said the police waited until everyone was served to make the arrests. The Orlando group has been feeding breakfast to homeless people for several years, and dinner on Wednesdays for five years.

Police had not enforced the ordinance while the court battle continued. However, the US District Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in Atlanta, GA, ruled in April that city rules regulating how often large groups of people can be fed in a park do not violate the Constitution.

According to arrest documents and reports from the Orlando FNB organization, the group had decided to reject any permits they received and to defy the ordinance. The penalty for violating Orlando's ordinance is 60 days in jail, a \$500 fine or both. Bail was set at \$250 for each of person arrested. A spokesperson for FNB said that McHenry planned to stay in jail and "let the legal process take its course."

A hand-made banner in the City Hall vicinity reads, "We won't stop until every belly is full!"

Police made 24 more arrests in June, resulting in heavy debate in the community—including threats to the City of Orlando from computer hackers and heavy criticism of Mayor Buddy Dyer for referring to FNB members as "food terrorists."

Apparently, standoffs like this are occurring all over the state of Florida, with one county threatening to ban sleeping in public as well as public feeding.

—Sources: *Orlando Sentinel*, *West Orlando News*, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, *Food Not Bombs* ([www.foodnotbombs.net](http://www.foodnotbombs.net)), *Orlando Food Not Bombs* (<http://orlando-foodnotbombs.org>).



Above: One of the Food Not Bombs logos.

# Budget Control Act

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Block Grants, Hunger-Free Communities Grants and energy assistance for low-income households.

The new cuts will come on top of earlier cuts to poverty-related programs. For example, the 2011 budget that was adopted in April included an \$80 million (40 percent) reduction in the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which has provided urgent assistance to millions of poor Americans for nearly three decades through the work of more than 13,000 nonprofit and public food banks, shelters and homelessness prevention organizations.

## *International Poverty Programs at Risk*

Poverty-focused international programs that are in danger include food-aid programs for disaster areas, school-meal programs, agricultural and microenterprise development assistance, HIV / AIDS relief programs (which now help millions of people in 30 countries), programs that strengthen national health systems in developing countries, an innovative and successful development agency funded by the Millennium Challenge Account, and the Peace Corps.

The “supercommittee” will be expected to examine revenues, “entitlement reform” and defense spending. Cuts will be split between “security” spending (which includes international humanitarian aid) and “non-security” spending. Analysts are concerned that crucial international development programs will be cut in that category to protect military defense spending.

The Obama administration, in a statement issued the day the bill was passed, stressed its determination to protect the Social Security program, Medicare and low-income programs. One endeavor that a White House statement mentioned specifically was the Pell grant program for low-income college students.

## *Speaking Out for People in Need*

On July 20th, President Obama met with a group of Christian leaders who were concerned about how debt-reduction legislation will affect poor people around the world. Members of the national coalition, which calls itself the Circle of Protection (COP), said they were not lobbying for any particular piece of legislation, but they wanted to make sure the voices of the poor do not get drowned out in the partisan debate on Capitol Hill.

The COP—which includes more than 50 Catholic bishops, as well as evangelical and mainstream Protestants—signed a statement and list of principles in April and began circulating it around the country.

The group also includes leaders from a number of national African-American and Latino clergy groups.

Jim Wallis, founder of the Sojourners community and one of the COP, said that, in previous budget debates, there has been broad bipartisan commitment to protecting vulnerable people, but not much is being said about that in the current discussion. Wallis said that Obama spoke of “the least of these,” a reference to people in need from the Gospel of Matthew. “It is always heartening to hear a political leader refer to that text,” he said.

On July 28, an interfaith group of 11 religious leaders staged a sit-in in the Capitol Rotunda to urge Congress and the President not to “balance the budget on the backs of the poor.” After they refused to leave, the leaders were arrested for demonstrating within a Capitol building. The protesters included Rev. Michael Livingston, a past president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ (USA); Jim Winkler, general secretary of the United Methodist Church’s General Board of Church and Society; Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia; and the Rev. Jennifer Butler, head of Faith in Public Life (a interfaith strategy center that was formed in 2004).

“Our faith won’t allow us to passively watch this travesty unfold,” Livingston said.

On July 31, political commentator Tavis Smiley appeared on *CBS Sunday Morning*, saying that the rapidly-growing gap between wealthy people and impoverished people in the US is “dangerous and unsustainable.” He went on to say that political leaders will not speak up for those most in need, “unless we demand that they do.”

Analysts agree that, although the new law brings a margin of relief, much is still at risk for the most vulnerable people in the US and around the world.

Perhaps “fake” political pundit Stephen Colbert said it best: “If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn’t help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we have to acknowledge that He commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition, and then admit that we just don’t want to do it.”

—Compiled by Katie Cook. Sources: *Bread for the World, Obama Administration; Associated Baptist Press; Sojourners Magazine; United Press International; CBS News; consultation with Stephen Gardner, Professor of Economics and Director of the McBride Center for International Business at Baylor University.*

**A** note to our US readers: For information about how you can speak out for poor and hungry people in the US and around the world, go to [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org). We recommend Bread’s citizen-action guide, “Advocacy 101.” It explains the legislative process and provides information for contacting your representative and senators. Call 1-800-BREAD to ask for a copy of “Advocacy 101” or to find out how to contact your regional organizer.

# Who's Hungry in the World?

compiled by Katie Cook

Before 2008, the “anti-hunger” community saw some progress toward ending hunger in the world, although it seemed slow to many of us. The number of people who died each day from hunger had shrunk from a reported 38,000 in the mid-1980s to 25,000 (depending on whom you asked and what criteria they used).

A United Nations summit in the year 2000 had chosen eight Millennium Development Goals—aims for cutting global poverty in half by 2015 (see the sidebar on page 7 for a list of the MDGs). Some gains had been made toward the eight goals, which included eradicating extreme poverty, providing education for everyone in the world, empowering women, reducing child mortality, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

But the petroleum crisis of 2008, brought on largely by the war in Iraq, caused food prices to skyrocket. The ensuing crisis set the anti-hunger movement back a decade or more. The global recession was exacerbated by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and extended droughts across the globe. During that year, riots broke out in a number of countries where the scarcity of food grew and the prices of food spiked.

Although fewer people have died from hunger-related causes in the past few years, more and more people are at risk for food insecurity and undernourishment. In 2009, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that global climate change alone could increase the number of undernourished people by between 40 million and 170 million.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation reports that 65 percent of the world’s hungry people live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. The World Food Programme lists the following 13 countries as having the highest rate of undernourished people (35 percent or more of the population): Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Twenty-two other countries are listed with 20 to 34 percent of their people undernourished and at “moderately high” risk of food insecurity. (Some of these countries may have shifted into the “very high” category since the WFP published its report.) Several regions of Somalia, in the Horn of Africa, were recently designated by the UN as official famine areas.

The southern regions of the Arabian Peninsula—along with Iraq, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Belize and the occupied Palestinian territories—are in such turmoil that the WFP doesn’t have enough data to rate them.

In the annual “special section” of *Hunger News & Hope* for 2011, we will take an all-too-quick look at some of those high-risk countries. (Watch in future issues of HNH for more profiles, including first Afghanistan, North Korea and Malawi.) After reading these reports, we suggest that you get in contact with your denomination’s or faith community’s hunger response program and find out how you can help them respond to these and other food-insecure regions. In the case of Somalia, the need is immediate and urgent. (If you need help in contacting your denomination’s hunger program or finding a program to support, please feel free to call us at 254-755-7745 or email [seedseditor@clearwire.net](mailto:seedseditor@clearwire.net).)



## Famine in the Horn of Africa

A few days before press time, the United Nations declared that Somalia’s food crisis had become a famine in several parts of the country.

Somalia has lurched from crisis to crisis since 1991, when the central government imploded. In 1992, a similar combination of drought and war set off a famine that killed hundreds of thousands of people and started a cycle of international intervention that, despite billions of dollars and more than a dozen transitional governments, has yet to stabilize the country.

Now, some 11 to 12 million people are struggling to survive the driest period in the Eastern Horn of Africa in 60 years. The drought is causing widespread crop failure, devastating livestock and causing substantial increases in food prices. In hard-hit Somalia alone, some 3.7 million people are facing a crisis and hundreds of thousands are pouring into other countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

The UN says that tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition-related causes in the past few months.

The UN defines famine as occurring when “acute malnutrition rates among children exceed 30 percent,

*continued on page 6*

Special section: Who's Hungry?

more than two people per 10,000 die per day and people are not able to access food and other basic necessities.”

Those conditions are being met in southern Somalia, in Bakool and Lower Shabelee, both controlled by Islamic militants known as the *Shabab*. But people are on the verge of running out of food throughout the country, and other regions were added to the “famine” category just before press time. According to American officials in the region, more than 10 million people need emergency rations to survive in the wider Horn of Africa—which includes Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. South Sudan, an emerging new country, and Djibouti are also affected by the drought and food crisis, as well as parts of Uganda. Many of these people are also at risk for cholera and measles.

Aid deliveries from the UN and other sources were discontinued almost two years ago, because of violence from the *Shabab*, which is considered a terrorist group by Western nations. Some Somalis reported that Islamic militants were still being violent against those who “had food from the infidels.”

A European Union aid spokesperson said in late July that, although deliveries are still complicated by the presence of the *Shabab*, some supplies are now getting through to the affected regions. A Somali aid worker told the BBC in early August that international organizations were handing food over to Somali agencies, and this seemed to be working well.

In late July, the WFP began sending airlifts with 80 tons of nutritional supplies into the capital city of Mogadishu. Lutheran World Relief, CARE and Church World Service, along with the WFP and a number of other aid agencies, have been recently been concentrating on bringing help to the huge refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya.

—*New York Times, Baptist World Aid, BBC World News, The Independent, Bread for the World*

### **South Sudan: Challenges for the World's Newest Nation**

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest country this summer. In January of this



year, the 8 million people of southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly for independence, and, in July, South Sudan became an independent state, with membership in the United Nations and the African Union.

The new country faces enormous challenges, including one of the worst health situations in the world.

Sudan's most recent civil war, a brutal one that earned charges of genocide from the international community, began in 1983 and officially ended in 2005, when a peace agreement was signed between the northern and southern regions. The referendum this January was a result of that agreement.

Some 1.5 million people died in what is referred to as the Second Sudanese Civil War, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) is cited for vicious human rights violations and hundreds of atrocities during that conflict.

These civil wars destroyed what little infrastructure there was in the South and contributed to what the humanitarian agency Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) terms as the region's “appalling health indicators.” An estimated 75 percent of people in the new nation have no access to basic medical care. One in seven women dies in childbirth. Malnutrition and disease outbreaks are constant concerns.

While the elections in January were conducted in relative peace, sporadic fighting erupted in late February and March in the Upper Nile and Jonglei states, as well as in the disputed oil-rich border district of Abyei. MSF reports that its hospital staffs treated scores of gunshot wounds during the last few months. Its clinics have also treated tens of thousands of people for severe malnutrition. MSF reports a 20-percent increase from two years ago, and a 50-percent increase from 2008.

Almost 200,000 more people have been forced from their homes since February. Another 300,000 have returned to the south from homes outside the region. This is placing an enormous strain on the country's already limited supplies of food and water, as well as shelter.

South Sudan's people are also experiencing a large outbreak of *kala azar*, a deadly disease spread by the bite of the tsetse fly.

—*Sources: Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières, BBC News, Al Jazeera English, Sudan Tribune, Associated Press. Note: MSF has been working in Sudan since 1978. The agency employs more than 2,000 Sudanese staff, along with almost 200 international staff in 13 projects throughout North and South Sudan.*

### **Haiti: A Long History of Poverty**

In January 2010, catastrophic earthquakes tore apart the tiny Caribbean country of Haiti, which was already choked by centuries of poverty and oppression. Before the 2010 earthquakes, 75 percent of Haiti's 9



million people, according to UN figures, survived on less than \$2 a day. About a third of the Haitian population was considered to be food-insecure.

The Republic of Haiti is located on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, in the Greater Antillean archipelago, and shares the island with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. According to the UN World Food Programme, more than 35 percent of its population is undernourished.

In the 18th century, Haiti was called the “Jewel of the Antilles,” the richest colony in the world. This wealth, however, was based on a particularly harsh system of slavery. Known as the French colony Saint-Domingue, it was described as one of the most “brutally efficient” slave colonies.

The country has been continually wracked by colonialism and indigenous dictatorships. Even after the slave revolt of 1804 brought independence to the nation, slavery and oppression continued—perpetuated by the Haitian elite and a hostile international environment.

Added to the ravages of oppression were earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, mudslides brought on by tropical storms, floods and international embargos. Around 2005-2006, Haiti experienced some economic growth. A US embargo was partially lifted, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund canceled 80 percent of the country’s debts.

In 2008, however, the global food crisis hit Haiti. Riots broke out as food prices skyrocketed. This turmoil continued until January 2010, when a 7.0 earthquake, with at least 52 aftershocks, hit the island and devastated the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The city crumbled. More than 300,000 people were killed and 1.6 million left homeless, according to the Haitian government.

In October 2010, a cholera epidemic broke out in Haiti, killing more than 900,000 people. Officials speculated that the disease was accidentally introduced into the population by earthquake relief workers.

In 2011, the Haitian people still struggle to rebuild

their nation from the rubble. General elections, originally set for January 2010, took place in November of last year, amid some violence between parties. Runoffs for president took place in March, and Michel Martelly was elected. Many humanitarian agencies remain in the country. According to the UN’s World Food Programme, food insecurity in the areas directly affected by the earthquake has dropped in the last year and a half, but levels are still higher than they were prior to 2010.

— Sources: Oxfam ([www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)), US Geological Survey, ([www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)), Global Voices Online ([globalvoicesonline.org](http://globalvoicesonline.org)), New York Times, United Nations World Food Programme. For more about the earthquake, the history of Haiti and resources about Haiti, go to [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org) and find Hunger News & Hope, Vol 11 No 1, Spring 2010, or email [seedseeditor@clearwire.net](mailto:seedseeditor@clearwire.net) for a pdf copy.

### Slow Reconstruction in Iraq

Nearly 30 years of conflict—with Iran in the 1980s and with the US and Coalition forces after 1991—along with UN economic sanctions beginning in the 1990s, have caused severe humanitarian consequences in the Republic of Iraq.

The years of conflict and sanctions were also years of economic decline. The United Nations children’s fund, UNICEF, reported in 1999 that the sanctions had caused the mortality rate of children in Iraq to double.

Since 2004, the Iraqi provisional government, with help from the international community, began to rebuild its infrastructure—including water supply and sewage, electricity production, health care, education, housing and transportation. Last summer, a National

### The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

For more information about the MDGs, go to [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals) or go to [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org) and look for the Special Section on MDGs in Hunger News & Hope, Vol 11 No 2, Summer 2010, pp 5-8, and Vol 11 No 3, Fall 2010, page 1.

Special section: What's Hungry?

Public Radio report said that, despite the fact that Iraq's economy is driven by oil, the country still only had half of the electricity it needed.

A United-Kingdom-based research group reports that security issues, corruption in the government and a lack of coordinated funding have slowed the progress of reconstruction in Iraq. In the first five years after the US invasion, 94 aid workers were killed, 248 injured, 24 arrested or detained, and 89 kidnapped or abducted. (One of those kidnapped and murdered was Margaret Hassan, the director of CARE International in Iraq and an Iraqi citizen since 1972.)

Also during those five years, some 2.4 million people were internally displaced, 2 million fled the country, and 4 million became food-insecure. One-fourth of Iraq's children were reported in 2008 to be chronically malnourished, and only one-third of them had access to safe drinking water.

According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), education and health services have continued to deteriorate in Iraq, a situation that severely affects women, children, elderly people and chronically-ill people.

Iraq is now at a crossroads to political stability and socio-economic recovery. Although the food security situation in Iraq is improving, the data from the Iraqi government and the WFP showed 930,000 people in need of food assistance and an additional 6.4 million who were extremely vulnerable and could easily become food-insecure. The survey also showed that female-headed houses and people in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity.

In response to these findings, WFP says it is shifting its strategy in Iraq from traditional food aid to innovative food assistance and supporting the government in finding durable solutions to food insecurity.

Sources: World Food Programme ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)), Overseas Development Insti-

tute ([www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)), National Public Radio ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)), BBC News ([www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)), Care International ([www.care.org](http://www.care.org)), The Guardian ([www.guardian.org.uk](http://www.guardian.org.uk)), UNICEF ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))



## Some Facts about Hunger

- Hunger is the world's number-one health risk. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. *World Food Programme (WFP)*
- One in seven people in the world will go to bed hungry tonight. *WFP*
- 925 million people do not have enough to eat, and 98 percent of them live in developing countries. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
- Asia and the Pacific region are home to over half the world's population and nearly two thirds of the world's hungry people. *FAO*
- Women make up a little over half of the world's population, but they account for over 60 percent of the world's hungry people. *United Nations Economic and Social Council*
- Sixty-five percent of the world's hungry people live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. *FAO*
- There are 583 million undernourished people in Asia, 236 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 51 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 15 million in the Near East and northern Africa. *WFP*
- Undernutrition contributes to 5 million deaths of children under the age of 5 each year in developing countries. *UNICEF*
- One out of four children—roughly 146 million—in developing countries is underweight. *UNICEF*
- More than 70 percent of the world's underweight children (aged 5 or less) live in 10 countries, with more than 50 percent located in South Asia. *UNICEF*
- 10.9 million children under the age of 5 die in developing countries each year. Malnutrition and hunger-related diseases cause 60 percent of the deaths. *UNICEF*
- Iron deficiency is the most prevalent form of malnutrition worldwide, affecting an estimated 2 billion people. Eradicating iron deficiency can improve national productivity levels by as much as 20 percent. *World Health Organisation (WHO)*
- Iodine deficiency is the greatest single cause of mental retardation and brain damage, affecting 1.9 billion people worldwide. It can easily be prevented by adding iodine to salt. *UN Standing Committee on Nutrition*

# Herbert Hoover's Great Good Deed

by Crystal Goolsby

Devastation swept across the United States during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many people lived on meager government rations, families went homeless, countless people lost jobs and the national economy was horrendous. One person became the scapegoat for this tragic portion of American history—US President Herbert Hoover. Though he attempted to pass legislation to help Americans and the economy recover, he left his presidency reputed to be the man who could not save his own nation.

But long before the Great Depression, Herbert Hoover helped to save millions of people's lives in several countries. After World War I, he arranged for food shipments to many parts of Europe that were trying to recover from the war.

In 1921, famine struck Russia, by then a part of the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). The famine was brought on by a combination of war, revolution, drought and—some say—Bolshevist policies. Years of war and civil conflict had decayed the country's infrastructure, and Russians were not able to transport food supplies—which were scant to begin with—to the stricken regions.

Conditions were so bad that famed Soviet writer Maxim Gorky sent out a worldwide appeal for humanitarian aid. US President Warren Harding directed Hoover, who was then Secretary of Commerce, to head a new government organization, the American Relief Administration (ARA). Its mission was to bring food to the millions of people in the USSR who were starving.

Hoover, who had already headed a huge relief effort in post-war Europe, convinced Congress to provide \$20 million for the relief fund. Although Hoover, and others, hoped the administration's efforts would bolster approval of US economic policies on the global stage, his main impetus was the desire to help all people who needed it.

The famine—which extended from the Russia's Volga River valley to Crimea, Ukraine and Armenia—was hideous. Millions of people suffered from hunger. Millions more died. Crude, overcrowded orphanages housed skeletal children whose parents had already died of starvation. People resorted to eating bones, dirt, grass and even the bodies of people who had already died. In some cases, parents even killed and consumed their own children. It was a horrific and tragic situation, a situation with no hope.

But the arrival of the ARA in 1921 set these regions on the long road to recovery. Relief workers arrived with corn grits, cocoa, white bread, sugar and condensed milk. They bought excess grains from American farmers to take to Russia. The ARA fed from 10 to 11 million people every day.

At the close of the famine, the ARA provided grain seeds to ensure against future crop shortages.

People in modern society have witnessed the United States providing disaster relief many times. Such actions are viewed nowadays as a diplomatic gesture, helping and maintaining the strength of a "friendly" country. But the striking significance of the ARA's work lay in the fact that the Soviet Union was by no means a US ally. The effort was wholly humanitarian. Hoover said his goal was to save starving people, and it didn't matter what their politics were.

In spite of the official Soviet view, some Russians who received this life-giving offering referred to their rations as "America." People who survived the Great Russian Famine have expressed gratitude to the Americans for essentially saving their nation.

The Soviet government, as could be expected, retained a suspicion of US workers throughout the duration of the ARA's efforts. The Soviets sometimes published negative accounts about American volunteers during and after the famine, accusing them of being US spies, infiltrating under the guise of good intentions. The USSR government never officially thanked the US government for the project.

Though Herbert Hoover may be remembered by his own nation as a man who could not alleviate its problems, people of other nations may well remember him as a great humanitarian who saved millions of people. And maybe a few Americans will learn to view him this way, as his pre-presidential humanitarian actions come more into the spotlight.

—Crystal Goolsby is a freelance writer in Austin, TX. Sources: [Globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org): "1919-1922—Famine in Soviet Russia" ([www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org)); Hoover Institution at Stanford University: "The American Relief Administration in Soviet Russia" ([www.hoover.org](http://www.hoover.org)); Stanford University News: "How the US Saved a Starving Soviet Russia" (<http://news.stanford.edu>), Stanford Magazine: "Waging a Kinder Cold War" ([www.stanfordalumni.org](http://www.stanfordalumni.org)); Public Broadcasting System: "American Experience: The Great Famine" (<http://video.pbs.org>); Humanities: "The Politics of Food: How America Kept Russia from Starving" ([www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)); Herbert Hoover Presidential Library & Museum ([www.hoover.archives.gov](http://www.hoover.archives.gov)); US White House ([www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents)); consultation with Michael Long, professor of Russian and Director of Slavic and Eastern European Studies at Baylor University.

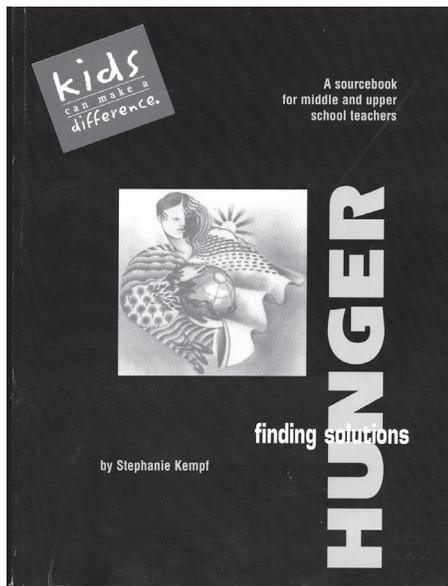


This poster from 1921, attributed to Dmitri Moor, calls for emergency aid in the famine-stricken regions of Russia. The Russian word, pomogi, is the command form for "Help!"

# Finding Solutions to Hunger

## A Resource for Middle- and High-School Teachers

In a national environment where boards of education are doing their best to remove minority stories from history books, teachers who are concerned about marginalized populations need all the help they can get. I am delighted to say that World Hunger Year (WHY) and Kids Can Make a Difference (KIDS) have created an excellent resource for our schools that will help educators teach young people about hunger and hunger-related issues.



*Finding Solutions to Hunger* is a 255-page curriculum for middle- and high-school students in public and private schools. The resource, updated in 2009 by Stephanie Kempf, has been used in more than 5,000 classrooms and after-school programs. Its 25 lessons teach young people about how hunger

feels and how it affects people, the importance of food, the inequality of food distribution, and the links between poverty, hunger, joblessness, and homelessness. Each lesson provides numerous ideas for activities to help kids understand these realities, and also gives them an opportunity to respond in a practical way.

*Finding Solutions* is made up of three components. The book is complemented by a website ([www.kidscanmakeadifference.org](http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org)) that keeps global and national information updated. KIDS also produces the *Finding Solutions Newsletter*, with three issues a year. The newsletter highlights current hunger issues and describes innovative ways that teachers have used the curriculum, as well as ways that students have responded.

*Finding Solutions* includes three units: "What Is Hunger?" with six lesson plans, "Why Are People Hungry?" with 14 lesson plans, and "What Can We Do to Help End Hunger?" with five lesson plans.

Unit I covers nutrition and the difference between famine and chronic hunger. It explores the diets of people (specifically teenagers) from several different parts of the world. Unit II tackles the causes of hunger, including the history of colonial-

ism, the way US foreign aid works and the importance of female education. This unit also teaches students about the minority populations in the US who are most at risk for food insecurity.

One lesson contains several excellent exercises that acquaint kids with how it would feel to be homeless. Another lesson takes a look at some of the ways media and advertising affect the lives of poor people. Still another introduces *The Grapes of Wrath* to teach about the horrors of the Great Depression.

Unit III is about what kids can do to help end hunger, such as conducting surveys, responding with art, joining community activities, writing letters to government officials and newspaper editors—even testifying before a legislative body.

The book also includes fundraising ideas, contact information for hunger organizations and an annotated resource list that is organized by topic. All through the book, teachers will find true stories about people (including kids) who are making a difference in their communities.

In its introduction, *Finding Solutions* also sets out ideas for a short, two-week lesson plan, in case the educator only has two weeks to spend on a hunger program.

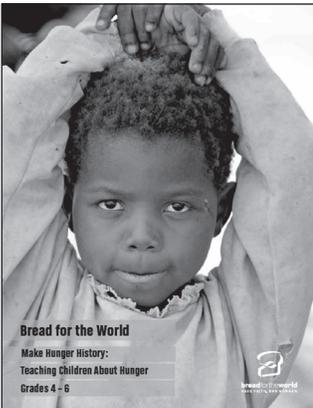
*continued on page 11*

**K**ids Can Make a Difference (KIDS) was founded by Larry and Jane Levine in 1994. Larry Levine is the coordinator. The project is based in New York City, NY. KIDS is also a project of IEARN, an international education and resource network.

World Hunger Year (WHY—it sometimes calls itself WhyHunger) is a leading advocate for innovative community-based solutions to hunger and poverty. The organization was founded in 1975 by the late Harry Chapin and by Bill Ayers, who is the current executive director. It is also based in New York City.

Besides sponsoring the KIDS project, WHY also runs the Hunger Hotline (1-866-3-HUNGRY), which refers individuals in need of emergency food assistance to agencies that can help them. WHY also created the Grassroots Action Network as an information-and-capacity-building connection for 8,000 community organizations around the world, and the well-known Artists Against Hunger & Poverty, which is supported by a number of musical artists like Bruce Springsteen, Chicago and Earth Wind & Fire. For more information about WHY, go to [www.whyhunger.org](http://www.whyhunger.org).

## Faith-Based Resources from Bread for the World



- Bread for the World's *Make Hunger History* is a curriculum for children in grades 4-6 and grades 7-9. It includes exercises to help children understand the uneven distribution of food in the world, and what it's like to make a food budget with limited resources. It also includes a "Mythmashers" quiz and other games, and a chance for children to write letters to their legislators.

- *Helping Hungry People* is a five-week curriculum, also from Bread for the World, that takes elementary-age students on "trips" to a local soup kitchen, and also to Haiti, Zambia and India to learn about people living in poverty. Students will learn to pray for hungry people, provide resources for a food pantry, collect money for an organization that fights poverty and write letters to their members of Congress.

- *Hunger No More* is the product of an impressive cooperative effort involving 24 national faith communities. The basic resource includes a leader's guide for six lessons for congregations, youth groups or adult study groups. It would be a great resource for the six Sundays in Lent.

Each lesson includes a handout designed so that it can be reproduced and used as bulletin inserts. The resource, which can be ordered or downloaded at [www.bread.org/hungernomore](http://www.bread.org/hungernomore), is supported by a number of web-based activities and links at that site.

A Jewish version of *Hunger No More* is available from Mazon, a national nonprofit Jewish organization and a major Jewish voice in the anti-hunger community ([www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)).

- *Getting Ready to Come Back* is an advocacy guide for international, short-term mission teams. It is designed to help

mission leaders in preparing teams to engage in advocacy when they return home. The guide is written to be used in conjunction with other training materials, in four or more sessions—before departure to the field, during the mission experience, soon after returning to the US or Canada, and another session several months later.

You can purchase a spiral-bound copy of *Getting Ready to Come Back* for \$10 (\$25 for five copies) or download it. You can find it at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) by going to "How You Can Help," "Engage Your Church," and "Activities and Curriculum." To purchase, contact the Publications Assistant at 202-639-9400.

- *Our Common Interest: Ending Hunger and Malnutrition* is Bread for the World Institute's 2011 Hunger Report. If you want to understand US public policy, trade policy and international development—and how they affect hungry people—this 200-plus-page book will help you. It includes a message from Bread's president, David Beckmann, who recently received the World Food Prize, and from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the president of the Republic of Liberia.

It contains a piece by Roger Thurow, a former journalist (he spent 30 years at the *Wall Street Journal*, and received awards for his coverage on famine in Africa) and co-author of *ENOUGH: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*. You will also find a conclusion by former Congressman Tony Hall (who is now director of The Alliance to End Hunger), and a Christian study guide.

To order *Our Common Interest*, call 202-639-9400 or 800-82-BREAD, or email [institute@bread.org](mailto:institute@bread.org). You can also download the report at [www.hungerreport.org](http://www.hungerreport.org).



### Finding Solutions, *continued*

This project received a prestigious award this summer from Psychologists for Social Responsibility. The award is given annually to an individual or organization whose efforts focus on peace and social justice for children.

*Finding Solutions* is a treasure trove for any leader who

wants to teach young people about hunger and what they can do to end it. To order a printed version (\$26) or download an electronic version (\$12), go to [www.kidscanmakeadifference.org](http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org).

—Reviewed by Katie Cook.

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**S**eeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended

## *quotes, poems, & pithy sayings*

### **Wake-up Call**

by Nadine N. Doughty

Whatever happened to America, the promised land?

When did the promise turn sour,

- if you were poor
- if you were sick
- if you were out of a job
- if you were homeless?

What happened that so many who reaped the promise

- who live in pleasant homes
- who eat well and regularly
- who attended the best schools
- just don't care enough to share?

I don't believe it.

I don't believe we comfortable ones  
are all that way.

We must

- tell our mayor
- tell our Congress
- tell our President
- then tell our needy neighbors...

We must

- provide food for all
- guarantee a living wage
- build affordable housing
- supply medical care for everyone.

If we can do that,  
our rich and blessed nation will truly be  
the promised land for all.

—Dee Doughty, a longtime contributor to *Seeds* publications, has worked for many years in ministries for the poor in the Chicago area, through her church (St. Augustine's), her Episcopal Diocese and other organizations.

to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

### **Editorial Address**

**S**eeds of Hope is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James Avenue, Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor@clearwire.net. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2011; ISSN

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Seeds of Hope also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for the liturgical year—with an economic justice attitude. These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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