

Hunger News & Hope

A Seeds of Hope Publication

Pastoral Prayer

by Scott Turner

Lord, We must admit today that we often find our security in the things of this world, when we should be solely relying on you.

It is easy for us to look to our relationships, positions, and achievements as the measure of our worth, but we know that you have called us to a different standard.

Help us, O Lord, to abandon our naive standards of success and value for the weight of the cross that you have called us to.

Help us to shed our lofty stations and gluttonous possessions for the simple life of abandonment that your son has modeled for us.

Help us to scrap our plans for future monetary success and comfortable lazy retirements

for a life lived for your kingdom of love and kindness in this world.

Help us to carry your love, peace, and justice to this hurting world, O Lord. Amen.



art by Sharon R. Rollins

—Scott Turner holds a degree in youth ministry from Howard Payne University. At this writing, he is a student at George W. Truett Theological Seminary and minister to youth at Seventh & James Baptist Church, where the Seeds offices are housed. He serves as a member of the Seeds Liturgical Team, working on our worship resources.

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art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

Why Millions of People Are Starving in Tigray

by Dawn Michelle Michals

A few years back I wrote an article for *Hunger News & Hope* about Yemen, called “*The Perfect Storm: How Aid Cuts, Drought & War Will Kill 20 Million People This Year If We Don’t Help.*” It was about how a war-torn country had killed and would kill 20 million of its own people simply by cutting off the most needed of supplies: food. The war in Yemen is still going on today.

And now I hate to write about another one.

Have you heard of Tigray? I hadn’t either, until a few months ago, and I apologize for my ignorance about this area. Tigray is the northernmost regional state in Ethiopia. And, right now, it’s in a mess of trouble.

In September of 2020, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), the once dominant political group in Ethiopia, held regional parliamentary elections in direct defiance of Abiy Ahmed, the country’s Prime Minister. Abiy, a Noble Peace Prize Winner, was once a minister in the TPLF-dominated government of Ethiopia. After he took office in 2018 as Prime Minister, he quickly set his sights

on erasing the TPLF’s 30-year hold over the country. This pushed the once-dominant group to retreat into their home region to rebuild.

In November of 2020, TPLF forces attacked a federal military base in Tigray. They called it a “pre-emptive strike

Tigray is the northernmost regional state in Ethiopia. And, right now, it’s in a mess of trouble.

against federal forces preparing to attack them from a neighboring region.”

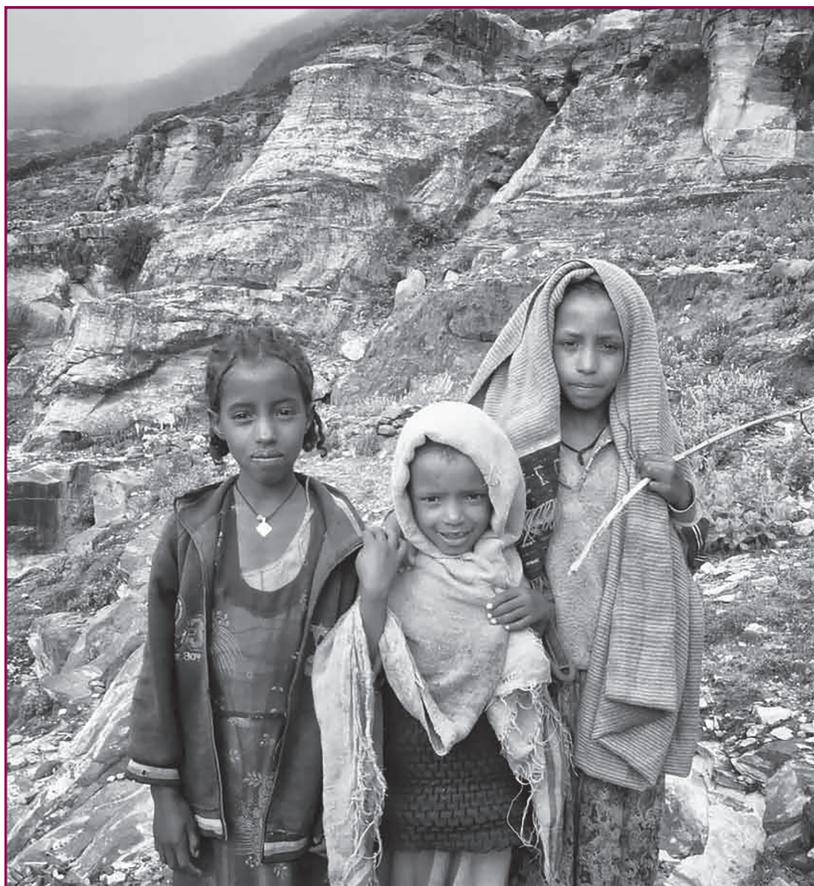
In retaliation, Mr. Abiy ordered a military operation a few hours later, in which he enlisted his long-standing allies in neighboring Eritrea against the Tigrayan leadership. He promised a “swift and bloodless victory,” which quickly changed as TPLF and its armed supporters fled to rural and mountainous areas and waged a guerrilla war.

Then, in June, the Ethiopian military suffered a humiliating defeat when it was forced to withdraw from Tigray, and several thousand government troops were captured.

Since then, this war has raged on—with little said about it in the news. So far, 5.2 million Tigrayans are experiencing hunger, two million have been forced from their homes, and there are thousands of uncounted deaths. And media outlets throughout the region are unable to report the real happenings of the two warring sides.

Both sides have been found guilty of war crimes—including genocide, ethnic cleansing, ethnic profiling and detention, starvation, weaponized rape and torture of civilians.

As the United Nations announced in January, “40 percent of the people in Tigray, a region of 6 million people, face an extreme lack of food with fuel shortages forcing aid workers to deliver medicines and other crucial supplies by foot.”



Children in the isolated mountains of Tigray. Photo by Rod Wallington.

Ilham Abdelhai Nour, the Ethiopia team leader for the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Incident Management System and Emergencies Operations, reported that "89 percent of Tigray's population is food insecure and 29 percent of children under five are acutely malnourished."

The United States has accused the Ethiopian government of preventing aid from reaching those most in need. As usual in these situations, Abiy's forces and government blame the Tigrayan rebels for preventing supplies from reaching their own people.

In August of 2022, a group of armed men entered the World Food Programme's (WFP) compound in Mekelle in the Tigray region and forcibly seized 12 tankers filled with over half a million liters of fuel. Without it, WFP and its humanitarian partners could not distribute food, fertilizer, medicines or other emergency supplies across Tigray to the estimated 5.2 million people who face severe hunger. Many supplies and medications must still be delivered on foot.

Researchers led by Jan Nyssen of Ghent University in Belgium released results of a study in March of 2022, during which they found that as many as 500,000 people have died from war and famine in the Tigray region since the conflict began. This includes "50,000 to 100,000 victims of direct killings; 150,000 to 200,000 starvation deaths; and more than 100,000 additional deaths caused by a lack of health care."

The Globe and Mail reported that "the estimate, by experts who have closely monitored the Tigray conflict since its beginning, is a rare attempt to calculate the war-related death toll in a region that has been largely cut off from the outside world."

On top of a two-year civil war, the country is experiencing its worst drought in decades, with reports of cholera outbreaks and more than 6,000 cases of measles already confirmed.

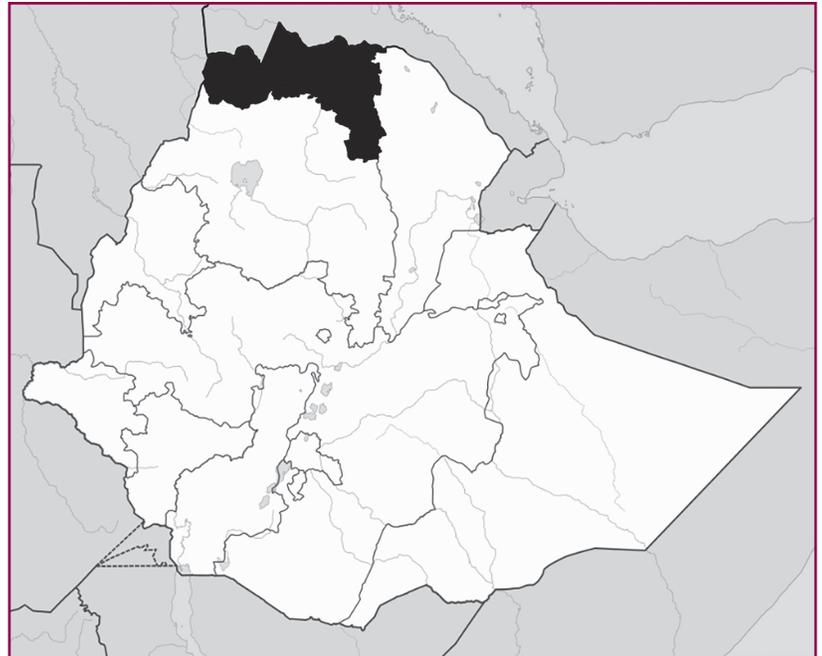
UN Secretary-General António Guterres declared the war to be a situation "spiraling out of control." Services for treatable diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, diabetes and hypertension are now gone. Even people who are financially secure are starving; there is no food to purchase.

The WHO warns that "banking, fuel, food, electricity and health care

are being used as weapons of war, while media coverage is also not allowed and destruction of civilians is taking place in darkness."

Peace talks were set to occur this October, and at the time of this writing, no updates have been posted. Previous talks were cancelled due to "logistical problems." I wonder what the next one holds, or if it will even happen. Pope Francis tweeted about the most recent round of talks: "I follow the persistent situation of conflict in Ethiopia with trepidation. May the efforts of the parties for dialogue lead to a genuine path of reconciliation."

Please see "Tigray" on page 9.



Above right: a map showing the Tigray region in Ethiopia (courtesy of TUBS). Below right: a map showing the location of Ethiopia on the African continent.

How a Farm Transformed a Neighborhood: The Story of Bonton Farms

by Linda Freeto

For many years, we have heard about communities of poverty where we find high rates of health issues like diabetes, cancer, and heart conditions, as well as lack of education. The Bonton community in South Dallas, TX, is no exception.

Bonton is a historically African American community that has faced these conditions for many years.¹ Forty-three percent of the population fall below the poverty line, and 65 percent do not have a high school diploma or equivalent degree. The population is at 1,686 with median annual household income at \$28,240. (The median national household income is \$64,994.)²

Before 1919, Bonton history was told through word-of-mouth, oral histories from long term residents and newspaper articles from Black newspapers of the community's "golden age." In the early 20th century, Bonton prospered. It was linked to the historic Black arts district Deep Ellum, in downtown Dallas.³

As decades passed, however, crime rates increased and Bonton became known, like so many other communities, for unhealthy living conditions, drug abuse and violence. The situation seemed impossible to change. By 1932, Bonton

had earned a notoriety that continues today for high crime rates and gang shootings.

Bonton became what is known as a "food desert." The residents did not have access to healthy, affordable food. A shortage of true grocery stores, coupled with lack of transportation, left residents no choice except to shop at local convenience stores.

Although this is beginning to slowly change across the country, most of these neighborhood stores do not carry healthy food products. Mostly, the stores have candy, chips, beer and sodas. Eating these sugary, salty, high-calorie food items helps contribute to medical issues like diabetes, heart problems and obesity.

The residents of Bonton knew their history; they knew that the neighborhood had once been a good place to live. They also knew the road back to a healthier community would be hard and long. But something had to be done. The idea of revitalizing the community began as a dream.

Nonprofit organizations have fought for, and still fight today, for quality lifestyles for residents who live in areas where they do not have the resources to procure healthy alternatives. One of those organizations is Bonton Farms.



Visitors to Bonton Farms in South Dallas, TX, are greeted by this barn's message. Photo by Christina Childress. Used with permission from Bonton Farms.

Bonton Farms founder Daron Babcock told *Green Source DFW*'s Monica Johnson that he decided after his first wife's death that he wanted to do something besides working and making money.⁴ In fact, according to an interview with Kathy Wise for *D Magazine*, his life went off the rails for a while.

After deciding that his life needed to stand for something, he ended up moving from Frisco, TX, into a Habitat for Humanity house in Bonton, which he shared with a felon on parole. He got to know the people in the neighborhood through a Bible study that started on his front porch.⁵

Babcock discovered that many of his friends and neighbors in Bonton were not only jobless and seemingly

In 2014, Babcock and a few men in the community started turning vacant lots that were covered with trash, overgrown weeds, bushes and trees into neighborhood gardens.

aimless; they were also sick and dying. Many of those medical indicators were associated with Bonton being a food desert.

"Men in South Dallas live an average of 11 years less than men in Dallas County," Babcock said. "Double the rate of strokes, double the rate of diabetes, double the rate of heart failure, and large numbers of childhood obesity."⁶

In 2014, Babcock and a few men in the community started turning vacant lots that were covered with trash, overgrown weeds, bushes and trees into neighborhood gardens. Bonton Farms, as they came to be called in 2014, became an oasis in South Dallas. In what was once a food desert, residents now grew vegetables for sale at affordable prices to other residents.

Bonton Farms began started out as a simple community garden in a small vacant lot at what the *Dallas Morning News* described as "the dead-end of Bexar Street." It has grown to two fully functioning farms, a Farmer's Market, a café and a coffee house. The food grown there is organic. Even more important, the residents are doing the work themselves.⁷

As Babcock says, "Investing in the soil yields healthy plants; investing in the soul yields healthy people."⁸

Today, Bonton Farms is much more than gardens in vacant lots. The Bonton Farms Extension, at 40 acres, is one of the nation's largest urban farms. The organization also provides services involving housing stability, career mentorship, cooking classes and nutrition counseling. Its mission statement is this: "We transform lives by disrupting systems of inequity, laying a foundation where change yields health, wholeness and opportunity is the norm."

The website adds the vision statement: "The change in Bonton becomes the change in the world."

To learn how a farm can transform a neighborhood, go to YouTube and watch any of a number of Bonton Farms videos. You can also follow Bonton Farms on Instagram.com/bontonthefarms; on Facebook; or email the staff at Info@BontonFarms.org. Or, if you are anywhere near Dallas, take a day trip to visit the farms, eat at the café and taste the honey harvested there.

—Linda Freeto, a frequent contributor to *Hunger News & Hope*, has received a number of Associated Church Press (ACP) awards for her Special Section reports in the HNH theme issues. Her special report on *Women and Poverty* from the summer 2016 issue was included in ACP's compilation, *Best of the Christian Press 2016*. A founding member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and former volunteer Business Manager, Linda is once again serving as a Council Member.

Endnotes

1. "Bonton Neighborhood in Dallas, Texas (TX), 75215 Detailed Profile." *City-Data.com*. Urban Mapping, n.d., June 2013.
2. Ibid. See also the Bonton Farms website: bontonthefarms.org.
3. *Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity*. Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity, June 2013.
4. Monica Johnson, "Bonton Farms Provides Oasis in South Dallas Food Desert," *Green Source DFW*, July 2016.
5. Kathy Wise, "The Rogue Shepherd: Why Daron Babcock Sold His Home to Start Bonton Farms in South Dallas," *D Magazine*, January 2018.
6. Bonton Farms website.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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The Farmer's Truck: A Major Opportunity to Reach Food Deserts

By Linda Freeto

Over the past two decades there has been a good deal of research on communities that are designated as “food deserts.” These food deserts are places where healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, are not accessible.

There are several reasons for food deserts: residents do not have available transportation, they live a long way from the nearest grocery store where they can get fresh fruits and vegetables, and they do not have family or friends available to pick up food or prescriptions for them.

Food insecurity costs the United States over \$100 billion dollars annually.¹ The health of the American people has declined in the past two decades. Sickness and long-term health issues (diabetes, heart condition and others) cause people to lose hours of work time.

More than 9 million children today are unable to focus on their work in school, because they are hungry.² The school system nationwide is struggling to provide nutritious, fresh foods for lunch. Schools have been working with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in several school lunch and breakfast programs, as well as the more recent summer lunch programs.

But kids—and their families—are still falling through the cracks.

Frederic (Fred) Laforge is the co-founder and CEO of The Farmers’ Truck, a nonprofit organization that operates on the belief that the whole nation needs to be, and can be, involved in solving the problem of hunger problems.

Fred grew up on a farm in Moncton, Canada. He never questioned the fact that there were fresh, healthy foods on the dinner table each night. The food was always there.

Along with the farm, Fred’s father owned and operated affordable housing units for low-income families. At the beginning of each month, as his father collected the rent, Fred would give each family a bag of vegetables from the Laforge family gardens. He reported that, for most of the families, this was the first time in months they had fresh vegetables on their dinner tables.³

For low-income families, healthy foods are not always an option. Being raised on a farm and seeing the struggles of low-income families to provide healthy food, Fred has made it his life’s mission to provide fresh, accessible, healthy foods in every community. And he is doing it one truck at a time.

Fred Laforge was one of hundreds of participants at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health hosted by the Biden-Harris Administration on September 28, 2022. This was the first White House Conference on hunger issues since 1969, 53 years ago.⁴ At the 1969 Conference, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a



A Mobile Farmer's Market in Northeast Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of the Urban Harvest Mobile Farmer's Market.

new school lunch program, and other legislation on food and nutrition were introduced.

At the 2022 White House Conference, one discussion was around hunger and the significance of Mobile Market Programs in “food desert” communities.⁵ Fred Laforge shared his experience and expertise in running a Mobile

At the 2022 White House Conference, one discussion was around hunger and the significance of mobile market Programs in “food desert” communities.

Farmers Market unit in Canada. Mobile Farmer’s Market programs are designed to make up for the distance from people’s homes to a produce market, and the lack of transportation.

A Mobile Farmers Market is just that—mobile. Unlike a Farmer’s Market that stays in one place, the mobile units go into the communities where they are needed the most, making good, quality food accessible.

We must wonder why in the richest country in the world, there are still millions of people going hungry every day. Coming from the 2022 Conference, the White House National Strategy named mobile markets as one solution to ending hunger and improving nutrition in the United States.⁶ There is hope that we will see Mobile Farmers’ Markets in all of our neighborhoods soon.

—Linda Freeto, a frequent contributor to Hunger News & Hope, has received a number of Associated Church Press (ACP) awards for her Special Section reports in the HNH theme issues. Her special report on Women and Poverty from the summer 2016 issue was included in ACP’s compilation, Best of the Christian Press 2016. A founding member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and former volunteer Business Manager, Linda is once again serving as a Council Member.

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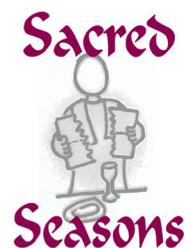
1. The Farmer’s Truck website (thefarmerstruck.com).
2. Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org).
3. The Farmer’s Truck.
4. “The Biden-Harris Administration Announces More than \$8 Billion in New Commitments as Part of Call to Action for White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health,” White House briefing room (www.whitehouse.gov). See also “Report from the White House Hunger Conference,” Hunger News & Hope, Fall 2022, page 8.
5. Lorraine Dufour, “The 2022 WH Conference on Hunger and the Significance of Mobile Market Programs,” Farmer’s Truck website blogs.
6. “White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health,” White House briefing room (www.whitehouse.gov).

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Dignity and Empowerment in the Face of Disaster: *Key Ingredients in the Cooking Pots of World Central Kitchens*

A review of the documentary film *We Feed People*

by Sara E. Alexander

For many decades, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, whatever food was most readily available was supplied to affected populations, all of whom were typically without food, shelter, potable water and health care. Dropping food from helicopters, providing MREs (Meal, Ready to Eat), and driving through conflict zones delivering other types of food rations was sometimes the most efficient means for meeting short-term food needs. In these emergency situations, little thought was given the nature of the food.

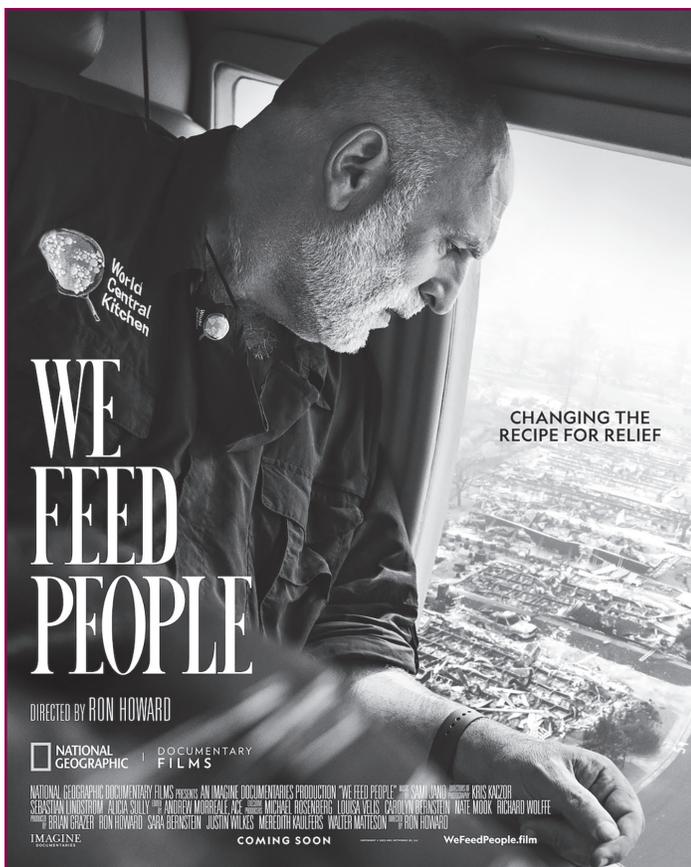
Yet, when a Category 5 hurricane hits or an earthquake occurs, the immediate aftermath is not the only time when food is needed. Adequate food demands persist, typically through the rehabilitation period (six to 12 months or longer), as countries make plans to repair, rebuild and perhaps explore opportunities for longer-term changes in how food needs are met. Over this duration, people must still have nutrition and are usually not yet able to produce food for themselves.

National Geographic's documentary film *We Feed People* offers powerful testimony of how renowned Chef José Andrés puts his skills of managing chaotic kitchens to use on a larger scale. He coordinates massive relief kitchens in disaster zones, with the help of funding from FEMA and the Red Cross. The cook's team supplies food prepared in a manner true to the local cuisine, keeping people fed over prolonged periods while other relief efforts might still be organizing.

"No one was calling on the chefs and cooks of the world when people were hungry," Andrés recollects when discussing how he found his mission. Yes, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army and other organizations made efforts to feed people, but it's not really what their workers and volunteers are trained to do.

After his earliest efforts in Haiti hit a snag in 2010, he took the lessons learned and conceived how he and his nascent organization could "create systems"—discrete systems, it should be emphasized—to get food out to those in pressing need. And from there, the organization could strengthen community bonds so that the affected places would be better prepared in future crises.

Renowned chef Jose Andres looks out the door of a helicopter in this poster for the film We Feed People. Image courtesy of National Geographic.



resource review

The *humanity* is apparent in every scene of the film where we see those who are helping World Central Kitchens (WCK) and those helped by its efforts. The *humility* comes from the way Andrés and his team deal with the locals and general chaos and misery of each of these situations.

Early on, when WCK was helping in Haiti, Andrés was there “making the best beans in the world,” but a local woman told him these were no good. Sure, they might be “the best,” but “this isn’t how *we* make *our* beans.” And so, Andrés listened and learned to make food for the Haitians that was their food, respecting the locals and establishing an important creed for World Central Kitchen, “to make sure what we are feeding is what the locals love to eat” and, through that, to try to “make sure that food is an agent of change,” retaining the dignity of the recipients in the process.

National Geographic’s documentary film We Feed People offers powerful testimony of how renowned Chef José Andrés puts his skills of managing chaotic kitchens to use on a larger scale.

The film portrays relevant parts of Andrés’ backstory while showing WCK’s efforts in 2017 in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, in 2018 in Guatemala with the volcanic eruption, in 2020 on the Navajo Reservation dealing with the highest per capita COVID cases in the US, and among continuing efforts in the Bahamas.

Throughout, director Ron Howard highlights the enduring financial struggles the kitchen has faced, while also focusing on their basic premise. World Central Kitchen does not just offer actual food—good food—but does it in a way that is empowering to the local population. Andrés found that people don’t want to just put out their hands and lose dignity, and so WCK hires locals, works with local food businesses and listens to local entrepreneurs. This makes the whole community a part of this food portion of the recovery effort *and* leaves them empowered to continue when WCK moves on, the ultimate test of sustained effectiveness.

—Sara Alexander is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Baylor University and a consultant with TANGO International (an NGO that provides technical assistance). As a social anthropologist, she has worked in Central America, West and East Africa, and Appalachia. Her research focuses on developing countries in such matters as livelihood security and vulnerability, food security, ecotourism, natural resource

management, the human dimensions of climate change and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She is also a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards.

Tigray,

continued from page 3

Already two years into a war that few people across the world know about, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the WHO, had this to say:

Yes, I’m from Tigray, and yes, this affects me personally. I don’t pretend it doesn’t. Most of my relatives are in the most affected areas, more than 90 per cent of them. But my job is to draw the world’s attention to crises that threaten the health of people wherever they are. This is a health crisis for six million people, and the world is not paying enough attention.¹

—Dawn Michelle Michals is a freelance writer and social media specialist living in Waco, TX. She is the Seeds of Hope Social Media editor and an award-winning reporter for Hunger News & Hope. Our readers will have also seen her work under the name Chelle Samaniego. Please visit www.dawnmichellemichals.com to check out her writings.

SOURCES: World Food Programme, Yahoo News, Al Jazeera, VOA News, The Globe and Mail, United Nations News.

Endnote

1. “Tigray Conflict is a Health Crisis for 6 Million People, and ‘the World Is Not Paying Attention,’” United Nations News.

This just in...

Author’s note: Things can change quickly in our world, and we just found out some exciting and positive news about the region of Tigray. We have a ceasefire!

Just as we were about to send this issue to press, the Eritrean army began withdrawing all of its forces, and Ethiopian Airlines resumed flights to its capital city of Mekelle. In addition, banking systems, which shut down in June 2021, have now re-opened and humanitarian aid can now enter as well.

What can you do? Pray. Pray that this ceasefire holds and doesn’t dissolve like the previous one in August 2022. Pray that aid gets to the people who need it, and pray that we no longer have to report on war atrocities in Tigray and that peace prevails. —DMM

Global Development Programs Predict Another Tough Year for Food Security

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) executive director David Beasley recently told Teresa Welsh of Devex Newswire that he is “very, very worried” about the global food situation. He predicted “mass destabilization around the planet” if present issues causing global food insecurity are not addressed “quickly, effectively, strategically.” He also predicted a global depression if things don’t change on a large scale.

According to the UN, the number of people facing acute food insecurity more than doubled since 2019, with outright famine presently looming over 49 countries.

David Laborde, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, told Devex that “All signs point to 2023 looking even worse on an acute level, on a chronic level, in terms of malnutrition. The world is experiencing a shortage of fertilizer because of supply chain interruption brought on by the war in Ukraine. Rice is one of the crops affected by this, and that will be exacerbated by recent floods in Pakistan.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation reported that the Food Price Index was down to 135.7 in November, compared to 159.7 in March, the highest number in 2022.

However, it is still 40 points higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Catherine Maldonado, senior director of food security at Mercy Corps, told Devex that her organization is now focusing on acute crisis situations, but she is also worried that, in doing so, it will lose sight of other problem areas. She reiterated the need to work toward more resiliency to prepare for “future shocks.”

Welsh wrote, “All of this leaves humanitarians braced for the worst in 2023....”

—From Devex Newswire. For more information about the global crisis, see the Fall 2022 issue of *Hunger News & Hope: “The War in Ukraine and the Global Food Crisis,”* beginning on page 1, and “Facts about the Global Food Crisis,” on page 6.

More than 1,000 Venezuelan Refugees Camp on the Banks of the Rio Grande

In early November, more than 1,200 Venezuelan migrants were camping out on the south bank of the Rio Grande in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, across from El Paso, TX. And there was news of more coming north through Central and South America.

This crisis began in the 2014 political and economic meltdown in Venezuela. More than 6 million have left since then to escape oppression and hunger. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently reported that more than 25 percent of the Venezuela’s population has fled in the past eight years.

They went first to neighboring countries like Colombia, then made their way north through jungles and countries overrun with drug cartels. Some had found tenuous jobs in Latin America.

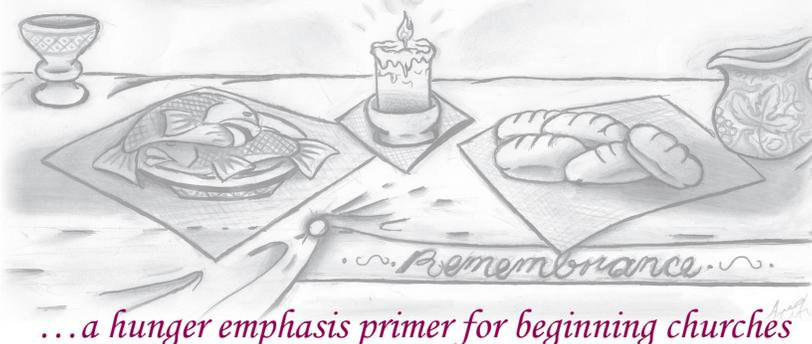
However, according to Elket Rodriguez, a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship employee working along the US-Mexico border, the coronavirus pandemic caused many migrants in Latin America, including Venezuelans, to find themselves without work. Venezuelans, Rodriguez said, were among the most vulnerable migrants in the area. This pushed them farther north to the US border.

These factors caused a record number of Venezuelans to show up at the US-Mexico border last summer. Before the pandemic, a monthly average of 127 had crossed the border. During the month of August 2022, there were more than 25,000. In September, there were more than 33,000.

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In October, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began sending them back by the thousands. US policy had changed abruptly. The Department of Homeland Security announced on October 12 that Venezuelans seeking asylum at the southern border by presenting themselves to border enforcement personnel without prior authorization would be returned.

According to the *El Paso Times*, the accord between the Biden administration and the government of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador included 65,000 US visas for Mexican, Central American and Haitian workers and 24,000 slots for Venezuelans seeking asylum, in exchange for Mexico agreeing to take expelled Venezuelans at its northern border.

Before this new policy began, Venezuelans, in contrast to other migrants from Mexico and Central America, could enter the US without prior authorization and seek asylum once they were on American soil. Under the new policy, some 5,000 Venezuelans who were in the country before October 12 were returned to Mexico to join the thousands of migrants from other countries seeking asylum.

The DHS announcement said that almost four times as many Venezuelans attempted to cross the border in 2022 as in 2021, “placing their lives in the hands of ruthless smuggling organizations.” Meanwhile, “irregular” migration from northern Central America was down by a quarter from 2021 to 2022. The announcement continued: “The actions the United States and Mexico are announcing today are intended to address the most acute irregular migration and help ease pressure on the cities and states receiving these individuals.”

Many churches and nonprofits have stepped up to supply basic needs for the people in the camp, which has come to be known as “Little Venezuela.” One of the groups responding to these migrants is Fellowship Southwest, a multicultural, ecumenical network of churches working in the border area.

Pastor Rosalio Sosa, a Fellowship Southwest partner, began organizing assistance, including a shelter, as soon as the Venezuelans arrived on the riverbank. There are some reports that the Venezuelans refused to go to the shelter because, as they said, they wanted to remain visible to the international community. In November, Sosa was camping with them, as he said, “out of solidarity.”

Recently, however, the *Tico Times* of Costa Rica reported that Mexican authorities and the US National Guard were involved in expelling the migrants from the Juarez camp and sending them to shelters in the city. US President Joe Biden is scheduled to visit the area in the coming months.

—*Fellowship Southwest, El Paso Times, Tico Times, US Department of Homeland Security.*

The Top 10 Most Neglected Displacement Crises

Every year, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) publishes a list of the top ten most neglected and underfunded displacement crises in the world. We don’t have all of the data for 2022, but there is a list for 2021:

1. Democratic Republic of Congo
2. Burkina Faso
3. Cameroon
4. South Sudan
5. Chad
6. Mali
7. Sudan
8. Nigeria
9. Burundi
10. Ethiopia.

For the first time in the organization’s annual list, all of the countries listed are in Africa. The council wrote in its summer 2022 report “Seldom has the selectivity been more striking.”

The war in Ukraine has highlighted the immense gap between what is possible when the international community rallies behind a crisis, and the daily reality for the millions of people suffering far from the spotlight.

The report analyzed 41 countries in crisis. The NRC used three criteria for its analysis: lack of international political will, lack of media attention and the lack of international aid. About the last criteria, the report explained:

Every year, the UN and its humanitarian partners launch funding appeals to cover peoples’ basic needs in countries affected by large crises. The extent to which these appeals are met varies greatly. The amount of money raised for each crisis in 2021 was assessed as a percentage of the amount required to cover the needs, thus indicating the level of economic support.

A June report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) found the level of aid needed to manage the world’s humanitarian crises is a record \$46.3 billion. UNOCHA’s Financial Tracking Service shows the three largest response plans—Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen—are the most underfunded.

—*From Devex Newswire and the Norwegian Refugee Council. For more information on the report, go to www.nrc.no and search for “The World’s Most Neglected Displacement Crisis in 2021.”* ■

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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry people in God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and vulnerable people; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



art by Sharon R. Rollins

Trouble and weeping and fear and ruin come when people forget the promises of God that bind us to each other—the hungry to the overfed, the innocent to the cynical, the triumphant to the brokenhearted.

*All over God's round earth, trouble comes when the people forget the promise.
And God is far away.*

*So we try to help each other remember the promises which are our way and our truth and our life.
We try to help each other stop expecting faith to be soothing.
We stop trying to mostly entertain each other in church and instead help each other find faith that will deepen into sacrificial love.*

—Martha Sterne

Editorial Address

Seeds is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. Mailing address: 602 James Ave., Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2022; ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status.

Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—with an attitude “toward justice, peace and food security for all of God's children.” These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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