

PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM

Many local churches and national church bodies are deeply concerned about global hunger. We estimate that 30,000 innocent people die every day because of extreme poverty, and we know from extensive research by Food First, Bread for the World, and other agencies that the world is capable of providing ample food supplies for all. How then can we work together so that the global economy will provide for the basic needs of all? Surely this is central to the biblical mandates of what we may call Sabbath economics or Jubilee spirituality. The Presbyterian Hunger Program is one of many denominational efforts to enable "ordinary" church members to respond in minimal or major ways to this global crisis on the basis of their faith in the God who brings good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). This program is organized in five interrelated areas.

Hunger Education and Interpretation. Learning about hunger and our response to it begins with the Bible.

Direct Food Relief. As Christians we demonstrate our love for sisters and brothers by supporting programs which ensure that food is available to those in need, while also working on longer-term solutions.

Development Assistance. The PHP encourages and supports land ownership by the poor, appropriate agricultural technology, rural community development, cooperative economic development, effective soil conservation, water resource development, equitable food distribution, community organizing, and nutrition education.

Public Policy Advocacy. It supports organizations and coalitions which advocate for public policies that provide food for poor and hungry people and empower their self-development.

Lifestyle Integrity. In this world where some go hungry because others consume too much, the PHP encourages families, church groups, and institutions to evaluate their own needs and develop new ways of being more caring and sharing of the world's resources in obedience to the Gospel.

Each of these areas of work for justice and for ending hunger may seem inadequate by itself, but each one can lead to all the others as consciences are raised and involvement deepens concern and commitment. (For more information about the Presbyterian Hunger Program, see www.pcusa.org/hunger or call (800) 334-0434.)

1. Consider how many of these--and other--ways your church is--or is not--responding to the challenge of local and global hunger.
2. Consider how important this matter is in terms of your own faith as a follower of Jesus Christ and discuss how you might increase your involvement.