

WHEREAS, historically, as an American religious movement, the Disciples of Christ have championed the cause of separation of Church and State; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress, through Section 3(33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and Section 414(E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended (Code), has taken unto itself the authority to define a Church in the context of defining the term "Church Plan"; and

WHEREAS, ERISA and the Code distinguish between a Church and what it calls "an Agency of a Church" or "Convention of Churches," providing that such "Agencies" cannot participate in a Church Plan after December 31, 1982; and

WHEREAS, Ministers and lay employees of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are employed interchangeably by churches and Church related units, organizations and educational institutions which the Code may describe as "agencies" and which now participate, or are eligible to participate, in the Church Pension Plans of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Christian Church and its organizational predecessors have authorized, established and given continuing oversight to the plans maintained and operated by the Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, October 21-26, 1977, urge their elected representatives in Congress to support legislation to amend Section 3(33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and Section 414(E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (Code) relating to the definition of "Church Plan" so that church related agencies are recognized as part of a Church or Convention of Churches and entitled to participate in a Church Plan.

## No. 7730

### REPORT CONCERNING WORLD HUNGER AND RESPONSE TO 1975 GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 46, 47 and 61

#### APPROVED by the General Assembly

##### *I. 1975 Assembly Actions*

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been concerned about hunger throughout the world for generations. This concern has been expressed through participation in agricultural development projects, emergency food distribution programs, self-help projects, disaster relief, family planning programs, development of educational materials on hunger, political action programs dealing with food production and distribution, and International Convention and General Assembly Resolutions.

In 1974, this concern was stimulated by increasing reports of famine and hunger-caused death throughout the world.

The 1975 General Assembly approved three resolutions dealing with the implications of hunger. Resolution No. 46 is a stance paper on world hunger and development. It called on members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to undertake an educational campaign; give support to efforts designed to feed persons now and discover and implement long range solutions; support the recommendations of the 1974 World Food Conference; and support a United States food policy that includes commitment to an adequate diet for all. Resolution No. 47 called for discipline in the use of resources and listed a number of options for response to hunger by congregations and individuals. Resolution No. 61 was concerned about the problems of North American farmers. It urged a just return to farmers for their labor, defended rights of family farmers and encouraged using other means of meeting cost/price stress than the destruction of animals and commodities.

## II. Present Situation

In the past two years, there has been some slight improvement in the world's food/famine equation.

1975 and 1976 brought good to excellent grain harvests in the food producing nations, particularly on the North American Continent. Indications are that sufficient grain is now in existence to meet or nearly meet present need. This could, however, be a mixed blessing. If farmers are unable to gain an adequate income from the sale of their crops due to an "abundant" supply, past experience suggests they will plan for a reduced yield in the future. If this should coincide with major crop failures, massive famine could become a reality very quickly.

There appears to be an increasing international agreement that grain reserves in the magnitude of 15-20 million metric tons are necessary to offset emergency food needs. A reserve that could serve to counteract wild fluctuation in international grain prices would be nearer 80 million metric tons. While there is increasing agreement about the necessity of reserves, there does not appear to have been any significant progress toward agreement on how these reserves should be established, held, released and distributed. In addition, there has been no essential change in the world's food distribution system. It is still difficult to get food to those most in need.

Individual citizens of the United States and Canada are more aware of the issues involved in world hunger than they were in 1974. Citizen concern about hunger has been expressed: in opposition to the use of food as an international diplomatic weapon; in letters to governmental officials urging action; through financial contributions to hunger fighting programs and organizations; and in modest considerations of changing life-styles. However, there does not appear to have been any massive change in the consumption habits of the citizens of the two nations.

United States (US) Senator George McGovern, US representative to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, in a statement to the UN Economic and Financial Committee October 14, 1976, said,

"In the U.S. bilateral aid program, the amount of money provided for the key sector of population and health has risen by 46 percent, funds allocated to food and nutrition have increased by 15 percent, while funds for education have risen by 18 percent. One hundred million dollars was earmarked for UNDP [United Nations Development Program]. . . . The United States is making its first contribution to the UN revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration. In fiscal 1977 the United States will be providing \$375 million to permit the continuation of the soft-loan facilities of the International Development Association."

In speaking directly about the world food situation, Senator McGovern said,

"The U.S. Congress has given a priority to the countries most seriously affected by food shortages in determining assistance programs. At least 75 percent of food sold under Title I of Public Law 480 is to be provided to countries with an average per capita GNP of \$300 or less, circumstances permitting. . . . The United States has made a pledge of \$200 million to the initial budget of \$1 billion set for [the new International Fund for Agricultural Development]. . . . Toward this target [\$750 million for the World Food Program] the United States has now pledged \$188 million in commodities, shipping services, and cash. This represents a substantial increase in the U.S. contribution to this important program."

The United States government is beginning to increase its hunger related aid, but has not yet attained the goal of seven tenths of one percent of GNP. Increased concern is being shown that government aid go primarily to those most in need.

The Congress of the United States in September 1976 approved a resolution that declared,

"That it is the sense of Congress that

1. the United States reaffirm the right of every person in this country and throughout the world to food and a nutritionally adequate diet; and
2. the need to combat hunger shall be a fundamental point of reference in the formulation and implementation of United States policy in all areas which bear on hunger, including international trade, monetary arrangements, and foreign assistance; and
3. in the United States, we should seek to improve food assistance programs for all those who are in need, to ensure that all eligible recipients have the opportunity to receive a nutritionally adequate diet; and
4. the United States should increase substantially its assistance for self-help development among the world's poorest people, especially in countries seriously affected by hunger and malnutrition, with particular emphasis on increasing food production and encouraging improved food distribution and more equitable patterns of economic growth; and such assistance, in order to be effective, should be coordinated with expanded efforts by inter-

While  
future

The f

III. C

The l  
of res  
nated  
ments  
progr  
respon

The c

Educ  
ticipa  
of th  
gests,  
follow

1. En  
throu  
judici  
in the

Each  
more

2. Co  
fellow  
Fellow  
they

"R  
in

Appr  
Chris  
ciples  
ment  
sugg

Most  
WHI  
Enab  
form  
mem  
relate

In a  
Educ  
vice  
entitl  
for S

Adva  
The  
tions  
prod  
polici  
stitue

DHM  
netw  
upda

national organizations, donor nations, and the recipient countries to provide a nutritionally adequate diet for all."

While this resolution does not bear the weight of law, it does help to set the context in which future United States legislation will be enacted.

The first step has been taken. The journey is long. The situation is still precarious.

### III. General Unit Response

The Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM) carries the major responsibility for development of resources and program for study and action in response to world hunger. DHM has designated "Response to World Hunger" one of its priorities for the period 1975-79. Staff assignments have been adjusted and funds set aside for developing and implementing hunger related program. A division staff task group on hunger was established to coordinate the division's response to hunger.

The decision was made that effective action on hunger could best be taken ecumenically.

**Education.** The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through DHM was a founding participant in *World Hunger Education and Action Together (WHEAT)*. WHEAT is a coalition of thirteen denominations and the National Council of Churches working, as its name suggests, in the areas of hunger education and action. The program of WHEAT has two foci as follows:

1. **Enabling Events.** By the end of 1977, fifty WHEAT Enabling Events will have been held throughout the United States. The events are designed to train four to six persons from each judicatory involved as "enablers" to assist individuals, congregations, judicatories and coalitions in their hunger related efforts.

Each participant denomination accepted responsibility for initiating the development of one or more enabling events. DHM accepted this responsibility in Indiana and Missouri.

2. **Covenant Fellowship.** The second part of the WHEAT program is the creation of a covenant fellowship. Individuals are given the opportunity to become part of the WHEAT Covenant Fellowship by signing the following covenant and indicating in which of five areas of work they intend to become involved:

"Recognizing my mandate as a Christian to take seriously the massive problem of hunger in our world, at home and abroad, I commit myself to:

1. —intensive study of the problem of hunger,
2. —become involved in dealing with hunger in my own community,
3. —support advocacy efforts on public policy issues related to hunger,
4. —provide financial support for my local church, denominational and ecumenical hunger efforts,
5. —change my life-style toward reduced and less wasteful food and energy consumption."

Approximately 200,000 WHEAT Covenant Brochures have been distributed to members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) primarily by regions. As of May 26, 1977 2,406 Disciples have signed the covenant. Each Disciple signing the covenant is sent a resource document entitled *WHEAT and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Resources, program suggestions and action possibilities on each of the five areas are included.

Most regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have responded affirmatively to WHEAT. Indications are that by the end of 1977 most regions will have had participants in Enabling Events, will have members enrolled in the Covenant Fellowship and will have some form of official hunger response mechanism established within the region. Many individual members and congregations have been instrumental in the creation and functioning of hunger related organizations in their communities.

In addition to the WHEAT covenant resource book, DHM has prepared *WHEAT—Hunger Education Resource Guide*, a study packet on world hunger and development, flyers on service projects related to hunger, and several periodical articles on the hunger issue. A study kit entitled "I Was Hungry" has been produced by Joint Educational Development as a resource for Shared Approaches "Doing the Word."

**Advocacy.** DHM is a founding member of the Interreligious Task Force on US Food Policy. The task force is composed primarily of Washington, D.C.-based staff of religious organizations. Task force members are skilled in research and political functioning. The task force has produced useful research on hunger related legislation and has presented testimony on food policy before Congressional committees. The task force issues frequent information to its constituent members and, through IMPACT, action alerts.

DHM has continued to promote membership in IMPACT, a church based legislative action network. Individuals join IMPACT by payment of a membership fee. Members receive regular update and action alerts on five or six legislative issues each year. Hunger is a current priority

of IMPACT. For those persons interested in food policy political action, DHM also suggests Bread For The World membership. Bread For The World is a Christian citizens' lobby with a particular interest in food policy. Individuals join by paying a membership fee. In addition, information and action alerts are sent by the division to persons who have demonstrated some interest in the issue.

**Domestic Hunger.** DHM conducts the majority of its work on domestic hunger ecumenically as a participating member of the Working Group on Domestic Hunger and Poverty of the National Council of Churches. The Working Group strives to insure implementation of federal nutrition programs. A portion of that work is the development of ecumenical domestic hunger programs in fifteen communities in the United States. DHM accepted responsibility for initiating that development in St. Louis, Missouri.

The problems of food producers seriously impact hunger. Two Farm/Food Consultations sponsored by members of the Working Group including DHM were held in early 1977. The purpose of these consultations was as follows:

1. To provide opportunities for segments of our economy, the farm producers of food and non-farm consumers of food, to move from talking *about* each other to talking *with* each other about their mutual interests, their potential conflicts of interest, and their common concern with the problem of hunger, both within the United States and around the world.
2. To provide opportunities for hunger action leadership of denominational and ecumenical agencies to seek guidance for policy, strategy and program, by listening to representative voices of farmers and non-farmer consumers speaking about farm and food issues.
3. To provide opportunities for suggestions to emerge for personal action and for United States policy direction in respect to the complete issues of food and agriculture.

**Funding.** Four of the general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have participated in founding the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS) sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Agricultural development is one of three priorities of EDCS in their program of loans at reasonable rates to the "poorest of the poor" through structures of the church around the world. Week of Compassion made a grant of \$20,000 to help get EDCS started; The United Christian Missionary Society, with the agreement of the boards of the Divisions of Overseas Ministries and Homeland Ministries, has made an investment of \$100,000 in EDCS; in addition, the Division of Overseas Ministries has made an investment of \$100,000, and the Board of Church Extension will invest \$50,000 in EDCS.

The Week of Compassion was designated as the channel for special hunger contributions for members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Since the General Assembly in San Antonio, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through its Week of Compassion offering has contributed more than half a million dollars toward combating world hunger, almost entirely through ecumenical channels.

The Week of Compassion planned ahead to make sure that a substantial proportion of the 1976 offering would be used to combat world hunger. The contributions fall into three categories: emergency food for hunger relief, self-help development programs aimed at combating the root causes of hunger, and supporting the ecumenical program of constituency education relating to hunger concerns. Because the congregations exceeded the goal set for the offering in 1976, some additional contributions were possible. Additional grants directly related to hunger totalled \$164,500.

The largest amount was for food distribution in situations of temporary acute shortage, \$104,500. This money sent food to Niger, Nicaragua, and Sudan where harvest had been poor because of drought; to Chile where children especially were suffering from malnutrition; and to Vietnam where shortages resulted from bad weather plus the cutting off of rice from the United States and the impossibility of cultivating fields because of ruined topsoil and the threat of buried land mines.

An additional \$60,000 was granted for self-help development projects clearly related to food production. These went to Sudan, Niger, Jordan, Turkey, Tanzania, Haiti and Belize for such projects as an ox-plow training program, land reclamation, irrigation, well deepening and digging, organizing and stocking fisheries, developing animal rations, planting windbreaks.

These contributions were in addition to the \$374,050 that the Week of Compassion Committee had planned to grant to programs directly related to hunger. Of this amount, \$6,000 from the Week of Compassion offering was distributed by the Division of Overseas Ministries for food supplement in response to requests from areas having traditional ties with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The bulk was used primarily in agricultural, livestock and water development programs of various kinds aimed at improving the capacity of Third World people to raise their own food.

It should be understood, also, that many other programs supported through Week of Compassion have a bearing on hunger. But without including those, \$538,500 was spent by the

Christian  
hungry pe

Overseas  
tinues to  
ing and di

DOM assi  
Kimpese i  
are develo  
who are b

In the Ph  
ments whi  
increased  
with dispo  
ments to  
self relian

DOM for  
Tokyo, wh  
These per  
tion and in

In India,  
hospitals a  
been reco  
acute mal

The divis  
of the Wo  
reforms in  
participat

#### IV. Concl

It has be  
Compassio  
the people  
tions of h  
consumpti  
societal de

The respo  
is still acc

"It cou  
who ar  
plenty.  
beginni  
of finan  
If we a  
style as

WHERE  
of U.S. a  
aging nea

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through Week of Compassion during 1976 to feed hungry people.

*Overseas Ministries.* Out of its special funds, the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) continues to fund numerous ecumenical experimental projects related to food production, marketing and distribution.

DOM assigned two staff members to the Community Development Center (CEDECO) at Kimpese in Zaire for nearly three years. Simple hand tools and inexpensive irrigation plans are developed at CEDECO, and training is offered in agriculture to young men and women who are becoming leaders in food production programs in their communities.

In the Philippines and in Paraguay, staff worked with rural cooperatives and agrarian movements which encourage dignity and self-confidence in those who are involved, and which stress increased food production and a better quality of life for the poor. Because of such programs with dispossessed peoples, DOM staff in both of these countries were asked by the governments to leave and not return. The whole issue of human rights and Christian concern with self reliance projects brings the church into conflict with dictatorial governments.

DOM for a brief period has had staff serving at the Asian Rural Institute, 90 miles north of Tokyo, where young Asians are trained in animal husbandry and small farm food production. These persons then return to their respective lands to give leadership in better food production and improved community life.

In India, projects of feeding hungry children are a regular part of the activity of Christian hospitals and community health programs. These are called "Under Fives Clinics" and have been recognized by the World Health Organization as a vital contribution to the problem of acute malnutrition among the children of India.

The division has seconded personnel to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches to work in the area of community development and agrarian reforms in the Third World. Through this channel, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) participates in a variety of programs which relate to the overall problem of world hunger.

#### *IV. Conclusion*

It has become increasingly clear to members of the staff of DOM, DHM, and the Week of Compassion who have been working on hunger that no permanent solutions are possible until the peoples of the world deal adequately with a number of interrelated issues such as: violations of human rights; absolute poverty in the midst of plenty; population increases; energy consumption; distribution systems; land reform; consumption patterns and humane methods of societal decision making.

The response to hunger has begun, but there is much yet to do. The 1975 Resolution No. 46 is still accurate as it states:

"It could be said that Disciples have done a great deal to express their concern for those who are hungry if the yardstick for measurement were other than their poverty and our plenty. Judged in this manner, the beginning response of the Disciples has been modest. Our beginning must lead to a sacrificial demonstration on the part of the whole church in terms of financial resources and time that is fully committed to an education and action program. If we are to speak the truth to the nations of the world, we must demonstrate in our life style as persons and as a church that we have understood the truth."

## No. 7731

### RESOLUTION CONCERNING REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

#### APPROVED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, television is a dominant and pervasive communication medium—some 98 percent of U.S. and 96 percent of Canadian homes having television sets with those in the U.S. averaging nearly seven hours a day in use; and