

**REPORT AND ISSUE STATEMENT ON WORLD HUNGER**  
**A Resolution Approved by General Synod XI (1977)**

I. SUMMARY

Hunger in our nation and our world will still continue to be with us during the 1978-79 biennium. The intensification of the UCC's efforts to combat hunger, begun during the current biennium, will need at least the full four years voted by the 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod for the denomination to approach its potential. The World Hunger Working Group on behalf of 11 national agencies and the Council of Conference Executives submits the proposal that the 11<sup>th</sup> General Synod will affirm the continuation of the UCC Hunger Action Program containing the goals of consciousness raising, resource allocation and theological and ethical studies as voted by the 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod.

II. BACKGROUND

In 1975, in response to the visible presence of extensive hunger in the U.S.A. and among the rest of our world's population, the 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod adopted a program designed to significantly increase the denomination's historical involvement in combating hunger. This four year program was assigned a top priority with the request for a progress report to the 11<sup>th</sup> General Synod. The design of this Synod calls for this report to be included within an issue statement on World Hunger. This section contains the requested report.

This six goal program engages the entire United Church of Christ in a wide range of programs designed to attack world hunger. These programs and activities are coordinated through the World Hunger Working Group, comprised of 11 national agency representatives, a representative of the Council of Conference Executives and the UCC Hunger Action Program Coordinator, and is under the administrative oversight of the United Church Board for World Ministries.

In 1976, the national agencies of the United Church of Christ spent over 2.5 million dollars on on-going hunger concerns. Financial data for 1976 is not available from Conferences, Associations and local churches. An equivalent of 14 full-time national staff work on hunger related programs plus other staff and hundreds of volunteers throughout the UCC. 37 Conferences were actively engaged in the hunger issue by the end of 1976. The greatest national involvement was in the areas of constituency education, citizen action, and aid and development. Conference programming concentrated on constituency education, citizen action, and aid and development. Conference programming concentrated on constituency education and fund raising.

Much of the UCC hunger action is done with other denominations, church related agencies and/or secular agencies whose programs coincide with the goals established by the UCC 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod. The following information relating to the six goals is only illustrative. A more complete listing of UCC programs is in the 1976 Inventory prepared for the World Hunger Working Group. Copies of the 1977 Inventory are to be available at this General Synod.

1. *Consciousness Raising and Constituency Education.* The UCC participates in the ecumenical program known as WHEAT (World Hunger Education/Action Together). This program identifies, through the signing of a covenant, persons willing to study and act on hunger and trains leaders in organizing hunger action. The UCC has over 2,500 WHEAT covenanters and 150 have WHEAT training. The UCC sponsored 6 training events.

Information on hunger and UCC and interdenominational activities are shared through local church, Conference newsletters, and most national publications. In additions, speakers, reports, audiovisuals, pictures, exhibits, radio spots, study guides, etc. are available. The UCC Hunger Action Fund contributed to the development of a Junior-Senior High Curriculum, an adult seminar series, and a book of theological studies on hunger. Conferences and local churches also developed curriculum, study guides and education programs.

2. *Lifestyle Modification.* The UCC task force on Christian Lifestyle, also relates to World Hunger. A Hunger Action Fund grant instituted a training program for those engaged in outdoor ministries (camping) for the exploring and practice of simpler and sounder lifestyles. Two national agencies have made conscious efforts to alter their institutional lifestyle with respect to meeting locations, meals and information flow. A number of local churches and Conferences have sought to encourage lifestyle modification often through imaginative ways such as weighting wasted food at annual meetings.
3. *Citizen Action and Public Policy Formation.* There are many activities in this area with a variety of local, Conference, regional and national organizations aiding the development of effective citizen action in policy development, legislative enactment and administrative implementation of hunger related concerns.

The Interreligious Task Force on U.S. Food Policy, (the Washington representatives of 23 denominations and groups) works in four areas: International Development and Food Aid, International Development and Food Aid, International Economic Justice, Domestic Nutrition, and Agricultural Policy. They prepare policy statements, advise on particular legislation, testify before legislative committees and administrative offices and provide information to citizen action groups. They have been particularly concerned with Food Stamp Legislation, Estate Tax Reform to benefit family farmers, Foreign Aid policy and the 1977 Omnibus Farm bill. The UCC Hunger Action Fund supports this most effective Task Force with grants of \$10,000 per year.

The UCC is also an active participant in the hunger activities of other organizations. This includes Bread for the World and The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a non-profit legal aid firm seeking implementation of authorized appropriations in Federal feeding programs.

The UCC participation in the hunger work of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) is in the area of agribusiness corporations. Shareholder's proposals were filed with Bristol-Myers about their infant formula and with Castle & Cooke, Inc. (Dole pineapple, etc.) over employment practices in canneries and field operations. The Northern California Conference is active in the Northern California ICCR and their negotiations with Del Monte, Tennaco and other Corporations.

4. *Fund Raising.* In addition to the established channels for giving to hunger related programs, the newly created Hunger Action Fund gives particular, although not exclusive, attention to consciousness raising and citizen action. At the start of 1976, \$162,861.89 was added. In 1976, there was a net increase over 1975 of more than \$215,000 in giving to OGHS, the major UCC offering for funds used in relation to hunger.
5. *Resource Allocation.* In 1976, the UCBWM spent about 50% of the \$2.5 million spent by national agencies. Of that 51%, 65% went for rural and agricultural development and an additional 4% went for mass economic development. The UCBHM expenditures constitute 38% of the total. Their

heaviest involvement was in support of citizen and economic action groups. A second major emphasis was constituency education. OCIS and CRJ spent about 3.5% each and their primary concern was citizen action and public policy development, 4% was spent by the Stewardship Council for promotion and interpretation.

The 1976 Hunger Action Fund budget accounts for 35% (\$84,000) of the UCC hunger spending plus an additional \$70,740 granted to a variety of programs. In 1977, the actual basic budget is \$81,369. The Spring 1977 project grants totaled almost \$40,000. 37% of the basic budget goes for ecumenical programs such as WHEAT, the Interreligious Task Force on U.S. Food Policy and the NCC Hunger Coordinating Council. 17% goes for 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod requested tasks. Hunger Action Fund grants are allocated according to a formula established by the Executive Council: Constituency Education and Mobilization—20%; Public Policy Advocacy—30%; Aid and Development—25%; Theological Ethical Studies—10%; Promotion of Giving—5% and Retention for next year's budget 10%.

6. *Study of Theological and Ethical Issues Related to Hunger.* The UCC participated in a consortium of theologians and laity from around the country in developing a book on the theological and ethical issues of hunger. A Hunger Action Fund grant was given to stimulate Third World theological reflection on hunger. Articles have been published, studies undertaken, and worship resources are available.
7. *Coordination and Implementation.* The UCBWM has responsibility for coordinating the Hunger program. They formed the World Hunger Working Group (WHWG), which meets monthly, consisting of 13 persons representing national agencies and the Council of Conference Executives. It is through the WHWG that basic coordination occurs.

The UCBWM also formed the Advisory Commission on World Hunger consisting of 18 persons who are knowledgeable about hunger and the functioning of the UCC. The Commission has called upon the UCC to attack the *root causes* of hunger and have recommended three public policy areas for the prime attention: Aid and Development Assistance to small Farmers, Establishment of Grain Reserves, and the Elimination of Domestic Hunger.

The UCBWM also secured a coordinator for this program. When Shirley Green retired at mid 1976, Neill Richards was appointed to this position.

### III. RATIONALE

The Bible repeatedly reminds us that food is a basic necessity for life. Bread and wine are the symbols used in the sacrament of communion (Mk 14:1-25). Many events in the life of Christ occur at meals (Mt. 9:10ff; Lk 11:37ff; 14:1ff; 24:28-30, 1-3; Jn 12:1-8, 13:1ff). Food is spoken of in many of Christ's parables (Mt 13:3-8; 24-30, 33; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; Lk 16:19-31), teachings (Mt 6:24-33; Mk 6:7-9; 10:17-22; Lk 6:20-25; Jn 4:31-38; 6:26-34, 47ff), and actions (Lk 6:1-5; Mt 14:15-21).

In the early church insights regarding the implications of their faith frequently centered around food (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-3; 10-11; 11:27-30). Throughout the Bible we are taught to be concerned for others and to provide food (Mt 25:31-46) but also to hunger and thirst after justice (Mt 5:6; Lk 4:18-19).

In response to the central teachings of our faith, it is imperative that we reaffirm our commitment to fighting hunger.

A comprehensive four year program such as established by the 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod takes time to develop and implement. While action has been occurring it was not until the end of 1976 that some of our Conferences were able to adopt world hunger as a priority. Now that the machinery is in place, the programs, indeed the incorporating of hunger action into the fabric of our faith and church life at all levels, can begin in earnest with the continuing recognition of world hunger as a top priority.

#### **IV. IMPLICATIONS**

The mandating of this four year program as a continuing top priority will encourage the entire United Church of Christ to continue and intensify their efforts of combating the short term effects of hunger and seeking the elimination of its root causes. The full implementation of this program would leave no expression of the UCC's life untouched. Each church would have persons designated to help focus that church's response to world hunger. Institutional styles of Conferences, national agencies and General Synod would be modified releasing additional resources for use in meeting human hunger.

The allocation of UCC hunger funds and personnel would increasingly be directed towards attacking the root causes of hunger including over-population, insufficient food production in developing countries, concentrated land ownership, political domination by the few to benefit the few, poor stewardship of resources. Based on continuing study and theological reflection, United Church of Christ members, individually and collectively, would substantially increase their giving to hunger programs and exercise their responsibility as citizens to get our government to enact and implement policies contributing to the elimination of domestic and world hunger.

This action implies that the UCC has a continuing ministry on behalf of the poor and the hungry of our world. The concentrated focus on hunger embodied in this program is to continue until the end of 1979 at which time a decision will be made as to how best the UCC can continue this imperative Christian witness.

#### **V. RESOURCES**

The fight against hunger is of such magnitude that no top limit can be placed on the allocation of our church's resources. In 1976 over \$2.5 million and the equivalent of 14 full-time national staff were at work against hunger. There are also numerous local church Association and Conference task forces on hunger. These involved unknown funds and considerable numbers of volunteer and staff hours.

The coordination of this program, the tasks mandated by General Synod and participation in ecumenical programs require at least \$100,000 annually from the Hunger Action Fund. To effectively implement the goals and objectives voted by the 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod, there will need to be significant increases in the amounts allocated to hunger by Conferences, Associations, local churches, members and national agencies.

#### **VI. RESPONSIBILITY**

Given the responsibility for coordinating this program on World Hunger, the United Church Board for World Ministries has implemented this through the UCC World Hunger Working Group with the advice

of an 18 member UCC Advisory Commission on World Hunger. The Executive Council has and will continue to receive progress reports at each of its meetings, approve budgets and other allocations from the Hunger Action Fund and is to present an evaluative report with recommendations for the future of the program to the 12<sup>th</sup> General Synod.

## **VII. ACTION**

We affirm the wisdom of G.S. 10 in their adoption of the Pronouncement entitled, "The UCC Confronts the World Food Crisis."

We receive the report of the World Hunger Working Group and direct that the report be recorded in the minutes.

We rejoice in the positive response initiated at all levels of the Church:

- a) the Instrumentalities have allocated funds and personnel;
- b) the Conferences and Associations have established committees to lay strategy both for national and international response and local church involvement;
- c) local congregations have begun to study, to give sacrificially, and to address the difficult task of life style modification.

Recognizing that world hunger is an ongoing critical problem calling for major long-term commitment by the UCC, G.S. 11:

1. Urges the Executive Council and Instrumentalities to continue their coordination and implementation of the ongoing program of action within the guidelines established by G.S. 10, including promotion of the Hunger Action Fund;
2. Further urges local churches, Associations, and Conferences to continue this issue as a major concern in their consideration and efforts;
3. Anticipates the receipt by G.S. 12 of an evaluative report by the Executive Council of the four year program (1975-1979) together with its recommendations regarding future directions for the UCC in this vital area of need.