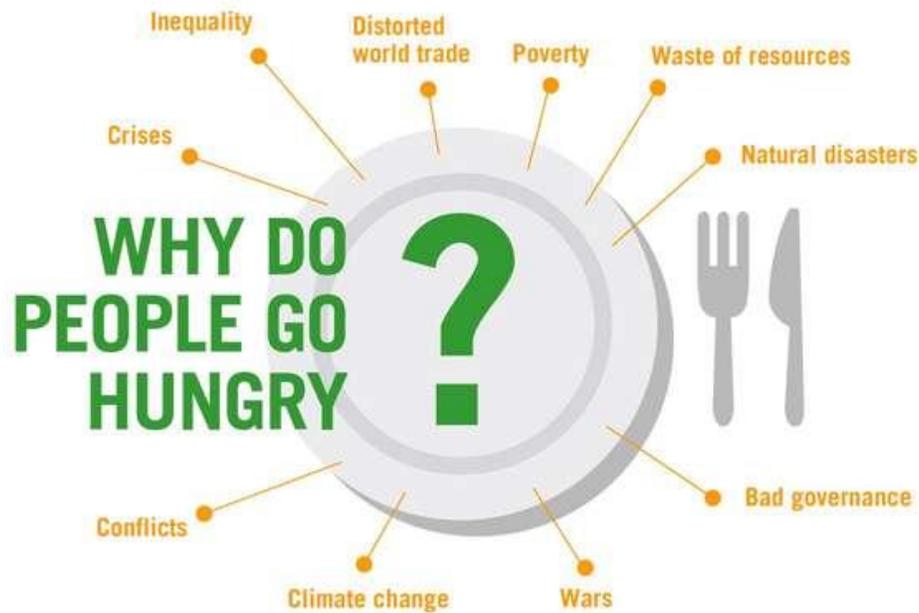


“Change the World: Feed the Hungry” Acts 6:1-7

When looking at the challenge of hunger in the world today, we can get pretty overwhelmed! Let’s consider just a few statistics.



There are many causes and many solutions out there.



The variety of reasons for hunger makes it really hard to agree on solutions. That is why as we look at God's challenge for us to feed the hungry, we have to consider how we can do this together and in ways that are long-term.

In our Bible story for today, we see an example of a long-term solution that brought people together to address the problem of hunger. This comes from the book of Acts which is part 2 of the two books written by the same author: Luke and Acts. One book (Luke) was about the life of Jesus and the other (Acts) was written about the life of the church after Jesus. In Acts, we hear how the disciples tried to continue the mission of Jesus and his vision for the kingdom of God. The book records both stories of success and struggle and how the church dealt with them. In this episode from chapter 6, the early church was facing a problem. There were too many tables to serve the hungry and not enough people to do it. In addition, some people were grumbling that the leaders were ignoring the needs of the Hellenists (the Greeks) among the assembly. The leaders were accused of a bias to help the Hebrew hungry more than those who were Greek.

1. What complaint did the Greek Jews have against the Hebrew Jews? Acts 6:1

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of food.



The issue was complex. The people were questioning the motivation of the leadership of the church. There were racial divisions and competition over human resources. The leaders could have felt overwhelmed by all of this. Instead, they came up with a brilliant and yet simple solution. They put it back on the people to discern who was called to leadership from their midst. They gave them some guidelines about the kind of people to be appointed: They needed to be full of the Spirit and of wisdom and of good character in the community. The solution had to come from the people themselves as they were led by the power of God's Spirit. The beautiful thing about this story is that it became the starting point for the ministry of deacons in churches all over the world. The twelve apostles realized that God was calling them to increase the number of people who were called to lead and to have a ministry that is solely focused on compassion, care, and feeding the hungry. The original deacons, the seven, were selected to serve tables.

What the disciples did was establish a sustainable system that helped address the needs of the hungry in their community. The people themselves decided who these leaders would be, and the leaders were focused on the feeding of the hungry. The ministry was relational, sustainable and focused.

As we consider God's call to us to feed the hungry today, we can learn from the example of the early church. Instead of focusing on the challenges of hunger as limitations, we can see the potential for creative solutions by sharing what we have and responding to the call to serve.

I recently watched the movie "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" which is based on the true story of William Kamkwamba who at the age of 13 invented an unconventional way to save his family and village in Malawi from famine. It took a lot of faith, cooperation, and creativity for this to happen. We will watch a part of his TED Talk:

<https://youtu.be/crjU5hu2fag>

Here is also an overview of the movie with William and the director:

<https://youtu.be/izCc4duhnxA>

Here are some excerpts from William's TED talks about this:

"One year, our fortune turned very bad. In 2001, we experienced an awful famine. Within five months, all Malawians began to starve to death. My family ate one meal per day, at night," said Kamkwamba in the talk. He wanted to do something for his family and his country and stumbling upon the aforementioned textbook proved to be a life-changing experience, once he found out that windmills could provide the water needed for a successful harvest.

Kamkwamba's story is incredible, showing how despite all odds, his determination drove him to find a solution that could be replicated by other communities. And in telling his story, Ejiofor, the director, is inspiring viewers to follow their own dreams and use them for the greater good.

"I used a bicycle frame, a pulley, and a plastic pipe," explained the inventor, saying that it generated 12 watts of electricity. It was able to light four bulbs and two radios in his home. When that first windmill became a success, he began making more. He said his next plan was to create another one that would pump water and produce irrigation for crops, and that he hoped, through his TED Talk, people would be inspired to lend a hand and provide materials.

Very powerful story! The power of it for me is that it was an ordinary child who had very limited material resources, but he had the power of imagination to see the potential to help his community. He also rallied others around him. They believed in him. The same is true of each of us. We could see all the limitations we have or the immensity of the hunger problems we are facing and thus feel overwhelmed or paralyzed. We could get stuck focusing on the people who complain about the hungry people or the causes of hunger. But if we rely on the power of the Spirit to inspire us, we can see new solutions and how each of us can contribute to such solutions.

The quest this week is to learn about groups in our community that feed the hungry and how we can support the work of one of them. I know that each week, people here bring food items to share with those who are hungry in our community. I am hoping that we can take this same spirit of generosity a step further to really connect with our neighbors who are struggling.

As you go about this week, remember the words of Jesus as a challenge to you, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. Matthew 25:35a" Amen.