

World Vision 



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Theological Learning Brief

A brief developed by an international team of Theological scholars to aid World Vision in our understanding of

HUNGER & NUTRITION

His divine power has ***given us everything we need for a godly life*** through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
—2 Peter 1:3, NIV (emphasis added)

Living in The Republic of Niger, surrounded by so much hunger, I questioned whether God had forgotten Niger—had he really given people in Niger ‘everything necessary’ for their physical needs? As people started working with creation instead of destroying it, God’s original bounty—different edible, (medicinal and other) plants came back, crop yields increased, nutritional diversity increased, food supplies became more secure and consistent ... and I realized, indeed, God did provide all we need, but its bounty or scarcity is dependent on how well we steward God’s gift of the earth and all that is in it.

– Tony Rinaudo AM, Principal Climate Action Advisor, World Vision

*Our vision for every child,
life in all its fullness.
Our prayer for every heart,
the will to make it so.*



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Contents

Introduction	5
Diverse voices	5
Definition and exegesis	7
Application	10
Call	13
Ask	16
Conclusion	17

Introduction

World Vision's Mission Statement

World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

The current global hunger crisis has been compounded by the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased conflict, climate change and the growing cost of living. The love of Christ and God's command to love one another compels Christians to respond when others are in need. In our missional commitment to following Jesus Christ, World Vision seeks to serve people who experience hunger and those affected by malnutrition in ways that reflect the love of Christ. This learning brief provides the guiding theological framework for World Vision's response to the hunger crisis—a response that is informed by Scripture, reason, tradition and experience that will meaningfully enliven our work as an expression of our Christian faith. God is at work in the world, reconciling all things and bringing fullness of life for children, communities and creation. We seek to partner with God and others in this work.

In this learning brief, biblical scholars have worked together to help World Vision staff, partners, and like-minded peers orient themselves for just action on hunger and nutrition through a scriptural lens.

The sections are as follows:

- **Definition and exegesis:** Explains the nature of hunger and nutrition on the basis of key scriptural passages to show how these human experiences relate to our engagement with God and the created order.
- **Application:** Provides examples of how church tradition has guided Christian engagement with this matter.
- **Call:** Articulates God's desire for Christians to work together and with others to end hunger and improve nutrition for children—addressing both urgent needs and unjust systems that perpetuate hunger and poor nutrition.
- **Ask:** Recommends key principles of advocacy for inclusion within the new World Vision global campaign, accompanied by a theological explanation of each ask.

Diverse voices

World Vision is an international partnership of Christians. As a partnership, 'we celebrate the richness of diversity in human personality, culture and contribution'.¹ Our particular calling and ministry as part of the church is to serve the world's most vulnerable children and the poor in the name of Jesus Christ.² Similarly, we embrace church 'diversity in local congregations, denominations, fellowships, movements and structures'.³ With all this in mind, we have intentionally worked to reflect and honor the unique, diverse voices of the contributors who—representing their own theological distinctions, denominations and Christian traditions—participated in the deep, collaborative process of writing this learning brief. We honor and thank them. Their contribution helps World Vision, as well as our partners, grow in understanding the diversity of perspectives that are intrinsic to and essential in the body of Christ.

¹World Vision's 'We Value People' Core Value statement.

²World Vision Partnerships with Churches Policy (2019).

³Ibid

How to use this document

This learning brief can be used in many ways by those engaging with the Hunger and Nutrition space. For example, it can be used to frame our thinking about:

- How each staff member can posture their heart as they prayerfully approach these matters, and how our response to hunger reflects God's heart.
- How to design and roll out programmes in a way that reflects Scripture and our theological understanding of hunger and nutrition.
- How we can best join with other Christian partners, aligning ourselves with God's mission and calling for an end to hunger and for improved nutrition.
- How advocacy and addressing systems of injustice that drive hunger and nutrition reflect God's heart.

At the end of each section, there will be two highlighted boxes, one that summarises key takeaways, and another providing questions for further exploration and reflection.

Key takeaways

- The current global hunger crisis has been compounded by a combination of climate change, conflict, the effects of COVID-19 and the rising cost of living.
- This hunger crisis reflects broken relationships between us and God, creation, each other and ourselves, and we have the opportunity to partner with God in bringing about life in all its fullness.
- This theological learning brief provides a lens through which hunger, nutrition and God's heart for transformation can be better understood and acted on.

Group discussion

Mother Teresa once reflected on the overwhelming issue of global hunger: 'I never look at the masses as my responsibility. I look at the individual. I can love only one person at a time. I can feed only one person at a time. Just one, one, one.'

What is one small way that you can contribute to rewriting the story of child hunger and malnutrition in your context? Consider how you might help people directly in your community or what opportunities you might have to amplify their voices among local, national or global decision makers.

Definition and exegesis

Explains the nature of hunger and nutrition on the basis of key scriptural passages to show how these human experiences relate to our engagement with God and the created order.

Written by Peter Altmann, Fifamé Fidèle Houssou Gandonou and Zukile Ngqeza

Hunger defined: God's intention and humanity's failing with food.⁴

Technical definitions Hunger (Source: ACF)

Hunger can generally be defined as the experience of severe food insecurity or distress associated with lack of food (undernourishment or food deprivation).

Malnutrition (Source: WHO)

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term malnutrition addresses three broad groups of conditions:

- **undernutrition**, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age)
- **micronutrient-related malnutrition**, which includes **micronutrient deficiencies** (a lack of important vitamins and minerals) or **micronutrient excess**
- **overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases** (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers).

In the book of Genesis, throughout the creation narratives, God is described as creating a world that is characterised by a generous abundance. In 1:29, God gives humanity 'every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit in it. They will be yours for food.' In [2:8–9](#), God provides not only basic necessities but 'all kinds of trees ... trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food', a rich abundance for humanity's nourishment. This picture demonstrates God's character and plan, one where God and creation are in harmony and every creature has enough good food to eat.

God's plan, however, was disrupted by human rejection of this opulent provision. There was one tree that God had commanded humans not to eat from. Even though they had all of their needs met, humanity decided to disobey God and eat the fruit of this tree. The fall of humanity—and therefore the breaking of humanity's relationship with God, each other, and creation—is closely tied to power, provision, and food. Humanity, through its own choice to reject the generous gift of God's provision and give in to greed, bore the consequence of no longer living in harmony: 'by the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food' ([Gen. 3:19a](#)). Instead of abundance, humanity's relationship with food would now be characterised by discomfort and struggle. In this moment, sin became something that humanity was both responsible for and victim of.

⁴Technical Definitions: ACF - <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/the-hunger-crisis/world-hunger-facts/what-is-hunger/>, WHO - <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition>

Hunger remains a sustained theme throughout Scripture, both as an acknowledged constant evil that afflicts the downcast in society (Job 30:3–4) and more prominently as widespread food shortage. Sometimes its causes remain without explicit moral comment ([Gen. 12:10](#); [Gen. 26:1, 41](#); [Ruth 1:11](#); [1 Kings 17:1](#); [Acts 11:28](#)). Elsewhere widespread hunger takes place as divine punishment for injustice and disobedience that can be related to covenant obligations ([Lev. 26:26](#); [Deut. 28:48](#); [32:24](#)). An example of this connection of hunger and disobedience appears in the many occurrences of the triad of challenges—food shortage, sword and disease—in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (e.g., [Jer. 14–15](#); [Amos 4:4–11](#)). These challenges describe, in ‘non-mythic’ fashion, what takes place during invasions by an enemy army. The most graphic depictions of food shortage consist of tragic perversions of the mother–child relationship ([2 Kings 6:28–29](#); [Lam. 2:11–12, 20](#)), while provision for a child is an ultimate example of divine care ([Deut. 10:18](#)). Finally, Scripture condemns hunger that results from gluttony and hoarding by the wealthy ([Isa. 58:1–10](#); [Amos 6:4–6](#); [Luke 16:19–21](#); [1 Cor. 11:19–21](#)).

God’s response and humanity’s new task in the production, distribution and consumption of food

In the face of humanity’s struggle, hunger is also defined as an affliction that requires a just response. On the most basic level, the Bible depicts God as the ultimate host and provider ([Gen. 1](#); [Ex. 16](#); [Pss. 104](#); [145:15–20](#); [Matt. 14:13–21](#); [John 6:35](#); [10:10](#))—something that humans concerned with justice were to replicate ([Acts 6:1–7](#); [11:29–30](#)). In antiquity in general and in the Bible specifically, the political authority (e.g., king or ruler) was expected to care for people who experience hunger in like fashion, which the pharaoh took seriously in [Genesis 41:33–57](#) and as is implied in the good king’s provision for the needy in [Psalm 72:12–16](#). These leaders appropriately represent the divine ruler (God) by actively caring for the nourishment of the people in their care. With regard both to divine provision and the corresponding actions that worldly leaders should therefore take, the nutrition provided for all creatures relates closely with the exercise of justice by human leaders.

Throughout Scripture, the people of God are urged to steward the land, allowing it to rest and produce food for all people and all creatures ([Lev. 25:6–7](#)) and for food to be shared with the hungry ([Isa. 58:7](#)), especially those on the margins, like children ([Deut. 14:28–29](#)). In like manner, the end of hunger is frequently associated with a greater realisation of God’s salvation ([Deut. 2:7](#); [8:3](#); [1 Sam. 2:5](#); [Isa. 49:10](#); [Ezek. 34:29](#); [Joel 2:21–27](#); [Luke 6:21](#); [Rev. 7:16](#)), allowing humanity and creation to increasingly rediscover its renewed rhythms of harmonious living.

Combining the parallel beatitudes by Jesus in [Matthew 5:6](#) and [Luke 6:21](#)—hungering for righteousness/hungering now—integrates the Bible’s holistic view of hunger and nourishment. Desiring God’s will to become a reality in the world includes satisfaction of physical hunger. The right to food is closely linked to the maxim of Jesus when he said to the disciples ‘give them something to eat’ ([Luke 9:13](#)). Jesus thus takes up the mantle as the host providing for humans as the guests of honour in his world ([Luke 9:15–17](#) and parallels), and he invites humanity to play our role in the transformation of our broken relationships, including the relationship with food.

The character of God in community with God’s people

While food is important for consumption in terms of its nutritious value to both adults and children, in the Hebrew Bible, food and eating goes beyond ‘nourishing’ the body and into building or breaking relationships with God and human beings. It is through ‘eating’ (instead of not eating) from the forbidden tree that scarcity and discord entered the world ([Genesis 3](#)). In Deuteronomy, God promises Israelites ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’ ([Deut. 26:9](#)). This denotes an abundance of food where poverty and hunger are not a reality. Thus God’s ‘Gift of Land’ exhibits benefits such as ‘brooks, fountains, springs flowing in the hills and valleys, wheat, barley, grapevines, fig trees, olive oil, honey,’⁵ resulting in food abundance and life. In [Deuteronomy 6, 8, 14](#)

⁵Miller, P.D. (1990). Deuteronomy: Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox Press.

and [16](#), God's people are summoned to eat to remember God (the giver of land/food) and to share with others (brothers and sisters). Thus, in the Hebrew Bible ([Deut. 14](#)), there is a relationship between food and sharing with 'others', that is, 'the Levite, sojourner, and orphan'. In New Testament ([Luke 22:19-20](#)), 'all' (*pantes*) the people of God are invited to share the broken body and the blood of Jesus Christ together. Thus, in the Christian Bible food and eating exhibit the values of sharing and cohesion with others.

Isaiah uses a metaphor of a mother who feeds and nurses her children to indicate a new and restored community of God's people ([Isa. 66:11](#)). Thus, the eschatological community shall be sustained by God. This text presents Israelites as metaphoric children who will be fed by God.

The Lord's Prayer in Luke 11 breaks the power relations between the feeder (adults) and the fed (children). It uses an inclusive rather than an exclusive language for food. Give us 'our' (as both adults and children; black and white; low-, middle- and high-income countries) daily bread emphasises that the food belongs to all of us in God's *oikoumene* (household). Thus, there is a call for God to feed both adults and children. In Luke 11, God is the breadwinner and not adults. He is the one to give "us" (adults and children). Food is from God for us.

The arc of the biblical narrative: The three trees and their fruit

Within this narrative arc described above, is an archetypal story of orientation, disorientation and reorientation—a story that we, as God's household, find our place in and use to understand ourselves and the world in which we live. In conclusion to this section, a key to our shared story is food, embodied in the fruit of three important trees.

Along with the tree that led to humanity's fall at the beginning ([Genesis 3](#)), there are two additional key trees mentioned in Scripture: one in the middle and one at the end.

At the centre, we find the cross, the tree upon which Christ hung, enthroned as King. Not long before this Christ referred to himself as the vine, and to his followers as his branches, urging them to abide in him that they may bear his fruit ([John 15:5](#)). This fruit being that which Christ was anointed for ([Luke 4:14](#), [Isa. 61:1-2](#) and [Isa. 58:6](#)) '... to proclaim good news to the poor ... freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lords favour', and by extension, 'to share [our] food with the hungry' ([Isa. 58:7](#)). The fruit of the first tree, therefore, was sin, suffering, struggle and death. The fruit of the second tree, in light of this, is freedom, sight and the year of the Lord's favour. This fruit is good nutritious food, equitably shared with those who are hungry ([Acts 2:44](#)).

The third tree is at the end, the tree of life in [Revelation 22:1-5](#). This tree, also present at creation (Gen. 2:9), reemerges to bookend the tree that brought about humanity's fall, once again underscoring the healing and restorative intent of God as the tree consistently bears its abundant crop. Humanity is in full harmony with God once again and the nations know health and healing.



Key takeaways

- Hunger, simply defined, is the feeling of discomfort or weakness experienced when there is a lack of food. Nutrition is the process of obtaining food that is adequate for healthy growth.
- God generously created enough good, diverse and nutritious food for humanity to enjoy.
- Humanity disobeyed God and decided to follow their own greed instead.
- God nevertheless persevered through the struggle and suffering that humanity's failing brought about. God's plan is for just and equitable access to good food for all creatures living in a healthy environment.
- Throughout, God's character as loving, patient and generous shines through.
- God is the ultimate provider of food, as witnessed in the person of Jesus Christ. He invites humanity to participate in his restorative mission of transformation by reconciling all things, including humanity's relationship with creation and the food that it produces as well as just systems for distribution to ensure enough for all.

Group discussion

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and communities worldwide to tackle the root causes of poverty and injustice. Inspired by God's heart for those who experience hunger, World Vision's Enough campaign is centered on finding strategies to equip communities to be free from the cycle of child hunger and malnutrition.

In the feeding of the five thousand ([Matt 14:13-21](#)), Jesus compassionately provides for a large crowd of people who had gathered to hear him speak. With only five loaves of bread and two fish, he performs a miracle, multiplying the food to abundantly satisfy everyone's hunger.

Reflect on Jesus' compassion and willingness to meet physical needs, just as he fed the multitude in the Bible story. How does World Vision's mission align with God's heart for those who experience hunger? What means has God provided us with to respond?

Application

Provide examples of how church tradition has guided Christian engagement with Hunger & Nutrition.

Written by Kendall Vanderslice and Daniel Muvengi

Christ's invitation to his table

Every time we eat, we experience both the goodness and the brokenness of creation. We all experience this brokenness in different ways, whether through food allergies or lack of access to sufficient nutrition, through obesity or stunted growth and the compromised immunity these bring, through forced or minimally compensated labour in the fields or lack of access to farmland, through drought or plague, or through the worsening effects of climate change.

Nevertheless, today God chooses to mark God's promise to restore all things through a meal. Jesus offered his disciples a meal of bread and wine before his death, saying that every time we repeat his actions we should remember him. The early Christians, mirroring Christ's final supper, ate meals that brought together men, women and children from a variety of social classes—providing for one another as each had need ([Acts 2:42-47](#)) and embodying the gospel where reconciliation occurs both vertically with God, and horizontally with others and with creation.

When we share Communion with our own church family—our local church family, as a manifestation of our global family—we too, remember God's promise to restore creation and God's desire for all people to flourish. Our feast at the Communion table ought to flow out into our tables with friends and families, with the stranger and the marginalized, where we once again remember God's goodness and acknowledge the present brokenness too.

When we come humbly to both the Communion table and our daily table, pained by present brokenness and grateful for God's healing, we are then positioned to ask how we can also be participants in God's restoring work, especially in relationship to hunger and nutrition, seeking opportunities to reflect the self-sacrifice, generosity and hospitality demonstrated in the Eucharist.

Church tradition, fasting and deification through grace

Throughout history, the church has guided believers on these topics, rooted in fundamental principles that emphasise the sacredness of human life, the importance of community and solidarity, and the responsibility to care for the poor and vulnerable. In [Acts 6:1-7](#) the early church dedicated a core ministry of the church to serving those who experienced poverty and hunger.

Within many church traditions, particularly the Orthodox tradition, fasting from food occupies an important place. For example, during a whole year in the Orthodox calendar, there are about 160 days of fasting. Here, fasting is part of the ascetic endeavour to seek human deification through grace.⁶ In this context, food must be seen as not only a means of existence but also as an instrument of fulfilment through its well-balanced use. In appropriately approaching food, things are set right.

⁶The Christian concept of deification, often referred to as 'theosis' in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and "divinization" in Western Christianity, is a theological idea that describes the process by which human beings can become one with God or participate in God's divine nature through the grace of God. This concept is rooted in the belief that humans are created in the image of God and have the potential to grow in holiness and spiritual likeness to God.

Jesus Christ began his earthly ministry with an ascetic effort, fasting 40 days in order to successfully confront Satan, the dominator of this world ([Matt. 4:1-11](#)). In the same way, Moses in the Old Testament preceded his encounter with God and the attainment of the law with a 40-day fast ([Ex. 34:28](#)). Fasting therefore does not defeat the purpose of this endeavour because in the Orthodox Church, feeding those who experience hunger is part of the commandments of fasting itself, completing the meaning of the act of mercy that sustains our salvation.

In his message of the 'Holy Father to António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations', issued on 26 July 2021, Pope Francis underscored the urgent need to overcome hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He called for a radical shift in the way we address the systemic injustices that contribute to these challenges in supporting the poor and the most vulnerable.

The [Anglican Alliance](#) has also recognised the biblical concern for ending hunger and has emphasised the importance of sustainable agriculture, better nutrition, and food justice. They are calling for diverse agricultural practices while advocating for a reduction in over-dependence on a narrow variety of staple crops such as rice, wheat, maize and potatoes. Many of their church leaders are great advocates for caring for creation through greening efforts. Their goal is to build resilience in the face of changing climate patterns and crop diseases that can lead to food shortage.⁷ They demonstrate a commitment to fulfilling Christ's teaching by feeding the hungry and caring for the most vulnerable.

Groups such as the [Organisation of African Instituted Churches](#) also play a pivotal role in social mobilisation and amplifying the voices of farming communities.

Key takeaways

- Food exposes both brokenness and a foretaste of God's restorative work.
- Food brings people together and can embody right living as we experience and participate in God's healing.
- Fasting is an example of an endeavour that seeks deification through grace, enacted by the sharing of food with those who experience hunger.
- Church leaders can be great advocates for caring for creation and for reforming and restoring systems and structures that perpetuate hunger and malnutrition.

⁷ Anglican Alliance 2017

Group discussion

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:25--37](#)) teaches us to extend mercy and practical help to those in need, challenging us to break down barriers and actively care for others with selflessness and kindness.

As we look around the world, we see systems and structures perpetuating hunger and malnutrition. How can we embody the principles of the Good Samaritan as we respond to God's call with both compassion and practical action?

World Vision's 'Enough' campaign strives to address the root causes of poverty and injustice, working towards a world where every child can experience fullness of life and reach their God-given potential. Through practical initiatives, advocacy and support, World Vision seeks to embody the principles of the Good Samaritan, extending compassion and aid to those in need.

How is the Enough campaign responding to God's call to address root causes of hunger and malnutrition?

Call

God's desire is for Christians to work together and with others to engage to end hunger and improve nutrition for children—addressing both urgent needs and unjust systems that perpetuate hunger and poor nutrition.

Written by Samuel Ewell and Derrick Weston

A complex problem, requiring a thoughtful response

No faithful response to hunger can be separated from the other justice issues facing vulnerable populations around the globe and care for the non-human members of creation. The issues at the heart of the hunger crisis are many and complex. Issues around food waste, challenges with distribution that lead to unequal access to nutritious food, and overconsumption or consumption of the wrong food are all challenges that need to be faced. These must be addressed together if the church is to adequately address issues of hunger. Furthermore, we must recognise that, as author and theologian Norman Wirzba has stated, food is 'the most concrete and intimate connection between ourselves and the earth that exists'.⁸ How we produce food (ethically and sustainably) is as important as how food is distributed (equitably), and as research has shown, food that is well produced is more nutritious.

⁸ [Food & Faith: A Theology of Eating](#) Wirzba, Norman. "Food & Faith: A Theology of Eating." Cambridge University Press, 2011

Ethical production, dignified distribution, responsible consumption

As communities of faith, we are called to be advocates both for ecologically sound production of food as well as equitable distribution of it.⁹ To accomplish both of these goals, the church must invest in the development of local growers and markets and, where necessary, divest from ventures that exploit the land or allow human greed to threaten communities and diminish the returns of agriculture. Skilled farmers must have control of their region's arable land to achieve food sovereignty,¹⁰ to grow sustainably, allowing the land to rest and restore itself and avoid exploitation as good stewards. Where the church owns the land (with the churches in the West being noted as being sizable landowners) committing this land to be used by up-and-coming farmers struggling to find land could cause a massive shift toward a more locally sourced and resilient food system.

As Christians, we should be advocating for food justice, while understanding that there are places where works of mercy (acts of charity) will still be called for as new systems are developed.¹¹ In those places, where charitable food systems are still in place, we should be seeking to see food distribution done in a way that protects the dignity of those being served. For example, it is the quality of food, not just its quantity that must be considered. Where cheap and unhealthy food is readily available, efforts to increase the accessibility of nutritious food must be promoted as must any necessary habit of behaviour changes that can help realise responsible consumption where healthy foods are valued and where food waste is reduced. Hierarchies of the server and the served must be replaced with common tables where all can be reminded of their own value and the value of their neighbour in the eyes of God and the church as we all engage in this shared journey of transformation.

The Creator's call to care for our common home is as urgent as ever, and it requires a range of faithful responses, from individual and grassroots efforts to major policy and legislative changes. By reconnecting with ecologically sound food production and equitable distribution, the church can offer demonstration plots of abundant life. Sites where, even in the margins, we tend the earth and one another.

⁹See WCCs 10 commandments of food - [10-commandments-guide_small.pdf](#) (wvi.org) and scriptural references such as [Jeremiah 12:4](#)

¹⁰'Food sovereignty' is a concept and movement in the realm of agriculture and food policy that emphasises the rights of people and communities to have control over their own food systems. It was developed as a response to concerns about food security and the negative impacts of globalisation and industrial agriculture on local and traditional food systems. Food sovereignty is often contrasted with the concept of 'food security,' which is a narrower focus on ensuring that all people have access to enough food for a healthy and active life. Food sovereignty goes beyond food security by addressing the broader issues of who controls food systems and how food is produced and distributed. It is a holistic approach to reshaping food systems to be more just, sustainable, and equitable.

In 2007, the first global forum on food sovereignty in Mali led to the [Declaration of Nyéléni which states:](#)

"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations."

¹¹ World Vision's [Transformational Development Policy](#) calls our staff and partners to recognise that God desires the transformation of systems and structures so they work for equity, justice and the well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable (2.6). Therefore, as we think of agency and dignity of all, we seek to empower children, their families, and communities to plan and control their own journeys of transformation [and food sovereignty] (2.2).

Key takeaways

- Hunger is deeply impacted by and impacts global challenges including conflict, environmental degradation, gender inequality, corruption, greed, unhealthy political incentives, etc.
- The church should embody an active role in restoring broken food systems.
- Acts of mercy must hold the dignity of individuals as primary, empowering all people to contribute to a shared solution to a shared problem.

Group discussion

As we reflect on our call to promote the rights of those both accessing and defining their own systems in food sovereignty, let's look at a few underpinning principles from Transformational Development that shapes our call to action (2.1, 2.2):

- We recognise that God is already at work in the process of human and social transformation.
- Transformational Development is the responsibility of the people themselves.
- Families are the primary social units and the basis of civil society.
- Children play a key role as agents of transformation.
- World Vision's contribution to a community's journey of transformation will always be limited and time bound.

As you think about how our Christian faith calls us to address systems of injustice and oppression, which of these principals is most needed in your context in order to achieve food sovereignty?



Ask

Key advocacy asks to be recommended for inclusion within the new global campaign— accompanied by a theological explanation of each ask.

Written by Eugene Cho and Nancy Neal

Humanity: Designed for just living

Throughout Scripture, God requires that God's people seek justice in their ways of living and being in community ([Mic. 6:8](#), [Amos 5:22-24](#)). Whether it is the call of the prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Amos), the provisions in the law of Moses ([Lev. 22:23](#)), or Jesus' commands to love our neighbours ([Matt. 22:37-40](#)), Scriptures call for communities to make provisions for the most vulnerable. God's people are called to respond in love to the widow, the orphan, the sojourner, the hungry, the infirmed, or the possessed. Jesus heals those who are in the margins and restores them back to community. Pursuing justice not only reflects God's character but is part of what it means to worship the triune God. As God's people we are called to build communities and nations grounded in justice. Therefore, we must ensure that all children experience food justice with protection and proper nutrition so they might thrive.

Calling those in authority

We see again and again in Scripture that God expects governing bodies to provide for the safety, well-being, and thriving of those whom they govern ([Pss. 72](#), [Jer. 22](#), [Prov. 31:8-9](#)). Prophets held kings accountable for caring for the most vulnerable in their communities. Jesus criticised both Roman imperial rulers and religious authorities (Luke 20:45-21:4) who exploited the most vulnerable among them. We call on governments of all countries to create systems and structures that protect children and provide for their safety, well-being and flourishing.

Calling those who have much

Further, God's creation is characterised by abundance. We as humans have been entrusted with the stewardship of creation. We can trust in God's provision of enough for everyone. Those who have resources are required to steward them to ensure the safety and well-being of our neighbours, particularly the most vulnerable ([Luke 12:48](#)). We also call on those who have wealth to collaborate with individuals and governments to invest their resources in systems and structures that protect children and provide for their safety, well-being and thriving.

Calling us all

God's voice spoke creation into being ([Genesis 1](#)). We hear God's voice through the prophets, in the stillness of silence ([1 Kings 19:11-13](#)), through the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit ensured everyone heard the good news in voices speaking their own language ([Acts 2](#)). We believe that God continues to speak through individuals and communities to celebrate God's work in the world and call for justice. We are called to listen to and elevate the voices of those who are most vulnerable, particularly children. We are also called to leverage our own voices to advocate for justice and peace in our world. Whether it is speaking out for those who cannot speak for themselves ([Proverbs 31](#)) or with persistence like the widow ([Luke 18:1-8](#)). We call for those with the power and responsibility of governance and resources to provide leadership and create systems and structures that protect children and provide for their safety, well-being and thriving.

Key takeaways

- Christians are called to cultivate communities of justice, reflective of God's triune character, where children and their families can access nutritious food and thrive. This also involves repentance in recognising where we may have contributed to or benefited from unjust systems.
- God expects governing authorities to uphold the cause of the needy, providing leadership for the creation of systems and structures that preserve and promote life.
- For those who have much wealth and/or power, much is expected, particularly on behalf of the most vulnerable.
- Everyone has a role to play and a contribution to make.

Group discussion

We learn from [Mark 10:13-16](#) that Jesus embraced and blessed little children. His words and actions consistently revealed that children hold a special place in his heart, deserving of love, attention, and protection.

As you reflect on the significance of children in the Kingdom of God, how can they be agents of change in our efforts to address hunger and malnutrition?

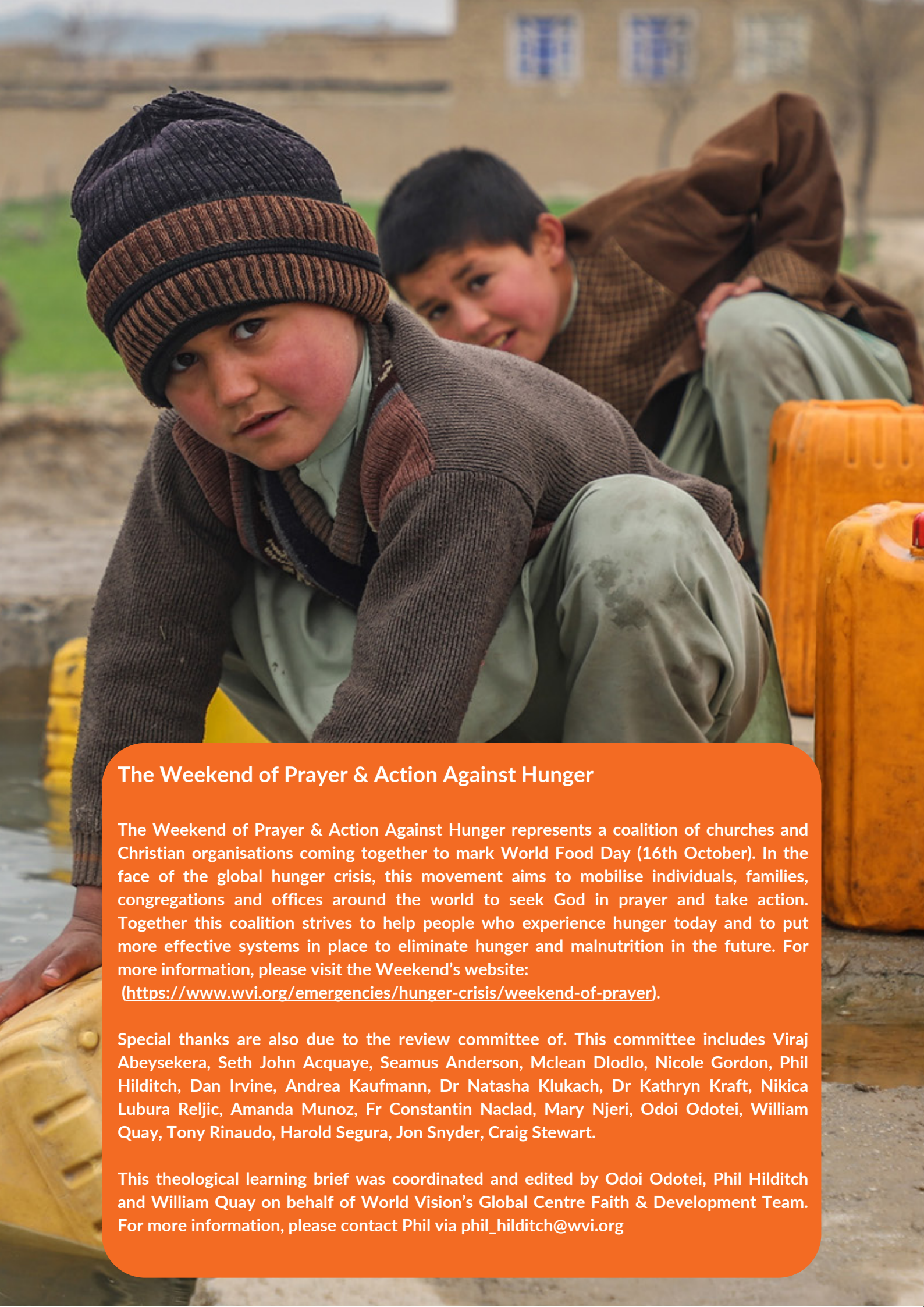
How can we follow Jesus's example and listen to and encourage children's participation in discussions about just food systems?

Conclusion

Hunger is a reflection of humanity's broken condition. Humanity's greed led to disobeying God and eating the forbidden fruit, causing sin to enter the world. Sin led to the disruption and disordering of humanity's relationships with itself, with others, with wider creation and ultimately with God. Sin directly impacts humanity's relationship with healthy, nutritious and accessible food, entrenched in injustice in the food systems. Despite humanity's failure, God is faithful and good, demonstrating patience and love, particularly for the marginalised, urging the people of God continually to choose life in many ways, including in sharing meals with those who experience hunger.

Time after time, however, humanity fails. We are both responsible for and victim of hunger and poor nutrition. In Christ, humanity is given a new hope. Christ is God's anointed one to declare the year of the Lord's favour and to see things set right. At God's table, all are invited to experience and participate in God's healing, in deification through grace, enacted in sharing food with those who experience hunger.

The people of God are invited to partner with God in the establishment of righteousness and justice, working with governments and duty-bearers at all levels to call for and participate in sustainable solutions to broken food systems. With the dignity of individuals held as primary, we are to pursue ethical and ecological production of food as well as equitable distribution and responsible consumption of food whereby everyone may have enough to pursue the fullness of life that God intends. In doing this we may participate in the greater realisation of the coming kingdom of God.



The Weekend of Prayer & Action Against Hunger

The Weekend of Prayer & Action Against Hunger represents a coalition of churches and Christian organisations coming together to mark World Food Day (16th October). In the face of the global hunger crisis, this movement aims to mobilise individuals, families, congregations and offices around the world to seek God in prayer and take action. Together this coalition strives to help people who experience hunger today and to put more effective systems in place to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in the future. For more information, please visit the Weekend's website: (<https://www.wvi.org/emergencies/hunger-crisis/weekend-of-prayer>).

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