

# **EDITORIAL: Hunger offering Every penny counts\_112204**

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## **EDITORIAL: Hunger offering: Every penny counts**

Baptist tables will creak this week under the burden of Thanksgiving feasts. No wonder Thanksgiving is one of our most popular holidays. We appreciate the Three F's of the day—family, football and food. And even if some folks quibble about how much they enjoy family and football, the appreciation for food is unanimous.

This Thanksgiving, as Texas Baptists dig in to the turkey, green bean casserole, candied sweet potatoes, fresh rolls, pie and other special dishes on our tables, we should remember victims of hunger across our state, throughout the nation and around the world. This is the season we collect the Texas Baptist Offering for World Hunger, which truly is an investment in the people Jesus called “the least of these.” And rather than mere acts of charity, our gifts provide an accurate reflection of our love for and devotion to him (Matthew 25:31-46).

Middle-class Baptists sometimes have a hard time comprehending poverty and the depths of hunger. But the Baptist General Convention of Texas' Christian Life Commission has created a paint-by-numbers portrait of hunger. See:

Twenty percent of the world's 6.3 billion people (one out of five) live on less than \$1 per day. Half get by on less than \$2 per day.

- ◆ A variety of causes prevent many of the world's nations from growing enough food to feed their citizens. The causes range from soil erosion and depletion, to water shortages and pollution, to destructive farming methods, to war, ethnic rivalry, greed, and political corruption and oppression.

- ◆ Every day, more than 30,000 children in the developing world die from diseases that can be prevented or treated. Seventy percent of all childhood deaths stem from malnutrition and preventable disease.

- ◆ Every year, 12 million people die because of polluted water.

- ◆ In America, “the land of plenty,” 34 million people, including nearly 13 million children, are exposed to hunger regularly.

- ◆ The U.S. child poverty rate is twice that of any other industrialized nation.

- ◆ Requests for emergency food assistance have increased by 19 percent in the past year, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

- ◆ In 2001, 23.3 million people received emergency hunger relief from America's Second Harvest. That's equal to the combined population of the nation's 10 largest cities.

- ◆ Texas has the second-highest incidence of food insecurity and hunger in the nation.

- ◆ One-third of inhabitants of the Texas-Mexico border live in poverty.

- ◆ One in 10 Texas children is hungry.

- ◆ Most poor people are in working families. More than 80 percent of poor Texas families with children had at least one adult who worked.

The Texas Baptist Offering for World Hunger will help alleviate this kind of suffering from Texas to Thailand and more than 60 points in-between. The goal is just \$750,000. If all Texas Baptists would contribute only what we spend on our own Thanksgiving meal, we could eclipse that amount many times over, and never feel the pinch.

As you eat that turkey, ponder the poor and hungry. And send your check to Offering for World Hunger, c/o Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 N. Washington, Dallas 75246-1798.

*-Marv Knox*

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