

February Fast Materials

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

FAST SCHEDULE AND CONTENTS ~ JAN. 30-FEB. 1

Topic: Increased Demand for Food

Country: India

* Special Section: Children and Fasting2

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IMPORTANT: *Fasting from food should be avoided by those with health-related conditions, such as diabetes, heart problems, and pregnancy. Anyone with questions about their health condition should consult with their doctor before beginning. Those fasting should read the guidelines in “[Fasting 101](#).”* 

Fasting options

- A fast typically begins after a simple meal Friday evening, no food Saturday, and ends with Communion or a communal meal on Sunday. Other schedules are welcome.
- Those who are not fasting from food can choose to eat simple meals, skip a meal, or design a fast that fits their circumstances.

For parents –

Children and Fasting

Fasting as an act of compassion and solidarity can be deeply meaningful for adults. But we don't often think of including children in this spiritual discipline. Yet the very concrete nature of fasting makes it uniquely suited to the gifts of faith of children.



The developmental needs of children call for a careful approach to this spiritual discipline. Muslims who fast from food during the month of Ramadan generally exclude children from the requirement of fasting until they are over the age of twelve. An absolute fast from food is probably not appropriate for a child whose body is growing and developing rapidly, just as it is not appropriate for pregnant women, diabetics, or those who have a heart condition. But the spirit and intent of the fast can be embodied in adaptations of the practice that can include children along with older family members. Here are some suggestions:

Talk together about what a fast is. With your child, read over and discuss the information in "Slow Down – and Fast."

Talk about the effects of the food crisis in India. Locate India on a world map. Using the information about India for this month's fast, discuss how the dire situation there is affecting the present and future of the children in India.

Decide together how your child will implement fasting. You might decide to have very simple family meals. Or your child might decide to refrain from eating snack foods or fast foods or from drinking sodas. Discuss the other options in "Slow Down-and Fast". Encourage your child to choose to fast from whatever food or activity will best help him or her to focus on God's intent for a hungry world.

Talk about communion. If you will be breaking your fast with the communion meal in the service of worship, talk with your child on Sunday morning about the meaning of the sacrament. The word "communion" points to the understanding that the whole body of Christ is a community where if one member suffers, all suffer. By breaking the fast with communion, you and your family are witnessing to the suffering of those without enough to eat, as well as to a commitment to give voice to their suffering and to work for justice.

Connect fasting and faith. A number of years ago, a Search Institute study of mainline denominations examined what contributes to a mature faith. One important factor identified in the study was the engaging of family members, adults and children alike, in acts of compassion and justice. But it is not enough to merely participate together as a family. Faith development is best nurtured in children when significant adults in their lives make a connection for them between the act and their faith. Reflect, pray, act-- and talk about it together.

For kids

Slow Down - and Fast

When you hear the word "fast", what's the first thing that comes to mind? Maybe it's how fast you are on your skateboard or bicycle. Or it could be how quick you are swimming or running, or your reaction time on your favorite video game.



But there's another meaning for this word that has nothing to do with speed. A fast is also a period of time when a person goes without food. You may not know it, but you fast every day! When you get up in the morning, you've gone for several hours without food. That meal of cereal and orange juice or bacon and eggs is called "breakfast"- you are breaking your fast of the night before when you were sleeping and not eating.

Everybody fasts at night when they are asleep. But some people choose to fast at other times. People of many faiths fast as a way of getting closer to God. During the Holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast during the daylight hours. Some Christians fast during Lent.

By fasting, people not only try to get closer to God, they also hope to be changed. They hope fasting will help them to make a difference in the world.

Many Presbyterians are fasting one weekend a month to call attention to the food crisis in the world today. Even though there is plenty of food in the world for everyone, many, many people do not have enough to eat. When we go without food or something else we are used to having, even for one weekend, it helps us to focus on a serious problem that affects millions of children

In a way, fasting helps us to slow down- to take time to pray and to think about problems in our world. By slowing down through fasting, we can get ready to take action as Christians.

A fast doesn't have to mean giving up food. You are growing and developing and you need fuel to grow. Here are some other ways you might decide to fast over a weekend:

- ✓ **Eat simple meals with your family.** Have meals of soup or beans and rice that cost very little to prepare. Ask your parents to make dinner using foods grown by farmers who live close to your home. Avoid eating meat.

- ✓ **Give up a favorite snack or fast food.** If you normally eat potato chips, candy, or pizza for snacks and drink sodas on the weekend, go without. If you usually buy snacks with your own money, set aside that money to give to a fund to end hunger.
- ✓ **Give up playing video games.** If you usually spend a lot of time playing your favorite games, go without playing for a weekend.
- ✓ **Give up watching TV or a DVD or going to your favorite sites on the Internet.** Read a book or play outside instead.
- ✓ **Give up talking on your cell phone or texting your friends.** Let them know you won't be using your cell phone for a weekend.

What happens when you think about the snack or the soda or the video game you are missing? If you choose to give up something that really matters to you, you're going to miss it a lot! Every time you think about eating a snack, playing a game or texting a friend, offer a prayer to God for hungry people instead.



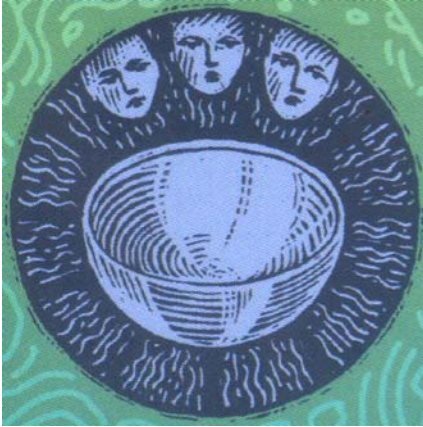
Talk with your parents about why so many people do not have enough to eat. Talk about what your family could do to help.

Slow down – and fast.

Learn more at www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis and www.pcusa.org/hunger

[Friday eve](#) | [Saturday](#) | [Sunday morning](#)

Friday evening: preparing / focusing



Reflection on February, the “Hunger Moon”

From Jessica Prentiss’s wonderful book *Full Moon Feast*

*In want and hunger was their lot,
They who fed to the parched wastelands:
They plucked saltwort and shrubs;
The roots of the broom plant were their food.*

- Job 30: 3-4, Translated from the Hebrew

In the deep of winter, when the earth in the North has been covered with snow and ice for many moons already, comes the Hunger Moon. This late-winter lunar cycle was called the Hunger Moon by many peoples in various languages, but always for the same reason – the frozen land yielded little to eat, and game was often scarce....

Our first experience of food is often synonymous with love: We are held, we are fed, and we are cared for – all at the same moment, by our mothers. In Hindu tradition the first rite of passage occurs when a baby reaches six months old-when he or she eats a mouthful of rice, the first food that is not mother's milk. The rice-eating ceremony is celebrated in the presence of a priest, often in a temple, with a gathering of relatives to witness this important transition in the child's life. Mantras and prayers are said. Such a ceremony reflects a worldview where food is sacred – a blessing and a gift – and being fed is not to be taken for granted.

Our culture doesn't express this worldview. We look at food as fuel, as something we need to keep going – our Energizer battery. We view food as a commodity, something that people need and so a thing that can generate a profit. Of course food *is* fuel and it *is* a commodity, but that is not all it is. I think that many of my teenage struggles with food came as a reaction against the commodification, commercialization, and overall undervaluation of food in our culture. If my grandparents had displayed what is often called a Depression-era mentality, maybe I displayed an Excess-era mentality, Maybe all those boxes on the supermarket shelves, the continual bombardment of commercials from the TV, and the abundance of the food itself played a part in the way I felt about what I ate and what I refused to eat.

The Excess-era mentality that I grew up around, along with the widespread adulteration of food with preservatives, chemicals, colors, flavors, and textures that originated in a

laboratory instead of a kitchen, made food feel like something that was tainted, something unclean, fake, and artificial. I reacted by trying to be a food purist. Hence my lunch of pita bread filled with dry diced vegetables and sprouts. I thought eating that way would make me pure.

The Hopi have called this late-winter moon, which falls around February, *Powamuya* – the Purification Moon. It is interesting that the word *February* comes from the Latin phrase *Febrttarius mensis*, meaning "the month of Februa." Februa was a Roman festival of purification that was celebrated every February 15, and so February was the month (moon) of *februa* (purification). In the Christian calendar, the period of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls in the beginning of February and lasts for forty days leading up to Easter. That is also a time of purification, of fasting, and of prayer. It is a time of intentional, conscious hunger.

I wonder how different my teenage years would have been if I had lived in a culture in which fasting, hunger, or purification were ritualized by the community, and were part of an annual cycle. Would I have spent years depriving myself of nourishment if there had been a Hunger Moon or Purification Moon in my calendar? Or if I had grown up in a time when my community observed the period of Lent through repentance and prayer? Or if my village held a purification festival at the end of winter?

And what if these practices were not about punishment, but about celebration and acknowledgment? Scarcity can be ritualized as a way of acknowledging it without having to actually suffer it. It can be seen as part of a cyclical whole, a new moon's darkness to the full moon's light. Or what if I had simply grown up in a time when food was seasonal? When there was, in each year, a time of more and a time of less? When food was not just there in packages on the supermarket shelf all year? What if I had grown up watching the planting, watering, and harvesting of crops, the threshing and winnowing of grains and beans, the drying of corn, and the careful calculations involved in making sure there would be enough food to last until springtime? Would I have inflicted unnecessary hunger on myself, privately and painfully if hunger had been honored and ritualized in my culture, and food considered precious and holy?

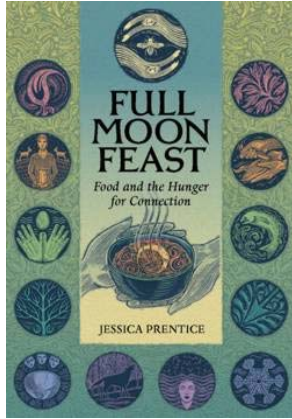
Jessica Prentice, *Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger for Connection*, [Chelsea Green Publishing](#), 2006, with permission from the author.

[Jessica Prentiss](#) is an writer, professional chef, passionate home cook, director of Education Programs at the [Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture](#).



Photo: Foster Wiley

The Book



[Buy Now](#)

Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger for Connection

[Full Moon Feast](#) invites us to a table brimming with locally grown foods, radical wisdom, and communal nourishment.

[Praise for Full Moon Feast](#)

[Read summary](#)

Learn More

VIDEO: [Global Food Crisis](#)

from RocketBoom

A Cruel Joke: Rising Food Prices **Perspective from a Partner in Mission**

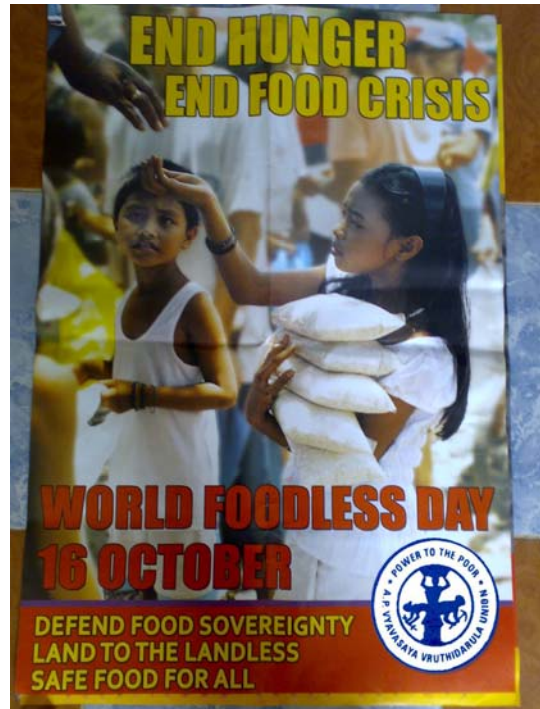
People fail to understand the roots of the food crisis. Some blame the growing Indian and Chinese appetite in contributing to the global food crisis. “For many in India this statement seemed a cruel joke. What about the 650 million people in India whose daily intake of food and nutrients are declining day by day? Total food grain consumption — wheat, rice, and all coarse grains like rye, barley etc — by each person in the U.S. is over five times that of an Indian ...” [Download the article by Thomas John.](#) 📄



Ending Hunger and Food Crisis Requires Understanding the Causes

Today roughly a billion people are hungry.¹ But the problem is not insufficient agricultural production. Over the past decades, food production has kept pace with population growth. So the persistence of hunger and the ferocity of the current food emergency are waking many to the need for a complete overhaul of the food system. Changing the food system will take a transformation of ourselves, our power structures and democracy itself.

Frances Moore Lappé says the crisis is not due to a shortage of food, but a shortage of democracy—“Because no human being chooses hunger, hunger is proof that a person has been denied a voice in meeting survival needs.”²



At its core, the food crisis comes down to this: Those most in need of food don't have the means to purchase it, nor the means to produce it.

In the United States, nearly all food banks are experiencing an increase in requests for emergency food assistance. But stocks of food are down because higher food costs and economic recession have resulted in reduced donations. The Federal government's donations to these banks, too, have dropped—75 percent in the past four years. Many of the 36 million people who are food insecure in the United States live far from grocery stores and farmers' markets. They must travel long distances if they are to buy healthy, affordable food.

Increasing meat and dairy consumption worldwide has further aggravated the global food crisis. Apart from high consumption in the industrial north, there has been a doubling of meat production and consumption in developing countries—mostly from grain-fed feedlots that displace small producers and consume 7 pounds of grain for every pound of meat produced.

The rise of agrofuels has impacted the global food system. The diversion of 5% of the world's cereals to agrofuels has increased grain prices. The U.S. Department of Agriculture claims that agrofuels are responsible for anywhere from 5 to 20 percent of grain price increases.⁹ The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has put it at 30%.¹⁰ A leaked World Bank report claimed it was 75%.

¹ Bread for the World, <http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics/hunger-facts-international.html>

² Frances Moore Lappé, “A Shortage of Democracy, Not Food” *The Progressive*, July 2008.

U.S. policymakers turned up the heat on the agrofuels boom by setting ambitious targets in the nation's Renewable Fuels Standards (RFS) as legislated in the *Energy Independence and Security Act* signed into law in December 2007. The Act mandates the consumption of 36 billion gallons of agrofuels annually by 2022—a five-fold increase over present levels. Achieving this volume will require 45 million acres—nearly 50% of the country's current corn acreage. Even if all of the U.S.'s 90 million-acre corn crop were converted to ethanol, just 12-16% of our gasoline would be replaced—barely enough for current ten percent ethanol blends (E-10), much less the 98% blends suggested in the Energy Bill.

(See: "[When Renewable Isn't Sustainable: Agrofuels and the Inconvenient Truths Behind the 2007 U.S. Energy Independence and Security Act](#)," Food First Policy Brief No 13, March 2008, [October 2, 2008])

Deregulation and poor oversight have contributed to the speculative bubbles in the futures markets. Following the sub-prime mortgage meltdown, investors searched for places to put their money. When they saw food prices going up, they poured investments into commodity futures, pumping up the price of grains and worsening food price inflation. Speculation in food commodities has had tragic effects in the developing world.

1 World Resource Institute. 2007.

2 Ibid.

3 FAO, 2004. (Full citations available)

Duped by Development

Through its structural adjustment policies, the [World Bank](#) and the [IMF](#) pressured African countries to abandon small farm agriculture, which was seen by these institutions as unproductive.

Development policies pushed people to the cities where they were to provide labor to manufacture and industry. African industrial agriculture would produce export crops (e.g., coffee, cacao, cotton) to pay off their foreign debt, and Africans would use revenues from industry to import their food.

The Bank insisted that this development strategy would result in increased family incomes and economic security, thus leading to lower population growth rates. This strategy failed miserably.

The urban population increased seven-fold, swelling from 18 to 33 percent of the population. Millions of poor and unemployed workers crowded into the cities—with two-thirds of them living in slums.²

The manufacturing and industrial sector did not "take off" in African countries; the percent of the GDP coming from industry was 30% in 1961 and 32% in 2000.³

In the countryside, as plantations for agro-exports expanded, food production plummeted and poverty grew. Within the rural population, density increased by 180 percent as more farmers were crowded onto smaller plots. While the rest of the developing world lowered the amount of export earnings they spent on food imports from 42 to 24%, African countries increased the share they spent on food imports from 42% to 54%.⁴

The industrial transition did not slow population growth because it actually *increased* poverty and insecurity in both rural and urban areas. This rise in population was not the cause of hunger, *per se*, but the result of poverty—brought on by the destruction of African food systems.

Friday evening prayer:

God of all goodness, open me to your presence in this period of fasting. Remind me of my dependence on you. Remind me of all humanity's dependence on you. Remind me of all creation's dependence on you. Reminded, may I seek to love you and my neighbors well. I pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Saturday: fasting / integrating

Early morning prayer:

Gracious God, another day begins and I give thanks for it is another opportunity to renew my efforts to love you and to follow Jesus. Strengthen me this day that I might love as you would have me love and live as you would have me live. Amen.

Breakfast-time prayer:

Eternal God, I go without today by choice. May my choice bring me in solidarity with my sisters and brothers who go without – who have too little or none at all – every day. I pray particularly today for the people of India asking your blessing with them. Guide their leaders and the leaders of the world so that the people may all be fed. Guide me that I may reach out in love. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Lunch-time prayer:

We dare to imagine a world where hunger has no chance to show its face.
We dare to dream of a world where war and terror are afraid to leave their mark.
We long to believe in a world of hope unchained and lives unfettered.
We dare to share in the creation of a world where your people break free.
Dare we open our minds to difference?
Dare we open our lives to change?
Your kingdom come, O God.
Your will be done.
Amen.

~ Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, U.K.
This prayer comes from [Making Poverty History](#)  by Church World Service & PC(USA).

Supper-time prayer:

Gracious God, by your Holy Spirit you gift us for lives of integrity and compassion following Jesus. You invite us to seek justice, to make peace, and to walk humbly with you. Embolden me to join those who urge our nation's leaders to end hunger in our own country and around the world. Amen.

~ Adapted from a prayer by Bread for the World

Evening prayer time:

God who makes us and loves us and nurtures us; help me remove all that distracts me from you. Help me focus my attention upon you – upon your presence in my life – upon your gifts – upon your grace already working in my life. Strengthened and sustained by your love, may I love my sisters and brothers. Amen.



Biblical Reflection

Culture of Death Vs Culture of Life (I King 21: 1-14)

*Who are main characters in this Old Testament story?
What role does each play? Can we look for
corresponding characters in our contemporary history?*

Luxuries of the rich

Ahab wants to acquire Naboth's vineyard and turn it into a vegetable garden, apparently through a deal that sounds legal and reasonable. "I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money." (1 King 21: 1-4) It is the rich that determines the economic priorities and developmental needs, and the land use pattern of the world. Their fantasies and luxuries have priority over the basic survival needs of the people who own, live and work on the land. The farming operations of agribusiness are geared towards producing for a global market where the demands of the rich always get priority. Thus the food security of the people is compromised. Our rice fields are thereby turned into shrimp farms, banana and coco plantations, amusement parks and golf courses.

Discuss more instances of how our priorities and decisions have affected the lives of people in the third world?

Turning 'vineyard' into 'vegetable garden'

Have you thought about the implications of turning a "vineyard" into a "vegetable garden"? As far as the Israelites were concerned, the cultivation of wine suited the soil and the ecosystem, and it was labor intensive. It served to meet the basic livelihood needs of a large section of the people. Vine, vineyard and wine have profound spiritual meanings for Israelites. These represented life and their means of survival. The greed of the rich degrades land in third world countries, destroys the biodiversity, displaces the people from their land and livelihood, and ultimately destroys their long-term food security.

Share with each other cases you know of how multinational agribusiness corporations utilize land in third world countries for mono-cropping and cash cropping, and use intensive forms of cultivation involving lots of water, fertilizer and insecticides, and their consequences for the local population.

Clash of two worldviews

Naboth and Jezebel represent two cultures or worldviews. For Ahab and Jezebel, everything is exchangeable with "money" or with better substitutes. The deal Ahab strikes with Naboth, which is, "I will give you a better vineyard for it or if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money," resembles the kind of offer made by governments and vested interests to those whose lands are taken for agribusiness corporations, big dams, mines, tourism and other big projects. Thus, land, stripped of its essential ties to life and livelihood, is turned into a commodity. Through the genetic modification of seeds and the related patenting of life forms, all aspects of life including the bounty of God is commoditized and commercialized and used for making profit. Commodification and commercialization is the biggest threat we face today.

For Naboth, land is not a commodity. It is part of a covenant with God. Land was given to his forefathers by God as a gift to enjoy its fruits, to preserve and not to exploit, sell or make profit. In other words, land is sacred. It is an invaluable gift from God. As the Chief of Seattle says: "We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy - and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his fathers' graves, and his children's birthright is forgotten."

What is our understanding of the sacred? Have we as a civilization taken away the sense of the Holy from life and all its varied manifestations?

Jezebel's ways

Ahab is the king of Israel (the state) and apparently the one with legitimate power. But king's desire is implemented by Jezebel, who is an extra-constitutional center of power. Today, the [International Monetary Fund](#), [World Bank](#), and the [World Trade Organization](#) (brief explanations of each is included below) play the role of Jezebel in implementing the designs of the rich and powerful nations with the complicity of "the elders and the nobles of the city"—the bureaucracy and the ruling elite of the respective countries.

Jezebel also uses religion to legitimize her nefarious designs. (1 King 21: 9-13) Fasting becomes an instrument to level false accusations against Naboth of blasphemy and lack of patriotism. Reactionary forms of Christianity, in the hands of the Jezebels of our nations, legitimize their exploitative designs.

Discuss the role of the church in the present context of food crisis? How often has it been co-opted to justify an unjust economic world order?

How many deaths will it take till we know that too many people have died?

In the past, Naboths were killed in Laos, Congo, Angola, South Africa, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador and many other countries. How many Naboths are being killed today? (1 King 21: 13) Jesus bore the cross in defense of life and in defiance of all that destroys the integrity of creation. He gave us the choice: to choose life or death, God or Mammon. Will we stand by the values upheld by Naboth, which is life affirming or by the values of Ahab and Jezebel, which deals in death? It is in making such choices and associated political decisions that we become followers of Christ.

How can we remain faithful in this context of global injustice? How can we together fight corporatization of agriculture and retail through which we compromise our food security and remain hostages to profit making corporate interests?

International Monetary Fund (IMF) – The international organization entrusted with overseeing the global financial system by monitoring exchange rates and balance of payments, as well as offering technical and financial assistance when asked. Many IMF policies have proven to be destructive of the people and economies of countries in the global South.

World Bank (WB) – Part of a group of financial institutions, the World Bank focuses on the reduction of global poverty and seeks to achieve this through the provision of low- or no-interest loans and grants to countries with little or no access to international credit markets. The World Bank (as a financial institution) also seeks to safeguard its own financial interests and has been criticized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, people's groups, and citizens for its structural adjustment programs (SAPs) which attempt to implement neo-liberal economic policies (i.e., deregulation and privatization) in the countries where the World Bank operates.

World Trade Organization (WTO) – The successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the WTO deals with the rules of trade between nations at a near-global level; it is responsible for negotiating and implementing new trade agreements, and is in charge of policing member countries' adherence to all the WTO agreements, signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The structure of the WTO allows the interests of the major industrialized countries of the global North to dominate the processes and agreements.



Learn More

The Demand for Food

Video: [UNICEF – Food crisis ravages India's poorest children](#)

[Also see the article](#)

On the Front Lines of the Global Food Crisis - INDIA

By Mira Kamdar

- 1 – [Things That Go Bump in the Night](#)
- 2 – [A Real Green Revolution](#)
- 3 – [In the Test Fields of Academe](#)
- 4 – [The Organic Farmer](#)
- 5 – [The Seeds of Violence](#)

JAITU, FARIDKOT DISTRICT, India—Wrapped in a musky blanket under a fan that was frantically trying to beat the air free of mosquitoes, exhaustion was finally overtaking me when I vaguely felt something nuzzle my left hand.

[\[Continue reading the first dispatch\]](#)

Call to Action

From the [U.S. Working Group on the Food Crisis](#)

This coalition, in which the PC(USA) participates, is calling for fundamental changes in the way we produce and distribute food. The goal is to ensure that farmers in rural America and around the world can survive and thrive, and that all people can feed themselves. Below are some of the features of this just and sustainable food system.



As a result of decades of misguided policies and the recent sharp rise in food prices, a billion people around the world face hunger and food insecurity. Dangerous volatility in the financial system puts these people at even greater risk. We, the undersigned, call on people across the United States to use our political power and actions to fight for food system changes that:

Stabilize prices for farmers and consumers globally

- Regulate the finance sector's investment in food and energy commodities.
- Establish and strengthen publicly-owned domestic, regional, and international strategic food reserves.
- Suspend international trade and investments in industrial-scale biofuels (a.k.a. agrofuels).
- Reform food aid.
- Expand fair trade, not so-called free trade.

Rebalance power in the food system

- Reduce the political influence of agribusiness corporations on public policy.
- Strengthen antitrust enforcement in agribusiness.
- Convene multi-stakeholder, representative food policy councils at state and local levels.

Make sustainable agriculture the standard

- Support biodiverse, agroecological family farming in purchasing and procurement.
- Halt expansion of government supported biofuels programs, mandates, and tax incentives and other subsidies unless they only support sustainable, domestic production.
- Direct state and national farm policy, research and education, and investment toward biodiverse, agroecological farming and sustainable food businesses.

Guarantee the right to healthy food by building local and regional food systems and fostering social, ecological and economic justice

- Call on the US to join the community of nations supporting the human right to food.
- Support domestic food production and independent community-based food businesses in the United States and around the world.
- Establish living wages, so that everyone can afford healthy food.
- Implement full workers' rights for farmworkers and other food system workers.
- Strengthen the social safety net for low-income people across the US.
- Create a solidarity economy that puts people before profit in the United States and around the world.

Sunday: breaking the fast / responding

***IMPORTANT:** It's important to break a fast carefully. Eating too much too soon will overload your digestive system, causing uncomfortable and disruptive reactions.*

Early morning prayer time:

This is the day that you have made, gracious God. I rejoice and give you thanks for the miracle of life experienced anew. I pray that the day quickly comes when all your children are fed. Grant me the strength and courage to follow Jesus and work for that day. It is in his name I pray. Amen.

Breakfast-time prayer:

God of abundance, as Jesus blessed many with the five loaves and the two fishes, may I too, know your blessing as I break my fast. May I experience afresh your peace in my spirit, your love in my heart, and your justice guiding my life that I may work for a world in which your gifts are shared so that everyone has enough. Amen.

Break the Fast with Holy Communion

A majority of Presbyterian congregations have communion on the first Sunday of each month, but some do not. If your congregation doesn't celebrate the Eucharist on the first weekend of the month, you could break the fast with a breakfast or a lunch before or after worship. Alternately, another time of the month can be chosen to do the fast.

Liturgical Materials

- [Download fast and food crisis-related worship materials](#)
 - [Eucharist Litany](#) 
-

Break the Fast with a Meal After or Before Worship Service

Bring local foods (as much as possible), perhaps create a prayerful ritual or simple worship liturgy, and share your fasting experience. You might wish to begin or end your meal with the Communion or Liturgical Materials from above.

Prayers for India

Gracious and loving God, stand with the people of India as people of different faiths seek to live together. Grant them a willingness to listen to neighbors, courage to live into nonviolence, and grace to love each other. Draw the people together. Amen.

Gracious God, who creates us for peace, bring peace to your children around the world. We pray for peace between India and Pakistan as they struggle with the ongoing issues over the Kashmir and how they will relate together. Guide these two countries to find solutions that will contribute to lasting peace and prosperity in this region. God who creates us for peace, bless and guide those who seek peace and justice. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

~ H. Remthanga, International Peacemaker from India in 2005

Loving God, we remember that Jesus wept with Martha and Mary. Stand with those who weep in Pakistan, in India, and around your world for your children lost to violence. Make your presence known to the wounded and the grieving. May they find comfort and hope for the living of these days. Make your presence known to those who resort to violence. Touch their hearts; transform their understanding; guide them in the ways of peace and love. Make your presence known to leaders of countries and the world. Inspire them to work for justice and peace for all. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

~ Inspired by a prayer posted on the Disciples of Christ 2006 [Week of Compassion](#), email from the Church of North India, and email from Maqsood Kamil, International Peacemaker from Pakistan in 2006



Bringing it home

The following responses are steps towards solutions. They are ways we can engage in our food system and learn ways of working toward the deeper changes needed. Consider choosing one or two to do during the month as part of your faith practice.

Personal Responses

- Contact your elected officials to demand policies that support a fair food system. The first 100 days of the new administration will be an especially important time to set a new course.
- Write op-eds and letters to the editor of your newspaper about your vision of a healthy food system. The Peacemaking Program has simple guidelines for writing a good one! <- link to <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/actnow/writealetter.htm> Use the Call to Action above as a reference.

Communal Responses

- You, your family, and your congregation can choose from the [52 ways toward a just and joy-filled food system](#). 📅 You can do one every week (or one a year for the next 52 years. I'm kidding!).
- Work with others in your congregation to host an event to educate and mobilize your community around the food crisis this spring. Go to the PC(USA) Washington Office to [find and contact your representatives](#).
- Join local or national organizations working for a fair food system. If you don't know where to start, contact the [Presbyterian Hunger Program](#), your presbytery or try [World Hunger Year](#).

Share!

Once you have shared your experience and ideas with those around you, share with other Presbyterians on [Facebook](#) and learn what others are saying and doing.