



# One Day to Feed the World

United act of compassion fills stomachs, feeds souls

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

When he pastored Alamo Christian Assembly in the San Francisco Bay area in 2002, Ken Jones received a Convoy of Hope mailing. Jones believed in the ministry, but he wanted to do more than just take up an extra offering at the end of a church service. Jones wanted to do something that would have a lasting impact.

He devised a plan that would culminate in congregants volunteering to give up one day's salary in order to help feed the

poor and suffering. For two months, during the Sunday morning service he stressed the importance of feeding hungry people.

Virtually everyone in the church of 200 caught the vision, from teenagers with part-time jobs to senior citizens living on pensions. When the day came for the offering, those in the pews donated a whopping \$22,700.

Jones thus devised the initiative now known as One Day to

Feed the World, a Convoy of Hope and AG World Missions initiative that since has spread to around 400 churches.

With half the earth's population living on less than \$2 a day, the need of the hungry has grown even more acute because of the global recession. The situation is desperate since food prices skyrocketed last year — as food supplies simultaneously have diminished.

"The idea is not to feed the world in a day — there's no



Children around the world receive nutritious meals thanks to compassionate donors.

way we'll ever do that," Jones says. "But we can bring in one day's pay — and there's only one sacred day we have to take action."

Clearly the contributions involve sacrificial giving; funds aren't in lieu of tithing or regular missions offerings. Yet participating churches have discovered that One Day to Feed the World cultivates a spirit of generosity. For instance, the year Alamo Christian Center launched the concept, its general fund grew by 21 percent and its missions fund increased 42 percent.

These days, churches typically show videos and make announcements about the endeavor each of the three weeks before the offering is taken. On the day of the event, the pastor preaches about hunger, poverty

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and how Christ views those in need. Funds collected are used to finance Convoy of Hope's ministry worldwide, including city outreaches, disaster mobilizations and daily feeding programs for children.

Randy Hurst, director of communications for AG World Missions, says the partnership in One Day to Feed the World is beneficial to both AGWM and Convoy of Hope.

"Because it's equal sacrifice, it's a realistic way for everyone to make a huge difference," Hurst says. "If enough people respond, funds given in this way could almost eliminate the need to make specific emergency disaster-relief appeals."

Hurst cites the example of the Macedonian churches mentioned by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8 being enabled



Frances and Ian Mead of Tri County Assembly in Fairfield, Ohio, are regular participants in the church's One Day to Feed the World program.

to always have enough in times of need because of believers' continual generosity.

The Convoy effort revolutionized the way congregants Ian and Frances Mead of Liberty Township, Ohio, perceived missions.

"One Day to Feed the World is a reminder that we have so much and those in the Third World have so little," says Ian, who has given to the ministry the five years that Tri County Assembly of God in Fairfield

has been a partner. "It's rare when we don't have food on the table. It's not that much to take a day's pay. To whom much is given, much is expected."

Ian, who owns a computer software business, and Frances, a certified flight instructor, became One Day advocates after going on a Convoy outreach to Scotland.

"Christ reached out to people with compassion and love in meeting physical needs," Ian says. "When people have their

physical needs met, they are more interested in hearing about Jesus."

The reality of hunger became apparent to Tri County AG Pastor Brad Rosenberg when he took a Convoy trip to Macedonia and saw Gypsies living in a city dump. The residents wondered not what they would eat for their next meal, but whether they would eat at all.

"The missions trip showed me that we don't have an option in giving to others," Rosenberg says. "We have a responsibility."

That approach has spread in the church of 600, which in each of the past three years has raised more than \$1 million for missions overall.

"We've called our people not just to give to missions, but to give radically," Rosenberg says. "God is extravagant in His giving to us."

When Sound Life Church in Tacoma, Wash., held its first One Day event last November, it resulted in the largest single missions offering in the history of the 70-year-old congregation: \$36,500. The 1,100-member church also had its highest November general fund giving that month. Sound Life Senior Pastor

Cal Carpenter says focusing on others can be a catalyst for a church growing healthier.

"One Day to Feed the World not only invigorates missions, it raises giving as a whole," Carpenter says. "People get out of themselves, and tap into God's provision."

Carpenter also found that young people respond to the compassion project more enthusiastically than toward traditional missions ministry.

Churches don't need to be large to be blessed by One Day.

River of Life Assembly in Hood River, Ore., has been a part of One Day for six years. In its first year, when the church had only averaged 90 attendees, it raised \$6,000 for One Day. Now the church has 200 adherents and is in a building program.

Along with many other congregations, River of Life holds One Day on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

"It seems right to talk about those who have nothing," says Pastor Terry Abbott. "Why wouldn't we give one day of our yearly earnings to help with those who have nothing?"

One Day also helps individuals to realize that collectively Christians truly can make a difference in fighting hunger.

"People realize they are not as poor or as weak as they thought they were," Abbott says. "They really aren't helpless to change things."

Churches also don't need to be prosperous to participate.

Robert Jimenez is pastor of Whiteriver (Ariz.) AG, a church located in the middle of a Native American reservation. More

than half in the congregation of 200 are unemployed. Yet Jimenez is sponsoring a pair of One Day events at the church this year.

"Even though the people may not have much, they enjoy giving," Jimenez says. "We find that when we give to causes, God blesses our church."

Whiteriver AG donates 41 percent of its budget to missions. The church operates a food distribution center, pregnancy care center and youth center.

Congregations connecting with the mission of Convoy of Hope often find a reignited passion for missions.

"The church really has to demonstrate the whole gospel message of Jesus of caring for the poor, including widows and orphans," says Bill Ellis, pastor of Riverside Community Church in Oakmont, Pa. "It's a way for the whole church to get involved in sacrificing equally."

The effort also has helped churchgoers examine ways in which they can reach out to the poor on a local level, Ellis says. Riverside attendees are involved in everything from volunteering at a local homeless shelter to delivering Meals on Wheels as an outgrowth of One Day, he says.

"We don't give to Convoy of Hope, we give *through* Convoy of Hope," Ellis says. "They are the courier for our compassion." **tpe**

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E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

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## ABCs OF SALVATION

**To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:**

**A. Admit you are a sinner.**

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

**Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.**

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

**B. Believe in Jesus** (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

**Become a child of God by receiving Christ.**

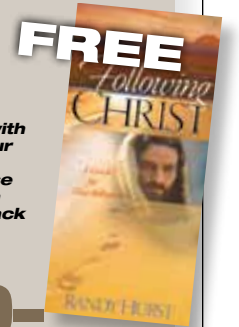
"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

**C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.**

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

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