

# A Matter of Compassion and Giving

You may have read an appeal such as this before: “Families Facing Famine – As many as 20 million people are at risk for famine, and over one million children could die of hunger in the coming months if urgent action is not taken.”

Our hearts may ache because we are unable to make a dent in the problem. However, the problem is “dentable.” As meaningful numbers of us make small contributions, we can make a dent by helping one family at a time. Sometimes these may be families in our own neighborhoods. Or, sometimes their children attend the same schools our children attend. Sometimes we could help with food and financial contributions if we only had a desire to help. If we showed compassion for humans to match the compassion we have for pets and wildlife, human lives could be saved.

**“URGENT: Please help deliver lifesaving aid. GIVE NOW.”**

“Being hungry means more than just missing a meal. It’s a debilitating crisis that has more than 700 million people in its grip,” according to [Mercy Corps](#). “Hunger is a perilous cycle that passes from one generation to the next. Families who struggle with chronic hunger and malnutrition consistently go without the nutrients their minds and bodies need, which then prevents them from being able to work, go to school, or improve their lives.”

These reports indicate that a child dies every ten seconds from hunger-related illnesses. More people die from hunger each year than from AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis together. If we only knew how, would we do something?

## Preventable Poverty and Hunger

[DoSomething.org](#), a “global movement of 5.5 million young people” cites these important facts related to preventable poverty and health conditions:



- “805 million people worldwide do not have enough food to eat. More than 750 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water.
- Diarrhea caused by inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and hand hygiene kills an estimated 842,000 people every year globally, or approximately 2,300 people per day.
- Preventable diseases like diarrhea and pneumonia take the lives of 2 million children a year who are too poor to afford proper treatment.
- 80% of the world population lives on less than \$10 a day.
- Oxfam estimates that it would take \$60 billion annually to end extreme global poverty—that’s less than 1/4 the income of the top 100 richest billionaires.
- Hunger is the number one cause of death in the world, killing more than HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

We may now want to take a closer look at our tables and the tables where we eat out—though our refrigerators are full at home with large amounts of food that will be fed to our garbage disposals.

“Some 40% of all the food produced in the United States is never eaten” according to the [BBC](#). “In Europe, we throw away 100 million tons of food every year. And yet there are one billion starving people in the world. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s best guess is that one third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted before it is eaten.”

## Helping the Cause of Compassion

Compassion matters in a world with excess hunger and poverty. When we consider the statistics, we can easily see that compassion matters. When we see starving bellies of children in countries that do not require naming and pictures, we may publicly acknowledge that compassion matters.

Giving, then, also matters. We can give, not just for the problem of hunger, but for all types of charities and causes. These include the arts, religious institutions, health care, and educational institutions. Everyone can consider and give to the causes of their choice.

One last thing, though charitable causes require the compassionate giving of others, rates of giving seem inconsistent with the ability to give. “Giving by individuals makes up the vast majority of contributions received by nonprofit organizations. . . . “In broad strokes, those with income between \$100,000 and \$200,000 contribute, on average, 2.6 percent of their income, which is lower compared to those with income either below \$100,000 (3.6 percent) or above \$200,000 (3.1 percent). The effect is even more severe at the extremes.”

## How Much is Too Little?

When we consider the percentages of income we tend to give, we recognize that there is room for more charitable practices and compassion. Churches, in general, consider biblical guidelines for contributions, with tithe or 10% being a starting point (Malachi 3:8-10). The above percentages are not half that amount.

Malachi 3:10 promises blessings in return to the giver, beyond his or her ability to receive. If we will give that a try, the problem of hunger along with many others, may be solved sooner rather than later.