



NEWSLETTER

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Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship

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Partnership Missions Ministry, Louisiana Baptist Convention

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Focal Scripture. *Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field.* (Lamentations 4:9 NIV)

Focal Thought. Regardless of what we say at 11:00 on Sunday morning, affluent people who neglect the poor are not the people of God. (Ron Sider, Theologian)

The Need is Ever Present. The reality is that both poverty and hunger exist in a world of plenty, which should burden the conscience of every Christian. Half of all deaths of children under the age of five are due to under-nutrition, and one billion people do not know where their next meal will come from. Since poverty causes hunger, and hunger causes poverty, it is imperative to focus on providing solutions to both. When people are hungry, Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, is more palatable if served with bread made from grain—and the best-kept secret of Southern Baptists is *agricultural missions*.

The Poor Need a Hand Up. It has been said that the greatest exercise of the human heart is to simply reach down and lift another person up. When we each stand before Christ we need to be able to say we provided a *hand up* for some of those who were powerless to help themselves. Your Agricultural Missions Fellowship is a Great Commission ministry that yields great commission fruits.

When we see someone in need we offer a helping hand *to help them* alleviate their own poverty, and we take the gospel where it has never been before. We recognize that those who are poor and lost will likely remain poor and lost—unless we provide *a helping hand*. Those at the greatest risk are pregnant women, infants, and children.

Food Surplus versus Food Scarcity. Food is always available for those who have sufficient money with which to purchase it. In fact, the world produces enough food to provide the seven billion-plus people on earth with upwards of 3,000 calories per day. The problem is not food scarcity, but distribution, which is precisely where your Fellowship plays a critical role. We work with those who are poor and disenfranchised in a manner that helps them become self-supporting, while at the same time *not* making them dependent on us.

Unfortunately, poor countries are often forced to export food products they produce in order to obtain cash to pay on national debts—while their poor die of hunger or hunger-related diseases. Moreover, the dumping of subsidized food by foreign governments and relief agencies undercuts subsistence farmers, which often drives them off the land and into extreme poverty.

Where is Your Fellowship Working? Much of our effort in recent years has been focused in the state of Oaxaca in Southern Mexico where the poverty rate is in excess of 50%. The prevalence of extreme poverty is highest among the Zapotec Indians where 50% of the homes lack basic sanitation and 42% have dirt floors. Illiteracy is high, with 46% of the population having no primary education. Many die prematurely.

We are also sponsoring agricultural projects in Eastern Europe, and more recently, we have begun providing help for projects in Haiti under auspices of the Partnership Missions Mobilization Network of our Louisiana Baptist Convention. As with all self-help organizations, our greatest need is for additional resources. A list of projects we support is provided below.

Project Support. Following are examples of projects individuals, classes, or churches can support to provide a helping hand to those who are poor and hungry:

Egg incubation facilities for a family or village.

Rabbit project for a family.

Chicken project for a family.

Goat project for a family.

Sheep project for a family.

Dairy heifer project for a family.

Vegetable garden project for a family.

Drip irrigation for a family.

Solar cell project for several families.

Small greenhouse for a family.

Water pump and pipe for a village.

Please help us help those who are poor, hungry, and in need of a Savior help themselves by making your check payable to Louisiana Baptist Foundation and sending it to P.O. Box 120, Homer, LA 71040. Indicate the funds are for Ag Missions. All donations are tax deductible and 100% of your contributions go directly to the mission field because the Executive Committee pays all expenses for operating the Fellowship.