
Pro Rege

Volume 5 | Number 4


Article 12

June 1977

World Hunger Conference

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Recommended Citation

Koldenhoven, James (1977) "World Hunger Conference," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 5: No. 4, 30 - 31.
Available at: http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol5/iss4/12

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A quarterly faculty publication of
Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa

Incidentally....



by James Koldenhoven

World Hunger Conference

“Stewards, not owners” and “working together in all areas of the hunger problem” were key concepts emphasized at the World Hunger Conference, held at Dordt College in March.

Dr. Paul Schrottenboer, executive secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and chairman of the Christian Reformed World Task Force on Hunger, opened the conference with a keynote address: “World Hunger—The Goodness of God and the Responsibility of Man.” Against a background of information of food production and malnutrition, Schrottenboer spoke to the need for Christians to “redeem the

land.”

Mr. Joel Huyser focused on maldistribution of food within the United States in a speech entitled “Poverty in the Midst of Affluence: Hunger in America.” Huyser is the hunger education co-ordinator for Evangelical Concern of Denver, and the Colorado co-ordinator for “Bread for the World,” a Christian citizens’ movement that works to reduce hunger by influencing policy. The American Dream is a mockery, said the speaker, as he characterized those who are honestly poor and, therefore, unfortunately malnourished.

Co-ordinator of promotions for the

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), Ms. Karen De Vos, focused on the plight of the peasant farmer in under-developed countries. Her speech, "The Church's Response to Hunger," emphasized stewardship, outlined what is presently being done by the denomination, and how the institutional church must be an example in how it spends money on keeping up its own property and decorating its sanctuaries.

Dr. Rockne McCarthy, association professor of history at Trinity Christian College, addressed the political dimensions of the hunger problem in his lecture, "Bread and Justice." McCarthy approached the problem of world hunger from the political point of view, pointing to rich nations trying to "re-create poor nations in their own consumption-oriented image," by creating a desire for immediate luxuries in poor countries with Coke and potato chip ads. Capitalism, the speaker pointed out, has distorted values with its "individualistic, competitive view of rational control."

Not least among the roster of speakers was potato farmer and president of the Christian Farmers' Federation (CFF) of Alberta, Mr. James Visser. In his presentation, "Restoring Agriculture to Bless the World," Visser explained that the CFF rejected both options, individualism and state control, for an option which "stresses the cultural mandate, steward-

ship, and the concept of sharing and being a blessing to creation as a whole." He stressed the importance of reevaluating the meaning of ownership in view of the Biblical injunction that the land is God's, not man's, and that the farmer is a steward of the land.

Dordt College professor, Dr. John Van Dyk concluded the conference with "The Response of the Academic Community to Hunger." Van Dyk defined the task of the academic community as "making available, advancing and deepening insight" into the nature of life. To show the complexity of the hunger problem, the speaker called attention to the fact that hunger is much more than an economical problem. This complexity was followed with an array of practical things that an academic community can do to fulfill its task, for example, develop a strong agri-business program, institute programs in foreign studies to create awareness of global responsibility, and distribute in public print and by radio results of discussions and research.

In response to the conference, the director, Rev. J. B. Hulst noted that the conference "struck a responsive chord." He added, "When we're told that there is enough food to feed the world's population, but that six per cent of the population is using 30 to 40 percent of the resources, that fact hurts . . . as Christians, we want to do something about it."

Donald Drew and NWTC, II

Dr. Donald Drew, noted author and lecturer, highlighted Dordt College's second New World Theatre Consortium with three presentations discussing the Christian's role in theatre and cinema.

A graduate of the University of Cambridge in history and English literature, Dr. Drew has lectured on literature and cinema in American and British universities, and is currently a visiting professor of