

Bread for the World's  
2020 Offering of Letters to Congress

# Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow

## A Pan-African Devotional Reflection

By Reverend Professor Quardricos Bernard Driskell

Despite what some people believe, the institutions of slavery and Jim Crow did not establish black people's relationship with the land and food. These are dual threads in the history of America's and the world's food system: stolen land, both from indigenous people and from black farmers, and stolen labor in the form of slavery and sharecropping.

Through a Pan African lens, we see thousands of years of agricultural innovation. The Mande rice people in West Africa innovated transplanting. The Susu women would share resources by ensuring there was enough food and other resources for each other in the village. These ingenuities safeguarded food insecurity and good economy for everyone in the community. But in the 21st century, hunger is on the rise in almost all African sub regions, Latin America, and Western Asia.

As people of faith, we are called to take care of those in need and to be good stewards over everything God has given us. This stewardship encompasses the earth, the animals, plants, our bodies, and the people—including the most vulnerable of our society, children.

Child poverty often leads to adult poverty and all of its problems: psychological distress, exposure to crime, and lost productivity. According to UNICEF, 22 percent—or 149 million—of the world's children are stunted, a condition in which a child does not grow because of chronic malnutrition.

This global tragedy cannot be ignored. Poor children neither vote, nor can they hire lobbyists. Thus, it is up to us to protect and advocate for the children.

The roadblocks to global nutrition also create a barrier to building intergenerational wealth. As such, we must illuminate the ways religious and racial hierarchies have wrought great injustice in this world. This, while also creating resources for our ecological imagination and rectifying barriers to agricultural education, and disparities in ownership of farmland—reconnecting communities to the lands that they have been dispersed from in the United States and around the world.

The failure is not personal. It is a failure of public policy. Working out which issues are caused by history and which are caused by current policies contributes to the analytical paralysis of policy makers.

By praying, collaborating, building, and advocating through the Offering of Letters to Congress, we can distribute life-giving food as a means to end food apartheid. Empowered by faith, with deep reverence for the land and wisdom of our ancestors, we will work to reclaim our collective right to belong to the earth and to have agency in the food system to end poverty and hunger in the land.

*Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*  
(Matthew 25:31)



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

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