

THE CHRISTIAN POS

[Home](#) / [Opinion](#)

What Christian aid program cuts look like: Spoiled food in Ethiopia, no polio vaccine

By [Edgar Sandoval Sr.](#), Op-ed Contributor | Sunday, March 02, 2025



Children in Sudan eating food provided by World Vision. | Photo provided by World Vision

Seventy-five years ago, World Vision founder Bob Pierce visited Seoul, South Korea, as it was on the brink of war with the North. He traveled with a camera, filming the children and families he met. After the North invaded and war broke out, he began touring the United States, showing his films to churches and gathering funds to support the children whose images he had captured — many now orphaned, without food or clothing. It was the birth of World Vision.

For decades, American Christians have joined us in seeing a hurting world through the eyes of Jesus — and responding in faith to serve children in need. With their financial support and prayers, we were first responders to the devastating 1984 Ethiopia famine, distributing emergency food aid to malnourished children. United as believers, we came alongside widows and orphans in the AIDS epidemic that ravaged Africa, and we rehabilitated child soldiers in Uganda who had lived through unthinkable violence.

Together with American Christians, we continue to serve today in some of the hardest places in the world to be a child. Places where emergency disaster relief and food aid are a lifeline for vulnerable children.

And yet even as we acknowledge the hurt around the world, our eyes are also on our neighbors struggling here at home — trying to rebuild after devastating U.S. hurricanes, floods and wildfires — or struggling due to poverty. Our hearts ache for them as well.

And so, we must approach humanitarian aid in this moment with our eyes and our hearts open.

First, as we provide lifesaving interventions for vulnerable children around the world, we must not ignore the needs of children and families here in the United States. Over the past five years, World Vision has responded to more than 40 natural disasters in the U.S., including most recently the Los Angeles wildfires and Hurricanes Milton and Helene.

Communities here at home benefit from the best practices we've established in our international emergency response work. For example, in the recent U.S. hurricanes, having pre-positioned supplies and established partners in disaster hot spots helps us respond quickly.

We've learned that working closely with local church and community leaders allows the help to flow quickly to those who need it most.

Even equipment from an ocean away was a blessing in unexpected ways. In Hurricane Helene, a solar-powered water filtration system we developed following a tsunami in Taiwan provided a safe water supply for people in North Carolina impacted by the hurricane.

Second, we must champion good stewardship in our work, making sure no dollars are wasted. The Bible calls us to be wise stewards with what is given to us. Our heart is to make every dollar count, whether it comes from our individual donors who give sacrificially or from U.S. grants funded by hardworking Americans.

Investments from the American people over the last 20 years have helped cut deaths from AIDS and childhood diseases in half, save millions of lives from hunger and starvation, and provide millions more people with access to clean water.

And international health initiatives make a difference here at home, too. PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is a bipartisan U.S. initiative that's saved over 26 million lives to date. And through a 25-year program to combat polio around the world, World Vision has helped deliver vaccinations for as many as 4 million children every year. Not only have these efforts saved children worldwide from death and disability — they've also helped keep these deadly diseases from spreading to our shores and our children.

Providing food for hungry people also gives vital support to U.S. farmers. Farmers can sell excess crops to the U.S. government, supporting families facing famine or severe malnutrition in places where food supplies cannot be purchased or sourced locally. These programs sustain tens of thousands of American jobs across the entire supply chain.

Finally, as followers of Jesus, Matthew 25 reminds us that we must not lose our heart and calling for those in need. It is part of our witness as salt and light in the world. God could not be clearer about His care for the poor and most vulnerable and our responsibility to help. World Vision works in 43 of the 60 countries classified by humanitarian experts as “fragile” or “conflict-affected,” shining the light of Christ where few Christian organizations are allowed.

Some of the most challenging and fragile places are where people’s lives are now at imminent risk without restoring aid funding for lifesaving humanitarian programs.

The impacts are already being felt. Food supplies purchased from American farmers are at risk of waste or loss in warehouses in Ethiopia, where thousands of severely malnourished children could face starvation. A program we lead that provides more than 400,000 polio vaccinations every month in African countries has been paused, putting millions of children at risk of death and disability.

And we have had to make the difficult decision to shut down some of our lifesaving programs and lay off or furlough the international staff who support those projects.

As American Christians, our legacy of service to the most vulnerable shines brightly. I pray that in this moment we can look at those in need — both in the United States and around the world — with both our eyes and our hearts open.