



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

2019 IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT
Iowans United in Fighting Hunger – At Home and Abroad
October 14, 2019 - Des Moines, Iowa

FIRESIDE CHAT

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Participants:

Rev. David Beckmann	President, Bread for the World
Ambassador Tony Hall	Executive Director Emeritus, Alliance to End Hunger
Ambassador Kenneth Quinn	President, World Food Prize Foundation

Ambassador Quinn

This is a way of inviting David Beckmann and Tony Hall to the stage. David Beckmann is a Lutheran minister. And you're now in for another treat, because these are two of the legendary hunger fighters.

So, Ambassador, you sit in the middle, I'll sit over here. Ambassador Tony Hall I met in Cambodia when he was a congressman, and he had come to call on the prime minister of Cambodia, who was a tough guy in a place where a lot of people had died. And I hadn't met Congressman Hall then, but he was head of the Select Committee on Hunger, leading Democratic congressman from Ohio, leading advocate in the U.S. Congress, about hunger. We come out after the meeting, and he said to me, "You know, I've met with 103 heads of state," which alone was attention-getting to me. And then he said, "This was the single-best conversation I've ever had with a head of state," which sort of, I was taken aback. But he was also through the congressional prayer breakfast, was a leading advocate. He then was a Democrat in the Bush '43 administration, appointed ambassador to the U.N. food agencies in Rome. When he retired from that, he was the head of the Alliance to End Hunger, the incredible, powerful coalition bringing together organizations in Washington.

David Beckmann from Nebraska, you know, all Midwestern guys, right? Yeah, as long it's not Minnesota, right?

[David — "Only one person clapped."]

David's a 2010 World Food Prize laureate, president of Bread for the World since 1991. You heard I met him in 2003 when he came, partnering, advocating with his energy, continuing to push the issue forward. Remarkably, he was for 15 years before Bread, on the World Bank staff, doing international development projects. When Norman



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

Borlaug passed away, the clergyman who came to preach at his memorial service was David Beckmann. So these two remarkable individuals have agreed to come be with us today.

And now I'm going to ask them questions about their life and their experiences and to let you have the benefit of hearing about all that they've done. And since they've all... David's retiring at the end of the year. Tony's retired. I'm retiring at the end of the year. We're putting together a gig, sort of three guys going around talking about hunger. If anybody knows a few places we can get in...

Quinn So your lives have been spent dedicated to this. I don't know two other individuals who have done more than the two of you. Tell me, tell everybody here, kind of looking at all this, what's your takeaway from this? What's the bottom line? What are the trends? We'll have each of you give an answer on that. So who wants to go first? David, go first.

David I'll go first, Ken. Well, thanks to everybody who's here. You wouldn't be here if you weren't salt of the earth people. And I'm sure that our day together will have a long-term impact. Ken told us that this was the first question he would ask, so I brought my favorite graphic. Can you put that up there? Can you see it? Yeah. So you can see there on that side, so it's the left side as you're looking at it, you see the unprecedented progress that the world has made against absolute poverty since 1990. You know, I think this is our loving God moving in our time.

And there are many causes for the dramatic progress that's been made against poverty around the world. But one cause is that our powerful government, the U.S. Government, is more supportive of global progress against hunger and poverty than it was in 1990 for sure. And that's because a lot of Americans are more supportive and have encouraged their members of congress to do things like support foreign aid, which they never would have done. Now we have strong bipartisan support. President Trump wants to cut hunger and poverty programs, but congress has refused to do so, on a bipartisan basis.

And then the other, on the right side you see the U.S. Census Bureau's best data on poverty. What's notable there is that the early date is not 1990. It's 1967, and that's because most of the progress that we've made against hunger and poverty in the United States was in the late '60s and early '70s. That's the period of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. And during those years as a nation we felt that we should reduce poverty, and so we set up programs like the SNAP food stamp program, Medicaid; and in those years we cut poverty in half.



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

Since then we haven't made much progress against poverty and hunger, but we haven't gone backwards either. Those programs that have done a lot, do a lot, have been under constant attack, but in the end they haven't been cut. What we have failed to do is mobilize sufficient political will to address the issue of earned income to make it possible for anybody who works full time to take care of a family—we just haven't done that. That's possible.

Overall, though, I guess the takeaway from this, Ken, I just think this is a great picture. And the main takeaway is encouraging. If that's what's happened over the last generation, it means now and in the years to come, we can get to the end of hunger. Pope Francis thinks it's true, Bill Gates thinks it's true, the World Bank thinks it's true. We certainly ought to be able to do that in Iowa.

Quinn Tony.

Tony You mentioned that the first time we met was in Cambodia, and you were the ambassador. And you said I said it was the best meeting I ever had, and meeting all these world leaders. And the reason it was the best meeting is because you made it very easy. Because I was with the best ambassador in the world—it was you.

Quinn Oh, gosh, oh.

Tony And you did. You made it very, very easy. And the head of state there in Cambodia, he talked very directly to me about what was going on. And to add to what David was saying, I'm a product of experiences, and my experiences with hunger and the trending that I saw started when I was in the U.S. Peace Corps; I was in Thailand. And it started when I was... As I was in congress, I became chairman of this committee, Select Committee on Hunger, and then I went to Thailand in 1984—that was before some of you in this room were born—and there was a major famine in the country.

And I thought I knew something about poverty and hunger, but I was just taken back by what was going on in those days—7,000 people were dying every day in Ethiopia in those days. And by the time we could get into the country—because the dictator in those days wouldn't let anybody in; I was the first elected official to get into the country—a million people had already died.

And I was up country with Mother Teresa's group, Sisters of Charity in a small clinic, and I saw 10,000 people that were running for their life because there was also a civil war going on. And they just got tired of running. They were dehydrated, tired, sick, and they laid down and started to die. And as I was walking between them, mothers were handing me their dead children, thinking that—he must be a doctor, and maybe if I give him my child, maybe he could somehow bring him back to life. That stunned me. We, in



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

1984, we weren't prepared to handle famines. We had to play catchup. We are much better qualified today to handle famines and catastrophes than we were in 1984.

A couple years ago or about three years ago I was in Dadaab refugee camp in Northern Kenya, watching refugees come out of Somalia and that tremendous problem we had in Somalia. And Dadaab refugee camp is a huge refugee camp, and Somalia was facing a near famine. We were so much better prepared to handle, because we had prepositioned food and water, and we had rushed in there very quickly to help people, and we saved a lot of lives.

Another thing that's really happened is the social media today, as a result, has really helped, because we can move things much quicker. I remember seeing a lady come out of Somalia with her children, and they were like starving. So I saw them come out of the border into this camp, and she had lost one child. The next day I see her on a cell phone. I thought, now wait a minute. She's starving to death, practically, with her children, and the next day she's on a cell phone, and she's calling in money from relatives that she has in Nairobi. And I'm thinking, how does this work. And she was using the cell phone that she had borrowed from somebody in the camp and transferring money to this refugee camp. I mean, it's incredible the way things have changed since 1984. And we do it so much better. We've saved so much. We've saved many lives, and we can handle emergencies so much better than we did in 1984.

Quinn So one of the agencies that you worked with when you were ambassador in Rome, U.S. ambassador to the food agencies, the World Food Program. And in 2003 Catherine Bertini, who will be here this week, was the executive director, and she won the World Food Prize for making the World Food Program probably the single-most effective organization in the world for delivering huge amounts of aid to starving people in exactly those kinds of situations.

Tony No question about it. The World Food Program is probably the finest—if not the finest, it's the largest humanitarian organization in the world. It's probably the best U.N. organization in the world.

David I just want to add—I got a chance to be in Ethiopia in October and saw for myself, [inaudible], the part of Ethiopia that's been most vulnerable to severe famine over the years is the northern part, Tigre. In the 1990s, actually, the government of Ethiopia told the World Food Program and the U.S. Government, "We don't want you to just give people food in normal times. When there is drought, yes. But in normal times we want to use food for Food-for-Work projects."



So that's what they have done, and there are these kind of... There's these outcrop... They're mountains, but they're volcanic mountains, and so they just jump out of the soil, and they've been denuded. They had been denuded over the decades by people going up there to graze their animals or to get firewood. But using food aid and the work of the people, they have been able to reforest those mountains. And then they also dug terracing, and so the water, when it does come, when the rains hit, they don't just rush off—they go down into the soil. And what they've been able to do, in addition to a better humanitarian assistance, agricultural assistance, what they've been able to do is reduce the incidence of drought at a time when drought in East Africa is increasing in frequency. They've halted that to some extent, and they've raised the water table of Tigre.

So in my judgment, if they don't have big ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia, they can manage to solve that problem, I don't think we'll see another famine in Ethiopia. You know, that's a chancy thing to say. But the progress they have made along the lines of what you said, it's just stunning. And some of that's been U.S. assistance, what we've fought for and also given for through charities.

Quinn In that, what you described as happening in Africa, in East Africa in the mid-1980s, it's important to know part of Iowa's legacy and heritage is that Governor Branstad had an initiative called Iowa Cares, which raised money following kind of the Iowa SHARES idea, to rush food and assistance and money to exactly that situation. So there was a significant response. So what's your sense? Is there still the willingness in America to respond in that way? One of the reasons I started the Hunger Summit was I sensed that maybe there was some waning of that. Was there some fatigue going on? And maybe a related question is—Do people still feel an obligation to help fellow human beings, no matter where they are in the world, no matter that they are probably different from us in every way, the color of their skin, the god that they worship, the language they speak, the culture they come from? That's so wonderful about R.W. and Mary Nelson and Kemin Industries, what they did and why they're receiving the Robert Ray Iowa SHARES Humanitarian Award at lunch, was that they did exactly that, reaching to India and to China and Nepal to help people. What's your sense of the spirit and the interest in our country?

Tony I think the short answer is yes. I think if you can inform Americans of the problem, if you can touch the hearts of Americans, if you could show them what's going on, if you can tell them and show them, they will respond. And the best way to do it is to take them. I found as an elected official, if you want to change an elected official's mind about foreign aid or about help for the poor, you have to take them there and show them. And it's the same way



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

with Americans. If you give them the right information and you touch their heart, Americans are generous, and they will respond.

David Tony and I both think that the binding constraint on progress against hunger is political will. So translating goodwill into action as a nation or as a state or as a city, there I think we've made a lot of... We've made significant progress over the last generation but not enough. I'd like to just give two examples.

One thing that's really exciting is, about ten years ago we got new research evidence on how to reduce child malnutrition around the world effectively. We also learned more than we'd known before about how much damage malnutrition does to babies—it stunts the brains; and a lot of kids die, but the kids who live, it stunts brains and bodies. So whole countries are crippled by the damage that's done to babies. And since then our government has played an important role in promoting that knowledge, promoting the importance of nutrition around the world. And over the last ten years we have substantially reduced child malnutrition among babies. And the commitment to that is bipartisan. There are global nutrition resolutions pending in both houses of congress, and they are the most bipartisan resolutions in congress. That's partly because a lot of people have called their own member of congress and said—I want you to cosponsor the Global Nutrition Resolution. So that's a good example.

I also want to give an example of where we came dangerously close to what I would have considered disaster. That is in 2017 congress came very close to cutting Medicaid for low-income people by a trillion dollars over ten years. That would be the same as... A trillion dollars over ten years is about twice as much as Americans will contribute to all charities that help people during the same period of time. That trillion-dollar cut would have resulted in a cut of the incomes of low-income lowans of about a billion dollars a year for ten years. And that was the McCain vote. We came within one vote of that becoming law.

So especially on the domestic issues, we cannot rest. You know, if there are problems with how we're doing it now, we could do it better. But we can't take it for granted. And the way you get political will basically is for people like us to work together in various configurations and let our members of congress know that we want them to end hunger. And there are different ways you can do it. You don't have to do it democratically or a Republican way. But you've got to focus on it and try.

Tony Having said that, and David and I have both said, yes—when you can get to people and you can inform them, Americans are generous and they're good. But there is, there still is 41 million people in this country that are hungry—Americans. And now they're not starving to death like they are in



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

Yemen and Somalia and Nigeria and other countries, Sudan, South Sudan. But this 41 million people in America, they are going to bed two or three days out of every month without food. And they're mothers with children, senior citizens. And by the time they get done paying their utility bill or their daycare bill or their rent, they run out of money. They have to go to a food pantry—41 million.

And this gets back to political will. You know, the poor, they don't get in to see senators and congressmen and governments, and they're not great voters. They don't have campaign funds. And to some elected officials, they don't count. So when we talk about political will, when the bishop talks about his speech, a good portion of it was about the 2500 verses that are really in the Bible that talk about, whether it's the Old Testament or the New Testament, it's about the orphans and widows and the sick and the people in prison and the refugees, and it's about those people. It's what Mother Teresa talks about in Matthew 25, which is "the least of these." And those people don't really get a very good hearing, and they don't get in to see congressmen or senators or governors—and that's the 41 million people that we're talking about in America. So as a result, those people are left out.

And so if we don't create a political will among our elected officials, they're not going to get fed. And we're kind of stuck right now. We've been making amazing progress in reducing hunger, reducing poverty, but we're kind of stuck, in my opinion. We still have 41 million people hungry in the greatest country in the world here, the greatest country in the world, with 41 million people that are hungry. And overseas we've got 820, 830 million people that are starving right now. Now, we have the ability to eliminate this, but we haven't created the political will yet among the leadership to end it. And we can end this.

And you've done an amazing job here in Iowa. Now, if we could take Iowa and transplant this among our 50 states, we could be something.

Quinn So, John Kennedy in 1963, one of his last speeches, talked about the lack of political will to address issues of hunger in the world and in America. So later this morning we're going to have the six leaders of food banks in Iowa. And the question I want to pose to them, very close to this, is—Are we going to get to the end of hunger? Can you really envision a day when basically hunger would be eliminated as an issue? Or is this going to be a static problem that we can only get to a certain point and it's going to be with us as far as you can see into the future? Because I'm not sure that among our citizens and among our leaders there's an understanding about which is likely to be the case.

David Well, and the global hunger, we have increased political will. It's still not enough, but since the year 2000 poverty-focused international aid from the



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

United States has quadrupled. So that's just a clear indicator that our government cares more about hunger and poverty around the world than it did 20 years ago. And that is because people organized—Bread for the World, the faith community, is better organized than we were 20 years ago. Charities—it used to be that groups like World Vision were allergic to advocacy. Now World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, CARE—they're all involved in advocacy. Then we got Bono and The One Campaign, so that brought celebrity and also digital advocacy to the effort. And then finally, Bill and Melinda Gates have really changed things, both with their money, their modeling of philanthropy. And if one of the richest guys in the world thinks this is not putting money down a rat hole, a lot of people think.

So all those things have, on the international issues we are... Clearly the world is making more progress, and it's partly... Now we have bipartisan support for these things—it's fragile, but we've got it both in congress and in the administration, actually, within the administration. So our success on the international side shows us that this is not impossible. And also that experience under Johnson and Nixon shows it's not impossible on the domestic issues. But what it takes is for the community work, the food banking itself is really, really, really, really important.

But we also, you're in Iowa—you have exceptional access to candidates for president of the United States. Use it. When the Democrats debated, there was not one mention of hunger. They used the word "poverty" three times. So when you talk to the Democrats, say, "Why don't you talk about hunger and poverty in our country and around the world?" If you get a chance to talk to President Trump, do the same. But I think that's what it takes for those of us who are involved in our own churches, our own communities, our own trying to help our neighbors. Also let our senators and representatives know that we want them to do their part. We cannot end hunger if we can't get our government to do its part.

Tony I agree. I agree with everything Dave said. We have the ability to end hunger by the year 2030. And I think we are doing so well internationally. You know, Iowa is sitting in a really amazing place because of your early elections. If you look at the past presidential elections, there has never, that I can remember, there's never been a question asked in a presidential debate about hunger. Nobody's ever asked the question, "What are you going to do about hunger?"

Quinn Yeah, well.

Tony And I think it's a great question. Can I say something else?

Quinn Absolutely.



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

Tony There's so many things that can be done, like in my hometown of Dayton, Ohio—that was the area that I represent—we have a real problem there. And we have one of the largest food deserts. Like you have food deserts here in Iowa. A food desert—as you know, there's a technical name for it—but a food desert basically is a place where there are no grocery stores. The grocery stores have shut down. They're not making any money.

So what they do is they move out of the area and they move into the suburbs. So in Dayton, Ohio, which is my hometown, which is a town of about 140,000 people, I have one grocery store. Well, we used to have six or seven. They have all shut down, and so people, when they want to go shopping, especially senior citizens, or women with children, they have to take a bus downtown, then they take a bus out to the suburbs. Well, senior citizens or women with children, you know, it takes two hours just to take the bus downtown and go out to the suburbs. And how many groceries can you really carry?

So we have the largest food desert in Dayton, Ohio, east of the Mississippi. So what we're doing is we're building a grocery store, and it's going to be a co-op, and it's going to be owned by the people there, run by the people there. And I'm in charge of the capital campaign to raise the \$4.2 million. And we just met the number. Not only have we raised 4.2 million but we raised 5 million. And we have raised the money, we're going to build it, and it's going to be a grocery store. And what's exciting, we're not only going to have a grocery store, we're going to have a teaching kitchen and a bank and stuff like that.

But if you want to know, you have food deserts here in Iowa. But if you want to know about food deserts and how to handle it, please contact me and I'll get you in touch with what we're doing in Dayton, Ohio. And it's really amazing how you can bring fresh food and vegetables and how to address this particular issue.

Quinn So here's the conundrum I find about generating political interest among candidates and politicians. I have this part of our Hall of Laureates, the Iowa Gallery, filled with artwork about all these stories about Iowa's agricultural and humanitarian heritage. And I did it just to keep the stories alive about Norman Borlaug and Governor Ray, Herbert Hoover, Henry Wallace. And every individual from the legislature, from our congressional delegation will come there, and I'll tell them stories, and they become extremely moved. It's one of the very few places left in Iowa where people of both parties will come, that Norman Borlaug's legacy is so sacred, he's so respected for what he's done by people in both parties. And to me that's precious, and I feel at the World Food Prize I'm entrusted with that, to keep it there, because it's something that unites everyone.



So David's my wonderful friend, and he's encouraged me to have a presidential candidate forum. So I did one in 2003, and I invited all the presidential candidates to come on Friday afternoon of the World Food Prize Symposium. And I think I remember it was Joe Lieberman couldn't come because it was the Jewish Harvest Festival, and he had to build a sukkah in his backyard because he was an observant Jew. But one candidate signed up, John Kerry, and then got called to Washington for a vote. And it ended up being a very problematic vote for his presidential candidacy. And he's a very good friend of mine. I said, "See, if you'd stayed in Des Moines and talked about hunger, it might have come out better for you." It was a true story.

And then we did it again in 2008, and everyone comes, and they're going to talk about representing candidates, and they say, "Look, we pledged—we're not going to say anything partisan." And they don't, except whatever is said in a political context is taken as partisan by people on the other side. And then they're calling up, "Why did you do that. You're supposed to be neutral." And it ended up becoming contentious, because it's political. And I don't know quite how to walk that fine line of getting everybody in politics talking about hunger without them turning it into an adversarial thing with each other? Am I off base there? And if you say yes, I'm in a lot of trouble.

David Well, yes, we ought to somehow find a way to... I mean, here you've got this magnificent gathering of people who care about hunger in Iowa and in the fall. In presidential years, we've got to find a way to get the candidates to pay attention to hunger. The churches have actually done it through... There's a coalition called "The Circle of Protection."

And we did it first in the Obama versus Romney general election. We got them both to record three-minute videos on what they would do to provide help to hungry and poor people in our country and around the world. And then since that worked, so the Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Lutherans and the National Association of Evangelicals, all together we go, and in the last election we got all the primary election candidates with the exception of two, and then we got both general election candidates, to do the same thing, to make brief statements about what they would do. And we got 85 million press impressions. We want to do better on the publicity this year, but we've started, and I think so far we've got four candidates and are really working hard to get President Trump to do a video, too—and other; if there are other Republican candidates, we want those videos so that people, especially people of faith can see—what are the candidates going to do about hunger and poverty. So I think we ought to use this wonderful gathering somehow. I was involved in previous efforts, and it didn't work out as well as we wanted.



The other thing that really works—Connect with an advocacy organization like Bread for the World. We're a Christian organization, so if that's not your cup of tea, go with The One Campaign, RESULTS. Lots of churches have their own networks—the Catholics, the Methodists. But you have to connect. I think to be effective, you have to connect with an advocacy organization that represents your values and then help. Especially the best thing you can do is go see the member of congress, look in his or her eyes, and tell them why hunger is important to you. So if you see them in the airport, seize the opportunity. And if you know something specific that's going on where your senator is on the right committee, that's when you can really make a difference to say, "I want you to move the Global Food Resolution, the Global Nutrition Resolution through the Foreign Relations Committee this fall. Get it done before World Food Day.

And then what we see from Bread for the World is, if thousands of people of goodwill across the country do that with their own members of congress, every year for now 45 years, Bread for the World has been able. It's always uphill and we always win substantial change. So this thing about building political will, that I know works. We don't have to do just at gatherings or just bishops. It can be people who care who take the time to learn about specific issues that are important to hungry people and let their members of congress know exactly what they want, and then they do it. Our democracy works. The problem is not them. The problem is us, that we don't push.

Quinn You're the personification of bipartisanship—Republican president appointed you, the Democratic congressman, ambassador to the food agency.

Tony Ken, there's only two ways that I've ever seen that you can stop this kind of malarkey and odious kind of behavior among politicians. The only two ways I've seen that work are:

1) You have to take an elected official to see what the problem is. You have to take him to the food pantry, and they have to see, and they have to talk to the person that's receiving the aid. Or you have to take them overseas, and they have to see the people—what happened, how did they get this way? And that changes their heart. You have to change their heart.

2) The second way that changes their heart is if two members of congress, Republican and Democrat, pray together. When you pray together, it's very hard to get up and go into the chamber of the congress of the United States and get mad at one another. Those are the only two things that I've seen that work in my 24 years in congress.

Quinn Wow. One of the interesting moments, the legacy of the World Food Prize was about in 2006 when then-Governor Mike Huckabee, the Republican governor of Arkansas—some of you know that he then became presidential



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

candidate and is very political and has a strong point of view—gave the breakfast address at our conference. We were addressing the issues of obesity and malnutrition.

And the governor of Iowa came to introduce him, Tom Vilsack, the Democratic governor—two governors coming together. And Governor Huckabee had written a book called, *Don't Dig your Grave with your Knife and Fork*, because he had been extremely heavy and had lost weight. And he invited Governor Vilsack to come to Arkansas to run a marathon or half marathon or something with him. And so Governor Vilsack made a special effort, came here, this room, introducing Governor Huckabee, for breakfast—there were about eight or nine hundred people in the room.

He said not one partisan word. He spoke about the issue of health and obesity and had people crying in the morning, because, you know, he's a Baptist minister and he had this way. So without any politics. And when Governor Vilsack introduced him, his comment was that he wished he could get the Republicans in Arkansas to say such nice things about him as Governor Vilsack had.

So that to me was like a magic moment. Now, people go then and become more enmeshed in politics but politics was put aside on a compelling issue of health and wellbeing.

David And I mean I think the things that divide the party... The parties have really different positions. And so if they debate, they're debating the future of the nation and the world. And so it's nothing wrong with people being vigorous in political debate. My wife and I occasionally disagree in a vigorous way, but we love each other. And that's the same. What we need to do is to remember that we are part of one nation, one human family. So we can be vigorously in disagreement with each other and really fight to move the country in the way we think we ought to go, and be civil. And it shouldn't be... So I think it's the civility we've got to maintain and also respect for the fact that that the parties are important—they represent real... These are not frivolous disagreements or between two candidates running for office. You know, they believe different things about where we ought to go, so the fact that they disagree is not a bad thing. Or if you have Thanksgiving dinner and people around the table disagree a little bit, I think we need to talk to each other and just remember we speak the truth as we see it, in love. It's the loving part that we've had a harder time maintaining lately.

Quinn The Dole-McGovern model. So we have a few minutes left. I wonder if you each maybe take two minutes or so and kind of look back in your life, and how did you get here? How did you get started? How did you get started on this journey? And maybe if you have... Some would say—"What's the one



thing we should do that will make things better?” So that’s a big challenge for just a couple minutes.

Tony Well, Martin Luther said 500 years ago, he said, “We need to send our good people into the Church. We need to send our best into politics.” And we’re not sending our best into politics. And I say that to young people here, that we need you to think about getting into politics and to think about value, think about justice, think about goodness, think about helping the poor and the sick and the hurting. And I’ll tell you, it’s a wonderful career. I served 24 years as a congressman and three and a half years as an ambassador, as Ken did, and I’m very proud of that service to this country. And you can do so much. You can make a difference.

So don’t be scared or offended by what’s going on in Washington today. I think this will pass. I’m embarrassed about what’s happening today, but this will pass. And think about a career in politics, because you can make a difference. You can make a difference faster as an elected official than anything that you do.

And I think Martin Luther was right. We need to send our good people into politics. We need to change things. And I guess that was kind of spontaneous.

Quinn No. That’s beautiful, beautiful.

David Well, I would complement that by saying all of us are in politics. This is a democracy. We are the king, and the Lord requires justice in the land of the king. That’s not going to come just from the people who happen to sit in Washington. That’s going to come from us. And so for salt-of-the-earth people like you, I just think we should all make our lives in politics. We just can’t delegate that and say, “Oh, those people are... I’m not going to get involved.” We have got to get involved, and if good people are involved in politics, pay attention to who’s getting elected, use their best judgment, their best values to send people to Washington or to the legislature, people who will represent their values, and then keep them accountable, we can... I think it’s us who have to make the system work, and it’s certainly us who have to make the system work for “the least of these.”

It has to be people like us who weigh in, to insist that our political representatives do their part to complement the really great grassroots work that I’m sure virtually all of you are doing in your own communities. We can’t do it unless we also use the structures of government to help us get to the end of hunger.



IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT | 2019

- Quinn One minute. So the President calls you up, whoever's president now, and says, "I need to do something about hunger. What's the one thing I should do?"
- Tony I'd say end hunger in the United States first, and then after you do that, end hunger in the world. And it's doable. It's very doable.
- David Yeah. I presume we're not talking about the current president, but I don't know quite how I'd use that opportunity. But right today I'm terrified about what's happening in Syria to hungry people and on a whim a lot of people are going to go hungry. But if we're talking a generic president, I think the big shift we need to make is to pursue public policies that will make it easier for people to make a living in this country. So, for example, universal broadband. There are a lot of rural communities where it's hard for the community to survive as an economic entity—it's hard for people to make a living because they don't have access to broadband. We had rural electrification. We can have universal broadband. It'd be good also in urban areas where a lot of kids, a lot of people don't have access to high-speed internet. You can't be... It's very difficult for a community to be a viable economic community. So that's something that is... Those kinds of issues, the jobs issues. Last year Senator Grassley was the lead in getting the First Step Act passed, which it's a way of dealing with too many people in federal prisons, especially from communities of color. Dealing with over-incarceration—that's a jobs issues, because nowadays if you come out of prison, that's just the beginning of your term. You can't get a job for ten years. So I think those jobs... I would say to the president, "We've got to move forward on the jobs issues in this country and then, you know, put the pedal to the metal on the things that we know are working in foreign aid and domestic assistance programs."
- Quinn So one thing for sure—there are many, many people in the world who are not hungry today because of the work of Tony Hall and David Beckmann. Join me in thanking them for their legendary accomplishments and for the difference they made through their lives to so many others.