

HERBERT HOOVER

WASHINGTON

June 18, 1917.

Rev. Anthony Demo,  
New York City,

My dear Father Demo:-

In the great National food crisis which confronts us, a crisis so great that the President himself has taken it up, I ask for your personal interest and assistance. As a minister of God, a leader of the people, and a lover of liberty and your fellow-man, your cooperation is earnestly desired and greatly needed.

In such a time as this, the people turn naturally to the church. It will be a calamity to the Nation and to the churches if their chosen ministers neglect to exercise their proper leadership in the great cause of feeding a world in need.

For the world is in want of food. The wheat crop of 1916 was short. The crop of 1917 will be shorter still, while the demands of armies and the waste of war require enlarged consumption. Thus with increased need and diminished supply, the world stock of food has reached a point lower than was ever known before in modern times.

From Canada and the United States the Allies are asking five hundred and fifty million bushels of wheat this year; yet unless special measures are taken the prospect is that both together will be able to give them only three hundred million. But if wise and sufficient measures are adopted, and then backed up by the patriotic good will of our people, there will be food enough for ourselves and for our Allies as well.

The present excessive cost of food is not justified. There is no corresponding shortage of supply in America. Nevertheless, the situation is very serious. The duty is laid upon us to raise not only food enough for ourselves, but so much more to send abroad that in spite of the submarines enough may reach France and England to keep them supplied. Unless we can feed both our own people and the men who are fighting for us across the water, the great cause which we have joined will be lost.

To meet the needs of the war and of the world, we must produce generously, give freely to our Allies, ourselves eat as much but no more than we need, and especially save the waste. Lasting disgrace will fall upon us if lack of self-restraint should prevent us from taking our proper part in this great conflict against the doctrine of "might makes right."

The waste in food amounts at least to fifty dollars a year for every family in America. The waste of a single ounce of food each day in every home means a yearly waste of nearly 500 million pounds of food. The waste of a single slice of bread each day in every home means the daily waste of a million loaves

of bread. The thousand million dollars of needless waste which thus takes place yearly in the households of America can and should be stopped.

The ways of thrifty living are not new. In order to practice them we need do little more than return to the frugal habits of earlier days. To purchase wisely; to lose nothing for lack of proper care; to serve no more than hunger demands; to serve again the unused portion; to preserve in time of plenty against the lean months ahead; to save wheat for France and England by eating more corn ourselves, because they do not bake at home, and corn bread is unknown; these are some of the means of helping to save the waste and win the war. I suggest them in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, to which, as well as to the County Agricultural Agents, the Home Demonstration Agents in the cities, and the State Agricultural College, inquiry may profitably be made for printed and written advice about saving food.

Will you join in the good work of saving more food for the women and children of Belgium, the orphans of France, the men in the trenches who are fighting our battles, and for the people of the United States? I ask that you will preach on the Conservation of Food on Sunday, July first, a day which I hope will become known as Food Saving Day. Make that day a notable one in the history of your church. To that end I suggest that you bring about cooperation with appropriate religious or civic bodies, and especially with the women of your own congregation.

The women of America have never failed to answer such a call as comes to them now. The saving of food is within their sphere. Without food conservation we cannot win the war. The woman who conserves the food supply of America and her Allies renders a high service to her country and to all humanity as well. In very truth, the outcome of the world war is in the hands of the women no less than in the hands of the men.

Will you also furnish in advance an abstract or copy of your sermon to the newspaper editors of your locality, to whom I am writing to ask special consideration for it.

Again I ask for your cooperation. Let us work together in whole-hearted response to the patriotic duty to which we are called. Let us make it the purpose and the motto of every household in America to Save the Waste and Win the War.

Yours faithfully,

*Herbert Hoover*