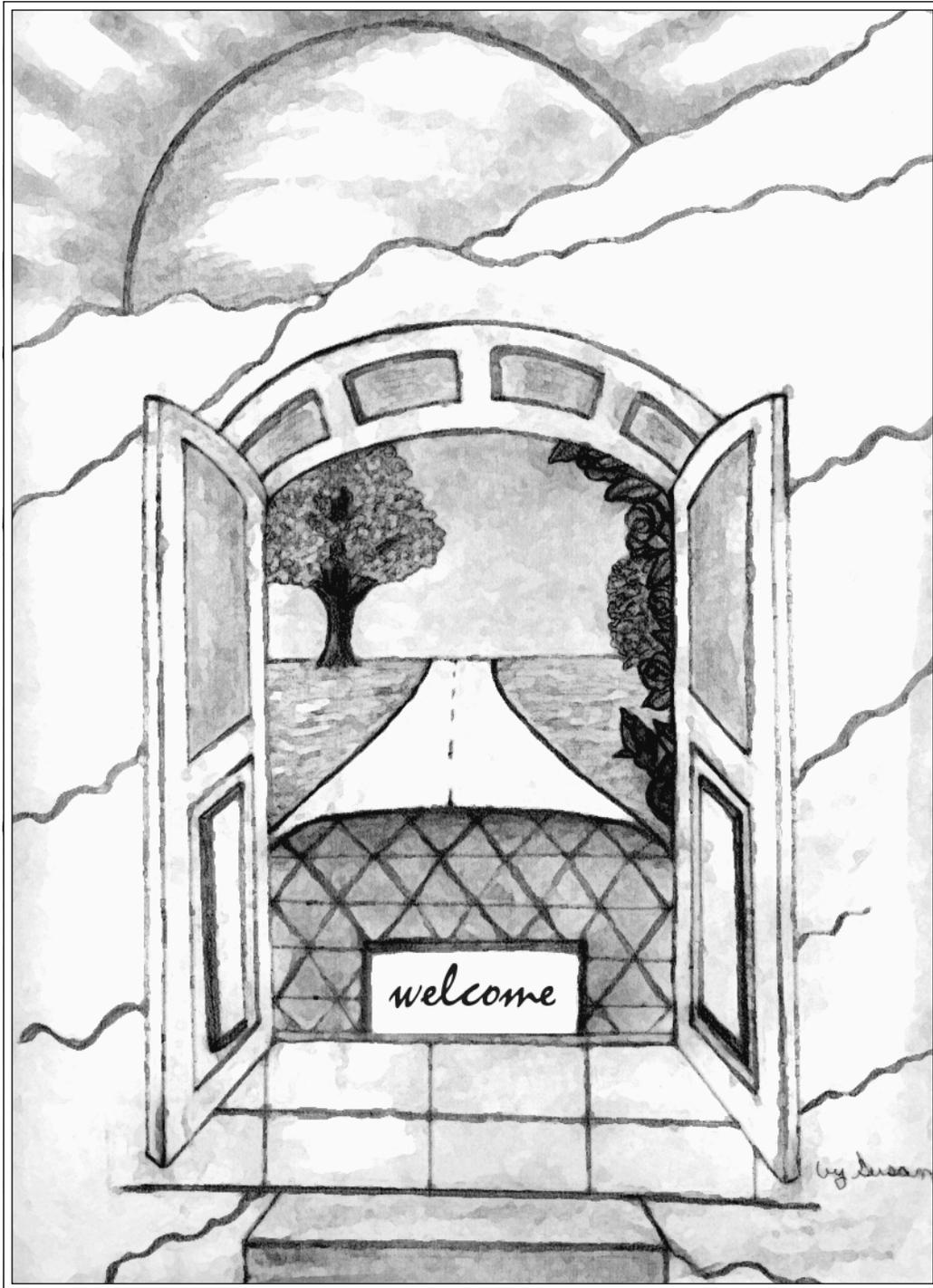


Practicing Hospitality



Creative Resources for Your Church's Hunger Emphasis

*Sacred Seasons, a quarterly series of worship packets with a peace and justice emphasis, from Seeds of Hope Publishers:
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Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: SeedsHope@aol.com; Web address: www.seedspublishers.org.*

Sacred Seasons: Creative Worship Tools for Your Church

These unique worship resource packets are available for the liturgical year, four packets a year for \$120 (\$135 for non-US subscriptions), one packet for \$50 (\$60 outside of the US).

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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope, Inc., is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable, and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Editorial Address

Seeds of Hope is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James; Waco, Texas 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: SeedsHope@aol.com.
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 - a hunger emphasis placemat
- bonus!* • materials for you from Bread for the World

a word about this packet

This packet is designed for congregations who have conducted a number of hunger emphases and are looking for some new approaches to hunger topics. We have tried to provide some resources that will challenge you in new ways without hitting you over the head with guilt. We went to Brett Younger again for his straight-shooting-yet-humorous sermon material. We received a poignant monologue from Rachel Hunter, whose dramatic material you have seen before. We have another hymn from John Ballenger, this time for Children's Sabbath. David Sparenberg is a new poet we just discovered. Gary Percesepe, a peace activist with philosophical training, is also a new contributor. Corley Sims, a high school senior, has also contributed a good piece.

Much of the art in this packet, including the cover art, is by Susan Smith, our newest artistic discovery. Other art is by Rebecca Ward, an art student at the University of Texas, Sharon Rollins, a therapist in Waco, Texas, and Erin Kennedy Mayer, a social worker in Arlington, Texas.

The quarterly Seeds worship resource materials have a name now; they are called *Sacred Seasons*. As always, with or without a name, these materials are offered to you on clean, unattached pages so that you can more easily photocopy anything you wish to duplicate. We are constantly looking for ways to make the pages more attractive and easier for you to photocopy. Feel free to copy any of this, including art, and adapt these tools to your needs.

The material in this packet is your congregation's to use freely. We have tried to pull together creative and inspiring resources that you can use to raise awareness of issues surrounding economic justice and food security (especially from a biblical perspective) in your congregation. We endeavored to choose a variety of age groups, worship areas, events, and angles, so that you would have a potpourri of art and ideas from which to choose.

We make a conscious effort to maintain a balance between the apostolic and the contemplative—on the one hand, the dynamic challenge to stay true to God's mandate to feed the poor and struggle for justice, and on the other hand, our own compelling need for nurture and healing while we work toward those dreams. May it be so.

Gratefully,
Katie Cook, *Sacred Seasons* editor

bulletin art

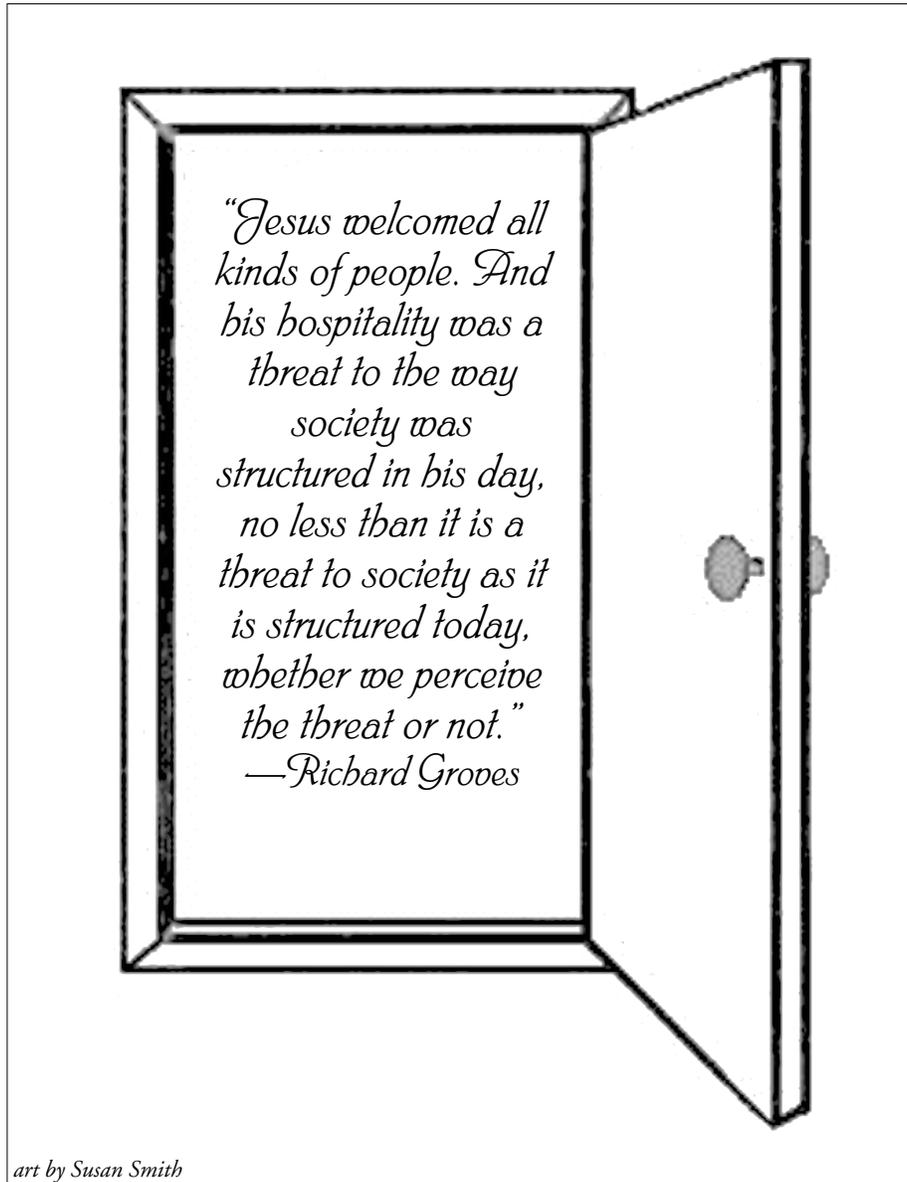


In the Genesis creation stories, cosmic hospitality was God's first act. God created a world that was good and filled with all the things we need to get along and live well. God's hospitality includes not only giving us abundantly all we need, but also God's gracious acceptance of us and generosity toward us in loving and forgiving us when we don't deserve it. When we extend hospitality to others, it is a reflection of gratitude to and trust in a generous God.

*—from *The Tao of Christ**

art by Susan Smith

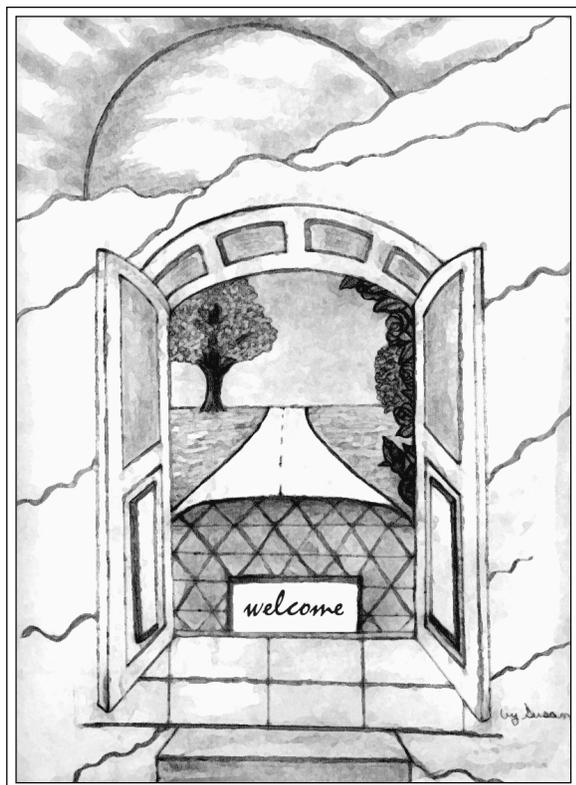
bulletin art



Practicing Hospitality

a liturgy for your hunger emphasis

by Katie Cook



art by Susan Smith

Call to Worship

ONE: Time after time we come into this place, into the house of God.

MANY: Time after time, we sing and pray and tell stories.

ONE: Time after time, we listen for a word from God.

MANY: What will we learn today?

ONE: What word of comfort and hope will we hear?

MANY: What word of indictment?

ONE: What challenge will we receive?

MANY: Today, let us open our hearts to the voice of God.

ALL: Let us hear the word for us today.

Musical Invocation

“Spirit of the Living God”

#297 in *The Worshiping Church*

(Hope Publishing Company)

Reading from Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 18:1-15

Reflection: Desert Hospitality

Desert hospitality was a life and death matter. For these nomadic people, food and water and relief from the blazing sun were necessities to be shared. In this story, Abraham is resting at an oasis, and he sees three men, traveling alone across the scorching sand. Rabbinic tradition says that he breaks off talking to God to see to their needs. He washes their feet. He asks Sarah to make cakes for them. He personally goes to select a calf to slaughter and gets milk for them. Then he stands under the trees and talks with them while they eat. He understands that this is more important than personal piety.

This story is held up as an example of ideal hospitality, and is contrasted with the story of Lot at Sodom. Abraham was not doing wrong by breaking off his prayers. Spirituality IS service to others, care for others. All of this was later put into law: the need of a human being is more important than your prayer or ritual. And don't give the stranger just anything; give him your best.

—adapted from observations by Rabbi Paula Reimers

Reading from the Law

Leviticus 19:10

Reading from the Prophets

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah:

SECOND READER: What have you made of the vineyard that I planted?

I had hoped for justice, but all I see is bloodshed.

THIRD READER: Woe to you who add house to house and field to field, until there is room for no one but you.

SECOND READER: The desert is full of refugees, says the Lord, people fleeing from the horrors of war.

THIRD READER: Bring water to the thirsty, says the Lord. Meet the fugitives with bread to eat.

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel:

SECOND READER: Hear me now; do not repeat the sin of your sister Sodom—the sin of inhospitality.

THIRD READER: She and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not help the

poor. But she was not as bad as you are.

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Amos:

SECOND READER: I don't want your sacrifices. I don't want your noisy songs or your solemn assemblies.

THIRD READER: You have turned justice into wormwood. You have sold the needy for a pair of shoes.

SECOND READER: At these words we cry out, We didn't know this is what you wanted. What shall we do? What do you command of us?

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophets:

THIRD READER: Share your bread with the hungry. Bring to your house the poor who are cast out. Cover the naked. Take care of your families.

SECOND READER: If you do these things, you will shine like the noonday sun, you will bring the new heaven and the new earth, you will be the healers, the repairers of broken walls. You will be my people; you will be called by my name.

—*from Isaiah 5:1-10; Isaiah 21:13-16; Ezekiel 16:49; Amos 2:6; Amos 5:7, 21-23; Isaiah 58:7-14*

Hymn

Suggestion: "What Does the Lord Require?"

#571 in *The Worshiping Church*

(Hope Publishing Company)

Gospel Reading

John 6:1-14

Reflection: Miracles of Abundance

In the gospels we find a good number of so-called "miracles of abundance." In John's account of the wedding at Cana in chapter 2, Jesus produces an abundance of good wine. In chapter 6 he produces enough food to feed five thousand—not counting women and children.

There are six separate accounts of the feeding of multitudes in the four gospels. It is the only miracle recorded by all four. In John 21 he produces 153 fish for seven men, and proceeds to cook it for them. In all of these stories, Jesus acts as a host, blessing and distributing food to others as though they were honored guests.

—*Katie Cook, adapted from "I Serve a Risen Savior"*

(Formations, a Smyth & Helwys adult curriculum, for the Second Sunday of Easter 2004)

Litany of Confession

ONE: We miss the mark so often, Lord,
Ignoring the needy who reach out to us,

MANY: Judging those who are different from us,
Asking more of others than we ourselves are
willing to give.

ONE: Open our eyes to the meaning of love.

MANY: Let our feet be quick to answer the cries of the wounded,

ONE: Let our hands lift up the fallen,

MANY: Let our wealth bring healing to the sick.

ONE: So we shall live the meaning of love, O Christ.

ALL: Amen.

—*from "Communion Prayer" by Mary Ruth Crook,
Fall Fresh on Me*

Assurance of Grace

ONE: Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that
she has served her term, that her penalty is paid.
(Isaiah 40:1-2)

MANY: Let us hear the good news: in the grace of God, in
Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 13:1-3

Anthem/Special Music

Suggestion: "Christ Among the Poor"

Music by Peter Cutts,

Words by Brian Wren

Selah Publishing Company, Pittsburgh PA, 15227

Sermon/Homily

For suggestions, see "Counting Calories in a Starving World" by Brett Younger, page 7 or "From Hostility to Hospitality" by Gary Percesepe, page 12.

Benediction

O God, as we commit ourselves to you,
Fearful and hesitant, strengthen us,
Feed us with your manna in the desert places.
Keep our eyes bright and our voices joyful
As we praise your name. Amen.

—*adapted from "Prayer of Commitment"*

by Mary Ruth Crook, Fall Fresh on Me

Choral Benediction

Suggestion: "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service"

#426 in *The Worshiping Church*

(Hope Publishing Company)

“Counting Calories in a Starving World”

a sermon by Brett Younger

Matthew 25:31-46

The parable of the sheep and the goats is nobody’s favorite story. There are lots of paintings of the waiting father embracing the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan helping the man in the ditch, but there aren’t any pictures of the goats being damned on the walls of children’s Sunday school classes. Growing up, I was in church every Sunday that I didn’t pretend to have a cold and I don’t remember ever hearing a sermon on this story. If there are hymns on this parable, nobody sings them. In Bible studies, this is one of those passages where the teacher ends up saying, “Okay, we agree that Jesus didn’t mean what he said, but

what did he mean?” Most of the time we just skip this part—and with good reason.

Jesus was on the Mount of Olives when he told everyone to take a seat. “This is important. Listen carefully. Judgment Day is coming and there will be surprises. The judge will divide the people like a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

“Then the King will say to those on the right hand, ‘Come and get your reward. When I was a victim of famine, you sent food. When I needed a drinking well, you took up an offering. When I was homeless, you found me a room.

When I was shivering, you gave me a coat. When I was in prison, you tried to help. Now it’s time to show my appreciation.’

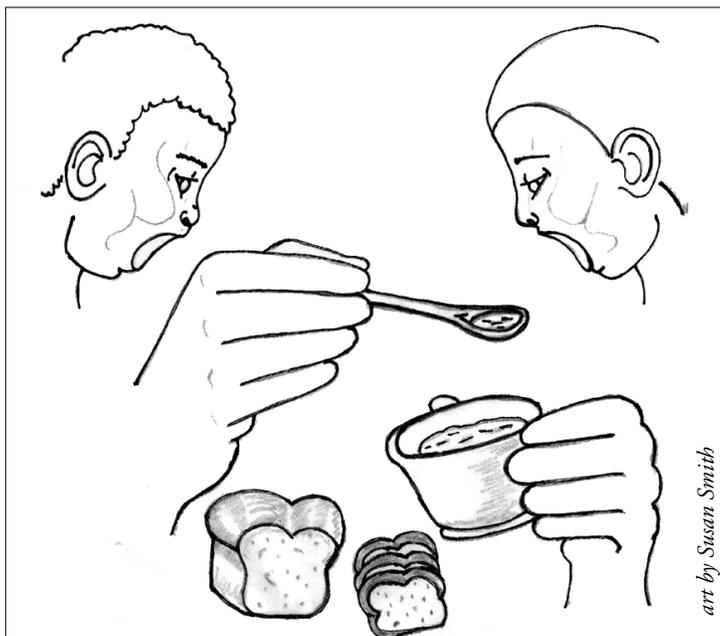
“Those people will say, ‘We don’t mean to seem ungrateful, but we don’t remember any of that. When did we do those things for you?’

“And the judge will answer, ‘You’ve been doing it all your lives. Every time you helped one of your needy brothers and sisters, you cared for me.’

“Then the King will turn to the goats on the left hand and say, ‘To hell with you. When I was hungry, you kept your money in your wallet. When I had only polluted water to drink, you were worried about your IRA. When I was homeless, you wouldn’t even look me in the eye. When I was cold, you had extra blankets in your closet. When I was in prison you said, ‘Let’s build more prisons.’

“And those people will say, ‘We never did that to you. As for the poor, we don’t know any poor people.’ And the judge will say, ‘You’ve condemned yourselves.’”

This story is disturbing because it’s about how God sees us. Religious people try to boil down the wonderful biblical theme of salvation, wholeness and healing, into a simple formula—four spiritual laws or five steps to be saved. This is as close as Jesus ever comes to summarizing what salvation means, but no one ever puts this on their church’s web site under



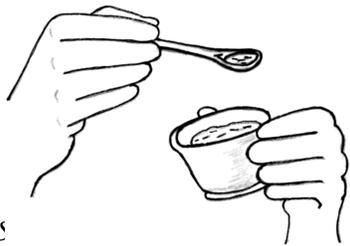
art by Susan Smith

In Bible studies, this is one of those passages where the teacher ends up saying, “Okay, we agree that Jesus didn’t mean what he said, but what did he mean?” Most of the time we just skip this part—and with good reason.

the heading, "How to Become a Christian." According to Jesus those who don't care for the poor have missed the gospel. Regardless of what's said at 11:00 on Sunday morning in most churches, people who neglect the needy aren't God's people. How could Jesus have been any clearer?

This story is disturbing, because we are calorie counters in a hungry world. Have you noticed that our meals have been getting bigger? As recently as five years ago, a 10-inch plate was standard in restaurants. Today the standard is 12 inches and one chain is experimenting with a 15-inch model. It wasn't that long ago that 20 ounces of soda seemed thirst quenching enough. Then in 1976, Seven-Eleven introduced the 32-ounce Big Gulp. They followed that with the 44-ounce Super Big Gulp and the 64-ounce Double Gulp. The human bladder, meanwhile, has a capacity of about 13 ounces. Do the math on that one. America's obesity rate is three times that of European countries, even though we eat many of the same foods. Americans eat more—even as

"And those people will say, 'We never did that to you. As for the poor, we don't know any poor people.' And the judge will say, 'You've condemned yours



much of the world starves.

The story of the sheep and the goats is disturbing, because most of us haven't done much. We try not to think about hunger because the problem seems overwhelming. The statistics are mind-boggling. By one hunger relief organization's recent estimate, twenty-four thousand people die each day of hunger-related diseases. That's a thousand an hour, seventeen each minute.

The statistics are so overpowering that the victims become statistics. It's easy to forget that hunger is suffered one missed meal at a time, one person at a time.

The numbers are sobering, but the faces are far worse. The faces of hunger are the faces of children. Three quarters of those who starve are under the age of twelve. Hungry children have eyes that are dulled by insufficient protein. The lack of nutrition means that their mental development is permanently impaired. Many will never be able to think for themselves. Their stomachs are bloated. Their arms and legs are spindly. Their hair is thin. They have no energy. And every one of them has a name—a six-year-old named

John, a nine-year-old named Angela.

The resident of a slum in Brazil, Iracema da Silva, said, "Sometimes I think, if I die, I won't have to see my children suffering as they are. So often I see them crying, hungry, and there I am, without a cent to buy them bread. I think, God, I can't face it! I don't want to look any more."

The faces of hunger are the faces of mothers. Fathers often walk away from children they can't feed. Mothers are less likely to leave. These poor, sad, lonely, frightened, frail, sick women suffer not only their own suffering, but also that of their children.

These are the words of a mother in the Philippines, a Mrs. Alarin: "I feel so sad when my children cry at night because they have no food. I'm so worried about the future of my children. I want them to go to school, but how can I afford it? I'm sick most of the time, but I can't go to the doctor because each visit costs too much and the medicine is extra. What can I do?" Hunger is a hundred million mothers weeping, because they cannot feed their children.

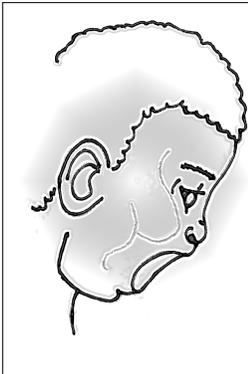
The faces of hunger are old. They are wrinkled, tired, and miserable. Their eyes are sunken. Their sight is dim. Their cheekbones protrude. Their teeth are gone because, in their poverty, they know nothing of dental care. Against all odds, they have managed to grow old; and now they have fallen on such hard times that many hope for some sudden fatal disease that will release them from their misery. It's hard to see the faces of hunger.

Our lack of concern is embarrassing. We lose sleep over problems at work, difficulties at school, and family troubles, but few of us lose sleep over children starving. We tell ourselves there's nothing we can do about it, but we know that isn't true. The problem isn't a lack of food. If the world's present food supply were distributed equally, there would be enough for everyone to have more than 3000 calories a day. The major cause of hunger is the apathy of those who have more than they need.

We're capable of more concern than we let ourselves feel. More than that, we're capable of the compassion that would lead us to action. Jim Wallis describes the step between concern and compassion in this way: "Being concerned is seeing something awful happening to somebody and feeling, 'Hey, that's really too bad.' Having compassion is seeing the same thing and saying, 'I just can't let that happen to my brother, my sister.'"

We can't solve the problem of world hunger, but we can make a crucial difference. Mother Teresa was asked how she kept from being overwhelmed by the multitudes of needy people. She replied, "I love them one at a time." You and I can make a difference for one or two or three.

We can give more generously than we have. We can ask whether we care enough for these people we'll never meet, these children of God, to give up some measure of our



*Sometimes it's hard
to tell what God
wants. This isn't
one of
those times.*

own comfort to save their lives. No one following the example of Christ can be content to have too much while others have too little. The rich must live more simply so that the poor can simply live.

A middle-aged couple earns good money and yet chooses to live simply. They go without status symbols and luxuries, so that they can give money to feed the hungry. They live a trimmed-down life. Every month the mother gathers the children around the checkbook. For each check

that she writes to whomever it might be, to whatever cause, she tells them a story: "This is why these people need the money more than we need it." And so these children actually know where the family money is going and that it isn't there in the bank account for them to buy a new toy. The parents themselves choose not to always have new, better, more things. Their children are mature, alive, and joyful. The mother's check-writing process is Christian education at its best. She's saying, "This is what love means."

Our contributions won't tip the scales of injustice, but we can place our stubborn ounces on the right side of the balance. A Swahili proverb has it, "Drop by drop, the bucket fills." And our one drop will make a difference—for us, too. It sounds paradoxical, but the more we care for the hurting, the more passionately we'll love life. Giving is celebrating life at its fullest.

Sometimes it's hard to tell what God wants. This isn't one of those times. This is judgment day, because we're deciding whose side we're on.

—Brett Younger, a frequent contributor to *Sacred Seasons*, is a pastor in Fort Worth, Texas.

A Holy Moment in Charlotte

Chris Ayers, pastor of Wedgewood Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina recently told a story that turns conventional Christian views of hospitality upside down. Many, perhaps most, Christians minister to poor people from a safe distance, as long as nothing disrupts their personal lives or their churches. But the members of this church, Ayers said, have a true heart for Charlotte's homeless people.

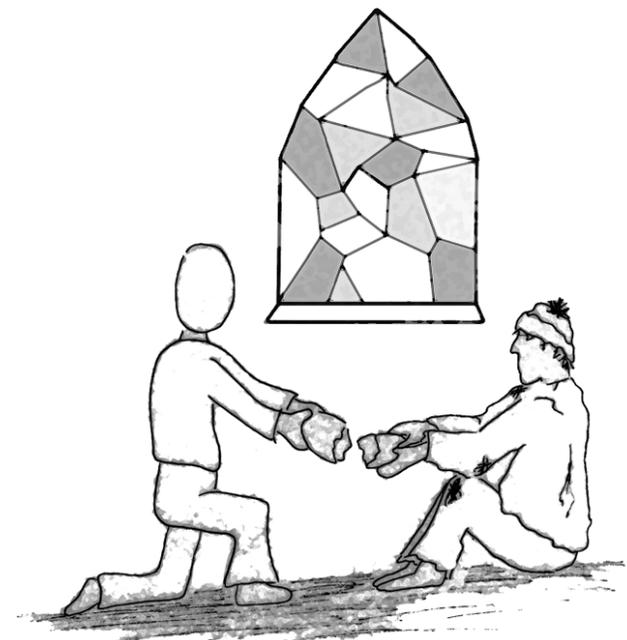
The congregation constructed a small building right next to one of Charlotte's homeless shelters, and they call it "Hope Chapel." Ayers visits on the third Sunday of every month to assist in the worship service, but he does not lead it. He invites the homeless to choose the hymns they want to sing and also asks them to lead the prayer times.

Through Hope Chapel and other ministries, the Wedgewood congregation has the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with street people. As part of the "Room in the Inn" ministry, members offer rooms in their homes, laundry services, meals, and listening ears. They never force their guests to attend worship services on Sunday mornings, but always invite them.

After a time, the homeless people feel comfortable enough to visit the church's services. One Sunday morning, four homeless people arrived for the worship service. Ayers asked them if they would serve communion

to the church members. He said he will never forget the faces of these guests, or the faces in the congregation, as the four of them distributed the communion elements.

—This story comes from a story by Emily Mann about Wedgewood Baptist Church in Baptist Peacemaker, the journal/newspaper of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.



art by Sharon Rollins

The 'Welcome' Sign

a dramatic monologue

by Rachel C. Hunter

It was a “welcome sign”—at first. More specifically, the sign said ALL WELCOME. In fact, as I recall, the “all” was underlined. One of the deacons was a prominent gay man who’d been with his partner for years. Ah, so they are a “welcoming and affirming” church.

It was a welcome sign—at first.

Of course, the whisperings started right away...they always do.

“What is it, anyway? Is that a he or a she?”

“What are you?” they’d ask, as if, by not naming gender as the issue, they were being discretely subtle.

“I’m a PERSON!” I scream inside, as I explain that I am psychologically and emotionally a woman.

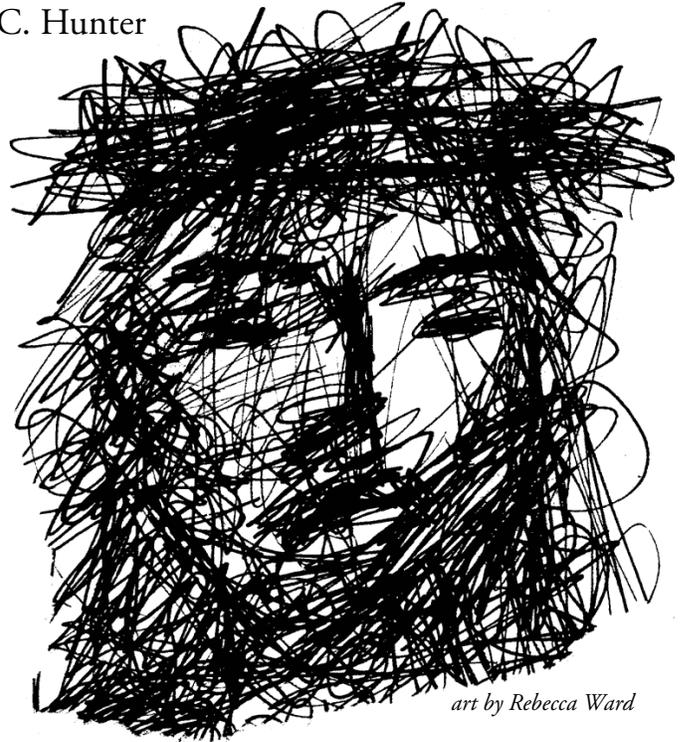
“But you were born a man.” As if that somehow disqualified me from my previous assertions.

The pastor smiled and shook my hand each week. It was a welcome sign—at first.

But the day I needed them, the day I was accosted in the street...(Sobbing, I explained that I was having trouble getting hormones. They’re expensive and insurance won’t cover them.)...the pastor politely explained to me that they were purely cosmetic, that I didn’t need them.

I told him pointedly that the gentleman on the street, upon spotting a five o’clock shadow on a woman...well, he strongly disagreed with that.

“These are tough issues,” the pastor said. “Perhaps you should find a community more suited to your needs. You make people here uncomfortable.”



art by Rebecca Ward

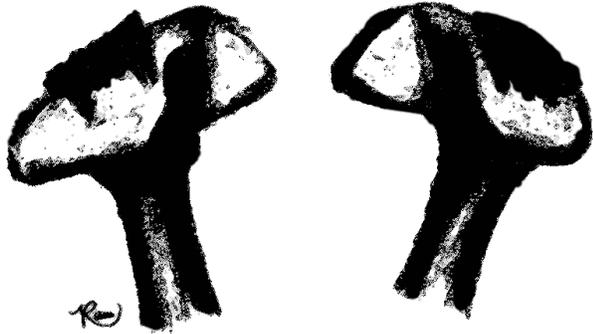
Uncomfortable! Does the church only accept those who make them feel safe and easy? Even the churches who risk themselves by accepting gays and lesbians, do they only accept “respectable” queers who don’t make waves?

What about the displaced? What about the ones without houses, without showers, who smell like three-day-old urine, who smell like the dumpsters where they find their food? Are they welcome? What of my friends who are suffering from the agonies of full-blown AIDS? They are the lepers of their day. Are they truly welcome?

And so I’m searching for a community. Searching for a place in which the welcome sign means I’M welcome.

—Rachel Hunter holds a degree from the College of Wooster in Theatre and Religious Studies. She recently moved from New York City to Rindge, New Hampshire to teach theatre and writing at The Meeting School there.

Quotes, Poems, & Pithy Sayings



"In Jesus we are seeing God the host, who offers hospitality to all who are open to receiving it."
—Rev. Dr Judith McKinley

It is ironic to think of the number of people in this country who pray for the poor and needy on Sunday and spend the rest of the week complaining that the government isn't doing something about them.

—William Sloane Coffin, *Credo*

Your neighbor stands before you as a representative of every human being and of the God who has created and dignified every human being...Neighborly love is at once an involvement in time and an orientation toward eternity...Nothing human can be alien to those who have hope.

—Glenn Tinder, *The Fabric of Hope: An Essay*

While I was teaching at M.I.T., Aldous Huxley joined us for a semester as distinguished visiting professor in the humanities. Needless to say, he was in demand all over New England, and my regard for him was so great that I volunteered to be his social secretary, driving him to and from his engagements because I wanted nothing so much that semester as to spend as much time in his presence as I could manage.

On the way to one of his engagements, he said, "You know, Huston, it's rather embarrassing to have spent one's entire lifetime pondering the human condition and to come

toward its close and find that I really don't have anything more profound to pass on by way of advice than, "Try to be a little kinder."

—Huston Smith

More and more I come to value charity and love of one's fellow being above everything else...all our lauded technological progress—our very civilization—is like the axe in the hand of the pathological criminal.

—Albert Einstein

We have made money our god and called it the good life. We have trained our children to go for jobs that bring the quickest corporate advancements at the highest financial levels. We have taught them careerism but not ministry and wonder why ministers are going out of fashion. We fear coddling the poor with food stamps while we call tax breaks for the rich business incentives.

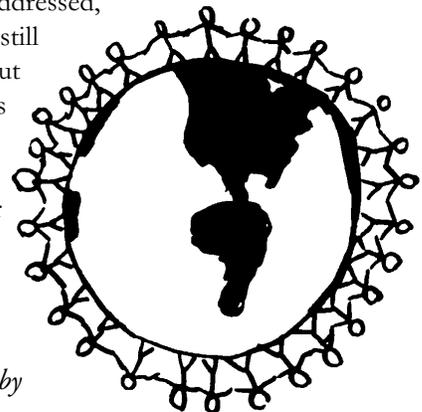
We make human community the responsibility of government while homelessness, hunger, and drugs seep from the centers of our cities like poison from open sores for which we do not seek either the cause or the cure. We have created a bare and sterile world of strangers where exploitation is a necessary virtue. We have reduced life to the lowest of values so that the people who have much will not face the prospect of having less.

—Joan Chittister, OSB

Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Not indeed that we personally are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not.

—from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

—Art on this page is by Rebecca Ward.



From Hostility to Hospitality

some thoughts on radical hospitality

by Gary Percesepe

We come from God, and to God we shall return; but in the meantime, it can be a mean time, and it is possible to despair—to forget who we are and where we came from, and where we are going. The hostility



art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

we find in our world needs no new description. But how do we make the movement from hostility to hospitality?

Of course, nearly every story that Jesus told was about hospitality, the welcoming of God, of the Other, of our neighbor. The Bible has a lot to say about the gifts of hospitality and God's displeasure with the lack of hospitality. We will recall in the book of Genesis the failure of hospitality that was Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the Gospel of Luke, Simon, the Pharisee, hectors the sinful woman at Jesus' feet, who has washed his feet with her hot tears and dried them with her hair. Simon had to endure the rebuke of Jesus for his hypocrisy, for he had failed in his duty as a host to show hospitality either to Jesus or to the woman. Also in Luke's gospel is the story of the hospitality of the father who welcomes home his lost son, even as his eldest son languishes in his hostility...but even he is invited to the feast.

Hospitality is one of those warm and fuzzy terms that we like, and that we think we understand. Too often, we don't. The word itself means to invite and to welcome the stranger. This sounds wonderful, as US-American as apple pie (who could possibly be against hospitality?) until we remember that hospitality is not restricted to personal hospitality but also works at the level of the state, which raises interesting questions about refugees, about the Palestinians and the Israeli settlers, about immigrants and unassimilated ethnic groups, about so called "foreign languages" and the English-only movement in the US.

In short, the term hospitality is a difficult one. Surprisingly, the word hospitality carries its opposite within itself. The English word *hospitality* derives from the Latin *hospes*, which originally meant a stranger, and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or "hostile" stranger; and it is linked to having power. "Hospitality," the welcome extended to the guest, *is a function of the power of the host to*

remain master of the premises. A "host" is one who takes on or receives strangers, one who gives to the stranger even while remaining in control.

This means that there is a certain stress built into the

idea of a host, because there is an essential limitation built right into the very idea of hospitality—which preserves the distance between oneself and the stranger, between owning one's property and inviting the Other into one's home or one's land. So there is always a little hostility in all hosting.

The idea of retaining the mastery of the house is, therefore, essential to the idea of hospitality. A host is only a host if he or she owns the place, and only if he or she holds on to his or her ownership—that is to say, if he or

This is unspeakable hospitality, a radical openness to the stranger that makes an impossible demand upon the host—who must, in an act of madness, tear up the contract, tear up the understanding between the host and the guest and make an absolute gift of his or her property.

she limits the gift. When a host says to a guest, "Make yourself at home," this is a self-limiting invitation. "Make yourself at home" means "please feel at home, act as if this were your home, but remember that, strictly speaking this is not true at all; this is not your home but mine, and you are expected therefore to respect my property." When I say "welcome" to the Other, "Come, cross my threshold," I am not surrendering my property or my identity. I am not surrendering my mastery or giving up my power.

This means that there is always a certain tension in hospitality: how can I graciously welcome the Other while still retaining my sovereignty, my mastery of the house? In

other words, how can I limit my gift? True hospitality, it seems, is impossible. True hospitality only starts to happen when I push against this limit, when I seek to make the impossible possible, when I invite hospitality to cross its own threshold and limit, to become a gift beyond hospitality.

This is unspeakable hospitality, a radical openness to the stranger that makes an impossible demand upon the host—who must, in an act of madness, tear up the contract, tear up the understanding between the host and the guest and make an absolute gift of his or her property. Which is, of course, impossible. Or is it? “Me, give up my property to this stranger, this alien, this guest in my home? Never!” And yet...this is the only way that a guest can feel at home.

This is what we celebrate when we break the bread and drink the cup. We remember Jesus, One who was whole who was broken so that we might become whole. We remember the future.



So hospitality is something I can never measure up to; I am always too close-fisted, too ungracious, too calculating in whom I extend my invitations to.

The impossibility of hospitality is like the impossibility of community. Our English word *community* has connotations of “fusion” and “identification.” The Latin *communio* is a word for military formation and a kissing cousin to the word *munitions*. To have a *communio* is to be fortified on all sides, to build a common defense, as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out. By definition communities are exclusive. There can be no such thing as a “universal community,” for communities by definition have an inside and an outside, those who are insiders—the beneficiaries of community—and those who are outsiders, the strangers outside the gate.

This is clear when we think about so called “gated communities,” the fastest growing housing segment in the US today. The Nazi’s Third Reich, after all, was a community, as was the Trenchcoat Mafia of Littleton, Colorado. The self-protective closure of community at first glance would therefore seem to be antithetical to the meaning of the gospel of Jesus, since Jesus’ vision seems to be a vision of openness and boundary crossing, a vision which is open and hospitable to the incoming of the Other—which, when you think about it, would make for a very poor defense system indeed!

(Or would it?) No wonder following Jesus gets us into so much trouble! There is both a conflict and a paradox to hospitality and to community. The paradox is this: If a community is too welcoming it loses its identity; but if it keeps its identity it becomes unwelcoming.

Let me tell you how I resolve the paradox. This won’t take long. (Hint: I don’t.)

Perhaps true community, like true hospitality, is located not in any actual social practice but only in *desire*—a desire for what is to come. A desire to let the Other come. And I would say to you that there is a real desire today on the part of many to experience something out of the ordinary, to cross over boundaries, to transgress national borders, to cross over from hostility to hospitality. That is the energy and the spirit that makes the impossible possible; for in the experience of God’s people, God makes a way where there is no way, God makes the impossible possible, for with God all things are possible.

This was certainly the experience of the early church, of which we read in the book of Acts that there was not a needy one among them! This is the New Economy of Jesus, a kind of Jubilee living which was as big an adjustment for the people of that day as it would be for us, if we dared to live it.

Two stories about hospitality. First, in 1995 my wife Suzanne and I both lost our jobs, within a week of each other, and we were facing the worst crisis of our lives. We weren’t sure where we would live, or what would become of us. One of Suzanne’s students, an 8th grader named Mary Wagner, found out about it. Mary and her family were poor as dirt; they lived in a shack on West Jefferson Street, on the poor side of town by the railroad tracks, five kids and their father. The mother was in prison for trying to burn the house down and kill her kids. And Mary, when she found out about our situation, said, “It’s Okay, Ms. P, you can all come and live with us.” And she meant it.

At that point, that was the best offer that we had—none of our rich neighbors or church members had made such an offer. I have never in my life heard such a spirit of generosity, of radical, no-holds-barred hospitality. It is a lesson I will never forget, because the offer was excessive; it was transgressive of every category I had ever heard of; it was outlandish and audacious. It came from the center of a heart that knew pain, knew bad times, but still wanted to reach out and act like a neighbor. Little Mary Wagner wanted to adopt us! Hospitality beyond hospitality. Excessive hospitality. The giving up of the insistence on private property. Not a needy person among them. Community beyond community, beyond inside and outside. The strong desire to make the impossible possible.

Mary wanted a new kind of family. She pointed to the reality of the coming kingdom of God, or what some of

us prefer to call a non-domination system, a dream of what is yet to come, the reality of which we still pray when we say, "Let your kingdom come, let your will be done, O God, on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven is in pretty good shape. It is on earth where we dream such dreams, we dream of the democracy which is yet to come, in the US, in Canada, in Mexico, in China. We dream the dream of God, of the healing of the nations, of the Beloved Community of Martin Luther King, where neither race nor gender nor sexual orientation nor environmental degradation nor any other thing can separate us.

Such a community will have slackened its defenses, diminished its supply of munitions against the Other, torn down the walls, beaten its swords and assault weapons into plowshares. It will have become—let us say it: a weak community with porous boundaries, a community of the weak and broken, made whole again through Jesus the Christ. This is what we celebrate when we break the bread and drink the cup. We remember Jesus, One who was whole who was broken so that we might become whole. We remember the future.

Living in community, with excessive, radical, transgressive hospitality. What does it mean to make the movement from hostility to hospitality? Rabbi Nachman, the 18th century Ukrainian master, taught: *The entire world is like a narrow bridge. The important thing is not to be afraid.*

I promised you another story. In 1992 Fred Rogers, the beloved host of the children's television show *Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood*, was invited to a political fundraiser, and he didn't want to go. But in the end he went. Jeanne Marie Laskas tells the story of how his name was announced from the podium, and how skinny and out-of-place he looked, standing at the podium, surrounded by political heavyweights. He cleared his throat and said, "I know of a little girl who was drawing with crayons in school."

He paused. It was a long pause. The guests at the fundraiser looked at one another. Was this...appropriate?

Fred continued, "The teacher asked her about her drawing and the little girl said, 'Oh, I am making a picture of God.'

"The teacher said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.'

"The little girl smiled and answered, 'They will now.'"

Fred then asked each member of the crowd to think of his or her own image of God, and that's who he prayed to. He asked that all the politicians listen to the cries of despair in our nation and help turn those cries into actual rays of hope. He never mentioned the names of the political leaders who had invited him.

When his short speech was over, Laskas says, Fred stepped off the podium and darted out of the room. No one could find him. The Secret Service couldn't find him.

They combed the building and talked into their secret little walkie-talkies. Lunch was about to be served and Fred was missing.

Finally, Laskas and her friends found him. He was standing outside alone, by an oak tree. A priest came running up, saying, "Mister Rogers! Where are you going? We are about to start the lunch!"

"Oh, I have to go back to work now," he replied. And then he was gone.

Fred Rogers did not want to be at that event. But he would say a prayer with those people or with any other people. He was not put on this earth to snub anyone; that's

*"I think people don't change very much when all they have is a finger pointed at them. I think the only way people change is in relation to somebody who loves them."
—Fred Rogers*

how he saw it. He later told Laskas, "I wasn't about to participate in any fundraising or anything else. But at the same time I don't want to be an accuser. Other people may be accusers if they want to; that may be their job. I really want to be an advocate for whatever I find is healthy or good."

Now, I have to tell you, when I read those words I was a bit disappointed. An activist alarm went off in my head that said, "Hello! Don't be naïve! Speak truth to power!"

But then I read on, and I read these words.

"I think people don't change very much when all they have is a finger pointed at them. I think the only way people change is in relation to somebody who loves them."

Walter Wink said once that he didn't think we were called to hate anyone. There's no shortage of hatred in this world. What we are called to do is pray. "But how do I pray for my enemy?" you ask. "How do I pray for someone I can't stand?" Wink would say that we should pray that that person will come, in time, to awaken to his or her full humanity, to what was incarnate in Jesus the Human Being, to pray that "that of God" would be awakened in him or her. And while we're at it, we should pray the same for ourselves.

—*The article above is taken from an address titled "Reaching Out" by Gary Percesepe, Coordinating Director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. The address will appear in three parts in the Fall 2004, Winter 2005, and Spring 2005 issues of Baptist Peacemaker. This portion is used with permission.*

Third from the Sun

a poem

by David Sparenberg

Most of the people on this planet
are poor.

Many of the people on this planet
are malnourished.

Many of the people are ill sheltered.
Many are insufficiently clothed.

Many of the children on this planet
grow old with fear,
pain and privation.
Some remain dreamers,
in spite of the facts.
Some remain lovers,
in spite of disappointments.

Some of the people have gone
or are going mad.
Some are afflicted
with sorrowful diseases.
Some are entrapped
in debilitating crime.
There is abundant anxiety,
guilt and despair.

Only a few of the people on this planet
are consistently secure,
sufficiently empowered, in control
of their lives.

*—David Sparenberg—a playwright, poet, storyteller, stage director, Shakespearean actor and
novelist—lives and writes in Seattle.*

Art on this page is courtesy of the United Nations Food Programme.

Over the years,
I have searched for justice,
justice and the luminous
dispensation of mercy.

I have found much hardship,
folly, deception.

I have found indifference.
Thicker than the wall of prisons.
Darker than stark night. Uglier
than torture.

Many of the people on this planet
are thirsty
(even where there is water).

Many of the people are hungry
(even where there is grain).

A great many of the people on this planet
are hungering.

A great many of the people are thirsting
and wasting away.

There are so many people on this planet Earth.

Third from the sun. One
from her moon.

And so much negative silence,
So much isolation in the busiest,
noisiest places.

The Meaning of Eucharist

by Cathy Tamsberg

I was on a study tour of the impoverished nation of El Salvador. In preparing for the trip, I learned about the murders of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American churchwomen in 1980 and the Jesuits in 1989—all of whom were killed by soldiers we, the US, supported because they stood in solidarity with the nation's poor.

But I was not prepared for the extent of the poverty, the pollution, and the desperate need of the Salvadoran people. Nor did I know that in this tiny Central American country, God would transform my experience of the Eucharist forever.

We drove for hours on bumpy rural roads to get to the village of Chatalenago. We almost couldn't get into the cemetery because it was locked, though any one of us could have found a way into this crowded repository of the dead where weeds grew everywhere they could find an open spot between the uneven and, by our standards, poorly-kept graves.

We wandered for a few moments until we found it—a large, above-ground white tomb. On top, painted in blue, was a dove and the word "Maryknoll."

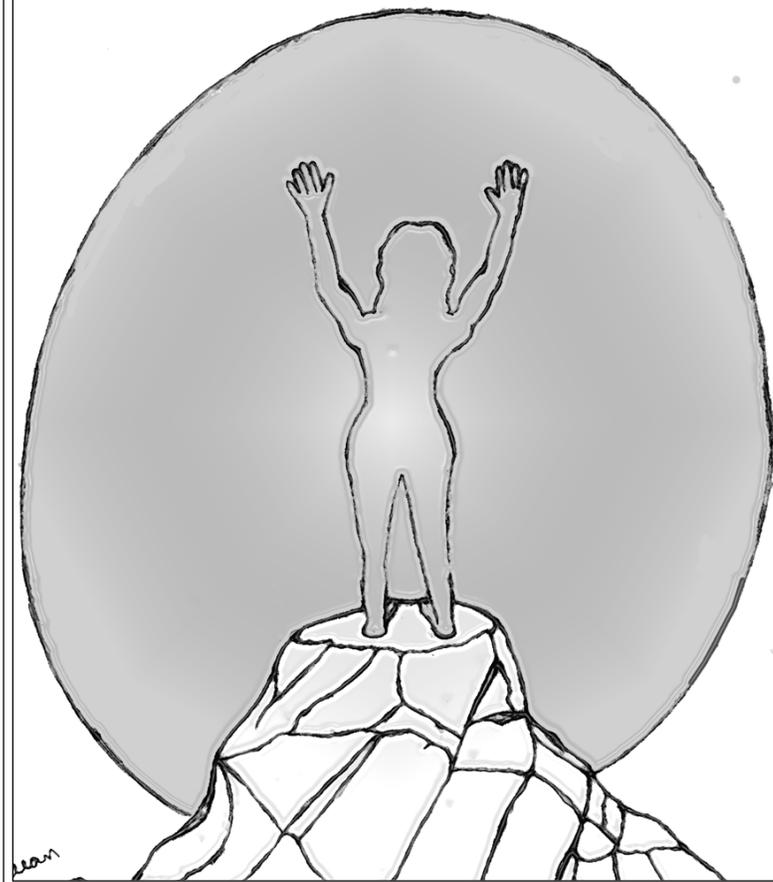
Then we saw the names. Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, the two Maryknoll sisters, two of those four American churchwomen, were buried here—buried in this scruffy little cemetery among the poor of El Salvador whom they loved and for whom they gave their lives. These women had been brutally beaten and raped and murdered by Salvadoran soldiers because they refused to discontinue their ministry of empowering El Salvador's poor.

Just being there was enough, next to this modest shrine to two of God's saints. But then Deidre, our professor and minister, began: *The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread...*

The tears began to roll down my cheeks and onto the parched sand beneath my feet...and broke it and gave it to his disciples and said...

I was nearly overwhelmed with emotion as I stood next to the graves of these two women, whose bodies had

art by Susan Smith



It was the women who taught me what the man had done, and the Eucharist will never, ever be the same again.

been broken for the poor, and heard Deidre's female voice say, ...*this is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*

In a way I had never experienced before, the brutality, the suffering, and the devotion represented by the cross—and remembered in that meal—came home to me. It was the women who taught me what the man had done, and the Eucharist will never, ever be the same again.

—Cathy Tamsberg is a minister in Raleigh, North Carolina. This meditation came from *Grace for the Journey: Interpreting Baptist Ordinances in the 21st Century*, written by Cathy Tamsberg and published by the Alliance of Baptists (www.allianceofbaptists.org).

Preaching the Gospel without Words

by Corley Sims

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of the boy who shared his fish and bread. I like this story for several reasons. I like how a young person aided Jesus and I like the idea of preaching the gospel without words. A similar experience last summer increased my liking of this story and made me even more aware of why it is my favorite miracle story.

The word *miracle* is defined by *Webster's New Riverside Dictionary* as an event that seems impossible to explain by natural laws and so is regarded as supernatural in origin or as an act of God. Last summer I was given not only the opportunity to witness such a phenomenon, but also the opportunity to aid in the miracle.

Nineteen youth and five sponsors from my church set out in June to help Buckner Border Ministries in the *colonias* by the Texas-Mexico border. The first day, for us, was the ultimate shock. We met a family whose home had no indoor plumbing and no insulation. Their "house" leaked when it rained, froze in the winter, and was scorching in the summer. They had lived in this way for two years and had been requesting help for about a year. The family consisted of a mom, a dad, two sons, and a baby girl.

In the four days we worked at the Torres house, we put insulation in the walls and ceilings; put in dry wall and mudded it; caulked and painted their house, doors, and trim; fixed their roof; installed a bathtub and toilet, and painted the garden cinderblocks. That was perhaps the most obvious miracle.

We had been told not to get our hopes up because we probably wouldn't make enough progress to tell much of a difference. Well, we challenged those odds. We were able to overcome language barriers, endurance obstacles, and personal problems to help aid these people in any way we could.

Another miracle occurred about halfway through the week. We discovered that we would need more money than we had planned to finish the house, and we had already crossed into our extra budget. So we decided to ask the congregation back home for more money, figuring we could scrounge at least \$150 to put in drywall and insulation. Kelsey, one of the youth, took pictures of the house with her phone and emailed them to Sharon, one of the church

members, who printed them out and passed them around at the fellowship meal on Wednesday night.

I guess we underestimated the people of our church. They raised well over the amount that we asked for.

During this trip we worked with a man named David. He was a minister who had been helping with the Buckner ministries for a while, and he was our contact in McAllen. He shared with Becky, our youth minister, that the Torres family had been struggling not only physically, but also spiritually.

Think of how difficult it is today to try and see God in the midst of the hatred and poverty in our world. And then imagine how difficult it must be when you not only have to witness these horrors, but live in them. People like me never have to worry about food and shelter. I wonder how much more difficult it would be to trust that there is a God when you don't know if your children will be able to eat that day.

Think of how difficult it is today to try and see God in the midst of the hatred and poverty in our world. And then imagine how difficult it must be when you not only have to witness these horrors, but live in them.

David had begun talking to Yossenía Torres, the mother of this family, while they were working on the house together. She told him that her husband, Juan, had never spoken to her of faith, and how this worried her. So David started to talk about his faith with both of them. At the end of the week, Juan asked David if he would translate his words to us. We all sat spellbound as Mr. Torres spoke Spanish to David and then David repeated his words to us in English. He told us, through David, that he felt we were sent by God to help his family and how grateful he was for that.

It's amazing how people can be brought to God. Our group never preached a word, we never brought a Bible

with us to the Torres house, and yet our service ministered to people, and those people were brought closer to God.

Now I must explain why I feel the story of the boy and his fish lunch pertains to this experience. One night our youth minister shared with us a new perspective on what might have

happened in this story. It is possible, she said, that some of the people watching the boy that day were so moved that they shared their own fish and bread that they had brought. To me, that is no less of a miracle than if the five thousand had been physically fed by the few loaves and fish.

Maybe instead of sitting around waiting for the miracle, we should begin the miracle. My dad recently told me what his ideal prayer would be. It went something like his: "Dear God, we no longer need people walking on water and people being raised from the dead; we need peace and justice in the world." A miracle does not need to directly defy the laws of science, nor does it need to serve as direct proof of God's existence in this world. Nothing I did that week on the border will be recorded as a

scientific phenomenon, but I witnessed heaven on earth, and that was only the beginning of the week's miracles. —Corley Sims is a senior at Waco High School in Waco, Texas. Sacred Seasons owes special thanks to youth minister Rebecca Speight for passing this story on to us.

*Maybe instead of sitting
around waiting for the
miracle, we should begin
the miracle.*

And Even in a Time of War

a poem about miracles

by David Sparenberg

I watch for miracles,
small and large.
The small ones come.
And often too.
A big one has not arrived.
Or has it?
I don't even know
what a big miracle
would be.
How would it look?
How would it feel?
Other than large; other than
blossoming, miraculously?
Because that is what they do,
miracles. They open up.
They expand and,
maybe, after all,
the small ones that
happen often are
big enough to fill and



complete a human life. I mean,
what does a human life
need? I mean,
really, utterly and truly need?
Man
is part of everything.
And everything that is
is part of a man.
The sun is bright.
The air is clean
and wholesome. The wind,
today, whispers
with the soft intimacy of
a woman, reaching out from
far away.
What does the wind-woman
offer, that the heart is so
uplifted with joy? You see:
a miracle! And tenderness.
Yes.

—David Sparenberg—a playwright, poet, storyteller, stage director, Shakespearean actor
and novelist—lives and writes in Seattle. The art on this page and page 17 is by Rebecca Ward.

The Other Side of the Door

a prayer for courage

by Katie Cook

“God? Is that you?”

I know you're there, on the other side of that door. I know I could open it and let you in, but I'm not quite ready. Sometimes I need to lock everyone out of my life—including you. I often pass people in need on the street without stopping, because I conveniently forget that it is you in those smelly clothes, sleeping on the grate to keep warm.

But sometimes you're not even in disguise, and I still pass you without stopping. It's frightening, the thought of letting you into my little orbit—disguised or not.

I have managed to squeeze the mystery of my faith into formulas I feel comfortable with. I have watered it down so that it is easier to swallow. I have retreated into a safe corner of intellectual debate. I have moved my spiritual self out of my heart and into my brain. I have decorated my worship areas; I have them looking just right, and I don't want anybody messing with them.

I dare not let you in. Who knows what whirlwinds and raging fires you might unleash? Who knows on what horrific quest your still, small voice might send me? How do I dare to listen to the voice in the Temple? How do I dare listen to the voice that calls me by name in the night? What if you tell me to leave my comfort zone? What if you expect me to feed 5,000 people—not counting women and children—with somebody's lunch? What if you ask me to love my enemies? *What if you ask me to be real?*

I feel much safer putting a peephole in that door and peeking out at you from time to time.

I would love to just fling open the door, to say to the voice in the Temple, “Hey! Over here! I'll go!” I'm standing just inside the door, with the key in my hand, but I am frightened.

“God,” I say, taking a deep breath, “Please, give me the courage to open the door.”

—*This prayer was inspired by the art on this page, by Emily Sadler, a senior at Midway High School in Woodway, Texas.*



Liturgical Aids for Children's Sabbath

Call to Worship

Note: we suggest that you ask a child to lead in the litany.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are taught to see beauty in all things around them;

MANY: for their world will be a place of wonder.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are led with patience and understanding;

MANY: for they will learn the strength of endurance and the gift of tolerance.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are provided a home where family members live in harmony;

MANY: for they shall become the peacemakers of the world.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are taught the value and power of truth;

MANY: for they shall search for knowledge and use it with wisdom and discernment.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are loved and know that they are loved;

MANY: for they shall sow seeds of love in the world and reap joy for themselves and others.

—from the Ecumenical Child Care Network

Readings from Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 54:11-17

Hymn

“Change for the Children”

(see page 21)

Information



Each day in the US the following things happen:

- 1 mother dies in childbirth.
- 4 children are killed by abuse or neglect.
- 5 children or teens commit suicide.
- 8 children or teens are killed by firearms.
- 76 babies die before their first birthdays.
- 182 children are arrested for violent crimes.
- 366 children are arrested for drug abuse.
- 390 babies are born to mothers who received late or no prenatal care.
- 860 babies are born at low birthweight.
- 1,186 babies are born to teen mothers.
- 1,707 babies are born without health insurance.
- 1,887 public school students are corporally punished.
- 2,171 babies are born into poverty.
- 2,539 high school students drop out.
- 2,341 babies are born to mothers who are not high school graduates.
- 2,455 children are confirmed as abused or neglected.
- 3,742 babies are born to unmarried mothers.
- 4,440 children are arrested.
- 17,072 public school students are suspended.

—figures are from the Children's Defense Fund, August 2004

Readings from the Gospel

Luke 18:16-17

Mark 9:36-37

Meditation on Children

We believe in children: little ones, big ones, and chubby ones. There is faith in their eyes, love in their touch, hope in their attitude. We thrill with them at life's joys, bow with them in worship, and hold them close in tragedy. We believe in children: the fragile dreams of yesterday, life's radiant reality today, and vibrant substance of tomorrow. We believe in children, for wherever we go we find yesterday's children who were nurtured in love, truth, and beauty, at work trying to make this world a better place for everyone.

—an anonymous quote, cited by Pat Corrick Hinton in Images of Peace

Note: Seeds of Hope intern Stephanie Tinker helped with this compilation.

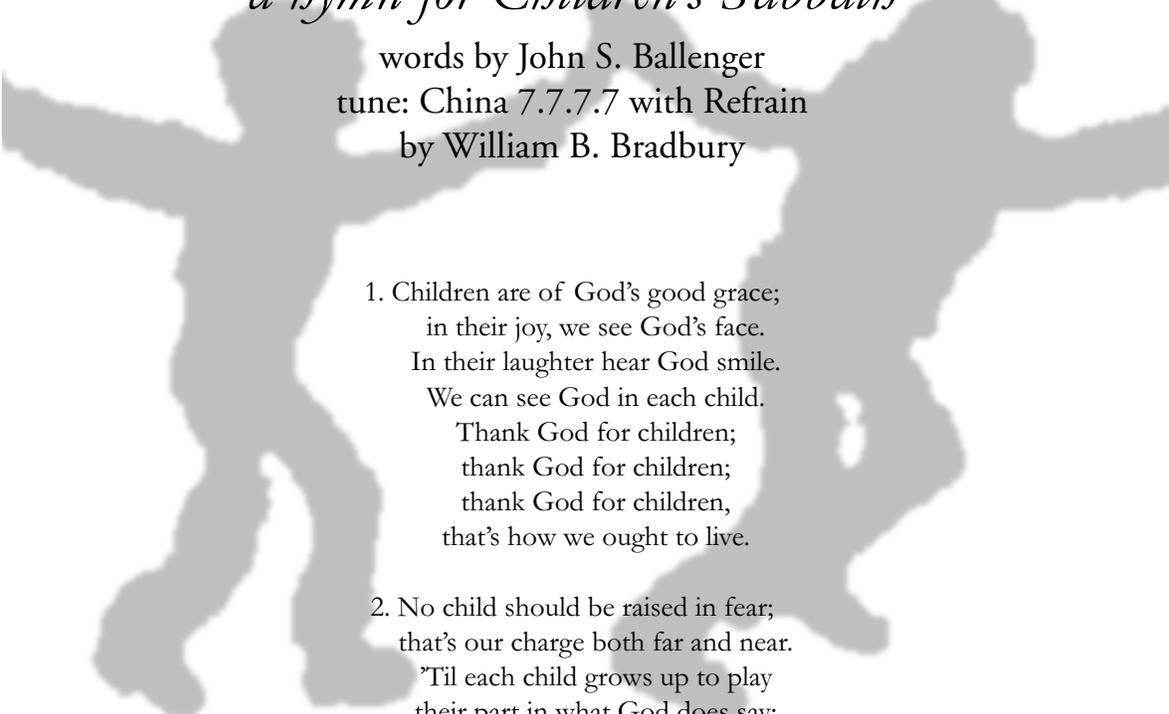
Change for the Children

a hymn for Children's Sabbath

words by John S. Ballenger

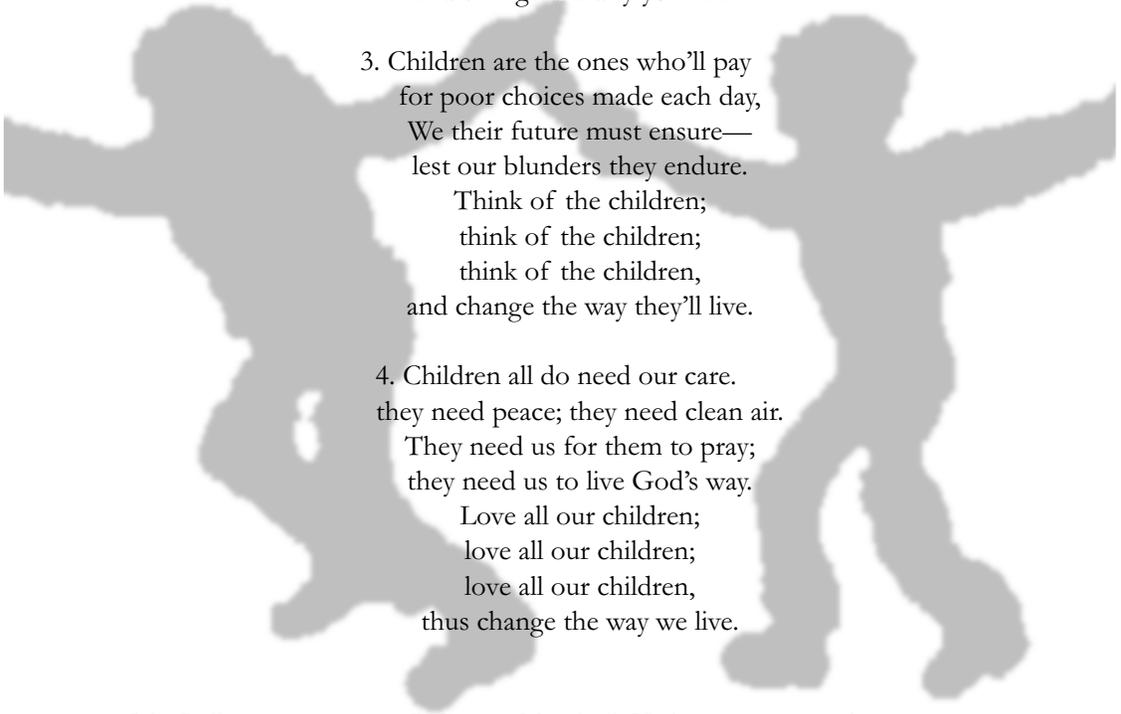
tune: China 7.7.7.7 with Refrain

by William B. Bradbury



1. Children are of God's good grace;
in their joy, we see God's face.
In their laughter hear God smile.
We can see God in each child.
Thank God for children;
thank God for children;
thank God for children,
that's how we ought to live.

2. No child should be raised in fear;
that's our charge both far and near.
'Til each child grows up to play
their part in what God does say:
"Take care of children;
take care of children;
take care of children,
and change the way you live."



3. Children are the ones who'll pay
for poor choices made each day,
We their future must ensure—
lest our blunders they endure.
Think of the children;
think of the children;
think of the children,
and change the way they'll live.

4. Children all do need our care.
they need peace; they need clean air.
They need us for them to pray;
they need us to live God's way.
Love all our children;
love all our children;
love all our children,
thus change the way we live.

—John Ballenger is a pastor in Baltimore, Maryland. He has written many dramatic resources for Sacred Seasons and other Seeds of Hope publications.

Children's Activity: Hungry for Hope

how we created a day camp on hunger

by Megan Sims and Katie Cook

It had started out to be just an innocent lunch in Waco, Texas. We had met to kick around ideas for a one-day-a-week summer camp for the elementary-aged children of our church. We (Megan, the interim children's minister, and Katie, the editor of Seeds Publishers and a youth leader in the church) realized that, when planning summer activities for children, one usually considers amusement parks, zoos, movies, and other kinds of lively attractions. But Megan wanted to do something a little different.

Megan said that she wanted to spend the time touring local nonprofit organizations that deal specifically with issues of hunger and poverty. We talked about the need to make missions a part of the children's church curriculum *before* they reach the youth group and go on mission trips.

We discussed the vast resources within our own church and community for teaching the children hunger and poverty awareness. So why not create a program that not only teaches hunger and poverty awareness, but also brings the children into contact with the programs and people who work in social ministries locally?

So the *Hungry for Hope* day camp was created. On Fridays during the summer, the children met at nine in the morning at the church. They came with sack lunches, sunscreen, bug spray, and an eagerness to learn and do missions work.

On the first day we issued *Hungry for Hope* press



credentials (laminated and complete with a Polaroid photo identification) which they wore around their necks. We also issued notebooks and pencils, along with a few disposable cameras. We explained that they were now reporters for a new publication, and that, in August, we would, together, compile their stories, drawings, and photos into a newsletter.

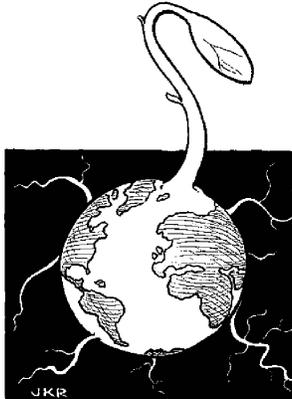
We began each day by learning about what it means to be hungry. The children completed short hunger simulations in which they learned how their own country compares with others and how a person with little money must live.

The kids also studied the different definitions associated with hunger and developed their own ways of understanding what the word *hungry* means. For all of these activities, we used *The Children's Hunger Educational Kit*, distributed by the Presbyterian Hunger Program, PCUSA.

○

Hungry for Hope Newsletter

photo here



Reporter

JKR

left:
"press
pass"
at 90
percent
size

After the classroom time each Friday, the children went to an organization in the city for hands-on missions

As one carload arrived at the building, one of the children rallied the others, saying, "Let's go get a story."

experience. On the first day the group traveled to the Central Texas Senior Ministry (CTSM) to see the central kitchen for Meals on Wheels. As one carload arrived at the building, one of the children rallied the others, saying, Let's go get a story."

A CTSM staff member led the group in a tour of the facility, and the children immediately whipped out their notebooks and started asking questions, taking copious notes. The tour guide was astonished and delighted.

The children then delivered meals and talked (and sang, in one case) with Meals on Wheels recipients. During other Fridays they washed vans at Mission Waco (an urban poverty ministry), pulled weeds at the World Hunger Relief training farm, and sorted food for the Caritas of Waco food pantry. After returning from the mission encounters each week, the children ate lunch and worked on their stories. Their businesslike attitude and enthusiasm for creating a newsletter was surprising and contagious.

In August, the children presented a program for the church and distributed copies of *Hungry for Hope*, composed of their page designs, drawings, photos, and stories. The response from the church and from the host organizations was overwhelmingly positive.

At the beginning, we might easily have questioned the sanity of taking children into the heat of a Central Texas summer to do

missions work. However, looking back, we realize that no theme park or movie could surpass our experiences.

The kids pleaded to return to these organizations to do more mission work. What better response to a program could we want than the desire to learn and do more?

—Megan Sims is a student at Chandler Divinity School in Atlanta, Georgia and Katie Cook is editor of *Seeds of Hope Publishers*. The day camp took place at Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco, Texas. Seventh and James is the community of faith that houses the *Seeds* offices.

Below are some brief samples from the Hungry for Hope newsletter:

The Meals on Wheels Trip

Today we went to the Meals on Wheels place. We helped Megan's mom and another woman. We delivered meals to people who can't go out and buy the food, and other things. First we went and saw how they make the food they deliver. There they had a big steaming pot and big ovens that bring their food. We came back to church and ate lunch and wrote a paper. The End

—written by Amber Anderson

Hunger Farm Facts

Today we went to the World Hunger Farm. We first went to an average house. 12 to 18 people live in one house. It is very cramped. It is about 1/8 of the size of the house we live in. We also did things. We collected eggs and ate watermelon and drank raw goats milk. The watermelon was yellow and much sweeter because it was fresh.

—written by John Harvey

For Caritas

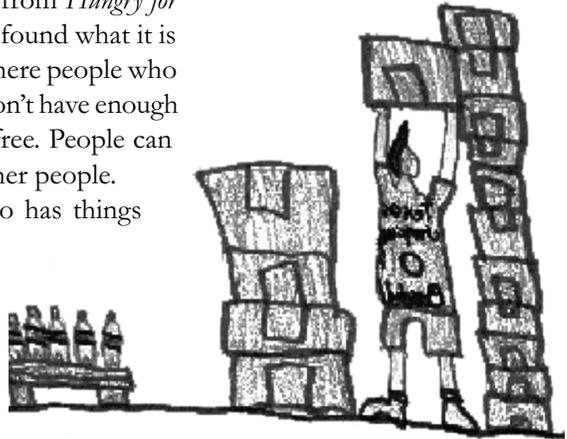
There may be some hungry people in the world, but not as many because of the fact that Caritas cares.

Today when the kids from *Hungry for Hope* went to Caritas they found what it is about. Caritas is a place where people who need different items but don't have enough money can get them for free. People can donate items there for other people.

I advise anybody who has things they don't need anymore that still can be used should give it to Caritas.

—written by Talj Tatum

art by William Underwood



Benediction



*The Time is surely coming, says the Lord,
when the one who plows shall overtake
the one who reaps,
and the treader of the grapes
the one who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people...
They shall rebuild the ruined cities
and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards
and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens
and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be plucked up
out of the land...
from Amos 9:13-15*