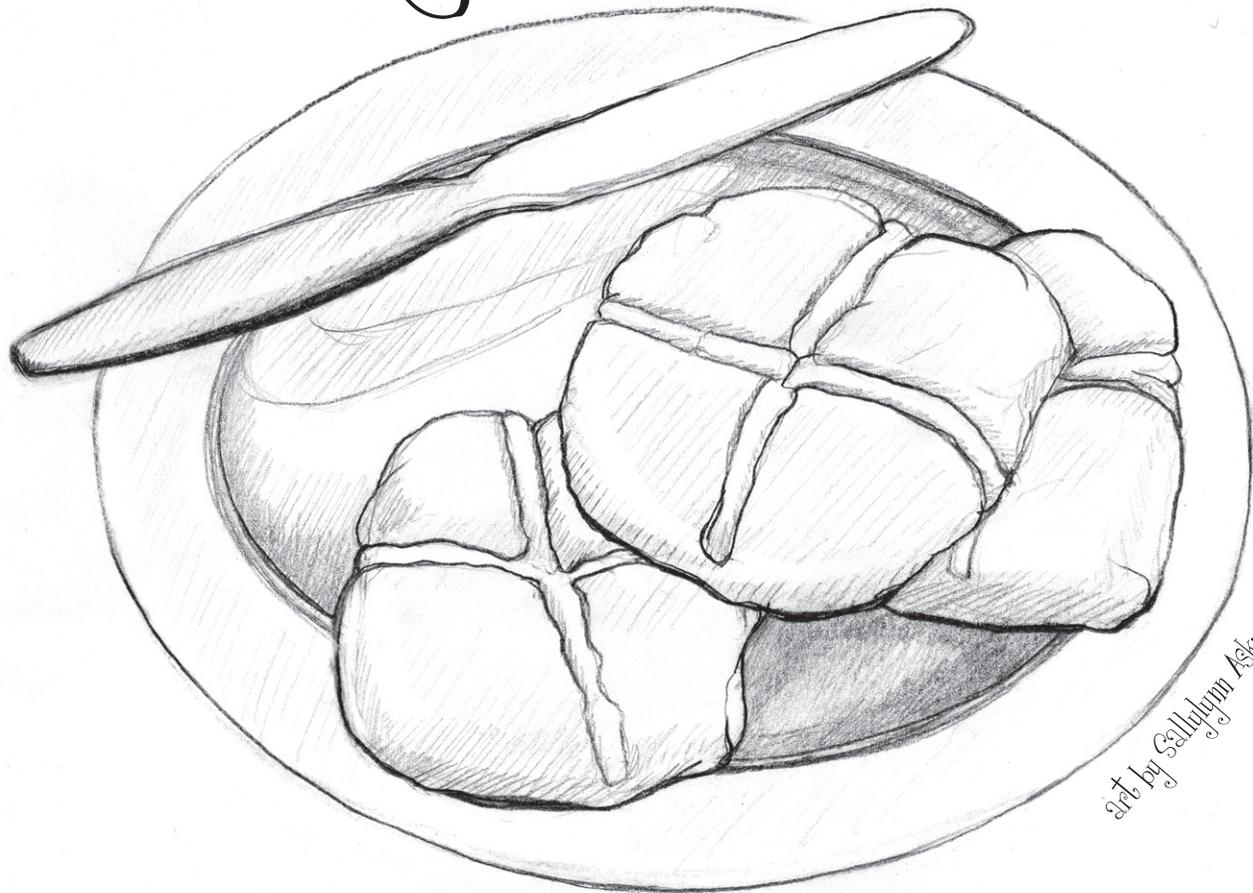


A Hunger Beyond Food



art by Sally Ann Astors

Worship Resources for the Creative Church-Hunger Emphasis 2011

Sacred Seasons, a series of worship packets with a peace and justice emphasis,
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Sacred Seasons:



Creative Worship Tools for Your Church

These unique worship resource packets are available for the liturgical year, three packets a year for \$100 (\$125 for non-US subscriptions), one packet for \$50 (\$65 outside of the US).

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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

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A word about this packet:

This worship packet was produced, as are all of our resources, with a great deal of love and prayer. We want you to be able to use these contents to enhance your congregation's Hunger Emphasis. The theme, "A Hunger Beyond Food," and a good many other things in this packet, were inspired by Sara Miles' book, *Take This Bread*.

We are deeply grateful to the Alliance of Baptists, who sponsored this packet as a part of their Bridges of Hope mission offering. (Go to www.allianceofbaptists.org to find out more about the Alliance.)

The beautiful cover art, and much of the other art in this packet, was created by Sally Lynn Askins, an internationally recognized costume designer and professor, who also serves as the vice president for the Seeds Council of Stewards. Deborah Harris, the secretary for the Council, has once again given her time and talents in copyediting. We are also indebted to Doug Donley and Ken Sehested for their writing, which is always superb.

As always, the contents of this packet are your congregation's to use freely and share with others as the need arises. We pray that these materials, and our other publications, will help you in leading your congregation into a renewed energy for responding to hunger issues in our world.

—Gratefully, The Staff and Council of Stewards

Material in this packet is for the use of the purchasing faith community to enhance worship and increase awareness in economic justice issues. ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status. All contributions above the subscription rate

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There's a hunger beyond food that's
expressed in food, and that's why
feeding is always a kind of miracle.
-Sara Miles,
Take This Bread

Tea, Cornbread & Communion

by Howard Williams

Celtic Christians were people of the land. They were agrarian people but their connection to the land was more than economic. For them, the land on which they lived was sacred. It was as if they were inextricably bound to it. It was the place of family and it was a gift from their Creator. I have places like that for me. Shake Rag, Mississippi, is one of them.

That day as I walked and felt the sacredness of the land beneath my feet, I was reminded of that "great cloud of witnesses" that Paul speaks of in Hebrews.

Every few years I go back to the place where my mother was raised and reminisce about a few acres that I was allowed to roam freely with a single-shot shotgun and an old dog named Mike. We took on many dragons and slew them all.

Up the road is Boone's Chapel Methodist Church. It is the first place that I had a real conversation with God. The story is a bit long, but around the age of 10, I became keenly aware that there was a Someone who loved me. Out behind the church is the cemetery. There are over 300 folks buried there and I think I might be related to almost all of them.

A couple of years ago, I walked the grounds of the cemetery, remembering my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, a cousin who died too soon, and a local TV repairman who often dropped

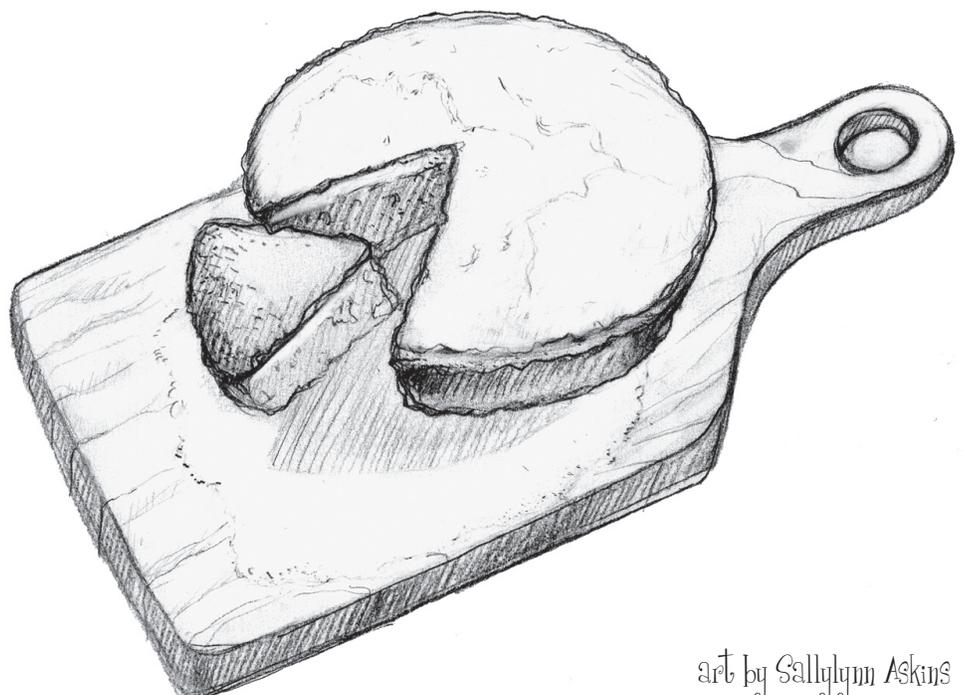
by for Sunday dinner at Mama Bea's. There were also tables—long tables that stretched out forever along the side of the church.

I remember community gatherings around those tables that I know are older than even my memories of them. Fried chicken, green beans, tomatoes, coconut cakes, fried corn and giant jars of tea filled every available space. I have to wonder if those tables are still being filled, or if all the saints who once gathered around the tables have now taken up residence behind the church.

Has the community that once broke bread on rough-hewn planks now gathered to celebrate communion at the banquet table with our Lord? Among those was Daddy Freeman, my grandfather. I only knew Daddy Freeman as a farmer. But, before that, during the Depression, he was a storekeeper. He ran a little country store in Shake Rag that was big enough to meet the basic needs of that small rural community.

As you know, the Depression was a dark time in the history of this country, and Shake Rag wasn't immune to its effects.

People were hungry. Even people who lived on farms and could raise most of their food. Growing food



art by Sallylynn Askins

in the summer, though, is of little value in the winter, if you can't afford the jars to preserve it.

So Daddy Freeman sold on credit. A little here, a little there, knowing full well that every two-bits worth of supplies that walked out the door would never be repaid. That was okay, though, because people were hungry, and that's what a community does. It shares the burden.

That day as I walked and felt the sacredness of the land beneath my feet, I was reminded of that "great cloud of witnesses" that Paul speaks of in Hebrews. They witnessed years ago to a skinny 10-year-old

about a mystery, about fellowship, simple faith and the importance of community.

They witnessed to the next generation about faith and about communion, not from little glass cups and bits of crackers while sitting on well-polished pews, but from big jars of tea and cornbread shared around long tables. It was true communion, gifts of God for the people of God...Southern style.

—Howard Williams is Minister of Spiritual Formation at Weatherly Heights Baptist Church in Huntsville, AL. Other stories can be found at his blog, "Comeinthehouse.blogspot.com".

Ideas for a Tea & Cornbread Communion

Editor's note: Here's an idea to go with the "Tea and Cornbread" meditation by Howard Williams. You could set up a communion table with a blue or red checkered cloth (or perhaps even an old quilt). Put cornbread on a Blue Willow dish, with a mason jar of iced tea. Invite people to share stories of meals that have been significant to them. You might even want to find a copy of Clarence Jordan's Cottonpatch Gospel translation, and read from John 13, Mark 14 or Luke 22. If you want to keep a hunger emphasis, you could use the following as a dramatic invitation to the table, and then share the tea and cornbread.

My name is Judy. I am 15 years old, and I live with my parents and three brothers and sisters on a farm in Mississippi. My father is what they used to call a share-cropper. That means we live on somebody else's land, and we work to get a small share of the profits from the crops—mostly cotton.

Our state has a bad name sometimes, with the highest numbers of poor people and the lowest numbers of people being helped. It has gotten worse in the last few years. The price of gas, to get us to town and to the grocery store, is higher, and the price of food is higher—but we have less money.

Someone told me that a girl my age shouldn't have to worry about these things, but I hear my parents talking, late at night when they think I'm asleep. They worry about us kids. I have heard that most of the hungry people in the United States are country people like me.

I have to admit that sometimes it's hard. Sometimes we miss a meal, maybe twice a week,

maybe more, because there's no food, and no money to buy food. I hope that when I grow up I can get out of this way of living, and I'll have enough to eat. As you come to the table to share this food together, please remember people like me.

Note: The most recent report from the US Census Bureau ranks Mississippi with the highest poverty rate in the US. The numbers of people in poverty in Mississippi and the entire US have grown steadily in the past few years.

art by Peter Yuchi Clark



Bread-baking God

by Ken Sehested



Bread-baking, kitchen-dwelling, breast-feeding God,
We return to your lap and to your table
because we are hungry and thirsty.
Fill us again
with the bread that satisfies,
with milk that nourishes.
Drench parched throats with wet wonder;
feed us 'til we want no more.

We come to your lap and to your table
and rediscover your romance with the world.
As you nourish us with the bread of life and the milk of your
word,
let your Spirit hang an apron around our necks.
Fashioned and patterned like that worn
by our Lord-become-friend, Jesus.

Instruct us here in the halls of your kitchen-kingdom,
with the recipes of mercy and forgiveness,
of compassion and redemption.
Leaven our lives
'til they rise in praise:
Offered, blessed and broken
for the healing of the nations.

—Ken Sehested is co-pastor of The Circle of Mercy in Asheville, NC. This prayer was written in honor of his mother, Joyce Sehested.

Quotes, Poems and Pithy Sayings

To eat this particular meal together is to meet at the level of our most basic humanness, which involves our need not just for food but for each other. I need you to help fill my emptiness just as you need me to help fill yours. As for the emptiness that's still left over, well, we're in it together, or it in us. Maybe it's the most of what makes us human and makes us brothers and sisters.

—Frederick Buechner

God will not force us to do good. We must choose to do good.

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta

It is not enough to say it, to repeat it, to hear it sing in our hearts, as in the great chorus of the last movement of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. It must be translated into act, into flesh and blood, into our eating and drinking and working and loving.

—Dorothy Day

The struggle against hunger is not fought in one cataclysmic battle. There is no "magic bullet" and no hunger monster to slay. Pushing back hunger is more like reclaiming the sea. Just as dikes, pumps and time draw new boundaries between saltwater and farmland, hunger is defeated by a well here, a health clinic there, an agricultural cooperative, a new piece of legislation, a soup kitchen down the block. Like the dikes, all can be lost quickly when we forget simple, recurring, unglamorous tasks. There's a lot of useful work to be done....

—Gary Gunderson

Every social institution which teaches human beings to cringe to those above and step on those below must be replaced by institutions which teach people to look each other straight in the face.

—Margaret Mead

Black, white, yellow, red, smart and stupid, starved and stuffed, from

nations large and small, whatever our creed, we all belong to one another. That's the way God made us. Christ died to keep us that way. Our sin is only and always that we are trying to put asunder what God has joined together.

—William Sloan Coffin

It's a commemoration, certainly; on its simplest level, it's an exhortation to remember Jesus every time we break bread together. But I think it's so much more than simply a reminder of who Jesus was. This meal is a festival, one of the parties that Jesus so loved, from which no one is excluded, a celebration of all the hope wrapped up in all those stories about how the Kingdom would break into our lives and how shalom would be born and what it would grow up to look like. These stories are our best catechism, the words that survive and persist when doctrine fails.

—Dawn M. Ripley, "Telling Stories at the Table," *Sacred Seasons: "In the Breaking of the Bread,"* Hunger Emphasis 2002



The impulse to share food is basic and ancient, and it's no wonder the old stories teach that what you give to a stranger, you give to God.

—Sara Miles,

Take This Bread

A Hunger Beyond Food

Preparing for Your Hunger Emphasis Service

by Katie Cook

This group of resources for a communion service are designed for the Sunday nearest World Food Day (October 16), but can be used for any worship service you choose, at any time of year you choose. We have written up an order of worship, with an accompanying sermon by Doug Donley.

We suggest that you look at the order of worship on page 10 and see if you have the suggested hymns, or decide if you would rather substitute your own ideas. Two hymns are suggested for the invitation to the tables, and two others that we think are familiar enough to play as instrumentals while people are participating in the meal.

You will need at least four tables, some international artifacts and fabric, dishes that evoke the culture of each country, and a bread and drink that is traditionally consumed in each country. During communion, if your faith tradition allows it, you will ask the congregants to choose one of tables and go there for the elements.

Depending on your Eucharistic practices, you may decide to display the traditional food and drink on the dishes of the country, and have another set of elements—like pieces of bread and cups of cooler tea—to actually give to the people.

Each table will have a speaker who represents the people of that country. You will find the invitations to the table from those speakers in the liturgy that begins on page 10.

You may choose to have your speakers dressed in costumes that resemble the dress of each country. We have tried to include a brief description of this clothing, although you may want to search on the Internet or at the library for some visual examples. You may also want to display some of the colorful images that you find, using Powerpoint or slides, or printed pictures.

As always, we want you to feel free to adapt these ideas or use them as starting points for your own brainstormings.

We are also including updates on each of these countries, starting on page 17 for you to use as background information.

A t Table One, you can arrange a **Somali** display and use Somali food as elements. (You might want to display a map of Africa, or the Horn of Africa, somewhere on the table.) Somali women wear brightly colored scarves and shawls, and both men and women wear bright sarongs. You could use a shawl or a sarong (a garment consisting of a long piece of cloth worn wrapped around the body and tucked at the waist or armpit) as a tablecloth.

Somali art is reminiscent of the Islamic Middle East, with non-figurative, intricately carved wood. Their historic rock paintings are among the oldest art in the world. The main languages of Somalia are Somali and Arabic, with English and Italian listed as second languages.

Somalis eat fried bread or bread that resembles a large, spongy pancake. Most Somalis are Muslim, so they do not drink wine. The drink of choice in many places is dark, sweet, hot tea. Wood-carving is a respected profession in the country, so carved wooden dishes would be appropriate for the elements.

Table Two will have a **South Sudan** theme. You could use a colorful, gauzy cotton scarf and Nubian artifacts, many of which are similar to ancient Egyptian artifacts. You could print out drawings of Nubian pyramids or a map of Sudan and South Sudan, showing where the Nile River flows, and showing how the two countries are now divided. Sudanese people wear long, cotton shifts, sometimes with vests or scarves worn like ministerial stoles. Many of the men wear turbans, and the women wear wide, long scarves that we would associate with costumes from biblical times.

For the elements, you could use pita bread and hot tea (with milk and a stick of cinnamon), on a brown pottery plate and a cup without a handle.

Table Three will highlight **Haiti**. The Haitian culture is derived largely from West Africa and France. A visitor to Haiti would find the vibrant, saturated colors—especially turquoise—in Haitian art, Haitian clothing and even on Haitian buildings. In the art,

one would also see brilliant yellow, red and orange. You could use a wooden plate and tumbler or goblet; many artisans in Haiti carve bowls, goblets and other dishes from native woods—conifers and fruit trees, among others.

Haitian food has many French influences. Among the most popular foods are *djon-djon*, tropical fruits such as mangos and plantains, and bread made from sweet potatoes, as well as French bread. *Djon-djon* is a rice dish that is flavored and colored with black mushrooms. Two of the major exports are sugar and coffee. Haitians often roast their coffee with a little sugar, so it has a strong, sweet taste.

For this table, you could set out, with wooden dishes, a French baguette or croissant and a glass of mango juice.

The **Fourth Table** will represent **Iraq**. You could use a cloth that features the red, white and black stripes of the Iraqi flag. You could use artifacts that resemble ancient Sumerian or Assyrian objects for the table. (Remember, if you use modern art, that Muslims do not use figurative images.) The traditional dress for Araqi men includes an ankle-length, white, loose-

fitting, shirtlike garment and a white or checked scarf folded into a triangle and fitted on the head with a black braided cord.

Modern Iraqis use all kinds of dishes, but you might consider using a large bowl, since many rural Iraqi families eat out of a common bowl. Hot tea the most common drink. Iraqi food encompasses most of the foods that are popularized as Mediterranean food. Most of the people eat rice with a sauce, and with meat and vegetables when they can get them. You could use pita or flatbread and tea for the elements.

You may choose to use only three or four of these tables, or you may choose to use all four. Your congregation may be studying another country or population, in which case you will want to represent that country. You might decide you want to incorporate a rural Mississippi table, using the reading from page 5. You may want to “branch out” and add more tables.

If you concentrate on these four countries, you will find more information about them on pages 17. You will also find an idea for an activity for youth and children on page. If you use this activity, it will help you in decorating the tables.

Be creative. Don’t make it too difficult. Get a committee together and brainstorm. —lkc

Liturgy for a Harvest Meal: Instructions and Ideas for the Placemat

Please see the placemat in this Hunger Emphasis packet for this liturgy. This could be used during an annual harvest meal or a Wednesday evening supper. We suggest that, before the event, you arrange corn, squash, pumpkins, and other harvest-time foods on a focal table—and perhaps on all of the tables.

(You might want to use fall decorations—such as autumn leaves or fall-colored tablecloths—to make the room more festive. You might also consider adding staples that food pantries need—such as rice, beans or canned goods—to these centerpieces.) Make or secure enough of whatever bread you provide during the meal so that it can serve for the communion bread. Provide a pitcher of wine or juice and enough goblets or cups so that each table will have one of each.

Recruit volunteers of all ages to participate in a processional of food. (You might decide that you want everyone to participate—or everyone who is willing and able to do so.) Designate several people to carry the communion elements in the front of

the processional. Ask people to bring groceries or produce from their gardens. These will be given to a local food pantry or soup kitchen (unless your church operates one itself).

Ask your processional people to start at the end of the room farthest from the focal table. They will carry the communion elements and groceries to lay on the focal table. Ask them to stand close to the ends of the room until after the Call to Worship, and then proceed across the room with their foods as the processional hymn starts.

This liturgy could easily be adapted for a Sunday morning service. The procession of foods could be a procession down the aisle to your altar table. All of the congregation could bring food and place it on the altar table, and—once it gets full—place it around the table. Your communion leaders could come from the pews instead of from the tables.

As always, we fully expect you to let your imaginations run amok. We’d like to hear about the ideas you dreamed up, and how you used our ideas in your own creative ways. —lkc

A Hunger Beyond Food

A Communion Liturgy

by Katie Cook

Call to Worship

First Reader: God says, "Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water!"

Second Reader: God says, "Are you penniless? Come anyway—buy and eat!"

Congregation: God invites us to buy what we need to drink.

First Reader: God says, "Come and buy without money—everything's free!"

Second Reader: God says, "Why do you spend your money on junk food, your hard-earned cash on cotton candy?"

First Reader: God says, "Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best food, fill yourself with only the finest."

Second Reader: God says, "Pay attention, come close now, listen carefully to my life-giving, life-nourishing words."

Congregation: God is making a lasting covenant commitment with us, the same that God made with David: sure, solid, enduring love.

First Reader Come, all who are thirsty.

Second Reader: Come, all who are hungry.

Congregation: Come to God's table.
—adapted from Isaiah 55:1-3,
The Message

Processional Hymn

"I Come with Joy"

Words by Brian Wren, 1969, rev. 1982, 1995

Music from *Southern Harmony*, 1835;

Harmony Charles H. Webb, 1987

Tune: DOVE OF PEACE

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 6:1-8

Hymn of Confession

"Here Am I"

Words by Brian Wren, 1982, rev. 1995

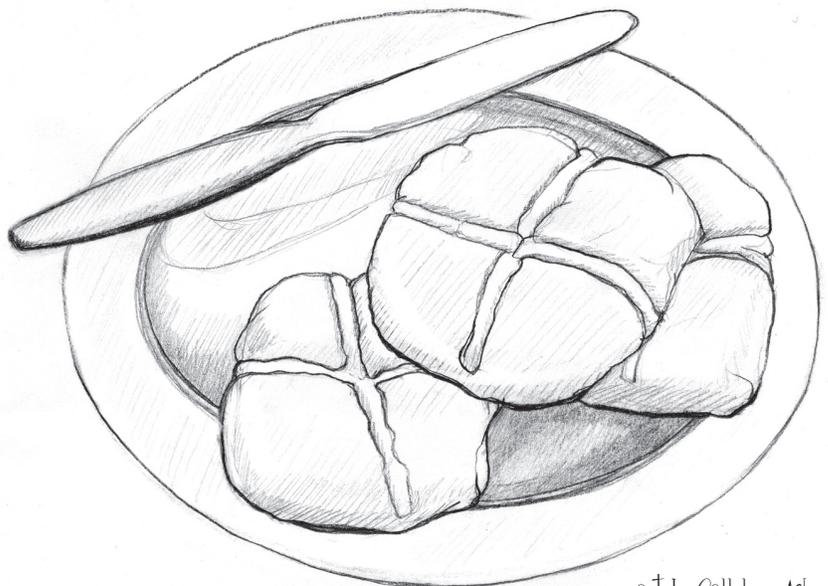
Music by Dan Damon, 1993

Tune: HERE AM I

(#654 in the *Chalice Hymnal**)

Meditation

What we would like to do is change the world—
make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe



art by Sally Lynn Askins

and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, of the poor, of the destitute, we can, to a certain extent, change the world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever-widening circle will reach around the world.

—Dorothy Day

Suggested Hymn

“The Voice of God Is Calling”

Words by John Haynes Holmes, 1913, alt.

Music by William Lloyd, 1840

Tune: MEIRIONYDD

(#666 in the *Chalice Hymnal**)

Epistle Reading

Romans 12:9-21

Meditation on Communion

The stories we hear and tell at this table are indeed just as elemental as the bread and the wine, and no mere wordplay; they are more than sufficient to feed our every hunger and slake our every thirst. At their best, these stories become the syllables on which we drape the sighs of our prayers....

—Dawn M. Ripley, “Telling Stories at the Table,” *Sacred Seasons: “In the Breaking of the Bread,”* Hunger Emphasis 2002

Gospel Reading

Mark 8: 1-9

Sermon

“The Great Hunger”

[see page 14]

Communion Hymn

“All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly”

Words by Sylvia Dunstan

Music by William Moore

(Columbian Harmony, 1825)

Tune: HOLY MANNA

(#419 in the *Chalice Hymnal**)

or

“Eat This Bread”

Words by Robert Batastini and
the Taizé Community, 1982

Music by Jacques Berthier, 1982

Tune: BERTHIER

(#414 in the *Chalice Hymnal**)

Invitation to the Table

First Speaker (at the **Somali** table): My name is Ayanna (*for a female*), which means “beautiful blossom.” (*If your speaker is a male, his name could be Asad, which means “lion.”*) I live in Somalia. We are in the midst of a famine. Our country has been torn by conflict for 20 years. We have also been in a drought for the past several years. They say that much of the country is turning into a desert because of global climate change.

Also, the region where I live is controlled by an extremist, Islamic rebel army called the *Shabab*. They are considered by many Western countries to be a terrorist group. The violence in my region, coupled with crop loss, has caused many people to go without food. The *Shabab* killed my brother because, they said, he had “food from the infidels.” They have also killed humanitarian workers from other countries who were trying to get food to the people.

My family has walked many miles to find a place where there is food. Millions of my people have fled to other regions of Somalia and surrounding countries to get away from the violence in my region, and to find food.

When we have enough to eat, we eat bread like this (indicating the bread on the table) and we drink dark, sweet tea like this (indicating the tea.) As you come to the table, please remember the people of Somalia in your prayers and your hearts.

Second Speaker (at the **South Sudan** table): My name is Asmina (*for a female*). It is a Nubian name meaning “jasmine flower.” (*If your speaker is a male, his name could be Habib, which means “beloved one.”*) I live in the Republic of South Sudan. According to the United Nations, my country has one of the worst health situations in the world. We have the highest rate of mothers who die in childbirth. We have been beset by war and civil conflict for the past 40 years and more.

The people of my region, many of them Christians, fled to northern Sudan and to other countries because of violence from a military group called the *Janjaweed*, who worked for the Sudanese government.

In ancient times, my land was known as Nubia, or the Land of Kush. For a time, my people were pharaohs in Egypt. But for the past 40 years, we have been known around the world for the atrocities and genocide that have taken place in northern and southern Sudan. South Sudan is the newest country in the world. We became a country this past July.

When we have food, we eat several meats (not pork), usually fried, or we have pita bread like this (on the table). We also love to drink hot milk-tea in the morning. When you come to the table, please remember my new country and her people.

Third Speaker (at the Haitian table): My name is Georges. I live in Haiti, in your hemisphere. My country has known poverty for a very long time. Long ago, native tribal people, like your indigenous people, lived on the island of Hispaniola. They are almost completely gone now.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived on the island, and the Europeans began to come. The colony that is now Haiti became a French colony, with sugar plantations that were worked by slaves from West Africa. All slavery is cruel, but in Saint-Domingue, it was extremely brutal. In 1805, the slaves revolted, and the Republic of Haiti was established, but we have lived in poverty during most of the two centuries that have passed.

We have suffered from colonial oppression, oppression from our own people, international embargoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and floods. It seems that we barely catch our breath from one disaster before another one occurs. As you come to the table, remember our struggle to overcome the many years of hardship, as we work until all of us have enough food.

Fourth Speaker (at the Iraqi table): My name is Hakim, which is an Arabic word meaning "wise." You have heard a great deal about my country, because we have been at war with your country for eight years.

You may not know, however, that my land has a long and wonderful history. It is located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers; it is the same geographical area as ancient Mesopotamia. The country was once known as Sumeria, and then Babylonia. The famous city of Babylon from the Hebrew scriptures was about 60 miles from our capital of Baghdad.

About two-thirds of our people are Arabs, and about one-fifth are Kurds. The rest are Assyrians (mostly Christian), Turkoman, Chaldean, Armenian, Yazidi and Jewish. Most of our people are Muslim.

We have been at war for nearly 30 years, and, before the war with the US and Coalition troops, there were sanctions from the United Nations. The provisional government has tried since 2004 to begin rebuilding our country, but there are so many things that need to be fixed. There is still much violence. We are constantly afraid, and it is dangerous for humanitarian aid workers to come to help us. As you come to this table, please remember the Iraqi people.

All Speakers: Jesus Christ invites you now, with us, to come to the table.

Music during Communion

Instrumental Versions of "Break Thou the Bread of Life" (*Chalice Hymnal** #321) or "Let Us Break Bread Together" (*Chalice Hymnal** #425)

Communion Blessing

O God of abundance, you feed us every day. Rise in us now, make us into your bread, that we may share your gifts with a hungry world, and join in love with all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Sara Miles, *Take This Bread*

Benediction

My sisters and brothers, go from this place in peace, and may the spirit of the living God empower you and me to go into the world and share our loaves with those who have none. Let us go into the world and not grow weary until all God's children are fed. Amen.

**Chalice Hymnal*, *Chalice Press*: 1995, St. Louis, MO. Commissioned by the Christian Church (*Disciples of Christ*).



A Hunger Beyond Food:

An Activity for Children, Youth & Others

This is an activity that should precede your Hunger Emphasis service by at least a couple of weeks, since it will probably take two or more sessions to finish. It should be especially appealing to children and youth (and other creative people). You might consider dividing the children into groups that are overseen by youth.

Your students will create four collages.

You will need four large, colorful poster boards, or four “disposable” tablecloths that will fit the tables you use for your communion service.

You will need lots of magazines and booklets that include pictures of people eating together. Try to find sources that include pictures of people from Somalia, South Sudan, Haiti and Iraq—the four countries highlighted in the communion liturgy. Old mission-education magazines from your denomination might have such images. You could also print some pictures from the Internet.

You will also need sources of various sizes of printed words. You could type and print your own, or you could also ask the students to hand-letter their art. Ask them to find or write words that are connected to people eating together: community, food, nourishment, family, thankfulness, togetherness, etc.

When the session begins, read Mark 8:1-9, and talk about the feeding of the crowd. Some of your students may want to choose a verse or two from the passage, and write it or put those words together in the collage.

Next, ask the group to find and cut out pictures of all kinds of people eating together. (Some of them may want to depict someone eating alone as well. If so, ask them to find words to go with that. Encourage them to put their own “spin” on the interpretation.)

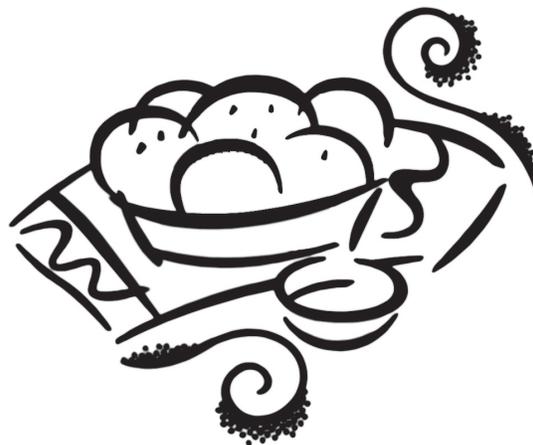
They will then glue the pictures and words together into four collages. Encourage them to make the design their own, but remind them that this is for the entire church to see and ask them to keep this in mind.

While the students are working on the collages, you could talk to them about the four countries,

using some of the information in “Preparing for Your Hunger Emphasis Service” that begins on page 8, from the readings in the service itself, or from the hunger updates on pages 17-20.

When the collages are done, attach them to (or put them on) the four communion tables when you prepare your worship space for the Hunger Emphasis service.

We would also encourage you to involve some of your youth in the four readings that are part of the invitation to the table. —lkc



Things Needed for Your Children's Activity:

- 4 posterboards or disposable tablecloths
- Lots of pictures of people eating together
 - Pictures from Somalia, South Sudan, Haiti and Iraq
- Words about people eating together
 - Colorful markers
 - Glue
 - A Bible
- Lots of Imagination

The Great Hunger

A Sermon by Douglas M. Donley

Text: Mark 8:1-9

We have heard enough about famine in the horn of Africa to last a lifetime. And yet, because it's across the world and such a big problem, we can shake our heads, say "it's a shame," and then move on to something more manageable.

And then the worldwide stock market crashes again, the US longterm credit rating gets downgraded for the first time in the country's history, and the "blame game" gets ramped up in the public discussions. It feels like a famine of common sense, or at least a famine of caring about our fellow human beings.

There's a difference between famine and hunger. People are hungry all the time, by circumstance, by blight, by war, by coercion. And we, as people of faith, seek ways to satisfy that hunger. But famine is much more sinister. It comes with a conscious choice to choose one person over the other, one's wealth over another's survival, often in the name of "freedom."

But if Jesus did nothing else, he reminded us that we are responsible for each other. There is no Christian value of forgetting the hungry. There is no Christian value of famine. The core of Christianity is care, compassion, mercy and justice. All of which brings about the peace that surpasses all understanding.

What are you hungry for? In what part of your life is there a famine?

In today's scripture, Jesus is faced with great crowds. Just two chapters before this one, in Mark's Gospel, Jesus fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread. This time, there are 4,000 people, and the disciples claim to only have seven loaves of bread.

This feeding thing with loaves and fishes must be pretty important since it's repeated—once in the

When I look at the gospel from this vantage point, the fact that the feeding of the multitudes happens, not once, not twice, but six times in the Gospels, means that we had better pay attention.

Gospels of John and Luke, twice apiece in Mark and Matthew. But the dim disciples don't seem to get it. "How are we going to feed all of these people?" they wonder. We can see Jesus asking, through gritted teeth, "How many loaves do you have?"

continued on page 15

In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way—and some of them have come from a great distance." His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said,

His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?"

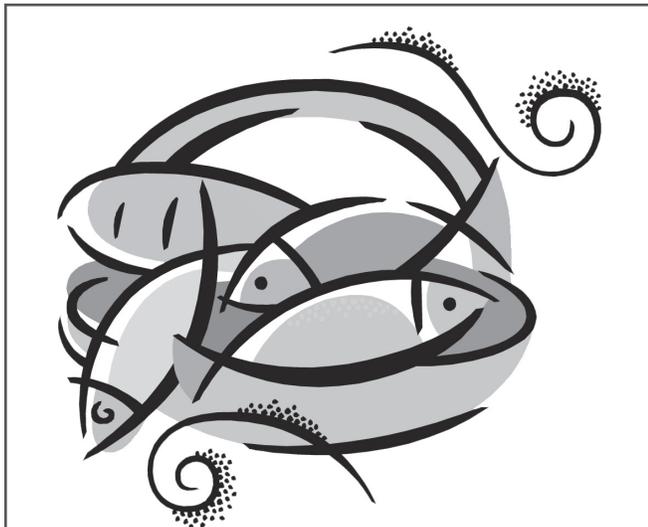
"Seven." Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them

to the crowd. They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.

—Mark 8:1-9

Scholars are quick to point out the significance of the numbers between these two stories: In the first story there are five loaves and 12 baskets of leftovers. In the second story there are seven loaves and seven baskets of leftovers.

The first story, being held in Jewish territory, has five loaves, perhaps representing the first five books of the Bible, known as the Torah. The 12 baskets of



It's audacious work, this taking of
communion bread and drink.
It's audacious work, this praying 'Give
us this day our daily bread.'
It's audacious work, and blessed work,
that we never do alone.

leftovers represent the 12 tribes of Israel. The second story happens in Greek territory, where the number seven represents completion. With these two stories, we have the melding of the Jewish and Gentile peoples.

What we usually don't remember from history was that Jews and Gentiles were bitter enemies. Their relationships were as toxic as, say, Israelis and Palestinians of today. Or perhaps Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. They were even worse enemies than the Slytherins and the Griffindors.

Paul's statement that our church repeats in our statement of affirmation, that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" is revolutionary language. It's the language not only of inclusiveness, but also peacemaking.

And hear this: everyone is fed, the insiders and the outsiders, the good and the not-so-good, the children

and the dogs, the poor and the rich, the Jew and the Gentile. Everyone gets fed. The activist theologian Ched Myers states that meal sharing is a test of social reconciliation and the 9,000 in Mark's stories passed the test.

Two months ago, I visited Ireland. In addition to experiencing great Irish music, hearing the lilt of the voices of the people we met, learning to say things like "brilliant" and "grand," I heard about the history of the Irish people. On Sabbatical, I also had the chance to visit Scotland, Wales and England. Wales, Ireland and Scotland all had in common a struggle for control over their own sovereignty.

Their enemy was England, who outlawed the speaking of Gaelic or Welsh, who made it illegal for anyone but English to own land, who outlawed Scottish bagpipes and looked down on the simple farmers trying to eke out a living. The sting of being on the losing side of those cultural and economic battles is still present among many of the proud people of those countries.

Our tour guide said, "In Ireland, we blame everything on the British. I'm not biased, just consistent."

In Ireland, we learned about the great potato famine. This happened when a blight hit the potatoes grown by the vast majority of the Irish farmers. I can't imagine a diet of only potatoes, but that's what many people lived on. Without a fallback crop, the people lost their livelihood, and many lost their lives.

We visited Skibereen, where hundreds of thousands of people tried to get what little food they could from the English who controlled Ireland. The land was dotted with mass graves of people who starved to death.

The English, for their part, started feeding programs. But they were wary of giving people something for nothing. So, in order to get food, they needed to work. They put the starving farmers to work making stone walls that line the countryside to this day. You can see them going up mountains, walls for nothing.

Many people died on those dangerous and cold work parties. They call them "famine walls." You can still see the shells of their old homes—roofs burned if the tenant farmers failed to pay the English their taxes, ensuring that the starving families could not stay in their foreclosed homes.

There was not only a blight that hit in 1845, but also one that hit in 1830 and another one even earlier than that. Each time, hundreds of thousands died and more fled. In 1840, the Irish population was 8.5 million. By 1851, the population was down to 4 million. Ireland lost over half of its population in a 10-year span. They

either died in the famine, building the famine walls or they left dear old Ireland and came to America.

My ancestors, the Donleys were part of that migration across the pond in the 1840's. They came in through Ottawa before settling in Cleveland, Ohio. It occurs to me that our children are the descendants of people who fled for their lives. The Donleys left during the famine.

Our tour guide in Ireland gathered us in the shell of an old chapel in the Skibereen graveyard. He sang a

That's what the world needs: a
transformed people who will act when
faced with famine so that no one goes
hungry. May it be so for all of us.

song about leaving behind a dear lass to sail to America. The dear lass is a metaphor for their homeland.

When he spoke about the famine, he got tears in his eyes and said, "You know, we don't call it 'the famine' here. We call it the Great Hunger. You see, no civilized society should have a famine. In the 1840's there was enough food in Ireland to feed 19 million people. But the British chose to export the food rather than feed the people. And when the people starved or left, the British swooped in and took their land."

The mass grave in Skibereen has a headstone that says, in part, "the 9,000 coffinless remains are a chilling reminder of man's inhumanity to man."

Hunger is what happened when the blight hit the potato crop. Famine is what happened when the leadership chose not to feed the people.

When I look at the gospel from this vantage point, the fact that the feeding of the multitudes happens, not once, not twice, but six times in the Gospels, means that we had better pay attention.

And each time, Jesus asks nothing of the people he is feeding. He doesn't ask their nationality. He doesn't ask for their loyalty. He doesn't ask their political party. He doesn't ask about their income level. He doesn't ask if they deserve it or not. He doesn't ask to be paid. He just feeds them.

But not only that, he instructs the disciples to feed them. "Take what you have and feed them. Believe it or not, there is enough to go around." His parting words to Simon Peter after the resurrection is "Feed my sheep." Not once, not twice, but three times—one for each denial.

Recently, when the rock band U2 was in Minneapolis, their leader, Bono, made a point of

visiting with Somalian activists who were advocating for relief for their starving people. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and other news outlets have noted that the famine there could have been avoided with a better set of policies that would better feed the populace. When policies fail to take care of the "least of these," then there is something wrong.

Is that what Jesus was trying to emphasize in his miracles?

I like what Stephen Colbert said about all of this. "If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn't help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we have to acknowledge that He commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition, and then admit that we just don't want to do it."

Which is it?

My friends, there is a lot of hunger out there, and even in here. For some it is hunger for recognition. For others it is a hunger for truth. For still others, it is a hunger for dignity or safety. Some people hunger for beauty and peace and rapture. And some hunger for food—in fact, most of the world hungers for food.

And what did Jesus do when he encountered the hungry? He fed them. And then he told us to go and do likewise.

Our church does a good bit through our participation in Loaves and Fishes, in our mission giving to One Great Hour of Sharing and various hunger agencies. We even lift our voices and join in the chorus of wishers and workers for a more just world.

It's a good start. But it is not done. It will not be done until all people are fed. Until all people have a place to live. Until all people live in peace. Until all wealth is distributed in such a way that no one goes hungry. Until all recognize that their enemy is God in disguise. That's what God has in mind.

It's audacious work, this taking of communion bread and drink. It's audacious work, this praying "Give us this day our daily bread." It's audacious work, and blessed work, that we never do alone.

We are surrounded by a people and a history that sees through the deception of leaders and advocates for the poor and the outcast. That's what we invoke when we take this revolutionary meal. That's what the world needs: a transformed people who will act when faced with famine so that no one goes hungry. May it be so for all of us.

Lest we forget, let us look to history and may it inspire and change us. Let us honor our ancestors and our descendants with a ministry and a life that feeds a hungry world. Amen.

—Doug Donley is pastor of the University Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN.

Who's Hungry in the World?

Compiled by Katie Cook

Before 2008, the “anti-hunger” community saw some progress toward ending hunger in the world, although it seemed slow to many of us. The number of people who died each day from hunger had shrunk from a reported 38,000 in the mid-1980s to 25,000 (depending on whom you asked and what criteria they used).

A United Nations summit in the year 2000 had chosen eight Millennium Development Goals—aims for cutting global poverty in half by 2015 (*see the sidebar on page 20 for a list of the MDGs*). Some gains had been made toward the eight goals, which included eradicating extreme poverty, providing education for everyone in the world, empowering women, reducing child mortality, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

But the petroleum crisis of 2008, brought on largely by the war in Iraq, caused food prices to skyrocket. The ensuing crisis set the anti-hunger movement back a decade or more. The global recession was exacerbated by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and extended droughts across the globe. During that year, riots broke out in a number of countries where the scarcity of food grew and the prices of food spiked.

Although fewer people have died from hunger-related causes in the past few years, more and more people are at risk for food insecurity and undernourishment. In 2009, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that global climate change alone could increase the number of undernourished people by between 40 million and 170 million.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation reports that 65 percent of the world’s hungry people live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. The World Food Programme lists the following 13 countries as having the highest rate of undernourished people (35 percent or more of the population): Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Twenty-two other countries are listed with 20 to 34 percent of their people undernourished and at

“moderately high” risk of food insecurity. (Some of these countries may have shifted into the “very high” category since the WFP published its report.) Several regions of Somalia, in the Horn of Africa, were recently designated by the UN as official famine areas.

The southern regions of the Arabian Peninsula—along with Iraq, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Belize and the occupied Palestinian territories—are in such turmoil that the WFP doesn’t have enough data to rate them.

In the annual “special section” of the Seeds publication *Hunger News & Hope* for 2011, we took an all-too-quick look at some of those high-risk countries. (We plan to make “Where Are People Hungry?” a series in HNH, with the next featured countries being Afghanistan, North Korea and Malawi. You can watch our website—www.seedspublishers.org—or Facebook page for the new issues.)

After reading these reports, we suggest that you get in contact with your denomination’s or faith community’s hunger-response program and find out how you can help them respond to these and other food-insecure regions. In the case of Somalia, the need is immediate and urgent. (If you need help in contacting your denomination’s hunger program or finding a program to support, please feel free to call us at 254-755-7745 or email seededitor@clearwire.net.)



Somalia and the Horn of Africa

In late July, the United Nations declared that Somalia’s food crisis had become a famine in several parts of the country.

Somalia has lurched from crisis to crisis since 1991, when the central government imploded. In 1992, a similar combination of drought and war set off a famine that killed hundreds of thousands of people and started a cycle of international intervention that, despite billions of dollars and more than a dozen transitional governments, has yet to stabilize the country.

Now, some 11 to 12 million people are struggling to survive the driest period in the Eastern Horn of Africa in 60 years. The drought is causing widespread crop failure, devastating livestock and causing substantial increases in food prices. In hard-hit Somalia alone, some 3.7 million people are facing a crisis and hundreds of thousands are pouring into other countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

The UN says that tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition-related causes in the past few months.

The UN defines famine as occurring when “acute malnutrition rates among children exceed 30 percent, more than two people per 10,000 die per day and people are not able to access food and other basic necessities.”

Those conditions are being met in southern Somalia, in Bakool and Lower Shabelee, both controlled by Islamic militants known as the *Shabab* (sometimes spelled *Shabaab*). But people are on the verge of running out of food throughout the country, and other regions were added to the “famine” category in early August. According to American officials in the region, more than 10 million people need emergency rations to survive in the wider Horn of Africa—which includes Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. South Sudan, an emerging new country, and Djibouti are also affected by the drought and food crisis, as well as parts of Uganda. Many of these people are also at risk for cholera and measles.

Aid deliveries from the UN and other sources were discontinued almost two years ago, because of violence from the *Shabab*, which is considered a terrorist group by Western nations. Some Somalis reported that Islamic militants were still being violent against those who “had food from the infidels.”

A European Union aid spokesperson said in late July that, although deliveries are still complicated by the presence of the *Shabab*, some supplies are now getting through to the affected regions. A Somali aid worker told the BBC in early August that international organizations were handing food over to Somali agencies, and this seemed to be working well.

In late July, the WFP began sending airlifts with 80 tons of nutritional supplies into the capital city of Mogadishu. Lutheran World Relief, CARE and Church

World Service, along with the WFP and a number of other aid agencies, have recently begun concentrating on bringing help to the huge refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya.

—*New York Times*, *Baptist World Aid*, *BBC World News*, *The Independent*, *Bread for the World*



South Sudan:

Challenges for the World's Newest Nation

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest country this summer. In January of this year, the 8 million people of southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly for independence, and, in July, South Sudan became an independent state, with membership in the United Nations and the African Union.

The new country faces enormous challenges, including one of the worst health situations in the world.

Sudan's most recent civil war, a brutal one that earned charges of genocide from the international community, began in 1983 and officially ended in 2005, when a peace agreement was signed between the northern and southern regions. The referendum this January was a result of that agreement.

Some 1.5 million people died in what is referred to as the Second Sudanese Civil War, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) is cited for vicious human rights violations and hundreds of atrocities during that conflict.

These civil wars destroyed what little infrastructure there was in the South and contributed to what the humanitarian agency Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) terms as the region's “appalling health indicators.” An estimated 75 percent of people in the new nation have no access to basic medical care. One in seven women dies in childbirth. Malnutrition and disease outbreaks are constant concerns.

While the elections in January were conducted in relative peace, sporadic fighting erupted in late February and March in the Upper Nile and Jonglei states, as well as in the disputed oil-rich border district of Abyei. MSF reports that its hospital staffs treated scores of gunshot wounds during the last few months. Its clinics have also treated tens of thousands of people for severe malnutrition. MSF reports a 20-percent increase from two years ago, and a 50-percent increase from 2008.

Almost 200,000 more people have been forced from their homes since February. Another 300,000 have returned to the south from homes outside the region. This is placing an enormous strain on the country's already limited supplies of food and water, as well as shelter.

South Sudan's people are also experiencing a large outbreak of *kala azar*, a deadly disease spread by the bite of the tsetse fly.

— Sources: *Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières*, BBC News, Al Jazeera English, Sudan Tribune, Associated Press. Note: MSF has been working in Sudan since 1978. The agency employs more than 2,000 Sudanese staff, along with almost 200 international staff in 13 projects throughout North and South Sudan.



Haiti: A Long History of Poverty

In January 2010, catastrophic earthquakes tore apart the tiny Caribbean country of Haiti, which was already choked by centuries of poverty and oppression. Before the 2010 earthquakes, 75 percent of Haiti's 9 million people, according to UN figures, survived on less than \$2 a day. About a third of the Haitian population was considered to be food-insecure.

The Republic of Haiti is located on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, in the Greater Antillean archipelago, and shares the island with the

Dominican Republic. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. According to the UN World Food Programme, more than 35 percent of its population is undernourished.

In the 18th century, Haiti was called the "Jewel of the Antilles," the richest colony in the world. This wealth, however, was based on a particularly harsh system of slavery. Known as the French colony Saint-Domingue, it was described as one of the most "brutally efficient" slave colonies.

The country has been continually wracked by colonialism and indigenous dictatorships. Even after the slave revolt of 1804 brought independence to the nation, slavery and oppression continued—perpetuated by the Haitian elite and a hostile international environment.

Added to the ravages of oppression were earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, mudslides brought on by tropical storms, floods and international embargos. Around 2005-2006, Haiti experienced some economic growth. A US embargo was partially lifted, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund canceled 80 percent of the country's debts.

In 2008, however, the global food crisis hit Haiti. Riots broke out as food prices skyrocketed. This turmoil continued until January 2010, when a 7.0 earthquake, with at least 52 aftershocks, hit the island and devastated the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The city crumbled. More than 300,000 people were killed and 1.6 million left homeless, according to the Haitian government.

In October 2010, a cholera epidemic broke out in Haiti, killing more than 900,000 people. Officials speculated that the disease was accidentally introduced into the population by earthquake relief workers.

In 2011, the Haitian people still struggle to rebuild their nation from the rubble. General elections, originally set for January 2010, took place in November of last year, amid some violence between parties. Runoffs for president took place in March, and Michel Martelly was elected. Many humanitarian agencies remain in the country. According to the UN's World Food Programme, food insecurity in the areas directly affected by the earthquake has dropped in the last year and a half, but levels are still higher than they were prior to 2010.

— Sources: *Oxfam* (www.oxfam.org), *US Geological Survey*, (www.usgs.gov), *Global Voices Online* (globalvoicesonline.org), *New York Times*, *United Nations World Food Programme*. For more about the earthquake, the history of Haiti and resources about Haiti, go to www.seedspublishers.org and find *Hunger News & Hope*, Vol 11 No 1, Spring 2010, or email seedseditor@clearwire.net for a pdf copy.



Slow Reconstruction in Iraq

Nearly 30 years of conflict—with Iran in the 1980s and with the US and Coalition forces after 1991—along with UN economic sanctions beginning in the 1990s—have caused severe humanitarian consequences in the Republic of Iraq.

The years of conflict and sanctions were also years of economic decline. The United Nations children's fund, UNICEF, reported in 1999 that the sanctions had caused the mortality rate of children in Iraq to double.

Since 2004, the Iraqi provisional government, with help from the international community, began to rebuild its infrastructure—including water supply and sewage, electricity production, health care, education, housing and transportation. Last summer, a National Public Radio report said that, despite the fact that Iraq's economy is driven by oil, the country still only had half of the electricity it needed.

A United-Kingdom-based research group recently reported that security issues, corruption in the government and a lack of coordinated funding have slowed the progress of reconstruction in Iraq. In the first five years after the US invasion, 94 aid workers were killed, 248 injured, 24 arrested or detained, and 89 kidnapped or abducted. (One of those kidnapped and murdered was Margaret Hassan, the director of CARE International in Iraq and an Iraqi citizen since 1972.)

Also during those five years, some 2.4 million people were internally displaced, 2 million fled the country and 4 million became food-insecure. One-fourth of Iraq's children were reported in 2008 to be chronically malnourished, and only one-third of them had access to safe drinking water.

According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), education and health services have continued to deteriorate in Iraq, a situation that severely affects women, children, elderly people and chronically-ill people.

Iraq is now at a crossroads to political stability and socio-economic recovery. Although the food security situation in Iraq is improving, the data from the Iraqi government and the WFP showed 930,000 people in need of food assistance and an additional 6.4 million who were extremely vulnerable and could easily become food-insecure. The survey also showed that female-headed houses and people in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity.

In response to these findings, WFP says it is shifting its strategy in Iraq from traditional food aid to innovative food assistance and supporting the government in finding durable solutions to food insecurity.

Sources: World Food Programme (www.wfp.org), Overseas Development Institute (www.odi.org.uk), National Public Radio (www.npr.org), BBC News (www.bbc.co.uk/news), Care International (www.care.org), The Guardian (www.guardian.org.uk), UNICEF (www.unicef.org)

The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

For more information about the MDGs, go to www.un.org/millenniumgoals or go to www.seedspublishers.org and look for the Special Section on MDGs in Hunger News & Hope, Vol 11 No 2, Summer 2010, pp 5-8, and Vol 11 No 3, Fall 2010, page 1.

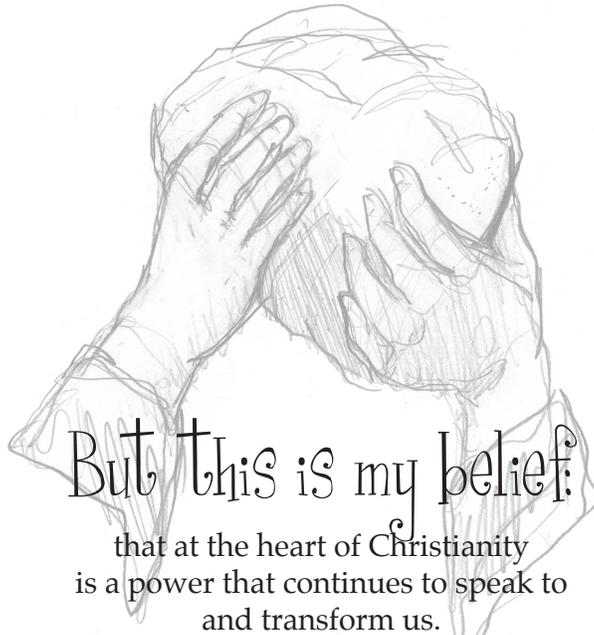
2011 Facts about Hunger

Compiled by the Seeds of Hope Staff

- Hunger is the world's number-one health risk. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. *World Food Programme (WFP)*
- One in seven people in the world will go to bed hungry tonight. *WFP*
- There are more hungry people in the world than the combined populations of USA, Canada and the European Union. *WFP*
- 925 million people do not have enough to eat, and 98 percent of them live in developing countries. *Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)*
- Asia and the Pacific region is home to over half the world's population and nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry people. *FAO*
- Women make up a little over half of the world's population, but they account for over 60 percent of the world's hungry. *United Nations Economic and Social Council*
- Sixty-five percent of the world's hungry people live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. *FAO*
- There are 583 million undernourished people in Asia, 236 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 51 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 15 million in the Near East and northern Africa. *WFP*
- The cost of hunger to developing countries is estimated to be 450 billion US dollars a year. *WFP*
- Undernutrition contributes to 5 million deaths of children under the age of 5 each year in developing countries. *UNICEF*
- One out of four children—roughly 146 million—in developing countries is underweight. *UNICEF*
- More than 70 percent of the world's underweight children (aged five or less) live in just 10 countries, with more than 50 percent located in South Asia alone. *UNICEF*
- 10.9 million children under the age of 5 die in developing countries each year. Malnutrition and hunger-related diseases cause 60 percent of the deaths. *UNICEF*
- Iron deficiency is the most prevalent form of malnutrition worldwide, affecting an estimated 2 billion people. Eradicating iron deficiency can improve national productivity levels by as much as 20 percent. *World Health Organisation (WHO)*
- Iodine deficiency is the greatest single cause of mental retardation and brain damage, affecting 1.9 billion people worldwide. It can easily be prevented by adding iodine to salt. *UN Standing Committee on Nutrition*
- It takes the World Food Programme 25 cents to feed a hungry schoolchild a cup of food with all the nutrition he or she needs for the whole day. *WFP*
- Fifty percent of all cultivated food in the world is grown by peasant farmers. *Bread for the World*



Benediction



But this is my belief:

that at the heart of Christianity
is a power that continues to speak to
and transform us.

As I found to my surprise and alarm,
it could speak even to me:
not in the sappy, Jesus-and-cookies tone
of mild-mannered liberal Christianity,
or the blustering, blaming hellfire
of the religious right.

What I heard, and continue to hear,
is a voice that can crack
religious and political convictions open,
that advocates for the least qualified,
least official, least likely;
that upsets the established order
and makes a joke of certainty.

It proclaims against reason
that the hungry will be fed,
that those cast down will be raised up,
and that all things,
including my own failures,
are being made new.

It offers food without exception
to the worthy and unworthy,
the screwed-up and pious,
and then commands everyone to do the same.

-Sara Miles,

Take This Bread

art by Sallylynn Askins