

Feasting Together



So that None Shall Go Hungry

Worship Resources for the Creative Church--Hunger Emphasis 2010

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Sacred Seasons:

Creative Worship Tools for Your Church

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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

We hope the resources we have collected here will help you lead your congregation through a meaningful and creative hunger emphasis. Much of the material was wonderfully created by the Spring 2010 interns, Audrey Cary and Katie Minchew. Audrey updated the 40-day calendar (always a huge project) and created several pieces of art, including the cover art. Katie compiled the hunger statistics and wrote the report on the Millennium Development Goals.

Lucas Land, another new contributor, wrote the liturgy for this packet. Other writers will be more familiar to you. Brett Younger and Mark McClintock have allowed us to print many of their excellent resources.

As always, the material in this packet is your congregation's to use freely and share with others as the need arises. May we truly create together a world where everyone has access to the Feast.

—*Gratefully, The Staff and Council of Stewards*

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It's All about the Feast

by Katie Cook

I have been, for better or worse, a major “simplify your life and feed the poor” voice, in my community and in publications, for about 30 years. So, when I recently showed the movie *Babette's Feast* to a group of college students at my church, one of them, William, looked me straight in the eye and said, “I want to know why a Franciscan is showing me this movie.”

Babette's Feast came out in 1987, so I don't think a spoiler alert is absolutely necessary. (I mean, really; if you haven't watched it by now...) The film, based on the book by Isak Dinesen, is set in a Protestant village on the remote and mostly frozen coast of Jutland in 1871.

Babette Hersant, a highly acclaimed Parisian chef, is forced to flee from counter-revolutionary violence in France. She ends up in the little coastal village and becomes the cook for two pious spinsters, who know nothing about her past.

Just before an important anniversary for the local church, Babette wins the lottery and asks for the pleasure of preparing a banquet for the occasion. She spends all of her lottery winnings on one beautiful and sumptuous feast for the community. The result, to me anyway, is magical.

But there I sat, at that college retreat, wondering what to say to William. He had a very good point. Why *was* a Franciscan showing those students this movie? Why do I love this movie? What in it makes me cry tears of joy every time I see it?

I mentioned this recently to John, my Franciscan brother, and he simply said, “It's all about the Feast.”

It's all about the Feast.

It's ALL about the Feast.

When a voice in my head says, “Shouldn't Babette have made more prudent use of her money?” another voice says, “Shouldn't this money have been used to feed the poor?” And I think of the story of the woman in the gospels who uses an expensive ointment to anoint Jesus' feet.

What are we supposed to do with this dichotomy?

Yes, for those of us who care passionately and profoundly about the world's impoverished people, it IS about sharing and consuming less, so that there will be enough for everyone. It IS about figuring out what is too much for me, and how that affects my soul.

But it's also about the Feast.

There's something here I can't articulate. I can only touch the edge of it. I can't see the whole picture. I can't make it form clearly in my mind. But there's a reality there beyond all of the other realities I know. It makes me think of Canadian songwriter Bruce Cockburn's “Rumours of Glory.” One of the lines says, “Something is shining, like gold, but better.”

Here's another example of what I think was a glimpse of that elusive reality. There was a television show on ABC about 13 years ago called *Nothing Sacred*. It was about a Catholic church in a rough neighborhood in New York City.

In the second episode, a couple in the parish is getting married, but the groom—who happens to be on staff at the church—has forgotten to book a place for the wedding dinner.

He has also forgotten to tell the soup-kitchen staff that, since he forgot to book a place, he made arrangements for the wedding food to be delivered to the church. So the staff, thinking it is a generous donation to the soup kitchen, serves it to the street folks who come in that day.

The couple has a huge fight, and the bride threatens to walk out.

The pastor, Father Ray, manages to get the wedding party upstairs to the church, and while the wedding ceremony takes place upstairs, the soup-kitchen staff are in the downstairs hall, improvising a wedding supper from whatever they can find in the kitchen.

Then the electricity goes out. They find boxes of candles and light them, and suddenly the hall is not so shabby looking. A volunteer finds two pheasant dinners someone has donated, and they arrange to serve them to the bride and groom. They somehow find enough food for everyone.

Finally, because of all of the truly concerted effort that has gone into the supper, what began as a disaster becomes a beautiful event. It becomes a joyful feast.

We eat together. We find new recipes and try them out on each other. We put flowers on the table. We enjoy the food, the presentation, the nourishment. We work ourselves half to death trying to find ways to make the world a place where everybody can do that.

We're all connected in the necessity of food. We try our best to share with our brothers and sisters—all of our brothers and sisters.

It's all about the Feast.

—Katie Cook is the *Seeds of Hope* editor.

art by Sallylynn Askins

Bookmarks

art by Audrey Cary



Morning Prayer in a Time of Disaster

by Claire McKeever-Burgett

Editor's note: The following prayer is from a Sunday morning in May at Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville, TN, after a devastating flood left much of the city underwater.

OHoly God, We thank you for your presence, your love, your companionship, your help. We know you in each other's hands and feet and faces. We know you in a gathering of people working to help restore homes that have been lost, damaged and destroyed.

We thank you for the small things this morning—a good conversation, clothes covering our backs, food for our hungry bodies, people who care about each other, water to drink, sunshine on our faces.

As we utter thanks for these small things, O God, we simultaneously ask for your help, your presence, your life to be with those who are living with no roof to cover their heads; with those who lost their homes, their loved ones, their health because of disaster; with those who wait for dry mattresses, blankets and pillows; with those sitting in the rubble of their lives, wondering what will happen to them. Help us extend hospitality to these people.

Help us name them and call them friend. Help us, as the community and people of you, to love and offer hope where and when it is needed.

OHoly God, your presence uplifts, your love endures, your grace upholds, and we come in this hour and in this moment, to rest, just for a moment, in you. As we breathe, as we listen, as we sing, as we remember—we pray.

We pray for those whom we love, those we miss. We pray for those who are sick, depressed, upset and lost. We pray for those who need you and your love, grace and peace.

We pray for the earth and especially remember those places upon the earth where it has been devastated by oil spills, hurricanes, flooding, earthquakes and war. We pray in voice and song and silence, trusting you to go where we go in our hearts, minds and bodies.

Silence

God of our aching, tired, worrisome hearts, we thank you, this morning, for a gathering of people who remind each other daily of your communing spirit within our lives. We thank you for walking with us, dancing with us, creating with us the world we dream of, the life we long for, the paradise and kingdom of your Holy Being.

The rain falls, the oil spills; the wars continue, and yet we listen for your voice in the midst of the aching and groaning of this world. We listen for your voice to tell us where to go, how to help and what to do. The rain falls, the oil spills and wars continue, and so we pray, diligently, wholeheartedly and hopefully, we pray.

In the name of the Holy God who goes where we go and who walks where we walk and who works where we work, Amen.

—Claire McKeever-Burgett is in her third year of divinity school at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, and serves as the pastoral intern at Glendale Baptist Church there. She served as a Seeds of Hope intern in 2004 and has contributed a number of writings since then.



art by Rebecca S. Ward

Guess Who Should Be Coming to Dinner

a sermon by Brett Younger
Luke 14:1-14

When it comes to dinner parties, Jesus is not Miss Manners, but it is not because he did not get enough practice. Jesus and his disciples eat their way through the Gospels. They go from place to place, house to house, one meal after another—always looking for the next invitation. Most of us cannot imagine not knowing where we will eat our next meal.

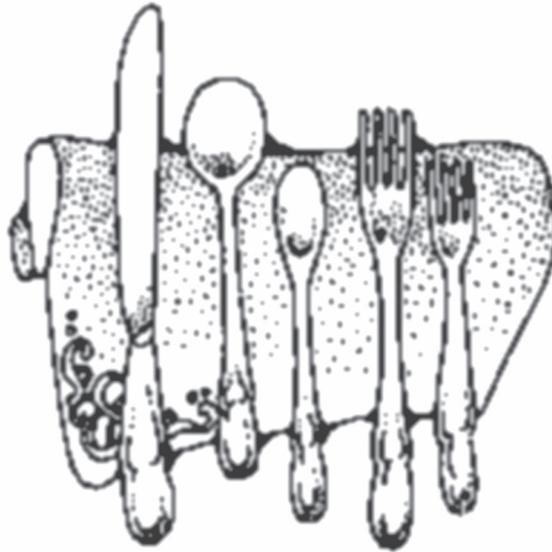
It can be discomfoting to notice that the Bible never mentions Jesus doing any work. There is a tradition that Jesus worked with Joseph in the carpenter shop before he began his ministry, but after his baptism, he does not appear to have worked at all.

Jesus' disciples had jobs like fishing and tax collecting before he called them, but once they started following, there is no record of them working any more. Jesus and the twelve depended on invitations to other people's homes.

That may be hard for us to hear. We live in a society where asking for help is seen as a sign of weakness. People who need the kindness of others are usually considered lazy or inept.

We like to think we are independent. We are big on looking after ourselves. One of the worst possibilities is to be reduced to the level of needing help, but Jesus and his followers were dependent on others.

My city has an ordinance against "loitering for the purpose of begging," against strangers asking for help.



The merchants worked to pushed this through, and it is hard to blame them. It can be depressing when we encounter someone who appears to have nothing while we are on our way to buy something.

In that moment, when we see someone who is poor, we might wonder if we ought to be spending money on the things we spend money on. We may question why we have so much and others have so little. People who need help can be a real nuisance.

The best public welfare programs are the ones that give people the housing and skills they need to be "self-sufficient." Yet Jesus does not have a home or a job.

Even at that, it is surprising that Jesus would eat at a Pharisee's house. The Pharisees criticized Jesus for blasphemy (because he forgave sins), for uncleanness (because he ate with sinners), and for working on the Sabbath (because his disciples plucked grain from a field).

As dinner begins in today's story, the Pharisees are watching Jesus carefully. Put in Jesus' place,

we would be on our best behavior—do not talk with food in your mouth, do not put your elbows on the table.

Dinner at a wealthy Pharisee's house—and wealthy Pharisee is redundant, is more than two-forks ostentatious. You know the rules. RSVP within a reasonable amount of time. Bring a suitable gift. Do not

Jesus asks no one in particular, "Should I heal him or not? Yes or no?" No one says anything, but the host is thinking, "No, not at my dinner party and not on the Sabbath."

unfold your napkin until your host does. Use your napkin only to gently blot your mouth when needed.

Use your utensils from the outside in. Do not push a plate away when you are finished. Place your knife and fork at ten- and four-o'clock angles to indicate that you are done. Once you have used a piece of silverware, never place it back on the tablecloth. Do not leave a used spoon in a cup. Place it on the saucer. Never lay a napkin on the table until the dinner is

At this point in the story, the disciples want to pull Jesus off to the side and say, "You might want to back off a little."

over. The host signals the end of the meal by placing his napkin on the table. And don't refold it or wad it up!

The table is magnificent, the crystal chandelier shining, the servants attentive, the centerpiece impressive, and the champagne chilled. All the "right people" are there—bankers, doctors, lawyers, preachers.

Jesus is invited, not because he is considered an equal, but because he is a curiosity who has been in the news. The esteemed guests are watching closely to see how Jesus fits in. The table talk is polite, as expected, centering on the new director of the symphony and the buy-out of a local factory producing matzo balls.

Then a man wanders into the party looking for Jesus. He shows him his swollen ankles. His joints are painfully huge. He says that he is always thirsty.

Jesus asks no one in particular, "Should I heal him or not? Yes or no?"

No one says anything, but the host is thinking, "No, not at my dinner party and not on the Sabbath. This isn't a public health clinic."

Jesus has the man lie down on the table, carefully avoiding the creamed asparagus. People roll their eyes. Jesus prays, heals the man and sends him home.

The party is not going to recover from the long list of rules that Jesus has broken. The mood is gone. The ambiance is ruined. The company is shocked.

Jesus decides to make things worse by offending the guests. This scene becomes a lesson in how to lose friends and alienate people. Jesus has noticed how the Pharisees look for ways to move up the social

ladder—or up the table on this occasion. He has seen how they try to sit at the places of honor.

We have been in those awkward situations when we were a guest in someone's home, standing before the dinner table, not sure where to sit. Most would not take a place at the end of the table, the seat of honor, unless, of course, the host invites us to do so. This kind of common sense would seem to be what Jesus is suggesting, but it is more than that.

Jesus criticizes the guests for striving for status. "When someone invites you to dinner, you take the place of honor. Then when somebody more important than you shows up, you are red-faced as you make your way to the last table and the only place left. You might as well go and sit at the last place in the first place. Then the host might say, 'Come, sit with me.' If you walk around with your nose in the air, you are going to end up flat on your face. But if you are content to simply be yourself, you will become more than yourself."

The addiction to status that we see in pecking orders and countless versions of climbing the ladder may be as difficult to treat as dropsy. Jesus can diagnose and prescribe, but patients need to become active participants in the healing process. Lots of us are afflicted with the desire to be invited to the head table.

We still live in a classed society. Ethnic groups, immigrants, the poor, the homeless, the addicted and the mentally ill face uphill battles. Lower class, middle class, upper class—we know the different classes in which we reside.

When Jesus finishes insulting the guests, he begins to insult the host for whom he invited and who did not make the list.

"The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends, family and those you are trying to impress, the kind of people who will return the favor. Invite people who do not have similar interests, blood lines or anything to offer, who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks, the least of our sisters and brothers, the poorest of the poor. They will not be able to return the favor, but God will know."

At this point in the story, the disciples want to pull Jesus off to the side and say, "You might want to back off a little. First you went after the seating protocol and, as if that was not rude enough, now you have gone after the guest list. Our host is an influential person. He could have done some good things for us. All you had to do was act friendly and keep your elbows off the table. We are going to run out of dinner invitations if you cannot get through the appetizers without infuriating the person who invited us."

Why does Jesus have to stir up trouble? Why does he criticize people who invited him into their home? Why can't Jesus leave a pleasant-enough dinner party well-enough alone?

It is because Jesus understands what is at stake. We desperately need to find ways to share food with those who don't have enough. It is not just about being nice, or kind, or fair to those who cannot repay us—it is about our own survival from a disease that can be terminal.

We have to learn that at God's table there is no need to jockey for position, because all are equally welcome.

We are one family, where the healing of suffering takes precedence over mere decorum. Jesus offers his host, the other guests and us a better understanding of what it means to be successful.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Success is discerning and appreciating beauty, seeing the best in others and leaving the world a better place."

That is not far from what Jesus is trying to make clear. There are no throwaways when it comes to human beings. Christians are to honor the least among us—the poor, crippled, lame and blind.

While the Pharisees were striving to move toward the head of a rectangular table, Jesus' table is a circle where no person is better than another.

The character of our guest list—who is on it and who is not—has everything to do with whether or not we are being Christ's church.

Jesus ate with sinners and invited outcasts to the table, but for centuries it was considered inappropriate to even imagine such people at the table with Jesus.

In 1573, a painter named Paolo Veronese finished a large canvas entitled "The Feast at the House of Levi." It is now in Venice. He tried to capture the true meaning of Jesus' invitation to the table.

In the center of the painting Veronese shows the more traditional Last Supper with Jesus surrounded by the twelve. Around this central panel he painted numerous others, from all walks of life, present at communion.

The combination of the two groups led to the painter being brought to trial. The inquisitor accused him of heresy for including at the Last Supper "buffoons, drunkards, dwarves, Germans (meaning Protestant followers of Martin Luther) and other such scurrilities."

That story makes the 16th century seem backwards, but we have all known moments when some were not truly welcome in the church.

Jesus' message is radical and countercultural. The Kingdom of God turns over the social basket. The followers of Christ have to learn that any table where

Jesus is present is a table where everyone is welcome, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, a foreshadowing of the kingdom where God cares for all and all we can do is give thanks.

From Christ's perspective, if there is anyone with whom you will not break bread and share what you

The character of our guest list—who is on it and who is not—has everything to do with whether or not we are being Christ's church.

have, then you have not fully realized what God has in mind for the church.

It is hard to imagine throwing a party and inviting the poorest people in the world, but here is how we can do this. When we give what we have to the hungry around the world, we invite those who don't normally get invited to share what we've been given.

In India, the Banjara community is treated as outcasts, so they suffer from poverty and lack of opportunity. Widows and orphans are subject to forced labor and prostitution. We can invite them to the table by giving for small loans to establish businesses, vegetable stands and sewing collaboratives. These businesses will provide food and shelter.

In Indonesia, agricultural methods in Sumatra have depleted the land and left communities starving. We can invite them to the table by helping with what is called "sloping land" agricultural technology. This system uses legume trees to stop erosion and build up the soil by spreading clippings from the same trees.

The hill country of northern Thailand is home to tribal communities that do not have Thai citizenship and thus what we think of as basic human rights. One of the most horrifying problems they face is human trafficking. We can invite them to the table by giving for sustainable farming, livestock, water, sanitation, and a Christian witness.

In a thousand different places, we can make a difference for our sisters and brothers.

Jesus said, "When you give a party, don't just invite people who already have enough, share what you have with the poor." When we share our money with the hungry, we take Jesus seriously.

—Brett Younger is Associate Professor of Preaching at the McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia. His sermons and writings have appeared many times in *Seeds of Hope* publications.

Transforming the Body

A Liturgy

by Lucas Land

Call to Worship

LEADER: God of all creation, earth,
grain, water, yeast, sun, grapes
and air,

PEOPLE: Gather us together like the
ingredients of bread and
wine.

LEADER: We are crushed under foot
like grapes in a winepress.

PEOPLE: Let the Spirit of grace
ferment in our church and
relationships.

LEADER: Knead our lives together in
this moment through pain
and joy.

PEOPLE: Let your creative fire
transform us into the Body
of Christ.

Hymn

"We come to the Hungry Feast"
TEXT: Ray Makeever, 2000
TUNE: Ray Makeever, 2000
With One Voice #766 Augsburg
Fortress Publishers (August 2001)

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

I Samuel 21:1-6

Litany

LEADER: Bread of the world,
in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul,
in mercy shed,

PEOPLE: By whom the words
of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins
are dead.

LEADER: Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed;

PEOPLE: And be Thy feast to us the token,
That by Thy grace our souls are fed.

—Reginald Heber, "Bread of the World,
In Mercy Broken," from *Hymns Written
and Adapted to the Weekly Service of the
Church Year* (1827).

Gospel Reading

Matthew 12:1-8

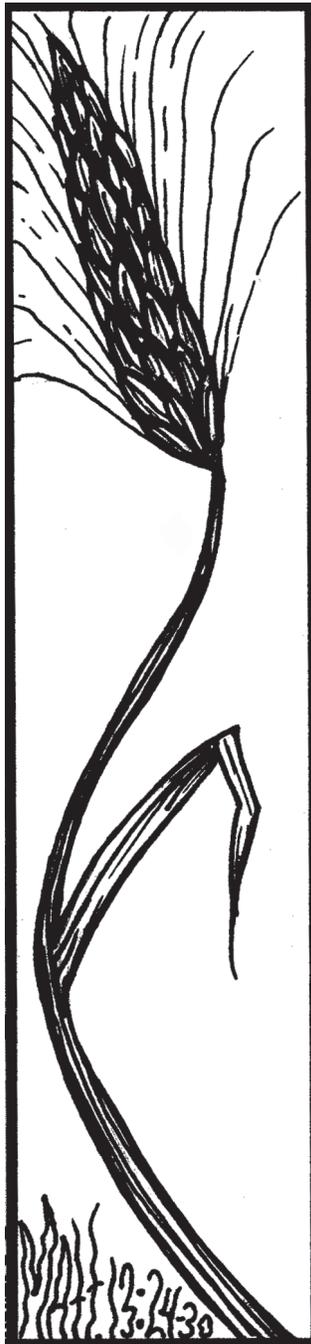
Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Meditation

Jesus' example of David taking the bread of the Presence when he was hungry reminds me of the way we treat the elements of communion. The bread and wine are considered "holy" and off limits except during the particular ritual of the Eucharist. In some churches the bread and wine have to be finished off, poured down a particular drain or disposed of properly because of their sanctity.

In light of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11 about divisions at the agape meal and his warning about taking communion unworthily which follows, he seems to imply that taking Eucharist unworthily means not sharing your food with the hungry. If that is the case then every time the elements (especially if it's a loaf of real bread) are disposed of or gorged on by someone in order to fulfill the letter of traditional ritual, we may be partaking unworthily of the Lord's Supper.



art by Audrey Cary

Communion/Eucharist

We place on our table symbols of abundance — bread and wine. We see these staples and we are reminded to live with grateful hearts. We see these things and we think, “Tonight, everyone can join in, everyone can have enough.”

For some of us all the bits of grain in this loaf and all the grapes crushed into this cup remind us that we are all part of one great family—birthed of one mother, co-existing in a common community. We look at these simple earthy foods and we remember that we belong together.

For some of us these simple foods remind us of Jesus—they help us remember that he spent much of his time around the table, sharing bread and wine and conversation. He seemed to think this was important, and we think it is important too.

As we eat this bread and take this cup, we are transforming the body of the world into our bodies. In the same way, as we consume the body and blood of Christ we are consumed by him, transformed into something more than ourselves, the Body of Christ.

—Adapted from *Monkfish Abbey* (www.monkfish-abbey.org)

Communion Hymn

“One Bread One Body”

TEXT and TUNE: John Foley,
SJ 2000

With One Voice #710 Augsburg
Fortress Publishers (August
2001)

Benediction

Blessed are you
Oh Lord our God,
Ruler of the Universe,
Who has given us:
The grain of the earth,
The fruit of the vine,
The blood of your vein,
The pulse of your heart.

Help us to break bread with the hungry
As we are broken by their hunger
Teach us to live as your Body
Amen

—Adapted from *Monkfish Abbey* (www.monkfish-abbey.org)

—Lucas Land, at this writing, was an intern at the World Hunger Relief Training Farm in Elm Mott, TX. Now he runs a business in Waco, TX, called *Edible Lawns*, dedicated to helping people grow more of what they eat. (For more information, go to www.ediblelawns.net.)

Eating alone is a disappointment.
But not eating matters more,
is hollow and green,
has thorns like a chain of fish hooks,
trailing from the heart,
clawing at your insides.
Hunger feels like pincers,
like the bite of crabs;
it burns, burns, and has no fur.

Let us sit down soon to eat
with all those who haven't eaten;
let us spread great tablecloths,
put salt in the lakes of the world,
set up planetary bakeries,
stables with strawberries in snow,
and a plate like the moon itself
from which we can all eat.

—Pablo Neruda, Chilean poet and Nobel Laureate



art by Sharon R. Rollins

A Feast Fit for the World

a children's sermon in the form of a dialogue

by Mark McClintock

Author's note: I use the following script as the basis of a dialogue between me and my puppet, Big Red, but it could be equally effective as a play performed by two human actors. For flexibility, I have simply used the appellations "ONE" and "TWO" to designate the two parts. The particular snack, of course, may also be substituted.

ONE: (To the children) I've been looking forward to this morning, because we get to share one of my favorite snacks—cheese crackers. I invited my friend, Big Red, to join us today, because he loves cheese crackers, too. Isn't that right, Red?

TWO: (Nods head)

ONE: Are you glad to be here, Red?

TWO: (Nods head)

ONE: Are you ready for a cracker feast?

TWO: (Nods head)

ONE: Do you want to greet the children first?

TWO: (Shakes head, "no")

ONE: Oh. A little bashful today, I guess. Well, anyway, we are talking this week about communion. What do you think of when you hear the word, "communion?" (Allow children to express ideas, and affirm them for volunteering answers.)

In our church, we celebrate communion together to remember that we are one family—the family of Jesus Christ—and to remember how great Jesus' love for us is. Communion is a time for sharing.

That's what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Can you say all that? (Open your Bible and help the children repeat the scripture reference.) How about you, Red? Can you say all that as well as the children?



art by Lara Luksis

TWO: (Shakes head "no")

ONE: Oh. Well, that's okay. Not only do we have Communion with the members of our church, but with Christians all over the world. Some Christians call Communion the Lord's Supper. Some Christians call it the Eucharist. The way Paul describes Communion in the Bible, it may have been like a real supper or a small feast, not just a little piece of bread or wafer. This morning, as we talk about sharing, we are going to share a small feast of cheese

crackers. You did bring them, didn't you, Red?

TWO: (Nods head)

ONE: Great! Where are they?

TWO: (Hands, uncovers, or points out a basket, which contains only two crackers)

ONE: Um, Big Red, there are only two crackers there.

TWO: (Nods head)

ONE: I just filled this basket this morning, and I know there were plenty of crackers to share with everyone here. Where in the world are they?

TWO: (As he opens his mouth to speak, crackers fall out of his mouth*) I don't know. Oops!

ONE: Red! You ate all our crackers?

TWO: Not all. I left some.

ONE: Two crackers, Red! How in the world are we going to share two crackers?

TWO: Oh, that's an easy one. One for me, one for you.

ONE: But we were supposed to share with all of these children. We're talking about communion, and that means everyone shares the feast.

TWO: Oh...well, you're a Christian—can't you break the crackers and multiply them?

ONE: Well, Jesus did do that, but I'm not so sure it would work here. You see, the way we multiply food is by sharing the abundance we have with people who have little. Why on earth did you eat all the crackers, Red?

TWO: Well, I was afraid if we shared them with all the children, there wouldn't be many left for me.

ONE: Oh, Red... That's the kind of attitude Paul was scolding the Corinthians for having. Some of the Christians there were coming to the Lord's Supper early and eating everything up before the poorer people got there. Paul says that we must not be greedy but be sure that everyone shares the communion, especially taking care to share with the people who have little money and would otherwise go hungry.

TWO: I'm hungry!

ONE: I understand, Red, but I mean *really* hungry. There are people all over the world who may go for days with no food or perhaps nothing but a little bit of rice.

TWO: Whoa! They must be starving!

ONE: That's right. And most of the people we know have more than enough food.

TWO: Oh, I see... We're sort of like those people Paul was writing about... the Corruptions...

ONE: Corinthians, you mean.

TWO: Right. We got to the food first, and now we're hogging it for ourselves.

ONE: Yes, many of us are greedy, or we just try to ignore all the other people.

TWO: I'm really sorry, kids. I should have shared. I wonder if the Corrosions—

ONE: Corinthians.

TWO: Yeah, them. I wonder if they learned to share?

ONE: I don't know, Red, but I hope so. What's important is that *we* learn to share.

TWO: Good point. Can we bring crackers again some time? I want to share them with everyone!

ONE: Great plan, Red. We'll try again.

Let's pray.

—Mark McClintock is director of PassportKids, a summer children's camping program. A number of his excellent children's sermons and dialogues have appeared in Sacred Seasons and special Seeds publications.

**If a human plays the part of TWO, rather than dropping crackers from the mouth, she or he should simply talk as if her or his mouth is full.*

art by Erin Kennedy Mayer



**You have come from afar
and waited long
and are wearied:
Let us sit side by side
sharing the same bread
drawn from the same source
to quiet the same hunger
that makes us weak.
Then standing together
let us share the same spirit,
the same thoughts
that once again
draw us together
in friendship and unity
and peace.**

—Prieres d'Ozawarncik,
First Nations liturgy from Canada

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

What the people of the world want most and have always wanted...are bread and peace.

—Patricia Young, founder and director of the US Committee for World Food Day

There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.

—Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

I don't take my sermons too seriously.

I don't think the preacher is the most important part of a church. The people here are baby Christians. I concentrate my messages on application. They can see that biblical characters aren't perfect, and learn from it. The poor don't need to be fixed; they need to be empowered.

—Jimmy Dorrell, pastor of the Church Under the Bridge in Waco, TX, and author of *Trolls & Truth: 14 Realities about Today's Church that We Don't Want to See* (reported by Chad Shanks in the Baylor Lariat)

Public charities, food banks and church pantries are doing more than ever before, but they can't keep up with the need. We can never end hunger only through the wonderful work of local charities. Like other Western democracies, we must end our national problem of hunger through national and political leadership. Charity is nice for some things, but not as a way to feed a nation. We don't protect our national security through charity, and we shouldn't protect our families and children that way either.

—Jeff Bridges

If a man were poor or hungry, [some] would say, let us pray for him. I would suggest a little different regimen for a person in this condition: rather take him a bag of flour and a little beef or pork, and a little sugar and butter. A few such comforts will do him more good than your prayers. And I would be ashamed to ask the Lord to do something that I would not do myself.

—John Taylor

Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead.

—St. John Chrysostom

When Christians help hungry people, they earn the right to share the gospel—not only with people in need, but also with a skeptical society.

—Jim Denison, theologian-in-residence for the Baptist General Convention of Texas

It is important for people to realize that we can make progress against world hunger, that world hunger is not hopeless. The worst enemy is apathy.

—David Beckmann, president of *Bread for the World*

If we can conquer space, we can conquer childhood hunger.

—Buzz Aldrin, US astronaut

art by Sharon R. Rollins



**We need to stop the dying
and start the living;
stop the hunger
and start the hoping.**

—Penelope Cruz

A Prayer for Troubled Times

by D. Bruce Pate

O God, we come before you to worship...
But we see devastation and destruction on TV
almost every day,
And so, we must confess, it is not always an easy
thing to Praise your Name.

In the past few years, we have seen homeless people
take up residence

on highway overpasses
as their city was swallowed by water
and sewage.

We have seen people struggling, literally,
to hold their heads above water,

We have seen people searching through the rubble
of their city for survivors.

We have seen dead people abandoned in a corner
while children played nearby.

We have seen rescuers getting shot at.

We have witnessed Earthquakes and Tsunamis and
war rip through our world

and leave hunger and devastation in its path.

And yet, we have to admit the occasional miracle.

A baby found under a collapsed building
after three days.

Children left homeless are taken in by strangers
willing to share their food and family.

We come before You...amazed, confused and
angered, bewildered and afraid.

Some of us have feared for family and friends, and
friends of friends who were caught up
in the chaos of a disaster somewhere.

Some of us ask where You were in all of this;

How could You have allowed these things
to happen?

And yet,

Some of us are thankful and grateful
that You were there

somehow strangely keeping watch
and protecting people.

After seeing people rescued, only to see them
starving later,

We must admit that there are some things
we will never begin to understand....

And so, today, we gather to worship in a world
where these things happen...

With tear-stained faces we look to You.

With weary hearts we cling to Your robes.

We bring all that we are and throw ourselves
at your feet

We beg...

We beg that You calm our souls with a Peace
which surpasses all Understanding.

Lift us up with Hope that sustains our lives
and calls us

to do and be more than we ever dreamed possible.

Remind us that You Love us,
even when we do not deserve it.

Remind us that You forgive us,
even when we do not deserve it.

Remind us that You redeem us,
even though we do not deserve it.

And even though it may be miles and miles
before the journey is clear,

And even though there are rivers and even oceans
of tears,

Remind us that the Hand that shields our eyes from
Understanding

Is also the Hand that will be holding us for miles.*

O God, today of all days
Remind us of Your Loving Touch
Of Your Healing Hand
For it is in Your Name we Pray and Hope...Amen.

—Bruce Pate is currently a member of Third Baptist
Church in St. Louis, MO, where he is involved with their
Food Pantry Ministry, the Arts Ministry, and serves as
an occasional worship leader.

*This section of the prayer is adapted from the song
"Miles" by Nichole Nordeman.

Art on this page is by Audrey Cary.

Test Your Hunger I.Q.

by Katie Minchew

How much have you learned about hunger and poverty? The answers to each of these questions can be found on pages 16-18 of this Hunger Emphasis packet, so be sure you have read closely! If you are stuck, the answers are upside down at the bottom of the page. Good luck, and may these statistics inspire you to help make a difference in the fight against extreme hunger and poverty.

1. Nearly ____ percent of the US population lacked adequate employment as of January.
a.15____
b.70____
c.20____
2. How many Afghan children under 18 applied for asylum in Europe last year?
a.3,800
b.6,000
c.4,300
3. An estimated 1.02 billion people across the ____ are hungry.
a.World
b.US
c.State of Mississippi
4. Every____, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes.
a.Day
b.Week
c.Month
5. In 2005, almost 1.4 billion people lived below the international poverty line, earning less than ____ per day.
a.\$3.25
b.\$2.25
c.\$1.25
6. Each year, ____ children under five die because they are undernourished.
a.3 million
b.1 million
c.5 million
7. ____ in ____ households in the U.S. are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger.
a.1 in 5
b.1 in 6
c.1 in 7
8. ____ million people, including 15.6 million children, live in homes that are at risk of hunger.
a.27.5
b.31.8
c.38.1
9. In 2006, about ____ million children died before they reached their fifth birthday.
a.9.7
b.4.5
c.10

1. c; 2. b; 3. a; 4. c; 5. c; 6. a; 7. c; 8. c; 9. a.

Facts about Hunger around the World

by Katie Minchew

Facts about Hunger in the US

- 49 million people—including almost 17 million children—live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents one in seven households in the United States. (*Bread for the World: Household Food Security in the United States*) *Whyhunger.org*)
- Research shows that preschool and school-aged children who experience severe hunger have higher levels of chronic illness, anxiety and depression, and behavior problems than children with no hunger. (*Whyhunger.org*)
- Nearly 20 percent of the US workforce lacked adequate employment in January 2010 and struggled to make ends meet with reduced resources and bleak job prospects. (*Reuters*)
- 8.9 percent of U.S. households in the US are at risk of hunger. Members of these households have lower quality diets or must resort to seeking emergency food because they cannot always afford the food they need. 31.8 million people, including 15.6 million children,

live in these homes. (*Bread for the World: Household Food Security in the United States*)

Facts about Hunger around the World

- One in six people in the world do not get enough food to be healthy. (*United Nations World Food Programme*)
- Worldwide, hunger and malnutrition are still the number one risks to health. (*United Nations World Food Programme*)
- 1.02 billion people in the world do not have enough to eat—more than the populations of USA, Canada and the European Union (*United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Bread for the World, World Bank Group*)
- About 25,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, according to the United Nations. This is one person every three and a half seconds. (*poverty.com*)
- Almost a billion and a half people live below the international poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per day. (*Whyhunger.org*)
- Among this group of poor people, many have problems obtaining adequate, nutritious food for themselves and their families. As a result, 820 million people in the developing world are undernourished, which means they consume less than the minimum amount of calories essential for sound health and growth. (*Whyhunger.org*)
- The number of undernourished people in the world increased by 75 million in 2007 and 40 million in 2008, largely due to higher fuel prices, which sparked the worst food crisis the world has seen in several decades. (*United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation*)
- 907 million people in developing countries alone are hungry. (*The State of Food Insecurity in the World, FAO*)



art by Audrey Cary

- Asia and the Pacific region are home to over half the world's population and nearly two thirds of the world's hungry people. (*The State of Food Insecurity in the World, FAO*)
- More than 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women. (*The State of Food Insecurity in the World, FAO*)
- 65 percent of the world's hungry people live in seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. (*The State of Food Insecurity in the World, FAO*)
- Latest figures from the United Nations Refugee Agency show that the number of Afghan children under 18 who applied for asylum in Europe last year rose by 64 percent, from 3,800 to more than 6,000. (*British Broadcasting Company*)

Child Hunger in the World

- Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes. This comes to 3 million children in a year, and one child every five or six seconds. Most of these deaths occurred in developing countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the two regions that also suffer from the highest rates of hunger and malnutrition. (*Bread for the World: State of the World's Children, Whyhunger.org, FAO: The State of Food Insecurity in the World*)
- Far more children live with undernutrition than die from it. For infants and young children, the effects of chronic malnutrition in the early years of life are largely irreversible. (*Bread for the World, The World Bank Group*)
- More than 70 percent of the world's 146 million underweight children, under age five, live in just 10 countries, with more than 50 per cent located in South Asia. (*UNICEF, Progress for Children: A Report Card on Nutrition*)
- 10.9 million children under five die in developing countries each year. Malnutrition and hunger-related diseases cause 60 percent of the deaths. (*UNICEF: The State of the World's Children*)
- The cost of undernutrition to national economic development is estimated at US\$20-30 billion per annum. (*UNICEF: Progress for Children, A Report Card on Nutrition*)
- One out of four children—roughly 146 million—in developing countries are underweight. (*UNICEF: Progress for Children, A Report Card on Nutrition*)
- Every year, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) feeds more than 20 million children in school feeding programs in some 70 countries. In 2008, WFP fed a record 23 million children. (*United Nations World Food Programme*)

Malnutrition around the World

- Global nutrition officials estimate that 684,000 child deaths worldwide could be prevented by increasing access to vitamin A and zinc. (*World Food Programme: Annual Report*)
- Undernutrition contributes to 53 percent of the 9.7 million deaths of children under five each year in developing countries. This means that one child dies every six seconds from malnutrition and related causes. (*UNICEF*)
- The lack of Vitamin A kills a million infants a year. (*UNICEF: Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency, A Global Progress Report*)
- 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*)
- Iron deficiency is impairing the mental development of 40-60 percent of the children in developing countries (*UNICEF: Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency, A Global Progress Report*)
- Vitamin A deficiency affects approximately 25 percent of the developing world's preschoolers. It is associated with blindness, susceptibility to disease and higher mortality rates. It leads to the death of approximately 1 to 3 million children each year. (*United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition*)
- Iodine deficiency is the greatest single cause of mental retardation and brain damage. Worldwide, 1.9 billion people are at risk of iodine deficiency, which can easily be prevented by adding iodine to salt. (*United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition*)
- The UN World Food Programme sponsored a deworming effort in 2007 that reached 10 million children in 2007. (*World Food Programme Annual Performance Report*)

Food and HIV/AIDS

- In the countries most heavily affected, HIV has reduced life expectancy by more than 20 years, slowed
- continued on page 18*

Facts about Hunger, *continued from page 17*

economic growth and deepened household poverty. (UNAIDS Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic)

- In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the AIDS epidemic has orphaned nearly 12 million children aged under 18 years. (UNAIDS Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic)
- The UN World Food Programme and UNAIDS estimate that it costs on average US \$0.70 cents per day to nutritionally support an AIDS patient and his/

her family. (WFP: Cost of Nutritional Support for HIV/AIDS Projects)

- The UN World Food Programme's assistance for orphans and vulnerable children is estimated at US\$0.31 per day. (WFP: Cost of Nutritional Support for HIV/AIDS Projects)

—Katie Minchew, at this writing, was a professional writing student at Baylor University in Waco, TX.

A Prayer of Contrition and Supplication

by Deborah E. Harris

O God of Grace and Mercy,

We are a nation of all-you-can-eat
buffets and fast foods.

We have forgotten what it is to eat
what we need to be healthy,
and to know when we have had enough.

Remind us of the morning manna in the desert,
of simply gathering what is needed each day,
and gratefully trusting in your provision for the next.

Disturb us at the thought of "haves" and "have-nots."

Help us to realize that a true feast is not defined by the quantity of food,
but by the certainty that everyone—even our enemy—has a welcome place at the table.

Amen.

—Deborah Harris is a freelance writer in Waco, TX. She volunteers as the regular copy editor for Seeds of Hope and serves as a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards.

art by Rebecca S. Ward

UN Summit to Accelerate Progress on Millennium Development Goals

by Katie Minchew

The Goals and Their Background

In September 2000, the United States of America and 188 other nations of the United Nations adopted a set of international development goals to be achieved by the year 2015. As 2015 draws near, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend a summit in New York, NY, September 20-22, 2010 in hopes of accelerating progress toward these goals.

The Goals and Their Targets

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Target One: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day
- Target Two: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- Target Three: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

2. Achieve universal primary education

- Target 1: Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

- Target 1: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by

2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

4. Reduce child mortality

- Target 1: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

5. Improve maternal health

- Target 1: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
- Target 2: Achieve universal access to reproductive health

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Target 1: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV / AIDS
- Target 2: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV / AIDS for all those who need it
- Target 3: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 1: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

- Target 2: Reverse biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

- Target 3: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

- Target 4: By 2020, to have achieved a significant



art courtesy of the US Committee for World Food Day

improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

8. Develop a global partnership for development

- a. Target 1: Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states
- b. Target 2: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system
- c. Target 3: Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt
- d. Target 4: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- e. Target 5: In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Indeed, these are lofty goals and, with the global tragedies that have occurred over the past few years and the obstacles that have arisen, some in the anti-hunger community may be losing hope. However, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put it, "We must not fail the billions who look to the international community to fulfill the promise of the Millennium Declaration for a better world. Let us meet in September to keep the promise."

Before the September Summit, a separate G8/20 Leaders Summit will be held in Huntsville, ON, in Canada. This summit could have a substantial impact on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit planned for September in New York.

The G8 (Group of 8) includes senior officials and heads of state and government from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. According to The Micah Challenge, the G8 and the G20 will be focusing on the recovery of the world economy and strengthening of the financial system at the June summit.

How Are We Doing?

"Not so good," writes an analyst from Bread for the World (Bread), a Christian advocacy group whose goal is to end world hunger. The United Nations' 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report, published by Bread, documents a slowing of progress in almost every area, and regression in some of the most important ones. The report says this is the result of the global recession.

According to the report, "Progress towards the goals is now threatened by sluggish—or even

negative—economic growth, diminished resources, fewer trade opportunities for developing countries and possible reductions in aid flows from donor nations. At the same time, the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent, with a potentially devastating impact on countries rich and poor."

The UN showcases their data updates on the progress toward the Millennium Development Goals at MDG Monitor (www.mdgmonitor.org). There one can see a compilation of information from the UN Statistics Division, in close collaboration with agencies and organizations within and outside the UN system—including the Statistics and Population Divisions of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Reports, and the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

Through this database one can see that, until 2006, the MDGs were well on their way to being met. However, with recent gas price hikes, food shortages and growing economic crises, progress has been dramatically slowed.

This is why UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for the summit in September—in order to grasp what we have left to do, and to make plans to do those things .

Recently, singer/songwriter Bono, of the rock group U2, interviewed President Barack Obama about the June G8 and G20 Summit in Canada. An article in Toronto's *Globe and Mail* quotes Obama as saying, "At this year's summit, we need to recommit ourselves to making serious and sustainable progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. We can, and should, celebrate the progress we've made, but we also need to be frank about where all of us—developed and developing countries alike—have fallen short."

If we do not meet these goals, what kind of legacy will we be setting up for ourselves, our children and their children? That is why everyone needs to be aware of these goals. The MGDs are not just "a government thing" or a problem for our world leaders to deal with. The MGDs are goals for each and every one of us to participate in. We are all responsible to take part and help.

What Are Others Doing and How Can YOU Take Action?

Taking action to help meet the eight Millennium Development Goals is one of the greatest things you can do to make our world better. Here are some organizations in which you can get involved to help the United States and countries around the world join together to meet the goals:

- **United Nations**

On the United Nations web site, www.un.org, you will find a tab at the top titled "Taking Action." The options range from campaigning and signing petitions to designing advertisements against poverty, to participating in photo contests and playing computer games. There is a way for everyone to participate and every voice counts.

- **Micah Challenge**

Micah Challenge is a global coalition of Christians whose vision is to see a world free from extreme poverty. This vision is based on the biblical passage Micah 6:8, which urges the reader to "do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah Challenge maintains an extremely educational web site (www.micahchallenge.org) that is full of ways to get involved in fulfilling the MDGs. You will find ways to get involved in the global and national Micah Challenge campaigns, and you will find other small ways to be involved in making a difference to end global poverty.

Also on the Micah Challenge web site, you will find two excellent Bible studies based on the book of Micah. It is a central resource for those who want to pray, promise and act against global poverty, aiming to halve it by 2015, which is in sync with the Millennium Development Goals. The studies are *Just Mercy* by Joel Edwards and *Who Is Our Neighbor?* by Steve Bradbury.

- **Bread for the World**

Bread for the World calls itself "a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision-makers to end hunger at home and abroad." On their web site (www.bread.org), you can find descriptions of the organization's battle against world hunger. One specific event, the Offering of Letters, invites church members, students—people across the US—to write personal letters and e-mails to Congress on important issues. If writing letters, organizing groups of people or speaking to congregations is not your style, Bread for the World has a link where you can donate any amount of money to whichever cause you choose.

- **End Poverty 2015**

At End Poverty 2015, you can sign up to join "Stand Up 2010," a set of global actions that will take place for three days leading up to the September summit (September 17-19th) in support of achieving the MDGs. Visit www.endpoverty2015.org for more information.

- **MDG Monitor**

At MDG Monitor (www.mdgmonitor.org), you can find a countdown to 2015—to the second. At this

writing, there are five years, 192 days, 12 hours, 51 minutes, and 42 seconds until these goals need to be met. Five years and counting may seem like a long time, but it will be here before we know it. On this web site you can be encouraged by reading more about each goal in detail and then reading success stories for each.

Another way to get involved in the accomplishment of the MDGs is to "blog" about it on MDG Monitor. The UN has set up a weblog specifically to hear the public's opinions on these issues, and to keep them up-to-date on events and progress made. The blog is at www.mdg-gateway.org/MDG-Blog. (Note: You must register for the blog before you will have full access to it. Simply go to "home" and "register," then follow further simple instructions.)

Your Own Voice

Perhaps the most important of all ways you can help is not through any single web site or blog site, but through your own word of mouth. Although there is a vast array of articles in the media about the MDGs, very few people actually know anything about them. Many have never even heard of them.

Needless to say, if our world is expected to meet these goals, we should at least be aware of them. Word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing tool. So spread the word about the MDGs to your friends, your kids, your parents and your congregations, so that we can all work together to end poverty, hunger, sickness, inequality, lack of education and environmental destruction.

A Little Extra Push

What if, in 2015 our nations really could look to our brothers and sisters north, south, east and west of us and know that we all came together to realize what seemed to be an overwhelming set of goals?

What if we could look around us and see less poverty, less hunger, more equality, better education and better health? This is such an exciting time in the world—let's finish strong and push to succeed!

—At this writing, Katie Minchew, a native of Frisco, TX, was a professional writing student at Baylor University. Sources: United Nations (un.org), End Poverty 2015 (endpoverty2015.org), Bread for the World, (bread.org), the Micah Challenge (micahchallenge.org), Millennium Development Goals Monitor (mdgmonitor.org), Interagency Coalition on Aids Development (icad-cisd.com), Toronto Globe and Mail (theglobeandmail.com). The art on page 5 is courtesy of the US Committee for World Food Day. This article also appeared in the summer 2010 issue of Hunger News & Hope.

Benediction



Go in peace,
and may the spirit of God drench all of us,
so that the blind will receive sight
the lame will walk
lepers will be cleansed
the deaf will hear
the dead will be raised to life
and the good news will be proclaimed to the poor.
Amen.

—Katie Cook, written with the help of youth
at the Southwest Baptist Youth Camp, Sherman, TX, 1993,
taken from Luke 7:22.
The art on this page is by Rebecca S. Ward.