

# *When did we see you...*



*Worship resources for the creative church  
Hunger emphasis 2012*

*Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship packets with a peace and justice emphasis,  
from Seeds of Hope Publishers: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745;  
Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: [seedseditor@clearwire.net](mailto:seedseditor@clearwire.net); Web address: [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org).

# Sacred Seasons:



## Worship Tools with an Attitude—Toward Justice, Peace & Food Security for All of God's People.

These unique 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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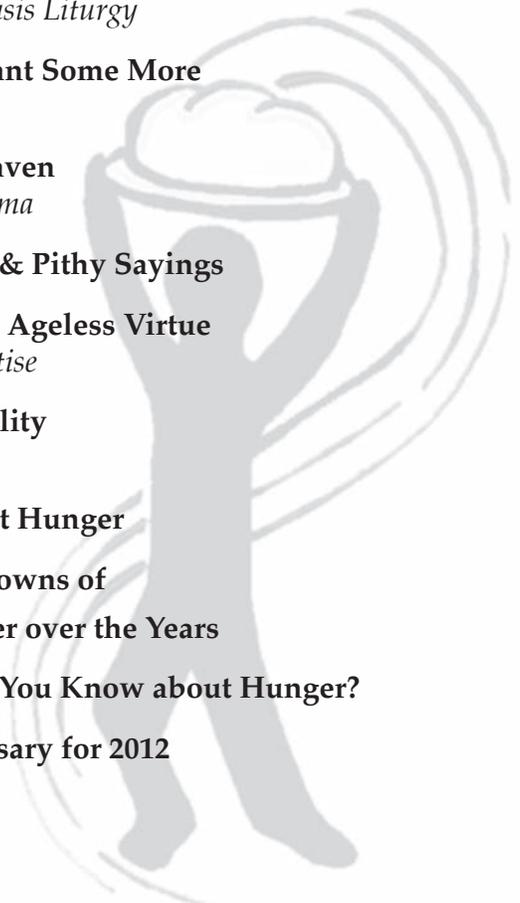
### Statement of Purpose

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

# When did we see you...

*in this worship packet:*

- 4 **Theme Interpretation:**  
*When Did We See You*
- 5 **Visual Interpretation**
- 6 **Bread from Heaven**  
*A Hunger Emphasis Liturgy*
- 8 **Please, Sir, I Want Some More**  
*A Sermon*
- 12 **Bread from Heaven**  
*A Children's Drama*
- 14 **Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings**
- 15 **Hospitality: An Ageless Virtue**  
*A Historical Treatise*
- 17 **Prayer of Humility**  
*A Poem*
- 18 **2012 Facts about Hunger**
- 19 **The Ups and Downs of Fighting Hunger over the Years**
- 20 **How Much Do You Know about Hunger?**
- 21 **A Hunger Glossary for 2012**
- 23 **What Is It?**  
*A Benediction*



art by Sharon R. Rollins

empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

### Editorial Address

Seeds of Hope is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor@clearwire.net. Web address: [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org). Copyright © 2012.

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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 are fully tax-deductible.

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# *A word about this packet:*

This worship packet comes to you with a great deal of love and prayer. The theme, “When Did We See You...” was inspired by Michael Stern’s song by that name. Mike is a singer/songwriter who lives in Seattle. He has been writing and recording songs about peace and justice for many years.

We urge you to go to his web site ([www.mikesongs.net](http://www.mikesongs.net)) or email him ([mikesongs@earthlink.net](mailto:mikesongs@earthlink.net)) and hear the clear, beautiful melody of this song. The scripture reference is, of course, taken from Matthew 25:31-41.

The carrying out of this theme, as well as all of our other themes, was enhanced by the wisdom and creativity of Deborah Harris, who is on our masthead as “copy editor,” but who does infinitely more than that to make sure that our resources come together.

You will find, on the cover, on page 5 and sprinkled throughout the packet, art pieces created by Sally Lynn Askins especially for this packet. We have been blessed by the gift of Sally’s art for many years, and we are grateful for these new creations.

We have also selected a few of our favorite art pieces by Sharon Rollins, who also supports Seeds in many other ways, and by Rebecca Ward, whose art has been enhancing our publications since she was a teenager. You may have seen some of them before, and we hope you appreciate them as much as we do.

Marbling through the theme from Matthew 25 is the “manna” passage in Exodus 16. You will find a sermon by Erin Conaway that explores this story in the context of world hunger. You will also find a children’s drama by Katherine Ramirez that tells the “manna” story. Both of these are part of a liturgy that weaves the two themes together.

We included a children’s sermon by John Ballenger, whose sermons, hymns, dramas and poetry have appeared in Seeds resources for 20 years. “Friends Who Need Us” was one of the first children’s sermons we printed and is a part of the Hunger Emphasis “primer” for beginning churches. We thought it should be reprised here because it illustrates the Matthew 25 theme so

well. John’s benediction is from a drama that also appeared in one of our earliest packets.

On page 7 you will find art, illustrating the Matthew 25 theme, from the Open Door Community, a house of hospitality in Atlanta, GA. The Seeds folks have enjoyed a relationship with that community, and been incredibly inspired by them, since the earliest days of Seeds in Decatur, GA.

Our Hunger Emphasis packets always come with a 40-day calendar and a place mat. Stormy Campbell, our wonderful new intern from Yoakum, TX, has compiled these—and also the statistics that you’ll find beginning on page 18. The place mat includes a liturgy written especially for youth.

As always, we want you to feel free to play around with these liturgies and services, and adapt them to your congregation’s needs and resources.

We are deeply grateful for all of you who subscribe to *Sacred Seasons*, and who make use of these gifts in your worship and work. We are also grateful for the many people who contributed their work and ideas to this packet.

As always, the contents of this packet are your congregation’s to use freely and share with others as the need arises. We really do pray that these materials will help many, many congregations in remembering and responding to God’s children who are hungry.

—Gratefully,  
The Seeds Staff and Council of Stewards



"Prisoner" by Sallylynn Askins

# *theme interpretation*

## *When did we see you*

When did we see you hungry and not give you food?

When did we see you thirsty and not give you drink?

Away, away, away, away, away...

When did we see you a stranger and not welcome you?

When did we see you naked and not give you clothes?

Away, away, away, away, away...

When did we see you hungry and give you food?

When did we see you thirsty and give you drink?

Stay, stay, stay, stay, stay...

When did we see you sick and come to you?

When did we see you in prison and come to your aid?

Stay, stay, stay, stay, stay...



"Thirsty" by Sallylynn Askins

*Editor's note: These are the lyrics of a song by Michael Stern, who is a singer/songwriter in Seattle, WA. "When Did We See You" is from the Come What May album. To hear the music or order the CD, go to [www.mikesongs.net](http://www.mikesongs.net) or email Michael at [mikesongs@earthlink.net](mailto:mikesongs@earthlink.net).*

# *Visual interpretation*

by Sallylynn Askins



# Bread from heaven

## a hunger emphasis liturgy

by Katie Cook

*Note: You may want to incorporate the children's drama from page 13 in this service. If you do this, you could include the children in the procession. They could follow the choir (if the choir processes) and other worship leaders, wearing their costumes. They could carry all of their props with them, and even scatter the "manna" on the floor just before they begin. If you do this, you may want to omit the reading of the Hebrew scripture.*

### Processional hymn

"I Hunger and I Thirst"

Chalice Hymnal #409

Words: John S. B. Monsell, 1866

Music: Maria Tiddeman, 1875

Tune: IBSTONE

### Responsive call to worship

FIRST READER: O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? How long shall I cry out to you about the violence of hunger in the land, and you will not save us?

SECOND READER: If only we had died in the land of Egypt; you have brought us out to this desert to kill us with hunger.

FIRST READER: Why do you allow me to see all of this wrongdoing? Why do you make me eyes to see all of this trouble? How long must we wait for your justice to come? How long must we wait for your deliverance?

SECOND READER: We had plenty to eat in Egypt, plenty of meat and plenty of bread. Now we are wandering in this strange land, with nothing to eat.

THIRD READER: Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. Each day the people shall go out and gather enough food for that day."

FOURTH READER: Then the Lord said to

Habakkuk, "Write the vision; make it large and plain so that even a runner can read it."

THIRD READER: Then the Lord said to the people through the prophet Malachi, "Put me to the test, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour down for you blessings beyond your wildest dreams."

FOURTH READER: And the Lord said, "There is still a vision for the appointed time. If it seems to take a long time, wait for it. It will come, and it will not delay."

—Adapted from Exodus 16: 3-4; Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-3; Malachi 3:10-12

### Invocation

God of abundance, we come before you today in gratitude for the bounty we have been given. Make us more aware of the gifts around us, that we may



"Stranger" by Sally Lynn Askins

exult in the goodness of creation. Open the windows of heaven, pour out your blessings for us, and grace us to share those blessings with others. Pour your energy over us, that we may go from here with renewed strength. Pour out your breath, that we may have the courage to go out and live our calling. Pour out your wisdom, that we would know where to guide our feet. Open our eyes, that we may see the vision you have written out for us. Open our hearts, that we may know that we have been in your presence today.

### *Children's drama*

"Bread from Heaven"  
by Katherine Ramirez  
(see page 13 )

### *Meditation of contemplation*

We are called to be the Holy Manna. We are to be the ones offering hope to the world. We are to be the ones offering alternatives to the war-making, easy-answered syrupy spirituality that makes none of us healthier.

How do we do that? We do it when we bring hope to people. We do it when we show people how to live. We do it when we befriend the friendless. We do it when speak the truth in love. We do it when we hold each other close.

We do it when we help resettle a family. We do it when we receive from that family some hope and some deeper sense of faith. We do it when we utilize our worldly goods in such a way that we can help people have a place to live, a school to attend, a place to call holy.

The challenge is for us to find ways that we can be manna for a world and people in need. If we can find ways to do that, we will be doing holy work.

—From "Holy Manna," a sermon by Doug Donley in "Just Harvest," Sacred Seasons, Hunger Emphasis 2007

### *Hebrew scripture reading*

Exodus 16:1-18

### *Hymn*

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Chalice Hymnal #86

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Tune: FAITHFULNESS

### *Epistle reading*

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

### *Gospel Reading*

Matthew 25:31-41

### *Sermon*

"Please, Sir; I Want Some More"  
by Erin Conaway  
(see page 9 )

### *Communion meditation*

When did we see you hungry  
and not give you food?  
When did we see you thirsty  
and not give you drink?  
Away, away, away, away, away...  
When did we see you a stranger  
and not welcome you?  
When did we see you naked  
and not give you clothes?  
Away, away, away, away, away...

When did we see you hungry  
and give you food?  
When did we see you thirsty  
and give you drink?  
Stay, stay, stay, stay, stay...  
When did we see you sick  
and come to you?  
When did we see you in prison  
and come to your aid?  
Stay, stay, stay, stay, stay...  
— "When Did We See You" by Michael Stern,  
from the Come What May album

### *The bread*

The world is full of hunger—for bread and for spiritual nourishment. On the night before his death, Jesus was at supper with his friends. He took bread from the table and blessed it, and gave thanks for it. Then he gave it to his friends, saying, "Take this and eat it, for it is my body." As we take this bread, we remember that he also said, "Whenever you give bread to the least of my brothers and sisters, you have given it to me."

## The cup

On the night before his death, Jesus also took a cup of wine from the table; and when he had given thanks, he gave it his friends, and said, "Drink this, all of you." In drinking from this cup, we remember that he also said, "Whenever you give something to my brothers and sisters to drink, you have also quenched my thirst."

## Communion music

The celebrant(s) ask the congregation to come to the table for the elements. As the congregants come forward, play Michael Stern's "When Did We See You." The song is two minutes and 38 seconds, so you may want to add "One and All" from the same album (Come What May). "One and All" is four minutes and 30 seconds. For a copy of the CD, go to [www.mikesongs.net](http://www.mikesongs.net).

## Communion blessing

At this table we celebrate the faithfulness and provision of our God, who opens the windows of heaven, and rains down bread upon us. O God, we give thanks to you, for the gifts you give us to sustain our lives. Bless this bread to be the Manna that nourishes us. Bless this cup to be the drink of new life. Help us to faithfully receive this food and drink. May it strengthen us to follow Christ and to become Holy Manna for a hungry world.

## Meditation of commitment

Sisters and brothers, this world doesn't need so much people declaring that they are Christians as much as we need people who are willing to be Holy Manna.

We need people who will show God's love to a world in need. We need people who will be beacons of light in a world where light is a rare commodity.

We need people who will offer friendship in the face of loneliness. We need people who will offer grace to a people in deep need.

We need some Holy Manna.

—From "Holy Manna," a sermon by Doug Donley in "Just Harvest," Sacred Seasons, Hunger Emphasis 2007

## Hymn

"Fill the World with Love"

Chalice Hymnal #467

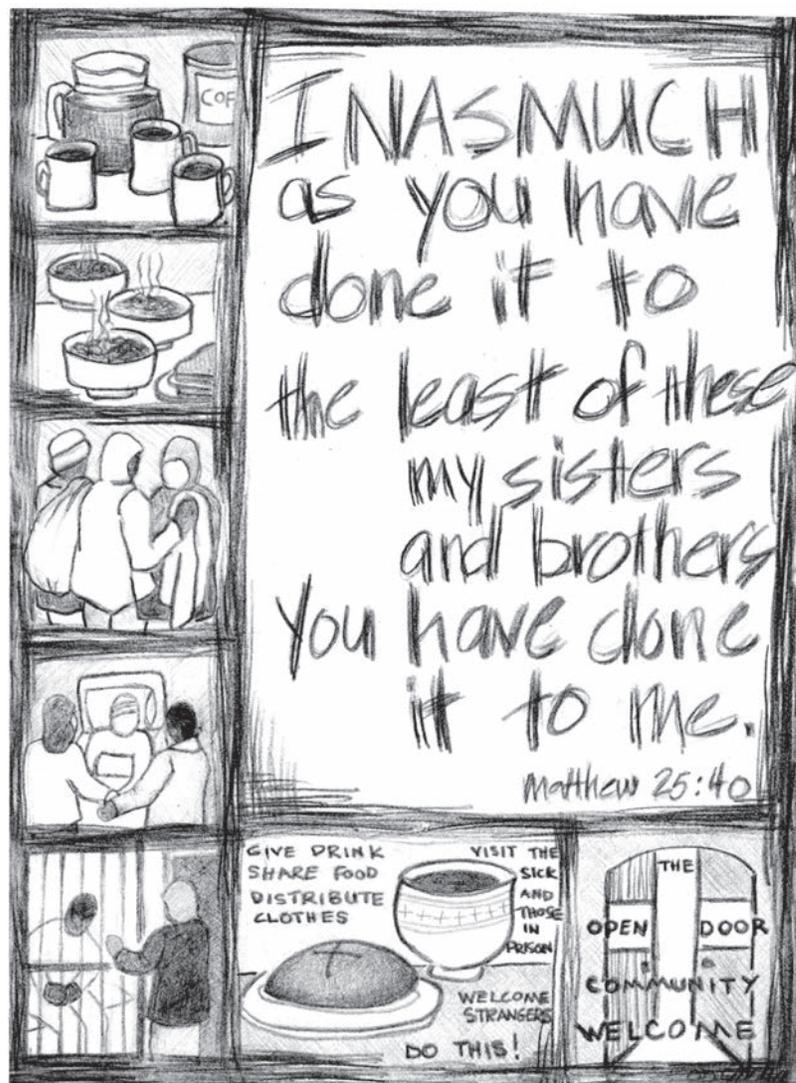
Words: David L. Edwards, 1992

Music: David L. Edwards, 1992

Tune: COMPASSION

## Benediction

Gracious God, as we go from this place, open our hearts and eyes to each other and to your children in need. Help us to see your face in the faces of our neighbors. Open our hands, that we may share out of our abundance. Free us from the fear that would cause us to close our hands or to pass by the neighbor in need. Give us the courage to go to the places where you would go, the places where your children need our help. ■



art courtesy of the Open Door Community in Atlanta, GA

# "Please, sir, I want some more"

by Erin Conaway

Text: Exodus 16:2-15

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper. His pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him, the gruel was served out and a long grace was said over the short commons.

The gruel disappeared. The boys whispered to each other and winked at Oliver. His next neighbors nudged him.

Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger and reckless with misery. He rose from the table and, advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity, said: "Please sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment at the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder, the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

Dickens paints such a vivid and compelling scene in his classic novel *Oliver Twist* and, in many ways, we hear this morning the Israelites crying out to Moses in similar fashion:

"If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Okay, let's be honest; it's far more

compelling to hear the plea of young Oliver than it is the whining complaints of the Israelites.

Verse one in the 16th chapter of Exodus tells us that this complaint about the desert accommodations

*Okay, let's be honest; it's far more compelling to hear the plea of young Oliver than it is the whining complaints of the Israelites.*

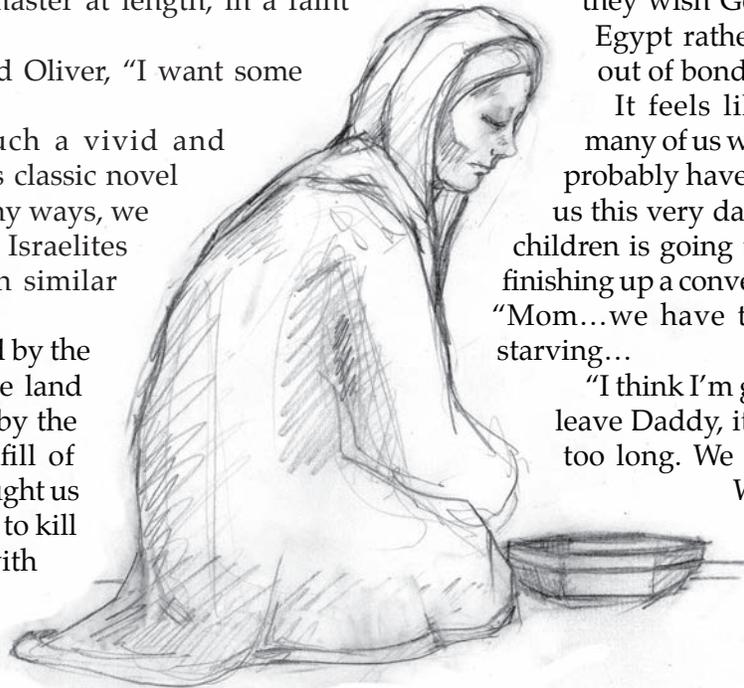
arose among the people midway through the third month after they left Egypt.

Two months and 15 days it's been since they left Egypt with all of the things they plundered, and now they are starving. And they say they wish God had killed them in Egypt rather than bringing them out of bondage.

It feels like the kind of thing many of us with young families will probably have played out in front of us this very day. One of our well-fed children is going to say to us as we are finishing up a conversation here at church, "Mom...we have to go eat NOW...I'm starving..."

"I think I'm going to DIE! Let's just leave Daddy, it's his fault for talking too long. We can come get him on Wednesday, but right now we have to go!"

But before we put Israel in a time-



"Hungry" by Sallylynn Askins

out, the fact is they really are hungry—and maybe, more importantly, they are scared. Just as painful as the hunger is the prospect of it getting worse, and from their vantage point, they can't see any reason to hope this is going to get any better.

So they panic. "Group-think" begins to build among the wanderers, and the pundits among them start forming the talking points about how, when they were slaves, they ate so very well, but now they are starving to death out here in God-only-knows where.

They are hungry and scared and their fear about an unknown tomorrow is stronger than the pain in their past. They are to the point now where they think it would be better to go back into slavery than to move forward into freedom.

How many people struggling with addiction have been at this very same decision point in their journeys and attempts with sobriety?

I had a friend whom I literally went and pulled out from under a bridge. I drove him to a shelter and then, just two months later, he'd fallen off the wagon again and called me on a Sunday morning to tell me he needed help.

As soon as church was over, we went and got some lunch and went to a park to talk and listen. In the midst of his taking stock of where he was, he wondered out loud, "Maybe I'm just a drunk and all I really want is to work enough so I can get a girl and drink a 12-pack and smoke some dope on the weekends."

His lip was burned from the "meth" he'd smoked the night before. As the words fell to the ground, my love for him came out a little sideways as I said to him, "If that's what you really want, then let's just walk over to that pond and I'll hold your big dumb head under the water until you die, so we can just get it over with right now. Because what you're talking about is going to kill you, but it's going to be slow and painful and hurt a bunch of other people in the process. That's just time-release suicide."

I didn't drown him in the pond that day, and that's not my typical pastoral approach. But I did hear his pain and sat with him in the midst of it.

Looking at the work required of him to move ahead into sobriety and work the system so he could get a job and find a place to live, it was easy to see how he would want to go back into slavery, even while he was still hung-over from the bondage of the weekend.

It's not just the people struggling with addictions who are hungry. One in seven people in the world

will go to bed actually hungry tonight. The number one health risk in the world today is hunger. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. One in seven people around the world will go to bed hungry tonight. That's 925 million people who don't have enough to eat.<sup>1</sup>

*Instead, God responded to their hunger and desperation and their fear, and rained down bread from heaven.*

And lest we be fooled and think it's just the people over there in faraway places (as if that should make it any more palatable), 43,120 residents of McLennan County are food-insecure.

That's 19 percent—almost one in five of the people we see every day.<sup>2</sup> Or, probably more accurately, we don't see them. But they are crying out to God and to anyone who could lead them out of this wilderness: "Please, sirs and madams, I want some more...."

Before Moses could take the message to God or even respond to the people, God said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you."

God was listening. Four times in this brief passage it's made clear: "The Lord has heard." God was listening to the Israelites and didn't respond to their weak and distorted memories—memories that would choose to dwell on the fabrication of bondage and how life was back in Egypt, rather than on the mighty deeds Yahweh had done before them and among them to get them to this point in the journey.

Instead, God responded to their hunger and desperation and their fear, and rained down bread from heaven. The language in this passage is rich with wordplay. One of the things you hear in this text is the repetition of evening and morning and that harkens us back to creation, when God was forming the earth and everything in it.

Part of creation was the naming of things and, in telling irony, as God fed the Israelites in this same pattern, they looked on the ground and said, "What is it?" And that is what they called it: "What is it?" or *manna*.

But they came to learn it was their daily bread.

As we read in the rest of the chapter, there was

just enough for each family for each day, and, of course, some of the Israelites failed this test, because they tried to keep some of the manna for the next day and found that it was riddled with worms and in ruins—just like their faith in God’s providing hand.

Here, too, we get the first notion of Sabbath-keeping. God provided a double portion on the sixth day and that would feed them for the sixth and seventh days, so they would not have to go out and gather on the seventh day, because on that day there would be no manna.

Again, though, a few went out on the seventh day to gather manna, but they found none, and they incited God’s anger against them because they just couldn’t quit trying to control their lives—even in the wilderness and in the midst of the miracle of food falling from the heavens.

They clung to their fear and that small self that told them, “There’s not going to be enough tomorrow, so you need to get more today.”

Another thing to note about the language in this passage is that it’s clear that this was supposed to not just be about putting bread in bellies, but also about worship. Moses (through Aaron) invited Israel, the congregation, to “draw near,” or to gather in worship. When they did, they saw “the glory” of God.

Walter Brueggemann writes,

*The complaint of v.3 indicates that Israel still associates “glory” (and the power to give life) with the splendor, wealth, prestige, and extravagance of Egypt. Compared to the glory of Egypt, the wilderness holds little attraction. In drawing near, however, Israel dramatically turns its face away from Egypt, and looks again toward the wilderness. It is not an empty, deathly place, but the locus of God’s sovereign splendor. The wilderness is more brilliant than Egypt, because Yahweh had “gotten glory over Pharaoh.” By God’s rule, the wilderness is completely redefined.<sup>3</sup>*

So the Israelites approached Moses with their hunger and fear, and God fed them day in and day out, but with daily bread, not hoards and stockpiles of food, lest they forget it is God who was acting in their midst.

So what about today? What about our hungry children and neighbors? What about their cries for food?

After the experience in the wilderness, God

stopped raining down bread from heaven, but even as Jesus was teaching us to pray, he taught us to ask for our daily bread. Not for truckloads of bread that we might store it up for what we used to say was a rainy day.

But what about our neighbors? Well, Jesus says, “You feed them.”<sup>4</sup>

And in the same way, in the midst of the feeding

*So the Israelites approached Moses with their hunger and fear, and God fed them day in and day out, but with daily bread, not hoards and stockpiles of food, lest they forget it was God who was acting in their midst.*

that happens when we do take on the role of helping our neighbors find daily bread, we discover God’s glory in our midst in ways we had not seen before.

This kind of feeding reveals God’s glory, all around us and in the bond of our fellowship with people to whom we bring daily bread. Talk to any one of our Meals on Wheels volunteers and ask them about the glory they have seen in the midst of their service. Ask them about the relationships that develop between neighbors as we seek to bring them some manna for the day.

When you talk to people who work towards seeing that everyone gets his or her daily bread, you can see it in their eyes: a mixture of more to do and the glory of things they have seen done by God’s hand, through the hands of God’s children at work, feeding the hungry here and all around the world.

But still, there are millions of our sisters and brothers who are desperate with hunger and reckless with misery and who are still saying, “Please sir, I want some more.”

If this is just another encounter with a text that reminds us of God’s heart to feed God’s children, and the miraculous way God did it with the Israelites as they were brought out of slavery, and if it serves only to ping us again with a little more guilt about the hungry in our world, and to make us feel bad as we gather around tables of abundance immediately after this service to each lunch, then I think we will

have done a disservice to the text and to our worship this morning.

I keep thinking about why it is that most of us aren't more involved in doing our part about the raging hunger in our world. Why is it that we can hear statistics like the ones I mentioned earlier and have an immediate emotive reaction that then doesn't produce any real results?

*I can't speak to what is happening in your heart and mind, but for me, when I read this text, the people I most relate to are the ones who tried to keep a little manna for the next day...*

I can't speak to what is happening in your heart and mind, but for me, when I read this text, the people I most relate to are the ones who tried to keep a little manna for the next day—the ones who went out on the Sabbath looking for manna, wondering if what they had in their tents from yesterday was going to be the last manna they saw, or if there would be more on the ground tomorrow.

They are the ones I seem to understand most in this story. Somehow, the miracles of yesterday get lost in my mind as I consider the hunger of today.

The weight of God's movement in my life historically doesn't seem to carry the day like it should when I think about what we are going to eat, and what we are going to wear. I worry, and that makes me want to gather more and be in control of tomorrow. And I suspect I'm not alone.

We have such a hard time living on daily bread—believing that the same God who loved us and provided for us yesterday and all the yesterdays before that, that same God still loves us today and will continue to provide for us.

I'm learning with my friend who is a recovering addict, in the midst of rebounds and relapses, that there is a lot of wisdom in taking *just* our daily bread. He is teaching me the strength in not worrying about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring enough trouble of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

This doesn't mean that we won't ever be hungry—there are many lessons that our hunger can teach us that we seem to be unable to learn in the

absence of hunger. It doesn't mean that we won't be hungry, but I think it means that we can be satisfied if we follow our hunger, past the things that would give us a false sense of fullness, to the bread that God longs for us to eat.

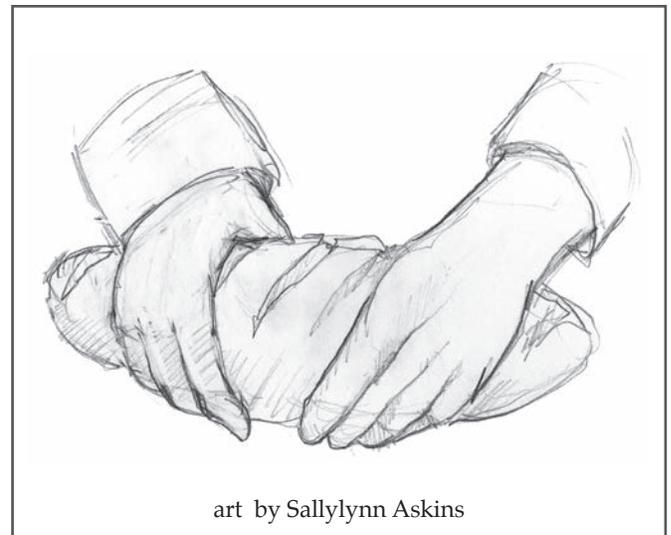
It think it means the very bread of life, the bread of Christ's broken body that was given to us, not so we could be rich and famous and find glory for ourselves in the glitz of eggshell fortune, but that we might see God's glory and be drawn ever closer to God and to one another.

Those who ate the manna and found in it something that did far more than fill their bellies, even in the wilderness, found they could see God's glory, shining brightly all around, and they were fed. May we find satisfaction in our daily bread, may we be about the work of helping others to find daily bread too, that we might all find satisfaction, not in the fullness of our stomachs, but in the opening of our eyes to see God's glory and want some more. Amen.

—Erin Conaway is the pastor of Seventh & James Baptist Church in Waco, TX, where the Seeds ministry is housed.

## Endnotes

1. From the World Food Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation. See page 19 for more facts about hunger in the world
2. From the Texas Hunger Initiative's "Hunger By the Numbers: a Blueprint for Ending Hunger in Texas" ([www.baylor.edu/texashunger](http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger)).
3. Walter Brueggemann in the *New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994) v. 1, p. 813.



art by Sallylynn Askins

# Bread from heaven

## a drama for children

by Katherine Ramirez

### *Speaking cast:*

Narrator  
The Lord  
Moses  
Aaron

### *Non-speaking cast:*

Israelites

### *Possible props:*

Frosted Corn Flakes to spread on the floor and represent manna  
Shepherd's staffs  
Sandals  
Tunics and loose cloth for costumes  
Costume paint for beards  
Cotton and posterboard to make the cloud  
Baskets for gathering

*Note:* Encourage the children to improvise as they go through the play. The Israelites, who include everyone except the four speakers, should dramatize what the narrator is saying and react to Moses' words. Use your imagination and that of the children in getting the props and costumes ready. You may want to carry out this project over several weeks, if you do it during Sunday school or another weekly program—or you could conduct the activity during a day camp.

**Narrator:** Fifteen days after leaving Egypt, the entire congregation of Israelites came to the wilderness of Sin, which lies between Elim and Sinai. They began to run out of

food, and they complained to Moses and Aaron about leading them away from their comfort zone in Egypt and into this new land of hunger.

(Israelites throw their hands up, look pitiful, shake their fists in the air, pantomime making remarks under their breath and glare at Moses and Aaron.)

**Aaron:** Moses, we're going to have to go to the Lord about this. I don't know what our people are going to eat.

**Moses:** Wait—I think I hear the voice of the Lord.

**The Lord:** Moses, I am going to open the windows of heaven and rain down bread for



art by Helen Siegl

your people. Each day, the people shall go out and gather enough for that day.

**Narrator:** This was the Lord's way of testing the people to see if they would follow instructions. Moses and Aaron told the Israelites of the good news.

**Moses:** (to Israelites) Your complaining has not been against us, but against the Lord.

**Aaron:** (to Israelites) But draw near to the Lord, for God has heard your complaining, and has already answered you.

**Narrator:** As Aaron said this, the whole congregation looked toward the wilderness and the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud.

*(Israelites look off in the distance, towards the sky. If you want, you could figure out some way to have the "manna" sprinkled on the floor at this time. Perhaps the readers could do it.)*

**Narrator:** In the morning, a layer of dew surrounded the camp. As soon as the dew dissolved, a flaky, frost-like substance covered the ground. The Israelites did not know what the substance was.

*(The Israelites talk to each other in confusion. They point to the ground and pick up some of the Frosted Corn Flakes.)*

**Narrator:** The house of Israel looked at the layer of white on the ground, and said, "What is it?"

*(The Israelites say to each other, "What is it?" "What is this stuff?" "Do you think it's okay to eat?")*

**Narrator:** In Hebrew, that means *manna*. It was like a white seed that tasted like wafers with honey.

**Moses:** (to the congregation) It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord commands you: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs."

*(The Israelites gather the manna in baskets. At this point, you may want to have Sugar Frosted Flakes already in some of the baskets for the children to taste. Perhaps they could even share some with the congregation, saying something like, "See how good it tastes?")*

**Narrator:** The people were instructed to take no more or less than they needed for each day. When all of them were done gathering, they measured it and not one person went without. But some of them gathered more than they needed, and it became rotten the next day.

**Moses:** I told you not to harbor it overnight, but you did not listen! That's

why it is rotten and filled with worms! Can you not follow directions?

**Narrator:** So they learned not to gather more than enough for each day, and, morning after morning, they gathered as much as they needed. On the sixth day, it was a little different.

**Moses:** On the sixth day, you can gather double the amount of bread you need. What you have left over from the sixth day can be stored overnight; you'll need it for the day of rest.

**Narrator:** But the people were not so good at listening. Some of them went out to gather manna on the seventh morning, and they found nothing. The Lord saw this and complained to Moses.

**The Lord:** (to Moses) How long will your people refuse to keep my commandments and instructions? Look, tell the people I have given you the seventh day to rest. Therefore, on the sixth day there will be food for two days. The people are to stay where they are, and not leave their places of rest on the seventh day.

**Narrator:** So that's how the Lord fed the people of Israel in the desert. And finally, they all rested on the seventh day.

—Katherine Ramirez is the Family Services Coordinator at Respite Care of San Antonio, TX. The agency serves families and children with special needs.

art by Sallylynn Askins

*Friend,*

even if I came to you  
in the rags of weariness,  
the cloak of invisibility or  
dust of neglect, the  
web of a spider,  
would you offer me  
a drink of water  
seeing thirst,  
and help to decide  
a way, at the crossroads of life?  
If I look into your  
hands, what will I find:  
a golden thread,  
the strength of beauty,  
a loaf of bread?



—David Sparenberg—a playwright, poet, storyteller, stage director, Shakespearean actor and novelist—works in Seattle. He uses his craft to help people cope with life-threatening illness and loss. These words are from his poem, "Dressed for the Occasion."

# Quotes, poems & pithy sayings

**A**t the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in."

—Mother Teresa

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand.

—Henri Nouwen

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

—Mahatma Gandhi

At dawn, when hushed was earth's busy hum and men looked not for their Christ to come,

From the attic poor to the palace grand, the King and the beggar went hand in hand.

—John McCrae, *The Shadow of the Cross*

Start by doing what is necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

—St Francis of Assisi

**the poor, n.** The third stanza of life's four-stanza hymn.

—P.K. Yancin, "The Devil's Glossary, Grievously Abridged" in the September/October 1996 issue of the Wittenberg Door.

I don't think I would feel happy if I were exempted from what so many others have to suffer. They keep telling me that someone like me has a duty to go into hiding, because I have so many things to do in life, so much to give. But I know that whatever I may have to give to others, I can give it no matter where I am, here in the circle of my friends or over there, in a concentration camp. And it is sheer arrogance to think oneself too good to share the fate of the masses.

—Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life: the Journal of a Young Jewish Woman*

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is the outcasts who really get the message of Jesus. It is the people pushed to the fringe, the rejected members of the establishment, who understand what Jesus means when he says, Come, follow me. They know what it means to suffer. Jesus makes it simple for us. In his command to love, he condenses all the written and unwritten rules of the covenant into two basic principles: love God and love your neighbor.

—Joe Nassal, *The Conspiracy of Compassion*

We say in our African idiom, 'A person is a person through other persons.' The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. I need you in order to be me as you need me in order to be you. We are caught up in a delicate network of interconnectedness. I have gifts that you don't, and you have gifts I don't--voilà! We are made different so that we may know our need of one another. The completely self-sufficient human being is subhuman. Thus diversity, difference is of the essence of who we are.

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *Address at University of Toronto's Convocation Hall, February 16, 2000*

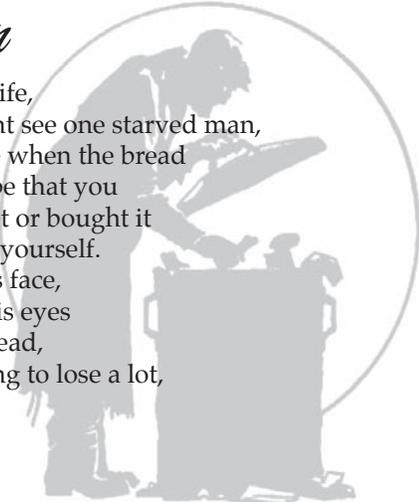
Food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul.

—Dorothy Day

## Communion

Sometime in your life, hope that you might see one starved man, the look on his face when the bread finally arrives. Hope that you might have baked it or bought it or even kneaded it yourself. For that look on his face, for your meeting his eyes across a piece of bread, you might be willing to lose a lot, or suffer a lot, or die a little even.

—Daniel Berrigan



# Hospitality: an ageless virtue

by David W. T. Brattston

These days, among mainstream Christians, we do not seem to hear many sermons about hospitality or read much about it in church magazines. The earliest Christians, however, had a great deal to say about this practice.

According to my dictionary, hospitality is “the friendly and generous reception and accommodation of guests and visitors.” St. Paul, in his Letter to the Romans, encouraged his readers to be “given to hospitality” as well as to contribute to the needs of other Christians (12:13).

The First Letter of Peter exhorts us to practice it ungrudgingly, as well as to be engaged in other forms of charity (4:9). One New Testament author and several other ancient Christian writers highly commended hospitality to strangers.

In the middle of the second century C.E., a brother of a pastor-bishop of Rome put forth commandments for the Christian life in a book called *The Pastor of Hermas*<sup>1</sup>, which he said were revelations from the divine. In hospitality, the book said, can be found a fruitful field for goodness.

Half a century later, in Egypt, Clement of Alexandria was dean of the world’s foremost Christian educational institution. Like St. Paul, he encouraged Christians to be “given to hospitality,” in a long list of what he considered desirable conduct for Christians, such as helping poor and weak people. In another book Clement wrote, “Akin to love is hospitality.”

Clement’s successor as dean of the Catechetical School in Alexandria was Origen, the most outstanding Christian teacher, writer and preacher of the first three centuries. So great was his knowledge of the Christian faith that he was called upon as a theological consultant by pastor-bishops throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

In his *Commentary on Romans*, Clement described receiving guests as a Christian virtue, along with rescuing innocent people and helping poor people, as well as those who were hungry and naked.

Clement said that great grace is to be found in hospitality, both with God and with people. In one of his sermons he valued hospitality in the same list

as justice, mercy, patience, gentleness and helping the poor.

Strangers were singled out in the early Church as special objects of hospitality. The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews says, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (13:2).

*The ancient authorities promoted the virtues of generosity and helping all people, including strangers, regarding them as brothers and sisters in Christ and as being entitled to the same reception and accommodation as Jesus himself.*

The most prominent examples in the writer’s mind may have been Abraham and his nephew Lot, described in Genesis 18 and 19. Clement called hospitality “a congenial art devoted to the treatment of strangers.” He also wrote, “Hospitality, therefore, is occupied with what is useful for strangers.”

In some localities, hospitality for fellow Christian strangers was a standing institution. *The Didaché*, a first- or second-century church manual believed to be from Syria or Egypt, prescribed detailed regulations for the reception and accommodation of traveling Christians, especially clergy.

About the same time as Origen, the church father Tertullian, in Tunisia, placed hospitality to Christian travelers in the same class of Christian activity as relief of the poor and attending church at Easter. A little later, papyrus letters of recommendation for travelers indicate that there was a network of hospitality among the churches.

Although especially for strangers, the earliest Christians did not confine hospitality to travelers. Clement widened the scope of the term “strangers” as a category: “guests are strangers; and friends are

guests; and brethren [i.e. Christians] are friends." In an even more universal statement, he wrote "And those are strangers, to whom the things of the world are strange."

The Bible speaks of being hospitable as a desirable quality, especially for bishops. The First Letter of Timothy recommends it in the same passage

*Centuries later, Martin Luther also encouraged hospitality to the poor. He taught that the failure to feed a hungry person, who then starves to death, makes one guilty of murder.*

as such qualifications as being above reproach, an apt communicator and "not a lover of money" (3:2). The Book of Titus includes hospitality in a list with such necessary traits as self-control, being upright, and being a lover of goodness (1:7).

In a paraphrase of First Timothy, Origen wrote in his *Commentary on Romans* describing a hospitable nature as necessary for a bishop—as important as being above reproach, vigilant and respectable.

Such linking reveals the early Christians' high esteem for both the office and the practice: while it demonstrates how dedicated a bishop must be, it also shows the centrality of hospitality in church life.

The early authors' frequent listing of hospitality along with relief of the poor was probably not accidental. Christian hospitality, as well as Christian life in general, has always been concerned for guests and strangers, no matter what their financial circumstances might be.

The ancient authorities promoted the virtues of generosity and helping all people, including strangers, regarding them as brothers and sisters in Christ and as being entitled to the same reception and accommodation as Jesus himself.

In his *Sermons on Luke*, Origen exhorted his hearers to invite into their homes Christian friends, even the poor ones, and also people who have trouble expressing themselves, those who are mentally and emotionally challenged. Jesus himself commanded: "When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind" (Luke 14:13).

Centuries later, Martin Luther also encouraged hospitality to the poor. He taught that the failure to feed a hungry person, who then starves to death, makes one guilty of murder.<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament and other early Christian writings and sermons were directed to all readers and to all people present in congregations.

Their admonitions are put to all of us to provide generously for people we barely know or even those we do not know at all, simply for the name of Christ and without regard to their means, status or circumstances.

Jesus himself provides a special blessing for the hospitable. In Matthew 10, beginning with verse 11, and in Luke 10:5, he instructed Christian travelers to salute and wish peace on the homes of hosts who showed them hospitality. These hosts might well have been hospitable to angels unawares. So might you.

—Dr. David W. T. Brattston is a freelance writer living in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. His articles on early and contemporary Christianity have been published in every major English-speaking country.

## Endnotes

1. Also known as the *Shepherd of Hermas*.
2. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism Ten Commandments* 190

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

—adapted from "Prayer of Commitment"  
by Mary Ruth Crook,  
Fall Fresh on Me

# Prayer of humility

by David Sparenberg

*Our father  
who art in heaven*

our mother  
who wanders among us  
holy and homeless  
hallowed be your names  
(vessels  
of essence, seedbeds  
of archetypes and angels).

May your dream of us  
be fulfilled in the  
earth-sphere as it is  
in the creative imagination  
and revealed to us  
here within the miraculous  
work of this living earth:  
a prophetic promise  
of reverence for life  
and of peace  
and of justice.

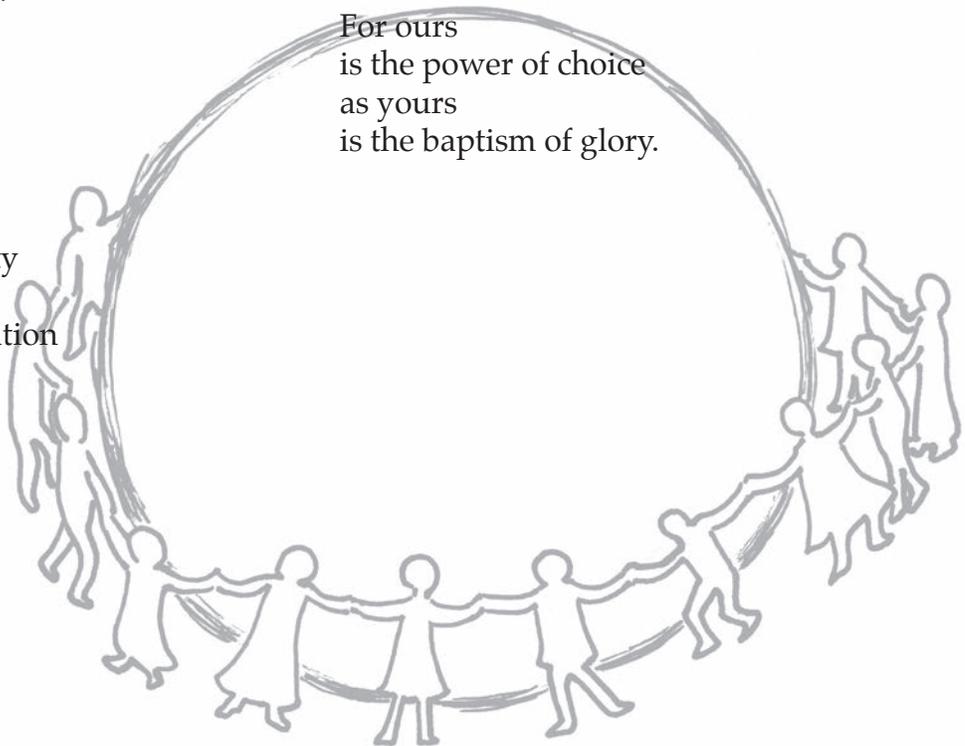
Give us this day  
the maturity of simplicity  
wean us lastingly  
from crimes against creation  
even the addictions  
of violence and greed.

Even as we with  
courage rare and rarer  
humility  
reach out to those  
who lay down the  
weapons of war and  
open their lives deep

to bone marrow and  
depths of their souls  
to new commensality.

For  
yours is the  
touchstone of liberation  
and the anointment  
of bio-democracy:  
that all species  
be protected from extinction  
and all places  
bearing the crucifixion of  
time and habitat be  
made re-gensis of the *numen*  
and in healing  
restored to the holy.

For ours  
is the power of choice  
as yours  
is the baptism of glory.



—David Sparenberg—a playwright, poet, storyteller, stage director, Shakespearean actor and novelist—works in Seattle. He uses his craft to help people cope with life-threatening illness and loss.  
Art on this page by Sharon R. Rollins.

# 2012 Facts about hunger

compiled by Stormy Campbell

## *Hunger around the world*

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*

140 million pre-school children have a Vitamin A deficiency, the leading cause of child blindness. Half of those who lose sight due to Vitamin A deficiency die within a year. *WFP*

Three-fourths of all hungry people live in rural areas. *WFP*

Around 50 percent of women who are pregnant in developing countries are iron deficient. *WFP*

Malnutrition is the leading cause of disease. *WFP*

More than 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women. *WFP*

A child dies from hunger-related causes every eight to twelve seconds. *World Vision*

In developing countries, almost one out of every 15 children will die before they reach the age of five. *UNICEF*

Children who are poorly nourished will suffer up to 160 days of illness annually. *World Hunger*

Malnutrition affects 32.5 percent of children in developing countries. *World Hunger*

Every day, approximately 16,000 children die from hunger and related causes. *Bread for the World*

One in six infants in developing countries is born with a low birth weight. *World Hunger Project*

65 percent of the world's hungry live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. *Hands for Hunger*

Over 30 percent of the world's population is anemic as a result of iron deficiency. Anemia contributes to 20 percent of all maternal deaths in pregnant women. *World Hunger*

Malnourished children consistently score lower on educational tests than well-nourished children. *World Vision*

People who live in poverty spend almost 75 percent of all income on food. *World Vision*

## *Hunger in the US*

Over 16 million children in the US live in food-insecure households. *Feeding America*

31 million children ate a reduced-price or free lunch on an average school day in 2011. *USDA Food and Nutrition Service*

Of the children who receive free or reduced-price lunches each school day, less than half receive breakfast daily and only 10 percent access summer feeding sites. *Bread for the World*

20.5 million Americans live in extreme poverty. *World Hunger*

49 million Americans are hungry. *Feeding America*

Food insecurity in America has doubled between 2000 and 2010. *Food Research and Action Center*

One in four children lives in households that struggle to put food on the table. *Bread for the World*

One in seven people are enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Of those, nearly half are children. *Bread for the World*

8 percent of seniors who live alone in the United States are food-insecure. *Feeding America*

The number of food-insecure seniors is projected to increase by 50 percent when the youngest of the Baby Boom Generation reaches age 60 in 2025. *Feeding America*

*continued on page 20*

# The ups and downs of fighting hunger over the years

from the Seeds Staff

Three United Nations agencies—the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report hunger and malnutrition as the biggest health risks in the world.

The number of deaths from hunger-related causes are greater than those from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. The main causes of hunger in the past few decades have been poverty, natural disasters, armed conflict (and the accompanying displacement of people), and global climate change.

In the final quarter of the 20th century, humanity was winning the war on hunger, its oldest enemy. From 1970-1997, the number of hungry people dropped from 959 million to 791 million. This was mainly the result of dramatic progress in reducing the number of undernourished people in China and India.

In the second half of the 1990s, however, the number of chronically hungry people in developing countries started to increase at a rate of almost 4 million per year.

By 2001-2003, the total number of undernourished people worldwide had risen to 854 million. This included 820 million in developing countries, 25 million in countries in transition, and 9 million in industrialized countries.

In 2007-2008, one in seven people did not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life. But the worst was yet to come. The petroleum crisis of 2008, brought on largely by the war in Iraq, caused food prices to spike and set the anti-hunger movement back a decade or more.

That situation was exacerbated by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and extended droughts across the globe. That year saw a number of riots in countries

where the scarcity of food grew as the prices of food skyrocketed.

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 its most recent reports, the WFP reported that 925 million people do not get enough nutrition to maintain healthy lives. And, unless the global community responds in a dramatic way, global climate change could increase the world's number of undernourished people by between 40 million and 170 million.

— Sources: World Food Programme ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)), World Health Organisation ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)), Food and Agriculture Organisation ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)), UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch))

## Hunger in the US, continued

In 2010, 4.8 percent of all US households accessed emergency food from a pantry at least once. *Feeding America*

In 2010, 12.6 percent of households in suburban areas were food-insecure. *Feeding America*

39 percent of all households served by Feeding America have had to choose between paying for food and paying for medical care. *Feeding America*

65 percent of working families that receive SNAP were single-parent families. *Feeding America*

Teenagers who are hungry are more likely to have trouble socializing with peers and be suspended from school. *No Kid Hungry*

— Stormy Campbell, a native of Yoakum, TX (near the coastal region) is a Professional Writing student at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.

# How much do you know about hunger?

compiled by Stormy Campbell

Test your hunger knowledge by taking the following quiz.

1. How many days of illness will a malnourished child suffer annually?  
a) 130      b) 140      c) 160      d) 180
2. One in \_\_\_\_\_ infants are born with a low birthweight.  
a) 3      b) 4      c) 5      d) 6
3. What percentage of the world is anemic and suffers from iron deficiency?  
a) 10      b) 20      c) 30      d) 40
4. Those in poverty spend what percentage of their income on food?  
a) 25%      b) 50%      c) 75%
5. Food insecurity in America has \_\_\_\_\_ between 2000 and 2010.  
a) remained the same    b) doubled    c) tripled
6. True or false: Hunger is the world's number one health risk.  
a) True      b) False
7. In developing countries, almost one out of every 15 children will die before they reach the age of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Three      b) Five      c) Seven      d) Ten
8. True or false: The number of food-insecure seniors in America is predicted to increase by 30 percent by the age 2025.  
a) True      b) False
9. Malnutrition affects what percent of children in developing countries?  
a) 32.5      b) 35      c) 40.5      d) 43.2
10. True or false: Malnutrition is the leading cause of disease.  
a) True      b) False

Answers: 1c, 2b, 3c, 4c, 5b, 6a, 7b, 8b, 9a, 10a

# *A Hunger Glossary for 2012*

from the Seeds of Hope staff

**Food Sovereignty:** a movement that seeks to establish the rights of those who grow food to determine what foods to grow, how food is grown, and how and by whom foods are produced, processed and distributed. It also seeks to provide fair compensation for those involved in bringing food to our tables. For those who eat (which is everybody), it is the right to know where your food comes from, how the food was produced, and therefore how safe and healthy it is. It would also include knowledge about who benefited from the food's production and distribution. (See *Hunger News & Hope, Vol 12 No 4*, at [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org). There is a special eight-page section on *Food Sovereignty* beginning on page 5.)

**Feeding Program:** a federal, school or private program or agency that serves meals to hungry people.

**Food Desert:** a district, usually a low-income area, where healthy, nutritious food is difficult to obtain. The Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as a low-income census tract where a substantial number of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. The residents are often much closer to fast-food restaurants and convenience stores.

**Food Rescue:** the practice of obtaining prepared food from restaurants, packaging it according to health codes, and making it available to feeding programs.

**Food Security:** having enough food to be healthy and productive. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." According to the United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO), food security is built on three pillars: food availability, food access and appropriate food use. Census workers in the US use the terms "high food security," "marginal food security," "low food security" and "very low food

security." According to the USDA, a household has very low food security if the food intake of one or more household members is reduced or disrupted at times during the year because the household lacks the money or other resources for food.

**Foodies:** people who spend a significant amount of energy on gaining information about the ingredients, nutritional value and origin of food dishes. (See "All about Foodies," *Hunger News & Hope, Vol 12 No 4, page 11.*)

**Hunger:** the body's way of signaling that it is running short of food and needs to eat something. According to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), the average person needs 1,200 calories a day to lead a healthy life.

**Malnutrition/Undernutrition:** a state in which the physical function of an individual is impaired by lack of nutrition, to the point where he or she can no longer maintain natural bodily capacities such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, learning abilities, physical work and resisting and recovering from disease. The term covers a range of problems: being dangerously thin (see Underweight), too short for one's age (see Stunting), being deficient in specific vitamins or minerals, or being obese. A person can be obese and still be malnourished.

**Protein energy malnutrition:** a form of malnutrition measured not by how much food is eaten but by physical measurements of the body, such as weight, height, or age (see Stunting, Wasting, Underweight).

**SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program), a federal program in the US administered by the USDA.

**Stunting:** a condition that reflects shortness-for-age. This is an indicator of chronic malnutrition and is calculated by comparing the height-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children.

**Undernourishment:** the status of people whose food intake does not include enough calories to meet minimum physiological needs. The term is a measure of a country's ability to gain access to food and is normally derived from Food Balance Sheets prepared by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

**Underweight:** a state measured by comparing the weight-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children. It is estimated that the deaths of almost 4 million children aged less than five are associated with the underweight status of the children themselves or their mothers.

**Urban Gardening:** also known as urban horticulture or urban agriculture; the process of growing plants of all types and varieties in an urban environment. Some types of urban gardening include container gardening (the use of a variety of containers for growing plants in city balconies or on patios), indoor gardening, community gardening, "guerilla" gardening (a somewhat subversive effort to grow plants in public spaces like vacant lots or highway medians), and roof gardening.

**Wasting:** a state reflecting a recent and severe process that has led to substantial weight loss, usually associated with starvation and/or disease. Wasting is calculated by comparing weight-for-height of a child with a reference population

of well-nourished and healthy children. Often used to assess the severity of emergencies because it is strongly related to mortality.

**WIC:** the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, a federal program in the US administered by the USDA. The WIC program has been shown to save \$5 in future social services for every \$1 it spends. ■

## *Friends who need us* *a children's sermon*

by John Stewart Ballenger  
based on Matthew 25:31-40

*B*efore the service, engage the help of three people in the congregation. (Try to vary the gender, age and ethnicity as much as possible.)

When the children's time begins, give the children a few adhesive bandages, some animal crackers and a container of water. (Let them eat some of the animal crackers, if necessary. Then give them more.)

Tell them that you think these things might be useful before too long. Then take them for a walk around the sanctuary. Lead the children to the first person you've previously enlisted, who is sitting somewhere in the midst of the congregation.

Introduce the children to this person. You might say something like, "This is Charles. Charles, how are you today?" Charles's answer should be something like, "I'm not doing too well. I cut my finger. See?"

Then ask the group if anyone has anything that could help

Charles. The children with the bandages will, hopefully, respond to their cue and give him a bandage. After he thanks them, continue your walk.

The second person should tell the children he or she is hungry, and you would prompt the children who carry the animal crackers.

The third person will tell the children he or she is thirsty, and the children should give him or her water to drink.

When you have returned to the place normally reserved for children's sermons, explain that this is exactly what Jesus asked us to do—to help people like our friends in the congregation, any time we can.

—John Ballenger, a pastor in Baltimore, MD, is a nationally recognized leader in the field of creative worship. This children's sermon is from "Developing a Heart for the Hungry: A Primer for Beginning Churches," Seeds of Hope Publishers, 1998 (available at [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org)). The art on this page is by Rebecca S. Ward.

# *Benediction*



## *What is it, God?*

Bread—that is a gift from you.  
Bread—that commissions us —  
that sends us out into this world —  
to change it.  
Bread—we share one with another.  
Bread—that binds us, sister to brother,  
brother to sister.  
Bread—that is part of the way  
You continue to create the world you envision.

## *What is it, God?*

Deliverance.  
May it become one with our very being —  
part of everything we do.  
Amen.

—John S. Ballenger  
*from the title drama in "The Bread of Deliverance,"*  
Sacred Seasons,  
Hunger Emphasis 1999

*The art on this page is by Rebecca S. Ward.*