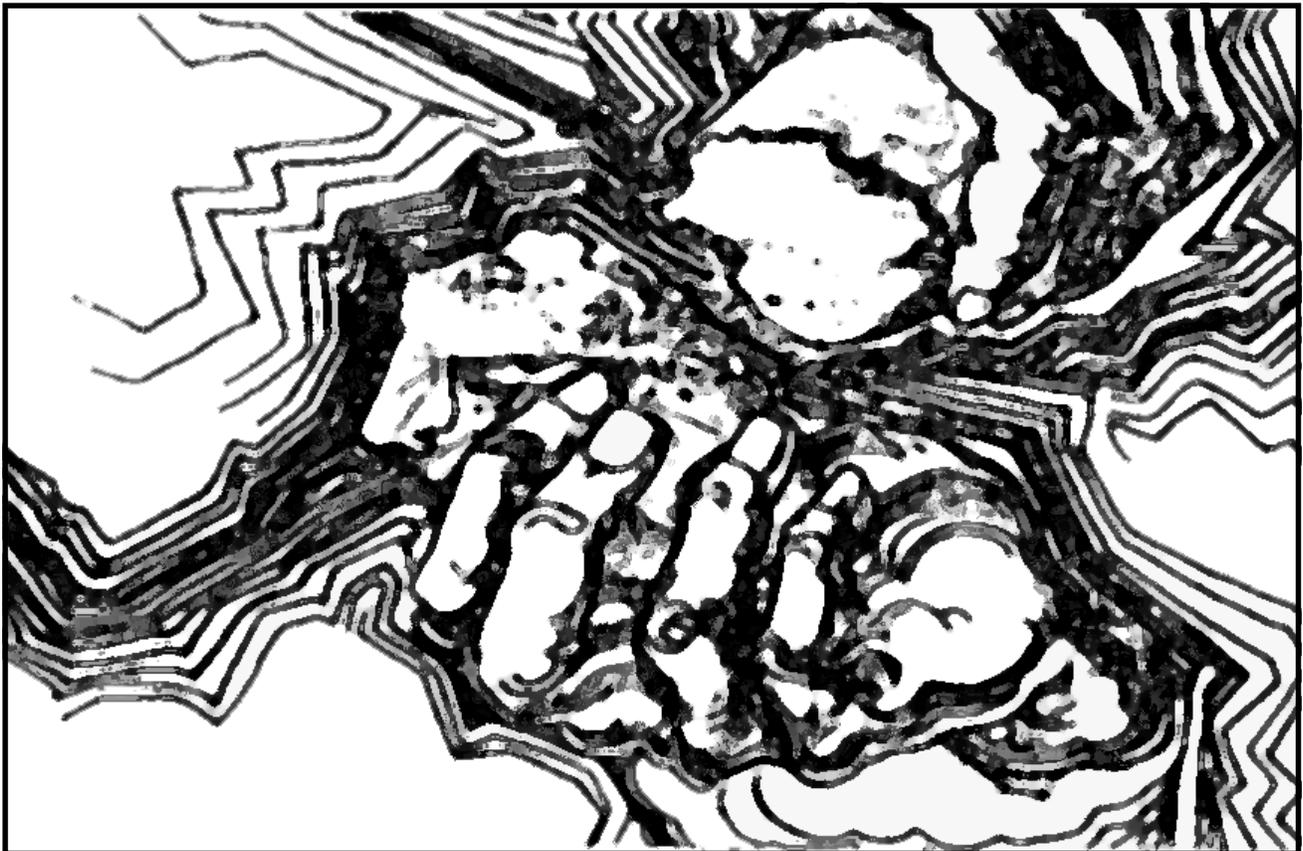


# In the Breaking of the Bread



## Creative Resources for your Church's Hunger Emphasis

*Worship tools 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: SeedsHope@aol.com;  
Web address: [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org).*

# Creative Worship Tools from Seeds Publishers

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

## Staff and Volunteers

Editor.....L. Katherine Cook  
Business Manager.....Laura Schmeltekopf  
Drama and Poetry Editor.....John S. Ballenger  
Editorial Assistants.....Kimmy Scott, Holly Vargo  
Web Designer.....Bennett Lane  
Artists.....Robert Askins, Sally Askins,  
Peter Yuichi Clark, Robert Darden, Van Darden,  
Erin Kennedy Mayer, Lenora Mathis,  
Sharon Rollins, Rebecca Ward

## 2001-2002 Council of Stewards

Linda Freeto  
H. Joseph Haag  
Theodore Londos, Jr.  
Daniel B. McGee (President)  
Kathryn Mueller  
Nathan Porter  
Steven Sadler  
Jacqueline L. Saxon

## Statement of Purpose

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

## Editorial Address

Seeds of Hope is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James; Waco, Texas 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: SeedsHope@aol.com.  
Web address: www.seedspublishers.org  
Copyright © 2002

Material in this packet is for the use of the purchasing faith community to enhance worship and increase awareness in economic justice issues. ISSN 0194-4495

Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501C/3 nonprofit tax status. All contributions above the subscription rate are fully tax-deductible.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version, Copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

# In the Breaking of the Bread in this worship packet:

a brainstorming session-page 3  
bulletin art-page 4  
"Knowing Jesus in the Breaking of Bread"  
a sermon-page 5  
"How He Broke the Bread"  
a dramatic reading-page 8  
more bulletin art-page 8  
"Remind Us of Your Face"  
a litany-page 9  
Quotes, Poems, & Pithy Sayings-page 10  
bulletin art-page 11  
"A Place at the Table"  
a World Communion service-page 12  
"Telling Stories at the Table"  
a sermon-page 16  
"A Feast Fit for the World"  
a children's sermon-page 19  
plus  
a Hunger Emphasis place mat  
a 40-day Hunger Emphasis calendar

## a word about this packet

These materials are offered to you on clean, unattached pages so that you can more easily photocopy anything you wish to duplicate. We are constantly looking for ways to make the pages more attractive and easier for you to photocopy. Feel free to copy any of this, including art, and adapt these tools to your needs.

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

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

For more on how we have tried to "flesh out" our theme, see the brainstorming session on page 3.

# A Brainstorming Session

## from editors and friends

This packet is designed for congregations who have done hunger emphases before, who are thoroughly familiar with Matthew 25 and Amos 8 and Isaiah 59 (and possibly don't hear them any more). For congregations just starting out with hunger issues, we would probably suggest one of the older Hunger Emphasis worship packets.

This one, while it is definitely about hunger and God's commandments to care for hungry people, is more—well, sneaky is a word that comes to mind, but perhaps it's a little srrong. You have heard writers say that certain writings take on a life of their own and insist on being what they decide to be—not what the writer had in mind at all. This is what happened here. One of my friends suggested that this is how the Holy Spirit works. I hope that's the case here.

The theme of this emphasis, “In the Breaking of the Bread,” is taken from the sermon by Clyde Tilley on page 5, “Knowing Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread.” We have dived into the passage from Luke 24 about the “Walk to Emmaus” and touched on several other gospel passages about Jesus eating with his friends and followers. We have included a dramatic reading (appropriate for youth) that we hope complements Clyde's sermon.

We have also included a whole subtheme for World Communion Sunday (or any other Sunday—or day of the week, for that matter.) To help with that, we have gone to Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians about observing the Lord's Supper in a proper manner, as well as the parable of the Prodigal Son, the institution of the Lord's Supper in Luke, and various other gospel stories. Dawn Ripley's delightful sermon, “Telling Stories at the Table,” goes all over the gospels for its references. Mark McClintock has once again given us a children's sermon—this time in the form of a dialogue.

To go with these two presentations, we have endeavored to put together a communion service with an emphasis on global hunger issues. There is a good deal of brainstorming in the “Getting Ready for a World Communion Service” beginning on page 12, with preparation for international communion tables, a collage to be done by youth (and other creative people), and some ideas about music for the service.

As in previous Hunger Emphasis packets, you will find a placemat to use during a hunger meal or for any time you want to emphasize hunger issues. It contains some information from World Food Day that should be

helpful to your congregations. You will also find our annual Hunger Emphasis calendar which was compiled by Holly Vargo. Again, we have tried to incorporate timeless elements from the past calendars with new ideas and new resources.

The art on the cover is used with permission from Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco, Texas. Other art was created especially for you by Rebecca Ward, a student at the University of Texas in Austin; Sharon Rollins, a counselor in Waco, Texas, and Sally Lynn Askins, a costume and design professor at Baylor University.

Special thanks go to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, for financial sponsorship of all of the research, writing, and design that went into this packet. Also special thanks go to the Brookview Church of Christ in Waco, Texas, who are temporarily housing the Seeds offices.

We hope you will enjoy using this packet, and perhaps you will be energized by introducing hunger issues without beating anyone over the head with the old “standby” scriptures. —lkc

art by Placid Stuckenscheider, OSB



# bulletin art

The growing millions of hungry people in our world are both a judgment upon our overstuffed affluence and an opportunity that presses urgently upon us. When nearly ten million people in our land, over one-third of them children, live in households experiencing



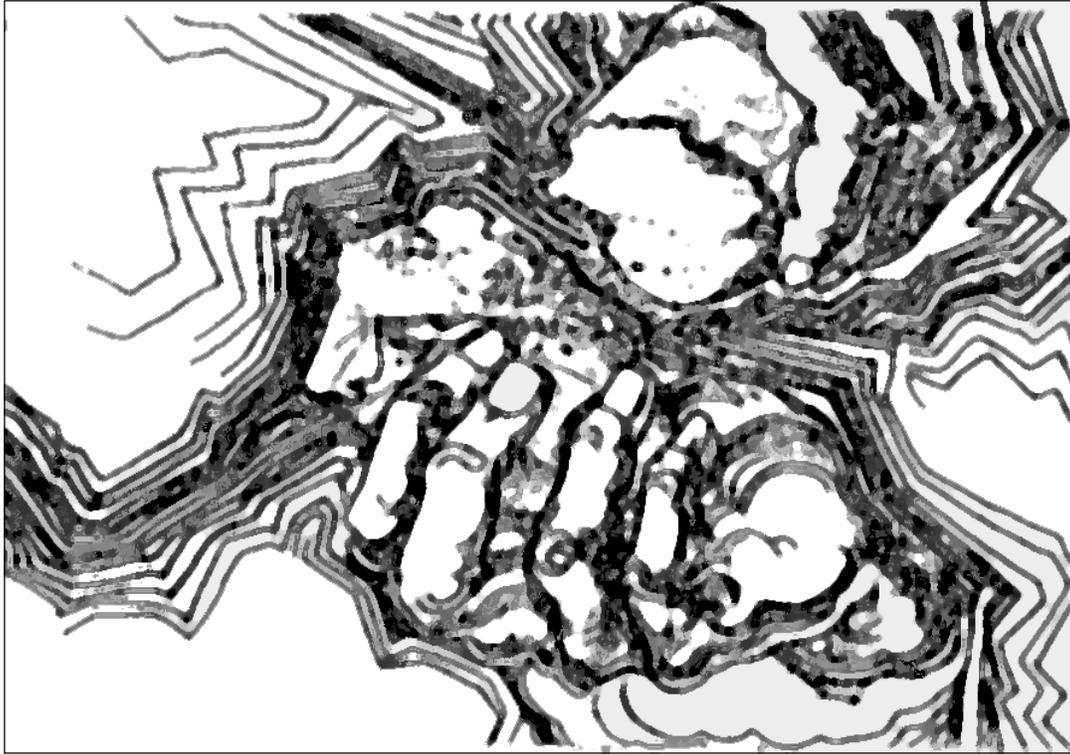
hunger, Jesus is present demanding a response. When one in ten households in our affluent nation reports that its access to food is extremely limited or uncertain, Jesus is present awaiting a response. An estimated eight hundred and twenty-eight million people on our planet are undernourished.

Christ is shown in mercy when his people break bread to them; he is shown in judgment when we do not. Never did Lazarus press closer to the rich man's door than does the hungry world that presses its claim upon us in Jesus' name right now. God's people ought to break bread to them in sacrificial giving, in political action, and in economic sharing of our abundant resources. The challenge is to find the way rather than bemoan our helplessness.

—W. Clyde Tilley

art by Sally Lynn Askins

# Knowing Jesus in



## the Breaking of Bread

a sermon by W. Clyde Tilley  
(*Luke 24:30-35*)

Strange it is that they would not have recognized him— these two people who walked together on the road to Emmaus. For two days they had thought of little else. They spoke painfully of him as they walked. Their hearts ached for his loss. Then he joined them on the road. He conversed with them and they heard his voice. They saw him as he walked and extended him an invitation to be their guest. He accepted their hospitality— and still they did not know him.

Stranger still it is that they should come to know him in this particular way: He broke bread and they knew him. What an astounding source of revelation! More articulate than the words he had spoken was his breaking of bread. More vivid than his countenance was his breaking of bread. More penetrating than the scriptures he expounded was his breaking of bread.

Or maybe it was not so strange after all. How often they had seen him break bread! Jesus had distinguished himself as a hearty and even controversial eater. He brought down the wrath of the religious elite upon himself because of his dietary customs. He ate food with sinners and tax

collectors in violation of the sanctimonious taboos of his day. When he was hungry on the Sabbath, he proceeded to help himself to the standing but forbidden grain and to lead his disciples to do the same. Choosing the celebrative feast rather than the somber fast as the hallmark of his ministry, he had actually been accused of being a glutton.

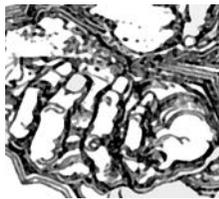
In fact, he enjoyed a good meal so well that he felt everyone should be entitled to adequate provision. When the multitude had heard him eagerly throughout a long day, he refused to send them away until they had been fed. His followers had seen him take a little boy's lunch of two fishes and five loaves, bless this food, break it, and then distribute it to a throng of people that numbered in thousands. He had actually taught his disciples that when they fed another who was hungry, it was as though they were doing it to him.

On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus had insisted upon eating the Passover meal with his disciples. After supper, in what was to be his last meal with them before his death, he once again broke bread with them saying, "This is my body." He shared the cup with them and likened the wine to his blood, soon to be shed.

These were among the flood of memories these men brought with them to the table at Emmaus. Thus it is less mysterious but no less moving that we read: “When he was at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him...” (Luke 24:30-31). They came to know Jesus, their risen Lord, in the breaking of bread.

This event on a Sunday in Emmaus need not be an isolated event of revelation. Nor has it been. It has been the

**When bread is broken, Jesus is known in the hands that break the bread. He is known in the hungry who take the bread. He is known in the bread that is broken and taken.**



testimony of the centuries that not only the devout have recognized him anew but that also those of the world have come to know him when bread is broken. When bread is broken, Jesus is known in the hands that break the bread. He is known in the hungry who take the bread. He is known in the bread that is broken and taken.

First, *he is known in the hands that break the bread.* Jesus was moved with compassion when he encountered human needs—like hunger. The Great Liberator came to set people free from every sort of bondage—including hunger, and including the greed or complacency that withholds bread from others. With his own hands he solicited bread, received bread, and broke bread. With his own words he called people to follow and participate in his life-giving, life-sustaining ministry.

He still calls us today and judges us when we fail to respond. In his name, in his place, in his stead he calls us to give a cup of water, a piece of bread. As his earliest followers wrote:

- *If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go and be filled,” without giving them the things they needed for the body, what does it profit? (James 2:15-16)*
- *If any one has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? (1 John 3:17)*

Deprived now as he is of his earthly body for soliciting and breaking this bread, Christ did not intend to be left without a body by which this same life sustaining ministry of giving bread could be continued. His ministry has not been completed. Luke told the story in his gospel “of all

that Jesus *began* to do and teach” (Acts 1:1), but a whole separate volume—the book of Acts—was needed to tell how Christ *continued* to do and teach these same things through his second body—the church. In saving us, Christ is incorporating us into himself. We become people in Christ. We become his new body—the body of Christ.

Quite frequently the apostle Paul spoke of the church as a body, but most notably he speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 12. He speaks not only of the unity of the body (v. 4), and the diversity of the body (v. 14), but he speaks also of the identity of the body (v. 27). It is Christ’s body that we comprise. Although metaphor, this is no mere metaphor. Christ takes his identity with his church seriously. Encountering Saul on the road to Damascus, he asked Saul who had never seen the historic Jesus, “Why do you persecute *me*?” He proceeded to identify himself by saying “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” Christ’s identity with his church is so real and personal that for Saul to persecute the church was to persecute the Christ.

We who are in him constitute no less than the very body of Christ. Our ministry performed in his name is no less than an extension, a projection of the incarnation of God in Christ. If there is a difference between these two bodies, it is one of degree rather than of kind. God who perfectly incarnated himself in Jesus of Nazareth is incarnated, however imperfectly, in those who bear his name.

Though by now these words may seem trite, they are no less true:

*God has no hands but our hands  
To do God’s work today.  
God has no feet but our feet  
To take God on the way.*

—Annie Johnson Flint

It is ours to be the continuing agents of our Lord’s ministry, including the ministry of breaking bread for our hungry world. The early church broke bread both in joyous celebration and in equalizing distribution “as any had need” (Acts 2: 44-46). Across the years and the miles, Paul gathered funds from the adequately-fed Gentile churches so that the impoverished and famished saints of Judea might be fed, “that there may be equality” (2 Corinthians 8:14). We are still God’s agents of ministry to make Christ known in the hands that break bread.

In addition to being known in the hands that break bread, *Christ is also known in the hungry who take the bread.* Just as he identifies himself with the blessed hands that bless and break bread for the hungry, so he also identifies himself with the hungry who live when we break bread and who starve when we do not.

A few days before his death Jesus spoke of the great judgment of the Son of Man before whom the nations of the worlds shall be gathered (Matthew 25:20-46). Those who are present shall be separated into sheep on his right hand and goats on his left hand. To those on his right his

words shall be, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food..." In utter surprise the righteous shall answer: "When did we see you hungry and feed you." And the king shall respond: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it unto me."

But that is not all of the story. To those on the left, the King will say: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food..." Then they shall answer, "Lord when did we see you hungry... and did not minister to you?" His rejoinder shall be: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not unto one of the least of these, you did it not to me." Surely we cannot read this story without drawing the obvious conclusion: Jesus identifies with the poor and the hungry and he is known in their faces. He is known in their *glad* faces when bread is broken. He is known in their *tearful* faces when bread is withheld.

Conrad, a kindly German cobbler, lived alone. One day, according to Edwin Markham's well-known poem, "How the Great Guest Came," when Conrad received a revelation that Christ would be a guest in his home, his joy knew no bounds. He busied himself feverishly with preparation for the Holy Visitor. But he was not so busy that he could not help three needy strangers who came intermittently to his door throughout the day—a cold beggar, a hungry woman, and a homeless child.

The day sped on and still the expected guest did not appear. As the day slipped away, Conrad knelt in puzzled prayer: "Lord, what has delayed you?" Out of the silence came a voice:

*Conrad, be not dismayed, for  
Three times I came to your friendly door  
Three times my shadow was on your floor.  
I was the beggar with the bruised feet;  
I was the woman you gave to eat  
I was the child on the homeless street.*

The growing millions of hungry people in our world are both a judgment upon our overstuffed affluence and an opportunity that presses urgently upon us. When nearly ten million people in our land, over one-third of them children, live in households experiencing hunger, Jesus is present demanding a response. When one in ten households in our affluent nation reports that its access to food is extremely limited or uncertain, Jesus is present awaiting a response. An estimated eight hundred and twenty-eight million people on our planet are undernourished.

Christ is shown in mercy when his people break bread to them; he is shown in judgment when we do not. Never did Lazarus press closer to the rich man's door than does the hungry world that presses its claim upon us in Jesus' name right now. God's people ought to break bread to them in sacrificial giving, in political action, and in economic

sharing of our abundant resources. The challenge is to find the way rather than bemoan our helplessness.

Finally, *Jesus is known also in the bread that is broken and taken.* "The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it, and said: 'This is my body which is broken for you.'" (1 Corinthians 11:23-24). In the very bread itself Jesus is revealed. When God's people gather together to share the

**Just as he identifies himself  
with the blessed hands that  
bless and break bread for the  
hungry, so he also identifies  
himself with the hungry who  
live when we break bread and  
who starve when we do not.**

common loaf and to partake of the common cup, Jesus is present—revealed.

But do not think that these are words alone for the cloistered sanctuary or the sheltered altar. They are his words also for the dirty hovel and the lengthening breadlines and the makeshift canteen. Whenever bread is broken in his name, he is being recognized.

It was not in an upper room, aloof from the common people but perhaps on a grassy knoll the day after Jesus fed the masses that he said to them, "My father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world...He who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:32-35). The church may preach God's love with great eloquence, yet there is no eloquence so persuasive as that expressed when God's people as Christ's body feed the hungry in this world. They are the ones with whose needs Christ fully identifies himself. Then does the loaf make itself known as the Lord of the Emmaus road. We rightly sing

*Bread of heaven, on thee we feed,  
For thy flesh is meat indeed;  
Ever let our souls be fed  
With the true and living bread.*

God feeds his people not only that we may be filled but that we may feed. We feed in order that he who "is all and in all" (Col. 3:11) may be known. And how is he all and in all? He is the hands that break the bread. He is the hungry who take the bread. He is the bread that is broken and taken. —Clyde Tilley has been a college professor and has more recently served as a pastor of the Piedmont Baptist Church in Dandridge, Tennessee. His writings on hunger issues have appeared in *Seeds* publications over a span of many years. This sermon was originally printed in *Christian Ethics Today* and is used with permission.

# How He Broke the Bread

## a dramatic reading for youth

by Katie Cook

FIRST READER: Who was this man from Galilee? Was he the one? Several times people asked him that. "How do we know you're really the one?"

SECOND READER: Yes; how do we recognize him?

THIRD READER: I don't know; there was just something different about him. You knew somehow that he was set apart, and you wanted to be around him as much as you could.

FOURTH READER: There were lots of people who followed him around, listening to him and watching him, and trying to get close to him.

FIRST READER: Somebody said it was the way the dust motes danced around his feet when he walked.<sup>1</sup>

THIRD READER: Somebody said it was the way he talked, the way he touched people.

FOURTH READER: But I think it was the fact that he was so...real. He was so real that he seemed, well, it's hard to describe what I mean. So real he was, I don't know, holy or something.

SECOND READER: I think I know what you mean. Like when he went to people's houses and ate with them, and laughed and told stories. And yet they came away changed forever.

THIRD READER: Even Zacchaeus; do you remember that? That little weasel. I couldn't believe it! Jesus went to his house and had supper with him.

FOURTH READER: And then Zacchaeus gave everything away. All of that money he had hoarded all those years.

SECOND READER: A lot of people did that when they got to know Jesus.

THIRD READER: The time I remember, though, is when Jesus is sitting beside the lake late one night, making breakfast for the gang.

FIRST READER: The Light of the World getting a fire going for breakfast by sheltering a spark with a pair of cupped hands and blowing on it.<sup>2</sup>

FOURTH READER: We knew him in the everyday, ordinary—and yet somehow extraordinary, and maybe even cosmological—act of sharing food.

THIRD READER: Yes! Do you remember when Cleopas and his friend were walking to Emmaus? It was after Jesus was executed, and then there were stories about people seeing him alive. They were walking along, and this stranger showed up out of nowhere and walked with them.

SECOND READER: Yeah; can you imagine? It was their leader, and they didn't even recognize him!

FOURTH READER: Not until they talked him into staying for supper. There was something about that, the way he broke the bread.

FIRST READER: That's what they said; it was the way he broke the bread.

SECOND READER: Maybe they were onto something. Maybe that's how we recognize him.

THIRD READER: Maybe that's how we know each other. In the breaking of the bread.

FIRST READER: The sacred in the ordinary. The sharing of food.

ALL READERS: (pensively, thoughtfully) The sharing of food...

1. This is from Canadian musician/poet Bruce Cockburn's "Creation Dream," a song on the album *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaw*.

2. This is from the monograph on *Darkness in Whistling in the Dark* by Frederick Buechner.



art by Sally Lynn Askins

# Remind Us of Your Face

## A Responsive Call to Awareness

by Daniel G. Bagby

LEADER: Return our minds and hearts  
to gratitude, O Lord!

PEOPLE: We live comfortable lives,  
enjoy many freedoms,  
share abundant resources;  
and struggle daily not to lead  
self-centered and protected lives;

LEADER: Teach us again the truth  
about ourselves:  
that we were born  
for more than self-entertainment,  
for active, and not passive, care;

PEOPLE: Teach us, who so often  
remain spectators in life,  
to cast aside our carelessness  
and fear of service;

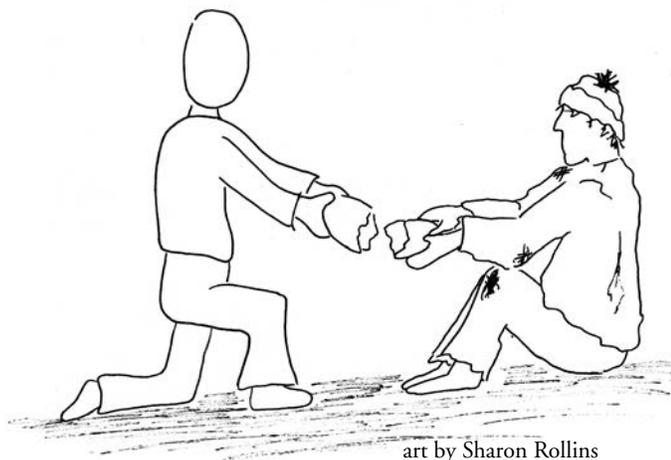
LEADER: Remind us of Your face in others,  
when we see the eyes of hunger,  
abandon, and hopelessness;  
help us to recognize Your features  
in the friendless stare  
of a neighbor;

PEOPLE: Open our hearts  
to Your silent presence  
in the want of those  
who tread the city streets;

LEADER: And teach us once again  
that You were not crucified  
in a clean cathedral  
between two candles,

PEOPLE: but on a garbage dump  
between two abandoned thieves;

ALL: That we may share Your passion  
for changing wretchedness  
into treasured living.



art by Sharon Rollins

—Dan Bagby is a dean and director of pastoral care studies at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

# Quotes, poems, & pithy sayings

Moral action is most authentic when it is undertaken for someone unlike oneself.

—Mark Long, Director of Baylor University's Middle Eastern Studies Program

*Seen on a billboard in Dexter, Missouri:*

That 'Love Thy Neighbor' thing...I meant it.

—God.

The way we overcome poverty is with humanity. We must stop seeing the poor as objects to be 'dealt with.'

—Fred Ball, Minister General, Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

The ideal of a life free from suffering, the illusion of painlessness, destroys people's ability to feel anything...The more people anticipate the elimination of suffering, the less strength they have actually to oppose it. Whoever deals with his personal suffering only in the

way our society has taught him—through illusion, minimization, suppression, apathy—will deal with societal suffering in the same way.

—Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*

The Christ head, the Christ face—what man will ever paint, chisel, or carve it? When finished, it would float

and gleam, cry and laugh with every face born human. And how can you crowd all the tragic and comic faces of mankind into one face?

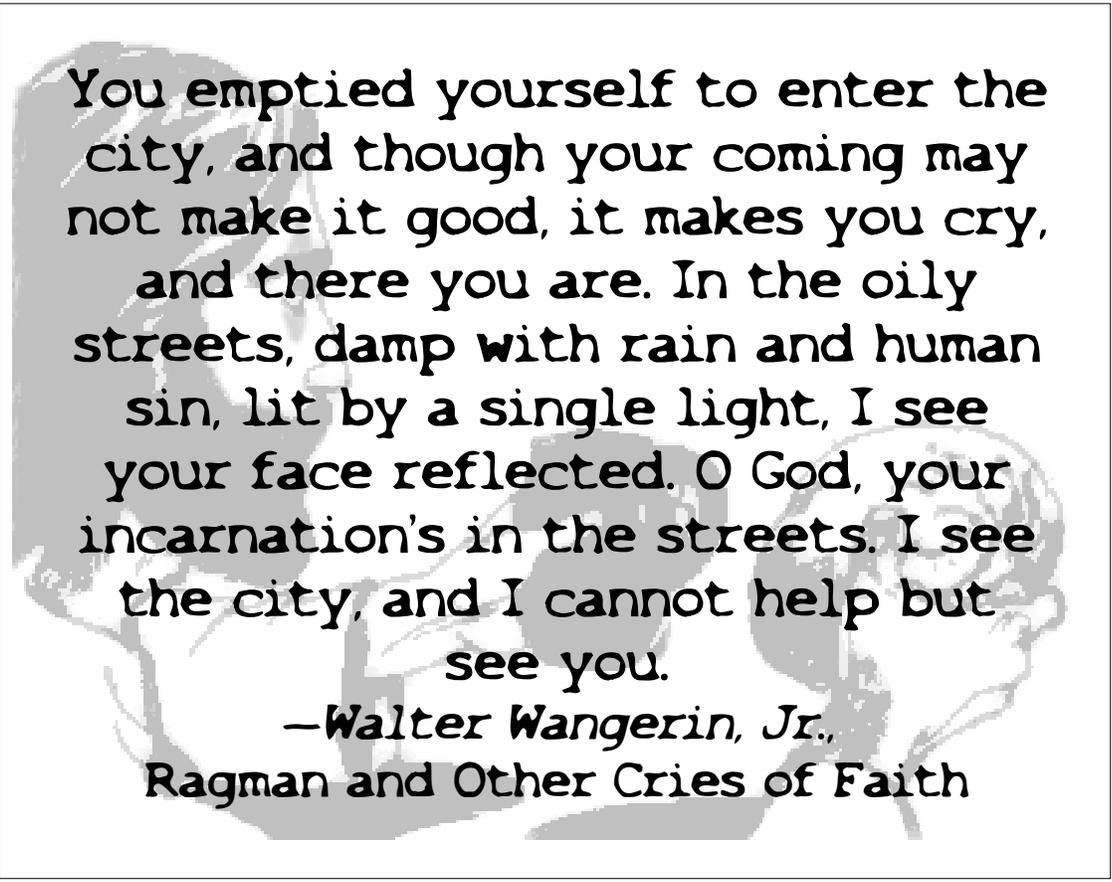
—Carl Sandburg

We have worshipped the god of pleasure only to discover that thrills play out and sensations are short-lived. We have bowed before the god of money only to learn that there are such things as love and friendship that money cannot buy and that in a world of possible depressions, stock market crashes, and bad business investments, money is a rather uncertain deity.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lord, give us eyes to see each other and ourselves more nearly as thou seest us, to see beneath each face we meet, and beneath even our own faces, thy face.

*Frederick Buechner, The Hungering Dark*



You emptied yourself to enter the city, and though your coming may not make it good, it makes you cry, and there you are. In the oily streets, damp with rain and human sin, lit by a single light, I see your face reflected. O God, your incarnation's in the streets. I see the city, and I cannot help but see you.

—Walter Wangerin, Jr.,

*Ragman and Other Cries of Faith*

# bulletin art

...the Lord's Supper is the centre of the Church and of its various acts of worship. Here the Church is truly itself, because it is wholly with its Lord; here the



art by Sally Lynn Askins

Church of Christ is gathered for its most intimate fellowship, as sharers in a meal. In this fellowship they draw strength for their service in the world. Because this meal is a meal of recollection and thanksgiving, the Church is essentially a community which remembers and thanks. And because this meal is a meal of covenant and fellowship, the Church is essentially a community which loves without ceasing. And because finally this meal is an anticipation of the eschatological meal, the Church is essentially a community which looks to the future with confidence. Essentially, therefore, the Church must be a meal-fellowship, a *koinonia* or *communio*, must be a fellowship with Christ with Christians, or it is not the Church of Christ. In the Lord's Supper it is stated with incomparable clarity that the Church is the *ecclesia*, the congregation, the community of God.

—Hans Küng, *The Church*

# A Place at the Table

## Getting Ready for a World Communion Service

by Katie Cook

### Things You Might Need

This group of resources for a world communion service are designed for World Communion Sunday in October, but can be used for any worship service you choose, at any time of year you choose. We have written up an order of worship, with the accompanying sermon by Dawn Ripley. We encourage you to freely adapt these ideas to your own congregation.

We suggest that you look at the order of worship on page 13 and see if you have the suggested hymns, or decide if you would rather substitute your own ideas. The service calls for the playing of a Rich Mullins song, "I See You" from the CD of that name. Depending on the size of your congregation, you may need more than one song. If you have a choir that learns quickly, you might teach them the song and ask them to sing it softly, *a cappella*, as the congregation continues to participate. Otherwise, instrumental music would probably work best. Your pianist or organist could choose some music, or you could ask a youth to play oboe, flute, or acoustic guitar.

You will need at least four tables, some international artifacts and fabric, and some dry food. (We suggest that you make sure the food gets used in some way after the service is over; ask people to take it home and cook it, or give it to a local soup kitchen.) You will need four speakers to read the call to worship and the invitation to the table.

At **Table One** (Zimbabwe) you can arrange an African display. Find some batik cloth, or fabric that looks African, for your tablecloth. Then find some ebony statuettes or wooden carvings of African animals or masks. (You might want to display a map of Africa somewhere on the table.) To represent the food of Zimbabwean people, you could display a bowl of dried hominy corn and a pitcher of water. It would be meaningful if, during communion, you send the people to the different tables for the elements. If you choose to do this, you will want to leave room for the elements. Some congregations might decide to use the food of these peoples as the elements. This is where your own needs must take precedent.

If you decide to use Zimbabwean food instead of bread and wine, we would suggest something like hominy grits. This would resemble their staple dish, *nhopi*, a kind of corn porridge. You could give the congregants plastic



art by Sharon Rollins

spoons to dip it with, and small cups of water. (If someone in your group knows how to make *nhopi*, that's even better.)

For **Table Two** (Chiapas), you could use a colorful Mexican serapi or cloth, and pottery or handcrafts from Mexico. You could display some dried corn, and serve corn tortillas and water for the "elements."

For **Table Three** (Rural Mississippi), you could use a checkered cloth and objects that evoke thoughts of the rural South. (Old, cracked Blue Willow dishes would work—along with "jelly glasses.") For elements, you could use cornbread and sweet iced tea.

For **Table Four** (Cambodia) you would need to find an Asian cloth and artifacts. For the food you could display *bok choy* (an Asian vegetable), dried rice, and baby corn. For the "elements" you could serve torn-up rice cakes and water.

You may choose to use only two or three of these tables, or you may choose to use all four. You may be studying another country or population, in which case you might want to represent that country instead. Or you may want to "branch out" and add more tables. Be creative. Don't make it too difficult. Get a committee together and brainstorm.

## An Activity for Youth and Others

This is an activity that should precede your special communion service by at least a couple of weeks, since it will probably take two or more sessions to finish. It should be especially appealing to youth (and other creative people). You will need lots of magazines and booklets—anything that is a source of pictures of people eating together. Try to find sources that will include pictures of people from different countries (you could try old mission education magazines.)

You will also need sources of large words, unless you want to type up and print your own. Ask your youth to find words that are connected to people eating together: community, food, nourishment, family, thankfulness, togetherness, etc. (You could also have someone do hand lettering for your words. First, however, you should organize a session in which your youth choose a list of words and phrases.)

Here's an idea: ask the group to prominently display (at the top or bottom of the collage) one of the following phrases:

- Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." (from Luke 9)

- "In remembrance of me, feed the poor." (from "In Remembrance of Me" by Beryl Red and Regan Courtney)

"We know each other in the breaking of the bread, and we know God in the breaking of the bread." (Dorothy Day)

Or you can come up with your own, to go with the theme of your communion service.

Next, ask the group to find and cut out pictures of all kinds of people eating together. (Some of them may want to depict someone eating alone as well. If so, ask them to find words to go with that. Encourage them to put their own "spin" on the interpretation.) They will then glue the pictures and words into a giant collage. Encourage them to make the design their own, but remind them that this is for the entire church to see and ask them to keep this in mind.

You will need butcher paper or some other large sheet of paper. Once the collage is done, attach it to a wall in your foyer—or you might want to make it vertical and turn it into a large "banner" to hang from the sanctuary ceiling behind the pulpit.



art by Sally Lynn Askins

**There is inside of me  
an unknown quantity  
left unexplored—  
and waiting  
for the dawn.  
But will the day  
reveal the  
hidden  
treasure?  
Only if  
I overcome  
the deep suspicion  
that I'm overrated  
and have less to offer  
an impoverished world.  
-Daniel G. Bagby**

# A Place at the Table

## An Order of Worship for a World Communion Service

by Katie Cook

### Call to Worship

**First Speaker:** Come, all you who hunger and thirst for justice, all you who are weighed down by life,

**Second Speaker:** Come and sit together at the table of the Lord.

**Third Speaker:** Come, all you who are oppressed, and all you who cry for the oppressed,

**Fourth Speaker:** Come and sit together at the table of the Lord.

### Invocation

#### Hymn

Let Us Break Bread Together  
(Hymn #776 in *The Worshipping Church*)

Old Testament Reading  
Deuteronomy 14:22-29

### Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

### Meditation on Community

We cannot love God unless  
we love each other.

We know God in the breaking of bread,  
and we know each other  
in the breaking of bread,  
and we are not alone anymore.

Heaven is a banquet, and life is, too  
— even with a crust —  
as long as there is companionship.

We have all known loneliness.  
We have learned that the only solution  
is love.

And love comes with community.  
— Dorothy Day

#### Hymn

“A Place at the Table”  
(Hymn #2 in *Sing Justice! Do Justice!*)

### Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 11:17-26

### Meditation on the Supper

And then I find that you bring divisions to worship— you come together, and instead of eating the Lord’s Supper, you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out, and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk. I can’t believe it! Don’t you have your own homes to eat and drink in? Why would you stoop to desecrating God’s church? Why would you actually shame God’s poor?

—1 Corinthians 11:20-22 (The Message)

### Children's Sermon

“A Feast Fit for the World”

by Mark McClintock  
(see page 19)

### Sermon

“Telling Stories at the Table”

by Dawn M. Ripley  
(see page 16)

### Invitation to the Table

**First Speaker:** My name is Shepard. I am a man of 32 years. I live in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. I work in an orphanage downtown. We go through the streets of our city and find children who have run away or have been abandoned. We bring them to our orphanage and make sure they have food, clothing, shelter, education, and—most of all—love. People in our country, when they have it, eat things like peanut butter stew and salted ground nuts. More likely, though, they will eat *nhopi*, a kind of corn meal porridge, sometimes flavored with pumpkin.

Our country is suffering from an unstable economy, political unrest, racial tensions, and drought. Our country is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, but things are sad and frightening. This is happening in several surrounding countries as well. I

am most concerned for our children. As you come to the table, remember the children of southern Africa, and all of the orphaned children in the world.

**Second Speaker:** My name is Alicia. I am 26 years old. I live in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, with my husband and five children. The mountains of Chiapas are beautiful, and the people are courageous. But there is much suffering here. The landowners are sometimes very cruel to the *campesinos*—the peasants. Some whole villages of *campesinos* have been forced to leave their homes and live in refugee camps. There has been much bloodshed between the *federales*, the Mexican troops, and a group of revolutionary soldiers called Zapatistas. Our corn crops are sometimes burned by soldiers. We have a shortage of corn, and this is our main food. We hope there will be enough corn to make *tortillas* for our families, but as long as there is fighting in our mountains, there will be hunger. As you come to the table, remember those of my people who do not have enough corn.

**Third Speaker:** My name is Nim. I am 45 years old and a rice farmer in Cambodia. My country is still rebuilding from decades of warfare in which a million of our people were executed or died from the hardships of exile. Our country, which is a little smaller than your state of Oklahoma, is mostly forest and rice paddies. Although one-third of our people live in poverty, things are gradually getting better, as we begin to farm more land and produce more food. People are working to remove the landmines that have blanketed our land, and also to rebuild irrigation systems. Even now our farmers are planting rice in dry fields and hoping for rain. Our people have been through much sorrow. As you come to the table, remember us as we work to overcome the many years of war, as we work until all of us have enough food.

**Fourth Speaker:** My name is Rosie. I am 15 years old, and I live with my family on a farm in Mississippi. My father is what they used to call a share cropper. That means we live on somebody else's land, and we work to get a small share of the profits from the crops—mostly cotton. Our state has a bad name sometimes, with the highest numbers of poor people and the lowest numbers of people being helped. I also learned that most of the poor people in the United States are country people like me. I have to say that life is sometimes hard. Sometimes we miss a meal, maybe

twice a week, maybe more, because there's no food, and no money to buy food. I hope that when I grow up I can get out of this way of living. As you come to the table, remember young people like me.

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

## Music for Coming to the Table

"I See You" by Rich Mullins

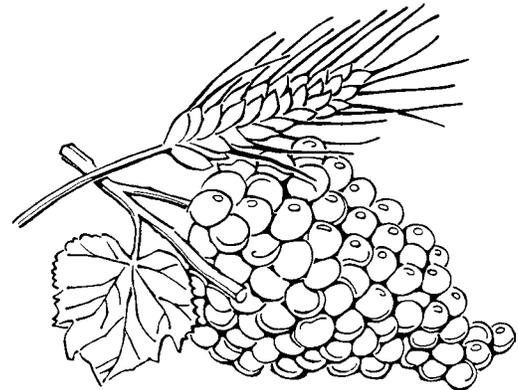
(See "Getting Ready for a World Communion Service" on page 12 for more ideas.)

## Benediction

As the congregation finishes partaking of the elements, ask them to pass the peace of Christ and dismiss them with the following benediction:

*My sisters and brothers, go from this place in peace, and may the spirit of the living God empower you and me to look for the face of Christ everywhere we go. Let us go into the world and break bread. Let us go into the world and not grow weary until all God's children are fed. Amen.*

art by Placid Stuckenscheider, OSB



## A Blessing for Bread

**Through your goodness, we have this bread to offer which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.**

—liturgical blessing from Nothing Sacred

# Telling Stories at the Table

a sermon for a world communion service

by Dawn M. Ripley



*Author's note: One of the translations drawn upon herein uses some startling language. Rest assured that the author, Clarence Jordan, was one of the civil rights movement's most daring advocates. The language he uses was intended to shock and surprise, much the same way that many of Jesus' stories did when he first told them. Therefore I have decided to quote from Jordan's translation precisely the way in which it was published in 1969, without amendment.*

**M**ost of what I remember from my childhood Sundays I have either forgotten or would just as soon forget: the frantic scrambling of getting three less-than-eager children cleaned up and dressed up and to Sunday School on time, the overwrought prayers of well-meaning Sunday School teachers trying to save my soul, the interminable sermon, and the endless refrains of "Just as I Am." But I also remember Sunday dinner.

Uncle Currey would head into the kitchen at 4:00 A.M. to get the meal started; yeast rolls took time to rise, and he would have been embarrassed to offer less than fried chicken and another meat or two. Then aunt Louise would join him, making sure that the meal would include fried potatoes, green beans, creamed corn, fresh tomatoes, butter beans, and anything else that their neighbors' gardens might be yielding.

And aunt Louise would apologize if she hadn't made time for a green salad and a congealed salad, rounded out

with a raisin or chocolate or butterscotch pie and a jam cake or angel-food cake, and sweet tea that would lock the jaw of any unsuspecting Yankee to help it down.

A feast, offered after church 'most every Sunday, open to any guest that might happen by, with a standing invitation to any and all family members—just show up on the backdoor steps. Conversation during the meal was

**Why, of all the things our Christian forebears could have made high and holy, did they choose something as common, as mundane, as hopelessly necessary, as feeding our faces? Maybe it's because that's where the stories that define us are best told...**

routine and predictable—who was ailing, whose crops were thriving, who’d just gotten married, who’d just had another boy—and God help you if you thought you were leaving the table when the main dishes were cleared. With belts eased a notch, Baptist coffee poured, slabs of cake and pie served—and the children excused, at last—the real stories began.

Why, of all the things our Christian forebears could have made high and holy, did they choose something as common, as mundane, as hopelessly necessary, as feeding our faces? And why on earth do Christian churches around the world choose communion to celebrate our unity in the midst of astounding diversity? Why a meal? Why a table? Maybe it’s because that’s where the stories that define us are best told, and today we get to hear one of

**I imagine that, in the dark days and weeks, then months and years, that followed Jesus’ death, folks who knew him best, and then others who wished they had, would get together, probably over a meal, and try to remember his stories about the Kingdom of God.**

the best ones. Listen closely, and imagine Jesus’ Aramaic with just a hint of Arkansas twang, told between bites of jam cake washed down with weak coffee:

**N**ow all the “nigger-lovers” and black people were gathering around him to listen. And the white church people and Sunday school teachers were raising Cain, saying, “This fellow associates with black people and eats with them.” So Jesus gave them this Comparison [Jordan’s synonym for “parable”]:

“A man had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Dad, give me my share of the business.’ So he split up the business between them. Not so long after that the young one packed up all his stuff and took off for a foreign land, where he threw his money away living like a fool. Soon he ran out of cash, and on top of that, the country was in a deep depression. So he was really hard up. He finally landed a job with one of the citizens of that country who sent him into the fields to feed hogs! And he was hungry enough to tank up on the slop the hogs were eating. Nobody was giving him even a hand-out.

“One day an idea bowled him over. ‘A lot of my father’s hired hands have more than enough bread to eat, and out here I’m starving in this depression. I’m gonna get up and go to my father and say, Dad, I’ve sinned against God and you, and am no longer fit to be called

*your son—just make me one of your hired hands.’*

“So he got up and came to his father. While he was some distance down the road, his father saw him and was moved to tears. He ran to him and hugged him and kissed him and kissed him.

“The boy said, ‘Dad, I’ve sinned against God and you, and I’m not fit to be your son any more.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘You all run quick and get the best suit you can find and put it on him. Get his family ring for his hand and some dress shoes for his feet. Then I want you to bring that stall-fed steer and butcher it, and let’s all eat and whoop it up, because this son of mine was given up for dead, and he’s still alive; he was lost and is now found.’ And they began to whoop it up.

“But his older son was out in the field. When he came in and got almost home, he heard the music and the dancing, and he called one of the little boys and asked him what in the world was going on. The little boy said, ‘Why, your brother has come home, and you daddy has butchered the stall-fed steer, because he got him back safe and sound.’ At this he blew his top, and wouldn’t go in. His father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look here, all these years I’ve slaved for you, and never once went contrary to your orders. And yet, at no time have you ever given me so much as a baby goat with which to pitch a party for my friends. But when this son of yours—who has squandered the business on whores—comes home, you butcher for him the stall-fed steer.’

“But he said to him, ‘My boy, my dear boy, you are with me all the time, and what’s mine is yours. But I just can’t help getting happy and whooping it up, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive; he was lost and has been found.’ (Clarence Jordan’s interpretative translation of Luke 15: 1, 11ff.(1))

**H**ave you ever stopped to think about just how much time Jesus spent eating and drinking and partying, and then telling stories about eating and drinking and partying? In fact, Jesus so thoroughly enjoyed eating and drinking that rumors started flying about his being a glutton and a drunkard (Mt. 11:19). The fact that he dared to dine with low life, the folks that no upstanding person would invite home for dinner after church, made him an outrageous affront to everything decent and orderly. Stories about a Kingdom where the undeserving are rewarded, stories that don’t end the way they’re supposed to—kept him off the a list of those invited to Jerusalem’s swankier dinner parties. But it was his cryptic words over a certain Passover meal that made that Supper his Last:

*And he took bread, and when he had given thanks*

he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22: 17-20, RSV).

To suggest that Jesus himself could become a proper sacrifice to replace the traditional offering of sacrificial animals was blasphemy, pure and simple. It was just the kind of rewriting of the Torah that the Temple leaders had been hoping against hope that Jesus would make—and it became the legal technicality that got him arrested, and killed.

**...this is the place that we learn whose children we are, and the names of all those aunts and uncles and cousins, and all their wild stories. This is the place we learn how to set the table, and learn that real hospitality means everyone—absolutely everyone—is welcome.**

I imagine that, in the dark days and weeks, then months and years, that followed Jesus' death, folks who knew him best, and then others who wished they had, would get together, probably over a meal, and try to remember his stories about the Kingdom of God. Eventually word spread, in the disciples' careful telling, that Jesus had said, "Do this when you remember me" the last time they ate with him.

Perhaps this is how the remembering was ritualized, and the ritual sacramentalized, until the Last Supper that we now celebrate became—as it had for those who heard Jesus' stories firsthand—a table spread somewhere between memory and hope. I wonder if that Last Supper was ritualized because the disciples wished they'd been listening harder to those stories, paying closer attention to the details. I wonder if, after hundreds of years of arguing over who's got the right version of the story, we're not still yearning for a sense of Jesus' presence, and recreating this Meal is often as close as we can get.

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

the words that survive and persist when doctrine fails.

And it has. The scattered believers and seekers who naturally gathered at table to talk and to remember and to dream became a church who spent centuries arguing over who can come to the table and who can't. Although the tables are many, the meal is the same: it is still the place where all those who lay claim to the way of Christ are struggling to learn the stories that will teach us how to follow that path.

Much the same way I did all those years ago at Currey and Louise's table, this is the place that we learn whose children we are, and the names of all those aunts and uncles and cousins, and all their wild stories. This is the place we learn how to set the table, and learn that real hospitality means everyone—absolutely everyone—is welcome.

This is the place that heartburn painfully reminds us that anger is the only unwelcome guest, and forgiveness the only antacid. This is the place where, perhaps, we are occasionally even given permission to eat dessert first! This is where we tell Jesus' stories over and over again, stories bursting at the seams with surprise, abundance, delight, and grace. This is where we're reminded, every time we break this bread and drink from this cup, that following the way of Jesus means taking seriously the very real possibility of God's shalom, even when those Kingdom stories seem outrageous—and the very thought of trying to live them seems nigh unto impossible.

The stories we hear and tell at this table are indeed just as elemental as the bread and the wine, and no mere wordplay; they are more than sufficient to feed our every hunger and slake our every thirst. At their best, these stories become the syllables on which we drape the sighs of our prayers, and by which we are emboldened to cry out, as Jesus taught us, "Abba, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

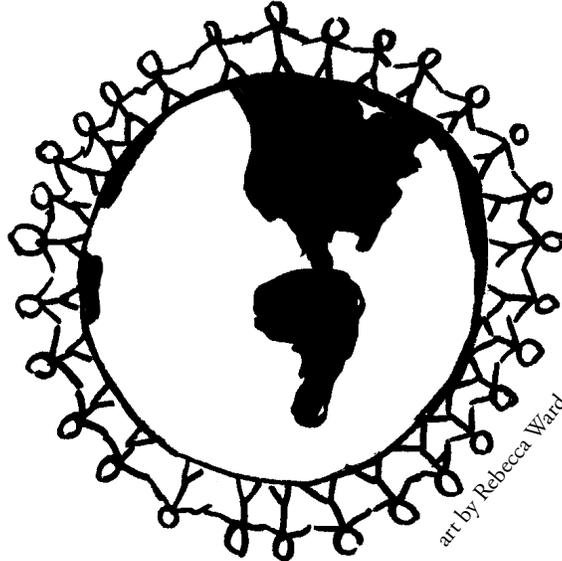
—Dawn Ripley cares for an 80-acre spot of land called Holdfast Farm, near Albany, Indiana, where she is working to create a retreat and sanctuary for spiritual pilgrims. This sermon was first presented at Covenant Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky in October 2001.

1. Clarence Jordan, *The Cotton Patch Version of Luke and Acts: Jesus' Doings and the Happenings—a Modern Translation with a Southern Accent, Fervent, Earthy, Rich in Humor* (Clinton, NY: New Win Publishing, 1969).

# 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?

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. Sometimes we call Communion, "The Lord's Supper." 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 people in the United States 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 a minister in Waco, Texas. In addition to being a skilled minister with children, he is an accomplished ventriloquist.

\* 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.