

2000

## English Files, Part 5

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### Recommended Citation

Kinsler, F. Ross and Kinsler, Gloria, "English Files, Part 5" (2000). *Ross Kinsler & Theological Education by Extension*. 65.

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### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HUNGER--Matthew 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY--Matthew 26:6-13

Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

### THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM--Luke 4:16-21

When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

## WHY PEOPLE ARE POOR

The January 1981 issue of *Sojourners* included a milestone article by Tom Hanks under the above title. It begins with an observation of North American churches' understanding of the causes of poverty.

*The major cause of poverty is widely assumed to be "underdevelopment." Other prominent factors are believed to be laziness . . . , vices such as drunkenness, and, however subtly and discretely expressed, the supposed racial and national inferiority of certain peoples. It's a very comforting worldview and one that our most popular politicians delight to propagate.*

Hanks himself, an Old Testament scholar with now some 40 years of ministry in Latin America, has examined extensively what the Bible teaches about the causes of poverty. It says precisely nothing about underdevelopment and very little about "laziness, drunkenness, and other assorted causes." On the other hand, the Bible contains "an overwhelming avalanche of texts that identify oppression as the cause of poverty."

*Oppression is a major category in the Bible's understanding and approach to reality. The Exodus has come to be recognized as playing a central role in the theology of the O.T., comparable to that of the cross in the N.T. And it was in the Exodus that a people God recognized as oppressed won their liberation.*

*It is no exaggeration to say that 90 per cent of biblical history is written from the perspective of a small, weak, oppressed, poor people. Small wonder, then, that oppression and the resulting poverty form so large a bulk of the literature that recounts the struggle.*

*. . . The Lord makes clear that in a class struggle between oppressors and oppressed God does not remain neutral or impartial: God takes the side of the oppressed-poor and acts decisively for their liberation (Ex. 3:7-10; 6:2-5).*

*The Bible . . . abundantly witnesses its awareness of antagonistic classes and the struggle of the poor against their oppressors, particularly in Exodus, the references to "enemies" in the Psalms, and in the eighth century prophets.*

Hanks notes the long absence of social analysis of the causes of poverty in First World biblical theology and calls for a re-reading of the Bible from the Third World.

*In Latin America's theological and spiritual revolution, biblical Christians often are accused of introducing class struggle into the churches. This is utterly naïve and shows we have understood neither biblical social analysis nor the most elementary facts that are a daily part of Third World poverty.*

What are we called to do as biblical people?

*We need to stop justifying our privileges and start trying to discover, unmask, and denounce the mechanisms of oppression that make and keep people poor. . . . We need to examine radically our understanding of the Christian gospel and Jesus Christ. We must ask whether Christ is presented as liberator of the oppressed or as champion of an unjust status quo, and whether our gospel is "good news to the poor" or a rationalization for the rich.*

**What is your own understanding of the causes of poverty--in the US and around the world?**

## THE FALSE GOSPEL OF GLOBALIZATION

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda's article, "Refuting the False Gospel of Globalization" (*The Other Side*, November-December 2002, 16--21), presents and unmasks the myths that undergird economic globalization, which is so powerful in our lives today.

*The pathos of the situation stuns. Christians are called, before all else except love for God, to love neighbor as self. This is our gift and vocation, our primary lifework here on earth, and many of us long to fulfill it. Yet we find ourselves locked into a global political economy that structures exploitation into the very fabric of our lives. We do not wish to buy shirts made in sweatshops, coffee grown on land that should feed its hungry children, or metal products from mines that have displaced thousands of people. We are not pleased to be pumping toxins into our planetary home, destroying the life systems upon which life depends. Yet, we do.*

*Our lives are intimately bound up in a moral-spiritual crisis of profound and unprecedented dimensions. The reigning model of economic globalization threatens earth's life systems, undermines cultural integrity and diversity, and endangers the lives of many who are poor in order that some might consume exorbitantly and a few accumulate vast wealth.*

*A haunting dimension of that crisis is our acquiescence to the prevailing form of globalization. As a society, we do not seriously consider its long-term social and ecological implications. We fail to resist it and forge alternatives. Many of us, insulated by privilege, remain blind to the suffering and ecological devastation wrought by current global trade and investment regimes. Others, while aware, feel muted, dwarfed by the situation, and powerless to shape economic lifestyles and structures that enhance human and planetary flourishing.*

What specific myths or ideological presuppositions drive this system of domination?

*The first "market myth" undergirding economic globalization is that growth benefits all.*

*A second myth at the heart of global free-market ideology is that human freedom and market freedom are inseparably linked.*

*A third key myth in the prevailing paradigm of economic globalization holds that the human being is, above all, an economic being—homo economicus.*

*Finally, free-market ideology includes the myth that corporate-and-finance-driven globalization is inevitable.*

Never before has any economic system produced such polarization between the few rich and the many poor. Genuine human freedom is not based on private property unconcerned for the common good and unfettered by "public accountability, scrutiny, regulation, and responsibility." Human beings are not simply autonomous, competitive, consumeristic, self-centered subjects but rather beings-in-community. Corporate-led economic globalization is not inevitable; it can be resisted and changed.

1. What evidence of the truth of these myths do we find in the media and among friends?
2. What evidence of the falsehood of these myths can we offer?

## CORPORATE-LED ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

No doubt there are many different dimensions of globalization, some of them of great benefit to humankind and planet Earth. But one of the most powerful dimensions of globalization, one that is having an enormous, negative impact on humankind and planet Earth, is what has been called "corporate-led economic globalization." One of the most prolific writers on this subject is David C. Korten, whose principle publications are *When Corporations Rule the World* (Kumarian Press, 2001) and *The Post Corporate World--Life after Capitalism* (Kumarian Press, 2000). Following are some of the critical questions he raises and responds to in the first book.

1. *Is "free trade" free? Is the "free market" free?* Neo-classical, neo-liberal, or libertarian "'free' market or 'free' trade policies they advocate do not free trade, markets, or people. Rather they free global corporations to plan and organize the world's economic affairs to the benefit of their bottom line, without regard to public consequences." (78)

2. *Does globalization increase competition?* "The argument that globalization increases competition is simply false. To the contrary, it strengthens tendencies toward global-scale monopoly." (207)

3. *What about sweatshops and ecology?* "The global economic system is rewarding corporations and their executives with generous profits and benefits packages for contracting out their production to sweatshops paying substandard wages, for clear-cutting primal forests, for introducing labor-saving technologies that displace tens of thousands of employees, for dumping toxic wastes, and for shaping political agendas to advance corporate interests over human interests." (118)

4. *Does this kind of economic globalization promote democracy?* "It is not possible to have healthy, equitable, and democratic societies when political and economic power is concentrated in a few gigantic corporations able to dictate public priorities." (174) "In its internal governance structures, the corporation is among the most authoritarian of organizations and can be as repressive as any totalitarian state." (211)

5. *What is the contribution of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?* "Together the World Bank and the IMF have helped build powerful political constituencies aligned with corporate libertarianism, weakened the democratic accountability of Southern governments, usurped the functions of democratically elected officials, and removed most consequential legal and institutional barriers to the re-colonization of Southern economies by transnational corporations." (166)

6. *What is the corporations' vision of the future?* "The architects of the corporate global vision seek a world in which universalized symbols created and owned by the world's most powerful corporations replace the distinctive cultural symbols that link people to particular places, values, and human communities." (160)

## MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FOREIGN AID

In its March 29, 2002 editorial, the *National Catholic Reporter* commented on widespread misconceptions among U.S. citizens about our government's foreign aid program. The following may serve to stimulate discussion among persons concerned about global inequalities and skyrocketing military spending.

1. *How much of our federal budget is spent on foreign aid?* "In a survey made last year, half the respondents thought that foreign aid accounted for 20 percent of the federal budget. The current budget exceeds \$2 trillion, and aid is about \$16 billion. That is considerably less than 1 percent."
2. *Does foreign aid go to the poorest countries?* "Many assume the \$16 billion goes to relieve starvation and improve health conditions in the poorest countries of the world. Regrettably, this is not the case. . . . Over a 40-year period . . . of a total \$258 billion, only \$42 billion went to the two most needy continents, Africa and Latin America."
3. *What are the priorities of U.S. foreign aid?* "U.S. aid has two clear policy objectives: to expand the market for U.S. goods and services and to influence domestic policy in the recipient countries."
4. *What effect do these priorities have?* "More than 70 percent of all aid is tied to the purchase of U.S. goods and services. Increasingly, a condition for aid is the elimination by the recipient countries of duties on imports from the U.S. Given the extreme disparity that normally exists in the infrastructure and technology of the two parties involved, this condition is fatal for small-scale agriculture. While we use our economic clout to pressure poor countries to open their markets, we do not reciprocate. As the chief economist for the World Bank noted last December, protection by the rich countries costs the poor countries twice as much as they receive in aid."
5. *Does the U.S. contribute its fair share to the poor countries?* "The sum total of this aid (from the rich countries) was \$53 billion in the year 2000, almost half of it (\$25.4 billion) from the European community. Japan was next with \$16 billion, followed by the U.S. with \$9.6 billion. In percentages of GDP, the U.S. comes out even worse. While Britain's contribution is 0.31 percent and Japan's 0.27 percent, we now give less than 0.1 percent. In 1990 we were giving 0.2 percent, and in 1970 it was 0.3 percent. . . . Not a single one of the major industrial nations comes anywhere near the 0.7 percent goal set by the United Nations."
6. *What do the poor countries want from us?* "As the U.N. Conference on Development opened in Mexico March 19, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed the hopes of the poor countries. 'What they ask for,' he said, 'is a fair chance to trade their way out of poverty, without having to face challenges or quotas or to compete against subsidized products from rich countries. Many are also asking for relief from unsustainable debts. And many are saying that in order to make the full transition to sound, open economies, they need increased aid from wealthier countries.'"

## THE NEW STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

Dr. Oscar Arias was President of Costa Rica when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1987 for his decisive role in bringing to a close the wars of Central America. In 1999 he gave a lecture at Dartmouth College on "Globalization and the New Struggle for Peace." Following are portions from that speech.

*While the age of the cold war has ended, it has not been followed by the promised era of peace and prosperity. This is supposed to be a time of peace. But how can we say that there is peace when thousands are made to work in dehumanizing conditions? How can we say there is peace when we build more prisons and fewer schools? How can we say that there is peace when so many go hungry. Today I challenge you to think about peace in a new way. When we demand peace, it must not only be a peace of national security, one which talks bombing and gunfire. It must also be a peace of human security, one concerned with the welfare and health of humanity.*

*The [globalization] system encourages insatiable consumption and consumerism for some, but denies many others the basic necessities of life.*

*I tell you that there is a much deeper crisis underlying the financial panic. I say that it is an economic crisis when nearly a billion and a half people have no access to clean water, and a billion live in miserably substandard housing. I say that it is a leadership crisis when we allow wealth to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. . . . I say it is a moral crisis when 40,000 children die each day from malnutrition and disease. And I say it is a democratic crisis when 1.3 billion people live on incomes of less than one dollar a day and in their unrelenting poverty are totally excluded from public decision-making.*

The tragedy of Central America is that the peace accords, which brought to an end most of the overt military repression, have not brought about the more basic peace that Dr. Arias has been calling for. Rather, national and international institutions and structures have been put in place to impose economic repression to benefit private and corporate interests at the expense of the majority poor under the rule of "free market" ideology.

- 1. How do "free market" ideology and arrangements determine the distribution of wealth in Central America and more widely around the world?**
- 2. What is the role of the U.S. and what is our responsibility?**

## PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM

Many local churches and national church bodies are deeply concerned about global hunger. We estimate that 30,000 innocent people die every day because of extreme poverty, and we know from extensive research by Food First, Bread for the World, and other agencies that the world is capable of providing ample food supplies for all. How then can we work together so that the global economy will provide for the basic needs of all? Surely this is central to the biblical mandates of what we may call Sabbath economics or Jubilee spirituality. The Presbyterian Hunger Program is one of many denominational efforts to enable "ordinary" church members to respond in minimal or major ways to this global crisis on the basis of their faith in the God who brings good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). This program is organized in five interrelated areas.

***Hunger Education and Interpretation.** Learning about hunger and our response to it begins with the Bible.*

***Direct Food Relief.** As Christians we demonstrate our love for sisters and brothers by supporting programs which ensure that food is available to those in need, while also working on longer-term solutions.*

***Development Assistance.** The PHP encourages and supports land ownership by the poor, appropriate agricultural technology, rural community development, cooperative economic development, effective soil conservation, water resource development, equitable food distribution, community organizing, and nutrition education.*

***Public Policy Advocacy.** It supports organizations and coalitions which advocate for public policies that provide food for poor and hungry people and empower their self-development.*

***Lifestyle Integrity.** In this world where some go hungry because others consume too much, the PHP encourages families, church groups, and institutions to evaluate their own needs and develop new ways of being more caring and sharing of the world's resources in obedience to the Gospel.*

Each of these areas of work for justice and for ending hunger may seem inadequate by itself, but each one can lead to all the others as consciences are raised and involvement deepens concern and commitment. (For more information about the Presbyterian Hunger Program, see [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger) or call (800) 334-0434.)

- 1. Consider how many of these--and other--ways your church is--or is not--responding to the challenge of local and global hunger.**
- 2. Consider how important this matter is in terms of your own faith as a follower of Jesus Christ and discuss how you might increase your involvement.**



## ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

*The majority of the world's resources pour into the United States. And as we Americans grow wealthier and wealthier, money is becoming a kind of narcotic for us. We hardly notice our own prosperity or the poverty of so many others. The great contradiction is that we have more and more money and less and less generosity—less and less public money for the needy, less charity for the neighbor.*

*Though many of us are well intentioned, we have invested our lives in consumerism. We have a love affair with “more”—and we will never have enough. Consumerism is not simply a marketing strategy. It has become a demonic spiritual force among us, and the theological question facing us is whether the gospel has the power to help us withstand it.*

*We must confess that the central problem of our lives is that we are torn apart by the conflict between our attraction to the good news of God's abundance and the power of our belief in scarcity—a belief that makes us greedy, mean, and unneighborly.*

Walter Brueggemann's essay, “The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity” (*Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope: Contested Truth in a Post-Christian World*, pp. 69-75, Fortress, 1999), draws a sharp contrast between the biblical message about God's abundant provision, beginning in the creation story (Genesis 1), and human fear of scarcity and propensity toward selfish accumulation, beginning with Pharaoh (Genesis 47). When the Hebrew slaves were liberated from the worst consequences of savage market capitalism, God's first major mandate on how to live in freedom was the lesson of the manna (Exodus 16). If only God's people could learn to share the bounty of God's provision, there would be enough for everyone. There would be justice. There would be *shalom*, abundant life for all.

Jesus taught and enacted the Kingdom of God as “public life reorganized toward neighborliness.” His parables are “subversive reimaginations of reality.” “Everywhere he went he broke the vicious cycles of poverty, bondage, fear, and death; he healed, transformed, empowered, and brought new life.” He enabled multitudes to eat abundantly out of their apparent scarcity simply by sharing, beginning with a few loaves and fishes. Jesus taught an alternative economics. He proclaimed the good news that we, too, can practice alternative economics and even create alternative institutions so that creation's abundance can, as God intends, provide enough for all.

**1. What are the signs of the rule of scarcity and accumulation in today's world?**

**How are we caught up in this vision of economic reality?**

**2. What are the signs of God's abundance and generosity in today's world? How are we ourselves engaged in God's economy?**

## PRAYER OF A PEOPLE IN THE THROES OF MARTYRDOM

I close these pages with a prayer used by the Christian communities of Latin America. It is the prayer of a people living in the midst of struggle, persecution, and martyrdom, the prayer of those who are in solidarity with the cause of the poor.

Lord, may your Gospel be for me not a book,  
but Good News, lived and shared.  
May I not be embittered by oppression.  
May I speak more of hope than of calamities.  
May my denunciations be first subjected  
to discernment,  
in community,  
brought before you in profound prayer,  
and uttered without arrogance,  
not as an instrument of aggression,  
but neither with timidity and cowardice.  
May I never resign myself to the exploitation of the  
poor,  
in whatever form it may come.  
Help me to be subversive  
of any unjust order.  
Help me to be free,  
and to struggle for the freedom of the oppressed.  
May I never become accustomed to the suffering  
of the martyrs  
and the news that my brothers and sisters are  
enduring persecution,  
but may their lives and witness ever move me to  
conversion  
and to the greatest loyalty to the kingdom.  
May I accept my church with an ever growing love  
and with Christian realism.  
May I not reject it for its faults,  
but feel myself committed to renew it,  
and help it to be what you, Lord, want it to be.  
May I fear not death, but infidelity.

**NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (launched in 1994)  
FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS (targeted for 2005)**

Planning is going ahead to unite the 34 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, with a population of 755 million, in one enormous market, FTAA, free of state and international regulation, in spite of the results of the existing agreement between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Global Exchange ([www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)) lists ten powerful reasons to oppose this new threat to the environment, family livelihood, human rights, and democracy through the globalization of free-market fundamentalism.

1. **The FTAA Expands a Proven Disaster.** NAFTA has cost the U.S. 400,000 jobs; it has cost Mexico one million more workers under minimum wage, 8 million more families in poverty, 44 tons of hazardous waste dumped every day, increasing rates of hepatitis and birth defects.
2. **The Agreement is Being Written in Secret.** Corporate representatives are advising negotiators and helping to write the rules, but citizen groups and even the UN have not been allowed to incorporate their concerns.
3. **The Agreement Will Undermine Labor Rights and Cause Further Job Loss.** Expanding NAFTA will not only break unions and move U.S. jobs to Mexico but pit exploited Mexican workers against even more desperate workers in countries such as Haiti and Guatemala.
4. **The Agreement Will Exacerbate Environmental Destruction.** Under the export-driven growth model promoted by the World Bank and the IMF, many countries in the Global South cut down their forests, over-fish their waters, and exploit other natural resources to earn hard currency.
5. **The Agreement Will Put Lives at Risk.** Expanding rules on monopoly patents to the whole hemisphere would limit the production of generic drugs essential for the majority poor, who can't afford drugs produced by U.S. companies.
6. **The Agreement Will Lead to Privatization of Essential Services.** The FTAA is expected to contain commitments to privatize and deregulate services such as education, health care, and energy and water utilities, leading to large rate increases.
7. **The Agreement Will Provide a Backdoor for the MAI.** Corporations will be able to sue governments for compensation if they feel that any government actions, including the enforcement of public health and safety laws, cuts into their profits.
8. **The Agreement Will Spread the Use of GMOs.** U.S. negotiators are trying to force other countries to accept genetically modified organisms.
9. **The Agreement Will Increase Poverty and Inequality.** "Free trade" is not working for the majority of the world; inequality has worsened internationally and within countries; the hope of achieving sustainable development will be farther off.
10. **There Are Proven Alternatives.** Citizens' groups from across the Western Hemisphere have written an "Alternative Agreement for the Americas" that offers a picture of what socially responsible and environmentally sustainable commerce would look like.

## JUBILEE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In the mandates of the Seventh Day, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year we find a vision of the world in which all have enough and no one has more than enough (Exodus 16), a world in which debts are cancelled and slaves are freed (Deuteronomy 15), all have access to the essential means of life and even the land rests (Leviticus 25). Jesus came to proclaim the Reign of God as Jubilee, "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4, cp. Isaiah 61:1-2a), and the early church experienced Jubilee when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. They practiced the sharing of possessions, and "there was not in needy person among them" (Acts 4:34, cp. Deuteronomy 15:4). This vision and these mandates are more important than ever today, because they are further than ever from our present reality.

The convergence between the Jubilee vision in the Bible and the modern struggle for human rights can be seen clearly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has ancient roots but is expressed more recently in the United Nations Charter (1945), where the member nations express their "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of the human person, and in the equality of rights of men and women, as among large and small nations." The Universal Declaration, which was launched on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, includes all the traditional political and civil rights, the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and also economic and social rights. The paragraph that follows seems to express the intention of the authors of the biblical Jubilee, who based their mandates on the God who had liberated God's people from slavery and commanded them to build a society of freedom and equality. It gives us the challenge--as persons, as faith communities, and as peoples--to unite our efforts with other movements and institutions in the struggle for fullness of life for all.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HIMSELF/HERSELF AND OF HIS/HER FAMILY, INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING AND MEDICAL CARE AND NECESSARY SOCIAL SERVICES, AND THE RIGHT TO SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT, SICKNESS, DISABILITY, WIDOWHOOD, OLD AGE OR OTHER LACK OF LIVELIHOOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS/HER CONTROL.

- 1. How are human rights taught, understood, and practiced in our faith communities?**
- 2. How are the biblical mandates for the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year taught, understood, and practiced in our faith communities?**
- 3. On reflection about the convergence between the Declaration of Human Rights and the biblical Jubilee, what recommendations can we make for our communities?**

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OF LIVELIHOOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES  
BEYOND HIS/HER CONTROL.**

***UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS***

## TRADE FOR LIFE

*World trade has the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty. But at the moment most of the benefits of trade go to rich countries. (Christian Aid News)*

Probably the U.K. has had the most successful Jubilee 2000 campaign for cancellation of the debt of the poorest countries. With the realization that unjust trade arrangements are for these countries even more detrimental than debts, organizations such as Christian Aid have been lobbying and demonstrating before Parliament, 10 Downing Street, and local Members of Parliament for change in the rules and practices of global trade. They point out that current trade rules are heavily weighted in favor of rich countries, because rich countries and huge transnational corporations dominate world trade. The World Trade Organization, which is controlled by these powerful forces, sets the most important rules, covering investment, services, agriculture, and intellectual property as well as trade. "Under WTO rules, developing countries are unable to raise the price of imports to protect local producers, but rich countries are able to protect their own markets from poor countries' exports to them. According to the U.N., poor countries lose around \$20 billion a year due to an inability to export their food products to rich countries through these trade barriers." (CAN)

Economic globalization has intensified the search for cheap labor, elimination of unions, minimal social benefits and ecological protections in the name of "free" trade. This has been called a "race to the bottom" as poor countries compete for investment funds, trade openings, and employment for their workers. As U.N. General Secretary Kofi Annan points out, the poor countries want to trade their way out of poverty and dependence by gaining fair access to global commerce. U.K. advocates for Jubilee have been pressing their government "to use their influence on the international stage to call for a major review of international trade rules so that trade works for the poor and not against them." (CAN) This campaign is called "Trade for Life." It advocates trade rules that:

- *have poverty eradication as a key aim,*
- *are monitored to check their impact on poverty,*
- *are decided by a democratic and transparent process,*
- *are enforced to make sure the rich as well as the poor abide by them,*
- *cover the activities of large transnational companies as well as governments.*

For some time U.K. Jubilee forces have been working toward a code of basic human and ecological values with the major supermarket chains, which do an annual business of over 50 billion pounds annually. Under "free" trade ideology, each chain must compete with the others in the "race to the bottom" mentioned above. Under the alternative proposal, a level playing field of basic human rights, labor rights, consumer protections, and environmental concerns is established for the benefit of all without prejudice to business.

**How might such critiques and efforts affect U.S. trade locally, nationally, and globally?**

## FAIR TRADE COFFEE

In recent months alarming reports have been circulating about the global glut in the coffee market and its effect on more than 25 million coffee farmers, their families, and their communities. *Co-op America Quarterly* (Spring 2003) reports that 600,000 coffee farmers and workers have lost their jobs in Central America; 700,000 families in Ethiopia face economic instability complicated by the HIV/AIDS crisis; in many places prices have fallen so low that the farmers cannot feed and care for their children adequately; in some cases sales do not even cover the cost of production. At the same time major companies and investors are enjoying windfall profits. "Under conventional trade, the race for profit drives companies to minimize their costs by exploiting workers and the environment in developing countries." (14)

"Fair trade is based on the principle of putting workers and the environment first, while still working in a healthy business model. Businesses committed to fair trade agree to adhere to the following criteria in their relationships with farmers and workers:

*Cooperative and healthy workplaces*  
*A fair and living wage*  
*Environmental sustainability*  
*Consumer education and public disclosure*  
*Respect for cultural identity.* (14)

"Fair trade guarantees farmers a fair wage for their labor, lifts them out of poverty, and puts farmers on the road to self-determination. Fair trade is bringing hope and justice to coffee farmers throughout the world." (16) We the consumers can play a major role in this growing movement, which reaches out not only to coffee farmers but also to other workers in similar circumstances. Co-op America lists five fast ways to act:

*Buy fair trade products.*  
*Encourage fair trade business practices.*  
*Educate others.*  
*Invest in fair trade businesses.*  
*Join campaigns.*

Many of us have been deeply concerned about the enormous inequalities in our world and our seeming powerlessness compared with the corporations that dominate trade. The fair trade movement brings the realities of global economics right down to where we live, what we buy, eat, and wear, how we practice our faith. Some faith communities begin simply by serving and selling fair trade coffee after worship and at other meetings, making available information about the movement and inviting friends to consider this option for themselves. They in turn can pass the word along to others, and some may take steps that will affect businesses, investments, and the environment as well as workers. By 2001 there were 7000 retail outlets selling fair trade goods in the US and Canada, an increase of 271% in just one year. The Fair Trade Federation estimates that worldwide sales of fair trade goods have reached \$500 million already. Safeway, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and Starbucks now carry fair trade coffee--but it must be requested. To find fair trade coffee, chocolate, tea, crafts, jewelry, etc. see Co-op America's *National Green Pages* ([www.greenpages.org](http://www.greenpages.org)) or TransFair USA ([www.transfairusa.org/do/whereToBuy](http://www.transfairusa.org/do/whereToBuy)).

**Consider the ways in which your family and faith community are already participating in the fair trade movement and additional steps you may wish to take with them.**

## **CONFLICT AND COMPASSION IN THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS**

Introduction: A point of view is the view from a point (rich or poor, man or woman, anglo or hispanic or african-american, dominant or dominated)

### **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HUNGER**

Matthew 4:1-4, Deut. 8:1-3, Ex. 16  
How to live in freedom and not fall back into slavery.  
Enough for everyone--neither rich nor poor.  
The Sabbath Day--to remember we are freed slaves.

### **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY**

Mt. 26:6-13, Deut. 15:1-18  
How to overcome poverty, debt, slavery.  
Fullness of life for all.  
The Sabbath Year--to practice God's structural adjustment.

### **THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM**

Lk. 4:16-21, Is. 61:1-2a + 58:6, Lev. 25, Acts 2:43-47 + 4:32-35  
How to ensure life abundant for all.  
Redistribution of land (capital)--it belongs to God.  
The Jubilee Year--to begin life anew.

### **THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**

Mk. 10:17-31, 6:30-44 + 8:1-10, 4:3-9, 1:15, Gal. 2:10  
How to follow Jesus.  
Release possessions into the community.  
Sabbath economics/Jubilee spirituality

Conclusion: The Lord's Jubilee Prayer--Mt. 6:9-13



### **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HUNGER--Matthew 4:1-4**

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

### **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY--Matthew 26:6-13**

*Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."*

### **THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM--Luke 4:16-21**

*When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

### **THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP--Mark 10:17-31**

*. . . "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me. . . Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age . . . and in the age to come eternal life."*

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He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

## **JESUS AT NAZARETH--LUKE 4:16-20**

- A. Jesus came to Nazareth. . . went to the synagogue**
- B. He stood up to read**
- C. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him**
- D. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written**
- E. The Spirit of the Lord. . .has anointed me**
- F. To bring good news to the poor**
- G. To proclaim release to the captives**
- H. And recovery of sight to the blind**
- G' To let the oppressed go free**
- F' To proclaim**
- E' The year of the Lord's favor**
- D' He rolled up the scroll**
- C' Gave it back to the attendant**
- B' And sat down**
- A' The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.**

This is one of the most important passages in Luke's Gospel. It has been placed here as Jesus' first act and his first declaration at the beginning of his ministry, in the Nazareth synagogue, on the sabbath day. It seems as if Luke wants to use this incident to indicate clearly that Jesus came to proclaim "the year of the Lord's favor," the Jubilee. He places it here in the place where Matthew and Mark identify the message of Jesus with the words, "the Reign of God has come near." For Luke, Jesus' proclaims the Reign of God as Jubilee.

1. According to this chiasmic analysis, at the center of Jesus' mission is recovery of sight to the blind. What does this focus mean? What evidence do we find throughout Luke's Gospel that this is the heart of his ministry? What does this mean for our ministries today?
2. We also find a strong emphasis on liberation or liberty. What meaning or meanings does this have throughout Luke's Gospel. What importance does it have or should it have in our ministries?
3. We find, thirdly, an emphasis on the preaching of good news for the poor and the proclamation of the year of the Lord's favor. How is the Jubilee related to the poor? In what ways did Jesus relate his ministry and his teachings with the poor? How do we preach good news, liberty, and sight for the poor today?

## PRAYER OF A PEOPLE IN THE THROES OF MARTYRDOM

I close these pages with a prayer used by the Christian communities of Latin America. It is the prayer of a people living in the midst of struggle, persecution, and martyrdom, the prayer of those who are in solidarity with the cause of the poor.

Lord, may your Gospel be for me not a book,  
but Good News, lived and shared.  
May I not be embittered by oppression.  
May I speak more of hope than of calamities.  
May my denunciations be first subjected  
to discernment,  
in community,  
brought before you in profound prayer,  
and uttered without arrogance,  
not as an instrument of aggression,  
but neither with timidity and cowardice.  
May I never resign myself to the exploitation of the  
poor,  
in whatever form it may come.  
Help me to be subversive  
of any unjust order.  
Help me to be free,  
and to struggle for the freedom of the oppressed.  
May I never become accustomed to the suffering  
of the martyrs  
and the news that my brothers and sisters are  
enduring persecution,-  
but may their lives and witness ever move me to  
conversion  
and to the greatest loyalty to the kingdom.  
May I accept my church with an ever growing love  
and with Christian realism.  
May I not reject it for its faults,  
but feel myself committed to renew it,  
and help it to be what you, Lord, want it to be.  
May I fear not death, but infidelity.

## **The Challenge We Face**

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**We who walk this journey of discernment  
in this time and place  
recognize that as Christians in the United States,  
as a people, as peoples  
as nations, as a nation  
as communities of faith  
as families and individuals  
we are called  
by the Spirit  
to conversion  
to life renewed.**

---

**O**ur greatest challenge is simply to act humanly in the midst of violence and death, to exercise sanity and conscience, to practice resurrection.

In this moment of kairos we are called and led by the Spirit of God to join the thriving new theological convergence which crosses traditional church barriers, to change the landscape and the soulscape of our communities.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to form alliances across difference,**  
embracing diverse gifts and the gifts of diversity — to ally ourselves with people of other faiths and with those who claim no faith at all — to build a multiracial, multicultural movement for justice and peace.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to a new relationship with the earth  
and all its creatures based on a deep sense of kinship —**  
to reject the obsessive patterns of consumption which drive the disintegration of creation.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to shape a culture of radical nonviolence,**  
a living alternative to the reality of our times, consciously countering racism, sexism, heterosexism, domestic violence, street violence, state violence, militarism.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to rebuild the fabric of our families and our communities;**  
to affirm and foster covenantal relationships with sexual integrity; and to  
further a culture of personal responsibility and social reconstruction.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to birth new forms of community:**  
reflective and analytical, contextual and prophetic, contemplative and  
active, diverse and creative.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to create new visions and possibilities**  
through art, music, poetry, story telling, a renewal of language itself -  
nurturing both memory and imagination as spiritual disciplines.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to relinquish and renounce economic privilege**  
that allows us as persons and families; as communities and churches, to  
ignore the social mortgage on property, both real and financial — to join  
the continuing struggles for Native land rights, for family farms, and for  
accessible, ecologically sound common land in urban areas.

**We are led by the Spirit to  
free economic imagination,**  
to promote alternative economic practice and economic relationships in  
our institutions and communities that ensure the needs of all not the  
desires of a few; that value equally the work of each one; that honor the  
dignity of all and promote the rights of every one to a fully human  
existence.

**We are led by the Spirit  
to restructure radically the global economy**  
to benefit the excluded poor and to protect the rest of creation — to lift  
the burden of debt from the backs of the world's poor.

**We seek nothing less  
than the conversion of our cultural soul,**  
of our values as a people, of our priorities as a nation. For that reason we  
pray first for the conversion of our own stony hearts. It is time in this place  
for humility, sensitivity, generosity. It is time for us to give flesh to the  
discipleship communities which may seed the deepest transformation of  
our families and neighborhoods, of the institutional church, and the  
dominant society.

KAIRIS/USA

# JUBILEE

for the United  
Methodist Student Movement  
Guitar: capo: 3, play: C

words and music by  
JIM STRATHOEE  
Bb(G)

♩ = 120

1. God told the Is - rael - ite peo - ple — The fruits of the earth be -  
2. Once in ev - 'ry new gen - er - a - tion — When the world is — bur - dened with  
3. We are the Ju - bi - lee peo - ple — The job is — ours and the

long to me, — So share with the poor — and each sev - en years rest — all my fields a -  
sor - row and pain, — The poor are op - pressed and their chil - dren in ter - ror are starv - ing, —  
time is now, — We of - fer our - selves and the work — of our lives with God's pur - pose —

bound - ing. — Once in ev - 'ry fif - ty year cy - cle — There must — be a time of  
dy - ing. — It's time for a great trans - for - ma - tion. — It's hap - pened be - fore — it can  
claim - ing. — We are the lib - er - ty peo - ple, — The Spir - it will — help us

lib - er - ty. — Slaves are re - leased and their land — is re - turned with the trum - pets —  
hap - pen a - gain, — Led by the prom - ise of peace — and Sha - lom — and God's peo - ple —  
keep our vow: — re - stor - ing all life — to its full - est po - ten - tia! God's jus - tice pro -

sound - ing  
cry - ing — JU - BI - LEE! — Let the slave and the cap - tive go free, JU - BI - LEE! — Save the land and re -  
claim - ing

turn it to me, — JU - BI - LEE! — Let peo - ple stand in their — dig - ni - ty — in the year of God's JU - BI -

LEE! LEE!



# SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

KEY: C CAPO: 5 PLAY: G optional

Kentucky-Tennessee Gospel Song  
as sung by  
The Temple Methodist Congregation

C (G) F (C) C (G) F (C)

Seek, and ye shall find, Knock and the

Dm (Am) Dm7 (Am7) Em (Bm)

door will o - pen, Ask, and it

Am (Em) F (C) G (D) C (G)

shall be giv - en and the love comes a tum - bl - in' down.

1. My mo - ther, the Lord has been here,  
2. My sis - ter, the Lord has told me,  
3. My bro - ther, the Lord has shown me,

F (C) Dm (Am)

My mo - ther, the Lord has been here,  
My sis - ter, the Lord has told me,  
My bro - ther, the Lord has shown me,

Em (Bm) Am (Em)

My mo - ther, the Lord has been here and the  
My sis - ter, the Lord has told me and the  
My bro - ther, the Lord has shown me and the

F (C) G (D) C (G)

love comes a tum - bl - in' down.

## THE OPPRESSED-POOR, A CALL TO CONVERSION AND LIFE\*

"The holy" has appeared in history. What has appeared in history is that which is terrifying, which makes us tremble, and that which "fascinates" us, seizes our attention, holds us unconditionally. The "holy" that has appeared in history is the threatened life of the poor.

### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

This life -- not only threatened but negated and annihilated so many times -- is what makes us tremble by its own tragic and cruel reality, and by being in itself a terrifying question for us about our responsibility for its existence. But this same life, although threatened, is what "fascinates" -- what seizes us. There is nothing in the world which seizes us more than the desire of the poor to live, their hope in the midst of death, their pride when they make gains toward their liberation, their joy in the celebration of life in community.

### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

We call this life of the poor "holy" because it appears as something ultimate for us, a kind of absolute plea. It appears as a kind of invitation. The life of the poor is an ultimate demand, one that can't be manipulated or silenced -- not by what it may cost us to defend it, not by ideologies, and not by the religious traditions that we might use to defend ourselves from it. In our history the life of the poor expresses the ultimate question of God: "What have you done with your brother, your sister?" And this ultimate question is one we must respond to with ultimate answers. The life of the poor is also holy because it appears as something that takes us beyond ourselves, as an offer of liberation.

### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

The new thing that has happened, for many in Central America and for many of us here, is the encounter with holiness in the life of the poor, the encounter with the ultimate. In seeing and touching something of this life, we have seen and touched something of the life of the majority of the world's people; we have seen and touched something of the ultimate and therefore true reality of our world. We have stopped being citizens of the western world -- a world which is the exception to the rule -- in order to become citizens of the real world.

### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

Now we find ourselves more in touch with the truth, a truth which is both terrible and demanding, but which at least isn't about something false and unrepresentative.

We also find ourselves in touch with hope, with creativity, and with the struggle for life, and so we find ourselves in touch with that which teaches and converts us and shows us a way to be human beings. We find ourselves in touch with the tremendous demand to give life and to love, but in this way too we find ourselves in touch with the possibility of living in love -- that is to say, of truly living. The threatened life of the poor is the form in which the holy is appearing in this world. It is the most real and the most demanding, but also the most hope-giving, the most "liberating."

#### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

The terminology of "holiness" is a powerful language which can shake us out of our inertia, our tendency to level off and relativize the things of our world. We also use this language to show the relation of this reality to God. The sanctuary movement uses this terminology because it seeks to provide a holy place which can serve as a refuge for those whose lives are threatened. But we speak first of sanctity with reference to the lives threatened and not to the place that serves as refuge. According to our faith, the poor are the privileged place of God, the ones who bear God on their shoulders and who make holy any place where they are.

#### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

In the threatened lives of the poor, we find our brothers and sisters; we find God; and we find ourselves. Once this triple encounter has taken place, living can no longer simply mean living alone, isolated, as autonomous individuals. Living then can only mean living in solidarity.

#### THE HOLY ONE DWELLS WITH THE OPPRESSED-POOR

This solidarity is the deepest thing, the most profound thing, we find in the sanctuary and solidarity movements. But let us remember that this has arisen, and will continue to arise, in the encounter with the poor, with the crucified peoples, where God and reality are revealed to us with the force of a demand and a call for unity.

#### THE HOLY ONE LIVES AMONG THE OPPRESSED-POOR

\*This reading is adapted from a presentation by Jesuit Theologian Jon Sobrino, of El Salvador, at the National Sanctuary Conference in Washington in September, 1986. The response is taken from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 57, verse 15.

*Reading from*  
*Jer. 20: 7-13*

## Confession

You seduced me, Lord,  
and I was seduced.  
Your defenseless child's eyes  
dug like claws  
into my guts.

You appeared to me  
in the pregnancy  
of that anemic girl  
who was impregnated by a soldier  
before the still warm blood  
of her murdered father.

You grasped my heart firmly  
with the outstretched hand  
of the old Indian  
who has been dying for centuries  
without a roof,  
without medicines,  
without a doctor,  
asking for the bread of justice,  
at the door of a Locked-Church.

You seduced me, Lord.  
and I let myself be seduced.  
You have conquered me,  
you have been stronger than I.

This is why those who were my friends

are retreating in fear  
and close their doors to me.  
Because each time  
I hear your Word  
I must cry out:  
Violence and ruin  
to those who manufacture  
orphans,  
misery  
and death!

How many times  
did I wish to close my ears  
to your voice,  
to harden my heart,  
to seal my lips,  
to forget forever  
the pain of the persecuted,  
the helplessness of the outcast,  
and the agony of the tortured,  
but your pain  
was my own  
and your love  
burned in my heart!

Yes, you conquered me,  
you were stronger than I,  
and I let myself be seduced.

I saw your whole body  
as one massive wound  
upon the slab at the morgue  
in the General Hospital  
on July 23, 1978.<sup>24</sup>

I inhaled your sweaty Indian odor  
in the Main Hall  
of the Law School  
in January, 1971.<sup>25</sup>

I saw your tears  
stream down the eyes of thousands of women  
at the funerals of the martyrs,  
I heard your command  
not to kill,  
at the final homily  
of a pastor  
who like you,  
gave his life for the people;<sup>26</sup>

and you conquered me,  
because you continue  
to be stronger than I.

The lies  
of those who accuse me  
are no longer important.  
The mockery of those who reject me  
and step aside  
for fear of being contaminated  
or of staining their prestige  
no longer matters to me.

Not even death  
can free me now of the sweet yoke  
which you lighten for me,  
because, as a powerful warrior,  
you accompany me,  
and you weep with my weeping,  
and moan during my prayer,  
and pour yourself out in my cry.

I have brought  
my cause before you,  
and I know that you will free  
the flesh of the poor  
from the hand of the oppressor.  
As a brave warrior  
you defend the cause  
of the persecuted,

and open up paths for us  
in the darkness.

You illuminate our darkness  
and fill our sadness  
with hope.

Because you are  
stronger than I,  
I have let myself be a capt  
and your love  
burns in my heart.

The thirst for your truth  
has made me a pilgrim  
from city to city,  
until the day your Word  
is fulfilled,  
and we are reborn  
in your Image and Likeness

Captivate me, Lord.  
Till the last of my days,  
wring out my heart  
with your hands  
of a wise old Indian,  
so that I will not forget  
your Justice  
nor cease proclaiming  
the urgent need  
for humankind  
to live in harmony.

*Julia Esquivel*  
*in exile*

March 27, 1981  
San Jose, Costa Rica

## SABBATH-JUBILEE PEDAGOGY

As we seek to deepen and widen the movement for Sabbath economics-Jubilee spirituality, we look for appropriate pedagogical tools and models. This is not to reduce pedagogy to method but rather to discover and develop a pedagogy that is both the means and the end of the Sabbath-Jubilee vision.

We have been using what has been called a **hermeneutical** process, in which we seek to hold together social analysis of today's world, biblical faith, and responsible discipleship in an unending **circulation**, with each of these three dimensions of critical reflection in tension with the other two. All three must be Spirit led; all three require commitment to praxis; all three utilize Sabbath-Jubilee lenses to perceive oppression and seek liberation.

**Liberation** can be spelled out in many ways. Walter Brueggemann summarizes exodus liberation as critique of the dominant ideology (unmasking the status quo), public processing of pain (refusing to accept the status quo), and release of a new social imagination (identifying and celebrating alternatives). All three are subversive of dominant systems of domination.

This means taking **options** for, with, and by those who are marginalized: the economically poor, those marginalized by gender or sexual orientation, racial-ethnic sectors discriminated against, others who endure similar marginalization, and nature.

It is also closely related to **contextualization** or incarnation within these social realities to struggle for full humanity, which means solidarity with all who struggle for full humanity, dignity, and abundant life.

This process is often referred to as **popular education**, in which people themselves become the subjects of their own history in the face of any and all exclusion and oppression.

Such education by and with the excluded and oppressed will necessarily be **holistic**, engaging mind, heart, and body, engaging the political body and the body politic, engaging the whole person at every stage of his and her self-discovery, engaging the community in a process of deconstruction and construction of its life culture.

The center of this process has been called an **epistemological rupture** that requires cleaning our lenses on the inside (this world) and on the outside (the biblical message) in order to see clearly and enact God's word and God's will for humankind and for all creation.

The primary **interlocutors** are not the educated nonbelievers, as they were for Schleiermacher, but the poor, the "non-persons," the exploited, especially those who are excluded in terms of class, gender, and race or culture. The challenge is not to build weighty theological constructs or intellectual apologies but to struggle for the liberation and fullness of life of all God's people.

Sabbath-Jubilee pedagogy will of necessity utilize multiple models and methods in order to be **accessible** to each person and community within their own cultural and experiential matrix. In Paulo Freire's terms we are all educatees and educators in pursuit of wholeness, shalom, Jubilee.

# LEVITICUS

itants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. <sup>11</sup>That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. <sup>12</sup>For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.

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<sup>29</sup>If anyone sells a dwelling house in a walled city, it may be redeemed until a year has elapsed since its sale; the right of redemption shall be one year. <sup>30</sup>If it is not redeemed before a

full year has elapsed, a house that is in a walled city shall pass in perpetuity to the purchaser, throughout the generations: it shall not be released in the jubilee. <sup>31</sup>But houses in villages that have no walls around them shall be classed as open country; they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the jubilee. <sup>32</sup>As for the cities of the Levites, the Levites shall forever have the right of redemption of the houses in the cities belonging to them. <sup>33</sup>Such property as may be redeemed from the Levites—houses sold in a city belonging to them—shall be released in the jubilee; because the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the people of Israel. <sup>34</sup>But the open land around their cities may not be sold; for that is their possession for all time.

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## JESUS' PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S REIGN AS JUBILEE

In Luke 4:16-30, Jesus presents his message and mission in terms of "the year of the Lord's favor," which is based on Isaiah 61:1-2a and 58:6, which in turn is based on the Sabbath-Jubilee texts of the Pentateuch. Given the power realities of his day, Jesus could not openly proclaim the mandates of the Jubilee and Sabbath Years (cancellation of debts, release of slaves, redistribution of the land), but the fundamental principles can be found throughout his teaching and ministry. And of course he was finally executed by the powers of the Temple and Rome for subversion.

Following are suggestions for group study of pertinent passages of the Synoptic Gospels.

1. Review the traditional interpretation of the text.
2. Consider the original context and our context as you re-read the passage.
3. Propose a re-reading of the text in light of the Jubilee.

Mark 2:1-12	Jesus heals a paralytic man.
Mark 4:3-9	The Parable of the Soils.
Mark 6:30-44/8:1-10	Feeding the five thousand/four thousand
Mark 10:17-31	The rich man and the matter of possessions.
Mark 11:15-19	The cleansing of the Temple.
Matthew 5:1-16	The Beatitudes, salt and light.
Matthew 6:9-13	The Lord's Prayer.
Matthew 6:19-24	Treasures, Sound Eye, Two Masters.
Matthew 6:25-34	Concern for tomorrow.
Matthew 25:14-30	The Parable of the Talents.
Luke 5:27-32	Levi's Call.
Luke 7:18-23	"Are you the one?"
Luke 7:36-50	A sinful woman is forgiven.
Luke 12:13-21	The Parable of the Rich Fool.
Luke 14:7-14	The Parable of the Wedding Banquet.
Luke 14:15-24	The Parable of the Great Dinner.
Luke 16:19-31	The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.
Luke 19:1-10	Zacchaeus' conversion.

### Old Testament Foundations

Sabbath Day	Exodus 16:1-36, 20:8-11, 23:12, Deuteronomy 5:12-17, 8:1-3
Sabbath Year	Exodus 21:2, 23:10-11, Deuteronomy 15:1-18, Leviticus 25:1-7
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# MATTHEW

# MARK

# LUKE

## Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee (Mk 1.14-15; Lk 4.14-15)

4:12 Now when Jesus<sup>a</sup> heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>He left Nazareth and made his home in Ca-per'na-um by the sea, in the territory of Zeb'u-lun and Naph'ta-li. <sup>14</sup>so that what had been spoken through the prophet I-sai'ah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup> "Land of Zeb'u-lun, land of Naph'ta-li,  
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

<sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

<sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."<sup>q</sup>

## The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Mk 6.1-6; Lk 4.16-30)

13:54 He came to his hometown and began to teach the people<sup>d</sup> in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? <sup>55</sup>Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup>And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" <sup>57</sup>And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house." <sup>58</sup>And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

## The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry (Mt 4.12-17; Lk 4.14-15)

4:14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news<sup>n</sup> of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; <sup>16</sup>repent, and believe in the good news."<sup>n</sup>

## The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Mt 13.54-58; Lk 4.16-30)

6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary<sup>k</sup> and brother of James and Jo'ses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense<sup>l</sup> at him. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief.

## The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry (Mt 4.17; Mk 1.14-15)

4:14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup>He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

## The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Mt 13.54-58; Mk 6.1-6)

4:16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet I-sai'ah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim  
release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." <sup>22</sup>All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" <sup>23</sup>He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Ca-per'na-um.'" <sup>24</sup>And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. <sup>25</sup>But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of E-li'jah when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup>yet E-li'jah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zar'e-phath in Si'don. <sup>27</sup>There were also many lepers<sup>e</sup> in Israel in the time of the prophet E-li'sha, and none of them was cleansed except Na'a-man the Syrian." <sup>28</sup>When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. <sup>29</sup>They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. <sup>30</sup>But he passed through the midst of them and went on

## THE SHAKERTOWN PLEDGE

On April 30, 1973 a group of religious retreat center directors and staff, meeting at a restored Shaker village near Lexington, Kentucky, began to formulate their personal commitments in response to the alarming prognosis about human needs and the world's resources. They called it a pledge, and they named it after the place where the conversation began. They commended it to others with the recommendation that they rewrite it in terms of their own confessional language and understanding of the call to global justice and peace. It is an attempt to integrate personal piety, social conscience, and a simple lifestyle as essential ingredients of a religious life.

*Recognizing that the earth and the fulness thereof is a gift from our gracious God, and that we are called to cherish, nurture, and provide loving stewardship for the earth's resources, and recognizing that life itself is a gift, and a call to responsibility, joy, and celebration,*

*I make the following declarations:*

- 1. I declare myself to be a world citizen.*
- 2. I commit myself to lead an ecologically sound life.*
- 3. I commit myself to lead a life of creative simplicity and to share my personal wealth with the world's poor.*
- 4. I commit myself to join with others in the reshaping of institutions in order to bring about a more just global society in which all people have full access to the needed resources for their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth.*
- 5. I commit myself to occupational accountability, and so doing I will seek to avoid the creation of products which cause harm to others.*
- 6. I affirm the gift of my body and commit myself to its proper nourishment and physical well-being.*
- 7. I commit myself to examine continually my relations with others, and to attempt to relate honestly, morally, and lovingly to those around me.*
- 8. I commit myself to personal renewal through prayer, meditation, and study.*
- 9. I commit myself to responsible participation in a community of faith.*

## RICOS Y POBRES EN EL EVANGELIO DE LUCAS

René Kruger ha resumido su investigación doctoral en su artículo, "La Conversión del Bolsillo: La Isotopía Económica en el Evangelio de Lucas." (RIBLA 30, 98-128) Kruger reconoce que los cristianos generalmente se refieren al arrepentimiento y la conversión como asuntos religiosos personales, pero él ofrece un análisis semiótico del llamado de Lucas a la conversión económica, es decir, por una comunidad cristiana y por la sociedad en general. Esto es más que un estudio literario sencillo. Requiere una consideración de toda una gama de términos concordantes y oposicionales, estructuras y planos de significado más allá de la gramática y el sintaxis, elementos narrativos múltiples, "un discurso coherente . . . a partir de la existencia de una isotopía común que da cohesión a la totalidad de las proposiciones que lo forman." (101)

La isotopía económica de Lucas revela tres complejos temáticos:

*El abismo entre pobres y ricos;*  
*La solidaridad de Jesús con los pobres;*  
*La ética del compartir.*

El discurso desarrolla una relación dinámica entre estos tres campos de significado. No es filosófico, ontológico, ni estético sino más bien la interrelación entre sujetos y objetos. No teoriza sobre pobreza, dinero, generosidad sino confronta directamente a sujetos pobres y ricos. Es "una ética puesta en acción . . . ética económica aplicada . . . ortopraxis vivida por un lado . . . egoísmo, perdición, opresión en acción por el otro." Lucas presenta una inversión económica "de la destrucción de la seguridad basada en la riqueza a la bienaventuranza de los pobres . . . la creación de un modelo de compromiso de los que tienen más con los que tienen menos o no tienen nada." Se realiza una inversión económica para que los ricos ya no sean ricos y los pobres ya no sean pobres. (102)

Este contraste marcado entre ricos y pobres corre no sólo a través del Evangelio de Lucas sino también Hechos. "En los llamados sumarios, Hechos 2:41-47 y 4:32-35, se expresa una normatividad de la dimensión económico-comunitaria de la iglesia primitiva, en el sentido de un paradigma para todo su desarrollo posterior." (104) A través tanto de Lucas como Hechos vemos "el conflicto entre el Evangelio y Mamón." En Lucas esta preocupación central se expresa a través de dichos, bienaventuranzas, ayes, sermones, parábolas, observaciones, explicaciones, juicios, mandatos—con implicaciones prácticas para el lector. El lenguaje sobre "pobre" incluye "no tener," "tener hambre," "humilde," "bajeza" o "humildad." El lenguaje sobre "rico" incluye "ser rico," "tener," "mamón," "riqueza," "tesoro," "atesorar," "amante de riquezas," "codicia," "abundancia," "posesiones," "bienes," "hacienda." El lenguaje para el sujeto que comparte incluye "limosna," "dejar," "abandonar," "vender todo," "prestar," "dar," "repartir," "devolver," "hacer el bien," "tener misericordia," "hacer misericordia," "ser rico en Dios," "hacerse amigos." El lenguaje de Lucas es sorprendentemente confrontacional. Un ejemplo es el Magnificat (1:47-55) o las Bienaventuranzas y los Ayes (6:20-26), la Parábola del Rico Insensato (12:13-21) o la Parábola del Hombre Rico y Lázaro (16:19-31), el Encuentro de Jesús con el Hombre Rico (18:18-30) o con Zaqueo (19:1-10) y su comentario sobre la Ofrenda de la Viuda (21:1-4) (105).

*Lo decisivo es que la mayoría absoluta de las menciones de pobres y de ricos tiene carácter conflictivo y oposicional. En última instancia, todas las referencias a pobres y ricos contienen ese elemento.* (106)

*Explícita e implícitamente todos los pobres del Evangelio de Lucas se oponen a los ricos. Como también inversamente todos los ricos se oponen a los pobres. Esta reciprocidad*

*oposicional es un dato de suma importancia: para el autor del Evangelio de Lucas no hay pobres aislados. Siempre se confrontan con ricos. Tampoco existen ricos independientes, "inocentes." Siempre se oponen a algún pobre o a su clase como tal. Finalmente debe notarse que la correspondencia antagónica es total: la totalidad de los pobres se oponen a la totalidad de los ricos y viceversa. (107)*

Según Lucas Jesús se identifica con los pobres por medio del testimonio de su madre y su precursor (en la introducción), por su ministerio entre los pobres (especialmente los enfermos y poseídos), y por medio del reo arrepentido crucificado con él (al final). El mismo fue pobre, como indica el sacrificio a su nacimiento (2:24, Levítico 12:8), su dependencia del sostén de otros (8:1-3), su declaración de que no tenía donde recostar la cabeza (9:58), su pedido de una moneda (20:19-26). Como indica la introducción del Sermón en el Llano, la pobreza no fue una virtud sino una necesidad ligada al hambre, el llanto, y la persecución. Los pobres eran enfermos, discapacitados, cojos, paralizados, ciegos, sordos, leprosos, marginados y marginalizados. Jesús respondió en solidaridad ante las crudas realidades de los pobres por medio de anuncios programáticos, bienaventuranzas, y sanidades. "La concientización y el convertir a los marginados en seres humanos son los pasos concretos mediante los cuales Jesús inicia su programa de liberación." (111)

Por supuesto ha habido una tendencia de interpretar el material de Lucas sobre ricos y pobres dentro de un marco "espiritual" y/o "religioso." La investigación de Kruger demanda más bien un marco económico y un llamado a la conversión económica. El Evangelio de Lucas exige una inversión doble en el destino tanto de los pobres como de los ricos, así como en el Magnificat, las Bienaventuranzas/los Ayes, y otros pasajes. Los ricos tienen que deshacerse de su riqueza para que los pobres puedan ya no ser pobres. Lucas/Jesús/Dios rechaza la ideología que concibe y justifica la riqueza como señal de bendición divina y pobreza como señal de castigo. Más bien la riqueza es una señal de "vivir injustamente," y la pobreza es una señal de "sufrimiento injusta." (118) Los primeros discípulos "dejaron todo y le siguieron." (5:11, 5:28) Jesús le dijo al hombre rico, "Vende todo lo que tienes y dalo a los pobres." (18:22)

*El ideal propuesto no es el de una sociedad rica sino la creación de una sociedad más justa. La pobreza, por su parte, no es sino un mal contra el que hay que luchar en un esfuerzo por su abolición. El Evangelio de Lucas, en su aspecto de proyecto económico dentro de las coordenadas del Reino de Dios, hace su aporte a esta lucha, construyendo un modelo de conversión económica basado en la conjunción entre Dios/Jesús y los pobres, y en su crítica de los ricos egoístas. (120)*

Este estudio realizado por el biblista argentino René Kruger es un correctivo poderoso ante las lecturas "espirituales" y "religiosas" del Evangelio de Lucas. Jesús estaba profundamente preocupado por la dimensión económica de Palestina en el Primer Siglo; él buscó lo que Kruger llama una conversión del bolsillo. Cuando esta perspectiva se une a la visión jubilar, como lo hace Lucas en 4:16-21, el pasaje que más define el ministerio de Jesús, todo el Evangelio de Lucas se convierte en mensaje de economía sabática o espiritualidad jubilar. Es sorprendentemente relevante este mensaje para el Siglo Veintiuno, ya que la economía se ha hecho la fuerza dominante para vida o muerte de miles de millones de personas.

1. **¿Cuáles son las implicaciones de este entendimiento del Evangelio de Lucas para cristianos relativamente ricos en el mundo actual, que es aplastantemente pobre?**
2. **¿Cómo podemos empezar a proclamar y practicar el Evangelio según Lucas?**

## GOD'S ECONOMY--CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

The following exercise is based on eight drawings taken from a calendar prepared by and for base ecclesial communities in Colombia. The captions have been translated into English, but some have wording in Spanish, which will be explained below. The challenge is to ask ourselves and our faith communities how we see or would like to see our church in response to the needs of the world around us. Copies of the following pages may be distributed to the participants or amplified to be seen by all. Each one may be asked to meditate on the drawings, one by one, and write down his or her comments--what they observe, how they compare their own church with the drawing, why their church is different, what they think their church should do in faithfulness to the Gospel. Group discussion can then be based on the contributions of all.

### *1. A CHURCH CENTERED IN CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL*

Note the diversity of the persons in the drawing. They are reading from Luke's Gospel on the one hand and considering a list of needs in their situation (hunger, disease, violence, unemployment, drug abuse, lack of housing, torture) on the other.

### *2. A CHURCH SHAPED AND BUILT BY THE POOR*

This drawing presents a group of women, children and men, poor workers and peasants, gathered around the text, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom," while in the background a banker and a wealthy businessman greet each other in front of the cathedral and the seat of government.

### *3. A CHURCH IDENTIFIED WITH THE POOR AND COMMITTED TO THEIR STRUGGLES*

This is a demonstration by indigenous people and workers with signs that say "Peace is the fruit of justice," "Land for those who work it," "We demand just salaries, bread, housing and education for all," "Jesus Christ rises in the struggles of our people." How many members of our churches have ever made a public stand on such issues? Why?

### *4. A CHURCH INCARNATED IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE*

In this community scene some are building a house and others are analyzing their reality, while in the background a religious procession is going by.

### *5. A SOLIDARY CHURCH*

A boss is beating his poor workers, but others are defending them and treating their wounds, and in the background there is a meeting of prayer and protest for the disappeared and the refugees of Central America.

### *6. A SERVING CHURCH*

### *7. A CHURCH SERVING AND BUILDING GOD'S REIGN*

### *8. A CHURCH THAT STRUGGLES FOR THE DEFENSE OF NATURE*