



Bread for the World Louisiana

**The Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice
Loyola University New Orleans**

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Walking With Us In Love

Walking, one of the absolutely astonishing claims of Christianity is that in the incarnation God literally walks with us in Jesus Christ. It has been called the ‘scandal of particularity’. It is time for us to welcome again the coming of Emanuel – God with us.

We are reminded in II Samuel 7 that the God of the Israelites was neither a deity made of wood nor a God out of touch, but a deity who journeyed with the people of God “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘this is what the Lord almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you where you have gone...’”

One cannot read the story of God in the Old Testament without being impressed with how intimately this Creator God journeyed with this difficult, stiff-necked people, sharing in the lives of their families, settling in a new land, and the all too frequent bouts of disobedience and

rebellion. Here we find a God who not only travels with God’s people, but a God who never gives up on them.

And this God was not content simply to journey with a small recalcitrant band. The Creator’s love was destined to embrace a world. From the beginning, this God was intent on not only journeying with us, but also entering, quite literally, into this creation through the life of one small infant.

The announcement comes for one frightened young Jewish woman in Nazareth: “Don’t be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give Him the throne of David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:28-33).



In the incarnation, the Creator not only enters into human flesh, but experiences the worst life has to offer, including humiliation, torture and

death. As Jurgen Moltmann points out in *The Crucified God*, this is a God who knows first hand and close up the horror experienced by victims of death squads, the sense of abandonment experienced by a young mother deserted by her husband and the health crisis facing a middle-aged couple. This is a God who walks with us in all of our struggles and grief. This is a God who, through Jesus Christ, fully enters into the worst the world can throw at us.

As we read further in the Gospel, this Jesus, the “God with us,” repeatedly invites us to walk with Him whatever our circumstances. We can decide once again if we will accept this invitation and share with our companion God all the grief and all the joys of our lives. And we can decide if we will embrace the disciplines that come with walking with Jesus.

Taken from *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?*

CHRISTMAS

The history of the celebration of the birth of Christ has been a history of struggle to separate the commemoration of Jesus’ birth from pagan influences. The selection of December 25 as the date coincided with the feast in honor of the Sun God in the cult of Mithras, the official Roman religion in the late third century. December 25 also came at the end of the Feast of Saturnalia (December 17-

23) that commemorated the Golden Age of Saturn.

It is likely that December 25 was set to provide Christians with an alternative to these popular festivals. Christian celebrations of Christmas, then and throughout subsequent history, have often taken on the character of the surrounding pagan festivals, whether in Rome, Northern Europe or in America. But there have always been movements to reform the celebration and restore its original significance.

No less than Christians in the third and early fourth centuries, we are faced with accommodation to pagan forces. Today, the issue is accommodation to the idolatry of consumerism, which comes closer than anything else to be the ‘state religion’ in the United States.

PRESIDENT OBAMA’S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Nearly one billion people endure the misery of chronic hunger, approximately one-sixth of the world’s population. Responding to the underlying causes of global hunger and food insecurity, at the London G20 Summit in 2009, President Obama announced a global food security initiative that has the support of the world’s major and emerging donor nations, includes strong roles for our multilateral institutions, and is led by partner countries that

are ready and willing to develop comprehensive plans and commit their own resources to agricultural and market development.

U.S. Leads a Global Response Against Hunger

Recognizing that chronic under-investment in the agriculture sector calls for stronger global partnerships, the United States has helped to forge a strong and swift global response against hunger and food insecurity. President Obama's pledge at L'Aquila of at least \$3.5 billion over three years helped to leverage and align an additional \$18.5 billion – for a total of over \$22 billion - in support of a common approach. The United States was instrumental in the development of five key principles that were subsequently adopted at the Rome World Food Security Summit in November 2009. Now known as the *Rome Principles*, these principles constitute the foundation for collective, global action on agricultural development and food security, and for the Obama Administration food security initiative, “Feed the Future.”

The United States has partnered with G-20 countries, developing countries, the World Bank and other multilateral organizations to establish the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. Launched in April 2010 with commitments from the United States, Canada, South Korea, Spain, and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this innovative new fund mobilizes public and private resources to scale

up agricultural assistance to low-income countries. To date, the fund has awarded \$224 million to five low income countries for increasing agricultural productivity and raising rural incomes.

U.S. Establishes the Feed the Future Initiative

Secretary Clinton in May 2010 launched a comprehensive effort to implement “Feed the Future” (FTF), the United States’ food security effort. U.S. efforts build on our comparative advantage in research, innovation and private sector-led growth, and are designed to increase our investment in nutrition and agricultural development to reduce hunger while continuing to address critical emergency needs through humanitarian food assistance. To date, the United States has led international efforts to review nine comprehensive country strategies, committed new resources in support of those strategies and launched a new research and development program. The President’s global food security initiative manifests the policy in a number of ways:

First, it engages traditional and non-traditional donors and the private sector to build needed multilateral capacities. The United States partnered with G-20 countries, developing nations, the World Bank and other multilateral organizations to establish the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, and mobilized public and private

resources to scale up agricultural assistance to low-income countries.

Second, FTF is the U.S. Government's contribution to a collaborative global effort centered on country-owned processes and plans that implements a common approach to improve food security, agricultural production, and nutrition;

Third, FTF invests in food security and agriculture development priorities that are identified by the partner country through country-led investment plans;

Fourth, FTF is selective in that it places increased emphasis on a core group of focus countries, chosen through careful analysis and the country's willingness to develop a national agriculture development plan;

Fifth, it increases investment in and support for innovation by emphasizing research and development, and by improving the extension and dissemination of research and technology development to the hands of small scale farmers through new models of public and private extension; and

Sixth, and perhaps most important, FTF focuses on creating a foundation for sustainable economic growth by helping countries accelerate inclusive agriculture sector growth through improved agricultural productivity,

expanded markets and trade, and increased economic resilience in vulnerable rural communities. In addition, by improving nutrition outcomes, FTF invests in helping people achieve their potential – the ultimate/true foundation for sustainable growth and development.

It is time for concerned citizens to speak out. We must make our national leaders understand that the combined efforts of individuals, churches, charities, and government will be needed to prevent hunger. *Thomas Gumbleton*



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