



Daily bread questions and challenges

based on John 6:1–21

WHEN HE LOOKED UP AND SAW A LARGE CROWD COMING TOWARD HIM, JESUS SAID TO PHILIP, “WHERE ARE WE TO BUY BREAD FOR THESE PEOPLE TO EAT?” (John 6:5).

Monday is “trash day” in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the day residents place their garbage bags near the streets to be collected by municipality workers. As a result, it is also the day men, women, and children come out in massive numbers to search through the multitudes of containers before the trucks arrive.



ELCA missionaries the Rev. Brian and Kristen Konkol serve in South Africa as Young Adult Program Coordinators

They are looking for “daily bread.”

“How could someone do this? How would someone handle the filth and stench?” I initially wondered. However, those first questions were soon replaced with better ones: “Why are people placed in such unjust situations? Why do billions of people struggle with extreme poverty in a world filled with abundant resources?”

Perhaps the feeding of the 5,000 account in John 6 is more about Jesus empowering the disciples to consider the material poverty of

those around them, and the spiritual poverty within themselves, than it is about Jesus amazingly producing “miracle bread” out of thin air. Perhaps Jesus knew that the amount of bread was not the challenge, but rather, it is the fair distribution that needed to be confronted and transformed.

Gracious God, Help us to see the spiritual and material poverty within us and throughout the world. Open our hearts and minds to receive the gifts of others, and teach us to put our faith into action by seeking justice and care for neighbors in need. Amen

– The Rev. Brian Konkol



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