



Bread upon the waters

By Bishop Wayne N. Miller

Send out your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will get it back (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

A number of years ago, I took up the practice of baking fresh bread from scratch. And when I was first learning about bread baking, I came across a little book called *Bread Upon the Waters* by Peter Reinhart (Da Capo Press, 2000). His book is a wonderful excursion into bread baking as a metaphor for the spiritual life—and it also has some great bread recipes.

But the book caught my attention partly because of the title. When I saw it I immediately recognized it as part of the familiar proverb quoted at the beginning of this article.

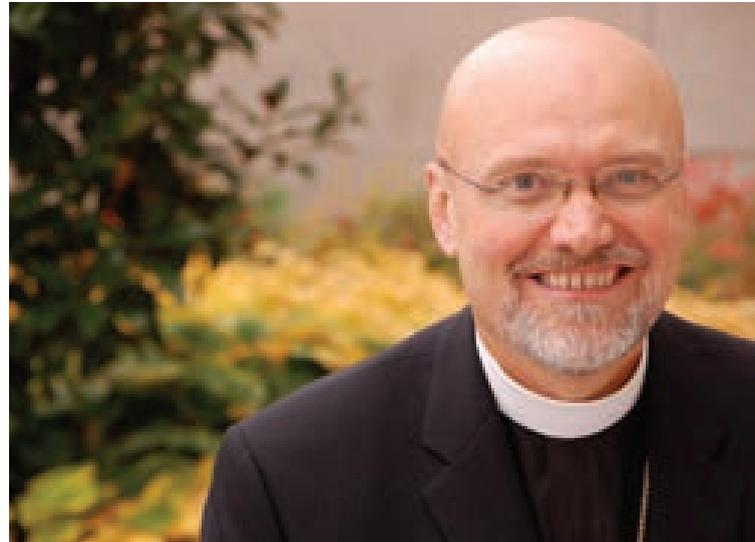
It is a biblical proverb that actually parallels an ancient Egyptian proverb. It refers to the fact that bread floats, and if I cast bread out into the water, though it may drift aimlessly for many days, it will almost certainly either be used by some needy fish or return to the shore from which it was cast.

The advice offered by the metaphor is simply that if you toss something good and nourishing out there into the world, though it may seem to go nowhere, your kindness, faith and reckless generosity will find its way back to you—this time as food for your own hungry soul.

Of course, if you live in this world long enough, you also learn that bread isn't the only thing that floats. And true bread is not the only thing that is being cast our way on the waves of this turbulent cultural sea we are floundering in.

All of which serves to emphasize not only the importance of paying attention to what we are swallowing, but also the need to be mindful of what we ourselves are casting onto those troubled waters.

Because in a culture that keeps tossing out the notion that your attractiveness is based on the



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depth of your crow's-feet, Jesus is calling on you to proclaim the truth that beauty resides in a place of greater depth.

In a culture that keeps tossing out the assurance that vengeance and retribution are the source of your strength, Jesus calls you to bear witness to the promise that confession and forgiveness are the things that will keep you afloat.

In a culture where our images of courage are those of violence toward those who oppose you, you are called to bear witness to the truth that the courage it takes to make peace or to love your enemies is the true bread from heaven.

And this isn't an easy calling. It isn't always easy to believe that the true bread from heaven, all by itself, has the power to ride the waves when the storm starts.

Still, it might be in remembering this God, who once cast the bread of life into the maelstrom of your own confusion, despair and hostility, that you will also find the freedom to return what was so freely given. ✞

Name change and new look for LSTC's Guild

By Jan Boden

For more than 70 years, the Guild provided support for students—first at Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Ill., and for the last 55 years at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). Now the Guild has changed its name and the way it carries out its mission. It's now called Village.

Under the direction of May May Latt, international student services coordinator, and the International Students Association, Village will sponsor projects to enhance the life of students. While it will continue to have several projects only for international students, Latt emphasizes that the organization will support all LSTC seminarians.

"The motto of Village is 'Gift to give, gift to receive,'" Latt said. "Duty Free is a good example of that. It's a place where all students can go to get donated household items and clothing for free. It's meant to benefit everyone."

Duty Free is an on-campus exchange filled with gently used or new items donated by area congregations and individuals. Students may take what they need. It is especially helpful for international students and their families, who often come to LSTC with just a few suitcases containing their belongings. Once they arrive, they must outfit an apartment with linens, pots and pans, and other necessities, as well as clothing appropriate for Chicago's changing seasons.

As the Guild had done, Village will have special projects for LSTC international students and their families. It will seek donations for winter clothing and medical kits and funding for an annual family retreat at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center in rural Illinois.

Mutuality is at the heart of Village: what each gives and what each receives. Village seeks



The Guild, now known as Village, helps support the annual retreat of international students and their families. Last August, nine families and 10 single students were able to go to camp, where the campfire and roasting marshmallows was the highlight. These gathered under the tree represent seven countries.

to deepen the relationship between students and congregations. It also wants to strengthen ties with, and support from, LSTC alumni.

"If people would like to support Village, there are a couple of ways to do that," Latt said. "One way is by donating kitchen, bedroom and bath-room items—and shoes—to Duty Free. The second is by writing a check or making a donation online."

Congregations or individuals who wish to donate items may contact Duty Free manager Adama Isa at adama.isa@lstc.edu or international@lstc.edu.

To support Village financially, make checks payable to LSTC with "International Student Program Fund—the Village Fund" in the memo line and mail to the Office for Advancement, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 E. 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615. Gifts may be made online at [lstc.edu/giving](https://www.lstc.edu/giving), using the designation box to choose "Other" and writing "International Student Program Fund—Village Fund" in the comment box. [L](#)

Jan Boden is LSTC director of communications and marketing.

Inside Out Network



Over the last 12 years of working in prison and re-entry ministry, the staff and members of Redeemer Lutheran Church (Park Ridge and Chicago) have gone cell-to-cell talking, listening and praying with inmates; handed out thousands of Bibles; led small groups both inside and out; counseled with those who are struggling; worshiped with them; wrote and distributed more than 50,000 copies of the *Spiritual Survival Guide for Prison and Beyond* for them; met people upon release; gone with them to court; cooperated with all kinds of service providers and created *RED Chicago*, a re-entry guide for those returning to Chicago; attended workshops and seminars; and learned an enormous amount from countless people in various state departments of corrections, volunteers, chaplains and family members.

From all that experience, they've found a lot to be discouraged about, including persistent inequity and injustice across racial and class lines, inadequate resources on every level, and a dysfunctional state bureaucracy that is, in practice, single-mindedly focused on security to the virtual exclusion of all other values.

But, even more, there's a lot that inspires them and gives them hope. Many men and women experience a significant spiritual awakening and profound faith development while incarcerated. We need the influence, intensity and giftedness and concrete faith of "the least of these"—a hard-won faith that often outshines our own. We want and need them in our churches and neighborhoods!

There is also a vast array of incredibly diverse, compassionate and gifted volunteers and employees who are hard at work

every day, building relationships, instilling hope, mentoring, running programs and so much more.

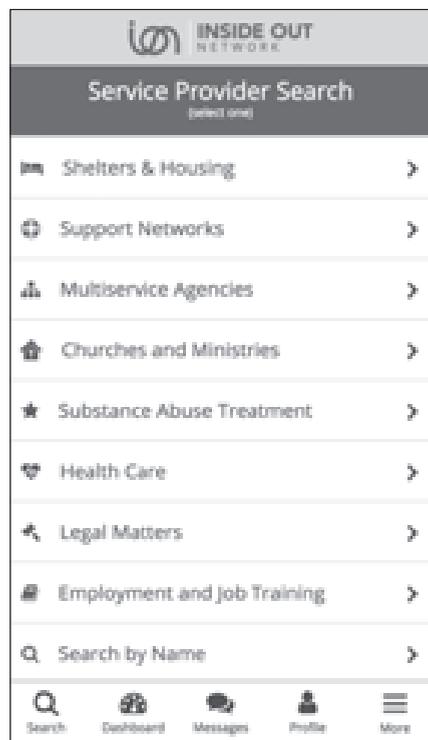
Redeemer also believes it has reached an inflection point. That's why members are busy creating the Inside Out Network (ION). ION is a growing statewide network of service providers, churches, ministries and volunteers who are banding together to offer a better way to help returning citizens navigate reentry. Members believe it's time to stop being invisible and working in isolation because they can't make the impact that is needed by continuing to go it on their own.

The congregation harnessed technology to make that happen by creating a mobile responsive website that allows churches and service providers to identify and reach out proactively to returning citizens in their area. Besides a powerful search

and messaging system, the site includes a special online forum (the HUB) to connect volunteers and service providers on the inside and outside of prison with each other.

Check out the site at insideoutnetwork.net. Explore as a guest. Or enroll your church into the network and start reaching out proactively to the men and women who are being released into your neighborhood.

For more details about ION, volunteering at Stateville Prison, being a pen pal, or donating copy paper to print copies of the *RED Chicago* directory, contact the Rev. Fred Nelson at fred@insideoutnetwork.net or call 847-823-3634. ☒



Independence tastes delicious

Something delicious is taking shape as the rhythmic “rat-a-tat-tat” of popcorn popping and its mouth-watering smell fills a small room with stainless steel appliances in Chicago’s southwest suburb of Homer Glen.



Chris Blogg, a client at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois’ (LSSI) Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center, prepares Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn for packaging.

The sounds and smells are part of the Handfuls of Hope kettle corn enterprise at the Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center, which is owned by Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). The center provides vocational and social skills training to adults with developmental disabilities. Its clients include members of the surrounding community and the 32 residents of the adjacent Shady Oaks Homes, which offers group housing for adults with developmental disabilities.



Shady Oaks program director. “We encourage independence, and the kettle corn enterprise provides clients with a meaningful way to make, package and sell the product.”

Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn is popped and packaged on-site by clients at the Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center and sold to benefit the program and its participants. The kettle corn enterprise provides them with job training and opportunities to earn an income from their work.

“Shady Oaks is like a family,” said Chris Blogg, who has lived there since 2007. Handfuls of Hope is another step in his independence. “We’re getting the kettle corn business started, and I’m learning how to learn the machinery,” he said.

“Thanks to kettle corn, we’ll be able to make our own money and be more independent.”

LSSI continues to look for opportunities to broaden the sales potential of the kettle corn. In late spring, staff and a client of Shady Oaks sold the kettle corn at LSSI’s Spring Fling fundraiser.

“The Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center is a place where clients can participate in programs like computer skills and specialized classes such as cooking and vocational training,” said Daniel Asencio,



Staff and clients from LSSI’s Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center sell Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn at an LSSI fundraiser.

Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn is available for purchase. It can be used for a church fundraiser or sold at craft fairs or farmer’s markets. It also can be purchased in various quantities for a corporate or holiday gift.

For more information about Handfuls of Hope, contact **daniel.asencio@lssi.org**, call 708-743-2315 or visit **lssi.org**. ♣