

Breads Around the World

India

UCC Hunger Action Office

United Church Board for World Ministries

KERALA - LAND OF COCONUT TREES

India is a country that has prompted mixed reactions and thoughts by most of us. Growing up I always associated India with masses of starving people. That was more a reflection on my first world blinders than it was on the reality. From 1963-1983, the proportion of the rural population living below the poverty line dropped by half in five Indian states: Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Andhra, Pradesh, and Kerala.¹

"Kerala" means "land of coconut trees." The coconut palm in this section of India, provides material for baskets, thatched roofs, and coir rope. It also provides the distinctive taste of coconut chutney for consumption at breakfast.

Consumption is not, however, a motivating force in this southwestern state of India. The society at large, and the elected leaders, have made conscious decisions to direct their limited resources to efforts that benefit the most people. As a result, there is strong support for educating boys and girls, for making land available for agricultural sustenance, for distributing food to those who have need, and for meeting basic health care needs.

As a result, with only an average Gross National Product of \$350 per person, the indicators for quality of life for Kerala residents are on a par with those for the citizens of France, Canada, Poland, and South Korea. The life expectancy rate for Kerala is 72 years. The total fertility rate per female is 1.9. The infant mortality rate is 16 per 1,000 births.

These realities aren't the result of an economic miracle as we understand it in the U. S. Rather, Kerala has a long history of involvement by ordinary citizens in the well-being of the community and the decisions that effect the region. Its economy is focused on distribution not production. Its decision processes are consensual and deliberate not unilateral. Its focus is on the family and community not the individual. Its work attitude can be characterized as one of enjoyment, not one of resistance or avoidance. These are but some of the important distinctions between Kerala and much of our world where the inequality continues to grow, along with hunger and homelessness.²



Chapati (Indian Flat Bread)³

Chapati are made in varying sizes and thicknesses in South Asia and East Africa. Pieces of Chapati are used instead of utensils to scoop up curry dishes or chutney.

Combine:

- 2 c. whole wheat flour
- 1 t. margarine, melted
- pinch of salt

Gradually add:

- ½ c. (or more) lukewarm water

Knead until dough is soft. Cover with damp cloth and let rest 1 hour. Divide dough into 10 pieces. On floured surface, roll each piece into 4-inch circle, ¼ inch thick. Heat heavy ungreased frypan. Cook each Chapati until it starts to bubble on bottom. Turn, fry other side, and remove. Stack in tea towel to keep warm.

Options:

- Substitute white flour for half the whole wheat flour.
- After turning Chapati, rub with a few drops of margarine or oil. When second side is finished, turn over again and cook briefly on first side. Rub oil on second side and fry briefly.

Puris (Whole Wheat Bread Puffs)³

This is a common bread in India, eaten with curry dishes or sometimes as a snack with sauce.

Mix:

- 2 c. whole wheat flour
- 1 c. white flour
- 1 t. salt
- 1 T. shortening
- 1 c. milk

On floured board, knead until smooth and elastic. Divide dough into 20-25 pieces and roll each into thin, 3-4 inch circle, or roll out entire piece of dough and cut into circles. Heat oil in deep saucepan. Fry 1 Puri at a time, turning once as they puff and rise to top of oil. Remove and drain on paper.

Hints:

- Let dough rest a short time after kneading.
- The oil must be just the right temperature. Drop a small piece of dough into the oil; oil is ready if dough sinks and rises to top.

Sharing the Elements

This is presented to give you options for your own service of communion. You may choose prayers from other settings or use the service as a whole.

Use several kinds of breads or variants to represent the many manifestations of "the Bread of Life." Also, use table cloths from other countries and possibly chalices - glass, pottery, wood, etc. These may be available from SERRV or a local import shop.

A Service for Breaking the Bread⁴

The Indian context for worship is the world of political-social-cultural India. Being "awakened" to the presence of God in worship is intended to awaken us also to the presence of God in the world. Thus, throughout the liturgy there is interaction between God's life and the world's life. They are in "inseparable relationship" to use a long-held Indian concept. The Bread-prayer, therefore, coming at the climax of our "Sharing" in God's life, is linked explicitly with the needs of the hungry, and the Redemption-prayer is linked explicitly with the deliverance of the oppressed poor in our land.

Entry (Pravesa)

- L: Welcome, brothers and sisters,
as we celebrate God's presence with his people.
- P: We have come to worship our Creator and Saviour.
- L: Welcome to the house of prayer for all people,
to the house of awakening to new life.
- P: We have come in the name of Christ, God with us.
- L: Let us pray that we may truly respond as God invites us to seek his face:
- Great and merciful God,
your life is the source of the whole world's life;
your mercy is our only hope;
your eye watches over all your creatures;
you know the secrets of our hearts.
By your life-giving Spirit,
draw us into your presence,
that we may worship in the true life
of your Spirit
with lives moved by your love,

through him who has led us
to your heart of love,
even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Awakening to the Word of God (*Prabodha*)

L: By your Word, O Light of this whole universe,
we live, move and have our being.
As you have illumined the hearts of people
at many times in the past, we pray, Eternal God,
for your awakening within us.
From delusion to truth, and into your righteous way;

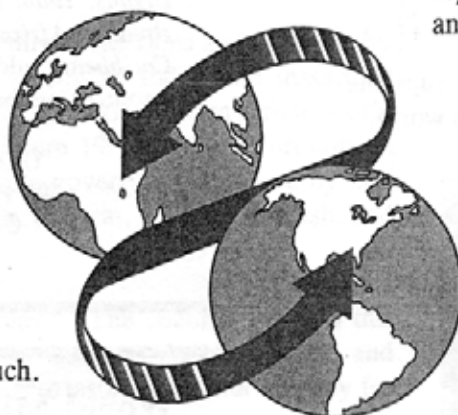
P: Lead us, Source of all,
our Father and our Mother.

L: From darkness to light,
and into your gracious will;

P: Lead us, O Christ,
our Friend and our Brother;

L: From death to eternal life,
and into your infinite joy;

P: Lead us, Divine Spirit,
enlivening Power within,
for we seek your awakening touch.



Scripture

I John 4:20-21
Exodus 16:18

The Redemption Prayer

L: O God, Redeemer of the oppressed,
at the last meal that your Son, Jesus Christ,
shared with his disciples before his death,
He took bread in his hands of compassion,
gave you praise and thanks,
and broke the bread.
Then he said, Take this bread, all of you and eat it.
This is my body. Do this to remember me.

P: We celebrate through this bread
the self-offering of our Saviour Christ.

L: Then after the meal he took the cup,
offered praise and thanks to you,
gave the cup to his disciples and said:
Take this, all of you, and drink from it,
This is the cup of the new covenant of my blood,
shed for you and for all,

that sins may be forgiven.
Do this to remember me.

P: We celebrate through this cup
the new covenant of our Saviour Christ.

The Bread Prayer

L: As this bread is broken
and this wine poured out,
O Seeker and Saviour of the lost,
we remember again the poor and
oppressed of the earth.
We recall that your body was broken
that the hungry might be nourished,
the oppressed set free,
replenished with the bread of new hope
and new life.

P: Christ has died, Christ has risen,
Christ will come in glory.

L: As this bread was once scattered seed,
O Bread of life,
sown in the earth to die
and rise to new life,
so gather all peoples together
in the one humanity
of your coming new age.
Restore the broken life of your creation;
heal the disfigured body of your world;

draw all creatures into yourself
through the cross and in the power of your risen life.
And grant to all the faithful departed
a share in your bliss,
that with them we too at the end may be welcomed
into your kingdom through your inexhaustible grace,
and guided by your indwelling Spirit.

Share the Elements

Exulting in God's New Age

L: Having now shared in the feast
that is God's sign of his coming kingdom,
let us pray with confidence and hope:

P: Our Father in heaven
holy be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not bring us to the test,
but deliver us from evil.

L: Merciful God of all creation,
Holy Parent of all peoples,
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who united all things in his fulness,
we join your whole creation
in exultant praise of your bountiful goodness.
You have now touched us with new life,
and filled us with new hope
that your kingdom will come,
that the hungry will be fed,
that the oppressed will be set free from evil,
that your reconciling work will be done,
and the earth filled with your glory.

P: For the kingdom, sovereign power and supreme
glory are yours alone, great Saviour of the world.

Blessing and Commission (*Preshana*)

L: The God of peace will be with you
and will grant you his peace at all times,
his peace beyond our understanding,
that purifies heart, mind and body,
until his kingdom comes. Amen.

Having shared this feast of God's love,
go into the world to share his love in your life.

P: In the name of Christ. Amen.

CITATIONS

¹John Mellor, "Green Revolution Reduced Hunger in India," *Hunger* 1992, Bread for the World Institute, Washington, D.C. p. 42.

²William Alexander, "The Kerala Exception: Limited Inequality," *Hunger Notes*, World Hunger Education Service, Winter 1994-95, Washington, D.C. p. 26.

³Copied by permission of Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA *Extending the Table: A World Community Cookbook* by Joetta Handrich Schlabach, 1991, pp. 48, 49.

⁴A Service for Breaking the Bread is excerpted from *Worship in an Indian Context*, ed. by Eric J. Lott. (Bangalore, India: United Theological College, 1986) pp. 65-77. Used with permission.

Special thanks to Martha Stroot
who tested the bread recipes.

Hunger Action

The Campaign to End Childhood Hunger continues to be a major domestic focus of the UCC Hunger Action program. With over 5.5 million hungry children in the United States, the need calls us to respond.

Breads Around the World is a collaboration between the UCC Hunger Action Office and the United Church Board for World Ministries. It is an expression of the Hunger Action's responsibility to provide the United Church of Christ with education and worship resources on hunger and poverty.

Breads: India is a fourth production. To receive *Breads: Africa; Breads: Middle East; Breads: Caribbean*; additional copies of this resource; or resources on the Campaign, please contact:

UCC HUNGER ACTION
700 Prospect Ave., 3rd Floor
Cleveland, OH 44115
(216) 736-3290

World Ministries in the U.S. and Canada

Your congregation can participate in a variety of ministries with Christians in India. If you are interested in establishing a church partnership with a congregation in India, please write for global church partnership materials. Also ask for information about international youth programs, global education and advocacy, and multicultural projects.

Church Partners in India
Church of North India
Church of South India

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in the United States and Canada**
United Church Board for World Ministries
700 Prospect Ave., 6th Floor
Cleveland, OH 44115
(216) 736-3210