



The Parable Of Serving Bread

ANOTHER SNAPSHOT OF MANY MODERN DAY CHURCHES

By Kurt von Schleicher

*Jesus Calls Every Pastor And Church To Lovingly Feed His Sheep.
Are We Prayerfully Prepared And Ministering His Word Accurately For Decisions!*

There once existed a very enthusiastic group of culinary experts who called themselves “bakers.” And lo, there were many people around who were hungry for what these bakers could bake. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by people living in famine conditions. It was starting to get bad in fact ...and worse as the time rolled by. The masses were out daily, searching for decent bread to scarf-down to address their inner pangs of serious hunger. The people were simply ravenous for the most part and many didn’t even recognize their plight!

Week after week, month after month, and year after year, these people who called themselves bakers, gathered in important convocations and large meeting halls to talk about their assignment to bake bread, to experiment with new types of oven-technology, about the abundance of yeast, and about how they might go about producing quality loaves in bulk so that they could begin to feed the undernourished masses of people around them. There was a high demand for this group of skilled and educated chefs. And they were able to cook innumerable types of artfully presented global, eclectic and Japanese-fusion cuisine too, but the people seemed to long for bread. So year after year, they carefully defined what baking really means, defended baking as a legitimate occupation, and declared that feeding people fresh baked bread is always to be one of the primary tasks of those who call themselves “bakers.”

Continually they searched for and tried out new and better methods to utilize in baking nutritious bread. They also wanted better definitions for this art and science of loaf-cookery. Further they said, "*The food preparation, baking industry exists by baking as fire exists by burning.*" They loved slogans such as "I'm all about catering," "Born to bake," "Baking is the task of every bakery and baker," "Bake 'till you drop," "Every baker is a true baker," and "An efficient bakery for every serious baker and fresh bread for everyone who's hungry!" They wore fashionable wooden clogs just like their euro-bakery friends, the most expensive Calvin Klein colognes, colorful baggy chef pants, high-end designer spectacles, and Hollister T-shirts that expressed these exact sentiments on them ...in different languages for that international look. A lot of it was about “image.” They knew they had to sell the people on themselves before their food.

The bakers sponsored special meetings annually called "*Baking Campaigns*" and "*The Month for Bakers to Bake and Serve People Bread!*" They sponsored expensive nationwide and worldwide congresses. I call them "trade expos" and the purpose of them is to provide a platform for the bakers to introduce product, tools for production, to discuss the finer points of bread baking and to promote all-out feasting on steamy, hot bread. What an exciting venue for the industry! It was a great event for chefs from all over to hear about all the new, innovative techniques in baking bread. Just think about the logistics for a moment! These expos of sorts were a whole lot of work to organize and set up, but they were certainly "the place to be seen" and to preview all the latest baking and serving pans, hand tools like bread knives, heavy industrial kitchen equipment, bread recipe books, and see whether any new flour was discovered. The bakers really looked forward to these special times together so they could hone and refine their skills. They so enjoyed the professional austausch and interfacing, because ...bottom-line, these people were their long time friends. They wanted to catch up on welfare of each other's kids, wives, neighborhoods. It was great to hear how they all were doing.

Because they felt the majority of lay people at these expos would also enjoy such information, hands-on tutoring and the novelty involved, the chefs would play around and experiment open-air to show-off their baking savvy ...you know, with all the powders, the sugars, the baking soda, the shortening, all the sesame, the caraway and all the other seeds... and especially the new ingredients that had never before been utilized. These bakers felt so committed to "the cause," that they built large, beautifully modern facilities which they called "Bakery Headquarters." The appeal was made public ...that everyone should give out fresh baked bread to the famished commoner. And the hungry, needy people were waiting with baited-breath for this to happen. **There were two things the bakers didn't do, however ...they didn't bake any bread and subsequently they didn't serve any bread to others** ...even though many bakers contested that they did, because they felt they did ...and because some customers excitedly reported that something was served to them for consumption.

In addition to meeting regularly, the bakers organized a respectable board to send out new bakers to other places where there were many famished and starving people who daily longed for real bread ...not the fake kind that so many bakers were peddling for exorbitant prices. All the men, women, boys and girls who were called to participate in baking seemed to agree that what is needed is a seasoned board which could challenge bakers not only in being faithful to baking bread, but in feeding this bread to those who have never tasted bread. The board was formed by those who had the great goal and courage to speak about dishing-up hot slices of buttery bread that came from the best of grains. "Great, let's start doing it" said the younger ones, but there was a lot more to learn. Tasting and safety measures are always imperative. Yes, those who could intelligently define baking, and those who would diligently promote the idea of baking in faraway lands ..also seemed to be people who could only dream of dining on bread.

The board hired capable kitchen and dishwashing staff, appointed committees and held specialized meetings to redefine baking, to defend baking as an occupation, and to decide what new cities should be targeted for establishing the emerging, high-tech-contemporary and mega-bakeries. One thing led to another. It was exhilarating, stimulating and electrifying how fresh start-up businesses on the periphery of this trade came to be established. I saw men selling plastic coffee mugs, pens, mouse pads, refrigerator magnets, electronic recipe books all in the shape of bread loaves. But these chefs, support-staff and committee members involved with such commerce soon became too busy signing contracts to start baking ...and therefore too busy to serve anyone bread.

Large elaborate and expensive training centers were built that were named after wealthy bakers of yesteryear, whose original and primary purpose was to teach potential bakers how to knead the dough, let the bread rise, how to bake, slice and feed excellent bread to the malnourished. And not only that, but to then show these

newly satisfied people how to bake and feed others fresh bread from their homes, as well. The centers were jaw-drop-ingly-impressive and made one feel proud to be apart of it all. Some of the bricks in the foyer had the names of the top contributors on them, actually engraved in gold. Nothing but the best for the best enterprise in the world! Conscientious students could sign up for *Rolls 101*, *Croissants 102*, *Pastries 103* or *Wedding Cakes 104*. Lots of other classes were offered as well, and one craftsman even made a beautiful silver plaque for the entryway of one such center, with their stamped, lengthy adage, "*We duplicate what we are! Our constituents will serve bread like we as bakery chefs serve it, more than if we just tell them to go and serve people buns! It's the well-nourished bakers and bread-eaters who are healthy enough to bake and reproduce themselves for future generations of hungry people.*"

Over the years, other specialized courses were offered on *the various needs and sociological dependencies of wanna-be-bread-eaters, how to locate and sensitively approach the starving, the inner struggle and nature of the hungry person, the politically correct baker, the psychological reactions and phobias of 21st century bakers, the consumer as victim and how to build up the self esteem of the inner-baker.*

As the years passed by, those who eloquently taught baking had earned doctorates in Loafology, but they didn't attempt to reproduce themselves with people who could actually cook. It was admirable how the teachers and their pupils really gave themselves to their studies and even specialized on one aspect of the process or another ...but as I said, they still did not bake or serve others bread. They only taught skillful baking as theory and how to approach it. Some of them, thought of as having baking expertise, felt that actual baking and serving up bread could be extremely dangerous with all the hot pans, special grease ...that could burst into flames to take an eye out, not to mention all the big, sharp knives laying around. Some, after a season of intense study grew discouraged and just gave up. They said they were leaving this kind of work for the few private bakery-guilds that claimed to have more experience and gifting in more important kitchen fields. But year after year, after long monotonous, mind-numbing training, many chefs were graduated and were then presented their baking licenses. They were sent to do full-time apprentice baking, some to distant bakeries, which were surrounded by people who were reduced to skin-and-bones and literally starving to death.

Some of the Grads really spent themselves in postgraduate study and in travel to learn the history of early baking and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great baking in centuries gone by using large stone ovens. They lauded the faithful bakers of old who even produced unleavened bread and who handed down to us this idea of baking.

Further, the bakers built large printing houses to publish contemporary recipe books and baking guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce materials solely devoted to baking methods, equipment, and programs to arrange and to encourage meetings to talk about baking. A speaker's bureau was also provided to schedule speakers on the subject of baking.

Many who felt the call to become bakers jumped up and responded. They were commissioned and immediately sent to bake, however, like their baker counterparts back home they never did bake. Yes, for many different reasons like the baking-personnel who trained them, they engaged in all kinds of other occupations. Some excuses were so lame and some people were convinced that they were allergic to baked goods. So, they would make all kinds of equipment to travel here and there to look at new bakeries. Some said that they wanted to be part of the baker's lobbying party and others simply felt called to inspect flour storage units and to furnish baking resources and premiums for cooking TV shows. Others felt that their job was to gently relate to the hungry people (who had never tasted any bread) in a cool and friendly way so these pitiful and anemic creatures would know the difference between authentic and hypocritical bakers. Others felt that simply informing the starving people of how cordial the baking-industry-CEOs could be and

how warm an atmosphere there was inside the real bread bakeries, this was enough to encourage the walking dead so to speak, to eventually produce their own bread.

One night something emotive happened! After experiencing a very stirring meeting on "*The Necessity for Baking*," one young fellow stood up, donned his tall chef hat and left the meeting to go bake some bread for a homeless friend. The next day with an ear-to-ear-smile on his face, he reported that he had actually finished cooking a big wheat roll and fed two smelly, gaunt looking indigenous locals in addition to his buddy. People, when they heard, were just stunned and just went crazy with jubilation. And this one baker—I guess you could call him that, even though he was still a novice—was honored publicly for his excellent, humanitarian deed. He was then scheduled to appear on all the primetime baking-talk shows and drive-time radio shows. His face appeared on the cover of many upscale culinary magazines and then cookbook contracts were signed. They scheduled him to visit all the big meetings, as much as possible, to tell how he pulled it off. Crowds were wanting his autograph, this touch, his powdery white handprint on their jackets, or just a chance to buy his expensive "*How To Bake It And Make It*" MP3 audio CD series. He and his speaking became "*in demand*" internationally, so understandably ...he had to give up his time in the kitchen baking in order to have the time to tell about that occurrence to the others in his profession. He was also placed on the General Board as a person having considerable experience and there was even talk of making him the president of a reputable culinary college.

Now it's true that many of the other bakers sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties around the cookware. Some lived with so much *dough* at home that they didn't know what to even do with it all, and yet many others in their respective neighborhoods still felt real hungry inside as they waited and waited. Some bakers even bore the smell of the bakery in their expensive silk uniforms, every day. They would often receive the ridicule of some who made fun of their posh and ornate bread clubhouses and the fact that they claimed to be bakers yet never baked any bread for anyone. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use anymore to attend the weekly *Let's-feed-the-masses campaigns* to talk about baking and bread distribution. Imagine how hurt some were when one day a greenhorn-apprentice suggested that those who don't bake weren't really bakers at all, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound kind of curious. Is a person a baker if year after year, after year after year, he never bakes one loaf to feed even one hungry person? Is a person a baker if they participate doing everything in the baking industry ..except the activity of baking and distributing fresh bread? Is a person a baker if they have nothing to offer people except hollow words, exiting pyrotechnics, dreams, hype, slick-professional videos and visions about the kitchen? No one should have to go hungry day after day from a lack of bread, when so much dough is available. Didn't the head Baker show more concern when He declared, "***I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger***" (Jn. 6:35). Shouldn't we emulate the head Baker's empathy and example by feeding people what they need? Why should anyone return to the bakery each week just to have to wait when, "***He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply***" (2 Cor. 9:10)?



Note: Many Pastors today do not teach or preach the Word. Many don't care about the lost and many are simply lazy. Many pastors do not pray; conduct prayer meetings or do any tool-work in the Bible for preparing a meal for God's people each week. Many do not feed people with a well balanced diet from all the counsels of God. They repeatedly teach their own pet-doctrines and sometimes for their own advantage. Typically most of what false teachers teach (even inside many Christian churches) is true... it's that small percentage of spiritual cyanide they mix in there that gets you.

And because of these poor ministers, many Christians—their poor devotees and followers—neither consume what's necessary, or minister what's necessary. They unfortunately do not minister effectively as they could, nor do they fish for souls as well as they could, but many would like to know how. They do not edify people with God's Word as they could. It's sad! Could it be that all our

church story telling, drama, shouting, fleshly dancing, name-dropping, alleged prophecies and words of knowledge really don't carry the same weight of authority as the simple Message of redemption in Christ, that is found in the Bible? Could it be that giving preeminence in our services to activities and things other than anointed expositional teaching from the Scriptures and Bible-loyal worship ...could be less productive than what God expects? This *Bakery Parable* is about living the life. It's about preaching and teaching what's needed most—proper Christian communicating. Listen, it doesn't have to be preachy or religious to build up. Is there a right and wrong way for a Christian or their leaders to minister? Is there stuff that I should be preaching with my life, my deeds, my attitudes and my words (and having all these congruent with each other)...to be an effective minister or fisher of people?

Expositional Preaching is the only kind of preaching that God is committed to bless, for that's what He mandates: **PREACH THE WORD.**

Are you hungry for the Bread of life? Christ is who you need. There is no spiritual growth for Christians who want to win souls or not, apart from the Word of God.

Jesus taught us to pray, "*Give us our daily bread.*"

Is a person a minister if year after year, after year after year, he never feeds God's people by accurately teaching the Scriptures ...if he never preaches Jesus Christ for decisions from hungry, lost people? We've heard so much entertainment, pop psychology, opinion sharing, funny jokes, politics, comedy routines, interesting stories about self and family, the giving of moralizing "do better" messages ... endless religious blah, blah, blah and we're still hungry. Why doesn't someone just leave the company of the status quo professional offering-takers and sermonizers and teach us the Bible. Simply teach us the Word of God simply ...with an emphasis on knowing Christ and practical Bible application. Yes, tell us about Jesus Christ and what we must do to live in righteous relationship with Him. Teach us how to win and train others to do the same.

Mr. C.S. Lewis said, "If you don't listen to theology today, that doesn't mean that you'll have no thoughts about God, rather it means you'll have wrong ones" (bad theology).

Pastor John McArthur speaks of the "*The velvet chains of the pastorate. I like being bound like that—it holds my feet to the fire. It stretches you to come up with new material; it breaks the ten suit/ten canned sermon syndrome. You've got your greatest hits sermons, your no fail-sugar-stick-message itinerate preacher stale manna with worms in it syndrome.*"

Here in Texas we've heard every kind of preaching there is, good and bad:

Biographical preaching
Expository preaching
Textual preaching
Topical preaching
Antidotal preaching
Evangelistic preaching
Devotional preaching
Longhorn preaching

Chuck Swindoll carefully describes that last type saying: It has two points and a lot of bull in-between.

My point? There is a hunger so great out there in the world today that the physic hotlines in America took in 6.4 billion dollars last year. Christians are even backsliding for hunger's-sake. Why has there been no bread in God's house? Why is our nation sliding down the hill? God wants us to have a dynamic prayer life. He wants pastors to teach all the counsels of God in the power of the Spirit... yes, through the entire Bible, verse by verse for decisions, for souls, for Christ's glory alone! It's well-fed sheep that naturally reproduce ...it's well-nourished bakers who are healthy enough to reproduce bakers. Amos warned us about this day we are now living in saying, "***Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord GOD, 'When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD'***" (Amos 8:11).

Here's a crazy looking acrostic to use as you prayerfully ask yourself questions—when personalizing a passage: I think everyone should have **SPACE PETS** to help them apply God's Word.

As You Read A Portion Ask Yourself; Is There A(N):

S	-	Sin to confess?
P	-	Promise to claim?
A	-	Attitude to change?
C	-	Command to obey?
E	-	Example to follow?
P	-	Prayer to pray?
E	-	Error to avoid?
T	-	Truth to believe?
S	-	Something to Thank God for?

Pray, first asking for the Lord's illumination and guidance with your tool work in the text. It takes a lot of work and time. Get a Hebrew Bible. Pour over the words—reading the text over and over in different translations PRAYERFULLY asking:

- 1. Observation - What does it say?**
- 2. Interpretation - What does it mean?**
- 3. Correlation - What does it say else where in the Bible?**
- 4. Application - What does it say to me and to this flock?**

As you're seeing the general outline beginning to emerge, look for:

Progression of thought
Comparisons
Analogies
Word pictures
Important subjects

If it speaks to you—if you get excited about it—preach it with confidence!

A *Token Text Sermon*: Many false teachers read a verse and make that verse a point of departure in their message (like a spring board they take off from it) never to return thereto.

Here's a simple definition of "exposition:" *"Exposition occurs when the biblical text is studied, personally understood, and clearly explained, when it remains the central focus of attention during the delivery of the main body of the message, and when it is graphically illustrated and applied in keeping with today's real world needs."*

Believing prayer is a given here, but staying with the Text is imperative—don't bend it your way. Let it bend what you say. Your comment must square with the Scriptures. When you are feeding people, tell them about Jesus and lead them to Jesus. Don't pressure them, but give them the opportunity to get to know Christ!