

World YMCA / YWCA  
Week of Prayer and World Fellowship  
November 8 - 14, 2009



*Striving for Global  
Citizenship for All*

Bible Reading Plan 2009 - 2010



# Contents

President’s Message.....	4
Day 1: Being “Good” Global Citizens.....	6
Day 2: Young People and Globalisation.....	9
Day 3: Embracing Migration.....	12
Day 4: Gender and Citizenship.....	16
Day 5: Climate Change: From Excuses to Action.....	20
Day 6: Economic Justice and Food Security.....	23
Order of Worship: Global Citizens — Citizens with the Saints.....	26
Bible Reading Plan 2009 - 2010.....	32

We would like to acknowledge with thanks the valuable contribution of Rev. Terry MacArthur to this week of prayer booklet.

Cover design by John Ainsworth

# Presidents' Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This year's theme for the Week of Prayer is "Striving for Global Citizenship for All." By focusing on global citizenship, we wanted to stress how critical it is today to see that the challenges we face in our communities have a global dimension and that while responding at that level to those issues, we should also be cognizant of the need for global solidarity.

The reflections in this booklet talk about the realities of migration, gender, economic justice and climate change and give insights on these issues from the perspective of global citizenship. These reflections challenge us to go beyond our own comfort zones in order to reach out to others and the world so that we are "no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."

As Christians, we locate our liberation from darkness and ignorance through God's incarnation, God becoming flesh. Today, this mystery of the incarnation is with us each day if we open our eyes and see the world around us. If we do this then we will see that God is an undocumented migrant, a woman discriminated by her culture, an environmental refugee, a malnourished child... challenging our own definition and perception of the stranger within our own community and outside.

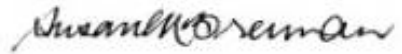
God's incarnation in the most vulnerable, the most humiliated and stripped of dignity, challenges us to speak what no one else dares to name, and to offer what no one dares to give... but most of all, it is to see that our liberation is intertwined with God's, our destinies bound to each other.

Is global citizenship just a privilege of the middle class, confined to those who have the time to think and make choices, those who have nothing to lose but a little bit of comfort?

As Christians, our faith tells us that more than global citizens, “we are sisters and brothers in Christ. Global citizenship disinherits most of the globe when it is restricted to those with special status. Christ is on the move so that the far-off ones are brought near to where Christ is, not in the centres of power where global citizenship is debated, but on the margins of society where the least of these receive a cup of clean water.”



Martin Meißner  
President  
World Alliance of YMCAs



Susan Brennan  
President  
World YWCA

# DAY 1: Being “Good” Global Citizens

Bible reading: Ephesians 2:17-20

*“So [Christ] came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone”.*

No longer aliens,  
no longer without a passport,  
no longer barred because of a lack of money,  
no longer needing a visa,  
no longer strange,  
no longer the wrong language,  
no longer the wrong colour skin,  
no longer the wrong clothes,  
no longer the wrong schooling,  
No longer.

Unfortunately, most of the world will be waiting a lot longer to become global citizens, particularly if the definition of global citizenship is speaking at least a little English, flying in airplanes, smiling at the border police, and being concerned for the world (even if one’s carbon footprint is world destroying.)

The writer of Ephesians talks about being a citizen with the saints. Well-off and educated are not the defining characteristics. For the ancient writer there is no striving to gain citizenship with the saints. Christ came. Christ broke through the barriers. Christ proclaimed peace regardless of distance or status. Access is not paid for, no bribes necessary, no indebtedness to people-traffickers, no fingerprinting or digital identity cards. Citizenship with the saints is a gift without our striving: no test to pass, no language exam to see if we can talk like the natives.

There are no elites in this household, no categories of those who pay and those who beg. Christ is on the move so that no-one remains an alien.

In the time when Ephesians was written, Roman citizenship carried status and safeguards. A Roman citizen could opt out of local taxes or be exempt from certain local laws. Freed slaves could sometimes buy their citizenship. As the Empire expanded non-Romans could also buy in. Citizenship was valuable. In the letter to the Ephesians Christ offers this prize without money, without price.

‘Citizens with the saints’ redefine what global citizenship looks like. If we would follow Christ, being a good global citizen means choosing to be poor. The globe can no longer support the over-consumption of the rich. It means rediscovering the phrase from the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches back in 1975: “Live simply so that others can simply live.”

‘Citizens with the saints’ assert that global citizenship is not just the prized possession of the elite. Those of us who don’t happen to be part of that elite are no longer content to be the object of their largesse or the targets of social planning. We are citizens too, more than citizens, sisters and brothers in Christ. We can teach and lead. Global citizenship disinherits most of the globe when it is restricted to those with special status. Christ is on the move so that the far-off ones are brought near to where Christ is, not in the centres of power where global citizenship is debated, but on the margins of society where the least of these receive a cup of clean water.

YWCAAs and YMCAs have been at the forefront of bringing people near to one another. They have provided wondrous opportunities for persons from different cultures, different life experiences, different challenges to get to know one another and discover new solutions. The Movement has stretched itself to train young people in the skills of being concerned citizens of the whole world. The ‘citizens with the saints’ are ringing the bell.

Strive to be good global citizens, and look carefully at how Christ redefines what that means. Christ is on the move so we are no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints, those loving, dancing, sharing, hungry brothers and sisters in the global family of God.

## Questions for Reflection

How would you define being a good global citizen? Which people model being good global citizens? In the reflection above the writer asserts that part of being a good global citizen is choosing to be poor. Do you agree? How would those you consider saints push you to becoming a better global citizen?

## Prayer

Arms wide enough to hold the world,  
draw your people together  
so that the time when we are no longer strangers and aliens is near,  
as near as a refugee seeking a host,  
as near as a young person looking for a job,  
as near as an old woman reaching for companionship,  
as near as Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our hope and faith. Amen.

## DAY 2: Young People and Globalisation

Bible reading: Matthew 10:16

*“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”*

One summation of the aspirations of young men comes from the rock song by Nickelback. It had some popularity a couple of years ago.

‘Cause we all just wanna be big rock stars  
And live in hilltop houses driving fifteen cars  
The girls come easy and the drugs come cheap  
we’ll all stay skinny ’cause we just won’t eat  
And we’ll hang out in the coolest bars  
in the VIP with the movie stars  
Every good gold digger’s  
Gonna wind up there  
Every Playboy bunny  
With her bleach blonde hair.’

Being a rock star is one way of being ‘global.’ The variations are endless. Star is the important word. Whatever happened to doctor, teacher, carpenter or farmer? Is this rock song a satirical poke at the lifestyles of the famous, or does it lay out what young men are supposedly dreaming of: fifteen cars, easy girls and cheap drugs?

Young people are the main target for publicity. They are constantly being told how to be attractive, beautiful, and successful. The entertainment industry gives the directions. And in the midst of it, young people must find a way to secure a future, determine who they are and who they will be. In some places they need to learn how to fight for their rights.

Jesus lays out a difficult task. His followers are to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. Jesus is very realistic about what lies ahead. It’s a forest of wolves out there. How can we believe anything when on

every side we are being seduced, cajoled, manipulated? Finding success is translated into having, even if having is no insurance for happiness, much less meaning. When the girls come easy, as the rock song says, then it is clear how much of a task YMCAs and YWCAs have in front of them. How do we say together, loudly and clearly: “No woman should be considered cheap, easy, or be treated as a sex object,” and drop the language of ‘girl.’

Where are the examples that being a responsible global citizen involves more than being a clever purchaser of global goods, breaking the equation that being global means buying, flying, and getting high? How do YWCAs and YMCAs convince women that the man with all the muscles from travelling around with a bicycle is much more attractive than the man whose only ability is to put his foot on the gas pedal and squeal the tires? How do YMCAs and YWCAs convince men that the woman who is free to express herself with her own well-being and elegance is more attractive than the one who is a slave to expensive and often wasteful fashion?

To be as clever as serpents means unmasking at every turn the demand that persons are reduced to consumers, pointing to the false claims and empty promises. If life is summed up by hilltop houses, then even the hilltops will eventually feel cheap and, more importantly, lonely. To be as clever as serpents is to look underneath the surface of what happens to understand what the causes are. It is the tough work of finding the way to communicate what has been learned.

Young people within the YWCA and YMCA can be leaders in redefining what it means to be global. They are constantly faced with scams and deceptions, so many of them have become discerning. They have the street language to point out to the rest of us what is really going on. Many are taking Jesus seriously. They are quickly becoming as wise as serpents. They have to. Much harder is Jesus’ call to be as innocent as doves.

What does innocence look like? If it is only naïveté, then it is quickly preyed upon. Of what possible use can innocence be for global citizens who are thrown to the wolves?

With this seeming contradiction, Jesus warns that suspicion and cynicism alone are not enough. One must rediscover again and again the joys of loving and being loved. Wariness, essential for protection, does not transform situations or people. Truth, openness, and sincerity changes perceptions about each other and the world. But serpents seem to be more visible than doves. Skepticism is the current mode. Who will be an example of wise innocence?

YWCA's and YMCA's are not just places to learn skills. They can be places where the wolves are kept at bay so their tactics can be put in perspective. Then YMCA's and YWCA's can be communities where innocence can be dared again, finding the smiles which delight, sighing words of wonder, engaging in the shared tasks from which vital friendship is formed. The 'girls' are not easy, (nor the 'boys') the drugs are no longer attractive, the parking area is full of bicycles, and everyone eats healthily because life is shared and found to be good. The wolves are still at the door but the serpents are wise and the doves innocent and they will make a difference.

## **Questions for Reflection**

What wolves confront the young people where you live? What place does mass media have in shaping the young people of your community? What testimonies are there from young people about the need for wisdom in contemporary society? What models of wise innocence are present?

## **Prayer**

Wisdom, Light, Truth,  
laying bare what is covered over,  
and covering what is vulnerable,  
protect us from the wolves which attack and exploit,  
so that love might grow in us,  
wizened by your word,  
innocent by your grace  
as we follow your Beloved, Jesus Christ, Amen.

## DAY 3: Embracing Migration

Bible reading: John 1:10-14

*“He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.*

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”

Blessed be God, the Word,  
who came to his own and his own received him not,  
for in this way God glorified the stranger.

*St. Gregory of Nyssa 4th century*

O God, show us your image in all who come here today  
that we may welcome them and you.

*St Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco*

The Word migrated,  
took a journey more strenuous than a trip to Mars,  
became one of us,  
living among us.

But the Bible tells us we did not know the Word.  
We did not recognize that we were related to this Word.  
We didn’t accept the Word.

So there are more discouraging laws,  
more quotas, more fences, more camps,  
more signs: “Go home!”  
more cursing the Word from across the street, more complaints:  
“You’re taking our jobs,”  
More ways to keep the migrating Word away  
The Word immigrated full of grace and truth.

Maybe it was that way at the start;  
but it is not so easy for current migrants.  
First goes the truth, integrity sold for a false passport,  
honesty forsaken for a more dramatic account hoping that someone will help.  
Later goes the grace,  
swallowed by desperation,  
the shattered promise of the recruiters, who lied about good jobs and  
easy money,  
warmth frozen by suspicion.

The prayer says, "Show us your image in all who come here." The  
Word lives among us, full of grace and truth,  
but there is little glory.  
She takes care of grandma or the children,  
cleans the house, cooks the meals,  
sometimes fends off the husband's advances, sometimes not.  
She is a trained nurse, or a teacher,  
more education than needed to change diapers,  
education needed back home.  
She misses her own children.  
She misses her family.  
She misses the smile of people who know her.  
She misses the sound of her language  
the daily gossip connecting her to her community.  
She gathers with others from home on her day off,  
when she has a day off,  
under the bridge, in the park, in the church parish hall, at the Y.

Many old stories tell of the Messiah coming in unexpected guise.  
Christianity begins with God crossing borders,  
divinity passing through the checkpoints towards humanity,  
leaving behind what rightfully belonged,  
starting in a new world, our world, our neighborhood.

God is migrating, becoming flesh,  
sometimes hungry for food,  
but always hungry for a welcome.

God is migrating, becoming flesh,  
sometimes missing the documents for safe travel from place to place  
but always missing home,  
a home where all who seek find a place at the table.

God is migrating, becoming flesh,  
and with the fear, the turning aside, the outright rejection,  
our humanity gets lost,  
and that judgment at the start of the Gospel of John comes into dreadful  
force:

The Word, the divine Wisdom, the One at the Centre,  
came to us, and we did not know him.  
We did not accept him.  
Maybe the judgment is even worse,  
we knew and we rejected that Word anyway.

There is still a chance.  
Curses can be replaced with smiles.  
This migrating Word is not the enemy.  
This migrating Word might save.  
The promise could hold after all.  
To all who received this Word,  
who see God's image in the stranger,  
God gives power to become children of God.

The Word migrated, became flesh,  
lived among us.  
If we could see, we would receive grace upon grace.

## Questions for Reflection

What limits do we place on the image of God? What situations confront us when we know we are not welcoming Christ in the stranger, and yet we continue our rejection? What would our YMCA/YWCA have to do to be serious about welcoming immigrants? What would we have to do to improve the climate they confront when they come to our place?

## Prayer

Wisdom, deeper than self-preservation,  
Word, opening minds,  
Arms, embracing the unknown:  
take away our fear  
so your wisdom infuses our politics  
your word draws us towards love  
and your arms hold us until we know your strong grace  
and dare your truth. Amen.

### *YMCA Spain Promotes Cultural Diversity and Integration*

In 2008 an estimated 5,5 million immigrants resided in Spain, representing almost 15% of the country's population. YMCA Spain implements programmes in Madrid, Logrono, Zaragoza, Barcelona and Valencia, to promote inter-cultural understanding and sharing, and provide much-needed support for immigrant youth and their families.

To promote mutual respect and greater integration, YMCA Spain has made all its centres into spaces for integration where the coexistence of Spanish and migrant young people is promoted through joint activities including education, training, and recreation. Spanish lessons, legal advice, school support for children, and training for migrant youth and women preparing to enter the labour market, are also core to the YMCA's weekly programmes.

Every year, over 1,500 immigrants benefit from the various programmes organised by Spanish YMCAs.

## DAY 4: Gender and Citizenship

Bible reading: John 4:5-10, 16-19

*“So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’*

*Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet’.”*

She was a citizen of Sychar. Would she have called herself a citizen? Would her neighbours have said she was part of the town? She was a strange type of citizen, venturing to the well in the heat of the day, avoiding others. She had five husbands, so supposedly the other citizens of Sychar had a lot to talk about, husband four comparing notes with husband two, husband three telling everyone how impossible she was. Did she really belong to Sychar? Were all options closed except for getting the one she was with now (as Jesus called it) to become husband number six? Or was he already comparing notes with husbands one to five?

In too many places, a woman without a man is not a citizen. She cannot inherit any land on her own. The death of a husband means the widow can easily be preyed upon by the next man who has legal charge over her. Some women cannot pass on their national identity to their children, if it is different from the father’s. What is citizenship for a woman when her

only legal status comes as an appendage to a man? For many migrant women, marriage is the only ticket to citizenship. But the ticket is often a trap leading to the stark choice between abuse and deportation.

What if the woman of Sychar was marrying all those men just to keep legal status in Sychar? She is seemingly not allowed or not able, to be a single, mature woman without a man. We are not given her name. She has no man's name to be attached to. She does not make any claims about Sychar. Gossip, rumor, ostracism can affect how one understands one's place.

But she is clear that she is a Samaritan. When the Gospels want to emphasize that Jesus' ministry was no longer confined to one tribe, the Samaritans appear in the narrative. She is alone at the well. Clearly some other form of citizenship can only be an improvement. She has nothing to lose but yet another man. How many women would like to leave behind the citizenships given to them? How many have more to offer than the tasks assigned? The Samaritan woman is capable of a conversation with the Son of God. She can articulate the contentious issues between Jews and Samaritans. She can play with words but she does not hide behind cleverness and wit. She is clearly open to change. Jesus is not boxed in by her self-understanding. He offers her living water and she drinks.

She is changed. In the presence of Jesus a new world opens before her. Maybe her neighbours snubbed her into hot and dusty water gathering, but she will not be hindered from telling them about Jesus. Her new world view draws her to those who had despised her and shut her out. Although we don't hear of her after this account in the Bible, her first response to Jesus is to introduce him to the citizens of Sychar. She shows a possibility often discounted by those who would be global citizens. She first exercised her new world view by drawing in the people of her own city. She didn't just give a huge sigh of relief and then head off with Jesus for Jerusalem.

Her courage can be honoured without turning it into a rule. For some women (and men for that matter) their place of origin is too dangerous or too stifling to return to. Their local identities give them only pain. Then the promise of another citizenship, not bound by custom or political oppression, can be living water for dried up souls. The Samaritan woman no longer needs to remain as one despised. Instead she becomes the citizen of Sychar who transforms it. She draws all women and men to the living water. She may have had more husbands than a movie star, but Jesus does not leave her stranded by the well. She is drinking free and she is a sister in Christ outside tradition's boundaries, a citizen with the saints.

## **Questions for Reflection**

In your setting who are the women who are leaders, who are changing things, who are examples of global citizenship? What limits to citizenship do women face in your country? What differences are there between the responses of men and those of women to the last question? What new visions are there for supporting women in other cultures in their struggles for liberation?

## **Prayer**

Conversation into the silence,  
Word at a well of loneliness,  
speaking what no one else dares to name  
offering what no one else can give,  
wet our lips with a truth that sets us free  
and opens our mouths to set others free  
to become citizens of your realm,  
where love is shared abundantly  
in Jesus Christ. Amen.

## *YWCA of Malaysia offers young women a life free of poverty*

Globalisation has had a devastating impact on Malaysia's rural communities. Competition in the oil palm industry and fluctuating market prices have driven rural communities further into poverty.

However, the YWCA of Malaysia's Vocational Training Opportunity Centre (VTOC) provides young rural women a different future. The centre offers skills training and safe accommodation for impoverished girls of all races. Here, young women learn not only income-generating skills, but life skills as well to ensure young women are not ensnared in poverty forever.

When 18-year-old Fauzihermi Herman first arrived at the centre, she was scared. The daughter of farm labourers and one of seven children, she grew up in an oil palm plantation and the move to Kuala Lumpur was a huge step for her. Hardship was part of her life. Her parents each earned between RM200-300 (60USD) a month and struggled to provide for their children. Higher education was out of the question for Fauzihermi, who aspired to be a teacher.

Now, through the YWCA VTOC Fauzihermi is making her dream a reality. Enrolled in the centre's kindergarten teacher training course, Fauzihermi has taken the first step towards realising her ambition. After her one-year course she hopes to start working as she pursues further studies in the field.

The YWCA VTOC started operations in 1998 with 50 girls, and as of 2008, 654 girls had passed through its doors equipped with employable skills. The centre also received a grant from Microsoft, through its Unlimited Potential Programme, to equip women and girls from marginalised backgrounds with ICT skills and bridge the digital divide in Malaysia.

## Day 5: Climate Change: From Excuses to Action

Bible Reading: Acts 27:18-20, 41-44

*“We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard, and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship’s tackle overboard. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned”.*

But Paul had a vision that all would be saved. He encouraged those on-board to eat and gain strength. They saw a bay.

*“But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land”.*

The earth is fighting back. The disasters will not be confined to a flood like in the days of Noah, although Bangladesh and some island nations, already feel the waters rising around their necks. The hard rains are getting harder and the dry plains are getting dryer. The computer models were wrong. The results of global warming will come faster and more severe than what had been thought. The world is running out of time.

What response can a good global citizen make? Is it enough to leave the car in the garage once a week, or maybe decide not to buy a car at all? Does writing letters to parliament or newspapers make a difference? Picketing the polluters? Praying for quick technological solutions?

The poorest, we are told, will be the first to suffer when the hard rain falls, or when the droughts, the other side of climate change, cause the crops to fail.

The most well known Biblical story about boats and storms is Noah and the ark. And Noah quickly becomes the model. Let me build my ark, save my people, keep my job, protect our industry. We will be able to float above the waves and arrive safely. The more fear, the more concentration on the ark. When the hard rain falls we will be building better umbrellas for ourselves. We will survive; too bad for the others. The ark, however, is not the only boat story in the Bible.

Much less well known is the story of Paul's shipwreck. It is worth reading the whole chapter in Acts. The sailors try and escape by themselves, and Paul prevents it. The soldiers are going to kill the prisoners, but because Paul is a prisoner the centurion saves all of them. In the end, everyone makes it safely to land.

In the Noah story, one family is saved along with all the animals on the ark. But everyone else is destroyed. But in the story from Acts, everyone in the situation is saved. No one is lost. What kind of global citizens can make sure that no one is lost?

The rich of both the developed and the developing world consume more than their share of the earth's resources. Many of them are busy saving themselves. Too bad if so many of those poor people have to be sacrificed. If the waters are rising, those with the resources will buy up the land on higher ground. But St. Paul would not allow anyone to escape the endangered ship. All would be saved together or none.

Wagging fingers will not be convincing enough for the kind of changes necessary in this crisis. The ecological crisis demands a spiritual solution. The YMCA and YWCA can create communities which celebrate consuming less. Along with the churches around the corner, they can begin to show that relationships are the centre of happiness rather than endless consumption. They can exemplify the joy which comes from

working together, sharing together, laughing together, while making the world and our own communities a better place. To be concerned about climate change doesn't mean we are grim and fearful. When the hard rain falls, we are together, and are finding ways for everyone to survive. No group gets cast out in the storm to fend on their own, and Alleluias are sung for all who are saved. Dancing breaks out for all who have been pulled onto the shore. Because of quick action, the earth has a chance to heal. Then everyone will be saved.

*Acknowledgement: The comparison of the shipwreck of St. Paul with Noah is taken from a Bible study which Dr. Wesley Ariarajah gave at the World Council of Churches. Used with permission.*

## **Questions for Reflection**

What concrete steps can we take immediately to limit our consumption of precious resources? How can we challenge each other to go beyond the obvious (and sometimes easy) solutions? What changed your attitude about climate change, and how has this affected your behavior? What joyous ways can we use to celebrate living in harmony with the earth God has given us?

## **Prayer**

Creator  
who makes everything  
and loves everything you make,  
change our desires and our souls  
so that we do not destroy what you make,  
but esteem what you give us  
and care for the earth as well as one another,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

## DAY 6: Economic Justice and Food Security

Bible reading: 2 Kings 4.42-44

*“A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, ‘Give it to the people and let them eat.’ But his servant said, ‘How can I set this before a hundred people?’ So he repeated, ‘Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” ’ He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.”*

‘How can I set this before a hundred people?’ What a terrible question to put before a prophet of God. Probably the man from Baal-shalishah was honestly embarrassed. There is a famine in the land. He is bringing his offering to feed Elisha, the prophet. All of sudden his offering is supposed to take care of a crowd. There are a hundred empty mouths out there.

When it comes to the issues of food and equitable trade, the honest man’s question quickly becomes an excuse. Can we really do anything that can alleviate human poverty? Even good global citizens are not going to be able to feed everyone. What does it mean to buy at equitable prices? A few farmers in destitute countries gain a little. The poor are still poor. If there were more equitable rules for trade would it really change things, or would it just redistribute corruption? How quickly an honest perception of ‘not enough’ becomes an excuse to do nothing. And if our limitations block us from small, rather charitable responses, our eyes glaze into stupor when someone tries to explain to us the systems in place which keep people poor. Who wants to pay attention to all those large numbers and complicated analysis? How can we keep track of so much injustice, so many hungry people, so many profiting on the misery of others? Easier to retreat to a music video.

But the prophet sees what God does, not just the insufficient supply, much less our excuses. Maybe the grain was offered to the prophet, Elisha, but the prophet doesn’t eat without seeing the people around him. God has told him, ‘If the people eat, he will have left-overs.’

What can provide the jolt from excuse to action, from a sense of shortage to the courage to share? How can God's word be heard so that the commandment to take care of others does not just provoke fear for one's own condition? Practical first steps are needed. Giving away the equivalent of the most expensive meal of the past week to support a project providing food to local communities? Not eating one meal and spending the time gained to try and influence the laws creating trade injustices, or at least learn about them? Giving a tenth of the takings from the soda machine to the education of farmers in developing countries, or toward a well that could irrigate the gardens of a village, or to support local campaigns advocating for justice and food security?

There are many possibilities. Or is the response, 'What can be done when there are so many ways to respond? There are too many needs and the resources too few'. It does not take much work to find ways to fight hunger or to work towards a more equitable global trading system. But these do not quell the excuses.

The prophet Elisha pushes. We are to give what we have and do what we can. If we cannot change the whole trading system, we can become knowledgeable and vocal about one aspect. If we cannot teach all farmers practices to combat climate change, we can fund one school that begins to make a difference. If we cannot feed all the poor of the world, or even of our city, we can gather together to discern who is benefitting from the hunger pangs of others and what changes can right some of the worst imbalances. If we don't have enough barley and grain for a hundred, we are not excused.

Elisha was not modest. He stopped the man from. . . well I can't pronounce it either, but it was somewhere near Gilgal. He stopped that man then and there. There are people. They need to eat. God says there will be left-overs.

And there will be.

## Questions for Reflection

Who are the hungry around you? What do you have to set before them? What resources do you have available to learn about the inequities of global trade? Even if it is a small gesture, what might God be calling you to do, to influence your government, your culture, to improve society so that no one goes hungry?

## Prayer

What excuses shall we offer, God?

Will you listen one more time to our well-rehearsed reasoning?

Can we convince you that we are limited, small, unable to really respond?

Or would you remind us that we are made in your image

that you have given us an abundance of love,

that we stand on the shoulders of all those who have done your will and glorified your name?

Awaken your Spirit within us so we see the needs of your people, and overcome our fear to offer what we have and are through Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Order of Worship

## Global Citizens—Citizens with the Saints

This type is for one voice.

*This type is for the assembly.*

Musical Preparation *This could include learning the songs for the service or instrumental music.*

### Greeting

Peace to those who are near.

***Peace.***

Peace to you who are far off.

***Peace.***

Christ is our peace.

***In Christ we are citizens with the saints.***

We all have a passport photo.

***We are made in the image of God.***

We have a digital imprint.

***We are formed into the body of Christ.***

We have a visa for the world.

***The Spirit blows where she wills.***

Christ has broken every barrier down.

***Whether far or near, we are members of the household of God.***

We celebrate together in the name of the Blessed Trinity,  
***one God, now and forever. Amen.***

### Song

### Opening Prayer

Barrier buster,  
Bridge builder  
bringing together the separated,  
reaching across long established divisions,

expand our many identities to encompass all your people,  
holding together the differences and contradictions,  
embracing each other's dreams and visions  
until we are no longer alien to one another,  
but citizens together in that land  
where there is no longer male nor female, poor nor rich,  
normal nor odd, fitting in nor acting out,  
but all are sisters and brothers in your name  
and all are recognized as a dwelling-place for you,  
the creator of a new humanity,  
the guarantor of a new citizenship  
Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### Sharing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

***and also with you.***

As citizens with the saints, let us offer each other signs of peace.

*The assembly shares the peace with one another.*

Peace song *for example Dona nobis pacem. This pulls the assembly back together so the service can continue.*

### Call to Confession

We know that we are sisters and brothers in Christ, but we are often quick to kick some of our sisters and brothers out of the family. We get afraid and we hurt each other. We are jealous and think others are taking advantage of us. Our encounters can lead to misunderstanding and suspicion as easily as to reconciliation and love. So we confess our sin.

### Silence

God of peace,  
when inner turmoil interferes with our acceptance of others  
***heal us.***

When fear keeps our arms folded in defense rather than open in welcome  
***unlock us.***

For the language we hide behind, which confirms our belief that the stranger is really strange,

***accuse us.***

For the lines we draw between us, the fences we erect to keep others out, the walls we build to continue making others into enemies,

***judge us.***

When selfishness blocks us from caring for your creation,

***convict us.***

When our 'global citizenship' points the finger at the sins of others and diminishes the sacrifices we are called to make,

***shake us.***

From the violence and selfishness which often overtake us,

***re-make us.***

With the saints and members of the household of God,

***love us into a new humanity, through the cross of Jesus Christ.***

***Amen.***

A short song of confession could be sung here.

Words of forgiveness

God is always ready to turn us. In Christ Jesus we have the promise that we can be different. We can start again, and day by day be nurtured in Christ's love. In Christ there is forgiveness and peace.

Short sung acclamation

Epistle Reading            Ephesians 2:13-22

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed

peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

Reflection

Song

Affirmation adapted from Ephesians 2:13-22 and Psalm 23

Christ is our peace.

***The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.***

In his flesh he has broken down the dividing wall,

***The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want.***

Christ has broken down the hostility between us;

***You make us lie down together in green pastures.***

He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances --

***you lead us all beside still waters,***

that he might create in himself a new humanity,

***You restore my soul,***

thus making peace,

***You restore my soul,***

reconciling all people to God in one body through the cross,

***You restore our souls.***

Christ reconciled all people to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death hostility through it.

***Even though we walk through the darkest valley, we fear no evil.***

Christ came and proclaimed peace to those who were far off --

***You restore our souls,***

and peace to those who were near,

***You lead us in right paths for your name's sake.***

We are no longer strangers and aliens --  
***for you are with us, your rod and your staff-- they comfort us,***  
but we are citizens with the saints  
and also members of the household of God,  
***You prepare a table before us, enemies are turned into friends,***  
built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone,  
***You anoint our heads with oil; our cups overflow.***  
In him the whole structure is joined together  
and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;  
***Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives,***  
in whom you also are built together spiritually  
into a dwelling place for God.  
***and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord our whole lives long.***

Hymn (maybe based on the 23rd Psalm)

Prayers of intercession

God of peace,  
raise up global citizens who turn the world from war.  
Replace the roar of drones and tanks  
with the wise reason which finds non-violent solutions.  
Inspire new dreams in which conquest is replaced by cooperation  
so all your children can live in harmony.  
***Turn your people into peace-making global citizens.***

God of justice,  
raise up global citizens who cry out against greed.  
Give our world new ethics  
which value compassion more than consuming,  
caring more than controlling,  
relating more than baiting to make the next sale.  
Inspire new dreams for the ending of exploitation.  
***Turn your people into just and fair global citizens.***  
God of creation,  
raise up global citizens who care for the earth.

Instill a new-found respect for what you have made.  
Encourage us to be cautious in what we use,  
joyful in what we share,  
deliberate in what we desire.  
Inspire new dreams so that the planet we call home can heal.  
***Turn your people into ecological global citizens.***

God of people everywhere,  
raise up global citizens who break through barriers of culture, class,  
race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, ideology, creed.  
End the violence which keeps breaking us asunder.  
Bring a new wave of warm, welcoming embraces  
to build inroads against stereotypes, misunderstandings, and fears.  
Inspire new dreams in which we join each other in the dance of love  
and discover sisters and brothers we didn't know we had,  
but which are part of your household.  
***Turn your people into saintly global citizens.***

Hear our prayers and bring forth the new humanity in Jesus Christ, ***Amen.***

The Lord's Prayer (If possible said in many languages at the same time.)

Song

Sending forth

You are invited to turn to your neighbors once again. Say the neighbor's first name (It's all right if you need to ask what it is.) and then add, "you are a citizen with the saints." Let us make sure that everyone hears this affirmation several times.

Citizens with the saints,  
go forth as global citizens  
in such a way that people see in you  
the dwelling of God. ***Amen.***

Blessing

# BIBLE READING PLAN 2009-2010

## November 2009

### 1. *All Saints Day*

Ps 33

2. Ezek 17,1-24

3. Ezek 18,1-3.20-32

4. Ezek 20,1-17

5. Ezek 20,30-44

6. Ezek 33,10-20

7. Ezek 33,21-22.30-33

8. Ps 69,1-16

9. Ezek 34,1-16

10. Ezek 34,23-31

11. Ezek 36,1-15

12. Ezek 36,16-32

13. Ezek 37,1-14

14. Ezek 37,15-28

15. Ps 69,17-37

16. Ezek 40,1-16

17. Ezek 43,1-12

18. Ezek 47,1-12

19. Ezek 48,30-35

20. 1 Thes 1,1-10

21. 1 Thes 2,1-12

22. Ps 46

23. 1 Thes 2,13-20

24. 1 Thes 3,1-13

25. 1 Thes 4,1-12

26. 1 Thes 4,13-18

27. 1 Thes 5,1-11

28. 1 Thes 5,12-28

29. Ps 24

30. 2 Thes 1,1-12

## December 2009

1. 2 Thes 2,1-17

2. 2 Thes 3,1-18

3. Zech 1,1-17

4. Zech 2,1-9

5. Zech 2,10-17

6. 1Sam 2,1-10

7. Zech 3,1-10

8. Zech 4,1-14

9. Zech 5,1-11

10. Zech 6,1-8

11. Zech 6,9-15

12. Zech 7,1-14

13. Lk 1,46-55

14. Zech 8,1-23

15. Zech 9,9-12

16. Zech 11,4-17

17. Zech 12,9-13,1

18. Zech 14,1-11

19. Mal 1,6-14

20. Lk 1,68-79

21. Mal 2,17-3,5

22. Mal 3,6-12

23. Mal 3,13-18

24. Mal 3,19-24

25. *Christmas*

Ps 2

26. Lk 2,29-32

27. Jn 1,1-5

28. Jn 1,6-8

29. Jn 1,9-13

30. Jn 1,14-18

31. Ps 103

## January 2010

1. *New Year*

Psalm 97

2. Jn 1,19-28

3. Ps 138

4. Jn 1,29-34

5. Jn 1,35-42

6. Jn 1,43-51

7. Jn 2,1-12

8. Jn 2,13-25

9. Jn 3,1-13

10. Ps 96

11. Jn 3,14-21

12. Jn 3,22-36

13. Deut 1,1-18

14. Deut 1,19-33

15. Deut 1,34-46

16. Deut 2,1-15

17. Ps 92

18. Deut 2,16-25

19. Deut 3,12-29

20. Deut 4,1-14

21. Deut 4,15-24

22. Deut 4,25-40

23. Deut 5,1-22

24. Ps 1

25. Deut 5,23-33

26. Deut 6,1-9

27. Deut 6,10-25

28. Deut 7,1-11

29. Deut 7,12-26

30. Deut 8,1-20

31. Ps 119,73-80

## February 2010

1. Deut 9,1-6

2. Deut 9,7-21

3. Deut 9,22-29

4. Deut 10,1-9

5. Deut 10,10-22

6. Deut 11,1-12

- 7. Ps 119,81-88
- 8. Deut 11,13-32
- 9. Deut 12,1-12
- 10. Deut 15,1-11
- 11. Deut 15,12-18
- 12. Deut 16,1-17
- 13. Deut 16,18-20

**14. Ps 31**

- 15. Deut 17,14-20
- 16. Deut 18,9-22
- 17. Deut 19,1-13
- 18. Deut 24,6-22
- 19. Deut 26,1-15
- 20. Deut 30,11-20

**21. Ps 91**

- 22. Deut 31,1-8
- 23. Deut 33,1-5.26-29
- 24. Deut 34,1-12
- 25. Jn 11,1-10
- 26. Jn 11,11-19
- 27. Jn 11,20-31

**28. Ps 35,1-16**

**March 2010**

- 1. Jn 11,32-45
- 2. Jn 11,46-57
- 3. Jn 12,1-11
- 4. Jn 12,12-19
- 5. Jn 12,20-26
- 6. Jn 12,27-36

- 7. Ps 35,17-28
- 8. Jn 12,37-50
- 9. Jn 13,1-11
- 10. Jn 13,12-20
- 11. Jn 13,21-30
- 12. Jn 13,31-38
- 13. Jn 14,1-7

**14. Ps 57**

- 15. Jn 14,8-14
- 16. Jn 14,15-26
- 17. Jn 14,27-31
- 18. Jn 15,1-8
- 19. Jn 15,9-17
- 20. Jn 15,18-16,4

**21. Ps 43**

- 22. Jn 16,5-15
- 23. Jn 16,16-24
- 24. Jn 16,25-33
- 25. Jn 17,1-5
- 26. Jn 17,6-16
- 27. Jn 17,17-26

**28. Palm Sunday**

- Ps 55
- 29. Jn 18,1-11
- 30. Jn 18,12-27
- 31. Jn 18,28-40

**April 2010**

- 1. Jn 19,1-16a
- 2. *Good Friday*  
Jn 19,16b-30
- 3. Jn 19,31-42

**4. Easter**

- Jn 20,1-10
- 5. Jn 20,11-18
- 6. Jn 20,19-23
- 7. Jn 20,24-31
- 8. Jn 21,1-14
- 9. Jn 21,15-19
- 10. Jn 21,20-25

**11. Ps 84**

- 12. Eph 1,1-10
- 13. Eph 1,11-14
- 14. Eph 1,15-23

- 15. Eph 2,1-10
- 16. Eph 2,11-22
- 17. Eph 3,1-13

**18. Ps 87**

- 19. Eph 3,14-21
- 20. Eph 4,1-6
- 21. Eph 4,7-16
- 22. Eph 4,17-24
- 23. Eph 4,25-32
- 24. Eph 5,1-14

**25. Ps 66**

- 26. Eph 5,15-20
- 27. Eph 5,21-33
- 28. Eph 6,1-4
- 29. Eph 6,5-9
- 30. Eph 6,10-17

**May 2010**

- 1. Eph 6,18-24

**2. Ps 98**

- 3. Heb 1,1-4
- 4. Heb 1,5-14
- 5. Heb 2,1-10
- 6. Heb 2,11-18
- 7. Heb 3,1-6
- 8. Heb 3,7-19

**9. Ps 95**

- 10. Heb 4,1-13
- 11. Heb 4,14-5,10
- 12. Heb 5,11-6,8
- 13. Ascension  
Ps 68,1-21
- 14. Heb 6,9-20
- 15. Heb 7,1-10

**16. Ps 68,25-36**

- 17. Heb 7,11-22

- 18. Heb 7,23-28
- 19. Heb 8,1-13
- 20. Heb 9,1-10
- 21. Heb 9,11-15
- 22. Heb 9,16-28

**23. Pentecost**  
Ps 99

- 24. Ps 81
- 25. Heb 10,1-18
- 26. Heb 10,19-25
- 27. Heb 10,26-31
- 28. Heb 10,32-39
- 29. Heb 11,1-7

- 30. Ps 145**
- 31. Heb 11,8-22

**June 2010**

- 1. Heb 11,23-31
- 2. Heb 11,32-40
- 3. Heb 12,1-11
- 4. Heb 12,12-17
- 5. Heb 12,18-24

- 6. Ps 76**
- 7. Heb 12,25-29
- 8. Heb 13,1-14
- 9. Heb 13,15-25
- 10. Amos 1,1-2; 3,3-8
- 11. Amos 3,1-2,9-15
- 12. Amos 4,1-13

- 13. Ps 36**
- 14. Amos 5,1-17
- 15. Amos 5,18-24
- 16. Amos 6,1-14
- 17. Amos 7,1-9
- 18. Amos 7,10-17
- 19. Amos 8,1-3; 9,1-6

- 20. Ps 139**
- 21. Amos 8,4-14
- 22. Amos 9,7-15
- 23. Hos 1,1-9
- 24. Hos 2,1-3
- 25. Hos 2,4-15
- 26. Hos 2,16-25

- 27. Ps 58**
- 28. Hos 3,1-5
- 29. Hos 4,1-11
- 30. Hos 5,8-15

**July 2010**

- 1. Hos 6,1-6
- 2. Hos 8,1-14
- 3. Hos 10,1-15

- 4. Ps 73**
- 5. Hos 11,1-11
- 6. Hos 12,1-11
- 7. Hos 13,1-14
- 8. Hos 14,2-10
- 9. Jn 4,1-14
- 10. Jn 4,15-26

- 11. Ps 51**
- 12. Jn 4,27-42
- 13. Jn 4,43-54
- 14. Jn 5,1-9a
- 15. Jn 5,9b-18
- 16. Jn 5,19-23
- 17. Jn 5,24-30

- 18. Ps 53**
- 19. Jn 5,31-47
- 20. Jn 6,1-15
- 21. Jn 6,16-21
- 22. Jn 6,22-27
- 23. Jn 6,28-40
- 24. Jn 6,41-59

- 25. Ps 48**
- 26. Jn 6,60-65
- 27. Jn 6,66-71
- 28. Jn 7,1-13
- 29. Jn 7,14-24
- 30. Jn 7,25-31
- 31. Jn 7,32-39

**August 2010**

- 1. Ps 42**
- 2. Jn 7,40-52
- 3. Jn 7,53-8,11
- 4. Jn 8,12-20
- 5. Jn 8,21-29
- 6. Jn 8,30-36
- 7. Jn 8,37-45

- 8. Ps 59**
- 9. Jn 8,46-59
- 10. Jn 9,1-12
- 11. Jn 9,13-23
- 12. Jn 9,24-34
- 13. Jn 9,35-41
- 14. Jn 10,1-10

- 15. Ps 148**
- 16. Jn 10,11-21
- 17. Jn 10,22-30
- 18. Jn 10,31-42
- 19. 1.Jn 1,1-4
- 20. 1.Jn 1,5-10
- 21. 1.Jn 2,1-6

- 22. Ps 41**
- 23. 1.Jn 2,7-11
- 24. 1.Jn 2,12-17
- 25. 1.Jn 2,18-29
- 26. 1.Jn 3,1-10
- 27. 1.Jn 3,11-18
- 28. 1.Jn 3,19-24

**29. Ps 93**

- 30. 1.Jn 4,1-6
- 31. 1.Jn 4,7-21

**September 2010**

- 1. 1.Jn 5,1-5
- 2. 1.Jn 5,6-12
- 3. 1.Jn 5,13-21
- 4. 2.Jn 1-13
  
- 5. Ps 146
- 6. 3.Jn 1-15
- 7. Zeph 1,1-9
- 8. Zeph 2,1-7
- 9. Zeph 3,9-20
- 10. Hab 1,1-11
- 11. Hab 1,12-2,3

**12. Ps 130**

- 13. Hab 2,4-20
- 14. Hab 3,1-19
- 15. Eccl 1,1-2,2
- 16. Eccl 2,3-11.24-26
- 17. Eccl 3,1-15
- 18. Eccl 4,1-12

**19. Ps 37,1-20**

- 20. Eccl 4,17-5,6
- 21. Eccl 5,9-19
- 22. Eccl 6,1-12
- 23. Eccl 7,1-14
- 24. Eccl 11,1-10
- 25. Eccl 12,1-14

**26. Ps 37,21-40**

- 27. Gal 1,1-5
- 28. Gal 1,6-10
- 29. Gal 1,11-24
- 30. Gal 2,1-10

**October 2010**

- 1. Gal 2,11-21
- 2. Gal 3,1-14
  
- 3. Ps 65
- 4. Gal 3,15-18
- 5. Gal 3,19-29
- 6. Gal 4,1-7
- 7. Gal 4,8-20
- 8. Gal 4,21-31
- 9. Gal 5,1-15

**10. Ps 56**

- 11. Gal 5,16-26
- 12. Gal 6,1-10
- 13. Gal 6,11-18
- 14. Rev 1,1-8
- 15. Rev 1,9-20
- 16. Rev 2,1-7

**17. Ps 75**

- 18. Rev 2,8-11
- 19. Rev 2,12-17
- 20. Rev 2,18-29
- 21. Rev 3,1-6
- 22. Rev 3,7-13
- 23. Rev 3,14-22

**24. Ps 38**

- 25. Rev 4,1-11
- 26. Rev 5,1-5
- 27. Rev 5,6-14
- 28. Rev 6,1-8
- 29. Rev 6,9-17
- 30. Rev 7,1-8

**31. Ps 143**

**November 2010**

- 1. *All Saints Day*  
Rev 7,9-17
- 2. Rev 8,1-5
- 3. Rev 8,6-13
- 4. Rev 9,1-12
- 5. Rev 9,13-21
- 6. Rev 10,1-11

**7. Ps 39**

- 8. Rev 11,1-2
- 9. Rev 11,3-14
- 10. Rev 11,15-19
- 11. Rev 20,1-6
- 12. Rev 20,7-10
- 13. Rev 20,11-15

**14. Ps 50**

- 15. Rev 21,1-8
- 16. Rev 21,9-14
- 17. Rev 21,15-27
- 18. Rev 22,1-5
- 19. Rev 22,6-15
- 20. Rev 22,16-21

**21. Ps 90**

- 22. Isa 1,1-9
- 23. Isa 1,10-20
- 24. Isa 1,21-31
- 25. Isa 2,1-5
- 26. Isa 2,6-22
- 27. Isa 3,1-15

**28. Ps 24**

- 29. Isa 4,2-6
- 30. Isa 5,1-7



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