



NEW LIFE NEWS

The official newsletter for New Life Presbyterian Church • March 2008 • www.newlifelamesa.org

SUPPER OF THE LAMB: A CULINARY REFLECTION

by Robert Farrar Capon, *Modern Library* 1967, 2002. Review by Tom Ziegler

“In time, I came to understand that for people who really love it, food is a lens through which to view the world. For us, the way that people cook and eat, how they set their tables, and the utensils that they use all tell a story. If you choose to pay attention, cooking is an important cultural artifact, an expression of time, place and personality,” writes Ruth Reichl, series editor for *Modern Library Food* in introducing *Supper of the Lamb*.

Capon is an Episcopal priest who was prophetic in his early espousal of the goals of the now popular slow-food movement and the organic/regional/natural/sustainable food movements. He revels in food as a gift from God to be enjoyed in its nature, preparation, sharing, and eating. He extracts a celebratory spirituality from chores of shopping, cooking, dining and cleaning up that others take on as merely necessary or even odious.

Chapter One: (Ingredients) Capon is one of the earlier voices for genuineness; he advocates refusal of the prepared, frozen, stylized, processed, packaged, or other “unnatural” foods. He doesn’t admit to it, but I suspect he secretly advocates terrorist-type destruction of fast-food establishments. He invites cooks to glory in natural ingredients and the transformative miracles of good cuisine.

Chapter Two: (The First Session) destroys “gnosis” and abstractions in favor of real onions for making a stew. He provides lengthy instructions for dissection and appreciation of onions. Skip these. Chop the onions coarsely and put them into the stew. “One real thing is closer to God than all the diagrams in the world.”

Chapter Three: (Burnt Offering)

strikes a difference between festal (expensive) cooking for celebrations, such as roasts, steaks and chops and the ferial (economical) cooking for everyday use, such as soups, stews, and casseroles. The latter can be just as much a delight to the hungry soul and call for greater chef artistry.

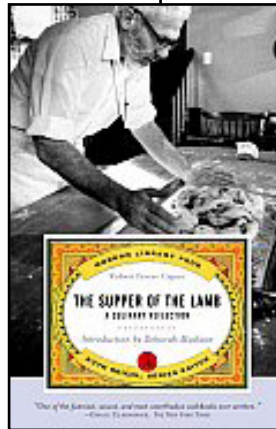
Chapter Four: (The Generous Ox) glories in the diversity of God’s good creations given to mankind as food and extols a wide range of preparations that a chef can apply.

Chapter Five: (Wave Breast and Heave Shoulder) holds forth on the Levitical offering of blood and burnt offerings of animals as an atonement for sin, reestablishing fellowship with God.

Chapter Six: (The Tin Fiddle) reviews knives and tools which have been rightly used to trace the development of civilizations. He provides an opinionated discussion of knives necessary in a well-functioning kitchen.

Chapter Seven: (Living Water) continues the diatribe against hurry and efficiency and continues to call us to reverential contemplation of the ordinary things of life, even food and its proper preparation. This philosophizing terminates in recipes for stock (broth) making.

Chapter Eight: (Water in Excelsis) extols the virtues of wine and the great blessings of God in the form of grapes,



yeast and fermentation. He sets forth the dogma that things are precious (inherently valuable) before they are contributory (functional). He concludes by sharing his prejudices about wine varieties and corkscrews.

Chapter Nine: (Suspended Solution) discuss the fine art of gravy-thickening with butter and flour and the preparation of sauces, such as hollandaise.

In Chapter Ten (And She Took Flour) a Screw-tape-like assistant to the devil proposes alienation of man from reality by a systematic substitution of abstractions, diagrams and conceptualizations in place of actual things. So, at a dinner party featuring homemade noodles and chicken paprika, the honored guest declines the noodles, saying that he is counting calories. The author extols the virtues of real objects and belittles our reliance upon abstractions or units of measure, such as calories, centimeters or seconds. To see food only as nutritional value is to engage in desubstantialization of man; regarding not what things are, but what they mean to us, thus becoming idolaters spiritualizing what should be loved as matter. He concludes with recipes for noodles, spaetzles and strudel.

Chapter Eleven: (Better a Dinner of Herbs...) Decries the eating habits of America’s young and pleads that parents

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Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for he is going to say, “I came as a guest, and you received me.” —Rules of St Benedict

BENJAMIN AND ROSIE ROCHESTER

by Ben Rochester

Greetings New Life PCA, My name is Benjamin C. Rochester. My wife's name is Rosanabella "Rosie" Rochester. Rosie and I were raised in Christian homes and grew up in the same church in Spring Valley, CA. We married on June 8, 2006 and became members of New Life PCA in August 2007.

I am a student at Westminster Seminary California because of a call to the ministry of the Word and sacrament. I want to gain the skills needed to serve Christ's church, for true spirituality, and for teaching our children. I am also pursuing a license and ordination in the Presbyterian Church of America, and am now interning here at New Life. With God's will, once ordained, I plan to preach the Word and set up home school programs.

I was not always certain about the call to ministry. Several years ago I did a year long internship at the church where we grew up. The ethics of that denomination left us with a sour taste for the ministry. I spent three years doing undergraduate work as a Bible major. It

was not until my last year that I felt a definite call to the ministry.

Evan Bowman gave me a book he purchased while visiting Westminster Seminary. It is called *Him we Proclaim* by Dr. Dennis Johnson. I had never heard of Dennis Johnson, and was not familiar with Westminster Seminary. This book dealt with preaching and Biblical interpretation. I devoured this book. I could not put it down. I was convicted that I needed to preach the Word. After reading the book I prayed, "Oh Lord, if you want me to preach the Word, let me learn from teachers like this." The phone rang. My wife answered the phone. It was Westminster Seminary calling to make an appointment for me to see the campus. She gave the phone to me, and the next week I had a face to face meeting with Dr. Johnson, who is the Academic Dean. I understood this to be an answered prayer.

I have not doubted the call to the ministry since that day. God has



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provided Rosie with a job that can support us while I am in seminary, a reliable car for travel back and forth from Escondido to La Mesa, and the internship at New Life. We are thankful for what we have been given, and I am excited to serve at New Life. ☛



STRICKEN AND AFFLICTED

By Thomas Kelly, 1804

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, see him dying on the tree.
'Tis the Christ by man rejected; yes, my soul, 'tis he, 'tis he.
'Tis the long expected Prophet, David's son, yet David's Lord;
by his Son God now has spoken: 'tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, ye who hear him groaning, was there ever grief like his?
Friends thro' fear his cause disowning, foes insulting his distress;
many hands were raised to wound him, none would interpose to save;
but the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great
hear may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load;
'tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God.

Here we have a firm foundation, here the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the Rock of our salvation, his the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, sacrifice to cancel guilt.
None shall ever be confounded who on him their hope have built.

ON HOSPITALITY

by Trudy Verdick

Have you ever been welcomed into someone's home when you were "down" or in need? This was the first question asked at this summer's WOC Hospitality Seminar, and it prompted some touching and amusing stories of the love of strangers which brought us right into the subject, hospitality.

Hospitality is often confused with our modern day "entertaining." In this era of beautifully photographed publications and the proliferation of food preparation and entertainment, today's hospitality misses the mark of being a truly spiritual activity. Hospitality is literally "a love of strangers," and God has commanded us to be hospitable.

The ancient world was a dangerous place for travelers (*Genesis 19:1-11*), particularly for those who preached the Gospel (*Acts 9:10-30*). God's hospitality command to the early church was practical. Christians must provide protection and sustenance for one another as they were displaced to spread the Gospel. Perhaps if you welcomed someone into your home, you would be giving food and shelter to a messenger of the Gospel without even knowing it (*Hebrews 13:1-2*).

Some good examples of hospitality in the early church were Simon, the Tanner (*Acts 9:35-10:23*), Lydia (*Acts 16:15*), Aquila and Priscilla (*Acts 18:1-3*), Philemon (*Philemon 22*), Gaius (*Romans 16:23*), and the other Gaius (*3 John 5-8*). These saints understood that their open door was being used by God to build His Kingdom even if they weren't preaching the Gospel themselves.

San Diego is not such a dangerous place, but the command still stands.



Occasionally, our church will have visiting pastors or missionaries who need a place to stay. There may be visitors to New Life who do not know anyone in the congregation or may be displaced, lonely, and in need of a listening ear or Godly counsel. We are commanded to welcome them in and lovingly provide for them. It is in God's character to seek out strangers and love them (*Eph. 2:11-13*). When we are hospitable, we display the character of God (*Isaiah 58:6-9*). God loves to be imitated by His children.

For many of us remembering the hospitality of others drives us to be hospitable out of gratitude to God. Have you experienced God's love for you, the stranger? Have you experienced the hospitality of others? Consider His call to this Christian practice and build on your experience with gratitude. Pray for God to give you a heart to obey. Talk about opening your home with others who are practicing hospitality. Get some helpful hints and encouragement to prepare for a guest, and be ready to say, "welcome!"

For encouragement to "jump in" read *Open Heart, Open Home*, by Karen Burton Mains or *The Hospitality Commands*, by Alexander Strauch. Both books, in our library, explain the Biblical principles of hospitality with clarity and give practical instructions for making hospitality an integral part of your

Christian life.

Finally, the greatest encouragement of all is from Matthew 25:38-40 when the righteous ask the Lord, "When did we see you a

stranger and take you in?" ❖

Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me."

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should indulge their tastes for a wide variety of foods, confident that their offspring will eventually return to the fold of educated and diverse taste.

Chapter Twelve: (The Mysterious East) focuses upon his lamb leftovers: lamb and spinach casserole, lamb fried rice, etc. Predictably he is deflected to extolling the wok and commercial gas ranges.

Chapter Thirteen: (Bread to Strengthen Man's Heart) continues to criticize the exotic food presented as prepared, frozen food packets. He extols use of simple foods, bread, cheese and nearly anything homemade. He recommends fasting alternated with feasting rather than dietetically guided eating three times a day.

Chapter Fourteen: (One Good Turn Deserves Another) describes the intricate art of making pastry with many iterations of rolling out, buttering and folding dough.

Chapter Fifteen: (The Long Session) pans the cocktail party and praises the generous sit-down dinner with well-planned guest list, seating arrangement and menu.

Chapter Sixteen: (The Burning Heart) recommends half a teaspoon of baking soda in half a glass of water to relieve acid-eroded esophagus and counteract excessive gastric acidity (after all this feasting).

Chapter Seventeen gives 79 pages of recipes useful for preparing and enjoying what God has given us.

I found this a delightful book (because I agree with it!) in that it advocates *reality* in procurement and preparation of food rather than using overly prepared food. In general, this type of reality should be welcome: turn off the TV, play/sing your own music, play your own sports, attend real live worship with other people, read your own books, poetry, novels, plays, and form your own reaction to them rather than depending on TV to pre-digest them for you.

Capon's ability to see, appreciate, utilize and share God's goodness in "ordinary" creation is remarkable. ❖

*The scope of who it is that God means to invite to the feast, you see, is not ours to define.
We are not put in charge of the guest list.—Don C. Skinner, A Passage through Sacred History*

SLICE OF LIFE THE WINGS OF THE MORNING (PSALM 139:9-10)

by Chu-Lin (Grace) Chang

I had an American dream, however, now I realize what I had was a dream of God's Kingdom.

On 20, August, 2007, I flew to the United States from Taiwan as an exchange student, alone and extremely excited, not knowing the overwhelming culture shocks waiting for me. While transferring in LA, not only multiple races and various appearances of crowds impressed me, but a flight attendant swore at me, throwing me the boarding pass reluctantly. That was unforgettable.

Not until I finally arrived in San Diego was I informed by a shocking e-mail telling me it was not my time to move in the dorm because I was not that kind of exchange student. Exhausted and angry, I stayed with some girls from Taiwan whom I had never met. I slept on the carpet of their living room. Toast was all I had for those five days, and without transportation I had nowhere to go.

After the first harsh week and finally moving in the dorm, I tried to be open-minded and participate in activities as much as I could. I made some friends from different countries. I enjoyed the beautiful nature created by God. However, I felt trivial and down very often. I felt like a nobody. So many things I could easily do in Taiwan were so unfamiliar and inconvenient here. However, God reminded me of who I am with a little white, wild flower under the moonlight. Another frustration came from not being able to express myself freely in English. As a linguistic major at the graduate level, I think God must know how effective it would be to confound people's languages at the tower of Babel. Being a Christian, I was not into what the college students here are into. They would ask, "You don't smoke, drink, party or go to bars; what fun do you have?" Feeling no connection to the dorm area, I was desperate to move out.



I was blessed to have Katherine Meek as my mentor in school. The director of the tutor-mentor program knew I was a Christian and insisted on finding me a Christian mentor. I had a good time with her every time we met, and because of her I had the chance to live with a Christian family, which I was longing for.

However, moving out of the dorm was not easy. With all the complicated and confusing rules and unreasonable deadlines given by different people in charge, I faced the risk of paying a huge fine which I could not possibly afford. I made my best effort to contact people and tried to work things out, however, things were still confusing and not done. I still decided to move out by the deadline and went on a trip over winter break scheduled long ago, but the worry about the dorm problem followed me all the way. All I could do was pray to

God and count on Him because things were out of my control, and I was stressed out for two months. After I came back, I had my best sleep the first night living with Craig, Erika, Nicole and Ryan. Two days later, while we were trying to figure some things out from the housing office, surprisingly, they said I had been replaced. I was all done! I couldn't believe what I heard because none of the candidates I found finished taking over my lease. I knew it was not me; it was a gift from God. How amazing and faithful He is! Through Craig and Erika, I've made Christian friends at New Life. I realize what I love about America most is the Christianity flowing in this place. Although we have different appearances, cultures, food and thinking, being with you, I deeply sense that we speak the same language, God's language—love. ☪

To open up and become sensitive to God's own mission could also mean that we begin to recognize the strangers as messengers, sent to us with a particular message, and that, therefore, before we dare preach to them we ought to listen to their stories.

—Gerhard Hoffman in *International Review of Mission*