

1-1-1990

## Editor's Notes

Mark Love  
mlove@rc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Love, Mark (1990) "Editor's Notes," *Leaven*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 2.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol1/iss2/2>

This Editor's Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Leaven by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu](mailto:bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu).



## *EDITOR'S NOTE*

Mark Love

Recently, the benevolence ministry of the church that I serve had a series of meetings to determine what the scope of our service to the community should be. For years we had fed people from a pantry that church members stocked out of the goodness of their hearts. The bulk of this food was gathered on four Sundays throughout the year in which we all brought our groceries to the church, laid them around the Lord's table, and consecrated them for God's use with prayers of dedication. These services said a lot about who we hoped to be as a congregation.

We fed an extraordinary amount of people for a congregation of our size and limited means. Many of these were individuals who, for one reason or another, had fallen through the cracks of social service agencies which we also supported with ministerial association dues. Yet, while we felt a sense of faithfulness and accomplishment in our service for service's sake, there was an ambiguous tension that left us feeling that perhaps more or better things could be done for the people we were helping.

One voice within our ministry group called for us to reevaluate the whole notion of having a pantry since we did not have full time social workers that would be required to address significantly the long term needs of these people. Ours should be a referral role, this voice continued, that would find appropriate help for people and would then offer the only thing we were truly capable of helping with, spiritual renewal. Another voice passionately defended what we were doing regardless of the direct or indirect results to the people we were feeding. If their lives improved, praise God, but in the meantime we had to be aware that there was a world watching to see whether or not we were truly compassionate and caring. After all, this voice articulated, Jesus fed the five thousand though he knew the insincere motivations of those following. Another voice echoed the old maxim, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." This voice called for us to count the cost of this important undertaking and provide more than just meals. We needed to bring redemption into the arena of life skills.

Debates similar to this are common in the life of autonomous congregations who have little knack, desire, or historical conditioning for cooperation with other congregations or organizations. I feel fortunate that my congregation at least felt a burden for ministering to the community. Many congregations begin the debate with far more fundamental issues to resolve. Some of us have preferred Matthew's "Blessed are the poor in Spirit" to Luke's "Blessed are the poor." And yet my congregation was still in need of resourceful thinking that could help us in our desire to be faithful to God.

The community I worship with needed to hear again of God's passionate identification with the poor. We needed biblical foundations that might reveal

strategies of how God's community interacts with the world. We needed someone to think with us about the reality of the politicization of this problem. We needed historical models that we could appreciate and emulate. We needed contemporary models to encourage us and to stretch us through their examples.

This issue arises out of those needs. Hopefully, your community of faith is in need of some of the same things. This issue could provide the sharing of ideas and information to inform preaching and teaching, and give practical insight you may need in the task of being faithful and effective in your call to service in the name of Jesus.

A few things need to be said in relation to defining the issue. Most of the articles will reflect a basic definition of the poor in economic terms. But the poor are also those who lack the resources to survive in other areas of life. The family stricken by alcoholism, the pregnant mother who sees abortion as the only way to maintain control of her life, the unborn who have no one to speak for them. All those who have been dispossessed in this world are "the poor." Surely these people wear the face of Jesus in the world as well. "As you have done for one of these, so have you done for me."