

'O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.' Job 19:23-27a

"Deliver Us From Amnesia"  
by Walter Bruggemann, adapted

God of peace,  
God of justice,  
God of freedom,  
We give you thanks for your cadences  
of peace, justice, and freedom,  
cadences that have surged through the lives of those who  
believe in Christ's Love and grace  
and all souls who have been obedient  
to your life giving promises  
and susceptible to your dreams.

Deliver us from amnesia concerning their  
courage in the face of violence,  
their peace-making against hate,  
and their hunger for you in a devouring economy.  
Deliver us from amnesia:  
turn our memory into hope,  
turn our gratitude into energy,  
turn our well-being into impatience.

That these same cadences of your will may pulse even among  
us, our families, our towns and cities, our nation,  
and peoples everywhere. Amen.

## 'Redeeming Faith'

The opening to a Sojourners Magazine article read: *DIABA M. WIKLINE* wants to bring "people to God's table, one cookie at a time." In 2007, she founded the California-based, family-run business, The Jesus Cookie Company. Made with evangelical ingredients . . . Wikline's product comes ready to bake (July 09, p. 9). Each of the ingredients in THE JESUS COOKIE represents Christ's life, which was given for us. Please follow along and see how simple it can be to know Jesus Christ personally.

The coconut represents the straw in baby Jesus' bed (Luke 2:7).

The spices represents the gifts from the wise men (Matthew 2:11).

The sugar represents his sweet presence (John 3:16).

The black jellybeans represents sin (Romans 6:23).

The red jellybeans represent Christ's blood shed for us (Eph. 1:17).

The yellow jellybeans represent forgiveness of our sins (Mt. 6:12).

The white jellybeans represent that through Him, we are cleansed  
of our sins (Isaiah 1:18).

The green jellybeans represent God's jealousy (Deuteronomy 5: 9).

The oats and flour represent that man does not live by bread alone  
(Luke 4.4).

NET WT. 3 LBS. (1361g) /36 INDIVIDUAL 1.3 OZ. COOKIES  
The Jesus Cookie.com

I call the Jesus Cookie --- junk food Christianity. It contains mostly sugar . . . sweet sounding bits of church doctrine which suggests that faith is simply a matter of correct belief and righteous conduct, rather than loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength---and our neighbor as our self---as Jesus taught.

One day, Jesus got into a discussion with Jewish leaders over the idea of resurrection. The gospel writer Luke records the encounter in chapter 20, verses 27-38. 'Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now

*there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.' Jesus said to them, 'those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.'*

The problem with reducing faith to matters of ideology is that it results in a hardening of the heart, and arthritis of the Prophetic Spirit. One of my favorite scriptures for Halloween comes from the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 37:1-14 (the valley of dry bones). The scripture is a metaphor for the hopeless state of the holy city of Jerusalem after her people, culture, and religious life had been totally destroyed by the Babylonians. *'The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones . . . I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.'* In his reflection on this scripture, Rev. Caldwell wrote in 'Bone': Here's what the story says: dry bones are not the final state of things. Death will not win. Here's what it says: **life wins**. Here's what it doesn't say: that they were human bones. Or that those bones went back together in their original order. Or that the bodies at the end were same as the bodies in the beginning. We tell this story as if it's only about humans, as if we're the only species God loves enough to waste the energy on. But

this is the God that notes the fall of every sparrow, right? Surely God noticed the fall of every pterodactyl. Surely, God noticed the fate of the hominid *Australopithecus afarensis* just as fully as he does that of the hominid *Homo sapiens*. Ninety-nine percent of all the different species that once lived are now extinct. And yet, the place is full of life. Why? Because God does not let extinction win. The dinosaurs go down to bones and molecules, and the mammals rise up to take their place. *Homo habilis* goes extinct, and up rises *Homo sapiens*. One very particular *Homo sapiens* goes down to dust, and rises up the King of Heaven. Death happens, but so does resurrection. Extinction happens, but so does evolution. And if our bones fit together differently when we walk out of the valley than when we walked in, maybe that's not so bad.

**Life wins.** Tuesday marks the end of an election season that, because of its hate filled rhetoric and arguments over divisive ideologies, finds many of us in that valley of dry bones, needful of some gospel faith. In his reflection on John's scripture (20:16) in which Jesus said: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' Rev. Nelson wrote: 'John's gospel may be especially helpful. It begins by reminding us that our hope is cosmic—'The logos (the essential meaning at the heart of all things) was with God, and the logos was God.'" John's gospel reminds us that our hope is also particular: In an unplanned provision for a wedding party, an unexpected bounty of food; an unanticipated healing, in signs too numerous to name that declare: God has shown up. In other words, our hope is in the One who bridges earth and heaven, meeting the needs of body and soul. Which ideology wins an election will influence our lives: granted. But the work of the faithful remains the same regardless: to answer meaninglessness with purposeful compassion; to respond to exceptionalism with universal forgiveness; to reply to fearful bigotry by taking on the perspective of those who have suffered persistent indignities; to mend the world (Oct. 28, '16 UCC Daily Devotional).