

**PROVOKING THE
STEWARDSHIP OF ALL
HUMAN FLOURISHING:
*GOD'S SUBVERSIVE GENEROSITY***

Keynote Presentation for Stewardship Kaleidoscope

September 26, 2023

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Pilgrimage

*A Spiritual Pilgrimage
is a sacred experience of journey,
engaging the whole self in dialogue with God.
Pilgrimage is an invitation to frolic in
the mystery and generosity of God which promises to birth newness,
deeper intimacy with God, and
faithful re-engagement with the world that God so loves.*



Camino

Story of encounter with
Ex- Singaporean soldier

...then came the questions

????????????

What do you do?

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS?

What real difference does he make in your life?

you think the world is actually a better place because of him?

What does your God want from us? Why do people discriminate against different races?

What are you doing to make the world a better place?

Before you die what do you want to have achieved?

What are you willing to give up for that?

A Word About Questions

- Questions can provoke more questions...
- Questions more fully involve the questioner in the nuances of reality
- Questions can get at the truth of things...but *“slant”*

- Questions can challenge assumptions and disclose bias
- Questions can propel us to inquire more deeply and responsibly, instead of assuming
- Questions can help to expose our fears, our biases and our prejudices
- Questions can disrupt our certainties as well as reveal our disingenuousness

Stewardship

So, what is God calling us to steward?

Could God's Mission
be...

the suffusing of all the cosmos
with free, radical, unimaginable,
just, unrestrained, creative...

GENEROSITY?

Our Big and Beautiful Universe

Either a Huge Waste or an Act of Absurdly
Extravagant Generosity?

*Current thinking suggests that the observable Universe,
birthed 13.8 billion years ago, is now
about 93 billion light years in diameter (and still
expanding) and consists of between 200 billion to 2
trillion galaxies.*

Some Biblical Examples of God's Diverse Generosity

- God supplies **manna by day and meat by night** for the fleeing Israelites and the mixed multitude among them. (**Exodus 16**)
- "Earth is drenched in *God's affectionate satisfaction*" (**Psalm 33:5** The Message).
- "You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing." **Psalm 145:16**
- Generosity in **Ephesians 1:3-8**: "every spiritual blessing"—v. 3.; "His grace given freely to us"—v. 6; "*Lavish redemption through Jesus' blood, forgiveness of sin and riches of grace*"—v. 8.
- "If anyone **lacks wisdom**, let them ask **God**, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to them." **James 1:5**

GOD'S GENEROSITY IS...



In [the] beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, *darkness was over the surface of the deep*, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” (Gen. 1:1-2)

God's “let there be” to Creation is an act of God's generosity.

GOD'S GENEROSITY IS...



COLLABORATIVE

“The Lord took the human one and placed the human one in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Gen. 1:15

God's collaboration with humankind in the stewardship of Earth's blessings, is an act of generosity.

GOD'S GENEROSITY IS...

subversive



Yeshua in a feeding trough

God's subversion of rapacious power, injustice, exclusion, 'entitled' privilege, and violence, through the birth of a baby, is an act of generosity.

Generosity

is not an attribute of God.

Generosity is who God is.

It's simply God's

Fundamental Disposition and Nature

The Subversive Maneuvers of God are meant to bear witness to God's Generosity towards ALL peoples and Creation

“for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” Is. 56:7

God continuously belches out a kind of generosity that subverts
and disrupts the lie, that some peoples ought to be more privileged
than others.

God's 'favorites' are actually... (*wait for it*)

***ALL NATIONS AND ALL
PEOPLES AND ALL OF
CREATION***



...A THEOLOGICAL LAB EXPERIMENT FOR JESUS' DISCIPLES THEN AND NOW

*Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite
Woman
in Matthew 15:21-28*

God hears the
distressed
cries of the
Egyptian
Hagar and
her son
Ishmael

“God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy (*Ishmael*) crying as he lies there. ¹⁸ Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, **for I will make him into a great nation.**”

Genesis 21:17, 18



An aerial photograph of a river valley in a dry, hilly landscape. The river is a vibrant blue, winding through a golden-brown terrain with visible erosion patterns and small reservoirs. The hills are rugged and sparsely vegetated. The image is presented as a torn piece of paper on the left side of the slide.

“A Mixed Multitude...”

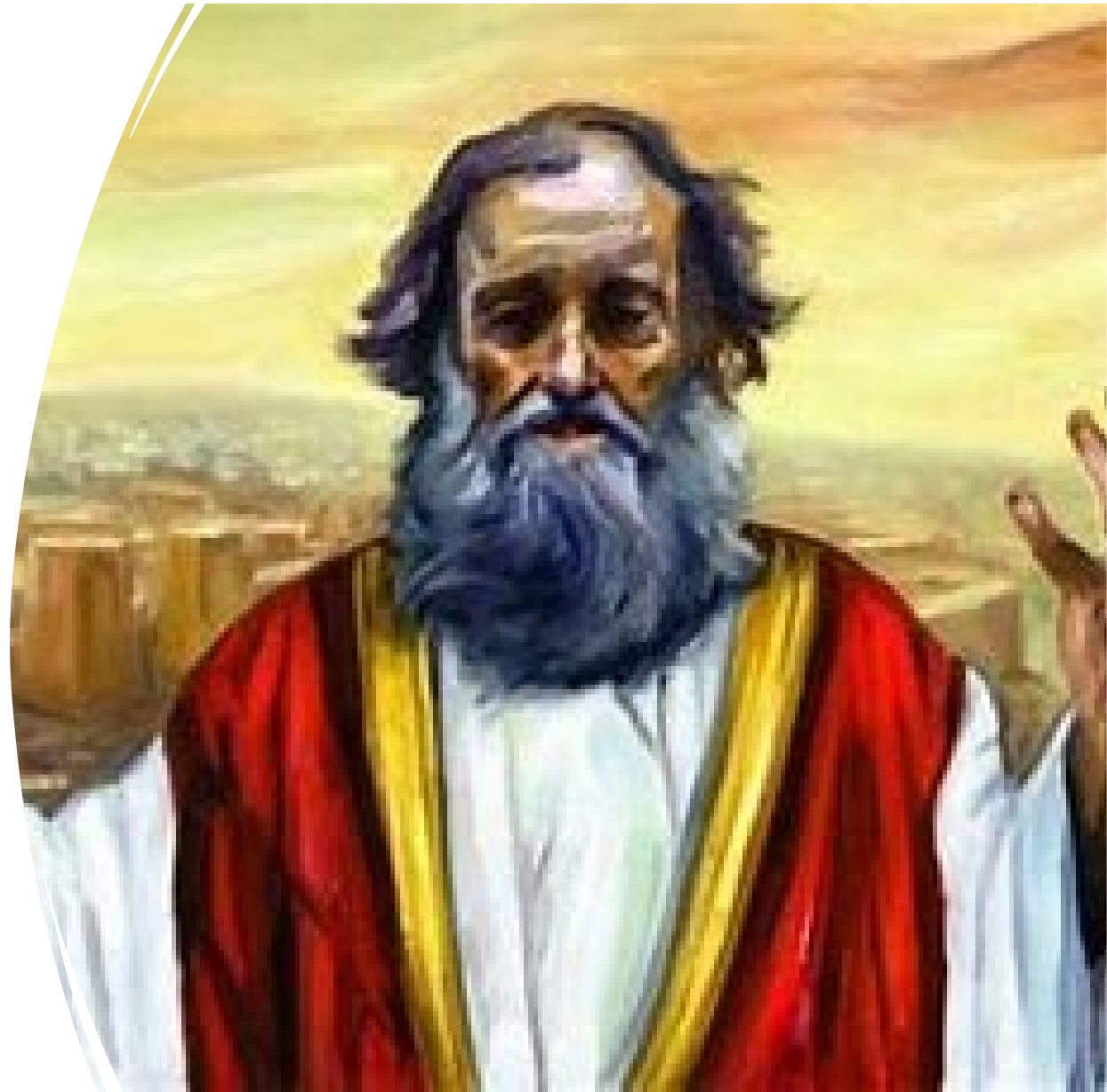
In Exodus 12:38, we read that the Pharaoh authorizes the formerly enslaved people of Israel to make their way out of Egypt. There is an intriguing phrase in this verse that indicates that those liberated from Egypt included a “***mixed multitude***” that would have consisted of non-Israelites; people from other nations who were similarly enslaved and toiled alongside the Israelite community in Egypt.

“Prophet to the nations”

God Says to Jeremiah

“I appointed you as
a prophet to the
nations.”

Jeremiah 4:1





Amos 9:7

“Are not you Israelites ***the same to me*** as the **Ethiopians**? (land of the burnt face people) declares the LORD.

“Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the **Philistines** from Caphtor and the **Arameans** from Kir?

multiple “exodi”

Fiduciary Covenantal Relationships in the midst of Judgement

After a torrent of Judgement against many ‘nations’, including Israel (and Jerusalem) {Isaiah chs. 9 – 23} Yahweh promises a connectional covenant with traditional enemies of Israel...

*“On that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, ‘Blessed be Egypt **my people**, and Assyria **the work of my hands**, and Israel **my heritage.**” (Isaiah 19:24,25)*

Generosity

Story of Jonah and God's Favour on Nineveh

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time... Jonah 3:1

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD, “Isn’t this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. **I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, SLOW TO ANGER and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.**

Jonah 4: 1-2

What about the *Generosity* of Jesus' Genealogy

...consists of 5 women (unusual inclusion for Jewish genealogy)

4 of whom are gentiles:

Tamar – most probably Canaanite

Rahab – a gentile, named a prostitute, risked her life...

Ruth – a Moabite; prohibited from joining the Israelites

Bathsheba - 'Uriah's wife', a Gilonite

Mary – mother of Jesus

- **Adoration of the Magi (*Matthew. Ch. 2*) Gentiles**

- **Panel from a Roman sarcophagus 4th century CE. From the cemetery of St. Agnes in Rome**



Jesus Rejected in Nazareth for privileging the ‘hated’ Gentiles



Luke 4:25-27 - “I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. *26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath [gentile from another nation] in the region of Sidon.* *27* And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—*only Naaman the Syrian [gentile from another nation].*”



Jesus' Subversive Generosity was so disruptive, it almost got him killed before dying on the cross!

vss. 28, 29 – “All the people...**were furious...**they drove him out of the town and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, **in order to throw him off the cliff.**”

Why???

By Privileging Generous Inclusion, God
Subverts human-constructed barriers of discrimination

Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: ***“You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.”*** ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.

...**Cornelius** (Gentile Roman Centurion), God has heard your prayer...

Acts 10:27-29;31

Mission to the Gentiles continues...

Breaking down barriers

The term “**Christian**” first used in Antioch – *Jews and diverse Gentiles worshipped and served together and were loving to each other (11:26)*



Cave Church of St. Peter
(Antakya, Turkey)

This Church of St. Peter is believed to be built on the original site of the very first Christian Church ever; the Church in Antioch Acts ch.11 ff.



Stewarding A Diverse Senior Missional Team (Acts 13:1-2)

- **Barnabas** - *Cyprus,*
- **Paul** - *Tarsus (Asia Minor),*
- **Simeon** – *Niger (sub-Saharan Africa),*
- **Lucius** – *Cyrene (Libya),*
- **Manaen** – *Judea, Galilee*



In what ways might we be failing to privilege the subversive generosity of God?

Justin Martyr – theologian (100-165 C.E.)

*“We who once took most pleasure in accumulating wealth and property now share with everyone in need; we who hated and killed one another **and would not associate with those of different tribes because of their different customs** now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them and pray for our enemies”.* (See - Acts 2:45, Luke 4; Matt. 5:44)

God's Generosity Privileges Justice

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.” (Psalm 82:3)

Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and plead the widow's cause (Isaiah 1:17)

Jesus said: “And will not God bring about justice...who cry out to him day and night?...I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly” Luke 18:7-8

Interrogating our willingness to comply with God's subversive generosity

Whom have we hated?

Whom do we still hate?

WHOM HAVE WE 'KILLED'?

Whom do we **refuse to honor**, because they are **differently able**;

... because of **their racialized identity**?

... because of their **gender** identity?

... because of their **neurodivergent** presentation?



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Whites -only Moms & Tots

Are you looking
for somewhere your children can play
with others that look like them?
Are they tired of being a minority
in their schools or daycares?
Escape forced 'diversity' and join other
proud parents of European children as we
create an atmosphere in which our kids
can feel like they belong. Invest in your
child's sense of well being and racial identity
by giving them the gift of time
spent amongst their own people
-because they deserve it.



<https://t.me/Whitetricitiesparentsandtots>
Whitetricitiesparentsandtots@protonmail.com

We were slow to contain the coronavirus



Slow to address and contend with the virus of anti- Black systemic racism







Anti-Black Racism
is a system that
in effect declares
BLACK LIVES
do not really matter

Terrance Floyd

Terrance Floyd, brother of George Floyd, came up to Ottawa, Canada in February, to speak at our church and other venues in the City, about the scourge of anti-Black Racism





14 88

Niggers

POLICE

Ottawa Mosque



Interfaith Response

Left to Right:

Rabbi Reuven Bulka (*now deceased*)

Imam Sami Metwally

Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey

Creative Response

...Restorative justice journey

...coordinating an interfaith blood drive with our respective faith communities.



Symbols of Hate, Anti-Semitism, Black Racism at the January 2022 Convoy protest in Ottawa, Canada



Too often, there is push back about this reality....

*“I don’t believe there is
such a thing as Systemic
RACISM...
and specifically
Anti-Black Racism”*

The Invention of Race

‘Race’ is a relatively recent concept that emerged in western societies. In Europe, until the latter part of the 1600s, *identity* was primarily defined by one’s religion and language. The concept of race as a category of identity did not emerge until Europeans began to colonize other continents.



In 1684, **François Bernier** published the first classification of humans into distinct 'races' followed by a 1735 publication by **Carolus Linnaeus** which further classified people based on continental differences

By the 1800s, the term 'race' had become commonplace and for the first time in human history, racial classifications were used to create and maintain discriminatory social hierarchies

Chief Philosophical Proponent of 'Race' - Immanuel Kant's Legacy



“Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians do have a meagre talent. The Negroes are far below...at the lowest point.”

Speaking of national characteristics Kant also wrote:
“this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid”

Kant

“The Negro can be disciplined and cultivated, but is never genuinely civilized... cannot develop rationality as Europeans can...among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality,” (quoted in E. Eze) Race and the Enlightenment, 1997



David Hume



Hume consistently insisted on a natural inferiority of blacks which set them apart from other races and believed that the difference between Europeans and Amerindians was as great as the difference between human beings and animals.

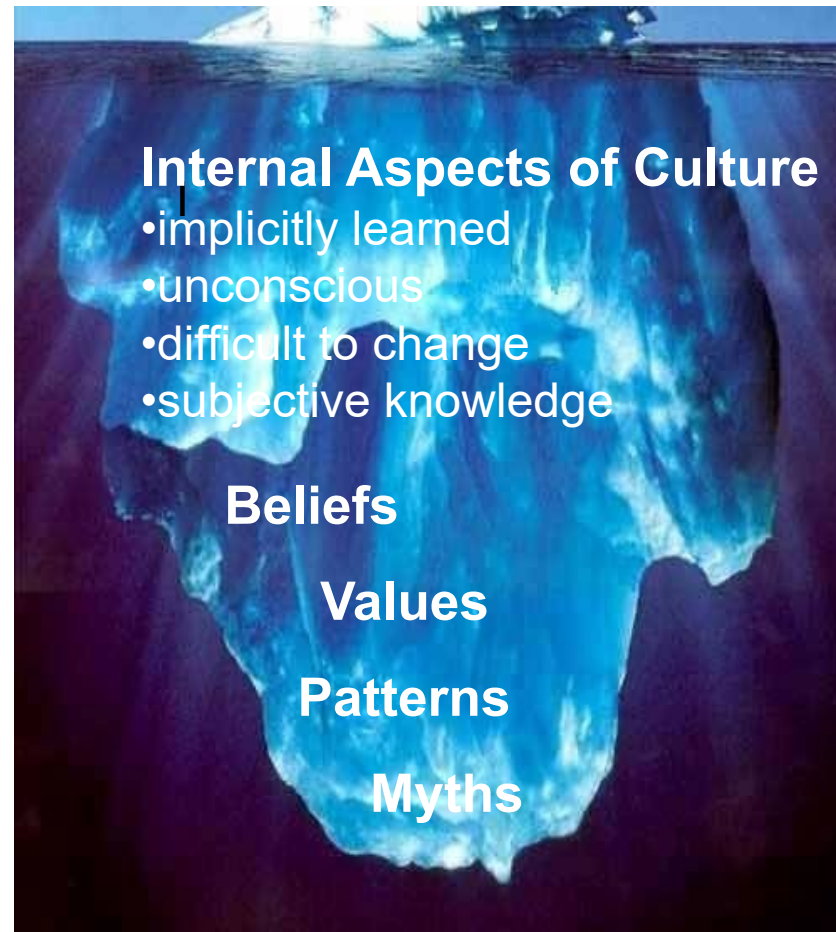
Hume writes: “I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all other species of men to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was any civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation.”

J. Kameron Carter,
Race: A Theological Account

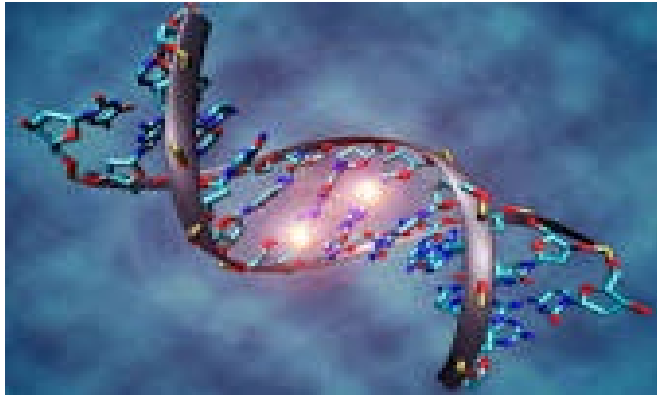
Carter argues that Christian theology has contributed to the roots of modernity's racial imagination when Western Christianity betrayed its Jewish roots and appropriated the Jews as a racialized body of people. Carter proposes a twofold process in which "racial imagination" came into being, resulting in "racist imagination" (or white supremacy).

Race is a ***socially constructed*** category of identity with its roots in an ideology that situates human beings within a **hierarchy of social value**, with whites at the top and everybody else below.

Multidimensional, complex that sustains systemic racism



Human Genome Project



(June 2000), Craig Venter, Head of Celera Genomics and chief private scientist involved with the Human Genome Project, claimed that ‘race’ was not a scientifically valid construct after analyzing 3.3 billion base pairs of DNA.

We now know that the way we talk about race has no scientific validity.

“Race doesn’t exist, but racism does. But we can now confine it to opinions and not pretend that there might be any scientific validity in bigotry.”

Rutherford

Systemic Racism

When institutions and/or social systems (*including the Church*) create or maintain racial inequity, as a result of hidden and/or blatant institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups while disadvantaging others. This is incarnated and applied by individuals/groups

“We now know that the way we talk about race has no scientific validity. There is no genetic basis that corresponds with any particular group of people, no essentialist DNA for black people or white people or anyone. This is not a hippy ideal, it’s a fact. There are genetic characteristics that associate with certain populations, but none of these is exclusive, nor correspond uniquely with any one group that might fit a racial epithet.”

Rutherford

Scientists have confirmed ***that there is no biological basis*** for what we refer to as human ‘races.’ In fact, genetic researchers have discovered that among modern humans, *85% of our genetic variation occurs between individuals*, with only 5% between so-called ‘racial groups’ on the same continent and 10% between people on different continents.

(Smedley, A. (1999). Race in North America: Origin and evolution of a worldview (2nd Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press)

Inventions by People of African Descent

- Stethoscope
- Ironing board
- Baby buggy
- Bicycle frame
- Guitar (modern)
- Almanac/surveyor
- Traffic light/smoke hood
- Blood plasma bag
- Fibre Optic Cables
- Pencil Sharpener
- Rotary Blade Lawn Mower
- Home security system

Imhotep Ancient Egypt
Sarah Bone – December 30, 1887
W.H. Richardson – June 18, 1899
L.R. Johnson – October 10, 1899
Robert F. Fleming Jr. March 3, 1886
Benjamin Banneker (approx 1791)
Garrett Morgan - November 20, 1923
Dr. Charles Drew –1945
Dr. Shirley Jackson, research paved the way
John Lee Love – November 23, 1897
John A. Burr – May 19, 1897
Marie Van Brittan Brown – filed patent in 1966



Alan Emtage

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

A Barbadian
invented the
world's first
search engine?

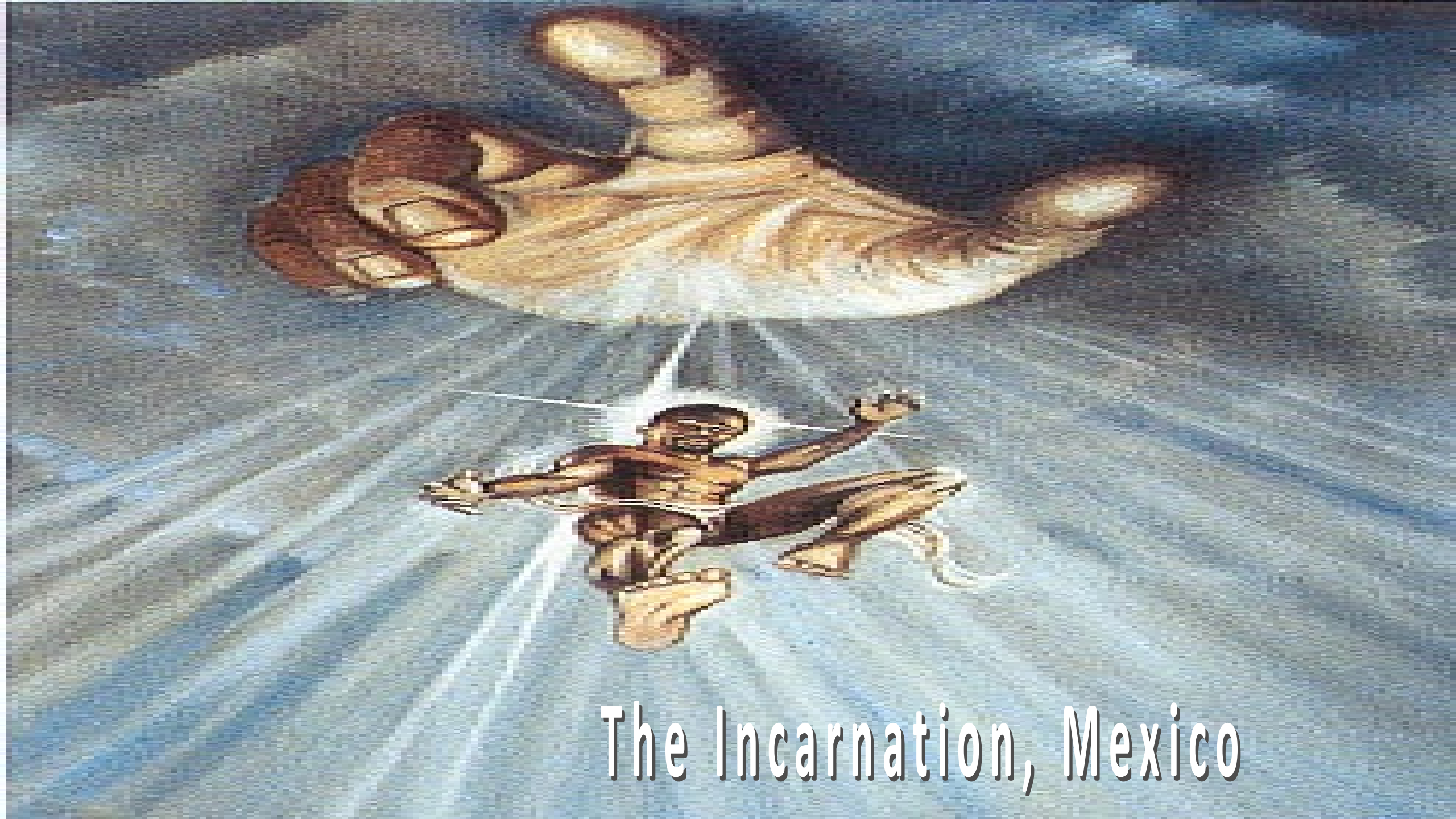
Recognising...
Alan Emtage



A native of Barbados ***invented*** the world's first search engine in 1990. Never sought patent.

The self-proclaimed geek majored in computer science at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and was working as a systems administrator for the School of Computer Science.

Theologically, I believe that the **story**
of God's incarnate Christ
and the generous mission of God to and in the world,
can only be comprehensively told
and experienced
though the full-throated, embodied
incarnated, testimony of people
from all the nations



The Incarnation, Mexico



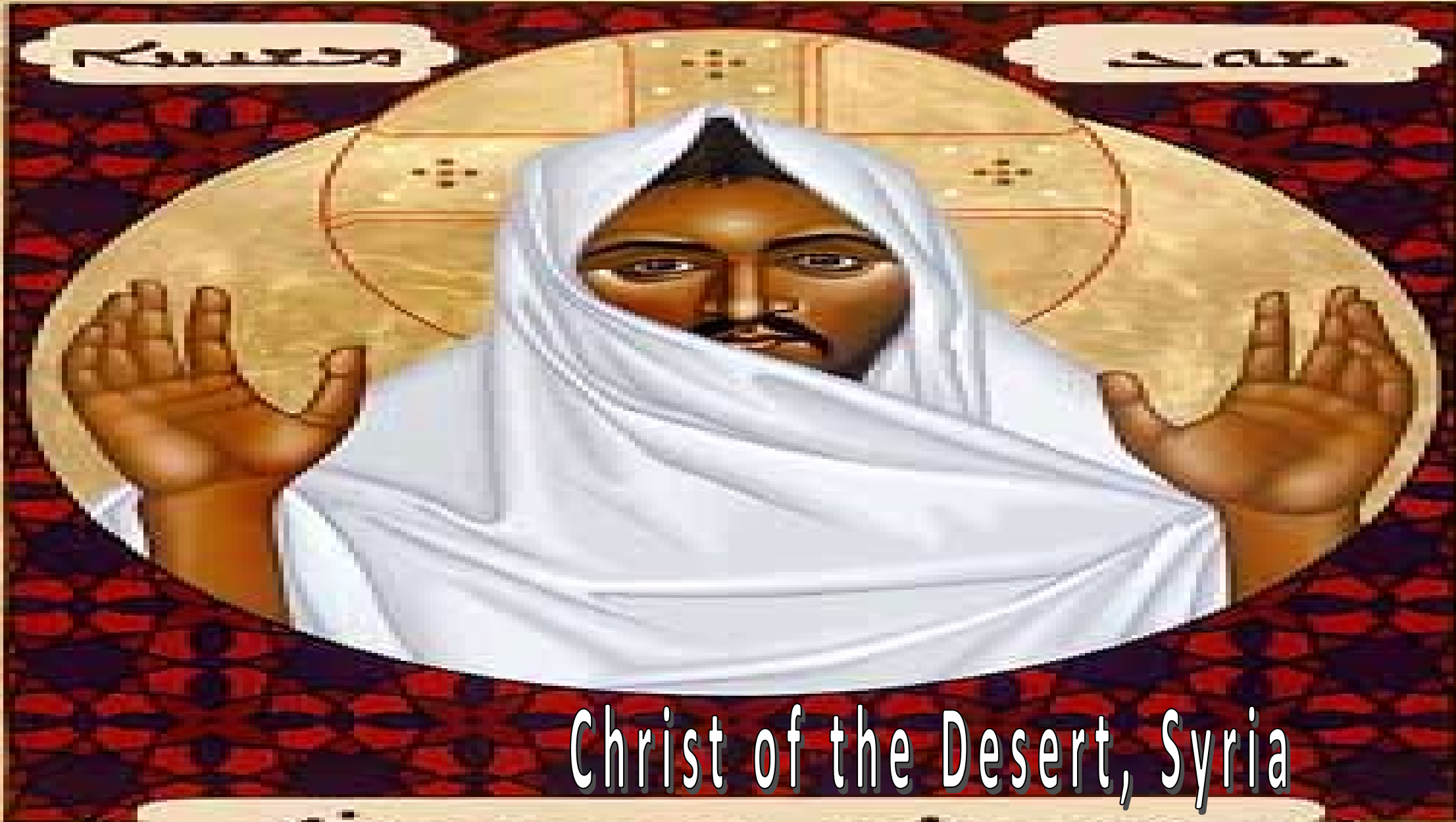
A Child is Born, Thailand



Flight into Egypt, Poland

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Christ of the Desert, Syria

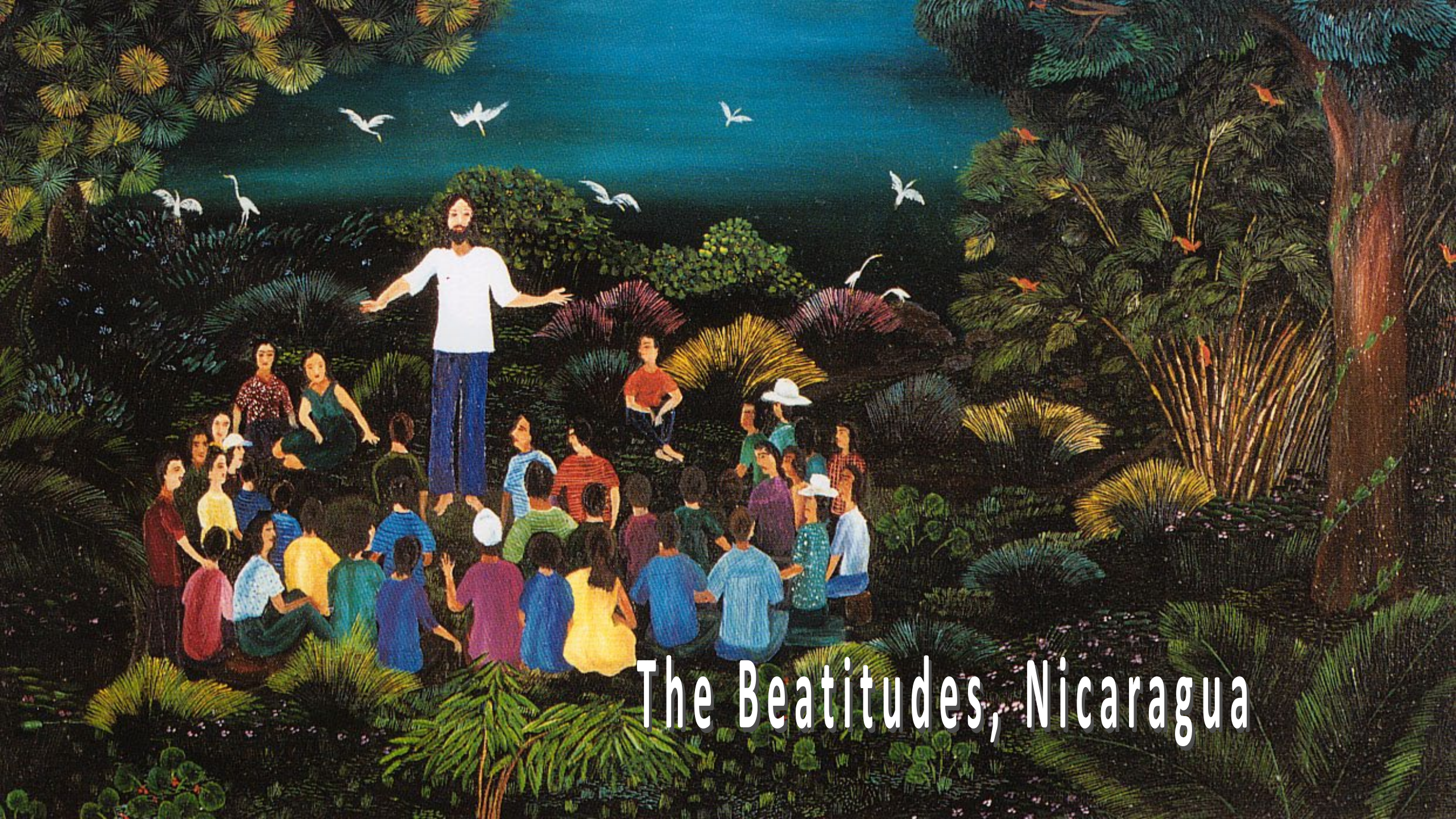
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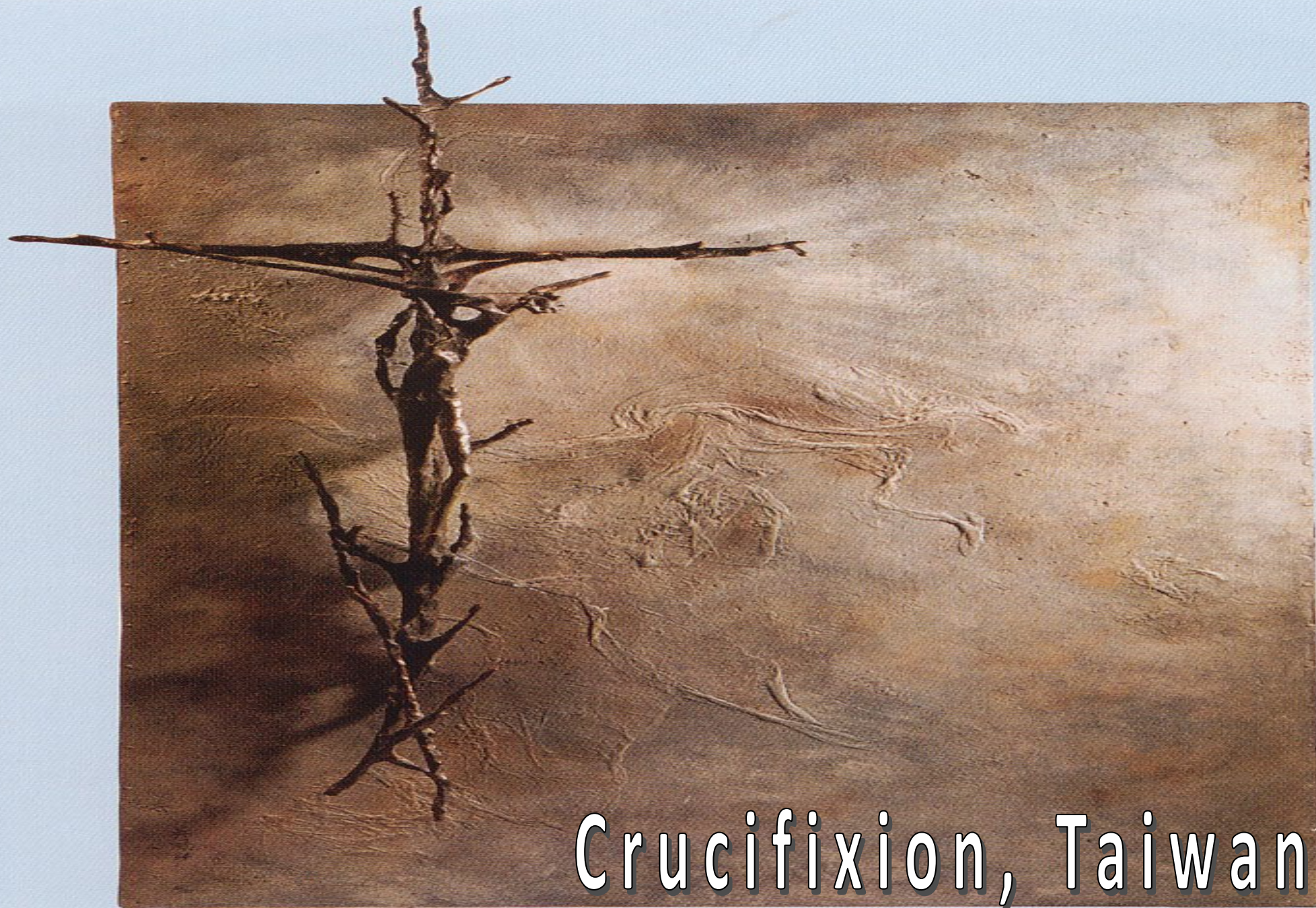
Jesus & the disciples, American Indian



Christ Preaching, India

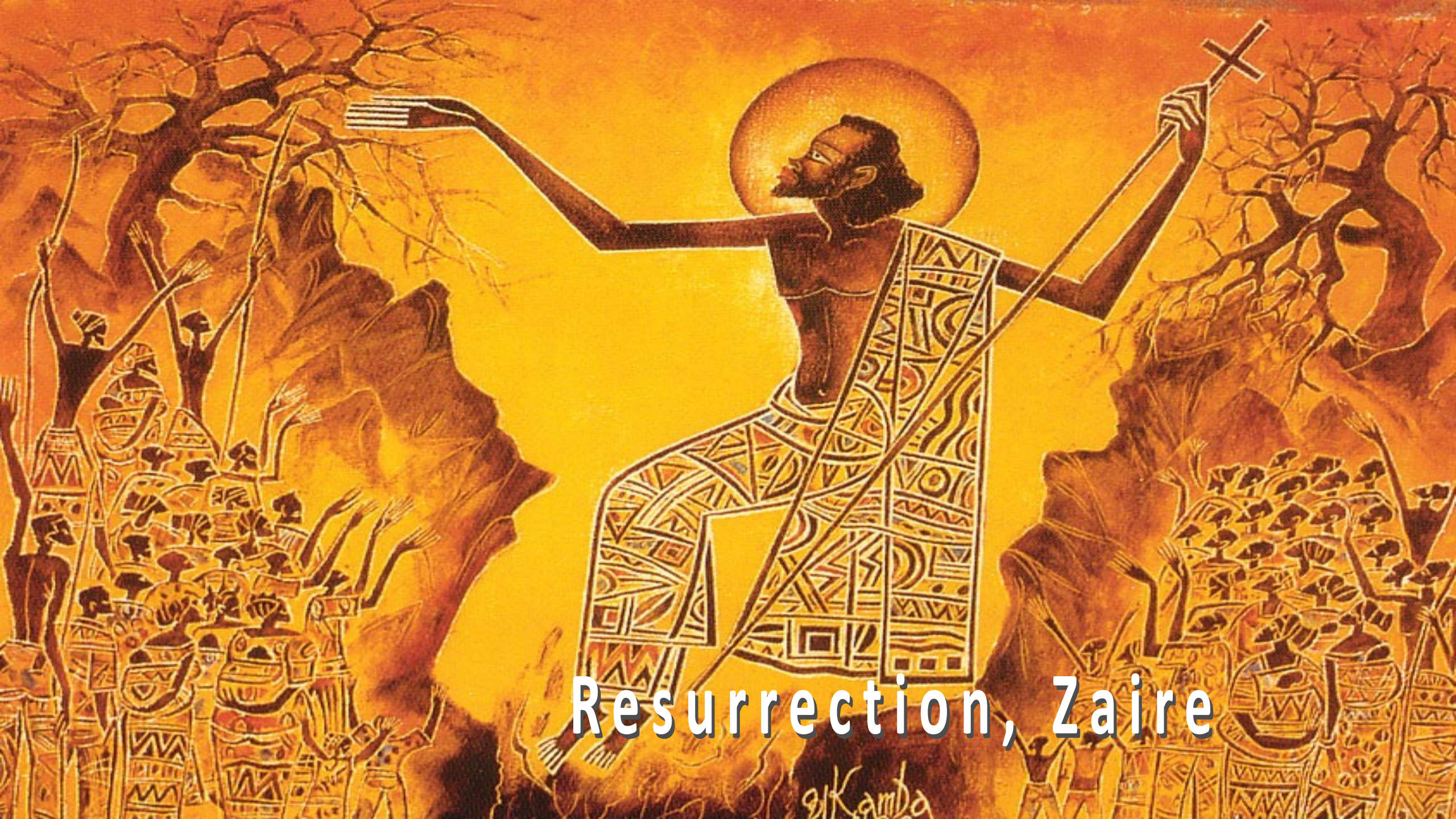


The Beatitudes, Nicaragua



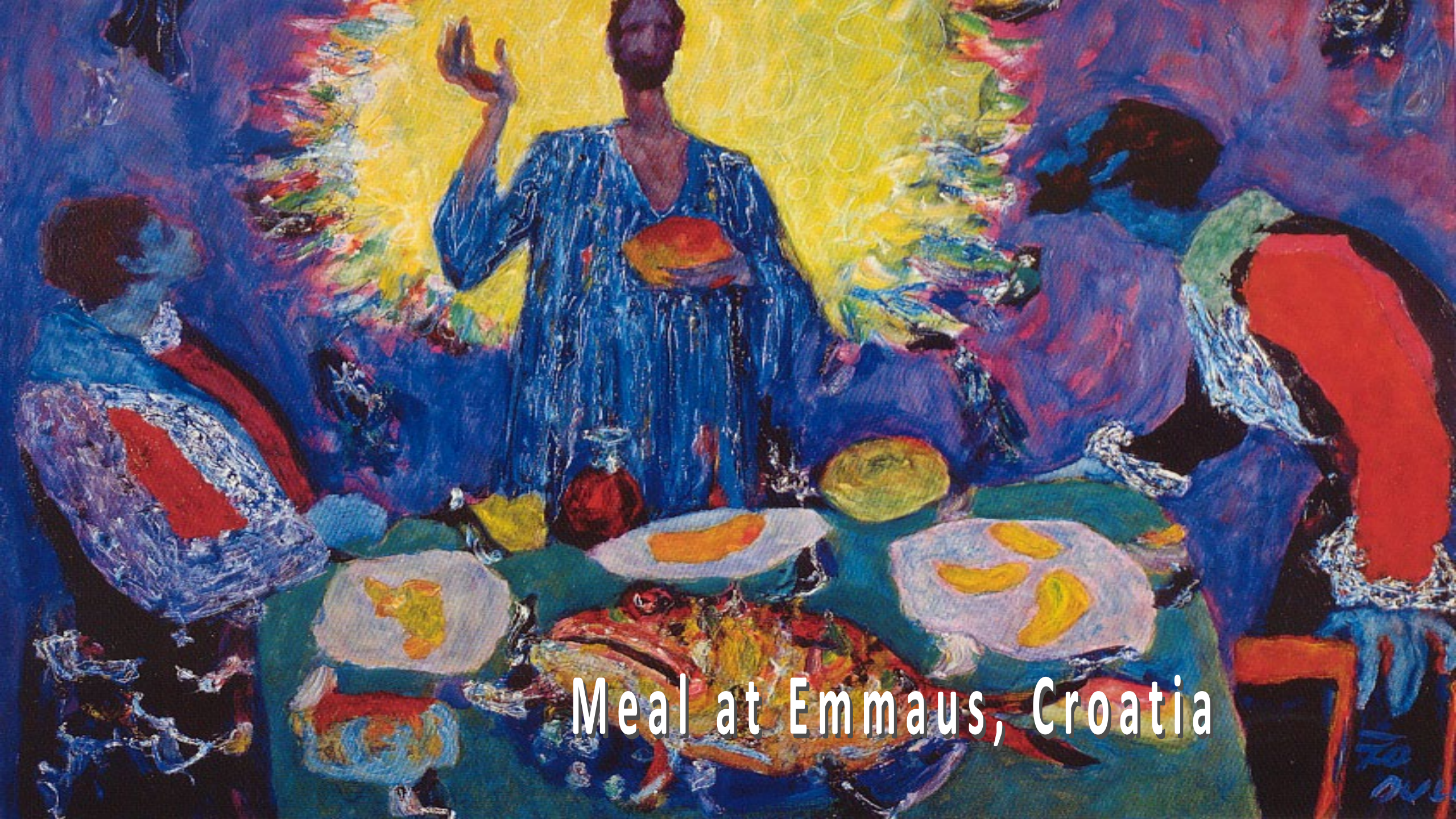
Crucifixion, Taiwan

Yu Yu Yang, Taiwan, *Crucifixion*, 1964



Resurrection, Zaire

S.K. Kamba



Meal at Emmaus, Croatia

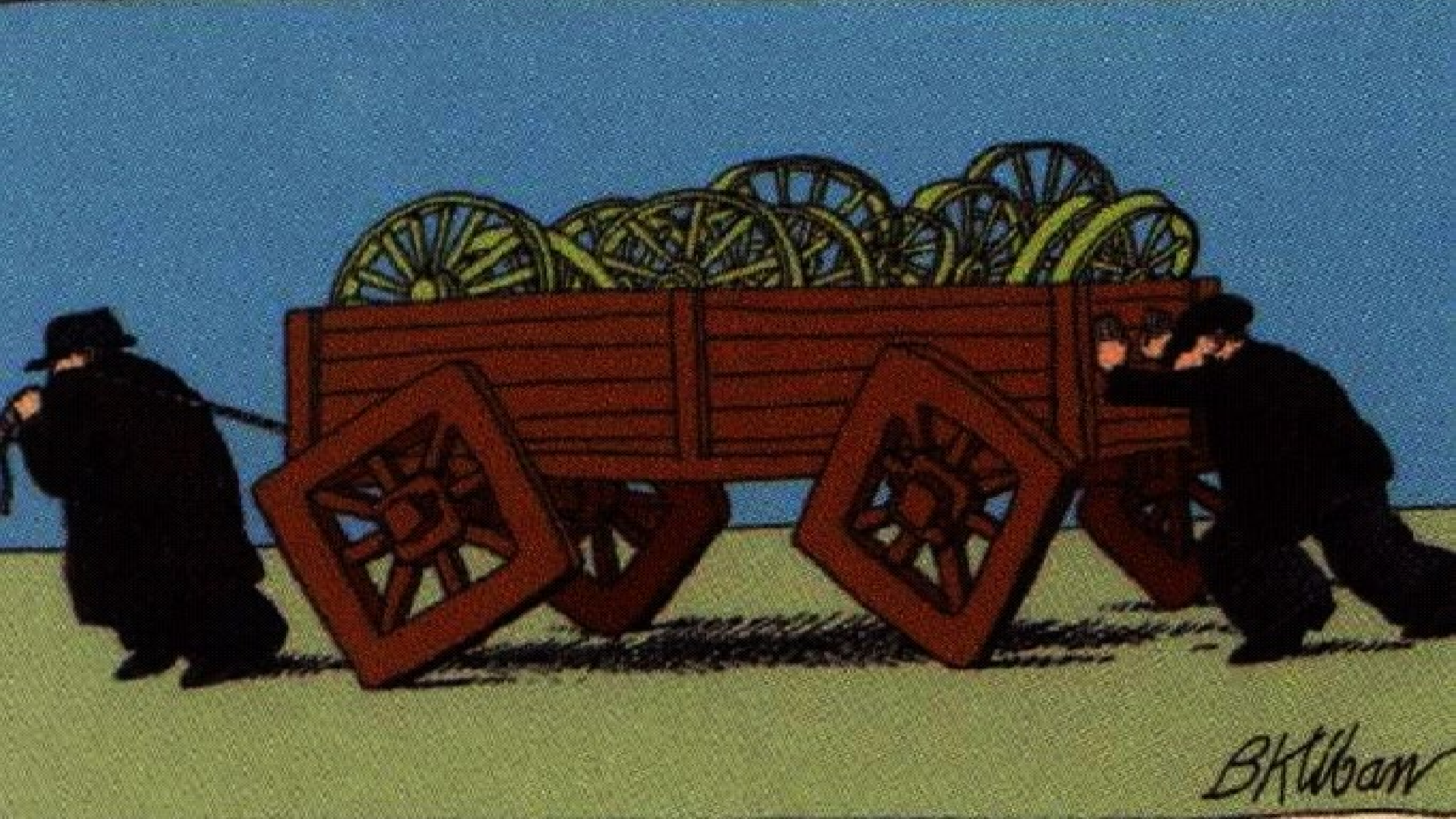
¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to God's self through Christ, and has ***given us the ministry of reconciliation;*** ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

2 Corinthians 5:18, 19

“And let us consider
how to *provoke* one another to
love and good works.”

Hebrews 10:24





BKWan



We need the provocation of confession, and systemic transformational justice...



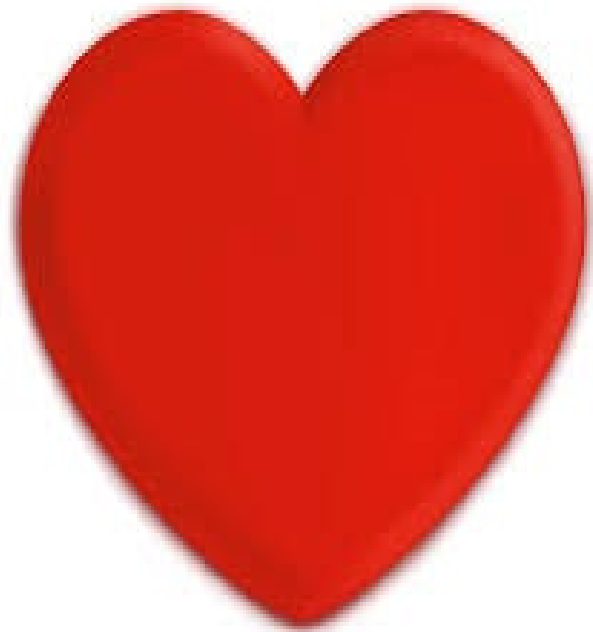
...that privileges the subversive, provocative generosity of God, that disrupts systems of rapacious inequity and instead curates human flourishing for all kinds of humans.

It is love, justice, joy, reconciliation, advocacy, protest and imagination, that can contend with the inequities in our present status quo, thereby inhabiting God's dream of provoking the stewardship of all human flourishing.

East African Story of

Modupe

God's Generous Love and Justice



will save us all!