

Heidi had relatives from the Netherlands who had come for their first visit to the United States. Heidi's relatives wanted to visit in Wisconsin and Minnesota, where various relatives had landed over the years. They decided that the best way to do this was as a camping trip, stopping at various sites along the way.

As they made way on their first day of travel they passed by a farmer's field where he was selling sweet corn. Heidi, being a true Wisconsinite, suggested they stopped and get some corn. The rest of the clan looked at her very strangely, but their English was limited, so they thought they perhaps missed what Heidi's purpose was in wanting corn. That evening, with the fire going in the middle of the camp, Heidi proceeded to roast the corn. Her Dutch relatives simply stared at her odd behavior. After the corn was perfectly roasted, Heidi took out an ear, prepared it with lots of butter and salt and took a bite. As she expressed her satisfaction with the tasty result of her roasting, she offered her extended family each an ear. No one moved. Finally, one of them managed to figure out how to tell Heidi why they were so mystified. They held up an ear of corn and exclaimed: "That cow food!" Apparently none of them had ever heard of sweet corn for eating. The only corn they knew of was used for feeding the cattle back home. But, first one tried it, and then another. And, of course, if you have ever had sweet corn done just right, you know the rest of the story. The "cow food" quickly became a "people food" favorite.

Sometimes in our spiritual journey we are "Heidi." We need to show people how good the "food" is that we enjoy as God's children. As we "eat" the Bread and "drink" the Cup people may think our practices are very odd. They don't really understand the language or the custom. Our role as "Heidi" is to make sure we present the Good Food in a pleasant and inviting manner, so that those who watch us will want to partake with us. Sometimes we are the "visitors" who don't have a clue what we are seeing done in the community is all about. But, rather than walk away from things we don't understand, the right thing to do is to give it a try! Test it out, assuming the person you are learning from is a known and trusted example. We'll think in later editions about the whole idea of "eating this book" and how we become what we eat, but as you prepare for your journey into the new week, think on this question:

Is there some practice of the disciples of Christ which seems foreign to you? Prayer? Bible study? The Lord's Supper? Baptism? Meditation? I invite you to "take a bite" in your spiritual community this week. Find someone who can help you get a taste of a new spiritual discipline (there are plenty to choose from and many great resources). I think you'll find that why you may now think of practicing a new Christian discipline is as strange as eating "cow food", it really will be as tasty as that dripping with butter ear of corn.

Shalom,

Bill