

The Church of Christ the Savior in Zacamil, El Salvador, is a very poor community—as poor as can be. Twice the village has been destroyed by army troops who resented the work and struggle of the poor people there. The community is divided into small groups (called *base communities*). These groups support their members, care for them, comfort them, encourage them, and even feed them. Together they pray for freedom and a better life. Together they hope. When the people of Christ the Savior were asked to tell the story of their lives, they did it in the form of a creed—a statement of faith. Here is what these people say about themselves.

WE BELIEVE in God, who created us free and walks with us in the struggle for freedom.

WE BELIEVE in Christ, crucified again in the suffering of the poor, a suffering which calls out to the conscience of people and nations, a suffering which ends in resurrection.

WE BELIEVE in the power of the Spirit, capable of inspiring the same compassion which has led our best brothers and sisters to suffering and death.

WE BELIEVE in the Church, called forth by Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

WE BELIEVE that when we gather, Jesus is with us, and Mary, our Mother, is at our side as a sign of faithfulness to the Lord.

WE BELIEVE in the Christian community, where we proclaim our ideals, through which we practice our Christian faith.

WE BELIEVE in building a Church, where we pray and reflect on our lives, and share in the

teaching, worshiping, and caring mission of Jesus. In this way, we make the kingdom of God present on earth.

WE BELIEVE in unity in the midst of differences.

WE BELIEVE that Christ calls us to communion and to live as sisters and brothers.

WE BELIEVE that we need to love one another, to correct one another compassionately, to forgive each other's errors and weaknesses.

WE BELIEVE that we need to help one another recognize our limitations, to support each other in the Faith.

WE BELIEVE that the poor, the illiterate and the sick, the persecuted and tortured, are closest to the Gospel of Jesus. Through them, Christ challenges us to work for justice and peace. Their cause is our cause.

WE BELIEVE that Christ is also present in those who are slaves to their passions, to vices, lies and injustice, to power and money.

WE COMMIT ourselves to never give up hope in the possibility of their conversion; to love them even though they slander, persecute and kill us; to pray for them and to help them so that one day they may live simply and humbly in the way the Gospel calls all of us to live.

(From *A Spring Whose Waters Never Run Dry*, EPIC, 1990)

The people of Zacamil, El Salvador may be poor, but they are rich in their understanding of how everyone who answers God's call needs to live faith every day.