

Minister's Message

Rev. Teresa's Schedule this past week...

- met with the Worship & Nurture committee to begin a new strategy for our Sunday School. Watch for some exciting developments over the coming few weeks, as we pilot project some new curriculum and classroom settings.
- met with Garry Ross who is experimenting with some new software to help provide us with a photo directory in the Spring of 2012
- the book study group started this past week. We watched the 1973 version of Jesus Christ Superstar as an introduction to our latest book, Mad Mary.
- thanks to everyone who made our Annual Meeting a smooth and informative session. And also to those who provided food to make sure we were well fed at the end of it all!

Next Week

Baptism
Addison Overfors

Mission Starts With an "M" (Based on Proverbs 3:1-12)

This is mission. (place box of donated soaps and toothpaste for the Palliative Care Wing at Summerside Hospital, PEI). And here is why we still need to make appeals for mission projects around the world.

I want it all, I want it all, I want it all, and I want it now!

~Queen (this version discovered and adapted by Trent Charlton)

So how did we get from this to that? We live in a society where we indeed, want everything, and we want it right now: fast food, fast cash, fast credit. Employers struggle with the new generation of employees who believe that they should have an executive office after working for a month or so. Newlyweds believe that they should come home from their honeymoon and walk into a four bedroom luxurious home with two cars in the garage, and sumptuous interior decorating. David Chilton says, "Pay yourself first!" which makes sense from a financial point of view, but continues to push the idea, "It's all about me!" We don't want to wait in line ups for anything or anyone anymore and road rage incidents continue to rise. The word patience is almost a thing of the past. It has been exchanged for anxiety, anger and attitude.

In many churches, a similar thing is happening. The reality of rising costs, higher budgets and dwindling donations has created a church, fearful of what the future years might bring, as we see a continuous stream of our brothers and sisters in Christ closing their doors and selling their churches. In this fear, churches stop being mission minded, and look inward, trying to protect what they have and keep the doors open as long as possible. "Why should we look out for the other guy, when we have so much trouble keeping ourselves afloat!" Have you heard that one before? It is a difficult position that churches find themselves in this day in age, both theologically, financially, and missiologically (there's a new word for you). And as good Presbyterians, we are taught that when we struggle, we go back to the scriptures.

*⁵⁻¹² Trust God from the bottom of your heart;
don't try to figure out everything on your own.*

*Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;
...Honor God with everything you own;
give him the first and the best.*



*Your barns will burst,
your wine vats will brim over.*

Now here is where the notion of tithing comes from. In ancient times, tithing was essential for your very life. A portion of all your seeds collected, animals raised, and so forth, had to be set aside for the next season, or there would be no crop to plant in the soil or food to eat on the table. Tithing was a matter of life and death.

And don't forget that in Jewish custom, gifts of your success were offered at the temple first, to give thanks for the crop and the financial success, or good health. Without the support of God, future success was in great jeopardy. The idea of tithing has bended and weaved its way through the generations of church, and still exists today. The churches you see that are wildly successful, with large buildings, large crowds, and yes, big mission projects around the world: they're tithing. In fact, tithing is not an option in these churches, it's a requirement for membership!

So, the second sermon in two weeks about money. (That means there is only one more money sermon this year!) Scripture says, *"Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best."* Now I'm not going to argue numbers or percentages, or budgets or allocations. The scripture simply says, "Give back to God a portion of what has been given to you by His love and grace, and that if you do this in love, "Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over." The scripture says to give: to give to everyone, not the select few.

Which brings us to Presbyterian World Sharing & Development, a lot of big words to say 'mission'. I know what to do with this box of soaps and shampoos and toothpaste. I know who to send it to. I know how to get it there. And I trust that it will be used appropriately, when it arrives, and serves the people it was intended for. But I don't know how to make sure a farmer in Nairobi gets the tools for his garden or the woman in India to get a sewing machine so that she can make lace and sell it to support her family. I don't know the best way to ship these things, how to avoid the black market, who the local contact is, or which village needs supplies the most. I do not know the local politics or diplomacy issues. I do know that our North American perspective on what the rest of the world needs is often not what is really needed. There is no point in sending a tractor somewhere when there is no gas to run it, and no parts to repair it. There is no point in sending seed to a country that does not have the right growing climate for the crop to grow. I simply do not know these things. The needs are often too big, too far away, and too complex for me here, to fully grasp. But that's what Presbyterian World Service & Development does understand, and understand well. They pair up with other organizations and government initiatives, to make sure every dollar is used well. They know where to send the supplies, and how to get things into the right hands. They know how to make a difference.

We must not forget about missions. And it's easy to forget about because it is often in a far away place that we don't have to think about very often. But we must not forget about missions. The little stuff around town we can get a handle on; the box of soap we can send to the east coast. And the bigger stuff well, that is within our reach as well, by resourcing the people from Presbyterian World Service & Development. Our children have shown us how easy international missions can be, when it is simply worked into our daily routine. Remember, they raised almost \$1000 to support a Build-a-Barn project last year, by baking cookies and helping out with a garage sale. Let's continue to support them, and let's consider our own contributions to the mission life of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We might want it all, and want it right now, but God only wants some of it. Surely, we can do that. Amen.