

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Don Ruthig

August 5th, 2014

FROM THE RECTOR

Why do churches miss the point on missions?

MISSION work is an essential element of the Christian way of life and churches today are devoting an enormous amount of time and energy to it. Individual Christians are increasingly committing themselves to "personal" ministries, offering their expertise to institutions that help the poor and underprivileged.

But has anybody ever paused to consider why – in view of this vast outpouring of effort, energy and expenditure – the congregations of so many churches are continuing their downward spiral? Surely these extraordinary missionary endeavors should be producing some fruit in the form of new converts?

Not so, however. And for the simple reason that large numbers of operations designated as "missions" cannot properly be described as "Christian missions." While they address serious social ills and pressing needs, modern missions often fail to make even passing reference to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many, in fact, seem embarrassed by it.

This is quite bizarre. After all, the primary purpose of a Christian mission should be to propagate the Faith. For what greater gift can a Christian give than that of faith?

Shoving food into hungry mouths keeps the body together while the soul continues to starve. Ultimately, it is the knowledge that God loves every one of us – that each of us is equally valued as an individual by our Heavenly Father – that empowers the distraught, the downtrodden, and the down-and-out to rise above their circumstances.

Certainly, it is our Christian obligation to relieve their physical distress. It is also a practical necessity. As the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, observed: "You can't preach to people with empty stomachs."

But many missions these days address only physical needs. The spiritual hunger goes unremarked and unattended.

No matter what the media and the political demagogues may say, aside from their economic distress, many of America's poor suffer from a profound spiritual poverty. Visit America's "inner cities" and you'll see what I mean.

The city slums of 60 or 70 years ago were sinks of the most appalling poverty. People were direly short of everything that we today would consider the necessities of life – food, clothing and shelter.

But while squalor abounded, they were far from hopeless places. That is because churches of all denominations during the latter part of the 19th Century – inspired by the Anglican Church's "Catholic Revival" – established a powerful presence in even the most squalid slums.

And with the construction of those magnificent "revival" churches, together with the associated parish houses and schools, they introduced not just the majesty of the liturgy, but a message of love, hope and comfort that transformed the hearts and minds of the impoverished inhabitants.

To be sure, the privations associated with poverty were by no means eliminated, but its associated evils were greatly ameliorated by the creation of caring communities – institutions that had never before existed in the dog-eat-dog world of the 19th and early 20th century slums.

Oddly enough, the state of the inner city today would shock the slum dwellers of a century ago. It is not unusual for the meanest home in the inner city to have a refrigerator, two television sets and a personal computer. Nor it is unusual for all but the poorest of the poor to own a car.

A century ago such things would be considered to be riches beyond compare. In Manila, Calcutta, Mumbai, and in much of Latin America they would still be considered so.

But the gifts bestowed on the inner cities by the churches a hundred years ago were incalculably more valuable – not least in

Calendar of Events

Weekly Activities at St Stephen's

- Mondays, 6.30 PM:** Bridge Club meets in Quimby Hall
- Tuesdays, 7.00 AM:** Breakfast Fellowship at the Nautilus Diner
- Thursdays, 10.00 AM:** Knitting Circle meets in Quimby Hall
- Fridays, 10.30 AM:** Bible Study in the Cadwalader Room

Special Events

- Wednesdays, 6.15 PM:** Silly Summer Suppers in Quimby Hall
- Saturday, September 20th, 3.00 PM:** Service of Rededication
- Saturday, September 20th, 5.00 PM:** Parish Picnic
- Sunday, September 21st, 10.00 AM:** Combined 9.15 AM and 11.00 AM Services (8.00 AM service unchanged). Service of Confirmation
- Sunday, September 21st, 3.00 PM:** Service of Ordination with reception to follow

the sense of self worth engendered by the knowledge that each and every one of us are equally beloved in the eyes of our Creator and Redeemer.

By contrast with that, the gifts our missions bestow on the inner cities are tawdry in the extreme. Churches that really want to have an impact on the ills that afflict the inner city of today would, thus, be wise to start missions that aim to serve both body and soul.

We are commissioned to be evangelists, after all, not state-employed social workers. Far from acquiescing in the marginalization of Christianity, it is our task, above all, to spread the Gospel.

As to "personal ministry," it's a dandy notion. But, again, its primary purpose must be to propagate the Gospel. What is often called "personal ministry" might actually be more accurately described as political work or, perhaps, a hobby.

Truth to tell, the best first step a Christian can take towards developing a "personal ministry" is to try to apply the Faith in every aspect of daily living. It's what the Church used to mean by "witnessing for the Faith."

It's a strategy devised by our Lord Jesus Christ. You'll find it in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven."

St. Francis of Assisi put it another way: "Preach the Gospel always," he commanded his brothers, "Use words if you have to."

It is the hardest ministry we have been charged with – and, potentially, the most fruitful. **GPH**

FROM DIANE NOVICKI

Dear Sunday School Parents

In order to teach the lesson of charity we will be collecting an offering in Sunday School every Sunday for the Zambia, Africa Anglican Diocese.

I have been telling the children about the church in Africa but would appreciate it if you could urge your child to bring a small age appropriate offering (\$.25-\$1.00) to church.

This offering of love teaches the children to care for others.

In Christ, **DIANE NOVICKI**

Help ...as the Beatles said.

There are so many ways we can serve our Lord, including giving thanks for the fellowship we share following the Sunday services, that being Coffee Hour.

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

August 10th, 2014

8.00 AM & 9.15 AM HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: Romans 8:12-17

The Gospel: St. Matthew 7:15-21

11.00 AM CHORAL MATTINS

The Psalter: Psalm 119:33-48

The First Lesson: Exodus 1:18-27

The Second Lesson: St. Matthew 7:15-21

This has been a long standing St. Stephen's tradition enjoyed by so many.

There is no blue print, all we ask is that you commit maybe once or twice a year to provide cookies, or, if the fancy takes you, share your culinary skills with your congregation.

Fear not! You will always be able to find a supply of cheese and crackers in the kitchen together with juice, coffee and cream.

If you feel able to commit, please email or call me and I will put together a monthly rota, if you feel unable to do so, that's ok, there is no pressure. You can reach me at 410-913-7405 or at anne.hawkins@me.com. ANNE HAWKINS

Confirmation Classes to begin

In anticipation of the upcoming visit of Bishop John Vaughan in September, confirmation classes will begin shortly. For further information or to sign up for these classes please call Brock Johnson at 410-825-8007.

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice & Dr. Bob's Place. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Fr Mike✠, Fr Tim✠, Carolyn, Hilarie, Vivian, Jack, John, Rodney, Hamilton, Donald, Annie, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Fran, Tracey, Linda Lou, Edie, Adele, Baby Charlie, Angie, Oona, Cary, Janna, Martina, Leela, Bobby Sally, Isabelle, Julie, Ray, Courtney, Mary, Phyllis, Liz, Joe, Indra, Ally, Marjorie, Steve, Judy, David, Wendy, John, Joy.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Ann, Lydia, Remi, Melba, Donna, Josh, Kim, Shane, Susan, Paula, Hannah.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes.

COLLECT FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY AND THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

O GOD, who on the mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses thine only-begotten Son wonderfully transfigured, in raiment white and glistering; Mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty, who with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end

AMEN

Book of Common Prayer Pages 198 and 248

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Happy Riley
(410- 252-8674)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATORS: Happy Riley (410-252-8674)
Martha Miller (410-321-9038)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.00 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

Return Service Requested

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