

# GROWING *Together*

ISSN: 1481-9465

## DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?

A 1940s musical has the line “We’re busy going nowhere, isn’t it just a crime? We’d like to be unhappy – but we never do have the time.” It seems that “We never do have the time” has become my theme song – and it’s making me unhappy. I feel like a hamster on a wheel – always in motion, always in a hurry, not getting anywhere.

Our culture teaches us that having more, getting more, and experiencing more is the path to fulfillment. It teaches us to be greedy for things, and greedy about filling our time. Christian faith points out a different path.

Jesus teaches that the value of our lives is not measured by the sum of our possessions or of our accomplishments. Even Christians who have seen through the false promises of materialism, and whose controlling passion is not for self but for the extension of the Kingdom of God, are not immune to/ from the spirit of the age. We can find ourselves chanting that spirit’s mantra: “Do as much as possible, as fast as possible, for as long as possible.”

With such a mindset, Christ’s words, “To whom much is given, from them much will be expected” can become a heavy burden indeed. We are aware that much has been given to us, and we feel responsible. The media ensure that almost every world crisis lands in our living rooms. The more caring we are, the more we can feel overwhelmed by the world’s burdens. We feel driven to do more, learn more, give more, pray more. The desire to serve God is good. It is the driven-ness that becomes the problem.

The gospel message celebrates our reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ and our joy in God’s redemptive dream for the world. Is this message best advanced by stressed, desperate, driven people? The gospel message is communicated not just by what we do or say, but by how we are. When Christians are caught up in the dizzy, busy spirit of the age, however worthy

their busyness, what message about the gospel comes across? Does our driven-ness drive others away?

A solution involves a change in attitude which is simple, but not easy. Redemption of the world? Here’s some news: God is still in control, and God could, if necessary, redeem the world without your help. God invites you to participate, to join in the redemptive dance: you are not required to rent the hall, book the musicians, sell the tickets or make the lunch. Just come and dance.

If you feel like a Christian hamster on a Christian treadmill, you have two choices: either stay on (puffing) until life knocks you off – usually by a health crisis – or step off. Take back time. Prioritize prayer. Care for your body and health. Re-connect with the natural world. Become selective about your commitments: the hardest choice is not between the good and the bad, but between the good and the best. Make time for friendships, for the care of your home, and for the unexpected. Resign as God’s vice-president and be humbly content to live a life-sized life.

End your chorus of “We never do have the time”. Try ‘Singing in the rain’ instead.



GROWING TOGETHER is a series of Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ’s faithful.

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism  
600 - 45th Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9  
CANADA © 2010



phone: (306)-653-1633  
fax: (306) 653-1821  
email: pce@ecumenism.net  
www.ecumenism.net