

A different sense of prosperity

GLEN MITCHELL

There are people I know who live their lives very sacrificially, just like Moses and Paul did. Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, something he was not willing to do at first; but God persisted, supporting Moses in his sacrifice doing what God wanted. The people I know do this too. They respond to God's call to care for the poor, the naked, the hungry and those in prison. In loving their neighbor, often far away from their own country, they live sacrificially to love God and their neighbor.

Paul delights in this: "So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us." (1 Thes: 2:8) Paul wants "to please God who tests our hearts." (1 Thes: 2:4)

The people I know live sacrificially; they could easily earn much more if they lived in the United States or Canada, and live much more securely; they have chosen to not follow the advice of the wicked. They really are "like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper." (Psalm 1:3)

The people I know have a different sense of how they prosper. Their currency of exchange is really not money, but how much they love their God and their neighbor. Elizabeth of the Trinity, a 19th century Carmelite nun, said, "Let us ask God to make us true in our love, to make us sacrificial beings, for it seems to me that sacrifice is only love put into action."

Christians who love God and their neighbor have

the currency of the baptismal covenant to guide us. Our currency is God's love. "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad our days." (Psalm 90:1) In rejoicing and in being glad our all days, God's love is all we need to prosper.

In our baptismal covenant Christians declare their belief in God, Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit. We, with God's help, declare that we will continue in fellowship, the breaking of the bread, prayer, resisting evil and repenting, proclaiming the Good News, seeking and serving Christ in all persons and loving our neighbor, striving for justice and peace

For reflection...

- Do you know people, as I do, who live their lives sacrificially? Make a list if you do. Learn about it — ask why they live so sacrificially by listening for God and loving their neighbor.
- How could you live your life more sacrificially and encourage others to do the same?

and respecting the dignity of every human being. In Canada, Anglicans also agree to strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth.

The people I know live their lives sacrificially in the way that Elizabeth of the Trinity suggested we all do. In rejecting the rampant consumerism of the age, in rejecting the disparity between the super-rich and the poor, we are called to live sacrificially as we live out our baptismal covenant, loving God and loving our neighbor just as the people I know do, as did Moses and Paul.



Glen Mitchell is the Stewardship and Gift Development Director for the Diocese of New Westminster. He has worked in the fundraising world as an employee and consultant since 1984. He is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and holds a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from the Vancouver School of Theology.



Sunday, October 29, 2017
Witness by Natalie Wilkinson

Good morning, I'm Natalie Wilkinson. I regularly attend the 10:00 service with my husband John, and children Sarah & Katie.

A cradle Episcopalian, my transient church experiences began at an early age. Upon my parents' divorce, my mother wisely relocated my brother and me to our hometown of Houston, just around the corner from my godparents. Soon after, my godfather encouraged me to join our church's music ministry. "The Minstrels," were a group of passionate musicians, all of whom were twice my age. We were intent on shaking up our rather formal church with folk music, tambourines, an electric guitar, and even a Hanukkah song during the Christmas Eve service. It was there that my deep connection with God and the Episcopal Church was formed: a Church deeply steeped in custom and tradition, yet not afraid of growing and transforming.

College, marrying John (and the military), two children, multiple deployments, and transcontinental moves often left me missing that connection. Our family discovered many diverse church communities in Virginia, California, Mississippi, Florida, and Rhode Island. Occasionally, these churches felt a familiar respite, yet more often closed off to our military family. It was during those times we found ourselves as Christmas/Easter Christians.

Upon moving to Kailua, we again began the process of "church shopping" yet again. Emmanuel was our first stop. Just around the corner from our house, and displaying a giant banner with the promise of CHOCOLATE; this church was intriguing indeed. One step through the doors and we immediately felt at home. The comfort of Episcopal tradition still rang true, yet the possibilities of those transformative memories of youth were sparked: a priest without shoes, church in-the-round, blowing of the conch, Hawaiian prayers. Increasingly, I found myself intentionally becoming a part of this community. Little by little I gave my time; serving on the outreach funding task force, as member of the Altar Guild washing our wine-stained linens weekly, and most recently, as a member of the Bishop's Committee, replacing another military member. In addition to our time, our family has pledged treasure since our arrival and plan to pledge again this year.

Our time at Emmanuel may be transient, yet it has never felt transient. When writing this testimony, I questioned Sarah and Katie about what they would take away from their time at Emmanuel. Their answer wasn't "chocolate." *It was the people: family, 'ohana.* Our shared connection to God and Emmanuel is why stewardship is essential. During this season of stewardship, I invite you to look inward at what our Emmanuel faith family sparks in you, and in return, share your time and treasure.