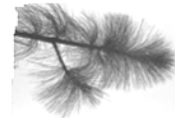




The Evergreen Bough



Volume III, No.8, October, 2008

Discovering God's will for our lives and living those lives
faithfully and to the fullest

Christians and Their Money

by Doris Donnelly

Dr. Donnelly is associate professor of pastoral theology and spirituality at St. John's University

[Abstracts from an article in *Christian Century*]

The Christian gospel has some things of its own to say about money, and says them directly and simply. First of all, it tells us that money itself is not the issue; the real issue is how we get it and what we do with it. In other words, money may not be intrinsically evil, but in its comings and goings in our lives it is frequently the root of evil.

How much does the gospel tell us to give away? Excess, for sure, because to hoard is to exploit the poor who are demeaned by the brutal poverty of imbalance. But the fact that the widow's offering (Mark 12:42-44) was not declined might give a clue about divesting even when it cuts into basic needs. "*She gave from her want, all that she had to live on.*" That kind of giving is always a powerful sacrament of solidarity. It says that even though we cannot take the suffering away or really share it, symbolic action (fasting, living with less, sharing -- not renting -- space in our home, opposing consumerism) is one way of lessening the distance between our own lives and the terror, deprivation and despair of the suffering poor. And something more. It also opens our eyes to the reality that we are all needy -- not only the suffering poor, but we, the suffering rich, as well. The slave-making forces at work in our world exempt no one.

Jesus spent a lot of time talking about money and what it could buy because He knew that it creates the illusion that it is all anyone needs. Therefore, people who had a lot of money, or those who hoarded it or were greedy with their relative share of it, tended to need Him less. The Christian gospel is, at its heart, about loyalties and dependencies, and Jesus set down some specific guidelines for those who would be His disciples: divest, deaccumulate, resist the urge to consume. The bottom line, as they are wont to call it these days, is whether you believe that *Jesus saves* or *money saves*, whether money talks or the gospel does. Jesus was sure you couldn't have it both ways: "*You cannot serve two masters*" (Matt. 6:24).

Choices for freedom in our ordinary lives are frequently -- perhaps constantly -- connected with money. One sobering reminder of what is at stake appears on all of the paper currency that passes through our hands. Like a cancer warning on a pack of cigarettes, it calls us to consider that it is "*In God We Trust.*" Once considered, the statement is ours to affirm or to deny, and to make peace with it as best we can.

Disciple Bible Study.

Why did Paul write his longest epistle to a church he didn't start and had not even visited? Attend, seek and learn!

Starting on Sunday, September 29, we are beginning a bible study and potluck dinner group. For starters, we'll be meeting at the home of Mary Kay and Herman (sometimes called 'the

Choir Party House') at 5:45 to 6:00pm until 7:30 or 8:00pm. Their home, 101 Pickett Lane, is in Windham Subdivision, the entrance to which is ½ mile south of the US 64 traffic light at the corner of Mt. Gilead Church Rd. and US 64. When you cross US 64, the road name changes from Mt. Gilead to North Pea Ridge so don't be confused. If you are coming on US 64 from the vicinity of Pittsboro, go east across the Haw River and up the hill to the first traffic light east of Pittsboro (Griffith Crossroad). Turn right on N. Pea Ridge, go ½ mile to Windham Sub. And turn right on to Pickett Lane, 101 is the 3rd driveway on left. Please call Mary Kay, Herman or Pastor Jeff to commit to the group.

Wednesday Night gatherings

Every Wednesday, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

We have begun a series of Wednesday Night gatherings (preceded by a simple dinner) to discuss God's perspective of our finances, budgets, debt, possessions – What is mine and what belongs to God? Derive contentment; learn from the Bible how to handle your money with care and confidence.

Trustees - Opportunities to Serve

There are many opportunities to serve Evergreen that require small amounts of time and effort. This article describes some of the ways that you can help the Trustees. Other opportunities will appear in upcoming issues of the *Bough*.

One satisfying way to serve is to adopt one of the flower beds at the church. Currently, only the two flower beds on the left side of the entry walkway and the one at the top right have been adopted. All others are available. Workload is only 30 minutes to an hour every couple of months.

Other opportunities include trimming bushes and trees, spraying sidewalks and parking lot for weeds, clearing

brush and small trees on the land south of the entrance, painting door and window trim in the sanctuary and baseboards in the narthex and hall, and participating in the Trustee work days. If you are interested in any of these, please contact Mary Kay Tripodi at hermaryk@embarqmail.com or 542-3493.

Sunday School

It's that time again! The Fall session of Sunday School will begin on *September 7th* . . . come join us in the Grove at 10:05!

Volunteers to teach Sunday School either full or part time are always welcome and received joyfully.

Michelle Duncan

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

An educational program designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of yourself. This course from AARP is being led by *Jane Armstrong* and a team of trained teachers. There is a small fee for the course but scholarships are available. Please talk to Jane to get more information or email her at jarmstrong@co,orange,nc,us. This training is co-sponsored by the Chatham Co. Senior Center, Orange Co. Department on Aging, and NC AARP.

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends!" *MLK Jr.*

Bough Editors: Mary Kay and Herman
hermaryk@embarqmail.com

