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Prophets, Pipelines and Palestinians by Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart

As your Pastor I enjoy meeting you in various locations around the community whether it is the coffee shop, the grocery store aisle, the play park, the rec centre or the seawall. Whenever I meet church members downtown over a meal I usually get around to inquiring about professional life by asking, "What's your business?" The answers are as varied as you can imagine – mining, investments, law, banking, and so forth. My follow up question is then, "How's business?" That question leads us deeper into the challenges and successes of their professional life.

Earlier this summer the General Council of our United Church of Canada met in Ottawa and made what some would call prophetic stands against various political issues from pipelines in Alberta to the treatment of Palestinians in the middle east. Many folks asked me what "business" the church had in making statements on these various political issues. While I was furious at a lot of what I observed this summer at General Council, I affirm the need for any Christian group to be prophetic when it comes to the gospel critiquing culture. But perhaps the most helpful way to respond is to turn my usual business question on the

church. I would be very, very interested to hear the response of my ministerial colleagues (including those who attended General Council) if asked, "What's your business as a church?"

For a long time my response has been grounded in the foundational statement of our Church of Scotland ancestors who declared in response to the question, "What is the chief aim of humankind?" – "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Isn't that lovely? What's our business? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. As Christians we glorify God through proclaiming Jesus crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. We live out this calling through a commitment to the Great Commandment (love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself) and the Great Commission (baptise all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit). And then comes the next question, "How's business?" I watched online for many days this summer waiting for a thoughtful and thorough debate on "How's business?" in the United Church of Canada but it never came. While commissioners to General Council passed a variety of motions that will be swatted off the

desk of the first low level bureaucrat in Ottawa, we missed a critical opportunity to ask "How's business?" In fact, I don't think we missed that opportunity by chance. I think we avoided the question on purpose. It appears to be much easier to wade into Middle East politics than it is to do evangelism and church growth here in Canada. Seeing as the stats are clear – the United Church of Canada is closing a congregation a week – you would think that alarm bells would be going off at the national level. Indeed, if we treated our General Council like a shareholders meeting we would fire everyone at the national level for leading an organization in numeric decline since the mid-1960s. Oh, I know, I've heard all the arguments before...we're better off smaller, we're more faithful now than before, etc. Sadly though, most folks I've bumped into with this logic are cloaking failure in the language of faithfulness. No, the prophetic and the pastoral must go hand in hand. We must earn the right to be heard in Canadian society through our acts of love and mercy.

Which then leads us back to the questions at hand, "What's your business and how's business?"

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Family Camp: Fun times at Fircom!

"When do we get to come back mom?"

"Oh, hopefully next year."

"What? No no no. I'm thinking more like 2 weeks."

That was the interaction between a mother and her 6 year old daughter who joined 75 other participants

at the United Church's Camp Fircom on Gambier Island at the beginning of September. Envisioned as a time for families to connect with one another at the beginning of a new season of ministry, this weekend did exactly that.

From early morning conversations nestled around warm

cups of coffee to energetic games and activities, from sharing communion in the wild simplicity of the camp's environment to late night hangouts in The Cottage - everything attested to the beauty and authenticity that exist in doing life in community.

Here are a few pictures that

capture a mere glimpse of this weekend. The video that was played during the September 16th service is also available at <http://www.ucbc.ca/family-camp-2012-video>. What a great way to begin a new year!



Up, Up, And Away We Go! by Simon LeSieur

There are kids running.
There is loud laughter.
There are crayons flying.
This is the unusual opening scene of our Summer Kids Camp at the church this past August. I say unusual because I'm used to welcoming quiet and shy children on the first day of any given camp. But not this year! The 32 children signed up, our largest group yet, arrived eager, filled with excitement and wonder, and ready for what was another great week!

Through all the silliness, through all the games, and through all the teachable moments with the children, what struck me this year



was the addition of a large crew of teens who infused the program in every area with their youthful energy. What I find most exciting is that these teens represent some of the first fruit that grows when a congregation

infuses new life into its children and youth ministries. Some of these young volunteers were much younger when I started working at West Vancouver United Church in early 2010. Others had yet to

make their way into our community's loving embrace! To see young leaders emerging and modeling a curious, energetic, and authentic life of faith to younger children is such an inspiring image.

Again, many thanks to all of you who came together, volunteering your time, energy, and resources for the sake of these children. We have great plans for next summer, and your continued prayers and support are always, always appreciated. Thank you for a great week!

To see more, please go to: <http://wvuc.bc.ca/summer-kids-camp-2012-video>



Kenya 2013 by Julie Walsh

As it is with so many projects in the 3rd world, it all comes down to money. I know I have the time and energy but raising my goal of \$10,000.00 has been and is going to be a struggle.

The project is a school in the small village of Kanyawegi, Kenya where the roads are dirt (mud when it rains). Homes are small, many made of mud and thatch. The bathrooms are outhouses. The cooktops are open fires in huts. The water, for the most part, comes from a deep hole in the ground and is carried in large buckets on top of children's heads for at least a mile. There are no stores, no hospital, and no internet. The people grow mostly corn which they sell to the mill and buy back for food.

Our goal in 2011 was to start a garden. It was a struggle, and continues to be so, to change the way people think about food. Our hope was to introduce new vegetables and fruits and encourage the local people to plant and harvest their own food. We started with the school. Now that the Oyiengo School is built and running at capacity, we introduced fruit trees. The children helped dig up the clay soil, created compost and planted the small trees that would one day bear fruit. Happily, in one year they are eating the bananas and papayas already. With the trees, we installed water tanks that



would provide the trees with water long after the rainy season as well as drinking water for the children.

Many people have asked me about my trip in the last year and the one question that haunts me is 'don't you want to just bring them all home?' The answer is no. These people have a rich culture. They have skills that I will never master....anyone know the process of making a rope? I do, but not well. I have learned to respect their way of life. My goal is to help relieve some unnecessary burdens that continue to cause hardship, sickness and death. I would like to enrich rather than change their lives. There will be some children that will leave the village in pursuit of higher education. I want to start a scholarship fund to help the best and the brightest not only reach for their star but to return and enhance their community. I would like to build a 'shop' where young people can learn from their elders how to work with wood or metal or maybe become an electrician! Many would love to have a venue where they can create art work that would reflect their culture and talent but this has sadly been removed

from the school curriculum. These opportunities and skills are desperately lacking in this community.

The biggest issue is and has been AIDS. Although the children are learning about the transmission of the HIV virus, culturally girls are still very much 2nd class citizens and are very vulnerable. Few complete high school. Many have babies by the age of 14 and are left to fend for themselves. Others will go to the big cities and end up in the slums. When virtually a whole generation of parents died and left their children behind, much of the progress and future promise died with them. Education is their way out.

My hopes for Kanyawegi are huge. It is a community with rich human resources but few material ones. I dream of the day when each person has access to good nutrition, education and health care. I dream of the day when the girls have the

same opportunities as the boys. I dream of the day when the child with artistic talent has the materials needed to express him or herself. I have a dream that the bright young people will leave for higher education and training and will return with their new knowledge and skills because Kanyawegi is a good place to live.

I am grateful to my neighbours, the congregation of West Van United, my friends and especially my family for supporting my crazy ambition and fundraising. They have dropped off bottles (I am the bottle lady of my neighbourhood), donated cash, potted plants for my plant sales, listened to my endless stories and generally encouraged my dream. It is a dream. Thanks Mum for taking me to see 'Born Free' when I was 7....the seed was planted.

June 2013....here I come!



We Care!! Ministries:

For Hearing Impaired:

User friendly hearing devices are available every Sunday in the back of the Sanctuary! Please ask any usher for assistance if needed.

For Visual Assistance:

We have Sunday service bulletins printed in extra large format, available from any usher every Sunday morning.

Hospital Visits:

We visit Lions Gate Hospital on a weekly basis but

because we do not have access to patient lists we rely on friends and family letting us know of anyone hospitalized. Contact us if you are aware of a situation where visitation would be appreciated.

Bouquets of Thanks!

Our flower committee is fantastic! They not only keep our church looking beautiful for Sunday Services but that they also deliver flower bouquets after

worship to hospital and care facilities.

Fellowship Luncheons:

For only \$3, these luncheons continue to provide a wonderful venue for new and old friends to meet once a month on the last Wednesday. Our numbers average approximately 90 men and women who enjoy a healthy soup and sandwich lunch with an excellent speaker/ entertainment.

The Caring Ministry would

like to thank all of the volunteers who help organize, set-up, serve and clean up. We couldn't have a project of this magnitude without your steadfast commitment.

Calling all Men!

The third Wednesday of every month twenty or so men meet for coffee, muffins and conversation. No agenda, no planned format, just conversation. Come and join in, you will be very welcome.

Free Educational Seminar:

Children, Cyber Safety and Social Media, presented by Jesse Miller

Friday, October 26th at 5:30 p.m.

FREE dinner and child care provided.

Parents, children, grandparents, concerned adults are

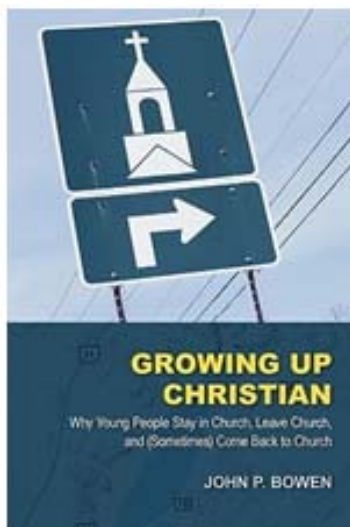
all welcome to attend this important opportunity for all of us to better understand the cyber world in order to knowledgeably guide our families and children in the virtual world.

Jesse Miller is a well-known presenter on cyber safety for children. He will be at WVUC on October 26th, eager to present his knowledge to all of us. This is a FREE seminar,

however we need you to sign up IN ADVANCE by letting the church office know. This allows us to best provide for food and child care.

Book Review:

Bowen, John P. *Growing Up Christian: Why Young People Stay in Church, Leave Church and (Sometimes) Come Back to Church.* Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010.



Recently a member of our church provided me with an excellent study of youth and young adults in Canadian society and their views on religion. The report, commissioned by an Evangelical Christian organization, clearly sounded alarm bells on the future of young people and the Christian church. This, of course, is not new news in the mainline protestant churches in Canada. For decades now we have been struggling to connect with younger people and it has become a successful focus of our ministry here at West Vancouver United Church. Despite our growth in children, teen and family ministry over the last few years we must endeavour to keep the question of how the next generations connect with the gospel of Jesus Christ. To that end, I am happy to recommend a former professor of mine at the University of Toronto's new book on this topic. John Bowen, a lovely soft spoken Welshman who has the title "Professor of Evangelism" at Wycliffe College, U of T, has produced a book on the subject of young adults and the church. Through research, and personal ministry experience, John offers both an assessment and a prescription for the road ahead. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this book....Rev. Ross.

Stay in Touch

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Office hours:
Mon-Thurs 8.30-4pm, Fri 8.30-12

Organ/Orchestral/ Choral Sound Sensation

Reserve Saturday November 10th at 7:30 pm for an extraordinary concert of sonic splendour: the Pacific Spirit Choir, the Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra, and Organist Neil Weisensels present Saint-Saëns *Requiem* and *Symphony No. 3 - the Organ Symphony*.

Remember the movie "Babe" ("That'll do, pig")? This is the featured work from that children's classic. Experience the incredible sound of full orchestra, full choir and full organ in the superb acoustics of our own church. This show is more popular than iPhone 5: it will sell out very quickly.

Please see choir members, or phone the church office for tickets.

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At West Vancouver United Church we remain focused on glorifying God and enjoying Him forever while living out that calling by making disciples for Christ. Praise God that our church family remains healthy and continues to grow. I encourage you to join us on Sunday mornings this autumn and throughout the week for a variety of programs as we continue to worship, witness and work for the gospel that is truth and life and love. May God bless the work we do together in this year ahead....

Calendar of Events

Baptism

Once a month on Sunday morning. Please contact the office a month or two in advance.

Communion

The 2nd Sunday of each month at 8.15am we will be having early communion services resuming on October 14th

We will be celebrating communion at the 10am service on October 7 (Thanksgiving / Worldwide Communion Sunday) and Dec 2.

Congregational Dates and Events

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| Tues | Oct 9 | Board and Committee meetings |
| Wed | Oct 17 | Men's coffee group, 10am |
| Sat | Oct 20 | Oppenheimer Park Youth Program, 9am |
| Fri | Oct 26 | Fall Seminar and dinner with speaker Jesse Miller on "Kids and Cyber Safety" |
| Wed | Oct 31 | NO Fellowship luncheon due to Flea market set-up |
| Sat | Nov 3 | Fall Elegant Flea Market, 8.30am-3pm |
| Sun | Nov 11 | Remembrance Sunday, Service time is changed
9.30am START |
| Sat | Nov 10 to | |
| Sat | Nov 24 | Footsteps of Jesus & Jordan Journey 2012 |
| Tues | Nov 13 | Board and Committee meetings |
| Sat | Nov 17 | Oppenheimer Park Youth Program, 9am |
| Wed | Nov 21 | Men's coffee group, 10am |
| Wed | Nov 28 | Fellowship Luncheon, 12 noon |

Upcoming Concerts

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| Sat | Sept 29 | Pacific Baroque Orchestra, WVUC 8pm
Mozart a Milano, with Michael Maniaci, guest soloist
A co-presentation with Early Music Vancouver |
| Sat | Nov 10 | Pacific Spirit Choir, Remembrance, 1pm
(Please see adjacent article) |
| Sun | Nov 18 | West Coast Symphony, WVUC, 2 pm
Johannes Brahms, Tragic Overture; Cesk Zadeja, Symphony No 1; Johannes Brahms, Symphony No. 2 in D Major |