



FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

June 2018

FROM YOUR PASTOR



Are You a Cheerful Giver?

“You must give what you have decided in your heart, not with regret or under compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.”

(2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV)

About 20 years ago, one of the members of a former congregation that I had served challenged me after a worship service in the receiving line! I can't say that I expected anyone to ever verbally challenge me right there in front of God and everyone else. But, now that I think back, I did just preach a sermon on tithing and if there is ANYTHING that gets people riled up, it's the subject of tithing to the church.

As the old saying goes, *“a great sermon always comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable!”* Now, I am not so egotistical that I would ever say that particular sermon which I had just preached was *“great”*. But, as you will see, I sure did my share of *“afflicting the comfortable”* that Sunday!

Well, as it turns out, the man who challenged me that Sunday opened up his *“greeting”* to me with this: *“Pastor, you of all people, know that tithing is an Old Testament thing, not a New Testament thing.”* This person then went on to say that *“I'm not an Old Testament believer. I'm a New Testament believer and Jesus NEVER*

taught His disciples or anyone else to tithe 10% of their earnings to the Church.” Finally, he said to me, *“So what gives you the right to preach a sermon on tithing 10% of my hard-earned money to the church? Ten percent is entirely too much!”*

I politely asked the man if he was finished. He said he was finished and wanted me to respond. I said that I would, but he would have to wait until the rest of the members and visitors to the church passed by and were greeted in the doorway. He waited, but a number of the members and visitors had heard what he had said (he was a rather loud person) and they wanted to stick around to hear my answer.

After I had greeted everyone, there were about 15 people who stuck around, asking both me and the man if it would be alright. We both said, *“sure, no problem.”*

My first question to the man was this: *“Did I correctly hear you say that you want to live by what the New Testament teaches about giving and NOT what the Old Testament teaches about giving?”*

The man said, *“Yes.”*

I then asked him, *“And, did I correctly hear you say you believe that the Old Testament standard of tithing 10% of one’s earnings is too much?”*

The man said, *“Yes.”*

Then, I asked, *“What do you believe that the New Testament teaches about giving?”*

The man responded, *“We are to give what we want and what we can. It’s up to us.”*

I replied, *“Really?”*

He said, *“Yes.”*

Then, I said, *“May I tell you what I believe that the New Testament teaches us about giving?”*

He said, *“Sure. I think that we all want to know how you are going to explain this one, Reverend!”*

I thought for a second and said a little prayer. Then, I began my answer. *“What would you say if I were to tell you that the New Testament standard for giving far exceeds the rather small 10% tithing standard of the Old Testament?”*

He said, *“That’s just not true. The Old Testament is always more strict and hard to follow than the New Testament.”*

I answered, *“I respectfully disagree. And, let me try to prove it to you with the following Scripture.”*

I continued, *“In Acts 4:32, we read about what I consider to be THE New Testament standard of giving practiced by the Christians who were in the very first New Testament churches. Here’s the passage:*

“All the believers (of the church) were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”

I went on, “*Now, I’m no mathematician, but that sounds like the New Testament standard for giving to the church is 100%, which is much more than the Old Testament standard of 10%. Wouldn’t you agree?*”

The man started to object, but no words came out of his mouth. He just shook his head and went over and sat in one of the pews to think.

Suffice it to say, what I had said was **NOT** what that man expected to hear (or wanted to hear) from his pastor. He, like most of us, wanted to find a way to give less of “*his*” money to

the church. And, he thought that he had found a Biblical justification for giving Christ’s church less than 10% in tithes and offerings.

Now, I would be the first one to say that Jesus’ standards were always 100%. After all, when someone asked Jesus the question, “*What must I have to receive eternal life?*”, He answered, “*go and sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and then come and follow Me.*” I can’t imagine any “*standard*” (Old or New Testament) that could be higher than that!

But, Jesus was also **NOT** a hypocrite. He more than lived up to His standards. He died on the cross to save all of us from our sins **and** rose up from death to reveal that we may have eternal life! He not only believed in a 100% “*Giving Standard*”, He live it and died for it.

So, which “*Giving Standard*” do you like? The one in the Old Testament **or** New Testament? And, what about Jesus’ personal “*Giving Standard*”?

To tell the truth, I don’t believe that we are to “*like*” any particular “*Giving Standard*” found in the Bible. None of us wants to give up **ANY** of “*our*” money to anyone. And, to do so voluntarily (and especially now, when the tax laws have been changed to further disincentivize giving to churches and charities by increasing the “*standard deduction*”), what’s a good Christian supposed to do?

Maybe having a particular “*Giving Standard*” is not the answer. Maybe giving and expecting something in return is **not** as Godly or Christian as giving and expecting **nothing** in return. And, maybe we are supposed to realize that having a *Savior* is so much better than having a particular “*Giving Standard*”.

Maybe, instead of being **religious** and following **rules**, God wants us to have a **relationship** with Him and follow **God’s Son, Jesus Christ**.

Is a **relationship** with God and following **God’s Son, Jesus Christ** really better than simply being **religious** and following **rules**?

I believe that it is better...much better! When I was much younger, I truly believed that the more **religious** I could be and the more **rules** I could faithfully follow would make God, others, and me happier. But, as I grew older, I realized that the more **religious** I was and the longer my list of unbreakable **rules** got, the more miserable I became and the more others actually disliked me!

It was only when I finally gave up *religion* for a *relationship* with God and started following *Jesus Christ* instead of my long list of *rules* that I was finally able to live more for others and for God. I became personally closer to Jesus Christ as my Savior and literally felt His love grow within me. I became more and more aware of the Holy Spirit's presence with me and began to trust that the Spirit would (and did) give me words that could inspire others to live more for Christ than simply themselves. And, I started to see my life as more of a beautiful gift from God, rather than something that just belonged to me and no one else.

And then, all of the sudden, I read this translation of 2 Corinthians 9:7: "***Let your giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving; because God loves a cheerful giver!***" And, I became a "***cheerful giver***"... not just of money to the church, but of all the kindness, love, hope, faith, and wisdom that God had freely given to me.

It made all the difference to me that anything that I could give away to someone else was not mine. It didn't belong to me. It had never belonged to me. It didn't come from me. It came from God and belonged to God...and all God wanted me to do was give it away.

I was finally free!

Your Friend and Pastor,



PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 2018

June 3, 2018 *The Rev. Bill Jokela*

June 10, 2018 *Dr. Chris Looker*

June 17, 2018 *Stella Lee*

June 24, 2018 **Proposed:** *The Rev. Richard Rwamuhokya Bishop of the Fort Portal/Kasese Diocese (Uganda)*

WEDDING BELLS ARE RINGING!



Dear FPCA Congregation,
Save the date! Betty Youmans and Donald Clark request the honor of your presence as they exchange vows **9 June 2018 at FPCA at 2pm**. There will be a small reception for the congregation following the wedding in the back of the sanctuary.



  **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**  

Rosellen Simon ~ 06/02
Mary Helen Hester ~ 06/07
Tuula Jung ~ 06/24

Betty DeAtley ~ 06/25
John "Jack" Belz ~ 06/26
Helen Sanders ~ 06/29

MEET FELLOW CHRISTIANS
Let us Meet My Beloved Husband Frank
By Marta Strada

When I was looking for a Christian who was either born or died in June, I could not resist the temptation to let you meet my dear husband Frank, who passed away in June 1999. Frank was a member of our church for quite a few years, but all he did was come to worship service every Sunday, even on those Sundays when there was a Hungarian service in a church in Maryland -- he went to both services.

Who was Frank Strada? I feel blessed that this wonderful man was my husband for 43 great years. Frank came from a family that owned their property in the Hungarian part of Transylvania. His mother was German, and his father part Hungarian and part Italian (that's where the name Strada came from), but he always felt to be totally Hungarian. As his older brother was the heir of their estate, Frank had to choose a profession. He studied history and Latin, and earned his doctorate in history. But World War II changed his life. As the Russian tanks invaded Hungary, Frank joined the large number of refugees, and fled to Germany to live at his mother's relatives' place. There he made his living teaching history in a school for young refugees. However, due to the difficult conditions and limited opportunities for refugees, Frank eventually decided to come to the United States in 1951. He settled in Cleveland, Ohio, with many other refugees who were supported by Americans of Hungarian descent. At first he got a job painting walls, and in the evenings attended an English class for immigrants – a class I also attended. That's where Frank and I met which led us to 43 wonderful years of marriage.

Frank and I fell in love – but Frank did not feel ready for marriage under his living conditions. We had to wait until Dr. Strada got his Master's degree in Library Science at Western Reserve University. Finally, we could get married in 1956 in a Hungarian Reformed Church in Cleveland – a truly great event for the Roman Catholic Marta who had attended mass every Sunday, but never felt close to the church. The Hungarian Reformed Church is a Calvinist denomination with a similar polity and Reformed theological background as our PCUSA denomination. Frank was the "Leading Elder" (Clerk of Session) who wrote the minutes in Hungarian. I was very happy to join, and even started teaching Sunday School! I felt closer to God than I had ever felt before I had met my beloved Frank. In 1965 Frank got a job at the Library of Congress, and we

moved here. I am a member of FPCA due to Frank! He was the one who suggested we join in 1985!

Thank you, Frank! I can't thank the Lord enough for the gift of 43 years of marriage and sacred worship with our FELLOW CHRISTIAN, Frank Strada!

THE FPCA MEN'S BREAKFAST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

Saturday, June 7, 2018 at 8:30 AM in Room 105

**Come One, Come All to this
GREAT FUN AND FELLOWSHIP EVENT!**

SHEPHERD'S CENTER EVENT

Day Trip

Take our first Day Trip of 2018 on Thursday, June 21st. Board the bus at 9:30 to see the Cold War Museum in Warrenton, Va. See details inside the newsletter. Call fast, seats are limited and go fast.

For more information, please call the Shepherd's Center Office at 703-941-1419 or e-mail us at shepherdschas@vacoxmail.com or see our web site at shepherdscenter-annandale.org. See us on Facebook.

THE PHYSICAL LAWS, PT. 3:
THE EMOTIONAL LAWS
THE LAW OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOTIVATION

Introduction – I have been writing a series of articles based on Greg Anderson’s book entitled **THE 22 (NON-NEGOTIABLE) LAWS OF WELLNESS: *Feel, Think and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible***. Greg Anderson is a cancer survivor. In 1984 his doctors told him he had 30 days to live. His cancer had spread and his doctors had surgically removed one of his lungs. He was in such bad physical condition his doctors had given up on him and told him to prepare himself for his death. Yet, as Anderson writes, he knew others had survived cancer, so he set out on a journey to find out what these cancer survivors had in common.

While on this journey of discovery about the common characteristics of cancer survivors he began to write. His books include **THE CANCER CONQUEROR, THE TRIUMPHANT PATIENT, 50 ESSENTIAL THINGS TO DO WHEN THE DOCTOR SAYS IT’S CANCER, HEALING WISDOM**. Notice that these books were written over an extended period of time and that he did not die as his doctors had predicted. His books are based on his findings and his own personal lifestyle that evolved as a result of his findings. This book, **THE 22 (NON-NEGOTIABLE) LAWS OF WELLNESS**, is a summation of the principles on not only how he lives his life but they also serve as a guide for wellness for us all. Please note that he is not just writing about surviving cancer but he is talking about the idea of “wellness” as it applies to all of life. The subtitle of this book is ***Feel, Think and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible***.

In the *Introduction* to The 22 Laws, he says that the term **wellness** is one of the most powerful words in the English language and one of the most important ideas of our time. It is also one of the least understood words. He says that wellness is more than a “medical fix” but is a way of living – *a lifestyle sensitive and responsive to all the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit, an approach to life we each design to achieve our highest potential for well-being now and forever*. This reminds me of the words of Jesus who says, “...The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10 (Modern English Version)

I mentioned earlier that Anderson structures his book around eight different groups of laws: Part One. **THE UNIVERSAL LAWS**. Part Two. **THE PHYSICAL LAWS**. Part Three. **THE EMOTIONAL LAWS**. Part Four. **THE SOCIAL LAWS**. Part Five. **THE INTELLECTUAL LAWS**. Part Six. **THE VOCATIONAL LAWS**. Part Seven. **THE SPIRITUAL LAWS**. Part Eight. **The Greatest Law**. This article will be on the third of the three **EMOTIONAL LAWS**, the **LAW OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOTIVATION**.

So much of what Greg Anderson writes about in his book has to do with changing our perspective on things. He is trying to help us change our point of view on issues or life dynamics that we all deal with. In this chapter he is trying to get us to focus on the issue of motivation; why do we do the things we do. He maintains that this is an essential issue to deal with on the road to wellness. Are we motivated in life by trying to “keep up with the Joneses” as we mortgage our lives to get that “McMansion” that we really don’t need? Do we do what we do in order to get even with someone who hurt us years ago or to settle a grudge? Are we motivated by revenge, by hurting someone for whatever reason? Or, are we simply trying to get more things just to make ourselves happy? We might think that if we just get that new car we’ll be happy. In this chapter Anderson helps us to deal with what actually drives us in life, what motivates us.

Anderson says that we are all motivated by unfulfilled needs. He opens the chapter by stating that it is a profound truth in understanding human behavior that only unsatisfied needs motivate. He then goes on to say that there are two types of motivation, what he calls *developmental motivation* and *deficiency motivation*. He stresses the importance of understanding this by saying that one type of motivation leads to a satisfying life, while the other type leads to a life of discontent. He then states categorically, “Understanding and practicing developmental motivation is crucial to experiencing wellness.

Anderson talks about his own experience with trying to motivate himself in his earlier life. For years he would use the latest self-help techniques but at best the results were only temporary. He then says that he had the most profound revelation courtesy of the author, Dr. Wayne Dyer. Dyer stated that often we motivate ourselves by trying to fix what is wrong with us, what he called the “deficiency motivation” approach. Dyer said it was a “no-win” way to live one’s life.

Anderson realized that he had been focusing on what he had been seeing as voids in his life, of what he had been missing. He had viewed his life as eternally deficient, missing love, money, possessions. He said that he read all the different self-help books and would try all these techniques. As he says, he would set a goal, create a burning desire, think positive and proceed to drive himself crazy.

He said that he realized that it was a huge trap. He said that when we motivate ourselves from such a mind-set we can never experience life satisfaction. The reason is that we will always want **more**. He said he would get a new car and after a week realize that someone else had a better one. Or, he would go on a world travel binge and after a short time start complaining about having to live out of a suitcase.

He observed: *What was wrong was my motivating mind-set. I was motivating myself from what was missing in my life. I may have satisfied a want, but my mind-set was never satisfied. I was always focused on wanting more—on striving, not arriving... In the world of personal motivation, if you focus on the something that is missing, guess what? The perceived lack will expand. Something will always be missing. What's deficient in your life will become your calling card, your life experience.*

Here is where Anderson introduces the non-negotiable **LAW OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOTIVATION**.

I will let Anderson address this concept: *The essence of the law is this: I am complete but not finished. This is a statement of powerful truth. You are complete, whole, and fully alive right now! You need no more for life to be happy. You can be completely fulfilled with what is, now.*

This is not a new idea. Paul writes of this in Philippians 4:11b-13 when he says, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Anderson helps to elaborate on this principle when he moves from the tangible things of life to the intangible; when he moves from being complete but not being finished. He says, "Even though we are complete, growth, change and becoming are part of life. Our physical body constantly replaces itself with new cells. Our mental capacities grow. Our spiritual reality provides a constant source of renewal. We grow and change naturally—by choice, not from lack."

Then he makes the following crucial statement:

We are complete now, yet our natural development calls for further growth. This shift in thinking is critical. Lacks become impossible. When we can see the inevitability of growth and change, we begin to become motivated by our dreams, not our deficiencies.

We feel fully alive because lack is no longer part of our thinking process. We no longer see ourselves as deficient. We are free to grow and change—but not because we are incomplete. Instead, we seek growth and change because we are internally motivated to

give, to serve, and to love. This is the Law of Developmental Motivation. It changes the way we perceive achievement and view life.

As an illustration, Anderson mentions the minister who tried to build his church to satisfy his own ego, but when he started to work solely out of a mind-set of service to others his congregation started to grow. Anderson observes that the minister stopped operating out of a deficiency mind-set and became free to grow out of a deep commitment to love and serve others.

Anderson addresses our perceived needs of physical survival, psychological survival and spiritual survival but says that satisfied needs, be they physical, psychological or spiritual, do not motivate. Only unsatisfied hungers move people. He then comments, "This is one of the most powerful understandings we can have of ourselves and of others."

He adds, "But the mere fact that we have unsatisfied needs does not mean we are deficient. With the **LAW OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOTIVATION** we are seeking the complete development of our life potential. That's total wellness." Think about this statement. My interpretation is in our lives we are motivated by altruistic values, not material things. And the goal is the development of our life potential.

Anderson continues by saying, "For the practice of total wellness to become an experienced reality, three key elements must come together; *knowledge, skill and desire.*

Study these elements. Knowledge is the "what to do" and the "why to do it"; each of the non-negotiable laws represents what must be done to accomplish a higher level of wellness. Skill is the "how to do it"; a daily process, a way of thinking, a disciplined response to life—all are part of the skill category. Desire is the motivation, the "want to do it" that is needed to bring knowledge and skill into reality. If we are missing just one those three elements we won't have wellness. Knowledge and skill are the simple parts. It's desire that stands in the way of most seekers of wellness.

He concludes this chapter by elaborating on "desire". He says that one of his patients wrote, "I just want things back to normal. If only my life were like it was two years ago." Anderson observes that "normal" is what contributed to the problem in the first place. He says that we don't want to be motivated by our lacks. "We need a vision of what might be."

He says, "In my observations, the people who have the most success are those who, in spite of illness, do all they can to live for today. These are the ones who see life as complete even though it may have some health challenges. They have made an essentially spiritual decision to live now."

I remember many years ago when I was visiting an elderly female patient at Eisenhower Army Medical Center. She said that she wasn't afraid of dying. She just wasn't ready to die. She said that she wanted to live to spend time with her grandchildren and to see them grow up.

The type of motivation that drives our lives is an important part of experiencing total wellness; goals that have deep meaning, dreams that need completion, love that needs expressing. A deep sense of fulfillment comes only from a serious commitment to a life filled with purpose, with striving for higher ideals.

*It's the non-negotiable **LAW OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOTIVATION.***

My next article will be on the first of the three Social Laws, **THE LAW OF HUMAN DIGNITY.**

Submitted by Bill Jokela, Parish Associate, FPCA

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

March - April, 2018

During the meeting in March 2018, Dr. Chris Looker welcomed the Child Caregiver prospective candidates, Sugye Norris and Carmen Vidal. Sugye Norris informed Session about her background, and Carmen Vidal about her plans to work with the children so they get in contact with Jesus. Ms. Stella Lee reported that her work with the children continues to go well. Dr. Looker reported that he planned to take leave in June 2018. During his sabbatical he will not be available for pastoral emergencies. If one occurs, Rev. Bill Jokela and/or Ms. Stella Lee will have to be contacted.

In April, Dr. Looker informed Session about the preaching plans for June. Session also learned that the plans for the FPCA Christian Childcare Center (FPCA CCC) are in progress. Attractive signs inviting the neighborhood will be set up. Also, a special workday to clean up FPCA's Building and Grounds should be set up. Elder Roger Stevenson reported that the church organ will have to be repaired, and the Sanctuary needs painting.