

The Pastors Connection
"Whose Burdens?"

“Carry each other’s overload, for in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” - Gal. 6:2

The Visitation Team approved by Conestoga members is now commissioned and operating! In our first meeting we noted that Paul seems to give contradictory commands in Galatians 2. Verse two instructs us to “carry each other’s burdens.” Verse five calls us to “carry our own load.”

The paradox is resolved by realizing that “burdens” can better be translated “overload”. In a healthy system, individuals carry the weight of their choices, callings, and crosses. But when tragedy or trauma overloads, the Body of Christ must help relieve the weight. Who of us has not needed a helping hand, listening ear or delivered meal to get through?

So what might be additional applications to our mission of joyfully living Christ’s story for others? When the aging process steals away capacity to attend communion, consensus comes easily that “carrying overload” mandates taking communion to shut ins. Doing so with other leaders and members afforded your Pastor some holy moments this past month!

But other applications take greater wisdom. Should Conestoga participate in the MCUSA “Corinthian plan?” (II Cor. 8:14 “At the present time your plenty will supply what they need. Then there will be equality”). The plan was commissioned by Assembly delegates who were moved by the plight of pastors unable to acquire health insurance; particularly in smaller, more urban, or minority congregations. Does a several thousand dollar impact on our annual budget fit the biblical admonition to “carry overload?”

What about the Twin Valley Food Bank losing its space in a neighboring congregation? What would Conestoga members think God expects of their leaders

with this reality? Does “carrying overload” include designating space in our facility to extend a helping hand to local needy families?

As Council wrestled with the Corinthian plan option we felt it warranted greater research. Consensus to engage the food bank agenda was easier when one of our seasoned leaders expressed a sense of call. Call provided a foundation of agreement authorizing Howard to pursue this matter on our behalf.

One we’ve not yet discussed is what we will do if there is an outbreak of H1N1. So far the virus has not mutated into its most lethal potential; for which the world is grateful! But when the next pandemic does hit and health care systems are overloaded what will be our response? Will we hide in our homes? Or will we join previous generations of Christ’s followers by stepping up to embody resurrection faith that “conquers the fear of death?”

I don’t have answers to these questions. But I know what I hope for. I know in whom I believe. I know towards what end scripture compels us to strive.

May God give us joy, wisdom, and boldness as we discern the way forward together!

Living Christ’s story with you,
Pastor Bob