



FROM OUR GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

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Pentecost 2010 - Generosity

If a quarter million Canadian Pentecostals lived out the life of the Spirit in their everyday lives, it would be evident in very practical ways. For one thing, there would be “no needy persons among them.” This phrase, found in Acts 4:34, is part of the description of the church in Jerusalem, a community of believers prepared to do whatever it took, including selling their own property, to see their brothers and sisters cared for. This attitude of generosity motivated the first church to reach beyond itself and become known within its society for its care of the poor, the dispossessed, and all who needed practical expressions of justice and mercy.

Personally, I’ve been inspired and challenged by those who live generously. Generosity is never just about money. It starts with a spiritual attitude that leads to a gracious lifestyle of giving one’s time, service and resources. Generous people understand clearly what Paul taught:

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each [of you] should give what [you have] decided in [your] heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: ‘He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.’ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

God, who has so generously blessed us, calls us to exhibit His character by living lives of generosity and sacrifice.

A genuinely generous follower of Jesus is a potent witness for Him. The believer who gives liberally to propel a ministry or church forward, or who liberates a person from the crushing responsibilities they are carrying, is one who honestly recognizes how God, in every way, has lavished His goodness upon their life. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” is not a cliché to them.

The new levels of mission to which God is calling us—locally, provincially, nationally and internationally—will require a family of churches that gives generously, not sparingly. As Pentecostals, we understand the need for the empowerment of the Spirit in order to proclaim Christ. But we must also embrace the priority the Scriptures place on a Christlike community marked by grace, forgiveness and generosity.

Over the last few decades, through the government’s “ParticipACTION” campaign, Canadians have been reminded that we need to make physical well-being a constant priority. The value of exercise and a healthy diet has been repeatedly impressed upon us—usually by contrasting a slightly overweight Canadian like me with a fit Swedish senior citizen like my friend, Bengt Logevall, who, in his eighties, is still running long-distance races.

In a similar manner, it is the conviction of our national leadership that we need to remind ourselves to continually practise the biblical principle of generosity. We have felt the Lord encouraging us to challenge the level of giving within our PAOC family. At General Conference 2010, we presented a simple, straightforward strategy to help us be the generous, relationally based mission family God calls us to be in Canada and around the world. We are calling on each adult constituent of the PAOC to “**Give Every Day.**”

There are some people within our circle who think we have maxed out our ability to support international and national

missions. But consider the possibilities if each adult attending one of our churches gave one dollar a day to PAOC based missional endeavours in Canada and around the world. The simple goal of a loonie a day each day of the year for every adult associated with a PAOC church could see revenues increase to as much as \$60 million. Currently, we fall far short of reaching this marker in our overall giving.

In Canada, increased resources would facilitate more missionary appointments and pave the way for significant initiatives in each of Mission Canada’s five missional priorities, including outreach to Quebec and Aboriginal peoples. Internationally, we could more than double the number of our global workers and improve training, resources and personnel support for their work on the field. As well, we could expand the scope of our emergency relief and development services. The advertisement on the opposite page, and the centrefold feature in this issue of *testimony*, explain more fully the kinds of possibilities that can become reality if we all rise to this challenge.

Friends, we have never been people who shrink back. We are people who believe in a God who does above and beyond. So we pray, envision and strategize appropriately. Rooted in relationship with God and with one another, we will *pray, give and go* like people who actually live out what we say we believe. Let’s believe together for over 200,000 followers of Jesus who “Give Every Day” in both finances and service.

Let’s pray: *Our generous God, You have lavishly poured out Your love on us in multifaceted ways. Help us, Your children, to demonstrate the same generosity of attitude and action with open hearts and open hands—in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

For more information on “Give Every Day,” please go to the website www.GiveEveryDay.ca or contact us at info@giveeveryday.ca.