

Responding to the call

by Bruce Wooderson

Do we really respond? What can I do? There are others that know more than me. Paul said in Galatians 6:9, 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'

On a personal level, I was challenged many times at work through the influence of the Holy Spirit. A teenage couple had a 3-month-old baby. My caseworker assigned to the family came to me to present her reasons why the baby should be removed and placed in care. I prayerfully thought about the scenario prior to making a home visit with the caseworker. As the visit progressed, I began to sense why the caseworker had come to her decision. At that point, I began to feel my thought processes were being controlled by another source and I took control of the visit. I asked the couple to sit in a chair opposite each other. Then to look into each other's eyes and try to remember what the attraction was that brought them together. After a few minutes, they were asked to hold each other's hands and verbally respond to each other. Other issues were also canvassed while they continued to hold hands. The responses were such that I began to feel comfortable in delaying the decision to remove until more counselling could be set in place. Neither parent had come from a warm, supportive family environment. They had never been afforded the opportunity to emotionally blend. They had no social supports. They had neighbours but did not know much about them.

I could not help pondering that if that couple had a Community of Christ neighbour, might a relationship have been developed that brought love, patience, experience, and wisdom into play. Galatian's 6:2 is pertinent. 'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.'

Two proverbs from the Book of Proverbs come to mind. 'When people are happy, they smile, but when they are sad, they look depressed.' 'The life of the poor is a constant struggle, but happy people always enjoy life.' Do not underestimate your capacity to bring a smile to another's face, to bring a ray of hope into another's life. I am now thinking of priesthood.

I believe the divine nature of priesthood, and the uniqueness of priesthood structure in the community

of Christ, has not yet been fully appreciated. With more of our youth and young adults completing tertiary education, especially taking up studies in the humanities, I see the day when the ranks of our Aaronic priesthood will be blessed with highly qualified people who will bring counsel, solace, respect, and hope to those fractured families within our church and local communities. Our young adults are more intellectually challenged than any other generation of young adults. As these vibrant young people grasp the true meaning of discipleship, I see them visioning a future we older generation may not comprehend, and they will have the skills necessary to bridge barriers of age and culture. We, of the aging generation must share our testimonies about how we met the challenges of our changing world. We too have suffered the hardships of war and economic disaster and yet came through with an unshakeable faith and trust in an eternal God of grace. Let us merge the age of wisdom, patience, and conservatism with the age of energy, restlessness, impatience, and boldness. The common denominator in this merging process must be priesthood. Men and women, young and old, who feel called by God to serve in special ways and can interpret the teachings of Christ in a contemporary world.

President Veazey in his address to the church on 5 April 2009 said, "Engage the current challenges and opportunities before you with commitment and hope worthy of the dedication and sacrifices of those who went before you. Creatively build on the faith foundations they laid. Open windows and doors to the future."

Our challenge is to swing wide open all the doors and windows we confront so that the freshness of the risen Christ can permeate our environments. President Veazey also said in his address, "Brothers and sisters. There is a way into the future that holds the promise that our best days are yet before us."

Brothers, sisters, and friends, we have witnessed many blessings. Some of us are at the stage where we will soon pass on the baton. Others are young enough to be a part of the 'new age.' We can respond with Jesus at our side. May we all feel the Spirit of God burning within us as we serve and worship in many ways and places. God is with us.