

## *“Attitude without altitude”*

January 2008

Hymn                      God of the sparrow                      VU 229

Scripture                      Philippians 2: 1-11

Verses 5-7, ‘Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant’

Prayer                      Let us pray – O God, our strength and our guide, we call on you as we enter this new year. We thank you for the joy experienced as we celebrated Jesus’ birth. Help us to know as individuals and as groups of men the direction you would have us take this year that we might truly serve you and our fellow man as we seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Amen.

Lesson                      A flock of Bohemian waxwings descended on our mountain ash tree. “Flock” sounds pastoral, placid, sheep-like, but these birds showed up like tow trucks converging on a highway accident. One minute the tree was loaded with bright red berries. The next, it was bare and shivering in the winter wind.

The strange thing was they didn’t seem to have a leader. They all arrived at once, they all left at once, as if a single mind motivated them. When they left, they swirled around in the sky, forming and re-forming the constantly changing patterns in a kaleidoscope. First one bird was in front, then another. But they all wheeled and turned together as if they weren’t forty or fifty separate birds at all, but one bird, governed by a single collective mind.

A favourite biblical passage comes in Paul’s letter to the Christian church in Philippi. “Let the same mind be in you,” he wrote, “that was in Jesus Christ.” In simpler terms he was saying, “If Jesus is the head of the church, then all his followers should be so much like him that you even think like him.” We would all be like-minded.

Paul might be dismayed if he could see today’s Christians squabbling with each other about things which make no real difference. I don’t suggest that all members of a faith group should become little robots, mindlessly listening for instructions from their master’s voice. Bland uniformity can be as boring as flavourless pudding.

But think of the impact that a group could have on society if the entire group could act quickly, decisively, and consistently. Compare the effect of one person alone...with a club of thirty men...with a national organization of sixty clubs...with several hundred thousand men of a denomination...

With a true collective consciousness, we could act more like that flock of waxwings. No, not stripping mountain ash trees. But sharing the same ideals, the same values, and then changing the world.

Discussion                      What are the ideals and values you share within your club?  
    What more can we do as a club to help our congregation and community?  
    What will we do along with others to help change the world?

**Prayer**            Let us pray – O God, we thank you for Jesus’ example. May we see that example in others. May others see that example in us. Amen.

*This meditation is based on material from ‘soft edges’ by Jim Taylor which first ran in January 2000.*

**Coming events**    Celebrate the events you have planned for the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “As One That Serves” with the men of your neighbouring churches.

**Book of the month**        ‘Paul’s letter to the Philippians’