

## *“Advent Conspiracy”*

November 2009

Hymn “Sleepers awake!” VU 711

Scripture John 4: 24-26

‘For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman said, “I know the messiah is coming – the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus told her, “I AM, the one speaking to you.”’

Prayer Let us pray together – O God, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus birth, keep us from being caught up in the glitter and excess that has become so common in our consumer society. Change our thinking. Change our actions. Change our lives. Help us to become part of a conspiracy to overcome the greed and meet the need. Amen.

Reflection The season of Advent is almost upon us. Will this year’s preparation and celebration be the same as the past many years?

Everyone wants Christmas to be meaningful, but instead it becomes “Shop, Shop, Shop”, credit cards, traffic jams, to do lists, useless gifts, then off to church “Noel, Noel, Noel”. Sometimes we’re glad just to survive it.

Did you know that North Americans spend more than four hundred billion dollars on Christmas every year – EVERY YEAR?

So we ask – How did Jesus celebrate? Did he present a bottle of wine to everyone he visited? Did he bring gifts of frankincense and myrrh? No! But Jesus gave! He gave of himself, his time, his presence – he even gave himself.

What if you bought fewer gifts? And instead of buying those gifts, you gave something valuable, like your time, to your family, your friends, the lonely? And what if you used your talents to make gifts, like when you were a kid?

And remember that money you didn’t spend on gifts? What if you gave some of it away to the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lonely, those looking for the opportunity to learn?

What if we give a portion of what we would have spent on gifts to the Dondi\* project to help some of the children in Angola receive an education?

Spend less on gifts, give more presence of yourself, love like Jesus. It began with worship when Jesus was born and the shepherds and the wise men came. It begins with worship even in 2009. Worship fully, spend less, give more, love fully.

In this season of Advent you are free to worship, to live, to breathe, to give, to love, to laugh, to celebrate, to conspire. Enter the story. Be part of the Advent conspiracy.

Discussion \* The Dondi project is a fund-raising project of the Men’s ministries network, in conjunction with the M & S Fund and the National Offices of the United Church of Canada and through coordination with a sister church in Angola, to rebuild a mission school which was started by a predecessor of the United Church in Angola early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For details see [dondiproject.wordpress.com](http://dondiproject.wordpress.com).

How can we bring the men of our neighbouring United churches together to join in the fund-raising to help to bring education to more of the children in Angola?

What can we do as individuals and as a group of men?

For next meeting learn more about the Dondi project.

Closing prayer      Let us pray – O God, we would seek to love like Jesus – to give of ourselves and not just buy gifts because we always have. We ask that you be with the families in Angola to whom we are trying to bring hope for their future. Help us to understand and take action in bringing together men of our churches and our communities that we might conspire to change our mindset of excess to a mindset of filling some of the needs of others. In Jesus' name. Amen.