

What's On Your Resume

Year C

Season of Pentecost

Sunday Between June 5 to June 11 Inclusive

June 6, 2010, Second Sunday After Pentecost

Read the Bible passage: [Galatians 1:11-24](#), The Message; or [Galatians 1:11-24](#), The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Read the Bible passage: [Luke 7:11-17](#), The Message; or [Luke 7:11-17](#), The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Faith-provoking, historical insights into the lesson by [David Ewart](#), [Luke 7:11-17](#).

Click here: [George Hermanson's sermon](#), for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this sermon.

The Rev. Dr. George Hermanson

In our reading of Galatians there is a travel log. Often when someone tells us of a trip our eyes glaze over. Did your eyes glaze over when you were listening to the letter of Paul to the Galatians? All those towns and places he visited. He talks about his former vocation and now his new mission. Think of it as a resume. He is telling us about what is important to him and what motivates his passion. His resume begins with what is important to how he lives.

As you now know this Sunday is a celebration of the 85th anniversary of the United Church of Canada. The question for our future is what is our business? What is so important we will give our lives to it. In part, we answer that by what is on the resume of the church and how that has informed our personal Christian resume.

Paul is telling us about his mystical experience, his encounter with God. Many of us in the United Church hold back on sharing such crucial faith formation events. We don't talk about a mystical experience that is foundational. We see other brands of Christians who seem to go over board and we are just more private about our resume of faith.

A change, or maybe a recovery, is the willingness of progressive Christians to speak of their mystical experiences. The pressing issue for the emerging church is to speak of the presence of God in quiet or earth shattering ways. "This is where our world was expanded and we felt God in our bodies." This experience is shaping the church for the better. Shaping us for the better.

Of course, we don't talk too much about these experiences because someone might look at us as strange. We have been well schooled in the temper of our times. We don't expect enchantment for our world represses

enchantment. The lights come on and that is not a miracle, so we have hard time feeling a story where bushes burn and are not consumed, where the dead are raised, and people are healed.

We are cursed by a rationalism that makes it hard to jump into the biblical narrative. It is hard for some of us to see our story in the biblical narrative and see it as basic for our resume. Sure, we come each week, seeking that experience, being open to its reality. We pray and sing, we eat bread and drink wine, and we are touched by the Spirit. However, we are careful in our enthusiasm.

Ecstatic experiences can be misused, to create people who are so otherworldly they never get their feet in the muck of life. Misused it can create suicide bombers. So we hold back.

Yet we feel some hint of God's beauty that calls to us, and calls us into making this world more beautiful. We do have a sense of God in our experience. We not always sure how to tell about it.

Jesus breaks the taboos of his time and touches the coffin. The touching of the coffin is an unexpected action. In that act new life happens. Eyes are opened. God does awe inspiring things. Lives are changed.

When we read or hear a story we often ask what happened next? In this story, though, we never hear the outcome. What does the young man do with his life? The narrative is unconcerned with that question. The concern is can we see life as it is meant to be - full of beauty and compassion and justice. I was a fan of *LOST* and loved the ending. However, many did not. They wanted the questions raised in the story to be wrapped up in a nice answer. No. We got an ending that fits with Luke, the action calls us to be open to surprise and finish the story for ourselves.

Think of burning bushes and think of how many times Moses walked by it before he saw it. This is what worship is about - training our eyes and bodies to see the love of God in this world, working with this world as it is to lure it to what it could be.

Some times in ordinary experience we have a moment of, "Ah ha!" where the world is transformed. Miracles are not something against nature - they are the unexpected, unprepared moments in our life where nothing told us this would happen. We were in the midst of a conversation talking about how the world is inter-related, we live in a matrix, a web of shared experience. The phone rings. Suzanne answers it. It is her brother. He never phones. He asks "Is everything o.k. - I had a feeling about you." A reminder that even when we are unconscious we are in a deep way connected.

Our problem is we walk by those moments of enchantment. If we prepare ourselves then all of sudden it is there, filling us, touching us, and we are transformed. We now know again the world is our place to live with passion.

What is on our resume? We begin with the basic fact - we are God seekers. We are those who feel a call to be in the world making it a better place. Our resume says the most important thing about us is we seek to practice our faith.

George Hermanson

May the Lure be with you

In the process of doing so, we also know we are learners, we are seeking to grow in wisdom and understanding. Our resume says we are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, so return to the source of our identity each week, to be fed and after being fed we go out to share with others what we know to be true about life - that it is full of the experiences of God.

What worship does is to help us attend to those qualities that deepen awareness about the truth of reality - that it is full of enchantment. By that I mean we see life for what really is, a relational reality full of beauty. Because it is created by relationships we know that what we do adds value to life, we make a difference to what this world will be. Our resume tells us that every act of kindness has a cumulative effect. Every act of justice making makes this world a safer place.

We know we have touched the truth of life, that there is no place that is Godforsaken. We can touch the other's face with love because we are loved. We know deep in our being this truth and it is our resume, who we are.

We go out to share that insight that the world is not Godforsaken but full of love and God's presences. It is only a matter of opening our eyes and minds to that reality which flows through all things.

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