

I Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21; Psalm 19
3rd Sunday of Epiphany, year C (used on 5th)
{Commissioning of Dave Feick as youth pastor}

February 7, 2010
Gordon Allaby

SAYING THE OBVIOUS

To say the obvious: It is wintertime!
This is a Mennonite Church
I'm not getting younger.
Dave Feick is not speaking right now –
And, the Leafs won't win the Stanley Cup this year.

Last Sunday, John, in his sermon, referred to First Corinthians 12. We didn't need to read it, today, because in that passage, Paul says the obvious, too.

That passage is about the body parts: one body with many members/parts. Paul notes that it is a good thing that all the parts are NOT the same. He mentions that if all the parts were eyes, then we could not hear, and so on.

Paul presents the human anatomy as an analogy for the church. He clearly says that the church functions as the body of Christ, and that the church, as a body, has many parts. Each part has an important function, and it is a good thing we are NOT all the same. There are preachers and teachers, and so on, and all sorts of gifts and abilities that each person contributes to the whole. And, take note, the preacher is part of the body –sharing himself or herself... to contribute to the whole.

Each **of us** is different. Each one of us is part of the whole which combines to make this church complete.....This is obvious!!!

I'm saying the obvious. We are glad that our body is not just one great big mass of eyeballs.....
Right? It is good that we are different!

Here is another Obvious statement: our planet's atmosphere is getting hotter.
We know this to be true, and..... most scientists agree on the reason; however, as you know, there is some debate on this.

Macleans magazine recently had an article suggesting that some facts stating the reasons are not quite so clear. And, of course you're familiar with the emails that went out, not long ago, from scientists sharing some uncertainties about a bit of the research.

The cautious and the business world argue that we should not engage in radical solutions, unless we are positive, because to reduce carbon output, etc.... could hurt the economy.

Personally / my own view is, that I don't care about all the details, because I'm already all for cutting back industries and behaviours that pollute a lot. I would love to see everyone live more simply and have a smaller footprint. Maybe we could improve trains service and share cars, or whatever?

Radical cutbacks and reductions to industry could hurt our economy, but... as far as I'm concerned, maybe that would be good. Maybe we'd learn to do with less and learn to better share what we have.

To be sure, I'm not a big fan of free market, supply and demand based capitalism. And, if I was a strong proponent of freewheeling capitalism, I likely wouldn't be in this profession. ... think about it.

What you just heard is my opinion, and my part is needed to make the whole complete. My opinion may not be yours, and that is fine.

We don't all have to be eye balls, and the pastor or the youth pastor are part of the church, just as everyone else is.

There are occasions, when we may represent the church, and ... this goes for any of us. When we speak for the church / in the name of the church, then we must be careful that our messages reflects the will of the whole.

Any other time, we **Must** be ourselves and contribute our gifts, passions and beliefs to the whole. Each of us are different and that is good.

*Dave...[]..... please share your opinions, passions and gifts freely.
We need you..... We need you to be who you are.*

I don't believe it is an accident that you are here. I believe God was involved, and therefore you are an important part in making this church function as the body of Christ in our community.

Aside from the business aspect, Pastors are NOT really employees. According the scriptures, pastors are part of the church, just as anyone else is. We must remember this. The Pastor or youth pastor does not function as a tool or an employee of the church, but rather as a part of the church.

To everyone: BE who you are.

You each one of you are needed and essential.

We need capitalists. We need flaming socialists and we need moderates, just as much as we need the gifts of teaching and healing.

All the parts are important and contribute to making the whole complete,.... and in the case of the church.... being the body of Christ.

Of course, we need to be sensitive and respectful, yet we still must be honest and authentic.

The Psalmist in Psalm 19 pours out his thoughts, feelings and passions about how he regards God and God's instructions.

He suggests the wonders of the earth and universe are obvious statements about God's grandeur. They, God's creation, are not holding back their regard and tribute to God. In addition, he says that it goes with out saying, that God's guidance is perfect. God's ways brings life and redemption.

Psalm 19 presents a clear picture of devotion, admiration and commitment to God. The Psalmist wasn't always so upbeat, but this passage sure is full of praise and platitudes.

Even so, some things are not so clear and obvious, such as why?
And,..... that's okay..... Most of life is lived in the grey areas, with lots of uncertainty.

Speaking of grey areas, in this case grey matter,.. scientists constantly try find the answers. Their mission is to find the deeper shapes of grey.

Just as some scientists are striving to determine what is causing global warming and how to correct the problem, others do research on how the brain works – the “grey matter”.

A while ago, I read an article that stated that scientists have discovered the source / the place in the brain that controls prayer – as if prayer is a mechanical byproduct of the brain.

The articles proposed that prayer was just a small section of the brain playing around with cognitive awareness.....because when the brain was scanned, “those” parts lit up when the person was praying.

I remember reading the article and thinking, how sad. They're missing the point.

That conclusion is like a mechanic declaring the value of a car is based on the power of the internal combustion engine. True, the engine makes a car go, and with more horse power, the car can be bigger or go faster. Some people value that, yet that is not the purpose of the car. Burning fuel, turning gears and wheels and releasing carbon monoxide is not the reasons why I drive a car.

A Car transports people, and hopefully transports people –loved ones–safely. In addition, I have many delightful memories of where I've been and people I've seen.... because of my car.

A car takes us places, just as trains and horses use to.

Sometimes the obvious is not so clearly stated.
Prayer may include certain parts of the brain, but what is important is that prayer connects us with God.
And, we know that. That goes without saying.

Two thousand years ago, a young teacher, preacher, and some knew that he was more, returned home after a very trying and difficult experience.

Jesus likely still looked as if he had wrestled with demons and hadn't eaten in 40 days. It is that obvious look that says, “I'm dead serious and I don't have time for superficial banalities.”
In addition, I imagine he had acquired an air of resolve and focus, too.

His calling / his essence was clearly coming through.

When he was home, on the Sabbath, Jesus went to local synagogue.

It was the custom to read the scriptures while standing, and do the preaching while sitting down. Also, specified readings from the Torah were read first, and then the writings of the prophets were read.

We are not told who selected the passages that Jesus read. We can assume that Jesus chose the Isaiah passage.

We heard this text earlier.

With unheard of authority and clarity, Jesus read the passage as it was intended to be read – IN THE FIRST PERSON.

The Spirit of the Lord is UPON ME, because God has anointed ME to bring Good news to the poor.

And, what is good news for the poor? ?????

.... maybe equal opportunity, fair treatment and wages...and so on???

Continuing:

God has sent ME to proclaim release to the captives. ... I presume that must mean –those unjustly imprisoned. Why else would God advocate for their release? And, how is that release going to happen?

I would guess, laws will have to change. People in power will have to change or be removed???? This is good news for the persecuted!

There is more:

God has sent ME to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Those in the dark / those who are ignorant will be enlightened.... they will be born anew, with a new way of thinking and living.

// God is doing justice.... and I'M a part of the process.....

What Jesus just read, were the words of a revolutionary, and the people in attendance knew it.

When Jesus finished, he rolled up the scroll and sat down and began to preach. All eyes were fixed on him– likely in a state of shock.

They knew what they heard, but to state the obvious, Jesus said, “Today this scripture / this message has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Wow.....

The Isaiah passage was alive and it looked like Jesus..... in fact,... at that moment, I bet it felt like all of the scriptures were alive and vibrant as the Psalmist presented,.... and they all looked like Jesus.

Jesus didn't stop there, and not everyone one was favourably impressed by what they were experiencing, some were very mad and likely left.

To be sure,if Jesus came to Osler, not everyone would be favourably impressed, either.

And, if you haven't already made the connections / connected the dots, then I will say the obvious:

We... the church are the body of Christ!

This is part of our mission, and.... it may really upset some people... because it is radical. It is revolutionary... because it turns the power structure upside down..... And, it is proactive!
In addition, that is not all we do, just as Jesus was much more, too.

We are the body of Christ, and each one of us is an important part of the whole.

We are NOT complete if people are holding back / are not contributing themselves and are not being real.

We need Dave. We need Chelsea..... We need [] We need each and everyone,and our community needs Christ.

Granted we don't do the saving..... We just present/proclaim and do as Christ did.
God does the saving. We just do our part.

So,..... the not so obvious: why do you and I do this?
Why do we do church? Why do we strive to follow Jesus?

I imagine there are a variety of reasons, but I'm sure at the core for most of us.... it comes down to an interaction with Christ and the moving of God's Spirit. We are Moved! We are not alone.

We are a part of something..... BIG..... something divine.

Each one of us is important, and what we do together brings Christ here today.