

On Rocking the Boat

It amazes me, that from time to time; some Christians use the phrase, 'don't rock the boat', when that is a distinctly un-Christ-like position to take. My Jesus was a radical revolutionary. My Jesus consorted with thieves, prostitutes and tax collectors. My Jesus held the hands of the unclean, both in body and soul. My Jesus not only rocked the boat, He invited Peter to step out of it in faith.

(Matthew 14:29) Christ's church is not charged with maintaining the status quo; it is challenged to completely and utterly overthrow the establishment and rebuild one based on the love of our God and each other. Understandably that is a scary position to be in, but we need not be afraid. In another boat, in the midst of a terrible storm, we learn that even the winds and the waves obey our Saviour.

(Matthew 8:26) A rocking boat should be the least of our worries; whereas the love of our Creator and of each other should be of vital concern and interest to all those who bear His name.

We see a wonderful example of God's love in the rainbow, which is a symbol of the covenant between Creator and all of creation. (Genesis 9:13) Whenever I see a rainbow I feel that love, which includes all the people of God whether they live in the village or on the margins. Perhaps there is no better way of advertising the ministry and mission of Christ's church than emblazoning rainbows on our signs to show that we honour and affirm this covenant. The affirmation of a rainbow is meant for all the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve; do not be deceived into thinking that it denotes a small segment of creation. However be vigilant in your radical inclusivity because if one of us is excluded, the covenant is weakened for all.

Often the Bible story that is the most challenging for 'comfortable' folk is when Jesus turns over the tables in the temple, and chases out the moneylenders. Sadly we have let the power of money rule in the house of God once again.

Laughingly we cite 'the new Golden Rule' *he who has the gold makes the rules...*
ha ha. But that isn't what Jesus taught. When the moneylenders had been chased out he said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for **all** people (Mark 11:17) - that is all the people who God loves and who are affirmed in that love with the sign of a rainbow.

Jesus did not value power, or position, or even affluence; some of his greatest battles were against the influential Pharisees. Jesus healed on the Sabbath and that annoyed the people in power. Jesus touched bleeding women, and that really ticked them off. Jesus also accused the Pharisees of loving money more than they loved their God. Jesus told them they couldn't serve both God and Money (Luke 16:13) and neither can his church.

So ultimately the decision is not about whether one small church, in one small town, puts one small rainbow, on one small sign; it is about whether we as bearers of Christ's name will step out of the boat in love, unity and faith and hold Jesus' church up as a beacon of inclusivity for all to see. There may be storms, some may choose a different path, but never let it be said that we choose to act out of love of money, over the love of God, whatever the consequences.

In closing I would encourage you not to conflate the importance of one's ministry with its length. Thus far the message which Jesus brought has lasted 670 times longer than His ministry.

I remain,
In His Service and assured of His Love

Kathleen Sorensen