

Dean's Letter, 14 October 2018

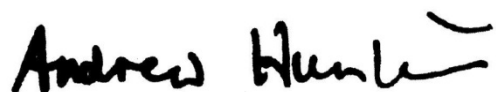
Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

As we continue with our sermon series on Dedication and Stewardship, I offer some reflections on the power of money. Money – if we have it – can bring us much that is good – opportunity, resources, food, education, health care, clothing, shelter; but it also can bring much evil into our lives – greed, selfishness, cruelty, suffering, and emptiness. Money represents a terrible power in the world: the power to control and even destroy lives. The recent and ongoing protests in Westbury in Gauteng, and in Bonteheuwel and elsewhere on the Cape Flats, are the cries of communities who have been trapped by the dark side of wealth – poor communities struggling to survive, trapped in a vicious cycle of gangs and drugs, families struggling to raise their children, pushed onto the outskirts of the cities by forced removals during apartheid. People are desperate. Claire and I lived and ministered in Bonteheuwel for 8½ wonderful years, but they were tough times, as we saw and experienced these things at first hand: the dark side of money as a power that controls and destroys lives.

At Provincial Standing Committee a few weeks ago, Brother Luc of Taizé spoke of teenagers and young adults all over the world, many of them with plenty of money “crowding to enter through the large gate of prosperity and success, entertainment and technologies. They seem convinced that a full life comes through external stimuli, downloading the latest app, music, being active on social networks”. Yet, he said, “More and more of the young visitors who come [to Taizé] come from broken families... Simplicity helps them understand that an affluent consumer society cannot offer everything”. Money seems to promise life, a full and exciting life, eternal life, but instead can bring death – to our own souls. Lack of resources can destroy lives; but great wealth and greed can also destroy hearts and souls. No wonder that money, this great power in the world, this great power in our lives, is important to God!

Today our sermon theme is “Tithing: a training exercise for the heart”. We are exploring tithing – giving a tenth of our take-home income or pay – in cultivating a life of faith. Our readings help us with this: Malachi 3:6-12, which speaks about “robbing God” by withholding tithes; Acts 20:32-35, it is more blessed to give than to receive; and Matthew 6:19-24, storing treasures in heaven; we can't serve God and “mammon” or worldly wealth, money, riches. Tithing helps us to put first things first, to give to God, not to be ruled by our money, our possessions. It is a big step to take, a step of faith and trust, and one that I encourage us all to do. A few days ago I was reading Bishop Eric Pike's book, *Waymarks on the Way*, where he wrote of his own decision, many years back, to begin tithing. And Claire and I have tithed our income (stipends etc.) for many years. I encourage you to join in this act of commitment.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.