



MESSAGE
FROM
PASTOR
NIELSEN
NOVEMBER
2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

Advent begins at the end of November this year. The story of the birth of Jesus is the story of a revolutionary gift of love and hope that changed the world. So what happened to Christmas? The celebration of hope and peace has become a season of stress and shopping that leads to debt and depression and clutter. What if Christmas became a world-changing celebration again? That is the goal of the Advent Conspiracy.

The Advent Conspiracy is a movement of churches around the world who are calling Christians to worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. One part of the call is for people to buy one less present this year and instead give a gift to the neediest people of the world. Americans spend about \$450 billion a year on Christmas gifts. What if we cut back our spending by 10 percent in order to give that money as a birthday gift to Jesus? What would Jesus want for his birthday? I know exactly what Jesus would want. He would want us to give a gift to the poorest of the poor in the world.

So what should we give to the poorest of the poor? The Advent Conspiracy folks, Lutheran World Relief, and others are talking about the importance of the gift of clean water. The gift of clean water is the first crucial step to health, education, and economic development.

Jesus also mentioned the importance of water. Matthew 25:35, 40 “I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Mark 9:41 “Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly be rewarded.” John 4:7 Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” John 19:28 Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

According to Living Water International, which is a Christian mission dedicated to bringing healthy water and the living water of the gospel to all people, it costs an average of \$12,000 to drill a deep water well in Africa. A couple in our congregation wants to encourage us to do just that. They have pledged \$6000 as a matching gift to double any Christmas gifts that the rest of our members give toward the drilling of a well in Africa. That well will save the lives of children, improve the health of families, free women to do productive work, free children to go to school, and allow a community to grow crops. It will show people the compassion of God. It will change the destiny of a whole community.

So this Advent season will you think about how much we are spending on gifts and spend a little less on ourselves and give a little more to the Lord. Your gift to our Peace Lutheran Advent Conspiracy will be doubled and sent to Lutheran World Relief's “Fill the Well” campaign.

For more information, check out adventconspiracy.org and lwr.org/water. Special envelopes for your Advent Conspiracy gift will be available in the church office. Let's reach our \$12,000 goal so that we can send this gift before December 25.

Yours in Christ, *Phil Nielsen*