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Faithfulness within crisis.... (I Peter 4:7-11)



The financial crisis of our time is not only, and not essentially, about money. It is a symptom of the human capacity for greed, lust for power, corruption, lack of transparency, narcissism, and competition. Fundamentally it is a sign of sin. But regardless of its motors, it does generate real-life crises in the lives of millions of persons at home and around the world. And often the ones with the least resources are those who bear the brunt of the impact.

What do we do when we are in crisis? What is the most faithful way for Christians to respond when the very foundations of what we had considered to be secure begin to shake and crumble? In such a situation, I continue to be inspired by the wisdom of scripture. The Apostle Peter begins one text by identifying a crisis, bigger than the one we are in. "The end of all things is near." Now that's a crisis. How are we to respond? He suggests four things and these continue to be important also for us:

1. Be serious and disciplined about prayer. Prayer is not a frivolous matter.
2. Maintain constant love for one another. Self-giving love, within crisis, is essential.
3. Be hospitable to one another. Crises are not times for hoarding and defence. They are times for sharing, generosity, and transparency.
4. Serve one another with the gifts we have been given. We are called to administer well the gifts of grace that God bestows on us, even within crises.

The end result of such faithfulness within crisis is that God will be glorified and we will acknowledge anew that there is power, and it rests in God and not in other things.

We do begin this New Year with a sense of trepidation. At Mennonite Church Canada we are indeed concerned about our capacity to be good ministry partners. Budgets and money do play an important part in this. Many at home and around the world are counting on us to live up to the commitments we have made with them. In good faith we have made commitments to others, and we want to do our best to fulfill them.

The counsel from the Apostle speaks directly to each of us: pray seriously, love constantly, practice hospitality, and make use of our giftedness in service to others. May this wisdom guide us all in being faithful within the crises of our times.

—Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada