

Summer, 2009

Dear Friends at Zion's,

I'm not a big fan of hot weather. Despite having lived in Texas about 15 years and for 6 years of that time serving on the Back Bay Mission Board of Directors in Biloxi where it is like a steam bath outside, I have really been appreciating these first three weeks of June. Since we have spent time in the South, much of it near the Gulf Coast, I am a big fan of air-conditioning. I would have packed up and moved back north after the first summer there if it had not been for artificial cooling. The editor of the Houston Post at the time we lived in Texas used to call Houston the world's largest sauna. Yet that area is perfect for growing crops such as melons and other things that take a lot of water. It also is good cotton growing country. Despite my aversion to the heat and humidity, I am reminded of the wondrous plan God continues to work out to provide for us in this world.

So I give thanks for the hot weather because of what it means in providing us with the things we need for life. I don't think it's inconsistent also to give thanks for not having to "sweat it out" as did those in previous generations. For the innovations that affect our lives, the labor-saving devices, the technologies that affect us all are also gifts from God.

As people of faith, we know that God continues to provide for us in many ways. We offer our prayers of thanksgiving because we see the great bounty God has planned for us on this earth. And as people of faith, we also have a responsibility to look beyond just ourselves. We know that everyone is a child of God, entitled just as much as we, to the good things of this world. If an accident of birth has placed us in this land, with parents who taught us how to develop our talents and enhance our lives, we should stand in awe of what we have received and look upon it with grateful hearts. It is also incumbent upon us, therefore, to give to those whose circumstances are less fortunate.

This sends to the church a challenge to look beyond ourselves and see how we can be in ministry in places both near and far. Last month, we heard Martha Mensendiek talk with us about mission work in Japan. Even though Japan is a developed country, there are people there as everywhere who are disenfranchised and in need. The church, through the efforts of many, touches lives there ... and here as well. Mission is all around us. Our call to mission sends us to our own neighborhoods as well as to Third World.

Our awareness of these things serves to make us stewards and disciples. We share the task of making the Gospel relevant to these days and to remind everyone how God acts in every life. Let us use our time this summer showing gratitude and working to look at the world with fresh eyes that are eager to see how we can be about our Father's work.

See you in church,

Peter C. Nichols, Pastor