

July 2009

Dear Friends:

The intermittent rainy weather did not dampen the spirit, enthusiasm and generosity of those who participated in the **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Wallet Open Golf Classic**, held on June 24<sup>th</sup>. We raised over \$23,000 from the golf tournament, the silent and live auctions afterwards, and other donations. All proceeds from this event go towards sending inner-city and underprivileged kids to summer camp, funding after school programs, and support for families in crisis. We want to thank everyone who participated for their generosity! Kudos also to Jennifer Troelstra, who organized this year's event, and the other staff members who helped to make it happen! Praise God for His goodness!

**More Than Gold** – The 2010 Olympic Winter Games are just months away. Vancouver and Whistler will be in the spotlight with an estimated two-thirds of the world viewing the games on television. More than 300,000 visitors, including athletes and spectators, are also expected. **More Than Gold (MTG)** is a network of churches and Christian organizations formed, in response to the upcoming Olympics, to encourage witness, service and social justice. The underlying theme of **MTG** is “radical hospitality” – where Jesus is guest and host. **MTG** is seeking to mobilize the Christian community to bring the heart of the gospel into the public arena during the games. The early church understood that hospitality went hand in hand with evangelism. They had the city gate – as public space to connect with strangers who were then invited into homes and churches. **MTG** is seeking to encourage a rediscovery of this biblical hospitality, inviting us to move into public spaces and connect with the stranger, finding rightful ways into the heart of the community. For more information, please go to: [www.morethangold.ca/og](http://www.morethangold.ca/og).

### ***Reflections of a Christian in the Marketplace:***

I was at *Office Depot* the other day checking out briefcases. I saw one that caught my eye and noticed it was much less expensive than the other leather briefcases. I asked a salesperson why it cost so much less than the others. She responded, “If you examine it closely, you can see that it’s not real leather.” I thought to myself, “You could’ve fooled me. It sure looked like the real thing.” Then she added, “The proof is not in the looks, but in its durability.”

I think we’re too often fooled by appearances. I’ve met people whom I’ve been really impressed with and thought, “Wow, that’s a sharp individual. He sure has it all together,” only to discover later that he wasn’t everything I thought he was. Not everyone who looks like a follower of Christ is one. Just because a person knows the right words and has good theology coming out of his mouth doesn’t necessarily mean that he is the real deal. Ultimately, only God knows for sure who belongs to Him or not, but there are some indicators.

1 Samuel 16:7 tells us that God does not look at outward appearance, but at our heart. In a related verse from Psalm 50:23, the psalmist talks about the real deal - real people, not pretenders - those who are genuine and sincere. By way of implication, a genuine commitment to Christ will evidence itself in our lives. We can’t help it. It will show up, if it’s real and genuine.

First, there’s a heart of gratitude. The psalmist says, “*The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me.*” There’s something special about genuine followers of Christ. There will be some expression of thanksgiving, some acknowledgment of gratitude towards God, no matter what the circumstances are in that person’s life.

Second, there’s a life of obedience. The psalmist continues with, “*to one who orders his way rightly.*” Along with thanksgiving, there’s also a desire to obey God, to follow His ways. So, a heart of gratitude and obedience to His Word are key indicators as to whether or not a person has a sincere, genuine relationship with Christ.

Nowadays, it’s so easy to mistake cultural Christianity for the real experience. You can know for sure that you belong to Him if you’ve surrendered your life to Him. Then He will give you those indicators: gratitude and a life of obedience. As a check, we could ask ourselves: “Does my life exemplify gratitude and obedience to God? In what ways have I fallen short in these areas?”

Blessings and shalom!

Bill Wong