



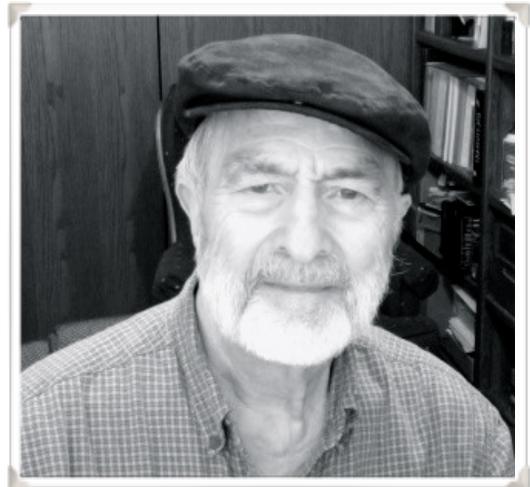
**First United Methodist Church**  
***Feeding the Hungers of our Community***  
**Stewardship Campaign 2013**

October 29, 2012

Irene and I share our material possessions in the form of tithing but we do not view tithing as the legalistic meeting of biblical teachings. *We view tithing as a minimum not as a goal.* Certainly, we have been influenced in our sharing by the incredible love story of the Bible but many other life experiences have taught us the importance of sharing. We tithe to the Church because we view it as a base for mission into the world of human need. We also support many other organizations that serve the poor and needy because they often reach people who are not always served by the organized religious groups.

*I want to share a story with you that touched me deeply:*

Once I was in Rio de Janeiro attending a conference of the World Methodist Council of Churches. I roomed with a wealthy Christian from an Asian country. Each evening we would have dinner and discuss the day's event. One evening we missed each other and he went to dinner by himself.



While he was eating, a young girl came to his table offering to sell him some candy. My friend noticed her eyes fixed on the food he was eating and asked if she was hungry. She nodded yes and he asked the waiter for another plate. He shared half of his food with her. While they were eating, though she spoke little English, they communicated with the use of gestures and drawings.

When they finished she invited him to visit her home. He followed her through several alleys until they arrived at a small cardboard house and she invited him inside. He had to bend very low to get through the door. Inside, the girl's mother was sitting and after some words from her daughter she welcomed my friend and asked him to sit down.

My friend was excited and decided this would be a great opportunity to share his faith in Jesus Christ. They used symbols shaped with their hands to communicate and he found out soon that the father had been killed in a car accident. They had lost their home and everything they possessed of any worth to debtors. My friend made a symbol of a church and pointed to the sky hoping to witness to them about Jesus. The mother understood what he was trying to convey and she looked for her purse to show him something.

*She took out her church pledge card and shared it with my friend. He read the card and saw the amount of her pledge was the equivalent of \$5.00! This poor family was certainly more than tithing because their love of God was much greater than their personal needs.*

When my friend returned to the hotel he shared his story with tears in his eyes. I remember him saying, "I am a wealthy businessman and I thought my Christian faith was sound and though I went to share the news of Jesus Christ I found He was already there to share with me!"

*Whether rich or poor, the most important thing we can do is to share all we can with the same love with which we ourselves have received.*

God bless you,

Arturo Fernandez

P.S. Please be praying about what God would have you financially share to "feed the hungers of our community."