

DAY NINE

For God so loved the world that He gave...

John 3:16

The candles cast a beautiful glow about the sanctuary; the choir raised their voices in a magnificent song of praise to honor the birth of the Savior. Yet, in the midst of such beauty and pageantry, tears slowly rolled down his cheeks. David had just returned from his third mission trip to Russia and all he could imagine was the children he had visited in the orphanages; children who would not hear the story of the babe lying in a manger, children who would receive no gifts, no candy, and no Christmas meal.

For God so loved the world that He gave...

The greatest gift the world has ever received was given for one reason and one reason alone -- love. It was a love so strong and powerful that He gave His only son. Our stewardship emphasis is not about bricks, buildings or budgets. Ultimately, we are about love; a love that desires to reach out and bring people into the family of God. A love so strong, so powerful that we want to give and give and give some more; not from obligation or guilt but from heartfelt desire that people would come to know the wonderful and saving love of God through Christ.

For God so loved the world that He gave...

We don't need to travel to rural Russia to find those in need. How many children and young people in your own community will not hear the Good News, will never grow up knowing the joy that comes from being a part of God's family? How many families in your own congregation desperately need to hear the good news of God's love in the midst of divorce, death, sickness or unemployment? How many elderly people need to know God still loves them? Think for a moment of co-workers, family members and friends who desperately need what the church has to offer -- love.

For God so loved the world that He gave...Will you?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why do I give?
2. Does my gift adequately reflect God's love for me and others?
3. Who do I personally know who needs to know the love of God through Christ?

PRAYER

Loving and Giving God, thank You for loving the world so much that You gave up Your only son that I might live. Help me, Oh God, to give like You. Help me to give with a generous and loving heart. Open my eyes to a world that stands in desperate need of Your wondrous love in Christ. I pray in His name, Amen.