



MNA Special Needs Ministries: “On Being *For* the Life of My Neighbor”



Even as I write this, our nation is in the midst of a heated debate over the subject of health care reform. As a former college instructor in Economics, a current disability ministry leader, and the parent of a teenager with Down syndrome this topic captures my attention—and my heart. The discipline of Economics can be described as “*the study of the allocation of scarce resources to alternative and competing wants.*” Or in simpler language: limited resources and unlimited wants. Who gets what? And who chooses? In a postmodern context where we, as a culture, will not acknowledge nor agree upon a set of transcendent values, the dialogue over important issues breaks down.

But we, as the Church, *do* have a set of transcendent values rooted in the holy character of God. We also know the nearness of God, in Christ—who has shown us what the costly, voluntary, sacrificial love of the Father looks like in everyday relationships with others. And because of Christ’s costly, voluntary, sacrificial love on Calvary—followed by his victorious resurrection—we have the indwelling, life-transforming power of the Holy Spirit. He gives us the wisdom, strength and courage to act on what we know is good and true according to God’s Word. In other words, you and I are without excuse.

In what is called *The Parable of the Great Banquet* in Luke 14 (which could be titled *The Parable of the Great Excuses*), Jesus tells us to “*Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame...*”

According to Jesus, his love is not dispensed by the government or sold by a corporation. It is a heavenly good distributed by the hands and feet of Jesus through his body—the Church. How much love have you and I been sharing lately with those who are marginalized by society? Valuing the sanctity of human life means much more than articulating accurate theology. It means living out our theology, as Joni Eareckson Tada says, “with our sleeves rolled up.” ***I would suggest that the sanctity of human life is not as much about what I am against as what I am for. It is about being for the life of my neighbor—from conception to natural death.*** Every human life is the inseparable intertwining of a physical body and a spiritual person. We cannot minister to

the one without ministering to the other. That is why the Gospel—the good news of the coming of the Kingdom—comes in word *and* deed. *The Parable of the Great Banquet* extends an invitation of honor... given with urgency... and follows with a meal that meets the real needs of thirst and hunger, both spiritual and physical.

I trust that you recognize—no matter who “wins” the current round of the health care debate—that we are living in a time when the allocation of scarce resources to unlimited wants will increasingly affect the lives of the most vulnerable in society: the elderly, the disabled, and the unborn. It is an economic reality with eternal consequences. And that weighs heavily on my heart because we, the Church, are not ready for the task.

MNA Special Needs Ministries exists *to help the Church to be **for** the lives of our neighbors with special needs—from conception to natural death.* Will PCA congregations go out into the streets and alleys and find our neighbors with disabilities? Will we pass out the invitations to The Great Banquet with a passionate sense of honor and urgency? Will we lavishly dispense love as only the hands and feet of Jesus can do? Will we offer the food and drink that quenches both physical and spiritual hunger and thirst as only Jesus can?

We at MNA Special Needs Ministries are here to encourage and equip the local church. We will help you write the invitation so that the Deaf can hear it, the blind can see it, and the intellectually challenged can understand it. We will teach you how to adapt the banquet hall so that the physically disabled can enter it. And we will challenge you to consider that The Great Banquet is never *fully* experienced by *any* of us until *all* of those who Jesus intended to be there are participating in it.

MNA Special Needs Ministries is here to bless the entire body of Christ by equipping the Church to make the Gospel accessible to *all* in word and deed.

How will your congregation be *for* the lives of your neighbors today?

I warmly invite you to contact me:

Stephanie C. Hubach

MNA Special Needs Ministries Director

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19 August 2009

Wanted:

Ministry partners who are passionate about

“Making the Gospel—the good news of the coming of the Kingdom—accessible to all, in word and deed.”

Will you commit to giving, as you are able, so that the PCA will be better equipped to be “for the lives of our neighbors?”

Regular giving for Stephanie Hubach’s salary is currently at \$15,000 of the needed \$30,000.

Your regular financial gifts in monthly amounts of \$10, \$25, \$50 or \$100 will all make a difference.

Your partnership is essential! Will you join us to reach the goal of 100% by January 2010?

Please give online at: www.pca-mna.org/specialneeds

*****A special “thank-you” to all of you who have given one-time gifts in the last year and to those who already give regularly!!*****