THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

18 December 2024

2024 MODERATOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Beloved friends,

This Christmas season you are called to remember that "we live by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). We are situated in southern Africa where we are faced with modern ambiguities, families separated by the diaspora, economic depression, social difficulties, religious uncertainties, complex cultures, environmental disasters, relational tensions, and political volatility like the outright war in Mozambique. One can be excused in being skeptical about the promises of God. So, I invite you to consider the following story by an anonymous writer.

In a mother's womb were two babies. One baby asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?"
The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."
"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"
The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short, so life after delivery is to be logically excluded."
The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anywhere."
The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover, if there is life, then why has no one ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the 'after-delivery' there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet the one who carries us, and she will take care of us."
The first replied. "You actually believe in her? That's laughable. If she exists, then where is she now?"
The second said, "She is all around us. We are here because she is. It is in her that we are living and moving and having our being. Without her this world that we have would not and could not exist."
Said the first: "Well I don't see her, so it is only logical that she doesn't exist."
To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and listen, you can perceive her presence, and you can hear her loving voice, calling down from above us."

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