

September 5, 2017

Do not press me to leave you, or to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge;

your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried.

May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well,

if even death parts me from you

Ruth 1:16-17

Dear Mennonite Church Saskatchewan,

When Ruth bound herself to Naomi, declaring, “where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge,” she was not only surrendering herself to Naomi, she was taking a leap of faith into a future unknown. Logic, reason, strategic planning, would suggest she turn back like her sister Orpah. As Naomi says, “do I still have sons in my womb,” go back, there is no future here. Yet, out of tremendous love and devotion, Ruth chooses to walk in faith, trusting that the only future she would have is the one she would receive.

Similarly, when Abram and Sarai, that old barren couple from Haran, left to follow the Lord to Canaan, they too ventured on a journey of faith where the future was not something they could own or claim for themselves, but rather, it would be given as a gift; a gift through the fulfillment of God’s promise.

The future was not theirs to claim; the future was God’s to give.

Thinking about the future as something we receive as opposed to something we claim is not natural for us as humans to consider. Our very nature is to secure the future to the best of our abilities and to eradicate as many unknowns and uncertainties as possible. As I rock my youngest child to sleep and read articles on Facebook about the peril our tiny planet is facing — from Global Climate Change to Nuclear Sabre Rattling between North Korea and the United States — envisioning the future as a gift to be received instead of something to be taken, seems irresponsible...maybe as irresponsible as a barren couple counting the stars as descendants or Ruth clinging to a widow. Yet, maybe this is how it always has been; the future isn’t ours to take, but a gift that is received.

Lord, open us to receive the gift of Your future. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Ryan Siemens