

WEEKLY SERMON

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Harvest time and it's time to assess our harvesting of souls

It's that time of year again when Christian churches around the land are holding harvest festivals. In my own garden, despite the topsy-turvy weather this year, my veg patch has done pretty well, supplying us with plenty of organic fresh veg.

So I've plenty to be thankful for. But worshipping in an urban parish maybe I'm an exception rather than the rule.

Of course, we urban parishioners should be thankful for the harvest and the abundance of food on our supermarket shelves, while at the same time be fully aware of the scandal of food waste.

We should also be aware of the undue pressure put on our farmers for lower prices and perfect products that leads to much of that waste.

Maybe as part of our celebrations we should be supporting our agricultural industry, not only by our prayers of thanksgiving but also by our actions.

We as Christians should be shopping wisely and sustainably, taking into account animal welfare and, as far as possible, the responsible use of the land and the carbon footprint left by the supply chain.

There is also another harvest that we should be celebrating. That's the harvest of souls.

Chris Bowater's hymn goes: "The fields are white unto harvest, but O, the labourers are so few; So Lord, I give myself to reaping, to gather precious souls unto you."

There is, outside the confines of our church buildings, a huge crop of souls waiting to be cultivated and harvested.

In his hymn 'I the Lord of Sea and Sky' by Daniel L Shutte the question is asked "Whom shall I send?"

The answer in the chorus is: "Here I am Lord, is it I Lord; I will go if You lead me; I will hold Your people in my heart".

Perhaps at this harvest time we should look at ourselves and ask the question; how many souls have we as individuals or as churches harvested for God this last year?

We of course should be giving thanks for each and every one that has been saved, but should also look at our performance.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

Have we heeded God's call and accepted His lead? If not, what is our plan to equip and train ourselves over the coming year to become better cultivators and harvesters of souls?

About 2000 years ago Jesus harvested 12 special souls to start this work; what a great job they did. Now it's our turn.

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