

Wormwood and Screwtape On Missions

Our apologies this morning to C.S. Lewis who wrote the original Screwtape letters – a dialogue between two of Satan’s demons. Listen in to our debate:

W: Screwtape! Screwtape! I swear by all that is unholy your name ought to be screw UP!

S: Here I am, your unholiness, is there anything wrong?

W: Wrong?! Is anything **Wrong**?!! Haven’t you been paying attention to what is happening at the church you’ve been assigned? First Presbyterian Church is **your** congregation isn’t it?

S: Yes, your Sire. Yes it is and things are going so well there. They have this new program coming on board and they are reaching out

W: Stop! Stop! Stop! Enough already! Didn’t anybody ever explain to you that our goal was to make things go WRONG. We don’t want them to get the good news out about God’s love. We don’t want new people coming in. We want to make people cranky and dissatisfied.

S: Yes, Sire. I know. It’s just that it’s hard not to get excited when they talk of sharing God’s love with those less fortunate than themselves.

W: I am just going to forget you ever said that Screwtape. That’s enough to have you kicked back down to being a coal shoveler!

S: But your lowliness, these people care about other people the way they care for their own families. In fact, that’s what they call themselves --- a family of God. (wishly) I wish I could have a family like that – people who would care for me –

W: Screwtape! Pull yourself together. You work for the great enemy of all that is holy. Now, let me help you plan how to overthrow this faithfulness to God.

S: Wellll, it is their stewardship season where they plan how to give and make out budgets.

W: That’s perfect. There’s nothing like getting people upset over money. Let’s have them ask questions about mission giving and why it should be increased.

S: I don’t know, sir. That seems like a hard sell to me. After all, doesn’t Jesus teach the people that they are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the sick? How can we make that seem wrong?

W: Ahhh. This is where you can learn a valuable lesson, my little devil. You keep their attention away from the need to help others – especially strangers, and you have them get caught up in arguments about who needs what and where every two cents goes.

S: But Master they give to general mission fund as well as to specific causes like RAM, the local food bank and Polly's Place, a home for abused women. They try to give 10% of their budget to mission. They call it a "tithe".

W: What?! You've let them begin to tithe as a church?! How could you do this! The tithe is one of heaven's great weapons. Why God Himself set up the tithe as a way to show faithfulness. Before you know it the whole congregation will be tithing and there will be more than enough to make the budget and grow into an even larger congregation. We're doomed!

S: Doomed?

W: Doomed. Screwtape your time with this church has been a serious failure. I may have to take you off the assignment altogether. I'll give you one more chance to lead these people astray. I'll check in with you next week, and you better have bad news to report or we'll both be on the carpet.