

Pentecost 11 (July 31, 2016)

**Luke 12: 13-21**

***13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”***

***14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”***

***16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’***

***18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’***

***20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’***

***21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”***

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A Presbyterian News Service story about Les and Cindy Morgan – Bangladesh

### **A Ministry of Healing Built on Relationships**

Making her bimonthly visit to a day center for street children in Bangladesh, Dr. Cindy Morgan saw 11-year-old Alamgir learning to write his name. Though he struggled to form the letters correctly, Cindy was impressed with the persistence of the unschooled boy. His father, a rickshaw puller, died of cancer four years ago, leaving Alamgir’s mother and six children with no means of income. Alamgir moved from his rural home to Dhaka, a megacity of 16 million. He supports himself by selling scraps of papers to recyclers, hawking newspapers on the streets and helping push heavy carts loaded with cargo. At Jokhon/Tokhon Day Center, he and other children play games, eat a nutritious snack and participate in educational activities. Thanks to the encouragement of Cindy and a third grader who has recently reenrolled in school himself, Alamgir has now started school.

The center, which serves 400 children annually, is jointly sponsored by the Church of Bangladesh and a local nonprofit organization. At the center, “Dr. Cynthia,” as she is known in Bangladesh, sees lots of colds and skin ailments. She also treats wounds sustained in the rough-and-tumble life on the streets. Yet she brings more than medical care to the clinic. “I delight in affirming them as children who are precious in the sight of God,” Cindy says. “Despite the hardness of their lives, many of them treasure a deep assurance of God’s love for them.”

In addition to seeing patients, Cindy and her husband, Les, also a physician, consult with the health programs of the Church of Bangladesh. It's a small church, but Les says they do remarkable work in the poor, mostly Muslim country. Financial resources are few, but Les says the ministry of healing should be built on relationships rather than money. He points out that early in Jesus' ministry he sent out his disciples to proclaim God's kingdom and told them not to take "money or even a staff, bag, bread or extra tunic."

"One of the greatest challenges of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is its wealth," Les says. "It would behoove our church to listen carefully to what Jesus has told us. Put money in its proper place and bring to the forefront what Jesus gave us, his power and authority to be in relationship with a hurting world."

At clinics in some of Dhaka's most impoverished neighborhoods, Les works with limited medical supplies. If a patient needs more treatment than he can provide, he sends them to the nearest hospital along with a note. The referral, he says, will help them get special attention from a Bangladeshi doctor.

"There aren't Christians living in the area where we do clinics, but we help the church reach out to Hindu and Muslim neighbors and express to people the love of God," Les says.