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## **YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN**

by Pastor Clarissa Martinelli

*“I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it; but God made it grow...Whether they plant or water, they work as a team....We are God’s fellow workers.”*

This is a thrilling text. It declares a privileged partnership--a partnership with God! And in this partnership, “we are dependent on God.” “God giveth the increase!”

But more rewarding, as social beings we are in partnership with each other. “*I planted...Apollos watered.*” So we are also dependent on each other!

We hear talk about the self-made person. There is no such thing! We drink from wells we have not dug. We learn from books we have not written. We are blessed by institutions we did not build. We are reared in families we did not establish. We are always, yes church, ALWAYS dependent on one another. No person is an island among himself or herself.

Even as we gather here to worship, this is a corporate and cooperative experience. Each person brings a spirit into this service. That spirit spills over to others on the pew. What’s in your SPIRIT? Does it make you smile, laugh, pause and reflect or shed a tear?

But the thrilling implication of this text is that God is dependent on us. God needs us to plant and water. Spiritual harvest is not accomplished or produced by God alone! He needs not only our faith and worship but also our active labor and support.

*“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.” (Mat. 9:37-38)*

God can never make a great church out of a body of believers without the active covenant, commitment, and willing sacrifice of the members of that church. Ours is a privileged partnership. In the fellowship of this church we can be fellow workers with God.

WE ARE LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD. In this Partnership – God is the Leader.

We are not left alone to do God’s work; God is always with us. *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what humanity shall do unto me.”* **(Heb. 13:5-6)**

In our Busy-ness -We must be about our Father’s business like Jesus who set the example **(Luke 2:49)**.

Our mission is the commission to *“be witnesses...in Jerusalem and...Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* **(Acts 1:8)**.

This mission starts at our doorstep, our Jerusalem. That’s your home, job or gathering place – where you have family, friends or friendemies that need the Good News of Jesus Christ. I believe in the providence of God that has placed us here at this point in time--to carry out His mission in our world where we are. It is not by accident but by the providence of God that this church is located right here on this spot in the world. Not by accident but by the providence of God, you and I are here, today, as co-creators with God as we are putting our faith in action by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Sisters and Brothers of Christ everything that had happened in your life—family strife, illness, financial woes, diversions--all were for the *“furtherance of the gospel”* **(Phil. 1: 12)** as God has tirelessly worked in each of us and through us in every circumstance of our lives.

Working as a Team to accomplish more – unity and/or oneness, with the same purpose to work together like a well maintained machine with all its parts working well together.

There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. **1 Corinthians 12: 12-13**

All of our ministries focus on one ultimate objective, the message of the gospel, the Good News in Jesus Christ. Our message is unashamedly evangelistic. We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and urge all persons to repent of their sins, believe on Him, and make a personal commitment of their lives to Him.

God has made a covenant with us and promised to bless us if we would use His call in each of our lives for accomplishing and carrying out the mission and ministry of His church.

We must bring our time, talents, and tithes to God and put them to use in fulfilling our partnership responsibility.

God's work is never done. There is always something that needs to be done in a growing church. There is always someone that needs help. There are lost people all around us that need Christ and the light that shines in your life that will lead them to salvation. There are children that need to be taught God's word. There is so much to be done. We all must do our share of the work. We are many parts but one body. In September secular community observe "Labor Day," but for Christians January 1st to December 31st are all labor days for God!

If God is our partner, Salem United Methodist Church, our plans to be a light and save souls for Christ in this community, this city, West of the I should be gigantic, humongous, colossal, mammoth. More than what we are able to imagine.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, God solemnly calls you for His service! Will you work for God in 2014? Or, if you have already been working for Him, would you, by God's grace and mercy, work even harder in His fields and vineyards in 2014? Will you make a commitment to bring someone to Christ and have him or her experience salvation? God has called us to be laborers into his harvest TODAY! Someone needs you to show him or her the way – will you be his or her beacon of light?

Therefore, my beloved children of God, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain. **(1Corinthians 15:58)**.

AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.