

Theme introduction: Invest in futures



“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

~1 Corinthians 3:5-9

“Let us plant dates even though those who plant them will never eat them,” writes Brazilian theologian Rubem Alves. “We must live by the love of what we will never see.”

Date trees can take a decade to bear fruit and 100 years to reach their full height. The hands that plant such a tree may do so knowing they may never rest in that tree’s shade. Moved by love, they invest in that unseen future. “We are all co-workers together in God’s service,” writes Paul in 1 Corinthians 3. Some of us plant. Some of us water. But God gives the growth. Through Week of Compassion, we become like date tree planters: serving the fruitful future for which God yearns. Who knows what growth God may bring when we join hands together across distance, across traditions, and across time for the love of what we may never see?

When we give to One Great Hour of Sharing, we help make new life and growth possible. Through our sharing, we are connected as co-workers. Our combined gifts have the capacity to travel all over the world. Whether we are rebuilding communities after disaster, supporting communities through agriculture as they learn to sustain themselves, or empowering ministers and members to serve their communities, in these and so many other ways, we release the waters of God’s growth when we invest in the lives of others.

In sharing our gifts, we join together as both givers and recipients of generous investment in the growth God will bring. As Paul writes, “the one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose.” Moved by our common purpose, we share our gifts for the glory of God and for our neighbors’ good.

While we cannot know the future, we do know that our future depends upon the future thriving of others and that God calls us together as co-workers to bring about a world in which all can thrive.

In giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, we invest in that shared future, and we trust that through our combined generosity, God will indeed give the growth!

The growth that God brings does not always look like more money in the bank, fancy new buildings, or even more people in our pews. Sometimes the growth God brings looks like opening hearts, forgiving each other, seeing new possibilities, and mending broken communities.

Investing in the future God will bring is not the same as investing in a retirement fund from which the investor hopes to one day benefit. Investing in the future God will bring is more mysterious than that. For there is no guarantee that any growth God brings will look as we expect.

Investing in the future God will bring is rewarding in immediate ways. For when we invest in each other and in each other's futures, we delight in knowing that we take part of God's holy work of growing and thriving. We celebrate the profound joy of living "for the love of what we may never see."

*Written by Katie Shaw Thompson, pastor of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren (Ill.)
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