

## *MM Moment on Ministry and Misery and Money August 10, 2020*

*"To hell with you and your money!"* (Actual Greek translation of Acts 8:20 J. B. Phillips)

Most know that I haven't been in the retail church business since 1979...  
but remain connected by a thin thread  
under the umbrella **Moment Ministries**.

So I have no "**base**" constituency...nobody pays me...and nobody I need to please...  
except for Jean whose honesty and insight I trust...  
--- the one who immediately disposed of my neckties the day I quit institutional church!

Yet in the midst of this global pandemic's gigantic complexities  
I still worry about clergy colleagues past and present...  
knowing what it is to try to help a fragile institution survive in all seasons.

I had a page ready to send about achievements of some virtual ministries...

when my cell-phone notified me of the latest Tacoma Tribune headline:

**"Tacoma area Churches Received Millions in Government Money..."**

*"More than 20 churches and faith-based groups in Pierce County were recipients  
of up to \$14 million dollars in Federal Paycheck Program Funding."*

"Jeeez..." I said reverently...

**"Keeping churches from dying  
when we haven't even stopped people from dying."**

**We know millions of people** had no paychecks to protect...or have received nothing...  
or have waited for promised checks that never arrived...  
or have lost the unemployment life-line that pays the rent and groceries.

**What must they think** about those 20 Tacoma churches which hit a jackpot...?  
or when hearing that pastors could only claim up to \$100,000 of their annual salary!

**I must not be the only one suspicious** of some political motivation  
in determining who gets government relief --- and who gets left out.

**And I won't be the only one to shudder...or be terribly chilled!...**  
when government does not maintain proper social distance from religion...  
once known as separation of church and state.

**Apply text here; "To hell with you and your money!"**

There is another reality possible;  
that many churches live and work closer to human misery than most can imagine...  
like hosting food kitchens...staffing homeless shelters...opening buildings...  
for child care and counselling services and AA and much, much more.

I often went past my last church at night and saw  
lights on in all the upstairs rooms...social service kinds of groups...  
one way churches "pay the rent" for taxi-free property.

Ministers are re-inventing themselves while locked down by necessity...  
baptizing modern technology virtually into church ministries...  
Zooming along without a government bailout...or expecting any...enough money or not.

The majority of people in the NW don't even belong to churches...  
yet every community is full of volunteer organizations without tax-payer help...  
doing essential human services without benefit of clergy.

Just sayin' what I think from my locked-down self-quarantine...  
sharing my view from two sides of a shaky fence...  
hoping to add to a conversation during troubled times.

--- Art Morgan August 10, 2020

(**Moment Ministries** is successfully non-profit owning no property, paying no salaries, never soliciting money since 1979)