

Simplification

“But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” Acts 3:6

About one week after Jacquelynne and I married we put everything that we owned in our 1956 Mercury and moved to an apartment in Lansing. I was a student at nearby Michigan State University. I tell you this to emphasize that *everything* that we owned in this world was in that car!

Well, almost 63 years have elapsed, and we have added to our inventory. When we were moved from out of state to our present home, I remember that it took an entire Bekins moving van to get the job done!

I haven't actually counted, but I am pretty sure that I have more than 100 pairs of socks in my dresser drawer. Who needs that much sartorial splendor? I am not keeping this collection, as I hope some would suspect, out of a plan for a late-life modeling career. I think that I am just cheap and unable to bear either giving or tossing this stuff. In addition to socks, we have the accumulation of furniture, dinnerware, artwork, and miscellany that might be considered “normal” by most folks. We have also invested heavily over the decades in “brown” wood furniture which we are now told cannot be given away.

We find our children to have at least a passing interest in some items. They will drop mention occasionally that they intend to put a colored “dot” on this or that. By this, they mean that, in the ultimate settlement of our estate, they wish that a certain piece should come to them.

The whole situation is provoking – at least to the degree that it inclines one to assess the real value of things. When I do this, I find that I have spent much of my life's energy in the accumulation of “stuff”. Some subset of my inventory is, I suppose, necessary to life, but most I think, as the preacher of Ecclesiastes would inform us, is “vanity”.

I am not sure that Peter owned any socks. I am pretty certain that he did not cart a bunch of brown furniture about as he went preaching. It is Christ that he judged, by grace, to be essential. If he would leave a legacy, he would care to have it be his accumulated corpus of teaching, preaching, and good works – all related to his service for Jesus Christ.

Tradition tells us that the old fisherman was crucified. One little wonder, as we contemplate his last breaths there, what it was that he truly valued and judged to be essential!

George Moore

Elder Emeritus