

## Carrier Pigeons

A member of my congregation recently sent me a very helpful note. Spurred by my invitation to the congregation to contribute toward a retirement gift for a departing staff member or to pay for altar flowers by writing a check to the church, she said “you might as well have asked me to send it by carrier pigeon.” Her good natured nudge to me in regards to how we Boomers and Beyond handle money as compared to the Millennials and Gen X’ers was spot on. She and her husband haven’t used a checkbook in years. So while she would be delighted to make a contribution toward a mission project or provide flowers on Sunday morning, asking her to do so by writing a check or using cash is a real barrier to making that happen.

I told her we anticipate having a new and overdue system in place to receive and track gifts and payments in the next six months and one of its features will most certainly be ease of use. She has graciously offered her professional and personal experience to help us get it right.

As one of those whose feet are in both worlds, using electronic banking while still holding onto the checkbook, my default assumption is that the method of paying is unimportant. But for that increasing segment of the population who handle money differently, who treat it as an electronic medium more than a physical one, our financial practices put a wall between them and the causes, activities and ministries they wish to support. This change happened while I wasn’t paying close attention and begs the question: What else don’t we see? It’s not a matter of chasing fads, but when there are tectonic shifts in how ministry can and should be done, how do recognize and respond to them?

While I and my progressive friends might balk at the label the church is a conservative organization. In the best sense of the word we are conserving a treasure handed down to us from previous generations. But conserving is different from preserving. Conservation is the sustainable use of something, whereas preservation is simply the maintenance of something in its present state. I’m always grateful for members of the congregation who remind me there is a difference.