**Sheep Dog, Sheep Dog, Bow Wow Wow 08**

A while back I received a Minister’s Prayer Book from the United Lutheran Seminary / Gettysburg, and in in it I discovered the following meditation by Evelyn Underhill (1875 –1941). Per Wikipedia, Evelyn was an English Anglo-Catholic writer known for her numerous works on religion and spiritual practice. This piece was, and us, aimed at the clergyman (or woman) who may have found (or currently finds) a need of some encouragement as he (or she) undergoes the rigors of constant ministry (or is it the constant rigors of ministry? Or both?). Although aimed at pastors, I think it applies in principle to everyone who works hard for the kingdom. Or wants to.

***The Sheep Dog***

***“We offer ourselves, one way or another, to try to work for God. We want, as it were, to be among the sheep dogs employed by the Lord Shepherd. Have you ever watched a good sheep dog at work? He is not an emotional animal. He goes on with his job quite steadily; takes no notice of bad weather, rough ground, or of his own comfort. He seldom or never stops to be stroked. Yet his faithfulness and intimate communion with the master are of the loveliest things in the world. Now and then he looks at the shepherd. And when the time comes for rest, they are generally to be found together. Let this be the model of your love.”***

And here’s a blog response to Evelyn’s message; author unknown, but from the style and spelling, obviously a UK clergyperson:

***“(The sheep dogs I saw) were helping the shepherd to deal with a lot of very active sheep and lambs, to persuade them into the right pastures, to keep them from rushing down the wrong paths. And how did the successful dog do it? Not by barking, fuss, ostentatious authority, any kind of busy behaviour. The best dog that I saw never barked once; and he spent an astonishing amount of his time sitting perfectly still, looking at the shepherd. The communion of spirit between them was perfect. They worked as a unit. Neither of them seemed anxious or in a hurry. Neither was committed to a rigid plan; they were always content to wait. That dog was the docile and faithful agent of another mind. He used his whole intelligence and initiative, but always in obedience to his master’s directive will; and was ever prompt at self-effacement. The little mountain sheep he had to deal with were amazingly tiresome, as expert in doubling and twisting and going the wrong way as any naughty little boy. The dog went steadily on with it; and his tail never ceased to wag.”***

Yeah. And one other thing: The sheep dog knows his territory to the very square inch, and he’s ever protective of it. But if the master should add to it or change it, the good dog will immediately adjust.

Bonus Underhill – this quite: ***“If God were small enough to be understood, He would not be big enough to be worshipped.”***

-- Rod Moore