



"What the World Needs Now is Love" was written by Hal David in 1965 and Burt Bacharach composed the melody the same year. It was first made popular when recorded by Jackie DeShannon. Built around a waltz, the 1965 version was a call for peace in reaction to the Vietnam War and the strife caused by it (Wikipedia).

What the world needs now
Is love, sweet love
It's the only thing
That there's just too little of
What the world needs now
Is love, sweet love,
No, not just for some
But for everyone.
Lord, we don't need
another mountain,
There are mountains and hillsides
Enough to climb
There are oceans and rivers
Enough to cross,
Enough to last
Till the end of time.
What the world needs now
Is love, sweet love
It's the only thing
That there's just too little of

Do you ever get a song stuck in your head? I had this old 60s tune dialing in on the way home from a recent trip to Asia. The school that I serve as principal recruits from a few spots on the Asian map. This last trip, I was in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. We have a number of Cantonese students studying at our school and my heart goes out to these people from Hong Kong who are divided in so many ways. The lines are

drawn between the protestors and law enforcement officers, between generations, and between members of the same family. The divide was palpable in the air when I talked to anyone in the region. Young people gathered together, first in peaceful protest then encounters escalated, as they gathered to fight for their future. They desperately want their "one country, two systems" interpretation honoured.

News broadcasts also make the situation seem much closer to home. And we are connected because there are 300,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong and 500,000 people of Cantonese descent live in Canada. I realize the actual situation is a long distance from us here in Atlantic Canada, but after visiting the area, I couldn't help but hum this popular 1960s tune: "What the world needs now is love, sweet love."

Here at home in our culture and communities, we may not be wrestling for the political freedom being sought after in Hong Kong, but our generation of youth need the freedom that love can offer. Paul unpacks the central place love should have in our lives in I Corinthians 13. A familiar passage to us, I won't list it all here, but the words in the first 12 verses of the passage remind us how to daily live. **When we think of the young people in our lives, love is the ultimate tool of victory providing hope, protection, patience, kindness, trust, and perseverance.**

We can experience the generational divide within our culture, and with kindness and patience we need to persevere to protect our youth. Colossians says love "binds everything together in perfect harmony." That unity is not always so apparent when we are first trying to establish boundaries with our young people. However, love doesn't mean we let our younger generation do whatever seems right to them: biblical authority says love protects.

In order for youth to be safe, parents and youth workers have to exercise perseverance in setting limits with digital technology: the purchase of the smartphone is put off until later adolescence, the device has to be turned off at 9 p.m. each night and kept in a safe holding place until morning, and boundaries need to be set regarding what content is allowed on the device. Setting limits with the smartphone generation is not for the faint of heart, but these are the kinds of boundaries we have to set to love our families well. When you tell your young person that you are setting limitations because you love them, you are speaking biblical truth into their lives.

I pray the political climate in Hong Kong will see relief in the weeks and months ahead. I pray that love and understanding will be present on both sides. I hope those in this conflict can experience the unity that true love has to offer: listening to each other, seeking good for others, hoping for peace, treating each other with kindness, and working to establish trust. The song indeed is correct; love, sweet love is the only thing there is too little of, and with God's help I wish that we each find it.

by Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell

Principal, Sussex Christian School
Executive Director,
Christian Action Federation of NB Inc.