



Senior Life: Stuff – It’s Every Where; Even in Sermons

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Have you noticed how pervasive the topic of stuff seems to be these days? It’s everywhere. Almost everyone has it, unless you are a minimalist and practice the art of *feng shui*, which focuses on decluttering, removing debris and creating open space. And because there is such an abundance of stuff, over the years it has become the subject of countless articles, books and even television shows that describe it, analyze it, and offer advice on how to get rid of it.

A quick Google search will land you on articles like Tom Verde’s essay about [aging parents with lots of stuff and children who don’t want it](#) that appeared in the New York Times or an opinion written by Lisa Schmeiser that was published in [Observer.com](#), “[Why Are Millennials Rejecting Prized Family Possessions?](#)”.

Stuff articles have morphed into a plethora of books that provide insight and suggestions on how to simplify, declutter, downsize and organize your stuff. Margareta Magnusson’s *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning* and Marie Kondo’s *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* became New York Times bestselling books. This book inspired the new Netflix series, *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*, that offers advice by the Japanese home organization expert.

And going one step further into the realm of television, the A&E network has produced the popular TV series *Hoarders* and *Storage Wars* that deal with excessive stuff.

Yes, the stuff topic stares at us at every turn, even in the form of a sermon. On a recent Sunday, The Rev. Ellen Meissgeier, Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Horsham, wove a stuff passage from Luke 12:15 “*One’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions*” into a sermon. The image presented in this parable reminded her of the comedian, George Carlin’s monologue about obsessive accumulation of stuff.

“You got your stuff with you? I’ll bet you do. Guys have stuff in their pockets; women have stuff in their purses. . . . Stuff is important. You gotta take care of your stuff. You gotta have a place for your stuff. That’s what life is all about, tryin’ to find a place for your stuff! That’s all your house is; a place to keep your stuff. If you didn’t have so much stuff, you wouldn’t need a house. You could just walk around all the time. A house is just a pile of stuff with a cover on it. You can see that when you’re taking off in an airplane. You look down and see all the little piles of stuff. Everybody’s got his own little pile of stuff.”

She continued by pointing out that now a days, stuff isn't just confined to one's house. According to garageliving.com, "Survey results released by the Self Storage Association show that **self storage units are rented by 1 in 10 U.S. households**. There are currently an estimated 58,000 self storage units in the U.S. *The Orlando Sentinel* reports that this is more than the country's number of McDonald's, Subways, and Starbucks combined." I wonder what George Carlin would have thought about that statistic.

As I contemplate the stuff culture in which we live, and the need to liberate our ourselves from the volume of unwanted and excessive stuff, possessions and treasures we have accumulated during our lifetime, I am inspired by the words of Anthony J. D'Angelo, who offers this sage advice: "Treasure your relationships, not your *possessions*" and the passage in Luke 12:40 "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

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