**Handout #6-1 – A Parable**

The following “parable” comes from Danish Christian theologian Søren Kierkegaard (this English translation is from Athol Gill, author of The Fringes of Freedom). As you listen to the brief story, imagine how it might apply to our congregation.

*A certain flock of geese lived together in a barnyard with high walls around it. Because the corn was good and the barnyard was secure, these geese would never take a risk.*

*One day a philosopher goose came among them. He was a very good philosopher and every week they listened quietly and attentively to his learned discourses. “My fellow travelers on the way of life,” he would say, “can you seriously imagine that this barnyard, with great high walls around it, is all there is to existence? I tell you, there is another and a greater world outside, a world of which we are only dimly aware. Our ancestors knew of this outside world. For did they not stretch their wings and fly across the trackless wastes of desert and ocean, of green valley and wooded hill? But alas, here we remain in this barnyard, our wings folded and tucked into our sides, as we are content to puddle in the mud, never lifting our eyes to the heavens which should be our home.”*

*The geese thought this was very fine lecturing. “How poetical,” they thought. “How profound! What a flawless summary of the mystery of existence.” Often the philosopher spoke of the advantage of flight, calling on the geese to be what they were. After all, they had wings, he pointed out. “What were wings for, but to fly with?” Often he reflected on the beauty and the wonder of life outside of the barnyard, and the freedom of the skies.*

*And every week the geese were uplifted, inspired, moved by the philosopher’s message. They hung on his every word. They devoted hours, months to the study of his doctrines…*

*All this they did. But one thing they never did. They did not fly. For the corn was good, and the barnyard was secure.*