

Some Thoughts on Understanding the Big Picture

I caught a line from an article the other day that is still stuck in my cerebellum:

In this moment especially, we need to be clear about our larger purpose, our ultimate purpose. As we work hard to resist what we're against – and work hard we must – let's not lose track of what we're for.

It's a great reminder that though much of what has defined our culture through what has always been called "Christendom" is now changed or changing rapidly, the bigger picture has always been front and center for Bible readers and should never be lost in the shuffle.

What is the essence of the big picture for you and me as Jesus followers? For me, let me suggest it can be simply and clearly stated in part of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to learn and to pray. We all know the Lord's Prayer and here is the line I am referring to:

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...

Jesus instructs His true followers to pray consistently for the coming of God's Kingdom among us. In these few words the Church is to recognize and to take serious its marching orders. This is what the big picture is all about and what every Christian is to take seriously no matter what is happening in culture, no matter what time or place we are living on planet earth.

The culture of America has been a unique culture that has run for several hundred years with the great results that have blessed a very small group of people with extraordinary benefits. Regardless of your theology or political persuasion, Christianity has been a major player in our particular outcome. Still, go to any other country, any other government and the results of their cultural patterns are not only different from ours but most often have not blessed the masses like we have been blessed.

I think this is often how we often fail to understand the big picture. I have failed to see it for much of the time that I have pastored. I personally have failed in that much of what I have always wanted to preserve has been the blessings or the benefits that I have experienced rather than my first priority being to extend God's kingdom. This is a huge problem when it comes to politics in America and a good conversation the other day reminded me of this. We like - I like - so much of what America has had to offer because it allows for making money, saving money, spending money, buying things and more things... if I work hard. I've always worked hard and enjoyed it. I consider myself not only making a living but making a good one and I am far from wealthy.

It is undoubtedly true that people work so much harder than I do across the planet under other governmental regimes and in other countries and have little or nothing to show for it. Certainly they don't have as much as you or me? Hard work has been a way of life for most people on the rest of the planet and if they don't work very hard every day, they are most likely not going to make it and by "make it" I mean they are not going to live very long.

All of this simply means that it's much easier from my perspective to miss the big picture of what we as Christians are to be all about. In the early days of Christianity, Jesus followers worked hard and had little or nothing so they had no qualms about sharing everything. Those that did well were happy to share it with those who worked just as hard but had little. Today we will share out of our abundance but that usually still pushes us. Higher prices, having to pay more for the same things that didn't cost as much in earlier days, well – it just seems painful. I went out for fast food the other day and treated us both to lunch and it was just under \$25! Fast food! Remember when there used to be change from your dollar?

The days of change from your dollar are gone in America and when we fail to see the big picture we tend to tie that loss (of what a dollar will buy) to our political positions and then furthermore we may associate (at least I have) that loss to our Christianity. It can't work that way! The big picture will always be what God wants us to be about... **Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done...** no matter how much money we make or have or don't have and most certainly no matter how much culture shifts or changes!

As Christianity continues to morph right out from underneath us, our Christian experience will either have to be truly authentic or we will abandon it in favor of power politics and/or money. I'm not a social scientist but that is the way I see it. Authentic Christians seek God's Kingdom first because that is what Jesus told us to do. So... let's not lose sight of the fact that we as the church on this corner are to be primarily about doing whatever it takes to give our hearts and our lives to the expansion of God's Kingdom. How to get that job done may change from year to year and in my lifetime it seems to have changed about every decade. It changes from culture to culture as well and it is what our Session continues to try and understand. Our Session has great experience and great desire to see God's Kingdom continue to expand from this corner for many years to come.

Pray that God give us wisdom to continue to see and pursue the big picture... Thy Kingdom Come!

With hearts aflame,

H Dick

<u>Women's Evening & Morning Circle</u>	
Morning Circle meets every 3rd Thursday at 10:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Evening Circle meets every 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm in Adult Sunday School room. Any questions contact Crystal Warren.	
<u>Evening Circle</u>	<u>Morning Circle</u>
No Meeting in August	August 20 th at 9:30 a.m. at Perkins
<p>Pastor Dick is in the church office Monday through Thursday. Cindy Miller is in on Monday and Wednesday.</p>	

Worship Assistants

USHERS:

2- Allan & Deanna Sents

9- Allan & Deanna Sents

16- Roger & Ruthanne Stucky

23- Roger & Ruthanne Stucky

30- Roger & Ruthanne Stucky

Usher Supervisor: Jeff Warren

Offering Depositor: Allan Sents

Deacon On Duty: Virginia Schmidt

CHANCEL FLOWERS & FELLOWSHIP HOST

Please consider signing the form in the Fellowship Hallway, for flowers or fellowship Sunday mornings.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Gent, Moennich, Davidson, Potter.

NEWS

Women's Morning Circle will be meeting this month August 20th at 9:30 a.m. at Perkins.

A new shipment of "Just Coffee" is in and available in fellowship hall. \$10.00 for each 16 oz. package is an excellent price and supports the Café Justo cooperative in August Prieta, Mexico. "Fair Trade", "Organic" Coffee.

THANK YOU

What a special caring church family I have. Thanks for the fellowship committee for my birthday cake they served and Jeanne for her singing telegram and for the pretty flowers. Thanks to everyone for the many beautiful cards. I had a very special birthday.

Love & Prayer, Maxine Bohn

To our brothers and sisters in Christ at First Presbyterian Church of McPherson: Greetings to let you know that your church was lifted in prayer on Sunday, May 31st, by the congregation of First Presbyterian, Coffeyville.

Blessings, Pastor Diane Massey

My sincere thanks go to all you in my Presbyterian Church family for the beautiful bouquet of flowers. These are so pretty. Jeanne Swick was so kind to deliver them to me. This Sunday I plan to come to church in my wheelchair if I feel OK- I'm fine now: God has put His arms around me for 95 years so my twin and I have a lot to be thankful for.

Sincerely, LaVera Lane.

Thank you so much for the beautiful peace plant in memory of my mom, Jenta Unruh. Mom spent her youth and a large part of her adulthood in the arms of the First Presbyterian Church of McPherson. I know she loved the church and the community within. I, too, have loving memories of my youth spent in the church. I am so very grateful for you kind words of support, your prayers and for remembering us.

Most Sincerely, Julie Unruh

DEADLINE FOR September NEWSLETTER IS

August 28th



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

- 1- Morgan Beckwith
- 2- Virgil Ediger
- 5- Lynn Gant, Kaden Warren
- 7- Mary Caldwell
- 9- Norman Johnson
- 11- Logan Mirkes, Tonya Morey
- 14- Linda Haddock
- 15- David Ediger, Lois Richards
- 18- Tim Davidson
- 19- Savannah Brooks
- 22- Myron Hoover, Elmer Richards
- 24- Candi Potter
- 25- Dan Wall, Brian Zerger

29- Lauren Birzer

30- Gabbi Berzer, Larry Kubin

31- Delbert Schrag

ANNIVERSARY

11- Allan & Deanna Sents

12- Jim & Margaret Warren

18- Bill & Loraine Unruh

25- Jim & Connie Hess

30- Garrett & Patty Wheaton

