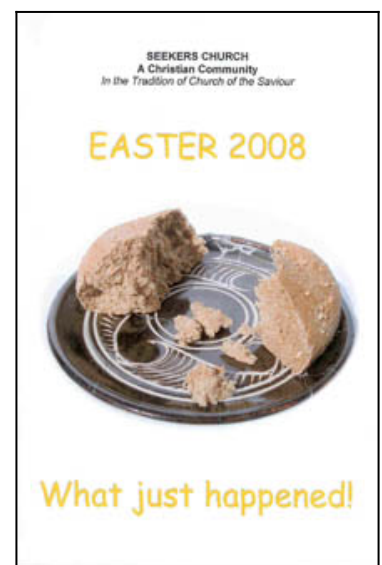


“Working Toward a Global Renaissance” by Jackie McMakin

March 30, 2008



Move with me to a conference held several years ago in downtown DC. Asked to introduce ourselves in our small groups, an attractive white haired woman began:

My name is Elsa Porter. I see the world like this. We are either headed for a global renaissance or a disaster. I'm putting my whole life behind working for the renaissance.

What a fantastic way of seeing things. Without thinking, I said to myself, "Me too!" This sermon explores how this has unfolded.

In today's Scripture David says to God, "You have made known to me the ways of life." Reading this my mind flitted to

God's word to us in Deuteronomy: "I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of Yahweh, your God."

Choose life. That's God's charge. Don't choose death or disaster. Choose life. Elsa's way of putting it, global renaissance, wakes me up to this charge and helps me apply it to our world. It starts my imagination rolling.

But it's a huge concept. How to get our minds around it? Recently, Jeannine emailed us that the "Everything Must Change Conference" she and six other Seekers had attended was built around 4 P's: **peace, poverty, the planet and purpose**. I like these 4 P's. They are easy to remember. To me, they are pillars for a **global renaissance**.

But what to do with these four pillars? The way I get things done is to frame a goal and some "to do's" – things that would help the goal happen. Here are goals that came to me related to the four P's. How would you frame goals for the 4 P's?

Planet: Restore the earth to full health.

Poverty: Insure nourishing food and productive work for all.

Peace: Build a world wide culture of peace.

Purpose: Foster a world wide spiritual awakening of justice and compassion.

If those goals happened, we would be a long way toward a creating the kind of world we want our grand kids to inherit.

Download these Resources by Jackie McMakin (Drafts)

Ending Extreme Poverty (PDF)
Actions to Eliminate Poverty (PDF)
To Restore the Earth (PDF)
Save the Planet Action Ideas (PDF)
Building a Culture of Peace (PDF)
Peacebuilder's Tool Kit (PDF)
Actions That Help Us Awaken to Our Calling (PDF)
Practices That Foster a Global Spiritual Awakening (PDF)

How to accomplish these goals? What are the "to do's"?

Recently Sonya Dyer thanked me for a one page summary of a book I had sent to her: "This is so helpful. You're good at this. This should be your life's calling – to put hard stuff on one page." Somehow this motivated me. It called to mind a tidbit I had learned in college: Trotsky started the Russian Revolution from his basement with only a mimeograph machine!

I became obsessed with creating Refrigerator Lists. When I want to get something done, I post my "to do" list on the refrigerator. Suppose, for example, the key things that need to happen to restore the earth could be reduced to a Refrigerator List, wouldn't that help? I decided to create eight one page Refrigerator Lists: a page to explain each of the P goals, and a page of enticing "to do's" for each goal. The staff of the "Everything Must Change" conferences asked to use these papers on their "Everything Must Change" website. That set a firecracker under me. I wanted to get them out quickly.

This took me on a hunt for what is happening and needs to happen. I discovered a goldmine. In many ways a global renaissance is already upon us. We have only to join the fun.

- *Canada has set up a national department to build a culture of peace. You can download their tool kit on how to do it.*
- *The U. S. Conference of Mayors has adopted a far reaching environmental plan to re-design cities so they are people and earth friendly. You can find a list of best practices that have already been carried out by cities such as Albuquerque and Portland, Oregon.*
- *Bill Clinton's foundation has organized 40 world cities into a buying cooperative to purchase green technology.*
- *The Millennial Project is busy teaching the poorest of the poor how to generate income and produce nourishing food.*
- *The Coalition for the Global Commons is running a consultation now which any of us can join to establish by 2010 world goals for a thriving world community.*

To figure out how to create the one pagers, I turned to questioning prayer. Mary Cosby told me years ago, "I always pray with a paper and pencil on hand. I ask God questions. When something occurs, I jot it down and try to do it." I'm constantly posing questions: What to read? Whom to contact? How to figure this out? Leads come, and I follow them.

This journey, however, is not been all roses. World problems are enormous. It's easy to come down with a case of the "yes but's". Yes, I want to make a difference but I don't know enough, I don't have time, what can one person do? I'm discouraged. Here's where questioning prayer comes in handy. Some of the leadings have been: Start learning. Build this new interest into the activities you're already doing. I will tell you what you can do if you ask. Read this story – it will get you going again.

My biggest "yes but" clobbered me fifteen years ago when I learned that Route 123, the four lane highway near our house, was slated to be widened to twelve lanes. I was mortified.

The whole world is getting paved over. I slumped into despair immobilized. Did I tell anyone? Certainly not. If someone saw me on the street and asked, "How are you doing?" Would I have said, "Oh, I'm in despair now." No it wouldn't go over.

However, just naming the "D" word led me to Joanna Macy, the Buddhist scholar. She too had been wiped out on learning what was happening to the earth. Her booklet, **Despairwork**, describes what happened. It taught me some key points:

There is a name for my condition: social despair, loss of the assumption that the species will survive.

The worst thing to do is to hide it, although that is normal. Hiding leads to apathy, powerlessness, numbness.

Grief for our world is healthy.

Expressing it releases energy and builds community. New possibilities emerge.

When we band with others to create these possibilities, good things happen.

This process led me to a crucial choice – to hope, to place my bets and my life behind the assumption that we will survive and thrive. Hope is not something handed down by a national leader although a hope-filled leader can help. It is a personal decision: to take a creative rather than a reactive stance toward life. When I choose to create a promising future, I join a host of others making positive change, people so excited by results achieved that they exude hope, create hope, spread hope. These people are my new saints. One is Lester Brown, author of Eco-Economy who says, "Everything we

need to do for the environment has already been done successfully by at least one country." Jared Diamond, in Collapse, his study of why societies fail or succeed says: **"All the problems confronting our global society are solvable."**

My new creed is The Earth Charter, whose preamble is in the worship folders. If you download the whole text, you will discover a beautiful description of the world we want. It was created by thousands of people and organizations around the world over a several year period. There is a place to sign the charter and ideas on how to spread the idea. The Charter invites us to join together to bring forth a sustainable global society. We Seekers are already on board. The 4 P's are alive here. Today's unison prayer contains the four P's. Individual Seekers donate to 47 environmental groups. Trish Nemore announced that a Peace Camp will happen this summer. Sandra Miller and others give disadvantaged Silver Spring folks a needed boost toward opportunity. We could list many more ways we address the 4 P's.

All this is great, but a question keeps coming up for me: Is there something more we could do to produce the future we all want? I want to be available to anyone who wants to explore that.

Listen to this story told to me by Peter Story, a Methodist minister from South Africa:

You know, Jackie, the peaceful transition from apartheid to freedom did not occur without effort. It was prepared. A group of ordinary folks created a vision of what they wanted South Africa to be like. They wrote it down and named it the National Peace Accords. We then went around the country and discussed with every leader we could find what they wanted for South Africa. We asked them to sign the Accords and pledge to put them into effect. 28,000 peace monitors were trained to come between fighting people and help them see alternatives

to violence. Hundreds of events that manifested a culture of peace were put on by black and white folks together – vigils, demonstrations, music and dance festivals. Eventually those who espoused violence were marginalized. It was then that deKlerk was able to call for elections and the nation elected Nelson Mandela as its first black president.

The term "culture of peace" was new to me and so appealing. Think about it. Ordinary folks like you and me created a written picture of the results they wanted, trained people in needed skills, then threw tons of parties that gave people a taste in microcosm of what South Africa would be when fully free. Look at the scale of change that occurred. Today people of all colors and tribes live peacefully together in what they call a Rainbow Nation, something we never imagined possible in the old apartheid days.

Jeffrey Sachs in the cover article for last week's Time magazine offers a blueprint for the kind of individual and collective action needed to create the future we all desire. Here's a quote:

Great social transformations – the end of slavery, the women's and civil rights movements, the end of colonial rule, the birth of environmentalism – all began with public awareness and engagement. ... It was scientists, engineers, church goers and young people who truly led the way. If as citizens ...we support a global commitment to sustainable development, then our leaders will follow, and we will find a way to peace.

Each of us has a role to play and a chance for leadership. First, study the problems – in school, in reading, on the Web. Second when possible travel...There is no substitute for meeting and engaging with people across cultures, religions and regions to realize that we are all in this together. Third, get your group active in some aspect of sustainable development...Finally, demand that our politicians honor our nation's global promises and commitments on climate change and

the fight against hunger and poverty. If the public leads, politicians will surely follow.

The message of Easter is the gladness that comes when we fulfill God's challenge to choose life. Jeffrey Sachs articulates the choice before us: "Our generation's greatest challenges – in environment, demography, poverty and global politics – are also our most exciting opportunity."

My question is not whether the planet needs our help. It does.

My question is not whether Seekers is committed to choosing life. It is.

My question is: Can we become such a potent force for change that our grand children will look back and say, "Seekers was instrumental in building the thriving world community we now enjoy."

References

www.culture-of-peace.info/

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Mayors Climate Protection Center

www.millenniumpromise.org

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