

# Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



Mean  
I thought about writing on this topic for a long time now. Last week when the bathrooms at Ervin Park got vandalized was the icing on the cake for me. My family and I were not the only ones who felt the outrage, but the entire community and surrounding area. We all felt violated in some way. That was our county park. Our kids and grandkids, nieces and nephews, neighbors and friends all play and relax at that park. To have the bathrooms torn to shreds like that was an attack on all of us.

I'm just glad that the guilty parties have been apprehended and the park restrooms will be repaired.

We have been lucky. We haven't had to live through riots like Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, or even parts of Champaign of late. We haven't had mindless destruction of property and loss of businesses to the great extent that these larger communities have had to endure. But we did get a taste of it. Imagine the full Monty.

Mean. Why do people have to be so mean? Reminds me of the Taylor Swift song of the same name, "Mean."

My daughter works at a fast-food restaurant, and although she is learning a lot

about people, which is a useful thing to know, I was surprised to learn how mean people are to her. That part doesn't make me happy at all. She is there to do a job, yet people drive through and are so completely rude to her, I am amazed at the gall of them! No one seems to have manners anymore! It's not just about saying please and thank you; we are WAY past that. People throw their money at her. People argue with her about the price of the food. People even complain that tax shouldn't be charged on the food because that is false advertising if the sign lists a price and then tax is added later. Makes me wonder if they ask that in every store, because adding sales tax is nothing new in Illinois.

I was surprised to find out that it wasn't younger people who were rude to her. In fact, she said that 75% of elderly people that she interacts with are rude and mean. I told her to try and be patient, because old people probably don't feel good and that can make anyone a little grumpy. But when I got to thinking about it, NO, she was right. Nothing ever gives us the right to be mean to someone. The Bible is clear about that. We are to treat everyone with love and respect. Remember the Golden Rule?

Yeah, it's Biblical.

So why do you have to be so mean? Put yourself in the other person's shoes. See both sides. And keep your hands to yourself. Act like adults.

Putin, why do you have to be so mean? Why do you need more and more and more land? Did you not get enough hugs as a child? Palestinians? Same questions to you? Dictators around the world? Lighten up! Why do you all have to be so mean? Fear is not the same as respect. The only good fear is the fear of God, and that is a Godly fear, for we should know how powerful and mighty that God is, and with that knowledge we should want to obey and please Him. If God be for us, who can be against us? I sure wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of God. I count Him as my friend. And if God is with

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# Hook, Line and Sinker

## With Tony Hooker

My friend Tom, whom I lost about 4 decades too soon in a car wreck six years ago, used to laugh maniacally at my wild conspiracy theories about sports.

"Hook," he'd say. "You are crazier than <add cliché here> if you believe that the powers that be are conspiring against the Illini, Bears, Cardinals, etc. Being the staunch Cub fan that he was, he would usually add a disparaging, often profane comment about the talent or lack thereof that was present on my beloved Redbirds squads, for good measure. But..."

I think even he would have a hard time believing that those who are large and in charge of this year's NCAA tournament weren't rubbing their rosary beads and throwing up prayers to the basketball gods in

hopes that the Puke Due Devils (whoops) and their coach Mike Shesdishevski (whoops again!) would go on this magical run to the final four, where they'll face <RIMSHOT!> their archrivals, the North Carolina Tar Heels. If I'm being completely honest with myself, Mike Krzyzewski and his Duke Blue Devils have had a marvelous 40-year run, winning championships, graduating players and becoming the winningest coach in the history of the sport. That doesn't happen by accident. The man can coach.

I think my main beef over the past decade or so has been the downright veneration of the guy as something more than a great basketball coach. I'm not sure when my distaste for the Coach K slobber fest began. It might have been when Dick Vitale, who is fighting and apparently winning his battle with cancer, earned the unfortunate sobriquet Dukie V for his unabashed homerisms toward the Blue Devils. Dickie V. always

pointed out all that was right about Duke basketball and the "honorable" Coach K, conveniently ignoring the fact that the parents of players like Chris Duhon were hired for jobs that "weren't posted and weren't qualified for," per a 2003 article in the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Other stars such as Corey Magette admitted to receiving cash and other benefits from Duke boosters during their time in Durham. According to sworn testimony from his former agent, Zion Williamson's parents moved from a \$900/month apartment into a \$950,000 dollar house while their son was playing for Duke. What a coincidence, eh?

Coach K was also adamantly opposed to "one and done" players when rules changes forced outstanding high school players to go to college for one season before they could be drafted by NBA teams....until Kentucky and other programs started using them to win championships, forcing

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Ephesians 5:8-14

Good News Translation

8 You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light,

9 for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth.

10 Try to learn what pleases the Lord.

11 Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to

the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light.

(12 It is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret.)

13 And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed;

14 for anything that is clearly revealed becomes light.

That is why it is said, "Wake up, sleeper, and rise from death, and Christ will shine on you."

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Greg Hoskins, publisher  
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Published every Wednesday  
Distributed free to the communities of Sidney, Philo, Broadlands, Homer, Allerton, Longview, Pesotum and Tolono

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## Pastor Stahl's Weekly Message of Faith

Hello, everyone!

Spring is here! The grass is turning greener, and you know what that means. Soon the sound of lawnmowers will be heard all over! As the grass grows, the flowers bud, and the birds sing, it is a sign that Spring is upon us. As we continue our Lenten journey to the empty tomb, we remember the words of God in Isaiah: "Come to Me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life.....Seek the Lord while you can find Him. Call upon Him while He is near." (Isaiah 55:3,6)

God Freely Offers us the Blessings of salvation, and the peace that passes all understanding. Jesus was constantly searching out people who were hurting, and offering to them the Healing power and Forgiveness of God. The 8th chapter of John illustrates this very well. Jesus was Teaching in the Temple when the Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in the act of adultery. "The Law says to stone her. What do you say?" (John 8:5) Jesus at first doesn't say anything. Perhaps He wanted the religious

leaders to examine their own conscience. Their issue was that they could see everyone else's sin except their own. Finally Jesus Said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone." One by one they dropped their rocks of judgment and condemnation, leaving only Jesus and the woman. Jesus asked her where her accusers were. They had all disappeared. Jesus Said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." (John 8:11) Jesus didn't say the woman wasn't a sinner, but that she was forgiven. It is an amazing thing to try and comprehend the forgiving Grace of God. We deserve punishment and death, but God Took our place on the Cross. He paid the penalty for our sin. God Himself died for us so that we could have eternal life. That is the Amazing Grace of God, that He Stood up for us and He Tells us, "Go and sin no more."

Thanks be to God!  
God Bless all of you!  
Pastor Jeff Stahl  
Countryside and Ogden United Methodist Churches

# Area Church Services

<p><b>IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 390 CR 2400E, Broadlands (217) 834-3289 Pastor Rev. John Sharp Sunday Schedule Service - 9 a.m. Sunday school and Bible classes - 10:15 a.m. (Aug. - June) Adult Bible Study Wednesdays - 9 a.m. (Aug. - June) Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:30 a.m. Second and Fourth Saturdays (Lincoln Street Lounge) • Youth Group • Sewing Circle • • Men's Club • Call the church office for more information.</p>	<p><b>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> (Non-Denominational) "Come Rejoice With Us" 701 N. Sycamore Street Villa Grove, Illinois Phone (217) 832-5231 Fax (217) 832-9348 website: www.fccvg.com e-mail: fccvg@frontier.com Minister—Mike Zylstra e-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com Open communion observed weekly Morning Worship Service: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (all ages) 10:45 a.m. Jr. &amp; Sr. High Youth Group 1st &amp; 3rd Sundays 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>TOLONO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 301 N. Bourne St. Tolono Pastor Catherine Thomas Office phone: 217-485-3610 e-mail: tolonomethodist@msn.com Sunday Service 10:30am Sunday School: Jr-Sr High 9:30am</p> <p><b>COUNTRYSIDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 1807 County Road 1000N Between Sidney and Philo Rev. Jeff Stahl E-mail: cumc.office99@gmail.com www.countrysidemethodist.org Worship Coffee Hour- 8:30 a.m. Worship-9:00 a.m. Sunday School- 10:15 a.m. (for all ages) Nursery Available during worship Wednesday Special 6:15 a.m. Bible study various support, fellowship and study groups. Please contact the church office for times.</p>
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