

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



Identity
The iconic movie "The Breakfast Club" presented a powerful question to all of us back in the 80's when the kids serving the Saturday detention were asked by Mr. Vernon to write an essay telling him who they think they were. The 5 kids found out when they got real with each other, that they all shared a little bit of each other's stories and personalities. They were all a brain, an athlete, a basket-case, a princess, and a criminal.

Mr. Vernon saw them how he wanted to see them, in the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions. Oh, how many times have we judged a book by its cover? A person by their wardrobe? A student by their cleanliness? A neighbor by their

rudeness? A dog by its bark? It says more about us than it does about them.

How we see ourselves is different than how others see us. Human nature. We all want to belong to a group. So we mimic behaviors, copy movements and actions. That's how trends and fashion fads got started. People are so driven to fit in and be liked they will do about anything the ads and social media proclaim to be "what everyone is doing." It's no wonder we have lost a sense of who we are in the madness of a cognitive advertising blitzkrieg! Be young forever, they say! Wear this! Do this! Lies.

I went to a funeral visitation for my cousin and I was surrounded by family. Although I felt the closeness

of being with my tribe, I also felt and heard the comments regarding my gray hair, the way I looked just like my mother. I had changed; I had gotten older. They had too, but I was polite. I was there to comfort and pay respect and also to mourn. I hadn't seen these people for several years so it made sense that we would all look a little different. I guess I wasn't quite ready to hear all the comments. For a minute there I felt a twinge of old-age panic creep up on me.

The next day I looked in the mirror long and hard in the bright sunlight. I really do look like my mother. I asked myself if I wanted to try and disguise my looks, grow out my hair, dye it blonde again, get a treadmill, get in shape,

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The Giving Place Weekly Newsletter

Faith
"Faith isn't simply tied to belief. It is tied to an action. Faith is tied to your feet. The power of faith comes when you are willing to give the very thing that you need to someone else so God can give "it" back to you."

— Tony Evans
"The life of faith is not a life of mounting up with wings, but a life of walking and not fainting."

— Oswald Chambers
"All that we call human history--money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery--[is] the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy."

— C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity
Upcoming events:

The Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive returns on May 14.

The Trail Life boys will be pushing carts for The Giving Place during the Tolono Fun Day Parade on June 25th.

The Giving Place is a Christian ministry serving families in need in the Unit 7 School District. If you know of any families in Unit Seven that are in need, please encourage them to visit TGP on Wednesday from 4:00 – 6:00. Thanks to all that donate to this ministry. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without your continued support.

We are in need of the following items: 100% juice, kids snacks, kids cereals and baking mixes.

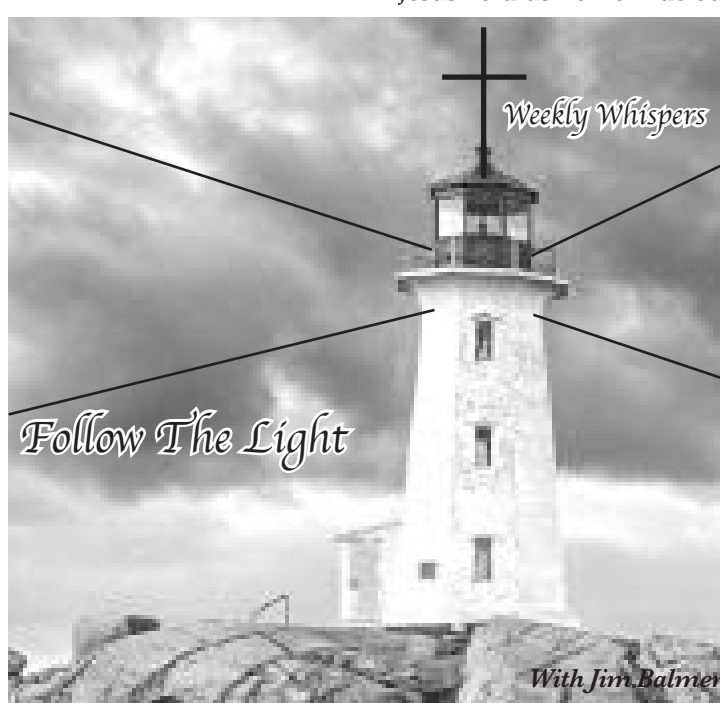
The Giving Place in Tolono has started having the Free Clothing Giveaways for anyone living in the Unit Seven School District once again. The next Giveaway will be Saturday June 4th from 9AM - 12NOON. Guidelines will be posted as you enter the WEST ENTRANCE.

We served 6 families (0 new) / 21 people / 7 children in the Food Pantry. Thanks to Pastor Catherine, Andrew, Israel, Julia, Marcia, Sharon, Jo Ellen, Tom, Dale & Mike for the efforts today.

Mike Williams

Hebrews 11:1-40 ESV

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ...



Philippians 4:11-13
New International Version
11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends

Mm, I get high with a little help from my friends

Mm, gonna try with a little help from my friends

I think the Beatles were on to something, all those years ago.

We as humans are so much better when we're working together. Take this week-end's Korner Beehive fundraiser/ opening day anniversary celebration, for example. Through the efforts of the beehive and many others, including Cabot Corporation in Tuscola, who donated \$2500, over \$4600 was raised for a great cause. Freedom Paws trains and provides service dogs for veterans, and there are few causes that I can think of that are more worthy. A representative from Freedom Paws told me that she personally has spoken to more than one veteran who was on the verge of suicide before meeting their companion animal. As many as 22 veterans take their own lives each day here in America, and if a program

such as this can save even one soldier or sailor, then all the efforts of all involved are worth it, and I was honored to have played a small part in the festivities.

As for the bands that played Saturday, they were, in a word, awesome. From the time Sundown hit the stage for a smoking set at 1:30 pm, through Ancient Ways, who just seem to get better and better, at least to this old rock dog, and on to the closing act, Cougar Trap, it was a solid 10 plus hours of rock and roll and partying! Get high with a little help from my friends? Indeed! Sitting outside jamming and have a few adult beverages with my lovely bride and my best friend was good for my soul, and I can't wait to do it again, soon.

As for trying with a little help from my friends, I just have to say thank you to one neighbor of ours, here on the northwest side. This gentleman, who probably would take me to task for outing him, has tilled at least 4 gardens, including mine, in the last week

or two and won't accept payment for his good deeds. If you know, you know, but it's just another example of why small-town living is so cool.

Speaking of gardens, I've decided that it's time to retire from the gardening hobby. For the past several years, I would go into the spring garden season with higher hopes than the ant and the rubber tree plant, and at the end of summer, I would look at my paltry haul of vegetables and determine that the ROI, to use a hip business acronym wasn't worth it. I put hours of blood, sweat and tears into the garden spot, only to get a few tomatoes and peppers. Better to let the pro's, like Meyer Produce for veggies or Tiger Gardens for home grown sal-sas and jams, do the growing and canning. Besides, I have my burgeoning addiction to golf to think about. It's a time sucker. Or I'm a sucker who spends too much time golfing. I'm not sure I know which is true, and I'm not sure I want to know.

Pastor Stahl's Weekly Message of Faith

Hello Everyone!

We have been blessed with good weather the last couple of weeks that have allowed the farmers to get out in the fields. We pray for a safe and successful planting season. Farmers are the backbone of our economy. God Bless all of them!

It was once said, "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" That means that when people look at us, do they see Jesus living inside of us? Jesus Told us not to hide our

light under a bushel, but to let it shine so that it gives light to all in the house. (Matthew 5:15) We are supposed to be bold in our witness for Christ, for some day Jesus Will come back and ask us what we did with the gifts He Gave us. Here are some examples of boldness:

After John Wesley had his heart warming experience at the Bible Study in London, England, he felt his heart truly warmed for evangelism. He would be invited to preach at a church, then at the end of the service be asked never to return, for his sermons were too fiery. Week after week, he would be kicked out of churches. Finally, he went to his father's tombstone in Epworth Cemetery in England and preached, and no one dared to knock him off. He later preached in a field, and 10,000 people came out to hear him and give their hearts to Jesus. He never gave up.

We remember the Columbine High School massacre that took place on April 20, 1999. Two students armed with assault rifles stormed the school and shot and killed scores of students. One of them was young Cassie Bernal. She came face to face with one of the killers, who asked her, "Do you believe in Jesus?"

If she said no, she might have had her life spared. But with conviction in her voice and faith in her heart, she said, "Yes, I do believe." And in a few moments, she met Jesus face to face.

Boldness is preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in season and out. Jesus Promised His disciples and He Promises us that He Will be with us when we face persecution for our faith. He Told His disciples in Luke:

"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." (Luke 12:11-12)

In other words, be bold in your witness for Christ, for God Will be with you.

So we can be bold in our faith, for our Lord is with us! To be a disciple of Christ means to heed the words of Joshua in the Old Testament: "Be strong and of good courage, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

God Bless all of you!

Pastor Jeff Stahl
Countryside and Ogden United Methodist Churches

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