

**Small Talk – June 23 2021**  
**By Michael Small**

It is too easy to get caught up in the many events that daily confront us locally and from around the world, drought, famine, children killed on our streets by gun violence, poverty, a pandemic that still rages through much of the world, climate change, legislative gridlock, and the list could fill many pages more.

I want to pause. I invite you to step back 100 years ago. Women had just been given the right to vote (2/8/21). The grand experiment of prohibition had begun (1920-1933). The Great European War had ended. The roaring 20's was at a beginning point. The most popular boy's name of the decade was Robert; for girls, it was Mary. A first-class stamp costs 2 cents. Band-Aids hit the scene. Baby Ruth candy bars are out, named after Ruth Cleveland, daughter of President Grover Cleveland. Chicago attorney Sebastian Hinton applies for a patent for the jungle gym. Writer, editor, and civil-rights activist W.E.B. Dubois wins the NAACP's Springarn Medal. Coco Channel introduces Channel No. 5. Cheez-It crackers first hit supermarket shelves. Hot air balloons inspired the name "Wonder Bread." The Tulsa Massacre occurred. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti are found guilty of first-degree murder following a widely publicized trial. In 1920, the Internal Revenue Service reports, the average income was \$3,269.40 per year. Life expectancy was 60.0 for men and 61.8 for women. Average size of a family was 4.34. Franklin D. Roosevelt, at 39 years old, contracts Polio. Sleeping Sickness claims nearly 1,000 lives in the US. The Chicago White Sox Baseball team is accused of throwing the World Series. The first-ever Miss America pageant was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Wingtip working shoes sold for \$4.95. The population of the United States was 108.5 million (2021 population is 331,449,281).

If one were able to transport a person from 1921 to 2021, what would they think and what would be their assessment of earth and humanity. After the shock of advanced technology, transportation, infrastructure – after they could gaze upon the human landscape, I think they would be surprised and pleased by what they see and experience. Women are not only voting but they have broken the glass ceiling. There is even a woman of color who is Vice-President and women are making progress at the highest levels of public and corporate America. Progress has been made. They would see a far more diverse mixing of culture, language, tradition. Somali and rural Americans working alongside one another. They would be utterly shocked and blown away by men marrying men and women marrying women. They would be shocked by the wealth of the people, even the poor are richer. They would be amazed to no longer see child labor being exploited. There would be disappointment by the decline of church, but they would be pleased with the free sharing of thought, theology, and how people of different faiths were working together and walking side-by-side. Research and science would be mind-bending. They would be overwhelmed by how people connect with one another – immediately stretching to the global community. Healthcare, hospitals, doctors, and nurses are doing miracles every day – bringing the dead back to life and healing bodies that are broken. The person coming from 1921 would be daily

amazed about how much easier life is and how people, together, are making amazing progress,

What hasn't changed! Politicians are still politicians. Yes, there are still sharp opinions and differences about how to get things done. There is still poverty, but less. There are still those who are bigoted and hateful, but they are fewer. People still make mistakes, but there is more opportunity for healing. Wars continue to wreak violence, but less. People still seek to love and be loved, and sometimes they walk away from one another – BUT people can love whom they love irregardless of what used to be the rules and ways of 1921.

Bottom line, in the last 100 years, the world is a better place for humanity – there are more opportunity and possibilities. As in times of 1921, the problems faced seemed insurmountable – but in 2021 you have done the impossible.

I can only hope that in the next 100 years, together we will continue do the impossible and the unimaginable, the amazing, the miraculous are all on the horizon. May we make it so.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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