

Small Talk – July 21 2021
By Michael Small

I wish for all living beings that life could be comfortable with short-and long-term challenges that can be reasonably and safely be met. I wish and hope for harmony in families, groups, nations, and yes, even the world. I value diversity of life and opinions, believing that one can always, somehow, walk hand in hand, even though it is difficult to see eye-to-eye. I always hope that after heated conversations and conflict – truth-telling, reason, and good decision making will always prevail, the common good will be the ground upon which all shall stand upon. I also think, given the best of circumstances that every human is, at their very core, good, kind, compassionate, forgiving, and loving. All want to contribute to the well-being of the planet that it can be passed safely on to the seventh generation, and beyond.

These days it is becoming more difficult to hold on to that hopeful vision. First, I continue to be amazed, startled, surprised, and concerned that too many are not vaccinated to keep one safe and to diminish the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. (Only 45% in Cass County have received their vaccination) Yes, there has always been some resistance to vaccinations and change, but this resistance is clearly based on politics and not science. I am anxious for our children, when able, to receive their vaccination. And for those who are eligible – I value your life and well-being. Please become vaccinated ASAP! This Delta variant, if allowed, will only mutate into more infectious and deadly strains. Don't become a Petrie Dish allowing this to happen.

Secondly, the world is heating up too quickly. The signs are all around us and in front of us! Seeing clearly is a wonderful thing - when you are able to see for miles and miles that is a delight! Yesterday, early in the morning, getting a call from my sister saying, "Are you okay?" was of some concern. "Your air quality numbers are horrible." While speaking with Mary and looking out the window, I could barely see across the lake. That has never happened before! The air was thick with a grayish-yellow tinge. Walking outside I could smell the smoke of faraway forest fires in Canada. My eyes stung from the acridness of the air. Speaking with another at the Post Office, she shared that the Sheriff was getting calls because smoke detectors were going off in homes around the area. Thankfully, as I look out the window this morning "I can see clearly now . . ." I am grateful.

Even for the naysayers, I think they would reluctantly agree, climate change is here – right now! The climate has been slowly and consistently changing for decades – but it seems now the change is exponential in its speed and intensity. In North America we are being inundated with record-breaking heat – high's never seen before. Floods are sweeping through Europe. Reservoir's out west are at record lows – Lake Meade has dropped 123 feet over the past twenty years – losing trillions of gallons of desperately needed water. Some are saying we must act quick to reduce further damage. Acting quickly means trying to turn an aircraft carrier 90 degrees on a dime. The quick turnaround is not going to happen.

How then, does one respond to the many crisis's that we are confronted with. First, each of us must become aware. We then can intentionally choose actions in response to the crisis. I can make a difference in how I choose to live. We can speak with one another about the best responses.

Example. Encourage families and friends to be vaccinated. Listen, respond, and love them into making good decisions. There can never be too much love. Make eco-friendly choices for the earth. Be kind and gentle with her. Make our air and water cleaner. Recycle, drive less, walk more. Use less plastic. Even by choosing to eat less beef and finding different sources of protein, each of us can make a difference.

Hard times will always be with us. In hard times let us make better and more creative choices! May we heal the earth and each other!

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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