

Small Talk – July 9 2021
By Michael Small

Early on in the first Mary Poppins movie, before Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) arrives at the Banks home, the Admiral, with his companion, they are on the roof of the house observing and looking around. It is as if they are both aware of the air, the currents, the winds blowing, the weather to come. There is a change coming. Then, in another place Bert (Dick Van Dyke) utters to himself – *“Winds in the east, mist coming in, / Like somethin' is brewin' and bout to begin. / Can't put me finger on what lies in store, / But I fear what's to happen all happened before.”* Change, mystery, a “new thing”¹ are coming.

As I listen to reports of projected weather throughout North America for this coming weekend – there is wind, deluges of rain, and record heat – Death Valley will reach 131 degrees above zero. With all of this said, have you noticed in the last couple of days in Northern Minnesota and the Central Midwest that the winds have shifted, the haze in the skies has disappeared, and temperatures have been moderating – good for sleep at night with windows wide open and working outdoors. (But the mosquito crop abounds!) And yes, it has all happened before.

As I write this I am thinking about the miracle of fresh and clean air. I am thinking about miracle of lungs that are able to breathe deeply in. I think about the winds that blow through our hair and rustle the leaves around us. Wind, breath, sometimes describes as Spirit – all present, all wondrous, all gifts freely given – effortlessly received!

Breathing air in, breathing air out – it is a natural reflex given to all living creatures. There is a simple, spontaneous rhythm, done without thinking or working. With that breath, with that oxygen taken in by the lungs, our bloodstream is fed by this life-giving oxygen. The National Institute of Health writes – *“When you inhale (breathe in), air enters your lungs and oxygen from the air moves ... a waste gas, moves from your blood to the lungs and is exhaled (breathe out). This process is called gas exchange and is essential to life.”* As I see it, the whole process of these living and breathing bodies is absolutely miraculous.

However, this earth, only one of billions and billions of planets throughout the universe, was created – genius and miracle comes to mind. Over the past 4.571 billion years the solar system in which we reside has been created and is still being created. Life on this unique planet has occurred, been birthed naturally – unfolding and growing, slowly and methodically through the billions of years. Life is still being created! But, as Bert says, *“Like somethin' is brewin' and bout to begin.”*

¹ Isaiah 43:19 “Look, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth—can't you see it? I'm making a road in the desert and setting rivers to flow in the wasteland.” *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible.* Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.

The winds are shifting, the power of change marches forward, and we cannot stop these evolutionary, disturbing, remarkable, miraculous transformations happening all around us. But we can open ourselves to the life-giving energy that is around us allowing it to do “a new thing” in each of us. It might be as easy as the air we breathe in and breathe out.

The dynamic of change is difficult. There will always be resistance to change – the greater the change, the greater the resistance. We are living in such a time where the “old guard” digs in, using every tool in their toolbox to preserve and hold on to the “way things have always been done.” The kind of change that is ultimately unstoppable was articulated over fifty years ago. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Stood on the steps of the capitol building in Montgomery and reflected on the journey of the civil rights movement, Dr. King rhetorically asked, ‘How long will it take?’ and famously answered, ‘Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.’”²

The changes I am speaking about are like the air we breathe. Being a people who are kinder and gentler. Being a people who seek to live and always do fair and good justice. Being a people who are inclusive of the other. Being a people who work for life and life abundant for all. These things are summed up in the three great loves we are called to be about – “Love of Neighbor! Love of Children! Love of Creation!”

As you move into your day breathe in love of neighbor, breathe in love of children, and breathe in love of creation – and breathe out hatred, fear, anxiety, pessimism!

Breathe deeply this day – know and embrace the “new thing” that is happening among, around, and in us. Be filled with hope, possibility, joy, wonder.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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² https://www.adl.org/blog/50-years-later-bending-the-arc-of-the-moral-universe-towards-justice?gclid=EAlaIqobChMltZ-vrZHW8QIVDYvICh2taQT5EAAYAiAAEgLMb_D_BwE