

The Church is made of human beings ~ Midweek Reflection # 33 Jan 28, 2009

“Jesus made his Church out of human beings with more or less the same mixture in them of cowardice and guts, of intelligence and stupidity, of selfishness and generosity, of openness of heart and sheer cussedness as you would be apt to find in any of us. The reason he made his Church out of human beings is that human beings were all there was to make it out of. In fact as far as I know, human beings are all there is to make it out of still. It’s a point worth remembering. It is also a point worth remembering that even after Jesus made these human beings into a Church, they seem to have gone right on being human beings.”

~ Frederich Buechner, “The Church” in The Clown In the Belfry ,Harper Collins, 1992

I was rereading this excellent essay on the Church by Buechner in preparation for our church’s New Members Enquiry Class and was struck again with the profound truth of Buechner’s comments. The Christian Church is not some kind of utopian dream but real people seeking to follow Christ in a real world. Of course there is another side to the coin, which Buechner goes on to discuss. As we worship, pray, work and play together we see the results of our having been redeemed by Christ and of our ongoing sanctification by God’s Holy Spirit in each other’s lives. It is just as important for us to remember this constant transformation that God brings about in us, as the people of God trust their Lord for daily renewal. Perhaps no one describes this better than St. Paul in his letter to the Colossians:

“As therefore, God’s picked representatives of the new humanity, purified and beloved of God himself, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving, for love is the golden chain of all the virtues. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of the one body you are called to live in harmony. And never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you.

Let Christ’s teaching live in your hearts, making you rich in the true wisdom. Teach and help one another along the right road with your psalms and hymns and Christian songs, singing God’s praises with joyful hearts. And whatever work you may have to do, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God the Father through him.”

~ Colossians 3: 12-17, J.B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English, Geoffrey Bles,London, 1060

May our gracious God grant us the wisdom and power to “accept life” , and one another, with all the humanness involved. And may we, empowered by God’s Holy Spirit, follow Christ faithfully in the Kingdom ways of forgiveness, healing, peace, and service !

Under God’s Mercy,

Howie

PS For those of you who have asked to be added to this list in the last few months, earlier reflections are now available on our church website, www.uccmagnolia.org just go to “downloads”