

Melva's Corner

READY TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

October 24, 2005

Bible Text: John 3:1-2

Central Truth: The truth is that every problem about which you have a justifiable concern is one where you can begin with yourself to make a difference.

Many of us dream of being involved in something that will change the world. So one person becomes active in politics, another in education, and still another in a business or profession that stands to affect the masses. But the crime rate remains high, and we cannot build prisons fast enough to avoid overcrowding in our jails. Poverty continues to grind whole families beneath its crushing weight. Homelessness, cancer, aging, child abuse, divorce, teen pregnancy — the problems are staggering.

God has created us in His own image. Thus we not only notice these problems that blight our world and cause so much misery but also feel compelled to try to do something to help. But is it really possible for any of us to make a difference?

The first atomic bomb used in war was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945. Dr. Fumio Shigeto was waiting for a streetcar about a mile from the center of the blast. He was sheltered from its deadly force by the corner of a concrete building. Stunned and disoriented by an explosive force more devastating than anything humankind had ever experienced, he had no idea what had happened.

Dr. Shigeto's bewilderment quickly turned into a sense of being overwhelmed. He was one physician with a tiny black bag still in his hand. Yet all around him he could hear the screams of desperately wounded men and women. He needed an army of physicians, nurses, and technicians. He needed tons of supplies. He needed every bed in dozens of hospitals. What could one man with so little at his disposal do in the face of such an incredible

situation of need? The stunned survivor knelt, opened his medical bag, and began treating the person lying at his feet.

Dr. Shigeto's experience parallels our own. We look around and see such incredible devastation in our world that it is easy to be paralyzed and do nothing. After all, what difference can one person make against such formidable odds?

God doesn't expect you to change the entire world single handedly. He is not holding you accountable for helping everybody in need. That is too heavy and impossible a burden for anyone. But there is a hint of what you can and ought to do in the example of Jesus. Although He preached to huge crowds, He touched and healed people one at a time.

There is one lonely person or one frightened child you can help today. There is someone you know whose marriage is in trouble or who is about to die from her alcoholism. There is a kid failing history class or a friend at work who is depressed.

Forget about changing the world. Reach out to just one person near you today,

The frustration most of us feel about solving great problems is that we have no control over the fortunes and behaviors of other people. Thus we are willing to leave the problem unsolved. At least, though, we feel pious that we are aware of it now and concerned about its effects. The truth is that every problem about which you have a justifiable concern is one where you can begin with yourself to make a difference.

Concerned about the war in Iraq? Pray for a just peace, and encourage your church to help the refugees whose faces haunt you from the evening news.

Worried about angry and alienated kids? Build bridges of communication and love with your own children. Or stick your neck out to share the pain of a fellow-parent and support him or her through a crisis with a troubled child.

Horrified over scenes of weather devastation? Send a personal or company donation to a reputable Christian agency helping provide emergency aid to evacuees.

Grieved over division in the body of Christ? Call a brother or sister from whom you are alienated, and get together to talk and pray about the matter. Or set up a luncheon for two who are at odds, and try to be a third-party peacemaker for them.

Problems that remain someone else's responsibility stay unsolved forever. At some point, someone has to begin taking positive steps to make things better.

Years ago a London newspaper asked its readers to respond to this question: "What is wrong with the world?" Tons of letters poured in and were printed. One simply said: "Dear Sirs: I am. I am the problem."

If something you know needs fixing, perhaps you can be the point of beginning.

Someday God will ask of us, "What did you do with all the todays I gave you?" And we must give an answer. What will that answer be? We dare not put off tomorrow what we can do today!

"Today is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 6:2 "Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then." (Proverbs 27:1 TEV)

Heavenly Father, this is the day that you have made. In Jesus' name, help me to make You rejoice and be glad in me with what I do with today. Amen.

Memory Text

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ... Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-2, RSV)