



**The Sleeping Giant - visible to the north of Helena**

July 2, 2007

Dear Friends,

This Fourth of July we again celebrate the independence our forefathers purchased. This update will focus on our freedom to pray. For those of you who do pray, I hope I can encourage you to pray for Helena – and for your own community. And, for those of you who don't pray, some day I hope you come to understand the beneficial impact such prayers have had for you and your community.

Before I go any further, let me tell you a story about an American pastor, Jack Miller, who loved people and the good news of Jesus. Jack was in England – but found a cold reception for the gospel in a multi-cultural area (mostly Hindu). So, he began going into shops asking the owners if he could pray “in Jesus’ name” that their businesses would prosper. Jack wanted them to understand that Jesus had such power to bless. A year later, he visited those shop keepers again asking if Jesus had prospered them. Many reported that Jesus had. Jack found a new receptiveness to the gospel.

That story planted a seed deep in my heart. I hope it does in yours, too.

With this insight from Jack's way of praying, read Paul's instruction to Timothy: *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness* (1 Tim. 2: 1,2).

Is Paul's instruction to Timothy simply good sense – good politics? It's more. Let me explain. Last March, Via and I attended the dinner that is held the night before the Governor's Prayer Breakfast. We prayed with our friend from Big Timber, Dan Rostad. Dan prayed that Christians would impact those in political office as well as those who are on the margins – “because that is the calling God gave Paul.”

Later that night, I went back and read God's call to Paul in Acts – but I found nothing like Dan had prayed – either in Paul's testimony to Felix in Acts 24 or in his testimony to Agrippa in Acts 26. Still later, I discovered it: Acts 9:15 - *This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.*

Think about this call with me. Imagine Paul going, as Jack Miller did, to pray for and with all kinds of people. God wanted Paul to take the gospel to those who were “up” (to “their kings”) as well as “across” (to peers – “the people of Israel”) and “down” (to the marginalized – “the Gentiles”).

We have asked those of you who pray that God would direct us here in Helena. Some of that direction has come from these two passages and some from God opening doors with leaders. I've realized we often neglect to "carry the name" of Jesus to those who are "above" us. Sometimes I wonder: "Which leaders will be in heaven because I brought the good news of Jesus to them?"

Before, I tell you about local leadership, I want you to know that my largest investment this summer has been with a leader from the next generation – my intern, Josh Charette. Thank you for your prayers for us. God has knit us together – in long heart to heart talks – in wrestling with theological problems – in praying for one another, our marriages, families – ministries: session meetings, church discipline, staff, shepherding, counseling – and our futures. I've learned much from Josh – especially about Native Americans and his hopes for them. After three more years at Covenant Seminary, Josh wants to plant a church in Billings that will include Native Americans and Anglos.

Josh has also been my instructor in fly fishing. Before meeting Josh I'd only been fly fishing one time – now that's increased to three! As you read the text of this update, I'll intersperse three Missouri River pictures of Josh and Ed Mangis, the President of the Kiwanis Club Josh and I attend. Below, Josh and Ed are - trying to figure out which "fly" the fish might want. Of course, the fish proved to be very finicky. Maybe Josh should write an update to help us understand why Jesus talked about making us "fishers of men." That's worth thinking about.



Before this fishing trip, I knew Ed ran a good meeting – and that he was in financial management. However, on the river I learned he had over 30 years in the Air Force – he flew jet fighters – and he flew over 360 combat missions in Viet Nam. He had ended his career teaching at the War College in Alabama. Pray that we will continue to grow in our relationship.

A few weeks ago, a friend we made during our '05 sabbatical announced he would be running for Montana's Attorney General. Via, Noah, Josh and I went to the capitol for the press conference. Although we were among over 100 in the rotunda, when the candidate saw us, he came up to me and said, "Steve, I know you will pray for me. I need your prayers." Christians, we need to pray for our leaders.

After he gave a fine speech, we met his family and then I suggested to Josh that we walk down the hall to see if we could meet the Lieutenant Governor, John Bohlinger. John's secretary

went to see if John could meet with us. Amazingly, he had a few minutes. I told John, "Josh has a great love for Jesus Christ – and a great love for Native Americans. I know you do too. I wanted you two to meet." Five minutes grew into fifteen. Then John took us down the hall to meet Major Robinson, the Director of Indian Affairs for the State of Montana. Subsequently, Josh was invited to be part of a three hour consultation regarding Native Americans.

At Josh's invitation, Major Robinson and his wife, Michelle, gathered with eight others at our home. We had a great evening. We learned that, although Major will continue his work and have an apartment in Helena, he and Michelle are returning to make their home on the rez near Ashland, MT. They want their daughters to grow up in a small community – and they want to see how the policies adopted in Helena impact people on the rez. Amazingly, another couple at the table had lived in tiny Ashland many years ago. God is a weaver. Montana is a small neighborhood with long streets.

In our attempt to get to know and love folks here, we've been having gatherings for a variety of folks at our home - usually between ten and twenty. We've had a cookout every Sunday night since the end of May. The age range has been from 9 months – 84. We have had a former Roman Catholic priest, a Marine who is now a nurse, a fire fighter, and a Native American whose last name is Stills smoking. Please pray that God would use these gatherings for good.



**Ed Mangis demonstrating "A River Runs through It" technique**

Josh and I have really enjoyed being part of Kiwanis. There is good camaraderie – every week we sing “Montana” and hear an informative speaker. I wonder: “Why didn’t I start doing this years ago? Where was I for so many years?”

Sheriff Cheryl Liedle spoke to the Kiwanis Club on 6/25/07. She began patrolling for Lewis and Clark County as a deputy in 1987. There were 28 deputies then; today there are 41. Pray that God will protect this leader and her officers – and that they will protect members of our community. See more details on the web site under “Specifics.”

Lewis and Clark County (L&CC) commissioners met with a group of about 40 citizens at the Chamber of Commerce for lunch. Keep in mind that this county is the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Please pray for the L&CC commissioners in regard to three issues: staffing,

infrastructure and water quality. Thank God for the service these commissioners give to this county – and pray for their families who send them to do this work. Again, for more details see “Specifics.”



**Josh Charette and a beautiful rainbow trout - catch (with a San Juan “fly”) and release**

Each Thursday, Josh and I attend a 7-8 AM meeting called Hometown Helena. This meeting is attended by about 50 leaders in the community. It also is characterized by a remarkable camaraderie. Each week there are introductions of people who are new to the community – including Josh and me. Then there is an open forum for matters of information – and good natured kidding. Finally, there is a speaker. The meeting is televised on a local TV channel. A number of people have told me that they have seen me on TV. What a great resource for this community.

Brian Schweitzer, the Governor of Montana, came to Hometown Helena on Thursday morning, 6/21/07. Governor Schweitzer is very upbeat about Montana’s current health – and he is pleased with the potential the Treasure State has to offer. Please pray for our Governor. He needs great wisdom and strength. Again, see “Speicifcs” for more details – including how I met the Governor.

Even as I ask you for your prayers again, you can see that God has opened doors for the beginning of relationships with leaders in our community. In the next weeks, I will focus more on leadership in the business community. And I will begin meeting with leaders in the Roman Catholic community too – one church alone has 2400 families.

In all these meetings it is often evident that two are better than one. Josh meets people well. I am grateful for his being here – and for the contacts he is making for the future. He, Katie and the boys will be here through the end of July. Then they will return to Billings – and then go back to Covenant Seminary in St. Louis. Please pray for the Charettes.

As you pray for the Charettes, please pray for the Bostroms.

- Jordan and Claire moved from Chattanooga to Raleigh. Pray for them as they get established with new work – nursing at Wake Med for Claire - painting with a former boss for Jordan - and, hopefully, more schooling in graphic arts for Jordan too.
- Thank God for safe travels. Several of us have been on the roads and rivers recently.
- Thank God for Zach's safe return from Bible school in England.
- Noah will be taking a long road trip to return to Montana with Micah, Jose and, maybe, Zach. I'm sure they would appreciate your prayers.
- Please pray for Jared, Rebekah, and Jackson during these final weeks of Rebekah's pregnancy with Savannah (due 8/4). Please pray for real estate clients for Jared. Via and Jess will come to Atlanta for Savannah's birth and return to Montana before school starts.
- Please pray for Noah, Jesse and Isaac as they begin public school.

Finally, Christians, as you think about where God has called you to cast your fishing line as you "fish for men," here's a cartoon for you.



We and others depend upon your prayers. Please see the web site for more "Specifics."

All the best,

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