

For the Good of All ~ July 4, 2010
Galatians 6:7-10; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20; Psalm 30

As most of you know I spent the past week or so in Anchorage, Alaska at the National Association's Annual Meeting. It was a small meeting, mostly because of the location. There was a quorum of churches, we needed 82 and had 83 plus a number of churches represented by proxy.

In the consideration of the business transacted, decisions were made that we hope will be for the good of all. Sometimes, it seems, this group, as many others, acts in an expeditious manner without always giving itself time to pause and consider what might be the best course of action. Instead of acting in a Congregational manner, we are more Presbyterial, presenting ideas that come from a small committee while not including others in the process. Perhaps, I am just getting old, but I truly believe that before major decisions are undertaken, it is wise to pause and consider all the ramifications of our actions. Ideas and directions that are forced upon people have little shelf life and cause resentment and a lack of support. This often leads to apathy and a sense that people are not being listened to and input is being ignored. This is true in many areas of life.

It is true now as it was in the time when the Letter to the Galatians was penned. We reap what we sow. We might not see this at first, but eventually it becomes apparent. If we selfishly push for decisions that benefit and include a few people, our selfishness will, eventually, bring us down. If we sow distrust we will gather up a load of it as time goes by. If we plant a lack of love, we will find ourselves loveless. It is true that what "goes around comes around" touching us all in the end. It always helps to have well-prepared soil before we attempt to sow anything—new ideas, new directions, new seeds of thought.

Jesus warned about the need to spread the word of the gospel on good soil. If the groundwork was not laid carefully, those who went out into the broader world to carry his message to all who would hear, would find the going tough. They were told that they should not spend an inordinate period of time in places where they were rejected but that they needed to move on to places in which they were welcomed and affirmed. Time was of the essence and the growth of God's kingdom was the goal. This was the mission he hoped to pass on to others through all generations.

What is it we can do to make sure that actions are taken for the good of all wherever it is that we live and move and have our being? Resist the option to opt out. Sometimes our efforts seem futile, but we cannot give up. We need to persist in our efforts to make things better. Moving forward often comes through small intentional steps. When we take great leaps we often find ourselves retracing our steps and heading back to the drawing board. Jesus knew a broad base of positive support was essential to firmly anchor the "good news" he brought to all. When there is a broad base, small defeats can be handled and substance remains upon which to stand and rebuild.

When we seek to do the greatest good for the greatest number we seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. We are all in this thing called life together. Our support and love for one another are what carry us through.

-- Amen