

Public Life: The Thread That Makes the Fabric

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“True love is to love the public at the cost of one’s life. Because life comes from true love, those who offer their lives will survive.”



Mayoral candidate Mike Yakawich, center, talks with his father Joe, left, and campaign treasurer Phillip Oliver, right, during a gathering to watch election returns at the War Bonnet Inn Tuesday evening. Photographed September 15, 2009.

In September, I was invited on stage at the Billings City Blues Music Festival. As the chair of rebuilding the gazebo in South Park along with other members, a check for \$5,000 was presented to us from a local organization. www.altinc.net/publications/Newsletter%20Fall%202011.pdf (We have now raised \$188,000 for this city park project.) As I looked out into the crowd I felt so blessed to know so many due to the public life we have lived. It began my ponderings on this thread that makes a tapestry within our community. Likewise, I am realizing more and more that living for the sake of others goes far beyond position or status, education, culture or creed.

In October, I was honored to be appointed as the Chaplain of a Benevolent Society with a 900+ membership. I have been a member for six years and part of their anti-drug program; they felt I would be a good officer of the Lodge. What an amazing group of patriotic, God loving service orientated people.

It is my premise that when a community, organization or a family lives for the sake of others it prospers and blessings over flow. The Holy Spirit is attracted to when we live a public life, serve others and live

for the greater good. The threads are created and the fabric can be made. God can weave a tapestry for His kingdom building.

To be clear, we can call it public life, faith in action, social action, all the terms here mean the same. It is taking one's belief system and putting it into everyday life. I believe it is the basis for growth. A growth of building God's kingdom on earth is our goal. Likewise, there is no greater power than that of a person stating, 'I cannot hear you for your actions are speaking louder than your words.'

Last week, I was presented an award for Environmental Stewardship from the Bright and Beautiful an affiliate of the Keep American Beautiful Inc. Even though we do not live a public life for others to recognize, it is an honor when we are appreciated. billingsgazette.com/news/local/article_de1d3fda-cc41-5c87-92c9-1ac49d95d592.html

Public life does include taking care of those close to you. In fact we should by all means take care of those closest to us. This then expands to reaching out to those others around you. It is not a campaign or a direction but coming from ones heart, we naturally witness one to one. *"You cannot make the excuse that you cannot witness to one person per month."*

Public life also will include taking care of those not in our immediate surroundings. When we seek to take care of and love those in our community who are our spiritual children, we find that public life is not only necessary but inspirational. There is a dynamic give and take action in living for the greater good or living for the sake of others as we interact and work in the community where we live. We will discover the umbrella of love which we create will come back to embrace those closest to us as well. My siblings have helped in many ways with many church repairs as one example.

I think of public life as an opportunity to interact with people who are or can become part of our spiritual family. We are after all one family under God. *"The world is one home, mankind one family."* It is in living a public life we can be flexible and address even be invited to address issues from city hall to the school board. billingsgazette.com/news/local/education/article_6955109e-d41a-5b50-87b9-77adc18adcb9.html

In public life we are care givers. Ultimately we are to raise up whom we take care of to also become care givers. Another way of saying is that some people need a great deal of attention and love. Actually, all people need a lot of love. Those who are younger need care and compassion, attention and investment. As people develop, they seek ways to reach out to others. There is no more glorious of a site in a family when an older sibling matures to where he or she is taking care of their younger siblings naturally and from their own self desire and motivation.

The youth can embrace public life naturally. This was reflected in some of the youth handing out and mailing out Father Moon's autobiography to some of their closest friends. Many times they volunteer in rest homes to perform music or in the community serving people. Certainly, they pioneered for me to be invited to teach a class on Family Values and my wife teaching a class on origami each year at the Catholic junior high school.

I wonder if we seek so much to be understood that we cannot understand others. We can get so much into ourselves and forget our goal of parental love toward others. This is when we get bogged down or stagnate. My wife always encourages me to work for the public. She knows I am inspired by it. She sees credibility grow from it. She sees her children vastly benefit from living a public life themselves. *"The woman who encourages her husband to work for the public is a real wife."*

When I ran for Mayor, my wife and Dad were the biggest supporters. They encouraged me to

run. billingsgazette.com/news/local/government-and-politics/elections/image_e891836c-a268-11de-855b-001cc4c03286.html My wife promised if I ran for Mayor she would become a U.S. citizen. I ran and she is a citizen of the USA. Now, the community is encouraging me to consider other opportunities.

Over the years, I have faced numerous facets of persecution. By religious and secular people alike, we have been shunned, attacked in the media, belittled, publically humiliated, betrayed all due to my religious affiliation. In fact, I have been punched, spit on, kicked and even shot at! Yet, it is my realization that for many who acted so unprincipled/unChristian, through serving them and living a public life, many of these same people have become my friend and ally in our community (St. Matthew 5:9-12).

A point I wish to make is that we actually grow more when we focus on public life. We grow our hearts more when we live for the sake of others. Our children grow when they learn to serve and work in the community. Our marriages are strengthening when we reach out to others and our marriage becomes a key to give parental love to those in the community. There is a great deal of energy and power generated when we serve and place our faith in action. *“When you put the purpose of the whole before the individual purpose the good give and take action can come into being.”*

During a special event for Evangelist Eunice Terry, my wife, son and I were touched by her love and the love of her church members. Mother Terry and her two sisters were the first to embrace and welcome my wife and I to the community 23 years ago. That love and kindness remains strong and genuine.

When we make connections then doors are opened. People are not only receptive but they read what we give them. When we handed out over 500 books on As A Peace Loving Global Citizen to our friends and family, we discovered this. One of my business contacts and whose father I conducted his funeral, Mike, shared recently, “I really enjoy this book. I have come to a deeper and more appreciative understanding of who Rev. Moon really is.”

Step by step with consistency we build credibility, confidence and courage. *“He is a fearsome person who is marching consistently forward for the greater purpose.”* As chair of a board or volunteer for an organization, I realized that people value our willingness to go beyond ourselves and stand up for more than our own organization. After all, we are to be global citizens. *“Each day, I set out on my path with renewed determination to achieve that goal. My prayer is that every person on earth will be reborn as a peace-loving global citizen, transcending barriers of religion, ideology, and race.”**

At a political leader’s office recently, the field representative was very happy to receive Father Moon’s autobiography. He acknowledged that our credibility and acceptance is strongly based on the amount of effort we place into the community. He stated, ‘As you live a public life for the sake of the community as in our recent 9-11 program, it is very difficult for people to speak badly of Rev. Moon or his work and thank you for the book!’ billingsgazette.com/news/local/article_c159b2f4-cb9b-55f2-9496-121bcd949388.html

Our youth may face greater challenges as their family lives a public life. Our youth face this dilemma of always having their parent in a public position and they too are encouraged to live a public life as well. Nevertheless, it does appear that with proper parenting the youth excel. They learn the value of community service. They gain confidence in public settings. They too learn the heart of other families whose parents also live a public life. None the less, I firmly believe the benefits of the youth far outweigh the negatives of living a public life. As our local youth receive scholarships for college, one director was inspired to call me and comment, ‘It is not due to their name that they receive these scholarships but rather their community service.’ billingsgazette.com/news/local/article_a03dae1f-88d3-5e31-b5d7-ec5bbb2de15d.html

We gain core results towards the Kingdom of heaven, serving, supporting, witnessing our faith, teaching and educating others on family values and the Divine Principle (the core teachings of Rev. Moon). Natural witnessing is powerful. They will know you by your fruits (Matthew 7:20). Working with our community they will come to believe and perceive we are genuine acknowledging the validity of our founder and his teachings.

My family has grown and matured more when we sought to love others more than to be loved by others. We grow when we seek to take care of others and not wait or expect others to take care of us. They too are protected and guided by the public. *“The public man cannot directly protect his family from Satan. God will protect them through his members.”* School teachers witness to them about the good work of their parents in the community; articles in the papers encourage them that their public life is important and inspire others. *“If you sacrifice your private life for the public, you will be respected by people around you.”* As when our son John lead a group on a work project for Habitat for Humanity recorded in their Fall 2011 newsletter page 6. www.billingshabitat.org/Newsletters.html

Last weekend our MLK Jr. Day planning committee met. We will host an annual dinner, walk and program at the Lincoln Center here in Billings. From the Black Heritage Foundation to the Not In Our Town organization, it is an honor to meet, mingle, plan and work with such great people in our community. This is the way which I have discovered in my own life. Living for the sake of others is where we grow the most. There is great power in living a public life. *“If you fight for the public centering on goodness, you will win the final victory.”* Individualism is in most regards living a self centered life. It reduces growth and causes antagonism and mistrust. It is the source of many of our social issues as well. *“Because of satanic self-center individualism, free sex, drug problems, venereal disease, divorce, juvenile delinquency, etc. came into being.”*

In conclusion, public life is the thread that makes the fabric of a family, community and society. It is through a public life we make the heart connections that build a spiritual family. We can address serious social issues from drug abuse to suicide living a public life. As on October 21st, 2011 as chair of the suicide prevention coalition for Yellowstone Valley, our coalition conducted a one day suicide prevention training for 110 participants (teachers, counselors, healthcare professionals and community people). It was a powerful testimony of collaboration and networking including the state director for suicide prevention and state Veterans Affairs director for suicide prevention which provided education, materials, great hope and insights. www.ktvq.com/videos/suicide-prevention-training/

Your contacts become your friends and then more so family who engraft onto your spiritual lineage. Like our neighbor Steve who keeps an eye on my family especially when I am away, Pastor Terry dropping off frozen turkeys and eggs for the family, Charlie offering fresh caught trout for our dinner table, Mr. Davis mentoring our youth in Boy Scouts (four of whom completed their Eagle Scout Projects) or another neighbor working together on a neighborhood taskforce. This is the public life that weaves a tapestry of hope and security, encouragement and strength that produces a real image of what the Kingdom of Heaven (CIG) is in its awesome display.

*“We are here...to renew our determination to respond to the call of God, to pledge our lives and our resources, and to pledge to have America realize God’s ideal here on earth. Let us commit our own skills, talents, and our very lives to this great purpose of God.” ***

Note:

“Quotes” The Fountain of Life * As a Peace Loving Global Citizen ** Christianity in Crisis: New Hope p.114