

Building Community: One Neighbor At A Time

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“Tong-ban kyuk-pa” A family report



Mike Yakawich

(Note: Over the years I had submitted these testimonies regarding our work in the community. Without position or agenda, God laid on my heart to continue to share these rich and amazing ways He continues to work in our lives. We often do hear many who reply how such testimonies have encouraged others to do similar outreach in their own community. We hope this to be the case for you.)

“Such a man is the Messiah! The Messiah never dreams of thinking “I will live happily in the Kingdom of Heaven alone.” He has to send all mankind to the Kingdom of Heaven and when people in the Kingdom of Heaven look for him saying, “Where is the Messiah? Come on in! Come on in!”—only then can he enter it. If only an individual tribe asks him to come in, he cannot enter. Only when all mankind asks him to enter, and he looks back to make sure that nobody behind him needs his help, then finally he can agree to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Such a man is the Messiah, and this is the ideology of the Messiah.”*

Rev. Moon has spoken on many occasions of Tribal Messiah. I find this to be such a wonderful teaching of his. We are all called to be small messiahs in serving and loving our community.

Recently, I have been thinking about how amazing Rev. Moon is. Having passed out over 550 of his autobiographies I have pondered more what a man of action he is. I realize more and more how great of a heart Father Moon has for God and for mankind. We are very proud to share his life with others.

By the end of 2011, we completed our family campaign to “Leave No City Behind” book distribution including recently a gift to the Mayor of Billings. Every town over 400 populations (and many under) has received one of As A Peace Loving Global Citizen books (over 200 cities). Even while at the post office and sending a few off in the mail, the ladies at the counter also asked and received a book excited to take turns and read it.

It was great to hear from Dr. Rob Balch who distributed books to his class. His college class on New Age Religions studied this book and the students kept the book. Just last week, our youngest son presented one book to his sophomore religion teacher. Our eldest son had placed a book at his college and it is

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(isbn.lib.montana.edu/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=6pDOzNBfpO/BOZEMAN/272000081/88)

In these past months, I have been thinking about Father Moon's words. "Unless you are ready to sacrifice yourself before you are told to do it, God cannot come to you. If you live like that, God will be proud of you before Satan. Unless we do that, there is no way for us to restore God's authority and dignity as His children." (p. 69 New Hope). Whether or not we have position or status, we are all called it seems to me to take responsibility. Rather than waiting for someone to ask, tell, direct, assign or instruct us to do something, we should be willing to "take up the cross and follow".

Last month the local TV station did an interview on our work in South Park. It reminded me once again on the value of investment in our community begins at the neighborhood level. When we invest many doors open. (www.ktvq.com/full-coverage/south-park-special-report/)

I recall a meeting with Mother Moon a number of years ago. I had reported to her that each year I am invited to the Carbon and Stillwater County Tavern Owners Association to offer the opening prayer for their convention. Each year I stand in front and offer a prayer and those willing welcome a Blessing with Holy Wine. She commented then, "Great job! Now you must continue to educate and raise them up." How true this is. In taking responsibility for the countless Blessings we have bestowed, we are indeed called to take care of our spiritual children.

We have been honored to share Father Moon's book to many of them. In addition, I have been asked to do the funeral for a number of these business owners as well as customers. Just a couple of months ago, I was invited and conducted a funeral for an 85 year old. His son told me over the years his father spoke highly of our work and would be honored for me to conduct his funeral. Late last month, I conducted a wedding for a son of one of these owners. The job to take care of our spiritual children as directed by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has been one I have taken to heart.

On December 23, 2011 I was honored to conduct a funeral service for a long time bar owner and friend of mine. Her family personally requested my services. It was again a blessing to support this family at that time. After all, the majority of people whom I serve to are my contacts through my business and have never stepped foot in any church. (billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/announcements/obituaries/arlene-frances-riley-barrett/article_bef06c61-9ceb-50a3-ad05-9546f5f4b772.html)

As we know, in all these cases it is both taking responsibility and not waiting for others to direct us. Likewise, it is based on many years of heart to heart relationship, credibility building and investment in the communities where we work. Such requests do not just come lightly nor are they taken lightly.

I learned this many years ago with Father Moon spoke here in Billings in 2001. I was a campaign person ashamedly! I would only visit people when I needed them to attend this or that. If there were no requests to attend I would not visit. I realized my foundation was so weak. After Father Moons talk, many of my close contacts drifted apart. I realized I did not invest heartisicatlly as I could or should have. Since then, I have striven to build and deepen relationships out of a personal desire to make bonds and friendships.

Now these people look forward to our visit. They now seek ways to help me in our community work. We offer to help them, volunteer and support. Yet, they resist with comments that we owe you since you are doing more for us that we do for you. It creates such a wonderful spirit and harmony. Over a year, I send out at least a 300 letters and postcards through the mail. People treasure and appreciate such correspondence. You would commonly find this correspondence magnetically attached to the refrigerator or hanging on their office bulletin board.

In late November, I was able to present Family Values to 6th, 7th and 8th grand Junior High Students. There were approximately 200 in attendance over the period of two days. I was again deeply touched by the teacher having the family flag proudly placed high on her wall next to the many pictures of Saints and religious people. It was a real honor to share our faith values on prayer, study and a particular well received lesson on "Living for the Greater Good." These teachers are incredibly gifted and really embody the Holy Spirit in their lives. One teacher wrote to me after and commented: "Thank you! You are an inspiration to listen to. Thank you very much...God Bless, J.D." I realize our children are the clothing of the parent and they were the pioneers to build the foundation for me to teach at their school. Another teacher commented: "Mike, your kind words are very uplifting. Thanks. Blessed Advent, M.L." ***When you return to your hometown, try lecturing in schools or colleges where there are students.**** Rev. Moon has spoken on many occasions of Tribal Messiah. I find this to be such a wonderful teaching of his. We are all called to be small messiahs in serving and loving our community. p. 122

On Sunday, Dec. 4th, as a chaplain, I had organized the annual memorial service for an organization honoring 30 members who had passed in the previous year. I invited and the Mayor attended. He shared how we have been friends from the campaign time we did. He praised my daughter who played the flute for the memorial. I felt how such events could never have been organized by me years ago. Now, we are welcomed based on our investment and relationships. God I believe open doors for us to reach out and build One Family Under God. "Thus you should live for their sake. Do many activities for their sake." P. 117

The local taskforce voted me in for 2012 as the Chairman of the taskforce. One may say that each time we join a board; volunteer for a community event or step up to give of our time is it worth it? I clearly find living for the sake of others is not just a motto or theme. It is very real, powerful and opens doors for God to work. Certainly, serving develops loyalty; consistency builds trust as people will notice our actions more than our words. (ci.billings.mt.us/index.aspx?NID=684)

You must go there to receive abusive language. You must be able to hear slanderous comments from people who do not understand your genuine heart and you may suffer many hardships. P. 111 These words on Tribal Messiah works were on my mind as we invested these past years. Father Moon is a man who has endured great trials and faced many hardships. Yet, he always points out that God is alive and with us. When we are determined not to give up, God pours in with amazing ways. Such people who opposed us are now our friends.

While on my sales trip, on Wednesday, Dec. 7th, an elder of a Tribal Nation, Mrs. D, whom I have known from my travels and a person given the ancestral right to give names, named me. "The man who walks the sacred circle." She explained that I come to Indian Country and bring sacredness to the people. As you know, there are no trumpets or fanfare in such a situation. It was informal and very spiritual. Mrs. D then stood me up facing west and said a very deep prayer over me. We then took a picture which I had a camera with me. In all my years of travel, this had not happen before....so sincerely and so deeply.

Mrs. D said, "Her life is now a calling to comfort especially young people who are facing life and death illnesses." Even at another location many miles away, I mentioned her name. She is well respected. I felt the spirit as the Mother Theresa of Indian Country. God is certainly alive.

Giving to our community is also a reflection of the quality of life we hold and cherish. Working on the Suicide Prevention Coalition for Yellowstone Valley is an ongoing effort. A letter was placed in the local paper addressing our work in this area. (billingsgazette.com/news/opinion/mailbag/suicide-prevention-coalition-hosts-monthly-meetings/article_d59e5299-a26e-58fd-9ddd-6d837aaaf485.html)

Reaching out is a family project. Last week, my wife taught origami at the local junior high for one week.

Along with our three college youth, it was a wonder annual experience to be welcomed and serve the school. Mrs. L sent a letter later sharing, “Thank you for coming into my classroom and also for being such a wonderful part of our Billings Catholic Schools community.”

Later in the month, she organized a musical at a local rest home an annual program which she began a dozen years ago. Our youth and their friends perform music for the residents, staff and family. There were over 70 people in attendance. It is always a beautiful way to serve and live for the greater good as well as bring joy to the neighborhood.

In closing, Jesus is the reason for this season. ***“He really lived that principle. He even gave his life for his enemies.”*** p. 106 New Hope With the Holiday Season, our family sends out cards to family and friends. We handed out cards, homemade cookies and strawberry jam to our neighbors. Knowing that one neighbor recently was released from incarceration, we made sure he had a card as well. The next day we found in our mail box a card from him and his wife. They wrote, “Thank you for helping us feel welcomed in the neighborhood.” Perhaps, this is a good way to end building neighborhoods, one neighbor at a time.

“Yes, this world has many problems. People are needed who can help solve those problems instead of being part of the problems. We are to be such people, working as the champions of God. We can attack the problems of this world only with God, by practicing His way of life. Then we can truly bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.” P. 114 New Hope

*p. 27 The Tribal Messiah