

Holy Play
A South Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo Publication

“Wiping the Slate Clean”

New Year’s day, just like all other January 1st days, we have a tendency to quietly reflect on our imperfections and then for some instinctive reason, we decide to make a list of those things we will do better in the coming year. We promise ourselves this year will be different. From losing weight to stop smoking and all the other vices we believe could hurt us are on the list. Sometimes we will share our complete list with family and close friends. More often we don’t, because we really don’t want them to know what this very personal list consist of so that when we fall short, they will not know the level of our resolve, which predictably turns out to be really low. We just don’t want to be held accountable to anyone. Really!

As a Christian community, we should understand Grace. Yet, I wonder does this word move ever so subtly into our head and vacate our heart...a natural location for it to reside along with the Holy Spirit. Our special custom made God-designed just for us grace-filled weekend gave us arrows to place in our quiver for the everyday battle against the Trickster.

Our human nature when we fall short is to groan in prayer. This groaning typically produces another list of our wants and needs.

The South Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo movement over the past few years has been groaning. During that dry spell, the committee and the community took our eye off the purpose. From our constitution Chapter 3: C3.01

“The objective and purpose of this organization shall be to glorify God and to help in the extension of His kingdom among all people for their salvation by proclaiming the Gospel and encouraging a faithful response.”

This past year the community came together and began praying for His will to be done. And the results as we now know were miraculous. We discarded our list of hurts, finger-pointing, and ego, and instead focused on His will, and prayed it be done. Amazing results! Should we be surprised? Not really when we understand the Via de Cristo movement is His, and His alone!

Recently, I was given a list of twelve thought provoking statements found on a website. As I read it, I felt convicted realizing my private shortcomings on so many levels. I have adopted this list in its entirety. I have no other New Year’s resolution list. Consider as you read this list of twelve statements possibly adopting them for you too. Then reflect on using this list as a compass for you and the community as a whole. If you do, then pray it be done.

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“Twelve Symptoms of a Spiritual Awakening”

www.recoverytradepublications.com

- (1) An increase tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- (2) Frequent attacks of smiling.
- (3) Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
- (4) Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- (5) A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experiences.
- (6) An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- (7) A loss of ability to worry.
- (8) A loss of interest in conflict.
- (9) A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- (10) A loss of interest in judging others.
- (11) A loss of interest in judging self.
- (12) Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything.

And finally, from:

Wind and Fire

“Our Daily Bread”

Friday, December 28th

Sometimes when I want to start a fire, the wind puts it out. But when I try to keep a fire burning, wind keeps it going. So, in the first situation, I label wind ‘bad’ because it thwarts my plans; in the other, I label it ‘good’ because it helps me accomplish what I want to get done.

This paradox illustrates how we judge things by the way they affect us. We declare circumstances or people ‘bad’ if they thwart our plans or cause us inconvenience. We judge circumstances or people ‘good’ if we agree with them and they support our cause.

But God is the One who determines what is good or bad, and he does so not by how it affects our plans but by whether or not it accomplishes His. His plan is that we would be ‘a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.’ And His purpose for us is to ‘proclaim the praises of Him who called (us) out of darkness into His marvelous light.’ (1 Peter 2:9).

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To accomplish God's good purpose, we are to respect all people, love other believers, fear God, and honor those who rule over us—even when something doesn't seem good to us (v. 17). These kinds of actions may fan a spark of belief in those who observe our responses to 'bad' circumstances and most of all bring praise to God. Julie Ackerman Link

This year and day-by-day, I will do my best to follow His will in my life. And when I fail, I will seek forgiveness, and then restart. And that's okay. He wipes the slate clean. I just need to accept His forgiveness, cleansing, and unconditional love. Happy New Year!

Peace...Gus Martschink

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