

From the Desk of Beth Ann Murray



Warm Lights

Last week during our weekly staff meeting, Pastor Jerome asked his staff a very poignant question – “Who are we?” As I pondered my answer, I remembered reading in the book of Mark, that right after Jesus was baptized by his cousin John the Baptist, that the heavens opened up and His Father said – “You are my dearly loved Son, you bring me great joy.”

I don’t believe that Jesus was struggling with his identity but that His heavenly Father needed to tell him how much he loved him. Jesus also needed to hear those words of affirmation from his Father.

So when I was faced with answering the question “Who are we?”, I realized that in order to answer that question I needed to place myself into my daily circumstances because who I may be is driven by my heart and the answer to the question may be based on what challenges I am facing at the time I ask the question.

After listening to Pastor Jerome’s recent series of sermons concerning how we as Christians handle the current challenges we face, I realized that it is very easy to be caught up in our circumstances and lose focus on the big picture.

As a mother I remembered a time when my son Coleman had finally pushed all of my

buttons, burned all of his bridges and was poking at my last nerve. My husband TJ came home from his hard day at work and realized that the wife he left at home a few hours before had now mutated into a tyrant. TJ simply looked at me and said with compassion – I love you! – and it immediately brought me to my senses – it was certainly not the response I expected – but the words pierced my heart with great conviction and I realized that who I am is a loving mother and not a frazzled woman on the edge.

As a Director of Children’s Ministry, over the years I have learned that the time we have each Sunday with your children is a time to reinforce what they are in Christ instead of what they are not measuring up to in the world. We intentionally focus on the good they have inside them and how they represent their faith. We do not focus on the bad elements of their personalities or the week’s activities they just experienced. So when we ask them the question “Who are you?” we hope they see themselves as a reflection of their relationship with Jesus as a protected and loved child.

As a Church member it is very easy to look at our current circumstances and be so focused on our challenges that we can lose perspective as to who we are. I can look at some aspects of our Church and become very judgmental or critical and in that process can transform myself from who I really am in my Church – to a negative force and a problem that exacerbates our current state. We need to reinforce our desire to answer the question “Who are we?” from a Christ centered perspective.

So to assist us in answering the question “Who are we?” I offer the following perspective and hope that it may help us all to focus on our answers.

The media is reporting that Christianity in America is only one generation from extinction. As a Children’s Ministry Director, I am passionate about our ministry. Some may say that my views may come from that passion, but I don’t think so. As I look at the children of today I see something different. As I look at children’s ministers today I see a different and more positive future. These kids are our future.

Because of this renewed passion to share the Gospel, we

believe that God is rising up a generation that will spark a re-emergence of the gospel in America. I also believe He is putting unique children’s ministry leaders in place that will reach these kids and make disciples of them so that they can do that which God is calling them to do.

We believe this generation has the potential to bring America back to God. To that end, I know our Church, along with our Pastor’s direction, is spending less time searching for a popular or trendy program, and more time focusing on reading and studying the BIBLE and FOLLOWING IT.

Why have I titled this article, WARM LIGHTS? In today’s environment, including some of our local churches, those in charge are focusing on glitz, glamour and bright lights in order to compete for the attention of people. Churches are often seen as in competition with sports, technology and family schedules as if the guiding light of a Church somehow isn’t as bright as other alternatives. But the light at our Church is a warm and comforting light and is not designed to drown out the Madison Avenue competition.

Here at SonRise, we are focused on nurturing the warm light aspects of our Church by keeping our programs aligned with the Bible and turning on the light of faith in the children we teach. So though there are challenges for Churches in America, we can take comfort in the fact that the guiding light of Jesus is still the center of focus for our children’s ministry.

Through our children’s ministry program at SonRise, we are training our kids to disciple and minister to their friends and neighbors. Through that process we will continue our outreach and attempt to grow our ministry using the WARM LIGHT we have developed and nurtured in our children.

So when you ask– “Who are we?” – One aspect that may influence your answer is to remember the SonRise Christian Fellowship is that Warm Light you see and the love that you feel in your heart.

Loving your children through God’s ways,

Beth Ann