

When I was a child our family lived in Belleville for awhile. I was just entering kindergarten when we moved. Two doors down from us lived a young couple who had their first child: Larry. The couple had wisely put a big fence around their back yard where Larry could roam free...and fence him in. However, as he grew older Larry would pull himself up on the fence, using a toy or something to stand on for a ladder. Just his head and hands would appear, Larry would call by name whomever he saw and yell, “George, come on over.” Sometimes we’d take time to go over and talk and play with Larry. Other times we didn’t. But through the summer months Larry was always there, yelling, “Come on over.”

As we listen to the scripture proclaimed, God, like Larry did, calls out to us. God calls Samuel to come on over. God uses John the Baptist to issue the call for his disciples to see Jesus as the Lamb of God. When two left John and approached Jesus, Jesus asked “What do you seek?” They answered with a question: “Rabbi, where do you stay?” Jesus answers their question with, “COME on over AND SEE.”

Sometimes it is hard to hear God’s call because others are calling too. In a few weeks it will be Super Bowl Sunday. Different companies and businesses are preparing commercials to call out to us WHAT WE NEED. It used to cost a million dollars for a 30 second ad to issue their call. The call to consume can drown out God’s call and cost us our lives if we follow. Always God’s call is to COME ON OVER.

Some call to us that the beginning of human life is expendable by abortion when that new life would cause pain, embarrassment or inconvenience. Others call to us that there reaches a point when life is worth taking to escape the pain of human suffering. Others call us that some life is worth taking because of criminal acts and that the only acceptable punishment is execution. That is how Jesus died.

In spite of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy there are those who would tell us (White Supremacist groups) that it is all right to hate another because of the color of one’s skin, that some lives are more valuable than others. Others tell us that violence and war are acceptable solutions to solving problems: whether it be the bombing of an abortion clinic, the terror of taking hostages, the building and selling of more and more weapons of mass destruction.

Others believe that recreational drugs and casual recreational sex pave the way to happiness. There are even those, who in the name of religion, invoke hatred of different religions. Sometimes it is hard to hear the voice of Jesus calling: “Come on over and see.”

Today God’s word speaks powerfully as Paul reminds us that we are all temples of the Holy Spirit. Yes, God calls to us that all human life – regardless of the color of skin, practice of religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or even criminal – ALL LIFE HAS DIGNITY. The call is consistent and persistent: ALL HUMAN LIFE IS SACRED.

Instead of “them and us”, our attitude is to be we are all children of God. Or, as MLK put it:

I have a dream that...that the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.
This is our hope.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with new meaning “my country ‘til of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim’s pride; from every mountain side, let freedom ring” - and if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.”

Amen to that!