

CRIBB<S>NOTE – July 12, 2009

What if we all just danced in the streets to the glory of God? What if we made an absolute spectacle of ourselves in a public demonstration of our faith? Can you see yourself in a parade of merry music makers dancing wildly in praise to God?

It is not unusual to shout at the top of our lungs during a sports event or political rally. We expect people in stadiums to get loud and scream endlessly as their favorite teams compete on the playing field. No doubt there have been times when you lost control and jumped up and down with great excitement. Would you do the same thing for God?

David, the king of Israel, did exactly that. In fact, he led 30,000 soldiers and religious leaders through the streets dancing for God. He displayed enthusiasm and complete abandonment of self-consciousness as the musicians played instruments and the people moved their feet. Yes, “they prayed with their feet” as Rabbi Abraham Herschel once described the Civil Rights marchers in Alabama. That is what David did through the streets of Jerusalem when he returned the Ark of the Covenant back to the people of God. Do you think you could have been one of those religious dancers and shouters?

The story is found in 2 Samuel 6 where the king and his followers dedicated themselves to God. David’s wife, Michal, did not like what she saw as she watched her husband embarrassing him and her so openly. She hated him for that.

Our reality is so different from David’s unashamed and unapologetic worship. “David danced before the Lord with all his might.” We worship quietly within the walls of the sanctuary without any expectation of going outside and “praying with our feet.”

What would other people say? What would they think of us? How could we explain such behavior? It just doesn’t fit who we are. But, what if....?

Psalms 85 is a prayer for the restoration of God’s favor. It gives us hope for justice to spread across the land. In times of distress and terrible conditions, God has a plan to bring people back to divine order.

“God will speak peace to the people, to the faithful, to those who turn to God in their hearts.” It goes on to say, “Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other, faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. God will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.”

That is good news. We need to hear good news in these days of so much bad news coming from many directions. But, what are we willing to do to bring more good news our way? Will we dance for God in the streets?

That may not sound like something a United Church of Christ congregation would do. It isn’t our tradition. What can we do to call attention to God’s love and presence with us?

Is David’s example too extreme? Was Michal right and justified in her anger? Are we any different from her? Do we identify more with Michal than with David?

In these days, the people of God must do more than sit quietly in our pews and remain silent amid so much struggling and suffering. How can we restore God’s favor? What will we do in concert with faithful sisters and brothers?

Perhaps the call to ‘lift every voice and sing’ is a good start. Making a ‘joyful noise’ could inspire us to start moving our feet. Who knows? We just might find ourselves boldly dancing in the streets to the glory of God.