

## God's Dream by Lowen Kruse

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low;  
The uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain."  
Isaiah 40:3-5

Isaiah wrote these thoughts nearly 3,000 years ago.

Jesus' herald, John the Baptist, repeated them about 1,000 years later. (Luke 3:5-6)

In the last century, Martin Luther King, Jr. repeated and made specific the vision.

In our present century, our pastor, Jane Florence, repeated them as recently as this MLK Sunday, with the theme: "God's Dream."

I have no doubt 'God's dream' will be repeated many times in the next century.

The witness of scripture, of history, and of our times affirm the trust and dream that the mountains will be made low and the valleys be lifted up. I was struck by the progress in our lives and world in each of the above time breaks as our pastor described them. We have huge deficits in our human condition, but the dream expressed by Isaiah has proven to be within our creator's plan.

Understand, we are being most presumptive to apply metamorphic language to God, as though we have captured God's thought or 'dream' in human language. Our wisdom quickly outruns what we actually know when we interpret what God 'thinks.' However, language is part of our human limitation. When we are humble and sensitive to that fact I believe we can venture to say what we witness: our creator adds blessing when we build community on our journey.

Our MLK Day preacher, a Baptist from Utah, reminded us that a ladder was in Jacob's dream, reaching upward from earth. That ladder is set on the ground, where we are. Also, the messengers from 'on high' come down the ladder before going back up. God involves us in the vision and plan. Dr. King's famous "I have a Dream" echoes and makes current the dream of Isaiah.

This column is not usually on faith, but, for each of us, faith is a part of everything we do. This witness of scripture and history communicates mystery and has messages for us.

First, that we do look for the day when all people -- Gentile, Jew and Muslim, Protestant and Catholic, black - white -- brown -- can join in a shout, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we are free at last!" It has to be together, with the basic belief that God's love is positive and is for all.

Second, that those who declare otherwise are contradicting God's plan. We have a long parade of persons who are just plain negative. They object to 'foreign' influence. They shoot and kill those who do not look or act or think or love or pray like them. They do not seek justive, which is what God's love looks like in public. They deny food and shelter to the hungry and to the cold. They seek weapons to physically wipe out another tribe. They withhold education from the young in certain cultures, including cultures next door. They block out the dream of children who 'chose' the wrong parents. Instead of using partisan claims for dialog and creativity, they spin the opposition to prevent helpful legislation. They block some citizens from voting their political decisions. They give up on selected offenders and kill them. They assert

by their rhetoric that killing those we do not like will be a benefit to all and will not be copied by criminals.

We are surrounded by negative voices, shouting to make up for their shortage of values and even common sense. They proclaim promises which cannot be kept and appeal to fears generated by outright lies that put down our nation, our leaders and our life together. We are in a mess, but need stay here only if we buy into the negative pitches.

Though these people and groups have widely varying methods, I put them all in the same sack. They are all opposed to making the rough places plain as they seek to prevent progress for and by others.

Third, we cannot change the world in one century but we can act where we live and think and talk. That is a mighty possibility! It is our responsibility. We can commit to the growth of others. We can be a positive witness when someone is trashing those they do not even know. We can study the issues, discuss and vote. We must vote. We still have a democracy if we actively claim it.

I am impressed with the mix of ideas and affirmations of candidates. Some are self-serving and thereby skewed, but they give us the handles to levers of change.

Many witnesses have moved us toward supportive community in 3,000 years. Some have stumbled. Some have set us back. Wars and violence are the quick way to 'settle' things. Rather, we can choose the substantial gains of God's vision. Violence delays the slower-moving spirit of justice and caring. Many have died, willingly putting their lives on the line to move us toward caring. Even bolder, thousands have been outspoken shakers and movers in God's loving vision of creation. They dance and proclaim the joy of positive actions. (If I can't dance it's not my revolution –Emma Goldman) They give their lives for the Common Good. They made a difference.

Now it is our turn.