THOUGHTS OF MARCH, 2012

1. If you were given a badge as a reward for being the most humble person in the organization, would you wear it?

2. R. O., the city manager of our town, has 5 principals that govern his own conduct: “Be truthful, be honest, be fair, keep your word, and have integrity in applying the first four principals.”

It seems to me that our definition of “integrity” has become limited to “honesty and truthfulness” and R. O. is working to restore its fullness such as: “Maintaining wholeness [completeness and orderliness], especially when under stress.” When we remain integrated under stress, such as did Job, we maintain our integrity – Job 2:9.

As God’s handiwork [Eph. 2:10], we are equipped for everything that comes our way. The Architect who controls all that comes our way does not allow anything to come against us that we cannot overcome as we rest/keep our peace/trust in Him. The guaranteed overcoming may be only within us, with righteous actions that follow. Of course, the overcoming may be that we overcome the situational opposition forces. When we are tempted, He always makes a way for us so that we may remain faithful.

Stress may be the tempter’s most effective tool against accomplished godliness in the saint’s soul. When we come under stress we are tempted to drop at least one of our righteous character traits. It may be our patience, our honesty, our faithfulness, our love, our calling, our etc. We become dis-integrated. That which had been appropriated and placed snuggly within our [integrated] soul is dislodged, at least during that stressful event. That need not happen.

3. Factors in unbelief, whether religious, scientific, or otherwise [and we will limit our Thought here to the spiritual], are ignorance, rejection, rebellion, and lack of being called by the Creator. Some of that unbelief is one’s fault, some not. Jesus said; “Forgive them, Father; they do not know what they are doing.” Although “they” knew what they were doing on the natural-human level, they did not know what they were doing on the eternal-spiritual level to their Messiah.

The further I go, the more often and more quickly I forgive others simply on the basis of their ignorance. I choose to remove their responsibility for their sinful act against me in the matter. It’s like: “What else should I/we expect from someone who knew no better? They did their best.” That brings them and their sin into my arena, where I am at least partly responsible for informing and transforming them so they may come into righteous self-responsibility.

4. Last month I shared some Thoughts on that which the Lord is doing around the Muslim world. He is bringing them to Himself, either through the church fulfilling our Great Commission or by the Lord’s solitary actions. This month I can share that the Christian share of the population of sub-Saharan Africa has soared from 9 % to 63% [no years-span known].

Not to become complacent, we are told that the Christian proportion of Europe and the Americas has dropped, respectively, from 95% to 76% and 96% to 86%. The good news is that as the church weakens, marginalization and persecution begin which, in due time, strengthens the church and promotes growth.

5. The Lord chastises those whom He loves – Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:4-13. There is no way His love can allow us to go onward messing up ourselves, our God-born family and all of creation without His inserting Himself as a loving earthly father would.

Isaiah saw it coming. He warned Israel of the consequences of its sinfulness. He even broke it down as to how Israel’s leaders would be spanked certain ways and how the women would be differently spanked – Is. 3:1 🡪 4:1. I find a bit of humor in some of those verses, despite their description of Israel’s personal, family, social and national tragedy. In verse 16, picture the prancing ladies all decked out. They lose everything, including their undies – v. 23. If it was not bad enough that children would be rulers of families and other social units [that’s common here in America], the women wanted men only for taking away of their reproach [marriage to remove the stigma associated with being an old maid, and children to prevent their being childless]. They did not want a husband; he would be too restrictive. They did not want someone to rule over them. It was better, they said, that a group of women marry one man, each provide for themselves, and raise their children in one-parent households. If you have not picked up on this yet, that non-controlling husband for many of our women is civil government. It provides and protects, and guarantees rights without responsibility.

If you have not yet noticed that your nation’s sins are there in Scripture [Old Testament and New Testament], check it out. The good news is that they had the same Lord as we do. We are indeed His workmanship. He will get His job done.

6. If a believer comes to a place in his/her life when he has a burning desire to be a disciple of Jesus, what may he do? Study; yes. Pray; yes. Seek counsel; yes. Associate with known disciples; yes. But how about looking into the gospels and see what the Lord Jesus said to those men with Him who wanted to be His disciples? That would be a threat to any responsible person’s life and livelihood – family, reputation, finances, job/profession, etc. Discipleship and its search are meant to threaten and probably end everything else. Discipleship goes beyond being an exemplary Christian.

I know of a group of Christian men who have decided to move in the direction of discipleship. They are searching the Gospels for Jesus’ instructions to disciples, and intend to apply ourselves to actually living those instructions. Furthermore, each week they will hold one another responsible for living those instructions every day.

This first week, “giving to the poor” is their project. They will not consider their regular giving to the church or any other of their current routines of giving to be their fulfillment of that instruction. Their giving to the poor must be daily, non-traditional, personal and face-to-face, and need not be only money.

After all, did not the Lord Jesus tell those disciples there with Him that the words they were hearing should be lived as a new lifestyle in His kingdom? They were not only to agree that they were true and good words, and not only that they should do them, but that they were to do them?

We shall see.

7. As the time of this present dispensation and his judgment and punishment draw near, Satan is getting frantic. “I think” that when he rebelled in heaven and was cast out of heaven upon the earth he was murderously angry. He began to strike back at God, retaliating, destroying God’s creation and promoting disobedience and iniquity. Also, “I think” that as the times are coming to an end, Satan is changing from destructive retaliation to a frantic attempt to avoid God’s judgment and the fiery pit.

Come along with me on this Thought. Satan has only two choices: 1) repentance – legally still an option [I only suppose] but, according to God’s prophetic Word, it being history written in advance, repentance will not happen, and 2) prove God to be wrong in some way – a liar, incapable of doing what He said He will do, permanently put-off the judgment, etc. ??] I mention that second possibility because if some type of untruth or inadequacy can be found in God, God would be incapable of judging anyone. To judge anyone, God/Jesus must be perfect. That’s God’s standard for us, and He holds Himself to it.

We have read all chapters in the Book, including the last, so we know the end; Satan goes into the pit. But, he is still working to destroy God’s handiwork, to find a fault in God, and to avoid the pit. In the meantime, we are working in the Spirit to build up Christ’s kingdom and to abide in the Truth, having full assurance of our salvation.

8. A solid brother was saying today that he is often distracted from worship while he is in the act of worshipping. He is aware that the evil one is the distracter so he applies himself to put his mind on the Lord.

I have long experienced just the opposite. My mind is enriched about things of my life, while I am worshipping. On the other hand, it seems that I get a tune-up while worshipping. As I have said before, I’m talking of worship as being a face-to-face contact with the Lord, in which I am focused on Him and expressing myself toward Him and about Him.

9. It’s not very probable that I’ll find any disagreement by saying that God’s love [agape] in us is not produced automatically, but is an act of the will. Romans 14:23 tells us that faith must be at the base of everything, or it is sin. Like anything good that is planted in a Christian’s soul, loving with our indwelling agape can and should become habitual and prevalent in all of our life’s situations. Yes, the moment we receive the Spirit of Christ into us we possess agape, but expressing that perfect love is not automatic or involuntarily. That’s what makes Christianity totally different from all other religions or non-religions in the world – being the only religion where God Himself, with His love, comes to dwell within us, and we have the option of expressing it.

But one of our self-questions is: How does that love go about showing in and through us? What must we “do” in order to express and perfect His love? I’ll say this, that it is not always easy on our selves/souls. It is often hard on our flesh, and the Designer customized it to be difficult for each of us. That’s not to say that the reward is only in the payoff, because the reward is also in the doing – although our flesh may complain throughout the expression process. The reason: Loving the Lord enough to intentionally express our love to Him or others is often an act of totally surrendering ourselves/souls to Him [and humanly to others] – with all our hearts, with all our souls/minds, with all our energy, with all our money, with all our time, and with all other of ourselves that you can easily add to this list.

The Greek word for the verb “love” in Scripture means “to totally give ourselves/souls over to something.” It’s not simply an emotional feeling [although I’m thankful for that as is granted] but a conscious relinquishing of our lives to Him and the people/situations which He puts before us. It is a total commitment of our wills and lives.

So, when we are asked if we love the Lord, we can say: “Yes, of course I do. Just watch my life. I put others’ happiness and needs before mine. I don’t live for myself. I demonstrate His selflessness and kindness for others. I don’t do that to earn God’s approval or my salvation, but because I love Him and others and I want to please Him.” If you cannot give that answer, join with me in intentionally praying and applying myself to that end.

In any case, it seems good to be prepared to answer questions like: Did you love me when I came as that needy person to your office? Did you multiply my love or did you bury it? Was I your life, or was I your crutch?

My pre-born again old man [the big me] had and nourished a self-life. My soul was molded to focus on my own natural thoughts, emotions, things and desires. The Holy Spirit and I have not finished re-molding my soul, but the Master Architect of every aspect of life is on the job.

10. From thermodynamics, we know that heat flows from hot toward cold. If the universe was infinitely old, it would now be at a uniform temperature.

11. Astrophysicists and quantum physicists tell us that we live in a hyperspace of more than 4 dimensions. Ten is the current estimate. Of those 10 which we suppose to exist, only 4 are directly perceptible by our current technologies. The remaining 6, according to metric tensors, are “curled” in less than 10 to the minus 33 centimeter, making them smaller than the wavelength of light and thus not directly discernible by current methodologies.

Elisha knew by faith and experience that there was/is more “out there” than meets the eye – 2 Kings 6:15-17. He knew that we have more with us than the enemy has with him, either in numbers or strength. He knew that his bit of knowledge [faith in the truth] was tangible and effective. His servant could not see God’s “more” at first, but had his eyes adjusted to see further reality.

Notice that the enemy army came down toward Elisha through the ranks of God’s army, as if they were going to be allowed to do harm to God’s man. It appeared that God’s army around Elisha simply let the enemy infiltrate through their ranks. Then Elisha, through the Lord, activated the offense, not the defense.

This Thought is that there is more “out there” than meets our natural eyes, and more than currently is “seen” by our best scientific methods. If there are other dimensions than our seen 4, and they can materialize into and out of our dimensions [as shown many times in Scripture], creation is something far beyond us – unless we read and understand the Scriptures – Eph. 6:12. Things and persons are present with us, but we cannot see them at this time.

The above presents us with the possibility/probability/truth that the unseen are all around us right now, not only that they come to us from elsewhere as sent by the Lord.

12. Let’s get it straight this month. First there was nothing, then the nothing exploded and eventually became everything that is. During the process of becoming all that is, non-living molecules came together by chance. In a random process some arranged themselves into self-replicating bits of matter and became a living cell. Individual living cells then randomly grouped themselves together, forming multiple-cell living structures.

The intellectually highest group of multiple-cell living structures, called humans, began determining what was good or bad, thus establishing variable ideas of morality among human groups but, having no logical or common reason for those morals, some eventually borrowed morality from a book called “the Bible,” selecting and adjusting such selections from time to time as were helpful, desirable and thought reasonable. That allows humans to be morally comfortable while criticizing as idiots those who believe the Bible’s different account of creation.

Do we have it straight now?

13. Regarding binding and loosing as in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18, consider this. When we have sinned against someone, such as our spouse or children, asking for and receiving their forgiveness releases us and them from injury to and scarring of our and their souls. If we do not ask for and receive forgiveness, those sins are retained – meaning they remain actively poisonous.

You have heard of near-end-of-life restorations of relationships, whereby long-estranged parties were dramatically relieved, changed and restored, have you not? The sin involved had damaged those relationships for years, especially their relationships in heaven with the Lord.

We can be young only once, but we can be immature for a lifetime. Maturity begins with taking responsibility – of self, family, actions, etc. It’s the taking of responsibility, instead of laziness or blaming, that starts the maturation process.

Everyone should mature, but in Scripture the Lord seems to focus on the need for men to mature. The man of the house must be everything to his family that Jesus is to the church. Paul wrote the Letter to the Ephesians, telling them to “grow up.” Its high-point is in chapter 5, verses 25-33. I think that he put the wife’s responsibility first because she is vital to that maturation of her husband, especially if he did not grow up before marriage. Then Paul laid God’s word on the children and slaves/servants – but only after the marriage was on track.

14. Churches often derive their spirituality from their women. We could criticize that by taking the position that group spirituality should be primarily derived from men. At least for the duration of this Thought I will say that it is healthy and normal for the churches’ spirituality to come from and be nourished primarily by its women.

In a bit of contrast [but really as an example of the difference between male and female souls, and God’s division of gifts and duties] churches should derive their strength from their men.

15. In Exodus 4:24-26 Moses was almost killed by the Lord. Why?! Moses was on his way to do God’s bidding. He was in good family order, being released into his ministry by his father-in-law, who was also his pastor. Moses appeared to be in good relationship with his heavenly God, his earthly religious leader, and his family head. What else?!

Moses had not circumcised his sons. He was about to take leadership for God over Israel and go to battle against evil spiritual forces in Egypt. Yet, he had not brought his sons into the covenant that Jehovah had established through Abraham, forever. That was a major oversight. Moses was severely neglectful, as was King David in 1 Chronicles 13:9-14. How could the Lord use Moses for such important assignments in view of such neglect?!

For scriptural enrichment of this point, read Genesis 17:1-14 wherein the Lord established His covenant with Abraham and his descendents forever. Nothing can set that everlasting covenant aside, not even Israel’s disobedience. But don’t miss those last verses [9-14] where the Lord told Abraham that every male in the house was to be circumcised as a sign of His covenant. That was something the Jews themselves were to do. It did not establish or maintain the covenant, but it was a sign that the male and his household were children of the covenant and that the blood of their sacrificial animals was efficacious for them. The covenant was spiritual and of God; circumcision was physical, done by man but ordained by God. Un-circumcision, whether intentional, neglectful or in ignorance, was a sign of fatherly failure among God’s leaders. That was bad; even worse than we might imagine.

So, if Moses was not going to take spiritual and physical authority in his family, how could he be trusted with the family of God?! See 1Timothy 3:5 for a New Testament update on that requirement. I think [and I may be right] Moses’ neglect was caused by his wife’s opposition to circumcision of her sons. She considered it fine for Moses to believe in circumcision but she did not approve of his living out his belief, especially in regards to her sons! Such wifely behavior is the sin of Jezebel, the queen who ruled her husband, King Ahab. See the effects of that type of marriage “square-off” or “stalemate” in Revelation 2:20-23.

Back to our story. When it became evident that Moses was about to die [chest pain?, obstructive breathing?, a stroke?, use your own imagination as to how the Lord may have presented to Zipporah the physical threat of Moses’ dying], Zipporah took a sharp stone and circumcised her son herself. They had 2 sons, and I suggest that she circumcised the elder son. She uttered a strong objection to the specific situation and to the entire process of circumcision, showing her complete disdain for Moses, circumcision, and God. It may have been that Moses’ dire condition made him unable to do the circumcision himself, and Zipporah did it begrudgingly only to save his life.

Despite this event being such an important part of the life of Moses, we are given only 3 verses. David got only 6. Let the Spirit enrich us greatly, even through few words.

It has been said that the more valuable one is to the kingdom, the more he is tempted. In this case, the more valuable Moses and David were to the kingdom, the more God required of them – Luke 12:48. It is required of servants that they be found trustworthy – 1 Cor. 4:2. I suppose that a little trustworthiness warrants a little of God’s trust, a little diligence warrants a little assignment from God, and a little faith warrants a little response from on high. That seems both biblical and reasonable. [“Reasonable” means that I agree with God, using my somewhat enlightened human mind. We cannot and should not try to escape using our reasoning process, but yet live submissive and attentive to the Spirit.]

I had mentioned David’s equally neglectful mistake in 1 Chronicles 13:9-14. In David’s case, he was doing a tremendously good thing for the Lord, was he not? But Uzza, the man whom the Lord struck dead when he helpfully touched the Ark, was not of the priestly lineage of Aaron. Priests were the only ones allowed to put their hands to the Ark, and, they should have been carrying the Ark on poles placed through rings on the side, not carrying it in a wagon.

What a tragic thing for God to do when everyone intended to do a great thing for God. Obviously, the Lord has a different view of just what is a tragedy. Only descendents [Christians] of the High Priest [Jesus] can “move God,” bringing Him into His rightful place among His people. See 1 Chronicles 15:11-15.

David’s event with the Ark is also allegorical of Christians’ bodies being temples/Arks of the Holy Spirit. We are to be careful to not put our hands to our and others’ souls, unless we are holy instruments of the Spirit. Working in the flesh to accomplish that which only the Spirit can and should do is counterproductive. Again, compare the stony altars of Deuteronomy 27 which were to be written on but not touched/engraved with iron [the flesh] tools.

16. Men, when your wife is asked if she has been married to the same man all of her married life, what does she reply? She should be able to say, “No; he has changed for the better many times. He is not the same man that I married.”

17. When the Lord declares “Peace,” it is often a declaration of war. When Jesus said “Peace,” the war was over promptly. When we proclaim it, some faithful laboring in our armor may be necessary before we have brought peace to our family, church, etc.

18. A crisis strips us down to core beliefs, removing or lessening the less important, like denominationalism, finances, formerly serious disagreements, and even relating to health problems contrasted to dying. There is nothing so quickly sobering and unifying as is a true crisis. The Lord has blessed Israel and the church many times by bringing them/us a crisis.

19. The Lord has done a special thing in the minds of the Jews. As a small group, they continue blessing the rest of us far out of proportion to their and our numbers with what seems the best of everything.

Now, again in the field of electronics, they have developed the best. They have several types of radar systems that can do wide-view scanning, eliminating the need to rotate like regular radars. The systems scan entire sections of territory, tracking multiple targets simultaneously. They are also sensitive to objects moving at slow speeds, even picking up lizards and trees waving in the breeze. The equipment simultaneously detects and tracks targets while constantly monitoring the area.

That’s part of God’s faithfulness to Abraham, Moses, and other Old Testament saints.

20. With how many others, family or otherwise, have you established this sort of covenant: “Whatever I have is yours, and whatever you have is mine? When you have a need, I will come to your aid. When I have a need, you will come to my aid. When those times of need arise, we will not make a decision of whether to act, for we have today made that decision.” That is the Lord’s covenant with us, and He is working in us to bring us to the same with Him, and with one another.

21. I think that most wives will appreciate this list of “do’s.” They have to do with building and intensifying emotional intimacy with their husbands.

 1) Greet your husband at the door when he comes home from work or from anywhere. He may have had a great day somewhere else, but show him that you can top it, with ease.

 2) Make your home a happy place. A happy wife impacts and empowers her husband, indicating to him that, despite his many and severe inadequacies, he is more than equal to the task of husbandship.

 3) If you are on the phone when he comes in, hang up promptly. Strengthen this display of honor by telling the person on the phone that you must go now because your husband has arrived. This gives him the impression that he is important to you. Try to live up to this impression.

 4) Look good, especially for him. Your efforts will not go unnoticed or unrewarded. He’s stuck with you for life, but don’t rub his face in it.

 5) Let him hear you praising him to someone, especially to your family. He will be pleased to have proven your parents wrong.

 6) When he occasionally does something good, give him praise. He might do it again.

 7) Now a “don’t.” Don’t lose your cool when he loses his. This will be a positive reinforcement to you both that you are vital to the relationship and have what it takes to be a good wife and mother [or will remind him why you were, years ago]. This is one place where you can outdo him without making him feel inferior.

I must give credit to the one who has displayed these 7 points now for almost 60 years of our marriage, and during the 2 years of our courtship. She has never changed.

22. Would you rather the Lord talk to you about your iniquity or sins or transgressions? All 3 is not a choice! In Psalm 103:10-12 David mentions all 3 types of missing the mark. FYI: Iniquity is “sold out to” sinfulness, sin or sins are the acts, and transgressions are perversions. That’s putting it simple enough to be inaccurate, but that’s the way I think of them. The Holy Spirit bundles the 3 together in one verse in Exodus 34:7.

23. Perhaps Jeremiah knew this little saying another way, plus in his own language: “Any jackass can kick down a barn, but it takes a good carpenter to build one.” If he did not know that truth from his youth, he learned it early-on from the Lord. In 1:10 the Lord told him that he was going to do a lot of kicking down, but ended His/his commission with “To build and to plant.” Ignorance and unrighteousness can cause a lot of destruction of that which may or may not have needed it. We need carpenters. Do you suppose that is the reason Jesus was a carpenter? It was no accidental piece of God’s majestic plan.

24. Let’s move from the carpentry shop to the farm: “Don’t ever wrestle with a pig. You’ll both get dirty, and the pig will enjoy it.” How true. When you get down and dirty with someone in an argument, whether it lasts for seconds or years, the pig will enjoy it and will work to prolong it. I have noticed at least a bit of pig-ism in me.

25. Not to change the topic, let’s move now into masonry: “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?” That’s Psalm 11:3. I know where you live, so I can say that this is true for all of us, that our social foundations are crumbling – meaning our moral, religious, social, denominational, financial, etc. foundations. If you are a Christian, your spiritual foundation in Him will not and cannot crumble. If you decide to base your life or some particular decision on something/someone else than Him, be prepared for troubles. This is a time of widespread crumbling.

What to do? Personally, repent. Then pray for yourself and others. Share the good news with those who are living by the bad news. Do good to everyone, especially [?] to those who mistreat you. In other words, make Christianity believable. We may not be able to heal everyone [Acts 10:38], but we can do good to them. It’s evidence that our God is with us.

Besides, doing good to others is evidence of compassion. Jesus is recorded as having a full range of our human emotions, but the record shows His compassion more than any other ingredient of His love. Our flesh’s self-centeredness wars against our compassion. How is the battle going? Do you need to do something about it? Here’s some help: Do simple acts for the most insignificant people, and do them in Jesus’ name. The Lord will do something beyond that which you do.

26. Here is a way among many ways to boil life down to its essentials:

 Life is short,

 Death is sure,

 Sin the curse,

 Christ the cure.

27. When the Lord calls us, we come from where we are, and come to Him in various ways. That means He does not tell us to start from elsewhere or to come in any particular way. Compare our nation’s beginning “under God” yet for years with slavery, Indian persecution and women’s rights.

28. How is the good life coming along? And how is the full life coming? Western culture often defines the good life as temporal plenty and good health. The full life, or well-rounded life, can be defined as [all 4 of] the following: Length of years, depth of commitment to God and man, breadth of commitment [including to the insignificant ones you encountered], and height of confidence [again, in God and man].

29. Prayer can be well-defined as a going forward, a procession forward, or a journeying forward. The root meaning of the word “prayer” means exactly that. It is a going to meet the Lord; a special journey into His presence.

While we are on the topic of prayer, I understand that Psalm 46:10, which says, “Be still and know that I am God” can at times be better said this way: “Shut up and listen to Me!” Something rings true in that translation into the vernacular.

30. There were 3 Herods mentioned in the New Testament – Herod the Great, his son Herod Antipas, and his grandson Herod Agrippa. The whole family was cruel and ruthless, associated with death. Herod the Great killed the children in Bethlehem soon after Jesus’ birth, Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist, and Herod Agrippa put James to death.

Manaen [Acts 13:1] grew up in the household of the Herods. He may have been a relative, but was at least a childhood companion of Herod Antipas. God’s grace reached into that familial mess and rescued another sinner. Of course, that was also true for the others mentioned in that verse, including Saul/Paul.

31. Spiritual enslavement ordinarily is a gradual process, at least in a christianized society or person. Pagan societies have no strength to resist. The enslavement process applies even if we are solid Christians. Graduality, deception and enticement make the protean approach successful in too many cases. For example, we can become enslaved to our financial savings, thus reducing our generosity and benevolence. We can be enslaved to any one of our favorite gods.

The process of enslavement usually starts with a small or brief submission to a god, hoping to improve our lot by just a little compromise with that which is known truth. If it works to our apparent benefit, we begin to depend more frequently on the god, and even build that act of submission/worship into our lives. Next it becomes a lifestyle, supported by “results” and a form of stability or easy habit. Next comes more obvious evil and anti-Scripture practices, with greater dependence upon that god. We then must placate that god, such as putting “enough” into financial reserve to qualify for a higher rate of return.

 If you have not picked up on this by now, no one action is evil. In our financial example, saving money is not sinful, except when we have and hold for the future that which our brother needs today. But as those gods pretend to be our servants, they quickly gain power over us and over those others who look to us for example. They and we become more than distractions for those who seek the Way. They become our oppressors and controllers.

It’s best to not start the downhill slide [but we all do, at least on occasion]. Do what Jesus did [of course] in Luke 4.

32. Here in Corpus Christi we are talking about how to change our culture into one more accurately reflecting righteousness and unity. The following is a list of things that we believe need to be focused upon:

 1) Do things because they are right, and say so.

 2) Have the courage to resist pressure. The encouragement of certain others helps a lot!

 3) The friction and error of our culture require truth working through constructive, peaceful communication.

 4) The community wants to trust its leaders. Leaders need to trust one another, and say so, openly. We must set the example, talk it openly, and show it by word and deed.

 5) We first, then the city, need to have a vision for what we are jointly pursuing, starting with things of the heart, and taking one step at a time.

 6) All of this requires reliance on a holy, living God. He is the central focus of our vision. Each of us has a somewhat different way of relying on Him, but He knows that.

 7) Godly leaders are God’s gift to this community. The Lord is currently doing that. We here are no accidental grouping. We have been harnessed together. What happens next depends upon God’s grace working among us.

33. The Constitution of the United States of America is a highly Judeo-Christian religious-political document. It was meant to limit government and reserve freedom to the people. It was meant to be a statement of definite standards and rules, with built-in provisions for its change. It was not meant to be ignored or changed by redefinition of words and terms. It was definitely written to stand against those who believed there was no inherent limit to state power.

However, during my lifetime, actually since 1932, 2 years after my birth, it has been subjected to gradual change in non-constitutional ways. Essentially, the Supreme Court has ruled that times and situations change, so that the Constitution needs to be changed by judicial fiat if standard constitutional processes do not keep up with “changing times.” That political stance places 5 persons [a simple majority of the 9 Supreme Court justices] in the elite position of determining the laws of the United States as social situations evolve. By judicial declaration, they legislate. Those elites and those social evolutionary changes have been shown to be basically or outright non-Christian and anti-Christian.

Such a condition would not surprise our founders; they wrote the Constitution. They knew the nature of man, so wrote the Constitution to control that nature. Our second president, John Adams, wrote: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” He and his peers could see it coming, and did all they could to stop it. They left it to a moral and religious people to hold the line.

Similarly, in the church we have been brought into the King’s presence to hold whatever line was and is established by the Lord. The gospel is given into the care of a righteous, faith-based, spiritually minded, Spirit-led people. It will not be accepted by or endure among christianoids. It is not surprising that political progressivism [social Darwinism] developed alongside “progressive creation,” known as natural evolution. Wherever the church has allowed the state to gather unlimited power to itself, it [the church] has neglected the unlimited power of its Builder, Sustainer and eventual Receiver to Himself.

34. A note to hoary heads among us: Use your wisdom and knowledge and righteousness in as large of a corporate setting as you can. You are statesmen in your family, congregation, field of endeavor and Life. You cannot be and are not meant to be easily replaced. It took many earth-years to produce you, so don’t “retire” and rust out. No one rightly expects those in the church whom I will call “great statesmen” to be young. Great mathematicians might be young, but they are not “great statesmen.” Great statesmen [those possessing practical, theoretical and theological wisdom] have been made in the crucible of God.

35. Why did the Israelites celebrate freedom while they were still slaves in Egypt? They celebrated the Passover hours before the Passover occurred. They celebrated freedom from Egyptian bondage while they were still slaves in Egypt. That’s like the Jews celebrating Passover in Auschwitz, which they did. We have heard a lot about how beliefs shape reality. That means faith causes things to happen or, in other words, that the Lord creates His desires based upon our faithful obedience to Him.

Human faith, even that of atheists, achieves a lot. As a young married man with 2 children, I believed that I could be a physician. Without that faith [although at that time that faith was not in the Lord], I would have never prepared for pre-medical studies, gone to college, gone through those tough courses, gone to medical school, worked my [Nancy and I] way through, sacrificed in every way, etc. But my level of faith was sufficient to move me along, one step at a time.

It had helped my vision and faith that I had had a family physician role model. First I was free internally [raised up with a positive attitude], then I could “see” it or “taste” it, then I took faithful, timely actions. The Lord was behind all of the process but I did not have an active faith in Him during those years. It was my confidence in being able to progress into my vision that set things in motion and kept them moving until they were accomplished.

We can be free indeed before we are free in the natural.

36. Until next month, remember that no amount of makeup can mask an ugly heart.