

An Inconvenient Truth: From a Lay Leader's Perspective

Greetings, Aldersgate Family!

Yes, it's been quite a while since I reached out to you to share my meandering thoughts. To be honest, I ran dry on subjects to share. I honestly don't know how Pastor Lee thinks of something new to say each and every week. I am awed by his quick and fertile mind.

And yet, I have to confess something to you. I ran dry for two reasons: 1) Recently my quiet times with the Lord have been briefer and sometimes I even skipped them; and 2) I have continued to do consulting work during the pandemic and at times I was super busy so studying and writing about things of the Lord suddenly seemed inconvenient to me.

A long time ago I had a boss who said something that has always stayed with me. I will roughly paraphrase him here: "I find that the staff members who are truly the most valuable are not always the most naturally talented ones. Give me someone who is willing to be inconvenienced for the greater good any day over a talented staff member who doesn't want to suffer any inconvenience."

Mr. Smithwick (my boss then) was speaking in the natural, but his wise words resonate in the spiritual realm too. Friends, we all know there is no greater good than serving within the will of God. But then there's this: Such service often comes with attached inconveniences. The Bible is replete with examples of people who moved out of their comfort zones to do the right things. Peter and Andrew had to leave their profession as fishermen, their homes, and families to follow Christ. Ruth had to leave her homeland to follow Naomi to hers. Joseph was imprisoned because he didn't want to compromise himself with Potiphar's wife. Thankfully, the inconvenience or trial for each of these individuals was eclipsed by the joyful end result.

Galatians 6:2 says: *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* Maybe you have found this to be true (I know I have) — helping someone during a time of need is often inconvenient. Some examples, we've probably all experienced include helping a friend move on what should have been a restful weekend; loaning someone money when we wanted to spend it on ourselves; or talking with a friend or relative late at night when we were dead tired because that person was laid low by tragedy, disappointment or frustration and needed a willing ear

Remember Jesus, whom we strive to be like, was often inconvenienced by the pressing needs of human beings who desperately needed healing and hope. When he was exhausted and tired and the crowds followed him anyway, did He turn them away? Recall Luke 9:10-11: *When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing.*

Yes, our Lord more than inconvenienced Himself for our greater good. My prayer is this: When I personally lose sight of that truth, I hope I always will eventually make my way back to it. I wish that for you too.