

Trust in Him who holds our future

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In my first years of ministry, I had a District Superintendent who drilled into us that challenges and changes are “opportunities to excel” for men and women of faith. With tears in my heart, I called him and stated that I had an “opportunity to excel” because the Wesley House at Stetson University had been struck by lightning and had burned down.

The reality was that I did not think of the fire as an opportunity to excel at the time. There were a lot of heart aches and times of high stress, a lot of wondering what the future might hold or even if there was going to be a future. It was a trial that brought changes. Nothing would ever be as it was before.

And in some ways that was good. I had taken up golf, and knew just about every inch of the golf course – except the fair way! When my clubs melted in the fire, I took it as a sign from God and have never taken up a golf club since, except for putt-putt.

But more than a change in spending time on the greens, it caused us to re-examine our purpose and focus on what we were doing and where we were going. The future was not secure as it had been, and we had to step out on faith and trust in God as we worked on building and securing what our new future was going to be.

With the recent news about U.S. Sugar, our communities are faced with a change and a challenge. Again I find myself in a community situation where we don't know what the future holds, but we know things will never be as they were. It is time again to trust in Him who holds our future and act accordingly.

Pastor Chuck Pelham of New Harvest Church expressed some of these same thoughts in a letter he shared with me. It's addressed to the pastors around the Lake, but it could be to all men and women of faith:

Dear Fellow Servants of the Lord, I am writing this letter to you in a response to the recent news concerning U.S. Sugar. I am sure by now you have heard many things that have been circulated in our community by many people who are fearful and full of worry. I believe as the ministers of this city it is our responsibility to stand in our pulpits and declare with unity and with authority that this city is a prosperous place and our greatest days are ahead of us and not behind us.

This should not come as a surprise to us but rather as an answer to prayer. For many years churches have stood and believed God for a move of God in this city and region and many of us have prayed for God to do a new thing. Well the new thing has arrived. It may not have come in the package that we thought it would come in but nevertheless it's here. And if it's really a new thing then it must be a new thing - meaning something that we have never seen. Isa 43: 19 "For I am about to do a brand-new thing. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness for my people to come home. I will create rivers for them in the desert!" (NLT)

I believe not only is this a great opportunity for our city but for churches as well. This is an hour for our churches to stand tall and begin to shine in the face of impending darkness. People need to hear that God has a plan for this City and region. "He has a plan to give us a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11).

I have lived in Clewiston my entire life - was even born at Hendry Regional back when it had a maternity ward and I can honestly say with all my heart that I believe this area is coming into a greater opportunity. It is our responsibility to convey the message that even though U.S. Sugar was responsible for 51% of the economy here in our area they are still not the largest source in our area. God is our source! U.S. Sugar was a resource not a source.

So as we stand to declare over our city and region, let's stand in confidence knowing that "He who began a good work is faithful to complete it." God bless and may you have a powerful service this Sunday.