

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period). Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared, and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." Uriah went out of the King's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. David said to Uriah, "You have just come from a journey. Why did you not do gown to your house?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing." Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die."

'It happened, late one afternoon, when king David arose from his couch' . . . that his decline began. No misfortune had come his way to start up his downward spiraling litany of selfish choices. Rather, it happened late one afternoon with an internal arousal of sexual desire. As David looked out from his window he saw a beautiful woman. Then, even though Bathsheba was another man's wife, he took her. Later when he found out that she was pregnant he tried to cover up his misdeed by giving her husband 'R&R' from his guard duty at the Ark of the Covenant. But when Uriah foiled the king's plan by refusing to leave his post and go home to sleep with his wife, David eliminated the problem by taking Uriah's life.

Some say that David's downfall is a prime example of Sigmund Freud's psycho-sexual thesis---that in our ego's struggle to tame, shape and control innate survival instincts, primitive sexual and aggressive impulses will win out. That, like David, an unbridled sense of entitlement, arrogant position of absolute power, and rejection of accountability will emerge to strengthen self-justifying, self-serving behavior. And that, like David, it's only a matter of time until every one of us arises from our couch late some afternoon to make headlines on the nightly news.

Others look on the brighter side by taking a look at our slippery slope decline from a theological point of view of faith. In his book, 'Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places,' Eugene Petersen wrote: Sin is not a mistake, bad call, poor judgment, error, wrong, negligent, slip, over-sight, misstep, stupidity, screw-up, bungle, faux pas of the ego. It is not an immoral act or crime accomplished, but rather a disconnected or refused relationship with God that spills over into a wrong relationship with others. But, just as important to understand, sin is neither incidental nor "fixable." That's why in church we say, 'We can't save us from ourselves, but God can.'

In "Half of the Truth," Peter and Helen Evans wrote: 'We sometimes see articles that bemoan the human condition. The



authors usually cite war, greed, pornography, selfishness, etc. as evidence of human weakness and failure. If it's not a downright condemnation of human nature, it's a sort of reverse snobbery in the form of "Let's laugh at our own stupidity." The authors are basically saying, "Let's just give in to human nature because it's all messed up and can't be changed." True enough, human nature seems to be carnal, selfish and forever dissatisfied. But that's only half the truth. We are not "only" human, this animal form with its nasty needs and worrisome weaknesses, but we are also the greater consciousness-force which incarnates in this (human) form.'

In a 1955 documentary Helen Keller was asked the question, "Can you see a world? She answered, "I can see, and that is why I can be happy, in what you call the dark, but which to me is golden. I can see a God-made world, not a man-made world" (Homiletics, July 2003, p. 34). Today, her faith and thoughts about God's activity in nature and engagement with people steps us into our Biblical world of faith, posing the question: What treasure of greater-consciousness force challenges the idea that we can't be changed? According to our Old Testament story, by the time David bottomed out in his sin, he had broken five of the Ten Commandments. By killing, committing adultery, stealing, and coveting he had broken covenant with his neighbors. By acting as though God had no claim on him he had broken his promise to have no others gods before the Lord Almighty. He was in that sinful state of disconnect, refused, distorted relationship with God. But because God is good, all the time, the story didn't end with David's sin. Rather, it ended on a victorious note with Uriah's treasure of faith. Unlike David who acted as though God had no claim on him, Uriah acted as though God had claim on every aspect of his life. When David tried to trap Uriah in his web of deceit by giving him leave to go home and sleep with his wife, Uriah said to David: 'The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing.' Uriah refused to break covenant with his God. He stood firm in his commitment to

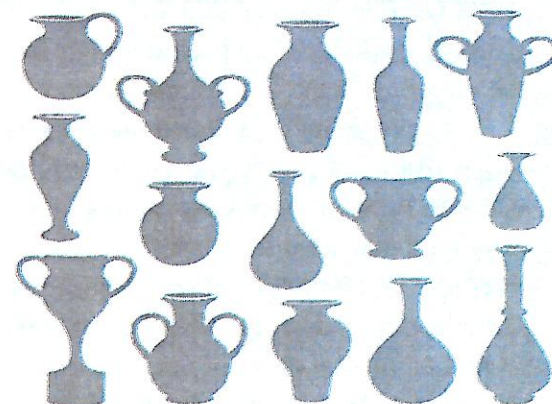
defend and protect the ark. He chose to stay in God's camp in solidarity with God's powerless, marginal, and vulnerable; people. Deep down in his bones, Uriah trusted in the Lord's life giving force and repairing of broken relationships that comes through faithful practice of God's Ten Commands and heeding of the words from God's prophets.

The scripture for the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the MACUCC was:

### **Come to celebrate, worship and be joyful together!**

*But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.*

*- 2 Corinthians 4:7*



In the movie, 'Pirates of the Caribbean', Captain Sparrow (played by Johnny Depp) had a magical compass that pointed in the direction of the bearer's true heart desire. One day, the compass needle kept on spinning and refused to stop and point to a direction. The harder he tried to get in touch with what way he wanted to go, the wobblier the needle got. Without the guide of the compass he had to rely on his own ego-centric judgments. By the end of the movie (after making a string of bad choices) he gave the compass to lady love, in whose hands the needle stopped---to point the way. For Christians, Jesus is our compass, the 'greater-consciousness force in our jar of clay who transforms our refused, distorted, and disconnected relationship with God through forgiveness of human sin. As the only Human One eternally begotten by God, he is our treasure of faith who assures us of the truth of God in our broken world: that nothing can separate us from God's Love for us.