

Recently we had some issues with the clothes dryer at the parsonage not drying as well as it had in the past. Soon after, we noticed the drum beginning to sound rough as if it were off-track. On investigation, Don discovered that it was loose. After mentioning this in a Sabbath Café conversation, a gentleman from the church offered to help, and together they took the dryer apart, cleaned out lint throughout the machine and discovered a worn-out part. Then the question was: Can we find a replacement part given the dryer's age? Don remembered having gone to Ulman Appliance at one point for another appliance replacement part. So he went again and was met by an elderly man to whom he showed the worn-out part. The gentleman said: “Well, let's see.” And then he went into the back of the store. After a few minutes he came back with the needed part. He told Don how to install it and gave suggestions on reassembling the dryer. A few days later after another Sabbath Café conversation, another handy person offered to come over to help reassemble the dryer. So all three men worked together on it, and after a final switching of 2 wires the dryer ran again. This whole experience was an example of people and resources coming together for a common purpose, and in this case, for a blessing to the church. Because of the people and resources involved, what could have been a large expense was only the cost of the part: \$31.45! Did God have a hand in this?

Today's Scripture lesson from Matthew is the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus takes the disciples with whom he felt the deepest connection - Peter, James and John - up a mountain to witness something that will change their lives forever. Suddenly, they see Jesus become shining bright. Moses and Elijah appear, who represent the OT law and prophets, and who affirm Jesus' life and his work of salvation that would soon take him to the cross. Then a bright cloud comes over them and they hear the voice of God the Father saying: **“This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!”**

The Transfiguration of Jesus was not only a time of affirming that Jesus, the Beloved Son, was doing the will of the Father, but it also had an impact on the 3 disciples. For them, the divinity of Jesus was confirmed. They would soon see that the One loved by the Father would become a model for showing them how to love unconditionally. And this loved, and loving Son of God, would become an encouragement to them when they'd face the trials of persecution and martyrdom that lay ahead. And God's hand was in all of this, for in this event, God the Father brought together the past in Moses and Elijah, and the present in Jesus and his disciples. And he brought together the human and the divine.

This is what we call “convergence.” Webster's dictionary defines “convergence” as a tendency to come together, to merge, to be inclined toward each other, and to tend to a common result, or conclusion. In the Transfiguration, God the Father brought people, divine and human resources, and circumstances together for a particular purpose which was to empower Jesus' present ministry and the disciples' future ministry. In fact, God is *always* working to bring things together in particular ways for his purposes. It's just that we may not always notice this going on, until something dramatic happens. For example, when we look at the circumstances around Jesus' birth, we see the divine plan in the words of Gal. 4:4 where it says: **“When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. ...”** And there's more: Jesus was born in a time of relative peace, when there was a common

language, and when the road system was the best it had ever been—all of which would facilitate the spread of the Gospel. This was God's handiwork.

And we might ask: Is this kind of convergence going on today? Is God bringing people, resources and circumstances together for a common purpose which is his purpose—in order to bring blessings into your life and mine, and into the world?

The proof is before us! Here are just 3 examples: When we celebrated our 125th anniversary as a congregation, there was much planning that went on. And what we saw was—a coming together of members of the congregation, citizens of the community, the mayor, past clergy, musicians from our church and the Spencer church, a wonderful history book was assembled, a tasty meal enjoyed, and more. God brought all of this together so that we might have an opportunity to honor those who came before us, and those who are here now, and to recognize God's grace and blessing in all of it. Another example is the Last Supper drama, where for many years God has brought together a cast, crew, financial resources, other resources, and this facility for presenting it. And the gift is that this drama has the capability, through the Holy Spirit's power, to change lives and bring people to faith. And in last December's Sunday School puppet play about the little lost angel, God brought together adults and youth, some one of whom who had never done puppetry before, and the needed resources, and the right space, so that we were all blessed in presenting it and seeing it.

Right now we're also in a time of convergence. Several threads of related spiritual events have begun or will soon begin: our Audacious Christianity process, where persons are using their gifts and talents, to multiply seed money they've received; the Revival experience on May 15 and pre-revival concert on April 10; March as prayer month; the UMW reading program in which 8 persons are involved; the Lenten Journey invitation which includes, Scripture reading, prayer, giving, and inviting; and the Walk to Nazareth which will be introduced in 2 weeks. There was no one person who put this all together. Instead, what happened was that 4 sets of people made offerings of their ideas, time and talent within a short period of time. God took these and is creating a time of convergence, when multiple threads of related events are going on at the same time. When that happens, expect something amazing to occur. See it as God bringing it all together. Live it as such. And look for the end result. It is often through convergence that God changes us, gives us a glimpse of what his Kingdom on earth can truly be like, and leads us into a deeper relationship with him and each other.

God is always bringing things together in various ways for his purposes, in order to bless us and enable us to be a blessing in the world. This was the experience of Jesus and the disciples in the Transfiguration event, and it is ours today as well. Amen.