

Alleluia

Dove

A Weekly Publication of the
ALLELUIA COMMUNITY
Augusta, Georgia



Vol. 43, No. 46

January 23, 2016

Go... Be... Fit It All In

By Andy Hatfield



"Daddy, can I bring my soccer ball?"
"Daddy, can I bring my dollhouse?"
"No, they won't fit."
"Daddy, should I

bring my winter coat?"
"Nope, you won't need it."
"Sissy, did you remember to bring your walking shoes?"
"Bubba, don't forget your church clothes."
"Honey, I want to take the big suitcase, just in case."
"Daddy, Daddy, are we really going to go to Disney World?"
"Of course, sweetheart, if we can get it all in..."

It is a valid question, "How are we going to fit it All In?" My response to this daily question is generally that we can't. We need to ask God what we need to be doing on a daily basis. When I get to school, I say a simple prayer: "Dear Lord, please organize my day so that I can get done what needs to be done today." I don't usually get everything I am planning done, but when I follow His promptings, I usually get more done than I might think is possible, often more than I hoped and, once in a while, all the stuff on my list.

The state of being All In, often

becomes the problem of fitting it All In. In the world that we are called to live in, there are so many good things going on. If we add "community" to all that, then we really have a car load that can be too full. This is overwhelming and we cannot fit it All In. As my ninth graders said to me, "You need to prioritize." In many cases, it comes down to what needs to be in the car. Sissy needs her walking shoes, and Bubba needs his church clothes, but the winter coat, soccer ball and dollhouse, all good things, don't need to come to Disney World. A question we had to answer is, "Should we let one of our children participate in Social on a Thursday evening?"

Let's take a look at one area of our community life that is often used as a measure of All In, and is especially poignant when considering Fitting it All In. There are times when, "Honey, the baby needs to be changed, the dishes are not done, Sissy had a rough day, Bubba has homework and I don't think I can handle going to the prayer

New Faith Builder Column to be Added

At the last Pastoral Team Meeting, a new faith-building column for the Dove was discussed. It will be a small box on the back page of the Dove, with items received from members regarding such things as answered prayers, healings, conversions, special little miracles God did, etc. Please email them to Bob Nestor (bobn@yeslord.com) or bring such items to the office for the Elders to discern if it is something that could be used as a faith builder for our readers. Questions? Call Bob Nestor (706-803-221-9805).

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Go All In, to Be All In and He will Fit it All In

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meeting after a full day at work. I think one of us needs to stay home tonight." There are times when, "It is 'melt-down o'clock.'" There are times when, "Are you kidding me? We have work party on opening/game day again!" Whether we fulfill our agreement to attend community meeting unless released is a visible measure of our commitment. I surely won't address the general question of "should I go?" right here, but we have a mechanism to answer it. We ask to be released, and then we are covered by the wonderful blessing of headship. When we go through the proper channels, we are still All In even if we are not All There.

Another good measure of our All In-ness is our call to pray. There are times when, "I got up late and I can't have a prayer time." This happens too often in my own life. Whenever I have a meeting with my personal head, he always asks about my personal prayer time. Pray. Pray! PRAY!!! This is a much less visible measure of our commitment, but no less important. It ties in nicely, though, with the previous area. My experience is that when I "get on my knees," God simply makes more room in my life and gives me life in abundance. When we are All In for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we spend time with them, we listen to them, and they give us the grace to fit it All In. I know I am being a little naïve when I paint a perfect picture after prayer; but life without prayer... that I am not naïve about.

Measuring our commitment level is not just about long prayer times and making it to meetings. We have 28 rules in our Rule of Life, a Covenant and a Teaching Program that we are trying to live up to. They are all tied to our commitment. Each of us struggles with some of these areas and has

great success with others. At the past men's meeting, we were called to look at one Rule of Life that we need to work on, and bring it under headship. Is this because we are not 'All In?' No, it is because we are All In. We are called to go higher up and deeper in, and this means we have room to grow and are committed to growth.

Part II



"OK, Bubba, you can bring the soccer ball and, Sissy, you can bring the dollhouse."

"Thanks, Daddy!"

"But, we are going to have to leave the baby behind."

"What? NO!!! You can't leave the baby. This is our first trip to Disney World."

"But we can't get All In the car with these nice toys."

"Please, Daddy, don't leave the baby. We don't need the soccer ball or dollhouse."

"Of course we will bring the baby."

The question is a little different now, "Are WE ALL In?" That is to say, "Do we have everybody?" What do I need to sacrifice so that everybody can fit in the car? Are my attachments holding me or others back from getting in the car or, using Bob Garrett's marionette analogy, are my attachments pulling the strings in my life or the lives of others? We all know that we can bring nothing with us to Heaven but each other. Are we living our lives that way?

Our Rule of Life exhorts us to have our children be active in community life. Scripture tells us to raise up a child in the way he should go... One of the problems that surfaced in

my support group lately is that none of the kids want to come to anything we do. "It is boring," or, "We never do anything fun." I don't believe that I am called to be an entertainer as a Support Group Head, but I do feel the need to engage our children where they are. "Jesus, take me as I am, I can come no other way," is a prayer of mine, and I need to be the man that extends the same courtesy to others. I need to take them as they are, they cannot come any other way.

We need to be the kind of people who hop in the car and encourage others to hop in the car, not because it is going to be a great time, but because we don't want anyone to miss out. Our invitation from the Lord is to Go All In, to Be All In and He will Fit it All In. It is going to be crowded and bumpy. The car will break down once in a while and we will have to get out and fix it. The baby will need be changed and Sissy will touch Bubba, again. We might just leave a toy on the side of the road, or pick up a new one on the way. But when we get to our destination and then, finally, arrive back home, we find out that the ride was as important and fun as the destination.

Before I wrap this sharing up, I want to say that I try really hard not to question the commitment level of my brothers and sisters unless I have a pastoral role and need to call them on. I look at so many of our younger members who are under the strain of school debt, a society that is vastly different than the one I grew up in, and so many other pressures that I don't even relate to, and I see people who are in love with Jesus. I see people who are generous, kind, loving and playing in the backyard with their

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Find the Call to be 'All In' Alleluia

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children like my dad used to do with me. I see people who are committed to be with a bunch of old folks (no offence intended; I too am gray and balding), so that they can be called to holiness as a people of praise. I see people who are investing time and energy into their peers, so that more people might find the call to be 'All In' Alleluia. I see a people who is growing and maturing before our very eyes.

As Chuck Hornsby mentioned in his article about being 'All In' last week, "The understanding of what it meant to live under the Lordship of Jesus was that we would hold nothing back. We would be 'all in' no matter the cost, no matter the sacrifice, no matter the inconvenience, and no matter our preferences. We often failed miserably at doing it, but we all believed we should be 'all in' and we all tried."

I pray that we can be sold out for Jesus (Go All In), that we can all ride in the car (Be All In-cluded) and that God will give us the grace to do what He has called us to do (Fit it All In).

I offer three Scriptures to meditate on that might help you Be All In:

Joshua 24:14

Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

2 Timothy 2:22

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheri-

tance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

The word picture from this short story has always helped me to learn how to fit it all in. It is important to figure out what the Big Rocks represent.

A teacher produced about a dozen big rocks and placed them, one at a time, into a large jar.

When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?"

"Yes," they replied.

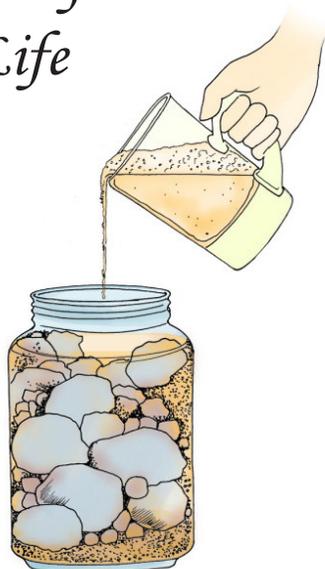
"Really?" he said, "Let's see." He pulled out some gravel and dumped them in. He shook the jar, causing the pieces to work them down. He asked the students again, "Is the jar full?"

"Probably not," they replied.

"Very good!" he said. He started dumping sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. When he was finished he asked again, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted.

Jar of Life



"Excellent!" he replied. Then he poured a pitcher of water in it until the jar was filled to the brim. The students looked at jar which was totally full, then looked back at him.

The teacher looked intently back at the students and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One student said, "You could always fit more things into your life if you really work at it."

The teacher said "That's true, but it's not the point of this illustration". He said, "The point is, if you don't put the big rocks in first, ... would you ever have gotten any of them in?"

(This is a story that I heard many years ago, and there are many versions on the internet.)

In the book of Joshua Chapter 24 we are exhorted, "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD." I fear that this can be interpreted in many ways, again all valid. I would ask you to look at yourself and see if you have put away the gods which are creeping into our lives today. Please do not try to do this for your neighbor. Ask your head, spouse, older woman to help you see if you are All In or if there are things packed in your car that cause _____?

Andy Hatfield is a teacher in the Alleluia Community High School and advisor to the Robotics Club, and serves on the Music Ministry and Pastoral Teams. A second generation member and school alumni, he has been a Full Covenant member of Alleluia Community since 1994. He and his wife, Janet, have four children and attend St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Former Life versus Present Life



By Larry Stenger

Too often we regard living in community as a normal lifestyle. Recently, in my prayer time, I started thinking about this. What if my wife and I had never joined community and instead stayed in Ohio? What would the contrast be?

In Ohio, I considered myself a pretty good Christian. I went to church every week. I was a member of our local parish's Spiritual Development Team. I didn't break any of the Ten Commandments. I even prayed periodically.

I loved my family and supported them in a middle class life style. I had some friends from church and work, and I think they

enjoyed my company. I even attended some Christian programs like Marriage Encounter and Cur-sillo. I knew I wasn't a saint, but I considered myself a pretty good old boy.

So now I'm in Georgia in the Alleluia Community. I no longer think of myself as a pretty good Christian. Rather, I know that I am a sinner, a person who must strive every day to try to become more like Jesus. I often ask Jesus to forgive me for being prideful or angry or ungrateful or impatient. I now attend church four to six times a week. I pray every morning and night and times in between.

I don't have a few friends anymore, but many, many brothers and sisters who love me in good times and in bad. Brothers and sisters who share, serve and support me and my family. Brothers and sisters with whom I have prayed, laughed and cried. Their joy is my joy. Their sorrow is my sorrow. I go to gatherings with them and pray and sing and many times can't help but to dance with joy. (They even laugh at some of my poor jokes.)

Why, why is there such a difference? I was happy in Ohio, but now in Georgia I am joyful. I'm now trying to live my life for Jesus. My treasure is no longer my possessions but Jesus and the brothers and sisters who reflect His love each day. Can anyone ask for more than this? I think not. Thank you, gracious God, for bringing me to Alleluia. Thank you, my good brothers and sisters, for accepting and loving me. I now have a real hope for spending eternity with my treasures.

Alleluia School of Spiritual Direction

Twenty students are participating in the current session on Prayer in the Alleluia School of Spiritual Direction being held January 15-28 in St. Michael's Hall at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Presenters include Fr. Tim McKeown, Fr. Brett Brannon, Rev. Tommy Meador and Mike and Bev Firmin.

The participants are being immersed in common worship, learning the elements of the art of spiritual direction, sharing a deepening fellowship over common meals, practicing real spiritual direction with one another, having three hours per day of personal prayer over assigned Scriptures, benefiting from one-on-one spiritual direction and ten evening lectures.

Open to any baptized Christian, the School emphasizes growing in personal holiness, developing a strong life of prayer and learning the skills necessary to accompany others on their journey to the Father in heaven. The students must complete three unique two-week sessions, go on a directed silent retreat of at least five days, and complete a Practicum in which they guide a seeking person through 16 weeks of prayer using a scriptural format and meeting once a week during the 16 weeks. The sessions are given twice a year, in January and June, rotating through three themes of Prayer, Healing and Virtue.

Larry Stenger, a retired engineer, is a Pastoral Coordinator, an Elder of the Alleluia Community, and the Administrator of the Alleluia Christian Service Center, responsible for overseeing the office. He and his late wife, Sue, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia since 1981. He has six children and nine grandchildren and attends St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

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