

January 1, 2011

Middletown has always been a unique city. Because of its place along the Erie Canal, becoming a major force in the Steel Industry, a center for Paper products, and a birthplace of many creative and talented people, Middletown has always seemed to have a unique identity and destiny.

But because it has tasted greatness in some peculiar ways, it is also so easy to criticize what can sometime seem to be the never ending process of revitalizing downtown, and the many twists and turns that have accompanied that to this point.

When it comes to the Downtown, Cincinnati State, The Manchester, etc., sure: I would like to have commitments in ink before purchasing properties, but we must think long haul: setting the city up to reap monies from renewal efforts, leasing and peripheral businesses that would result from having an active college campus operating here is well worth the risk, in my opinion. And business is all about taking a risk. Granted, a well thought through, multiple counsel sought out one, but a risk nevertheless. When it comes to money, everything is a risk.

Other ventures such as the Art Center and the beginning stages of progress Kingswell Seminary (for example), point to Middletown becoming a focal point for both education and the arts in the days ahead.

About 10 years ago, the Lord spoke to me saying that the roof would be coming off the City Centre Mall and that an entrepreneurial spirit would be released which would result in multiplied millions of dollars coming into and flowing throughout Middletown. It is clear to me that we are now in the middle of that gradually unfolding, yet arduous, process.

Leaders need support as they wrestle with many variables that are not ripe for public discussion in City Council meetings, or yet appropriate for journalistic review by the public. Mike Robinette in particular needs the prayer support of every Christian in this community, that God's economic way for our city would not only be continually revealed, but that obstacles to it would be overcome through vision, wisdom, negotiation, and proper planning.

Granted, generations X,Y & Z are not going to do with Middletown what "The Greatest Generation" did or we "Boomers" would, but it is still up to us to set the stage for the ongoing success of a fruitful enterprise, called "Middletown, Ohio."

We are at an important, "never been here before" juncture in our history. We need to trust that this will become the time (when later referred to) Middletown turned the corner and headed into its season of building a new foundation, establishing a new identity, forging a new reputation and producing a self-generating prosperity.

It would be awful if what many are saying about the future of our country came true, in terms of economy, influence, safety and self-image. But, with that in mind, wouldn't it be wonderful to turn this corner in Middletown? Then, even be able to be an example of what can happen when people work together, support their leaders, pray for God's best, and refrain from the rhetoric that is ruining the spiritual, emotional and intellectual climate of our nation?

If we will but put away Downtown vs. East End jealousies, the constant belittling of City Council, and negative speak in general, we could at least clear the air enough to allow positive, visionary, supportive speech that will go a long way to healing our city and setting it onto the right path.

Bill Click