

# The Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF REYNOLDSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## What is a BHAG?

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## HAVE YOU HEARD OF A BHAG?

"Have you ever heard of a BHAG?" That was the way we began the discussion during the April meeting of our Church Board. I then explained that the term, "BHAG," comes from the business community best-seller, *Built To Last*, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, who defined "BHAG" as a **"Big Hairy Audacious Goal."**

Collins explains that a BHAG (pronounced BEE-hag) is "a clear, compelling, and unifying focal point of effort" that "engages people—it reaches out and grabs them in the gut." A BHAG is rooted in the mission, vision and core values of the organization, and draws together the things about which people are most passionate—those things the organization can do the best—and the fuel that drives its engine. Jeremiah would call it a "fire in the bones." It reaches into the future and "requires thinking beyond the current capabilities of the organization... a BHAG should not be a sure bet—perhaps only 50 to 70 percent probability of success—but the organization must believe 'we can do it anyway.'"

The classic example of a BHAG is when John F. Kennedy announced in 1961 that we would put a man on the moon in ten years. Martin Luther King, Jr., described a BHAG on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when he delivered the classic "I have a dream" speech. Starbucks' BHAG is to become the most immediately recognizable beverage brand in the world (replacing Coca-Cola). See what I mean?—a Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal.

That evening, I asked the Board, "When was the last time we gave our

congregation a BHAG associated with anything other than a building?" In the discussion that followed, those present said that we really had not—at least in their recent memory. It was at that moment that I introduced the concept of The Kingdom Principle based upon the Parable of the Talents—which we are living into at this very moment.

**"A BHAG is a clear, compelling, and unifying focal point of effort."**

I proposed that we would give some of God's money—\$50 for every adult and \$10 for every child from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade—to those in attendance on the weekend of April 12 and 13, and invite them to partner with God in the Parable of the Talents; that we would ask them to multiply God's money over the next seven weeks, and bring it back on the weekend of May 31/June 1. And, once we paid the seed money back, we would distribute the increase in equal increments of 25% each to feed the hungry in central Ohio, to Jackson Area Ministries for their new building, to UMCOR for Katrina Relief, and to build a church in another country. See what I mean?—a BHAG.

After extensive and appropriate discussion, the Church Board unanimously approved the BHAG of The Kingdom Principle. It was a faith-stretching moment. While we initially decided to borrow the money from some of the Church's restricted reserves, an amazing thing began to happen at the

close of the Board meeting. I noticed that one of our members had a unique, reflective look on his face; and I asked him what he was thinking. He said, "I was thinking that if we had not said, 'Yes' to this proposal, we would have missed out on an incredible blessing that God has in store for our church."

As the discussion continued, the question was asked whether individuals could partner with the church and 'loan' the church some of the seed money—interest free—for the duration of the project. People wanted to partner in The Kingdom Principle. We spoke to how that would happen, and in the course of the next eight days, seven 'faith-full' families from our leadership and staff gave ALL of the funds (over \$100,000) to use as the seed money for The Kingdom Principle—a BHAG.

Action followed faith—and faith followed action. That is the core of what helps individuals or organizations to achieve a BHAG. Time, faith and action will tell how this will turn out; but those who are charged with leading our congregation—our Board and Ministry Staff—have confidence that God is at work in this and that as we participate in the work of the Kingdom—the King shows up—and blesses the ones who faithfully follow with joy. And we have invited many of you to be partners—in a BHAG.

What is God doing in our lives and our life together as we journey through this season together? That depends upon us—will we give ourselves to partnership in the Kingdom? One of the exciting things about following Jesus is that we have the opportunity to participate in the ultimate BHAG—being citizens of the Kingdom of God. We can pursue our Mission—to develop fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We can live into our Vision—to glorify God—grow disciples—and change the world—one person at a time. Now, that is a BHAG.

Will you join in the BHAG—stretch in faith—partner in action—change the world—and "enter into the joy of your master?" (Matthew 25:21, 33)



LEAD PASTOR  
JEFF GREENWAY