

If It Is To Be, It Is Up To Me

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

I sense it is safe to say that we've all been shocked by some of the events that have been happening around our country and the world in recent weeks. It seems like the world is in chaos with a total breakdown in civility and common decency. To make matters even worse, there is no one person who can fix it all. Nobody on this planet has that power. Yet, at the same time, we all have the power to fix it.

I finally accepted the fact several years ago that I can't change people. I can't change my brothers or my sisters. I can't change my wife. I can change only one person - me. And that's all that anyone can do. We can try to be a good example. I think we all know that children learn far more from what we do than what we say. Adults are much the same way. I have a saying that I fall back on periodically, "They can't hear what you're saying if your actions are making too much noise."

If it is to be it is up to me. Ten words with twenty letters. Perhaps the most powerful sentence in the world yet one of the simplest. Martin Luther, one person, changed the religious world in the 16th century. Martin Luther King, one person, changed the course of civil rights in the United States. Albert Einstein, one person, changed how we look at the world around us. Mother Teresa, one person, changed the world for thousands of people in India. They didn't start out trying to change anyone else. They just had an idea, a goal, a mission and they dedicated themselves to it. If it is to be, it is up to me.

We may not like the way that things appear to be going, but all we can do is continue to try to be a good example. Treat others like you would want to be treated. The good old golden rule is still pretty darn golden. Our attitude not only affects us, it affects how people respond to us. Each of us is only one person, but we are one person. If each one helps one, pretty soon a single action becomes a movement! If it is to be, it is up to me.

We've got Election Day coming up. One of the things that always disappoints me is the low turnout for our elections. How many times have you heard, or have you said, "My one vote isn't going to make a difference." Granted, if all the other eligible voters did vote, your one vote may very well not make a difference. But when 50% of the registered voters don't vote, it becomes a big deal. If it is to be, it is up to me.

Democracy: one person, one vote. We can argue all day about whether our country is a democracy. But the bottom line is that we are a country that was set up to be ruled by the people. Or in this case, the people who vote. Some people say that voting is a right. I prefer to view voting as a responsibility. Democracy isn't easy or simple. It's hard, it's sometimes painful, it's sometimes frustrating and maddening. If anyone tells you that your vote doesn't matter, it's because they want their vote to carry more weight. Democracy demands involvement. If it is to be, it is up to me.

If you have already voted, good for you! If you haven't voted, then you have an opportunity on Tuesday. Exercise that right and responsibility. If you don't vote and you don't like the way things turned out, you have no one to blame but yourself, and all the people like you who didn't vote. You can't make anyone else vote, but you can lead by example. If it is to be, it is up to me.