

Uncertainty

by Dr. Mark Eckel

One lesson I learn again and again is how much I should not judge my moment in time as something overly significant. If I die today, life will practically go on as it has all along. Am I important in the world's scheme of things? Not really. Are my contributions large and earth changing? Not always. At the same time, new discoveries, events, and ideas do shift the way people think about life. However, do they change a culture--how people live--in a new way. I'm not so sure.

But, you might ask, what about the historic changes that have occurred over time? One is struck with plate-tectonic shifts in thinking that *have* changed the way people think. I would include some of the following inventions, discoveries, or events as "earth shattering": Guttenburg's printing press, the formation of The United States of America, the Gatling gun, discovery of ocean currents, telegraph-telephone-electronic communication, and air travel. Experts call these and other events "paradigm shifts." People say thinking and living change when extraordinary events unfold. I'm not convinced.

But you might say something "new and improved" happens every 30 seconds. The next great thing is just around the corner. We are told that if we just have that phone, switch to this company, apply that face cream, eat this cereal, watch that movie, go to this school...well, you get the idea. Someone always has something that will change our lives. But again, I'm not so sure.

Yet, you might ask, don't we live in prosperous, peaceful times? Humans are constantly coming up with means of combating disease, finding water in deserts, and new farming applications. Surely, if we put our collective minds to it, we can circumvent the wars, economic downturns, and educational deficiencies for our generation. We are told that hope and change are just around the corner. But again, I'm not so sure.

Life is hard. Humanly speaking, "bad" things happen. We don't always get what we want. Sometimes we don't even get what we need. Things don't always go "our way." Injustices are constant. The best of intentions are riddled with contradictions. Difficulties cannot be sidestepped, whitewashed, or eradicated. In short, imperfect people in an imperfect world, do wrong. This simple teaching of discord is explained in famous novels. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, or William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* make the point clearly: left to ourselves, we do not always do what is good for others.

Certainty is in short supply these days. Unemployment, underemployment, and too-discouraged-to-look-for-employment continue to be high. Bankruptcies are up, real estate prices are down. Consumer confidence remains low. The public's opinion of The White House and Congress continues to slide. But this brings me back to the one lesson I continue to learn: I should not judge my moment in time as something unique or special. My significance is not dependant upon my time or place, but on another Person. There is One who is outside space and time, who has made me unique, who alone gives hope, and guarantees change: His Name is Jesus. For Prime Time America, this is Dr. Mark Eckel, personally seeking truth wherever it's found.