



NO SHORTAGE OF HEROES

(if you know where to look)

- by Rev. Clayton King

Upfront you should know I am a huge Indiana Jones fan. Recently the fourth installment of the Indiana Jones series was shown to millions of new viewers. I'm thrilled to know that an entire generation of rookies not familiar with "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (first released in 1981) can now be introduced to the greatest action hero in history. Then, if they have not seen the preceding three movies, they might be compelled to do so. As a result, their lives will be changed like mine was as a little boy watching this semi-awkward, every-man-turns-into-a-death-defying-damsel-rescuing-hero.

This is something that plagues our communities today. We need heroes - not celebrities, authors or television stars. We need some honest-to-goodness women and men who are not too flashy, so funny, or fantastic to look up to and admire. Our culture's merchandise machine cannot provide us with these heroes. The local church is where we can find these much needed examples of strong faith, simplicity and character.

Cities large and small always need local role models to look up to- like Randy Satterfield. Randy was a volunteer at my church growing up who took all the boys camping and fishing. He was a 'man's man' who knew the outdoors, how to start a fire and how to catch bass on a Carolina rig. All the boys idolized Randy. He died of cancer a few years ago and left such an impression on me that I named my black lab after him. I still remember the lessons he taught me and remain forever grateful.

Older people have more elective time to contribute knowledge and experience than any other age group. One of my favorite and most life-shaping memories as a child was hearing the older men at my church tell stories about World War II. I would give a year of my life to have another day with my grandfather and hear him recount the day they found out Hitler had committed suicide and the Germans had surrendered. He was on a ship in the South Pacific, and he said that grown men fell on their

faces and cried like babies because they knew they would be going home soon.

In my mind, there is no real hero shortage. Instead, there is a time shortage and a will shortage. If we have the will to say 'no' to unnecessary things that clutter up our lives, then we can make the time to get close to unknown heroes.

If you are seeking a modern day hero, look no further than the seniors in your local community. Ask them to lunch. Take a walk in the park with them. Take your kids to their house or assisted living community and watch their faces light up. Let them really talk and record their answers. Lean in closely to notice the emotion on their face when they talk about using an outhouse, surviving the Great Depression, bringing water from a spring in a bucket or taking a bath on Saturday nights in the tin tub. Hear their struggles and joys and find out what they value the most.

And who knows? These wonderful seniors might have other stories that would make Indiana Jones look like Big Bird.

Since 1988, Clayton King has preached to almost 2 million people in 25 countries and 45 states. He has led 200 mile backpacking expeditions to the Himalayas, made seven trips to India, and nearly died of malaria in Africa. He was chased by the KGB in Moscow, Russia in 1992 and nearly killed by mortar fire in Kashmir in 1999. With many stories to tell, he's written three books and hosted his own nationally syndicated radio show called "Clayton King Live" for the last four years.

Clayton is the Founder and President of Crossroads Worldwide. This non-profit, interdenominational ministry includes Crossroads Summer Camps, Winter Conferences, Ministry Summits, Ministry Forums, and Mission trips. He is also the founder of two bands; Monogamous Fish (1995-1997) and Adam's Housecat (1997-present). He loves to read theology, apologetics, and adventure. He also collects action figures and would rather work on a tractor than do just about anything else. He is thankful for God's faithfulness and cannot wait to see what He will do in the days to come.