



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I will answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

November 4, 2011

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Feature Article - Why Reproofs are So Important - Part 7 -

There are many myths around regarding reproving others. Over the past month or so we have been examining the most common myths.

- Myth #1 - Reproving others is unspiritual, unloving and unkind,
- Myth #2 - It is wrong to reprove anyone outside your local church,
- Myth #3 - Words of reproof must never be spoken to or about "God's Anointed Ones."
- Myth #4 - Reproof always involves judging and judging is sin.
- Myth #5 - It is always wrong to reprove anyone in public. It must always be done in private.
- Myth # 6 - Only a fruitful Christian is qualified to reprove error.

This week's myth (#7) is, "Only an 'apostle' was ever called to by God to keep watch over, and to warn of impending danger with regard to the spiritual safety of the flock."

We have all heard the old proverb, "Throw a rock into a pack of dogs, the one that yelps the loudest is usually the one you hit." So it is with a reproof that finds its mark. There is often a loud yelp in reply.

The myths about reproving others are actually the repeated yelps of wounded lap dogs. This myth was stated, not because it was biblical, but in order to relegate all stone throwing to the first century. "Only the apostles were ever called to to keep watch over the flock." It was intended to silence the few old time preachers that still exist so they no longer warn God's children of impending danger.

Why is this myth so wrong?

1. Not only the apostles watched over the Lord's flock, but pastor/elder/bishops are commanded to do so as well. Read Acts 20:28-31:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

The pastors of the church at Ephesus are exhorted to do exactly what the myth forbids, "Take heed, be overseers, watch, and remember how I warned everyone night and day with tears." Pastors are to warn their flocks, just like the apostles did!

2. Timothy was no apostle. Possibly he was an evangelist since he was told to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5). He was commanded of God to reprove and rebuke (II Tim. 4:2).

I have a biography of Bob Jones senior on my bookshelf. It is titled "Builder of Bridges." How I wish all the modern soft soap preachers would read it and then ponder the descriptions of his preaching. On page 82, there is a page of editorial cartoons depicting his evangelistic sermons. In the top frame he is seen to be holding up two giant sized magnifying glasses he uses to focus the light of the gospel on the head of a poker player and on the gownless back of a socialite at another poker table. You only need to read a paragraph or two in this chapter to realise that the old evangelist know how to reprove and rebuke with all authority. How sad that those days are gone forever, from Bob Jones University and from most Baptist pulpits! Old Bob Jones knew full well that Bible preaching included reproving sin!

3. Charles Spurgeon's best known sermon was on the subject of infant baptism. He titled it "Baptismal Regeneration." When he knew that the Lord would have him reprove publicly the great error of baptising babies he went to see his printer and told him that he was about to put him out of business. He was just sure that, when he rebuked all the Protestant ministers, Anglican bishops, and Catholic priests for leading their flocks to believe the lie that their children would be in Heaven because they had water sprinkled on their heads, he was just sure that no one would ever buy his sermons ever again. **BUT PREACH IT HE MUST! AND HE DID. AND PRINT IT HE DID!** And it created an enormous controversy.

What a furore! Almost every minister in England, at least all the paedo-baptists, yelped in pain, and howled out their protests! But he was right and God blest his faithfulness, and he sold more sermons and won more souls than he ever did before. How thankful we should be that dear Charlie never read the modern day myths about reproving others. (That was a well thrown stone, Charlie. Some of the pope's lapdogs are yelping still!)

The doctrinal anemia that is increasingly infecting fundamentalism is giving us leaders who cooperate with heterodoxy, and almost nobody raises the alarm! The henhouse has a hundred chicken thieves in it, and they are all yelling loudly for the farmer to shoot old

Fido for barking and telling on them. Very few of our church members will realise what has happened until there are no more eggs for breakfast.

I'm with Fido, even it means dodging buckshot.

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How Much Are Little People Worth? –

(Someone sent me this a while back. It made me think how valuable the "little people" in our towns are worth. Nobody knows their names, and most times they are not recognised when they walk down the street. But they perform vital services that keep our towns alive. Maybe you know someone like "Information Please." – Ed)

THE OLD PHONE

When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anyone's number and the correct time.

My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlor and held it to my ear. "Information, please" I said into the mouthpiece just above my head.

A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear. "Information."

"I hurt my finger..." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me," I blubbered.

"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open the icebox?" she asked.

I said I could.

"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.

After that, I called "Information Please" for everything. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts. Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called, "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?" She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Paul always remember that there are other worlds to sing in."

Somehow I felt better. Another day I was on the telephone, "Information Please."

"Information," said in the now familiar voice. "How do I spell fix?" I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. When I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please."

Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well. "Information."

I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?"

There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now."

I laughed, "So it's really you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time?"

I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your call meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls."

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

"Please do", she said. "Just ask for Sally."

Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered, "Information." I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?" she said.

"Yes, a very old friend," I answered.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said. "Sally had been working part-time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up she said, "Wait a minute, did you say your name was Paul?" "Yes." I answered.

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you."

The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean."

I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.

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A Quote From Jerry Lee Lewis -

Rock and Roll legend Jerry Lee Lewis' mother enrolled him in Southwest Bible Institute in Waxahachie, Texas, secure in the knowledge that her son would now be exclusively singing his songs to the Lord. But Lewis daringly played a boogie woogie rendition of "My God Is Real" at a church assembly that sent him packing the same night.

Pearry Green, then president of the student body, related how during a talent show Lewis played some "worldly" music. The next morning, the dean of the school called both Lewis and Green into his office to expel them both. Lewis said that Green shouldn't be expelled because "he didn't know what I was going to do."

Years later Green asked Lewis: "Are you still playing the devil's music?"

Lewis replied:

"Yes, I am. But you know it's strange, the same music that they kicked me out of school for is the same kind of music they play in their churches today. The difference is, I know I am playing for the devil and they don't."

<http://www.walkoffame.com/jerry-lee-lewis>

Contributed by *Pastor David Bennett*

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2Timothy 4:2-5

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Deacon True Sez -

"The push to get all the churches to join up together just proves one thing. Makin' a omelet outa bad eggs don't make them taste any better."

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Poems That Preach -

Invictus

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

- William E. Henley

Conquered

*Out of the light that dazzles me,
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
I thank the God I know to be
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.*

*Since His the sway of circumstance
I would not wince nor cry aloud.
Under that rule which men call chance
My head with joy is humbly bowed.*

*Beyond this place of sin and tears
That life with Him! And His the aid,
Despite the menace of the years,
Keeps, and shall keep me, unafraid.*

*I have no fear, though strait the gate,
He cleared from punishment the scroll.
Christ is the Master of my fate,
Christ is the Captain of my soul.*

- Dorothea Day

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Isaiah 50:10-11

Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

Posters to Ponder –



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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes –

- "And then the promises. A Scotchman found out thirty one thousand distinct promises in the Word of God. There is not a despondent soul but God has a promise just to suit him" – *Moody's Anecdotes and Illustrations*.
- ...that Moses was 80 when God called him, and although he gave excuses, he never mentioned his age? – *Evangelist Don Boys*
- "Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or keep one; the man who requires you to do so is dearly purchased at the sacrifice. Deal kindly but firmly with all classmates; you will find it the policy which wears the most. Above all, do not appear to others what you are not." – *General Robert E. Lee* in a letter to his son.
- Time is a wonderful healer and a terrible beautician – contributed by *Hughie Seaborn*
- You've got to eat a bag of salt with somebody to really know them. – *Randy Pike*

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Sermon Fodder – Ecclesiastical Hitchhikers –

"Church attendance is infected with a malaise of conditional loyalty which has produced an army of ecclesiastical hitchhikers. The hitchhiker's thumb says, 'You buy the car, pay for repairs and upkeep and insurance, fill the car with gas – and I'll ride with you. But if you have an accident, you are on your own! And I'll probably sue.' So it is with the credo of so many of today's church attenders: 'You go to the meetings and serve on the boards and committees, you grapple with the issues and do the work of the church and pay the bills– and I'll come along for the ride. But if things do not suit me, I'll criticize and complain and probably bail out – my thumb is always out for a better ride.'"

(The Disciplines of a Godly Man by *R. Kent Hughes* Pg 159)

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My Father's Fingerprints –

THE MIND OF BACTERIA –

"Researchers are learning that bacteria have senses similar to our hearing and sight. Bacteria even have a brain that receives information from their senses. They can make decisions.

However, all of this is not enough to explain how bacteria can make the decision to swim toward food. When you want a candy bar, you know where to find one, even if you must go to the nearest store. You might also hope that your dentist doesn't see you buying candy. All of this involves memory, which has long been considered a basic part of the mind.

Researchers, using various solutions of substances that attract or repel bacteria, have now learned that bacteria do indeed have both long-term and short-term memories. They remember where goodies are to be found.

Once a bacterium develops a strategy for dealing with the unknown, it will remember what to do next time.

This finding shocked researchers. They know that when you or I decide to retreat or advance, at least hundreds and probably thousands of brain cells are involved. The one-celled bacteria can make the same decision based on past memories."

From *Creation Moments*, October 14, 2011.

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So What About Tolerance?

As I checked in for an outpatient test at a local hospital last week, the admissions lady...inquired, "What is your religious preference?" I was tempted...to repeat what Jonah said..."I am a Hebrew, ma'am. And I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven...." But that would surely have got me sent to psychiatry rather than X ray. So I desisted.

In ancient times, they asked, "Who is your God?" A generation ago, they asked your religion. Today your creed is a preference....

According to Chesterton, tolerance is the virtue of people who do not believe in anything....When it is believed that on your religion hangs the fate of your immortal soul, the Inquisition follows easily; when it is believed that religion is a breezy consumer preference, religious tolerance flourishes....After all, we don't persecute people for their taste in cars. Why for their taste in gods?

Oddly, though, in our thoroughly secularized culture, there is one form of religious intolerance that does survive... the disdain bordering on contempt ...[for] those for whom religion is not a preference but a conviction.... Every manner of political argument is ruled legitimate in our democratic discourse. But invoke the Bible as grounding for your politics, and the First Amendment police will charge you with breaching the sacred wall separating church and state....Call on Timothy Leary or Chairman Mao, fine. Call on St. Paul, and all hell breaks loose...Associates of [Hickman] Ewing [Whitewater prosecutor who has been called a "religious fanatic" by some] defend him thus: "His open Christian faith...is left at the prosecutorial door."

An interesting form of exoneration. Ewing is fit to carry out his judicial duties after all. Why? Because he allows none of his Christian faith to corrupt his working life.

Charles Krauthammer

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Therapy For the Funny Bone -

Grandma Sykes got a bad case of hiccups last month and finally went to see her old doctor. He was busy with a patient and sent her in to his new intern. The young doctor asked her, "How long have you had this hiccups thing?" She replied, "More than a week." So he said, "Let me check you over just to be sure there's nothing serious wrong." A couple of minutes later, the old doctor heard Grandma scream and come running out of the consulting room into the hallway. He stuck his head out of his room, and asked the distraught old lady what in the world was wrong with her? She replied angrily, "He told me I am pregnant! I'm 68 years old and have 15 grandkids, and he tells me I am pregnant!" The old doctor looked over the top of his glasses at the younger doctor and asked, "Did you tell her she is pregnant?" "Yep," the intern replied. "It got rid of her hiccups, didn't it?"

My favourite animal -

Our teacher asked us what our favourite animal was, and I said, "Fried chicken." She said I wasn't funny, but she couldn't have been right, because everyone else in the class laughed.

My parents told me to always be truthful and honest, and I am. Fried chicken is my favorite animal. I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of PETA. He said they love animals very much. I do, too. Especially chicken, pork and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened, and he laughed, too. Then he told me not to do it again.

The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favourite live animal was. I told her it was chicken. She asked me why, just like she'd asked the other children. So I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken. She sent me back to the principal's office again. He laughed, and told me not to do it again.

I don't understand. My parents taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.

Today, my teacher asked us to tell her what famous person we admire most.

I told her, "Colonel Sanders."

Guess where I am now...

(I like that boy - Ed)

A couple in our street are having marriage problems. Bill said they hadn't spoken to each other for two weeks, but were just writing notes to each other when they needed to say something. He is a traveling salesman and had to catch an early flight last Monday, so he wrote Pam a note Sunday night and left it on her desk. It said, "Early flight tomorrow. Wake me up at 4:30 in the morning." Well, he was furious the next morning when he woke up at 7:30 and missed his flight. He rolled over and sat up and turned on the lamp, only to find a note that said, "Wake up, it's 4:30."

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And Now Mormonism is Not a Cult? -

(About 50 years ago, Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse came to the conclusion that Seventh Day Adventism was not a cult. For many years evangelicals have been telling us that Roman Catholicism is not a cult. Now, because Fuller Seminary, Mouw and Ravi Zacharias are holding hands with the Mormons in Salt Lake City, we are told that they no longer should be seen to be a cult. Who's next, the JW's? Interesting sidelight, J.I. Packer describes fundamentalism as being "cultic orthodoxy" and Rick Warren said recently that fundamentalists will be the greatest problem in the 21st century. - Ed.)

Romney Not A Cultist, Fuller President Says Cautiously

by Anugrah Kumar | Christian Post Contributor

As Mitt Romney's Mormon faith has become an issue in the GOP presidential nomination race prompting the Latter-day Saints to launch an ad campaign, the President of Fuller Theological Seminary Richard J. Mouw has declared, though cautiously, that Mormonism is not a cult.

After numerous evangelical Christians raised questions about the reasoning and motive for the gathering,

"While I am not prepared to reclassify Mormonism as possessing undeniably Christian theology, I do accept many of my Mormon friends as genuine followers of the Jesus whom I worship as the divine Savior," Mouw, head of the Pasadena, Calif., seminary wrote in an article on CNN Sunday.

But can Mormons be called Christians?

Mouw said that's a "complicated question."

Mouw's careful defense of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came two days after Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church of Dallas called Mormonism a "cult." He made the comments minutes after introducing Texas Gov. Rick Perry, an evangelical Christian and Romney's top rival, at Friday's Values Voter Summit in Washington, D.C. Jeffress continues to stand ground on his comments.

"I have not changed my position," Jeffress told the 2,000 congregants at his church Sunday. Mouw disagrees, saying religious cults - such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology and Hare Krishna - are "very much us-versus-them." "Their adherents are taught to think that they are the only ones who benefit from divine approval," he wrote on the CNN blog. "They don't like to engage in serious, respectful give-and-take dialogue with people with whom they disagree ... Nor do they promote the kind of scholarship that works alongside others in pursuing the truth."

Mouw said he had been co-chairing, with Prof. Robert Millet of the Mormon Brigham Young University, a behind-closed-doors dialogue between evangelicals and Mormons for over a decade.

"We evangelicals and our Mormon counterparts disagree about some important theological questions," he admitted. "But we have also found that on some matters we are not as far apart as we thought we were," he added.

Mormons reject one of Christianity's central tenets - the Trinity, the belief in one God in three Persons. They also believe Joseph Smith Jr. is the first latter-day prophet who restored the original Christian church in the 19th century in America. They believe the entire structure of Christian orthodoxy affirmed by the post-apostolic church is corrupt and false. Additionally, Latter-day Saints are often criticized for their belief in "divine" books of scripture, aside from the Bible, including the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

But the Fuller president said Mormons "talk admiringly of the evangelical Billy Graham and the Catholic Mother Teresa, and they enjoy reading the evangelical C.S. Lewis and Father

Henri Nouwen, a Catholic. That is not the kind of thing you run into in anti-Christian cults.”

Mormons are responding to criticism.

After Jeffress’ remarks, the LDS issued an official statement.

“We really don’t want to comment on a statement made at a political event, but those who want to understand the centrality of Christ to our faith can learn more about us and what we believe by going to mormon.org,” it said.

LDS Dems Interim Chair Senator Ben McAdams and Interim Vice-Chair Crystal Young-Otterstrom also issued a statement Friday saying they were “appalled and disappointed by Jeffress’ statement that Mormons are not Christian.”

This month, the LDS launched an “I’m a Mormon campaign” in 12 cities in seven states of America, featuring ads on television, city buses and billboards asking people to visit the church’s website to learn about its beliefs and followers.

The Associated Press on Sunday reported that the LDS was airing ads in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and South Bend in Indiana, home to over 41,000 Mormons. “A lot of people are not familiar with our faith”, Tom Burdett of Noblesville, president of the Muncie Stake (similar to a diocese), said. “The best way to understand Mormons is to meet them and get to know them. The ads are an invitation to do that.”

According to a LifeWay Research survey conducted in 2010, 60 percent of Protestant pastors strongly disagree that they consider Mormons to be Christians and another 15 percent somewhat disagree.

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The Watcher of The Springs –

To me this is a story that beautifully illustrates that even the least amongst the saints in the church can be very important. And while that dear brother or sister in the LORD may not be the most vocal or the most outgoing or the best known in our church yet their faithfulness in prayer, in giving, in service to the LORD is of the utmost importance if the church is to move on! Here is the story,

“Many years ago one of our towns voted to improve its water system. Mains were laid to a network of lovely mountain springs whose pure waters flowed by gravity into the homes of the nearby town. After a season the housewives began to complain that the water was dirty: bits of leaves and other foreign matter had found their way into the line.

The town fathers chose a man who lived near the springs and assigned him the task of keeping the springs clean of leaves and debris and of keeping the lines open. The watcher was a quiet, unassuming man who seldom went to the town, but attended strictly to his assigned tasks and his own personal affairs.

Few people had ever met the watcher of the springs. He was just a shadowy figure who moved in the background and whose name was never known by the towns-people, save as they noted that name on the annual budget. No one paid special heed to the man until the Depression came and with it the demand for decrease in expenditures. The fathers decided to lay off this watcher of the springs in order to reduce the expenses.

Not long after this the mothers began their protest: the water was polluted. And there were those who would trace the mounting illnesses to this cause. It was a poor economy to reduce the payroll by laying off the watchman and in consequence hazard the health of the community.

The watchman was hastily sought out and returned to his old task. It was a brief period until the public was again refreshed by the pure, clean waters and knew well that "the watcher is back at the springs again.' "

I Cor.12:23-"And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."

Rev. Warren "Chip" Roy

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Fresh Quills -

(Another of our young Aussie Christian authors is Caitlyn Drews of Lismore, NSW. Cait is a budding author, 16 years old, an accomplished musician, loves missionaries, and has written five books. She gives a first person account in this short story. - Ed.)

Touched

by C.G. Drews

I am standing behind my mother. She holds the baby, Benjamin, who cries. He always cries and she is worried. She wanted to take him to see the one everyone is talking about— Jesus, the Messiah, the Great Physician. Now we are waiting behind the market place. The noise and hubbub has died down. People are going home to rest during the hottest part of the day. My mother does not wait. Martha, wife of David bar Simon, is walking behind us, her three little boys trailing after her, eyes wide and expectant. We all have the same idea.

I hold tightly to my mother's skirt. She lingers for a moment, watching Jesus. He is tired, sitting under the olive tree. His disciples are clustered around him. Some are eating a small midday meal, and others talk quietly amongst themselves. Their eyes dart over to the figure of Jesus, resting against the olive tree. My stomach is in a big knot. Suppose Jesus is too tired to look at my brother? Suppose we must just go back home? Suppose my father grows too tired of my baby brother's crying and yells at my mother? My father's temper is short. He doesn't like my brother.

My mother takes a deep breath and goes towards the cluster of men around the olive tree. The disciples look up. One slowly pulls himself to his feet and comes over to us. His face is deeply tanned. His eyes scan over us and rest on Martha, still hustling her boys along. He is not happy, and I am scared. "The master is too tired," he says roughly. "Take your children away. He has no time for them."

I begin to cry. I always do when I want something to go right and it turns wrong. My mother catches her breath and clutches my brother closer to her chest. "Please..."

The disciple shakes his head and turns away.

Martha is right behind us. Her face crumples and she pulls her little boys behind her voluminous skirts. We have to go. It is over and we cannot see Jesus. The Messiah. The Great Physician.

"Wait." My mother spins around. Jesus is getting up. I look up at mother and there is hope in her eyes. She comes forward, eagerly. "Let the children come to me." Jesus looks at his disciples. I can see his eyes. They look sad that his disciples sent us away. "How could you send them away...?" He is right in front of us. My mother hands him Benjamin. He holds my baby brother tenderly. Benjamin does not cry, not like when my father holds him. He does not make a sound. I hold my breath. Will Jesus bless him even if he cries?

Martha is right next to us. Her little boys cluster around Jesus' knees. Without hesitating, they come closer and closer to Jesus. It is as if they feel safe close to him. I cannot help myself. My legs are moving. I tell them to stay right behind my mother, but they take me closer to Jesus. I want to see his face more clearly. I want him to touch me too.

He kneels down, his hands resting on the little boys' heads. He is talking to them. I can see out of the corner of my eye, more mothers coming our way. They are peeking out of their doors. Their children stick their little heads out from behind their mothers' skirts. Jesus is blessing children. They want their children blessed too. Jesus hands Benjamin back to my mother. He strokes the baby's head one last time. I think he has not seen me. I start edging back behind my mother. He has more children coming. Perhaps I am too old. I am almost twelve. I am almost a woman. But, still, I wanted him to touch me.

My mother is moving slowly away, giving room for more children to get closer to him. Benjamin is quiet. He is not fussing or whimpering. I take a step backward, following my mother. Jesus looks up. His eyes catch mine. He smiles and his hand reaches out. I take a step forward and His hand rests on my head for a moment. I see his eyes. They are brown like mine. They smile at me and I smile back.

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Eddy-Torial – Why the Emphasis on Leadership Conferences?

Over the past twenty years or so a disturbing trend has developed. It is for churches to hold "Leadership Conferences". Anyone who takes the time to do any research will find that "leadership conferences", as such, are of very recent origin. Why the sudden need for conferences that focus on leadership? I first attended preachers' conferences in the

1950's with my dad and our pastor. When I surrendered to preach in 1963 and took my first church in 1966, nobody had ever heard of "leadership conferences." When we came out to Australia in 1972, the old veteran missionaries had Bible conferences, but "leadership conferences" were unknown. It was only a few years ago, it seems, that they sprang up like mushrooms all across the land.

The Danger of Too Much Emphasis on Leadership –

In certain circles this overemphasis on pastoral leadership is turning Baptist churches into Episcopal churches. Many Baptist churches are moving away from a congregational church polity into an episcopalian form of church government so that they are increasingly ruled by a bishop (episkopos).

Books written by successful business management specialists teach pastors to see themselves as the CEO's of big businesses that just happen to be called Baptist churches. Since our pastors and churches are moving in this direction, then there are a number of issues that we, the "sheeple", need to address.

The High Cost of Leadership –

On His last journey to Jerusalem, James and John came to Jesus seeking positions of leadership in His kingdom. "If you are to be King, then we would be Prime Minister and President." His reply is a masterpiece of wise counsel to every man who aspires to spiritual leadership. He told them to count the cost. After all, leadership is costly. The Saviour showed them the three price tags on leadership. (Matthew 20:22-28)

1. First, it requires a deep draught from the Saviour's very own cup. Drinking a bitter cup of suffering and sorrow as the Saviour did on the cross is a part of leadership. (I wonder how many of the permed and perfumed CEO's of churches ever drink of that cup?)
2. Second, it requires a baptism that is deeper and longer and darker than any they had known. Going down into the deep, dark waters of death, day after day, as Paul said, "I die daily," is a vital part of Christian leadership.
3. And third, it requires a change of garments. According to I Peter 5:5, they would have to put on the servant's apron of humility. Whatever royal garments James and John hoped to wear when they sat on thrones beside Jesus, they were wrong. The "apron of humility" awaits every saint of God who aspires to lead.

So there are three costs involved in leadership! A cup, a baptism, and an apron! We don't hear much these days about the costs of leadership, do we? We hear about the authority, the honours, and the privileges they have, but we don't hear much said about what it costs to be a leader.

Hear the words of the Saviour, *"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Matt. 20:25-28).

Jesus tests all His disciples' fitness for leadership by our willingness to become the servants of those we would lead. No servanthood? Then there is no position of leadership available for His disciples!

Jesus used two very familiar words to describe the nature of our service to others. He calls us ministers and servants (diakonos and doulos.) The disciples understood that diakonos referred to an errand boy or a waiter, whose work involved the most menial of tasks. They knew that doulos described a bondsman, a life long voluntary servant, one who surrendered all his rights to serve his master. And, if this was not enough, He pointed out to them that He had set the example for them, that His service for others would reach its highest point in His death for sinners.

Service To Others Is So Important -

There are sound biblical reasons why it is important to be the servants of those we would lead.

1. **First, Jesus said so.** That, in itself, is reason enough. If an aspiring pastor bucks at this (or any other) word from Christ, it is doubtful whether he will obey any other command the Lord gives. Service is God's way of showing that I am under authority to Christ, and that I am following His example. He asked his hearers, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46
2. **Service to others is one of the courses we must pass in the school of humility.** Humility is the key to grace (James 4:6). Jeremiah speaks of this in Lamentations 3:27, 28 when he writes, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him."
3. **Service is an expression of love for others,** according to Galatians 5:13b, "...by love serve one another." It is a great truth, that if you will tell me who you serve, I will tell you who you love. My people know that I love them because I serve them.
- 4.
5. **Service to others is a rare commodity in our self centred world.** It is often the key that unlocks a sinner's heart to the gospel. Whenever I have opportunity to tie a little boy's shoe, or wipe his nose for him, I may be preaching more in that simple act than I preach in my sermons.
6. **Service to others is often the burning coal that lights a fire in a backslidden Christian's heart.** Many a time have I seen a visitor come to our church and begin a lifetime of service for Christ because they saw one of our people serving someone else.
7. **The carnal desire to rule without serving others, according to our Lord's words in Matt. 20:25, is a mimicry of unregenerate worldlings.** A domineering, ambitious, and self centred spirit is forbidden by our dear Saviour. We have all seen this, but it belongs in an unregenerate world, not in the churches. Especially not in the pulpit!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

A.J. McClure quoted this poem the first time I heard him preach. I need to hear it again and again.

No Scar?

*Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land;
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star.
Hast thou no scar?*

*Hast thou no wound?
Yet I was wounded by the archers; spent,
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.
Hast thou no wound?*

*No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And piercèd are the feet that follow Me.
But thine are whole; can he have followed far
Who hast no wound or scar?*

Amy Carmichael

Our conferences tell on us. Somehow, we preachers need to get back to the simple Bible truth that...

Magnitude depends on Servitude!

Bro. Buddy Smith

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