"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 shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

July 8th, 2011

A survey of readers taken this week indicates that 70% of our readers would like to receive Heads Up! every week.

In order to assist those who find they have too much reading material or struggle to balance priorities, I am organising the mailing list so that Heads Up is emailed as frequently as the readers have requested. It will still be sent out each week to those who wish to receive it weekly, and others will receive it fortnightly, or monthly.

Just to answer the queries regarding the amount of time it takes to compile each Heads Up, I usually spend about 4 hours or so every week putting it together. For 45 years I have been collecting articles and preacher helps, and sources for good sound biblical materials, so I just tap into those. Many friends send me more each week, so that I have almost enough to send out a Heads Up every day of the week (No fear, that's not going to happen!)

Thank you for your responses.

Again, I invite you to send to me the very best of the articles you receive by email from others or anything you glean off the internet.

Thank you,

Bro. Buddy Smith

Table of Contents -

Feature Article - A Biblical Evaluation of The Sinner's Prayer

A Word of Testimony -
Links In the Media Chain -
Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -
Sermon Fodder -
Walking With Wise Men -
Is It Wrong for Christians to Oppose and Expose Error? -
Poems That Preach -
Therapy For the Funny Bone -
Science Falsely So Called -
Country Music, A Safe Alternative? -
Deacon True Sez -
Biblical Christianity Not Found in a Megachurch -
Cartoons for the Wise -
Eddy-Torial -

Feature Article -

A Biblical Evaluation Of The Sinner's Prayer

There has always been a tendency, amongst fallen men, to seek as an end in themselves certain things that were only ever intended by God to be a means to an end. In matters pertaining to life and death and eternity, it is of vital importance therefore, that the Lord's people understand the difference between what was only ever intended by God to be the means, and what actually is the desired end we are hoping to attain to in the lives of those we are seeking to bring to Christ. In days gone by it was always fairly well understood that the sinner's prayer was simply the means whereby an individual under conviction of sin expressed his heart's desire to repent and be saved. In sincerity and humility, after hearing God's Word, he (the sinner) was encouraged by the Preacher, under conviction by God's Holy Spirit, to pray and call upon God to receive Christ, thus attaining to the great and eternal end we call, Salvation. And so it has been from the days of Christ, the sinner's prayer has always only ever been simply the means to that great and glorious end, Eternal Life!

While men slept, a slight, but very dangerous shift of emphasis has taken place. What used always to be understood simply as a means to that one eternal end, has somehow quietly and subtly become the actual end itself. I refer again to the sinner's prayer. In our eagerness as soul winners to bring men into the Kingdom, we have learned to press men to make eternal decisions whilst they are still in a temporal state of mind. We refer to these decisions as professions of faith. Sadly, in many Fundamental Churches today, a profession of faith has become synonymous with Salvation, and to the eternal detriment of many, they are now held to as one and the same.

As missionaries in Papua New Guinea we saw scores of these "professions of faith" in our first few years on the field. From day one I pressed men, women, and children for decisions for Christ. Many of these decisions I reported in our regular prayer letters to our supporting churches here in Australia. The well worn expression, "counting your chickens before they are hatched," fairly well describes our early days on the field. The first two years we were in PNG, I personally prayed with and led numerous sinners into the Kingdom, or so I thought. Using the good old Romans Road and

the typical sinner's prayer (Translated into Melanesian Pigin of course), I led most of one whole village, and half of two others to Christ, that's what the churches in Australia heard anyway. The sad picture in the village of Erima and its surrounds was quite a different story. Men and women who had gladly professed Christ continued to commit sorcery, idolatry, murder, rape, incest, thievery, and deception, all the while believing and proclaiming themselves to be Christians. Though I preached repentance, like many others before me, I failed to recognize that lurking beneath the murky surface in these people's lives was the powerful and unyielding god called Animism. To my great detriment I learned the hard way that the Romans Road, the Sinner's Prayer, and a Profession of Faith had little effect upon the evil spirits controlling these villagers and the idolatrous system to which they belonged. After almost three years of preaching, teaching, praying and supposedly leading all of these souls to Christ, I couldn't help but feel Satan quietly but confidently mocking me, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" I certainly had put a lot of faith in these professions of faith, but Satan was unmoved, and men were unchanged.

If I could be so bold, I would share with those facing this same issue today here in Australia, that the same is true concerning Animism, as it is of the great god Materialism, or Humanism, or Evolutionism, or even Hedonism for that matter. Sorcery and Sin in any culture die hard. In my experience I found Papua New Guineans, (like many Aussies) to be obliging folk, and unless the utmost care and discernment was taken with them in dealing with the issues of sin, repentance and the legitimate claims of Christ upon their whole future lives, without much difficulty, a prayer of confession and a profession of faith could be elicited. What I didn't realize was that these often sincere, (but sincerely uninformed) folk, were just as obliging to the gods and demands of their other animistic religious commitment as they were to me. Their willingness for me to pray with them, and supposedly lead them to Christ, was for most of them nothing more than a token, a gesture, a desire to please the missionary, mixed with some vague hope that maybe my praying with them might protect them somehow from the promised wrath to come. Again, what I failed to realize was that their deeply entrenched adherence to, and unwillingness to turn from the gods and doctrines of Animism completely disqualified them from being partakers of Christ's Salvation. "No man can serve two masters / Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Matt 6:24 / Luke 13:3). It wasn't until we began to deal Biblically and seriously with the real foundational issues of this powerful underlying commitment to their animistic fears and beliefs that we began to see genuine fruit and the "new creature" of 2 Corinthians 5:17.

I am glad to go down in history, unashamedly proclaiming that a Papua New Guinean cannot, and will not be saved until he is willing to repent and turn to God from the idols and evil spirits of Animism. I believe the same is true of Australians entrenched in one or other of these deadly "isms" that are popular in our day. Men are not saved by praying prayers, following Roman's Roads or giving simple lip service to the Lord of Glory. Men must repent or they'll perish (Luke 13:3-5), they must turn or they'll burn (Mark 9:43-48). The devil holds unrepentant men in bondage to sin until Christ makes them free, men can only be made free by embracing the truth, truth cannot be embraced and adhered to when there is still an idol set up in the Holy Place. Genuine old fashioned Biblical, "Repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) is the only hope for men who are bound by their "isms" and bent on their "schisms". It is of great interest to me that the Gospels, and the book of Acts, are characterised by the absence, rather than the presence of the sinner's prayer. How many people can you think of off hand in the New Testament seated with a counsellor praying the sinner's prayer? The emphasis very clearly in the New Testament is on repentance and faith. Sadly, these are the two missing elements in the lives of many these days that have professed Christ.

In closing, the real issue here is not concerning an obscure church planting ministry in the highlands of PNG, and its struggle against the evils of Animism, but rather an issue concerning the very foundations of our soulwinning philosophy. Biblical soulwinning involves a clear recognition of the total inadequacy of any man made system of approach in bringing men to Christ. Each individual soul needs to be dealt with according to the particular need and relevant cultural context, sin also needs to be seen and understood for what is, and the depths of its hold need to be carefully plumbed and prayed about, often with fasting, (see Matthew 17:21). To brush aside these matters is the greatest eternal error the soul winner can make. It would do us a great amount of good to study and restudy the methods of The Lord Jesus and the Apostles and their approach to soul winning, taking particular note of their recognition of the depths of depravity in the individuals they were dealing with, the power of evil spirits to manipulate and control, and their own total dependence on the Holy Spirit for any amount of success. The Lord Jesus particularly on a number of occasions, rather than encouraging prayer, left individuals to their sin when it was obvious they were not ready or willing to repent, (see Matthew 19:21-22 / Matthew 11:20 / 25-27). Before men are ready to pray for Salvation, we are obliged biblically to look carefully, and prayerfully, for evidences of a deep convicting work of God's Spirit concerning sin and its eternal consequences, and we ought not to be calling an individual "saved" until there is evidence of what the Apostle Paul referred to as a "new creature." Remember, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). For those who feel troubled with that hard line approach, it might be helpful to carefully read the following passages of Scripture, (Matthew 3:7-10 / Matthew 7:21-23 / Luke 6:46 / 2 Timothy 3:5 / Titus 1:16). I believe today many of us have lost our sense of the "Behold" of Bible Salvation. God has been much robbed of His glory by our cheapening and lowering of the biblical standard in accepting for salvation the cheap counterfeit of an empty prayer and profession of faith. Unwittingly, by sleight of hand we have exchanged the means, for the actual end itself. We all agree, sinners must pray to be saved, (Romans 10:13) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved", but, for the sinner's prayer to be effectual unto Salvation, it must, according to Scripture be accompanied by an heart ready to repent of whatever deadly "ism" hath taken the "Seat of the image of jealousy" that should only ever truly belong to the Lord Christ. I know for some this may be considered thinking dangerously outside the acceptable bounds of our theological system, that may be the case, but if our system of theology in any one point is proved biblically to be unsound or faulty, ought we not feel the liberty to think (and act) outside the box. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16) Scripture supersedes and must correct all theological systems, no matter how long or how tenaciously we have held to them.

Bro. Dave Crowe

Australian missionary to Papua New Guinea

(Back to Table of Contents)

A Word of Testimony –

from Emily Montiford

I grew up with my mum who was saved when I was 1. We attended quite a strict Independent Baptist church, although we lived in quite a rough neighborhood. There was always pretty violent stuff going on. Seeing that drugs and alcohol always scared me, my mother taught me quite strongly against those things as she never wanted me to make the mistakes that she did.

Mum got remarried when I was nine so we started to attend a church that wasn't as strict, drinking and stuff seemed to be condoned, and as a result of that our family seemed to slowly slip away.

When I was 14 I met a boy who introduced me to the world of drugs and alcohol. Shortly after that I completely stopped going to church.

When I was 15 I dropped out of school and started to work. I was now living in the adults world. I was too young to handle it and ended up making some awful decisions. I was dating a guy who I was living with when I was 16, it ended badly and he ended up in jail. After that things seemed to go from bad to worse when drugs became my only escape. I knew I was sinning against God. And every now and then Good ol Uncle Dave (Crowe)would turn up and remind me of that, which seemed at the time to make me worse, but now I see that God was only letting me go so far. My partying got out of hand and I knew I had to stop or it was going to kill me so I ended up at a salvation army rehab where they tried to heal you with tambourines, hand holding and helping you justify your actions by telling you that your addictions were a disease and you couldn't help it, you were born that way.

But it turned out that tambourines couldn't heal me and I was back on it that night I got out. I lived with a guy for 6 months before I moved back home and started to settle a little being back with my mum.

I got married but that also didn't seem to fill that spot where the Lord needed to be, and as time went on the drugs got heavier and more frequent, which resulted in many overdoses and many trips to the hospital. Until one day I woke up and knew that it was time to make a decision. I couldn't run from God anymore or I was going to die and go to hell . So it seemed to be the Lord's timing that Dave and Julie were in the country, so I flew up here to north Queensland, detoxed and gave my heart to the Lord.

And since that day he had greatly blessed me. I now have a beautiful baby and a wonderful church, I have been able to repair all the relationships that I had broken because of my bad choices. So I'm so grateful that the Lord has saved me and turned my life around because without Him I was living hell on earth to spend eternity there.

(Back to Table of Contents)

Links in the Media Chain -

* Concerned about a sea level rise?
http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/06/17/research-center-under-fire-for-adjusted-sea-level-data/

* Very interesting IMax video clip of Israel –

http://vimeo.com/15034110

* So you've always wanted fly? – http://www.heraldsun.com.au/travel/news/jeb-corliss-becomes-first-man-to-fly-through-waterfall-in-wingsuit/story-fn32891l-1226084690386

* Driver caught in the Japanese tsunami – http://wimp.com/japanesetsunami/

* Our new pipe organ at church – http://wimp.com/oomphalapompatroniuminstrument/

(Back to Table of Contents)

Quotable Notes and Notable Quotes -

Dear Dave,

With reference to your insightful answer [about God's foreknowledge 6/11]: Thanks for your wisdom in this regard, Dave. I have been a Christian for three decades and a pastor for almost two. Some nine years ago I started a serious flirtation with Calvinism and even began introducing aspects thereof into our church, although I had a niggling uneasiness about it. I then read a portion of What Love Is This? and as a result tried to merge Calvinism and Free Will in my mind. Some years later, after a humbling personal crisis, I attempted a second reading, and from the first page the book made me feel extremely stupid. I was crying out all the time "but I knew that!" and "I should have written this!" Something deep within whispered "Well, why don't you stick to what you know and believe?" I did exactly that, and it was not even necessary to finish the book. It is now years later, and it has become clear to me that there was a direct correlation between my attraction to Calvinism and the size of my ego. I wanted to be part of the intellectual elite, and so I began finding reasons to discard the obvious and simple meaning of Scripture. My huge effort to become a 5-point Calvinist can be explained in one word: PRIDE. Thanks again, Dave. TV (email)

(from a letter to Dave Hunt, printed in the Berean Call)

* "I'll preach against any minister who is preaching false doctrines... I'll turn my guns loose against him and don't you forget that. Any man who is preaching false doctrines to the people and vomiting out false "doctrine?" The responsibility for no revival in our cities and towns has got to be laid at the doors of the ministry...most of them (apostate preachers) are a lot of evolutionary hot air merchants." *Billy Sunday*

(Back to Table of Contents)

Sermon Fodder -

(We have been studying Psalm 1 on Wednesday nights for several weeks. When we came to the verses about the ungodly man, we found that he is compared to chaff. (“ The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.” Psa. 1:4) One of the most interesting comments I found was by Sir Richard Baker, "Here, by the way, we may let the wicked know they have a thanks to give they little think of; that they may thank the godly for all the good days they live upon the earth, seeing it is for their sakes and not for their own that they enjoy them. For as the chaff while it is united and keeps close to the wheat, enjoys some privileges for the wheat's sake, and is laid up carefully in the barn; but as soon as it is divided, and parted from the wheat, it is cast out and scattered by the wind; so the wicked, whilst the godly are in company and live amongst them, partake for their sake of some blessedness promised to the godly; but if the godly forsake them or be taken from them, then either a deluge of water comes suddenly upon them, as it did upon the old world when Noah left it; or a deluge of fire, as it did upon Sodom, when Lot left it, and went out of the city. Sir Richard Baker."

Further consideration of this verse prompted me to write: "Chaff has the shape, but not the substance of the grain. It is originally attached to the grain, but is separated from it in trials and afflictions. When pressure comes upon it, it breaks loose from the grain and is easily blown away. Judas was such, and Balaam. There arose a situation that tested their adherence to Christ, to His words, and to His people and revealed their true character. Though the ungodly clings to the wheat for a time, and enjoys being gathered into the granary of the church, after a time the husbandman will bring out the flail and thresh ALL his wheat, and then the true nature of each grain will be seen. He does it for the good of the grain. The grain can only be all it should be once the chaff is separated from it. No longer will the chaff cling to the wheat, no longer will it be found in the granary, no longer will it feel that it belongs to the husbandman. The chaff will no longer chafe at its restraints, resenting the ownership and authority of the Husbandman, who is Christ. It now has its freedom to be who it really is. It thinks it is as free as the breeze. No one can tell it what to do. It is entirely autonomous. Or is it? The chaff now finds that it is blown about with every wind of doctrine. It is scattered, even from the other chaff that it felt were its best friends, until it eventually wears itself out against the earth and turns to dust that cannot be traced.

It is especially noteworthy that we are told in verse 4 that the ungodly ARE NOT SO...” Are not what?

The ungodly, the chaff, are NOT like the godly man of verses 1 and 2. The chaff DOES walk in the counsel of the ungodly, he DOES stand in the way of sinners, and he DOES sit in the seat of the scornful. He does NOT delight in the law of the LORD, and he does NOT meditate in His law day and night. He is NOT like a tree planted by the rivers of water, he does NOT bring forth fruit in his season, his leaf DOES wither, and his works DO NOT prosper."

Bro. Buddy Smith

(Back to Table of Contents)

Walking With Wise Men -

Lipstick in School

According to a news report, a certain private school in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs was recently faced with an unusual problem . A number of the girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the girls' bathroom. That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints.

Every night the maintenance man would remove them and the next day the girls would put them back . Finally the Headmistress decided that something had to be done . She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man . She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every night (you can just imagine the yawns from the little princesses).

To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required . He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet bowl, and cleaned the mirror with it.

The silence was broken by a large number of gasps, a few girls vomited and apparently someone fainted . Since then there have been no lip prints on the mirror.

There are teachers…and then there are educators.

(Back to Table of Contents)

Is it Wrong for Christians to Expose and Oppose Error?

By Buddy Smith

For the Bible answer, read:

Matt. 7:15-20
Matt. 23:1-39
Acts 13:4-12
Acts 15:1,2
Rom. 16:17,18
I Cor. 5:1-7
II Cor. 6:14-7:1
Gal. 1:8,9
Gal. 2:11-14
Col. 2:8
II Thess. 3:10-12
I Tim. 4:17
II Tim. 3:1-9
II Tim. 4:1-5
Titus 1:10-14
James 5:1-6

II Pet. 2:1-22
I John 4:1
II John 9-11
III John 9,10
Jude 1-23
Rev. 2:6
Rev. 2:14
Rev. 2:20-23
Rev. 3:14-19

[Editor's note: Go on, look them all up ... I dare you!]

(Back to Table of Contents)

Poems That Preach -

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.
To lose one's wealth is sad indeed,
To lose one's health is more.
To lose one's soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.

Robert H. Smith (1832)

You're Just Out of Date -

You're just out of date,"
said young pastor Bate
To one of our faithful old preachers
Who had carried for years
in travail and tears
The gospel to poor sinful creatures.

"You still preach on Hades,
and shock cultured ladies
"With your barbarous doctrine of blood!
"You're so far behind
you will never catch up—
"You're a flat tire stuck in the mud!"

For some little while, a bit of a smile
Enlightened the old preacher's face.
Being made the butt of ridicule's cut
Did not ruffle his sweetness and grace.

Then he turned to young Bate,
so suave and sedate.
"Catch up, did my ears hear you say?
"Why, I couldn't succeed
if I doubled my speed,
"My friend, I'm not going your way!"

Author unknown

(Back to Table of Contents)

Therapy For the Funny Bone -

* A new study found that 10 percent of toddlers are overweight. That explains the most popular new stroller on the market: a wheelbarrow.

* House Speaker John Boehner was talking to the President before his big golf match and ask him what his handicap was. Without a moment's hesitation, he said…."Joe Biden."

* A new study found that most Americans will have to work into their 70s and 80s to be able to retire. Ah, but don't you worry. After that, you 'll have plenty of time to enjoy your golden year.

* My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. Now she's 97 years old and we don't know where she is.

* The quantity of consonants in the English language is constant. If omitted in one place, they turn up in another. When a Bostonian "pahks his cah," the lost R's migrate southwest, causing a Texan to warsh" his car and invest in "erl" wells.

* A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

(Back to Table of Contents)

Science Falsely So Called -

Greens have got it all covered -

THANKS to the Greens, we can rest assured that no Tibetan transgender whale will be living in poverty by the end of this Senate term.

(Back to Table of Contents)

Country Music: A Safe Alternative? -

by Jeff Royal

Country music has hit the big time. It "has become the most popular radio format in America, reaching 77.3 million adults--almost 40 percent of the adult population--every week. Since 1989, country record sales have nearly doubled from $921 million to over $1.758 billion"

(http://www.roughstock.com/history/garthnew.html).

Is Country music a viable alternative to the secular, worldly mainstream music of our day?

Consider some song lyrics and information that will help shed light on the spiritual and moral dangers of this music.

Read more at: http://www.wayoflife.org/files/166f634668dfe9e574a0b1df38ec0b7c-823.html

(Back to Table of Contents)

Deacon True Sez -

"The best way to discourage somebody is to tell him the truth and leave God out of it."

(Back to Table of Contents)

Biblical Christianity Not Found in Megachurch –

by Chris Dunn

CollegiateTimes
Wednesday, June, 29, 2011

Last Sunday I went to a megachurch. Normally I attend small churches with a gathering of local believers who strive to live according to the Bible.

Having already attended countless churches from many denominations and faiths, I was eager to see what the average parishioner experienced at one of these stadium-sized complexes. It was horrific. Megachurches like this one can have almost nothing to do with biblical Christianity and may actually do violence to the 'Word of God.'

After finding a place to park I made my way to Building B. The "campus" for this church that boasts over 10,000 members had six buildings labelled A-F. Each building was as large as many found here at Virginia Tech. The large entrances showed me into an enormous hall that resembled an airport terminal or the concourses that surround NFL stadiums. Once inside I noticed that few people were dressed like they were going to church. The Bible does not say that one must dress exactly such and such way, but neither is it silent when it comes to the matter of attire. Dressing modestly is important to me, but at this church mini skirts and cleavage were everywhere. Another is that as an ambassador for Christ I want to dress in a respectable manner. This is especially true for church because I do not want to pay more respect to man than God.

For example, it would bother me if I dressed more nicely for graduation, to meet a politician or went on a date than I did to worship God. People at this place must not have shared my conviction because scores of them wore flip-flops, shorts and t-shirts. I only lasted thirty seconds in the first room I entered.

In it I found hundreds of cafeteria-style tables where people were in the process of guzzling down coffee and loading up on donuts. Large screens surrounded the room and apparently these people were about to watch the real service on a ten-minute delay. I wanted to watch real preaching so I turned around and followed the lengthy hallway to the live service.

As I entered the main service the lights were dim and a band was playing to a crowd of 3,000 or so. They were playing Michael Jackson. Because I want my column to go to print I will refrain from expressing my true thoughts on why this is wrong on so many levels. Needless to say it was absolutely disgusting to see parishioners "worship" God by rocking out to Michael Jackson.

The guest speaker for the day was a New York Times best-selling author. He found a niche writing Christian books on how to be a good father. Throughout the service I pondered how a single, childless, middle-aged man from a fatherless home became an authority on what it takes to be a good father.

Similarly, I found myself wondering if the church's pastor—if they even had one; he was nowhere to be found—also failed to meet the Bible's requirements for church leadership, which are clearly outlined in Timothy 1.

Once he finished speaking the lights went dim and the band took the stage. While they were playing I witnessed the most appalling form of the Lord's Supper in my life. [For the uninitiated, in this practice. The bread or food is symbolic of Jesus' body, and the wine or drink symbolic of his blood. It is a solemn event where you remember that Jesus gave his body on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world]. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic time of remembrance where you focus your thoughts on Jesus Christ and what he did for you. Well at this megachurch your thoughts were anywhere but Jesus. They passed around bread and grape juice while a Jessica Simpson look-alike rocked out with her band. And when I say rock out I mean it. In its attempt to bring the world into the church these guys must have spent a fortune—two high definition 10-foot wide TVs, half a dozen cameras you would find in the newsroom studios of Fox or CNN, a light show that you

would only find at an expensive concert, and speakers so loud that they register on the Richter scale.

After this amazing display of "worship," a quick prayer was said and everyone promptly filed outdoors to navigate traffic in the parking lot. I am not one for lines or sitting in traffic so I sat around until most of the crowd dispersed. That is when I heard it - a small round of applause somewhere off in the distance of this vast auditorium. I located the sound and discovered that half a dozen family members were clapping for their child who was being baptised. Apparently this symbolic representation of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is less important than listening to Michael Jackson and hearing a preacher joke about how he has multiple back-up girlfriends in case his favourite one dumps him. I say this because they baptised him after the service when most of the crowd was gone and nobody was looking.

This was my first and last experience with a megachurch. I found it so horrific that it grieved my spirit the entire time I was there. Not one time did the preacher mention sin, hell, heaven, or Jesus. Not once did I even feel like I was in church. As a Christian, I try to separate myself from the wickedness of this world, especially the corporate trash that pours out over the TV and airwaves. This church gathered all the entertainment I avoid into one nice little package and overloaded my senses with it.

With places like this around, I can understand why non-believers are always saying that Christians do not act like Christians!

(Back to Table of Contents)

Cartoons for the Wise -

(Back to Table of Contents)

Eddy-Torial -

The Lion Of Truth

"Spurgeon once told of preaching in the dark when the gaslights in the Tabernacle failed. He said that, during the last hymn as he read over his sermon notes, 'from across the page a text leaped upon me like a lion from a thicket.' It seized him in its teeth and pierced him deeply. So obvious were its truths, so pointed its message and so clear were the points of its outline that he took it to be the leading of the Lord to change his sermon and preach from the lionlike text. No sooner had he begun

to speak than the lights in the auditorium went out, and people and preacher were plunged into darkness. But he had no need of sermon notes. He knew the text by memory and the outline was fresh, so he calmed the people and preached with great power. In the dark.

It is that saying of his that kept coming back to me, 'a text leaped upon me like a lion from a thicket!' I wondered how long it was since I fell under the onslaught of a mighty text, torn limb from limb, rent in pieces by the ferocity of truth, helpless in its jaws?

Not for a long time.

In fact, I almost despaired of experiencing that blessed crushing of my stubborn will, that breaking of my hardened heart, that wounding of my arrogant pride. It was not that God had lost His power or that His Word had no teeth. Rather, I had allowed the world to condition me to preach 'safe texts', to avoid all the thickets of Holy Scripture where lion texts may lurk. I had absorbed the lie of neo-theologians who smilingly told me that all lion texts have been tamed and were now mere pussycats.

My culture had taught me that brokenness was a strange and foreign experience for modern day pastors. I had learned from experts how to bend slightly if the Lord put enough pressure on me, but brokenness was thought to be out of date and baptistically incorrect.

I needed to hark back to Spurgeon's description of the text 'leaping upon him like a lion from a thicket.' And when I did I became convicted of too much carefulness in the reading of the Word. The Lord was challenging me to prowl all the thickets of God's Word, to probe every bush, and to follow every game trail I found, in hope of springing a lionlike text. As time passed I became more adventurous, and began to leave my armour at home. In fact, I noticed the other day that it is gathering a bit of rust.

I cannot yet boast of great numbers found, but I can give thanks for some small progress. I am occasionally being mauled by the Lion of Truth.

Is it fearful? Yes and no. It was terribly frightening at first to be seized and dragged off to the lair of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But I discovered that my wounds were for my good. Like Jacob, I am finding that all God's noblemen limp from the wounds He inflicts. He was only Jacob the supplanter, until God crippled him, and then he was Israel the prince of God. I am coming to believe that lionlike texts are the best kind.

I suspect that the man who lays aside the armour of self will and intellectual pride and begins prowling among the thickets of Scripture will find many hungry lion texts there.

There is surely nothing better for our people than for their pastor to limp to the pulpit with many a scar from having wrestled with a lionlike text of Scripture until it did its work in him.

May they leap upon us as they did upon Spurgeon!

Bro. Buddy Smith

(Back to Table of Contents)