

A Rancher's Rumbblings, August 14, 2009

LIFE AND DEATH AND FEAR ALL AROUND – YET JESUS IS WITH US

by David R. Currie
Executive Director, Texas Baptists Committed

There are some weeks when column topics are a lot easier to come by than other weeks. This is one of those “some weeks.” Right now, I have at least five subjects rumbling around in my head (yes, that’s where the “rumbblings” start) and want to write about them all.

Here is what I mean.

Back to the Ranch

I have not given you an update on the ranch in awhile. The reality is that “Lost” is lost and “Found” is found. The twin goats Loretta was so excited about – and that she named Lost (female) and Found (male) have lived up to their name. We have not seen Lost in the past 6 weeks – sorry to say, she’s probably gone for good. Maybe a bobcat caught her; maybe Mama didn’t have enough milk for two; we will never know the reason for sure, but Lost is lost. We do rejoice, however, in seeing the other two sets of twins doing well. Maybe twins are special that way – after all, my Dad, Roy, was a twin (with his brother Floy), and we have twin grandsons as well (Brett and Brent).

I could write tons more about the ranch or my garden, where I planted 30 squash plants (five different kinds). I drive around San Angelo twice a week, giving squash away at banks, law offices, etc., because I’m producing about 70 squash and 30 cucumbers a week, and Loretta refuses to freeze any or make pickles like she did when we were poor and she loved me!!!!!!!

New Baptist Covenant

I could write three or four columns on how incredible the New Baptist Covenant meeting was in Norman, Oklahoma (and probably will over the next few weeks).

President Carter reminded us of the importance of seeking unity, no matter how difficult it may be to achieve.

J. C. Watts challenged us to quit attacking and start caring.

Ellis Orozco reminded us that Baptists are at their best when they speak “from the margins of society.”

Wade Burluson, a Southern Baptist pastor who has been attacked by Southern Baptist leadership in recent years for his willingness to challenge unloving and authoritarian actions, shared his heart with remarkable courage and conviction, emphatically supporting full equality for women in ministry, leadership, and the home.

He stressed that any Scriptural interpretation used to justify anything less than full equality for women is taking the Scripture out of context.

My favorite thing out of the meeting was a paragraph from Wade's blog, [Grace and Truth to You](#), which I encourage you to read regularly. Wade writes that his wife Rachelle turned to him during the New Baptist Covenant meeting and said, "I've heard more about Christ and what it means for us to honor Him than any Convention I've attended in a long, long time. These folks aren't either heretics or infidels like we've been told."

Can you *believe* that this is the image that Southern Baptists have been given, by their Fundamentalist leaders, about people like you and me? Well, sad to say, it is, and they have come to believe what they're told – that people like us don't believe in Jesus, the Bible, or anything Christian. UNTIL THEY TAKE THE TIME TO GET TO KNOW US. This is one reason we are so divided as Baptists.

The key point of Wade's message was that we must love each other and respect each other – even when we differ with each other. We must take the time to hear each other out and get to know each other rather than simply believe everything we hear about each other. Wade has put action to his words and set the example.

I am sad that three people wrote me, either questioning why TBC would associate with Jimmy Carter or saying that they couldn't support us anymore because of our association with President Carter. All I can say is that even the most die-hard Democrat wouldn't have been offended by anything that former Republican Congressman J. C. Watts said in his message last Thursday; by the same token, the most loyal Republican wouldn't have been offended by anything said by President Carter or Democratic Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry, who – in his moving testimony – spoke of the pain of losing a daughter when she was only 7 months old.

But that goes back to Wade Burleson's point. Folks, don't assume that the presence of politicians on the program makes the program political. They may be politicians, but J. C. Watts, Jimmy Carter, and Brad Henry are Christians first. That's what they talked about in Norman last week – their faith in Jesus and their commitment to taking Jesus' love to our world. This meeting didn't have a thing to do with politics. It was all about following Jesus faithfully and working together as Baptists – from all ethnic groups and all cultures – for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

You can watch all of these sermons and testimonies online by clicking [here](#).

Celebrating Family Memories in the Wake of Death

I could also write this week about the death of Mother's best friend. It happened while I was away in Norman at the New Baptist Covenant meeting. This week, I took Mother to Lubbock for the funeral, which I preached Tuesday morning. I have never seen Mother this emotional about a death – but they had been friends for 59 years, and that family is like family to us. In fact, when I was young, we took vacations together. On Monday evening, I saw videos of myself running around the yard in Paint Rock with the three kids of this family when I was 5 years old. I had no idea such videos existed, and I loved watching them.

People – and Churches – Need Our Love, Encouragement, and Help

After I got back, I spent some time talking to a young minister who recently resigned from his church after making a huge mistake. I loved loving him and encouraging him, but I also remembered another young minister who faced a crisis several years ago. That time, I failed to

call and be his friend – I will regret that till the day I die. I hope I learned that, no matter how busy you are, you should never let that stand in the way of being available to people who need your help and encouragement.

Anybody else need to be reminded of that?

On Monday, I got a call and then a follow-up email from a church in another state – a church that had been torn apart by a Fundamentalist pastor who is now threatening to sue the church for firing him. This church is struggling to figure out what to do and who to turn to.

I am trying to help them get sound legal advice and move forward. The saddest thing is that the church has decided to accept NO NEW MEMBERS – out of fear that there are people who will join for no other reason than to pack the church with enough votes to reinstate the former pastor. How sad. Have you ever heard of a church that would refuse to accept new members? This is how scared this particular church is after having an encounter with Fundamentalism.

So friends, this is my life just in the past week. I guess I can at least say that this “following Jesus stuff” is not boring!!!!

If you need to be reminded – like my young pastor friend – that God loves you and thinks the world of you, believe it and feel it now. God bless you.