

A Rancher's Rumbings, June 12, 2009
LOST OR FOUND OR ANY WHICHWAY

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I carry in my Bible a copy of one of my favorite quotes from my favorite writer, Frederick Buechner. It's a saying of Leo Bebb, the title character of *The Book of Bebb*, which is a compilation of four novels Buechner wrote, centering on this character.

Leo Bebb says, "We all got secrets. I got them same as everybody else – things we feel bad about and wish hadn't ever happened. Hurtful things. Long ago things. We're all scared and lonesome, but most of the time we keep it hid. It's like every one of us has lost his way so bad we don't even know which way is home any more, only we're ashamed to ask. You know what would happen if we would own up we're lost and ask? Why, what would happen is we'd find out that home is each other. We'd find out home is Jesus that loves us lost or found or any whichway."

I thought of this quote Monday night. The little kid goats I wrote about last week were not with their mother when Loretta and I fed them toward the middle of the week. I tried to assure Loretta that they were probably just sleeping, but – in all honesty – I was worried, because they had been with their mother Monday and Tuesday night and looked strong and healthy.

On Friday night, we were in Austin to watch Loretta's granddaughter run the 800 meters in the state track meet, which was even more special, since I had run there in 1971 in the Mile Run. On Saturday, we drove from Austin to Lubbock so that I could preach again at Second Baptist Church, Lubbock. You know, if I were to consider pastoring again, I would be begging those wonderful people to take me (and I think they just might).

On Sunday night, the mother goat was there again, and again there were no babies with her. I told Loretta I was sorry, but I was afraid that a bobcat must have caught them.

On Monday morning, Loretta was crying when she called me. I said, "What is wrong, Angel?"

She told me, "The babies are here. They got outside the fence and are near the house – they are alive!"

On Monday evening, we caught them and put them in a pen. Then we went and caught their mother and put them all together. My, did they get after that milk! I turned to Loretta and said, "Well, now they are family – like Dot, Oreo, and Brown-Eyed Girl we raised on a bottle. So what are you naming them?"

She replied, "Lost and Found, I guess." And now you know why I thought of the Buechner quote that I carry in my Bible.

I could act like a preacher at this point and "unpack" Buechner's great words and turn them into a sermon outline. But I think, instead, I'll just leave them as he wrote them and let you and God decide how they speak to you.

SAVE THESE DATES

Before I close, let me give a few important dates to mark on your calendar.

On August 6-7, the *Midwest Regional Meeting of the New Baptist Covenant* will be held in Norman, Oklahoma. You can register at www.ok.newbaptistcovenant.org. The entire meeting is at the Embassy Suites, and the rooms are at a great price. We will have a *TBC Breakfast* during this meeting. Mitch Randall will be our speaker. Mitch is pastor of NorthHaven Church in Norman, a church that partners with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Mitch formerly pastored at First Baptist Church, Bedford, and is a longtime friend of TBC. You may remember that Mitch recently wrote a *Baptist Reflections* column for us.

President Carter will be speaking at this meeting, along with Ellis Orozco – who spoke at our *TBC Convocation* last year – and several other inspiring speakers. I urge you to make a special effort to attend. The national *Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant* in Atlanta in January of last year was the most incredible Baptist meeting I have ever attended. I'm excited that we have one closer to home this summer so that it will be easier for many of you to attend. You will find it an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life – Baptists of all kinds meeting together in unity, one in their love for the Lord.

Also, we have finalized plans for our *TBC Breakfast* during this year's annual BGCT meeting in Houston on November 16-17. Ed Hogan, pastor of Jersey Village Baptist Church in Houston, will be our speaker. Ed is a great friend (we hunt together) and one of the most effective and dynamic pastors in Baptist life. He served two terms as second vice president of the BGCT during a critical time in our history. You will want to make it a priority to be there to hear this visionary pastor's message.

I'm looking forward to attending many other exciting meetings this summer, including the following:

- [Hispanic Baptist Convention](#), Dallas, June 28-30
- [CBF General Assembly](#), Houston, July 2-3
- [Bivocational Smaller Church Ministers' and Spouses' Statewide Conference](#), University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, July 10-12
- [African American Fellowship Conference](#), DeSoto, July 27-31

The size and diversity of the BGCT means that there is a lot to do to keep the relationships strong and to keep educating our churches about the continuing threat of Fundamentalism – and the danger it poses to our churches. Thank you for your support in allowing me to do these things. If you haven't renewed your membership this year, please do so. TBC's ministry is important to the future of Texas Baptists. Please give what you can to provide us with the resources we need to educate and inform people and churches.

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

The last two issues of *Rumbblings* resulted in the largest responses my writings have ever received. I think it is for two reasons: (1) like me, many of you grew up in a rural church and value what these wonderful pastors do for us in those churches; and (2) we really are a Baptist family at TBC and, since my son was struggling, you cared.

I cannot thank you enough. I forwarded over 20 emails to him and said, "Son, print these out and treasure them, read them from time to time, these people care about you." It was very special, and I thank you.