

Monday, October 31, 2005

Market Decisions and Decisions for Christ

"Preferences for goods and services, like preferences for one's friends, are revealing. In markets we don't reveal what our true preferences are until we buy products and services. Surveys that allow us to 'choose' among alternatives, without incurring any cost, are not the same as market decisions. No wonder that the results of surveys and questionnaires differ from behavior, when choices are costly." This is copied from an article found at this site- http://www.johnlocke.org/articles/display_story.html?id=2852 It uses the TV show American Idol to illustrate a truth about economic choices. This statement is also true about spiritual and moral choices, as well. Many people say they have chosen Christ as Lord and Savior. Unless and until they demonstrate costly commitment to obeying Him, what they say is meaningless.

Posted by Cal at 11:28

The Things I Didn't Learn in School

I am frequently reminded about how much I never heard (to my best recollection) when I was in school, going back over 60 years. Do you remember being taught that Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh were avid (rabid) anti-Semites and very pro-Hitler? I don't, but they were, according to many historians. The disturbing and disillusioning story is told in a book I just read entitled, *The American Axis*, by Max Wallace, St Martin's Press. My life-long illusion was that both men were great American Heroes, good guys. Not so, if the evidence is believed. Makes me wonder how many other illusions I have about our Country's History and the famous people who helped make it. One interesting footnote: Theodore Geisel (Dr Suess) began his career, drawing anti- Lindbergh political cartoons in a New York newspaper.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:46

The Power of One

The previous post called for Christians to be well-qualified for the work God calls them to do in the public square. The implication was intellectual qualifications. Sometimes, the qualification is simply character with courage. Rosa Parks was not qualified to be a Supreme Court Justice, nevertheless her character and courage, exercised at the right time and place, effectively changed the laws of the Land.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:27

When Faith Alone isn't Enough

The Harriet Miers case illustrates well that simply being a Christian is not enough to serve God in the public square. Ya gotta have the chops, as musicians say- the necessary skills (or qualifications) particular to the job. In this case, simply being a good attorney, as well as a Christian, was not enough. If Christians are to work within the Systems and "speak Truth to Power", then we must be well equipt on every level, to do the work effectively. That doesn't guarantee success, of course, but at least it would get us off the bench and into the game- or in Sister Miers case, onto the Bench.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 09:21

QT Thots

Psalm 139 (CEV) 1You have looked deep into my heart, LORD, and you know all about me. 2You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. 3You notice everything I do and everywhere I go. 4Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say, 5and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side.

7Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight? 8If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there. If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there. 9Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean.10Even then your powerful arm would guide and protect me. 11Or suppose I said, "I'll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over." 12But you see in the dark because daylight and dark are all the same to you. Here is a Psalm loaded with great Theology. From this Psalm we learn God knows everything (omniscient), He is everywhere (omnipresent) and can do anything He wants (omnipotent). There are no limits or barriers for Him. (He is infinite). He is personal and He cares and provides for me personally.6I can't understand all of this Studying Theology does not puff me up or make me arrogant. Quite the contrary. The more I learn about God, the more I realize I do not know. I see mystery and paradox. I am led to bow in worship before the God I study. Such wonderful knowledge [Theology] is far above me. Who God is amazes me. That He is with me right now as I write this, is awesome. That He cares about my day is mind boggling. Knowing that He is in control of my day, no matter what, is so reassuring and gives me peace as it begins.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:12

Sunday, October 30, 2005

Can Fiction be used to teach Truth?

"Good night and Good Luck" is a story about Edward R. Morrow, TV journalist and Joe McCarthy, Senator and Communist Hunter in the mid 1950's. The story is presented as true. There is evidence that the story as presented is not historically accurate. That is ironic, because reviewers say the movie is about "telling the truth" and is being touted as a great story for our time in the early 2000's. In other words, the writer, producer (George Clooney), has a message for today about the current administration and is using a story from the 50's to convey it, even if that story itself is not what it purports to be. The story as written serves his purpose. This is another example of fiction presented as truth, though it is not, being used to try to teach a moral lesson. To my mind, this is not an acceptable use of fiction and leads to error. Reviews and links can be found here <http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/filmforum/051020.html> http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/good_night_and_good_luck/ This Fall, another movie will debut: "The Lion, Witch and Wardrobe". This story is not true as presented. No one claims it to be anything other than fiction, an allegory, that communicates truth. The story itself never happened. It is not true. All agree. Aslan the Lion does not exist. What he represents, of course, does exist and is true. How do we know that? Because the Bible tells us so. The story would not have us believe that Jesus actually is a lion. The fiction faithfully conveys what the Bible does teach. Using fiction, in this case, to teach truth, is acceptable. No one will be misled if they believe it. On the contrary, the Lord has used this fiction to lead many to Himself. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/interviews/michealfaherty.html>

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/commentaries/photographingnarnia.html>

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 17:35

Saturday, October 29, 2005

Left Behind

We have finished sorting through, and disposing of, my mother-in-laws things. Always strange how things are left behind. Her recliner is now sitting in one corner of our living room, opposite the recliner I use, which was left behind by my father. We watched a fascinating TV documentary last week, covering some 20 years, about the "Last Cowboy". He is a man about my age whose entire life was devoted to farming, particularly to raising cows. His family long ago lost interest and moved to town, including his wife. He won't leave. Sad story. He will pass away and not only his farm, but his way of life, will be left behind. When we have passed on, what from our lives, do we hope will be left behind? I do not mean farms and recliners. Those, too, will eventually be gone. What will live on because we have been here?

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 15:00

More on the Critique of Rick Warren's books

The critique of Rick Warren's books, posted two days ago, focused on two issues: Dualism and Dispensationalism. Perhaps more explanation is in order. 1. Dualism- Dividing reality into two spheres: Spiritual and Physical, Eternal and Temporal, Sacred and Secular, Heaven and Earth, Church and World, etc. The opposites are compartmentalized and kept separate. They are seen as equally real and valid "worlds", just different with different "rules" or they are seen as enemies. Such "Dualism" is the common perspective of Christians. Neocalvinists are Holists and seek the redemption of all Reality, including arts and culture, work and leisure, marriage and family- all in Christ, the Sovereign of all, for the Glory of God. 2. Dispensationalism- in Naugle's article, he was not discussing Eschatology (End Times). He was discussing the common view of the Church, as taught by Dispensationalism. That view says the Church did not exist in the Old Testament. It is a New Testament, Age of Grace, Body. In Naugle's perspective, Evangelicals like Warren divide the Bible in two and thus also have a very deficient or incomplete understanding of the Church. In Naugle's Reformed view, the Bible must be considered as a whole and the Church is the Covenant People of God, having replaced Israel. This is tied in with the Neocalvinist Reformed World View taught by Naugle. That WV begins with Creation and the Purpose of all Humanity, as the Image of God, to be responsible for the cultivation and care of all Creation. The Fall impeded that Plan. Israel was formed for this Purpose, creating civilization according to the Norms (Law) established by God for His glory. They refused this mission. Christ came and redeemed the Elect, the Church. The Church assumes Israel's role to carry out the Cultural (Stewardship) Mandate. This is its "Purpose". What motivates it? Love of God and Humanity (the "Great Commandments") It intentionally seeks to enlist others in this Purpose (the "Great Commission"). Commonly, Evangelicals do not "buy" this Purpose, because they are Dispensational Dualists (as defined here). The "purposes" of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Evangelism, as defined and taught by Rick Warren and most Evangelicals, while of value, are not at all the same. In practice, this 5-fold purpose ends up supplanting the original Purpose, given at Creation and elaborated on through out the entire Bible. I agree with Dr Naugle.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 12:00

More on being Purpose Driven

In yesterday's post about Rick Warren's two books about being purpose driven, I referred you to the website of Dr David Naugle. He is a professor at Dallas Baptist University with earned PhDs in both Theology and Philosophy. If you read his biographical material on his website [recommended], you saw his photo. Sitting with him is his pet dog. An important clue to where Dr Naugle is 'coming from' is the dog's name: Kuyper. Dr Naugle is known for his writing and teaching promoting a Biblical World View. For him, that is the world view as developed from Scripture by Abraham Kuyper. A simple introduction, written by Dr Naugle can be found here <http://www.dbu.edu/naugle/pdf/IntroReformWV.pdf> His critique of Rick Warren comes out of this World View.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 10:04

Friday, October 28, 2005

Today's QT Thot

The Church Calendar today commemorates Apostles Simon and Jude"Simon is not mentioned by name in the New Testament except on these lists.

Judas (often called Jude in English, but the Greek has Judas) is variously named, but this is not surprising. Before the Crucifixion, there would be a need to distinguish him among the apostles from Judas Iscariot, and after the Crucifixion there would be an additional reason for being emphatic about the distinction. After the Last Supper it was Jude who asked Our Lord why he chose to reveal Himself only to the disciples. He received the reply: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:22f) [James Kiefer in Oremus]"What a wonderful promise: God the Father & Son will come to me and abide with me. I can have His presence in my life today. There is a condition: I must regularly obey the Word of the Lord. Why would I do that? Not to have God's presence [or other rewards], but simply because I love the Lord. Things can go wrong in a Christian's life. There are difficult times and set backs. I did not sleep well last night, my "dreams" were reminding me of some that I have experienced. I am anxious about some of the things planned for today. We often do not have explanations for why we sometimes, regardless of the Lord abiding with us- have troubles, We often do not understand why things are turning out the way they are. If we are Calvinists, believing in the sovereignty of God, it is easy to slide into fatalism or resignation or defeat, and say "What's the use trying to obey God and follow the Bible if this [stuff] happens to me?" It must be His will and for my good. UghWhy not give up? Why hang in there? Because, in site of it all, by His grace, I love the Lord. I love Him. So I keep on keepng on to please and obey Him. Simple as that.[Disclaimer: As regular readers know, I use Oremus.org for my Morning Devotions every day. I do not endorse everything on it. It is an Anglican website and has what some will consider Catholic elements. As with eating fish, you pick out and set aside any "bones" and go on to enjoy the "meat"]

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:14

Thursday, October 27, 2005

A Critique of Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Books

The Purpose Driven Church and the Purpose Driven Life are mega hits with Pastors and Christians everywhere. Endorsed by many national and famous Evangelicals, they must be good and valuable books. Here is an excellent critique that exposes what is wrong with the books and, by extension, with Evangelical Christianity. In brief, Warren and his books are dualistic and dispensational. What does that mean? Read this article (starting on page 3) http://www.dbu.edu/naugle/pdf/worldview_church.pdf

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 19:05

Great American Pastime?

What a difference a year makes. The 88 year drought for the Chicago White Sox ended last night with their World Series win. It barely made the sports section of our daily paper, along with local high school sports and an article about the Patriots. Last year, the Red Sox victory made screaming Front Page headlines. National pastime? Even in Chicago, more attention is given to the Cubs from the northside of the city than the southside Sox. And why did the pregame show celebrate and focus on Latino players? Sure they have contributed a lot to the game, past and present; but, so have Black, Asian and White players. I thought this was a Team sport, as well as an American sport. If the reason was because the game was in the Southwest, that just confirms my complaint. The name "World Series" just confuses the point further. The only Teams playing are from the United States. Actually, the great American pastime, when it comes to professional sports is making money.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 10:19

We must follow the Law

Joshua 3 1

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. 2 After three days the officers went throughout the camp, 3

giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. 4 Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. 6

Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them. In the post below, I quoted Psalm 138. The Lord has exalted His Word. All who are serious about serving the Lord, insist that they are following His Word. All agree that doing that is essential. The problem is we define "the Word" differently. Where we go, following the Word, depends on what we understand the Word to be. Otherwise, "following the Word" is a meaningless or mushy motto. Personally, I am losing patience with those who reduce the Word of God to the example of Jesus in the synoptic Gospels and then reduce that example simply to open and inclusive "love" which means acceptance of everyone and every behavior [except everyone and every behavior which does not practice this "love"]. Others seem content to reduce the example of Jesus simply to service: do-goodism. This, they insist is the Word of the Lord. The Israelites did not know the way for them to go. They needed guidance. The instruction was: follow the Ark. They were to go where following it would take them. What was in the Ark? The Torah: the Law of God, which is the Word of God. To me, this story provides the necessary metaphor for our times. We do not follow the Ark across the Jordan into Canaan; but, we must follow what was in the Ark into the public square of our day. Yes, I hear you say, we are saved by grace, not the Law. Of course, I know that. But why are we saved? To go to Heaven, you say. Well, what about now? Most of us have years to live before going to Heaven. How are we to live them? By following the Law of God as interpreted by Jesus. We are saved and Spirit filled, in order to do this. The Law, rightly interpreted through a Christian or New Testament grid, teaches us how to live our daily lives here and now. It is neglect of this most basic truth, in the name of "Saved by grace alone" that has led us into the moral morass which is our American culture.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 09:58

Speaking Truth to Power

Psalm 138 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise. Who are the "gods" of this pagan age? Isms and Ologies, Tyrants and Dictators, Fashions and Fads, Moneymongers and Greed, Technism and Scientism: in front of them all- in their face- I will sing the praises of Jehovah, the LORD. 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name [because] you have exalted above all things [all other names] your name you have exalted above all things your name and your word. How can I exalt God? by exalting His Word. I do not exalt Him, if I ignore or reject His Word. My worship must be according to Truth 4 May all the kings of the earth praise you, O LORD, when they hear the words of your mouth. My prayer and hope is to have all the Kings of the earth join me in praising God. In order for that to happen, they must first hear the Word of God. That is our mission: God's Word must be spoken to the kings of the earth- to the powers and systems that seek to rule this world, as though it exists for them.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 09:26

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

A Psalm for a Senior

I really appreciate Psalm 71. So much is made of young adults today. I mentioned in the previous post that we are in the midst of a revolution when it comes to how church is "done". What I was wrestling with, in that post below, was not post modernism, et al, but the realization that the church, with its doctrines, worship and traditions, that I have known and served most of my life, seems to be disappearing, like firemen on railroad engines did. What further disturbs me is that these changes are rationalized as necessary to reach the youth and young adults. Of course, we must "reach" and serve them; but, from deep within me comes a loud "Wait a minute!" The fastest growing segment of the American population is middle age and older. Sometimes I get real tired of hearing about young adults and that we must jettison centuries of Tradition and Heritage because they are not interested in it or don't like it. Since when does that have to be the measure of what is good or bad, right or wrong, worthwhile or worthless? Often I have heard from older members that they do not like the changes in their church, but if that is what it takes to get the young people to come to church, they will sacrifice what they do like and have enjoyed all their lives. Who says they must do that? One of the most basic principles in the Bible is that parents and the elderly are due respect and honor. Doesn't that apply to what they believe and value in their churches? In our youth oriented culture, older folks don't count for much. Well, some facts: The future belongs to the elderly. For a century, the American population has been getting older. In 1900 4% of the population was 65+ Today it is 13% nation wide and by 2030 it will be 20%. In the Northeast in the year 2010, adults 45-64 will be 27% and 65+ will be 14% -that means 41% of the population 5 years from now will be middle age and older. Young adults between 20 and 30 will be 20% [Google US demographics and see for yourself] Serve the youth? absolutely; but, we must not sacrifice the elders, and what they have valued and sacrificed for, to do it. Psalm 71 5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. 6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. 9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. 18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 19:18

Tuesday, October 25, 2005

A "Revolution" ?

There has been a rapid change we should note over the last 2-3 years according to the attached research by the Barna Group. Until recently, 40 % of Christians (all kinds) attended traditional Services on Sunday. Now 31 % of them attend alternative Services. They periodically keep in touch with their church of origin for family and social purposes, but most look to these alternative Services as their primary church home or fellowship. These alternatives are primarily house churches or meetings held at work places during the week. We are talking here about 50 million Christians! Almost half are evangelicals (4 of 10) and they are not the youth, but mostly Baby Boomers (40-55 year olds)- the ones behind the mega-church movement in recent years. These surprising stats (and more) are found here-<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdateNarrow&BarnaUpdateID=202> Add this trend to the other major trend by many formerly "traditional" and "contemporary" churches toward the so-called post modern or "Convergent" Services and methods to reach younger and unchurched people where they are at today, in ways that communicate to them today, and we do indeed have a revolution going on

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 11:55

Monday, October 24, 2005

QTThots

Today's Psalm from Oremus: Psalm 116

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Amazing that God the Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth is both attuned to supplication from human beings and responds accordingly, even more amazing is that He does this for me! I cry and He hears! Amazing. 3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. There have been times when dark thoughts have tied me up in knots and dark feelings have overwhelmed me 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD : "O LORD, save me!" I am thankful for the forgiveness of my sins. I am thankful that when I called on the Lord, as a lost sinner, He saved me. That was more than 50 years ago. I am glad that, through the years, He has also saved me from dark and evil powers which have warred against my soul and sometimes brought me down into despair. 5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6 The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Ah, so, today, I need to say to my self, 7 Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. He has 8 delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. Was this for my sake? No, for His. He has saved me 9 that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I look forward to walking before Him in heaven, but now, I know, I must do that in the public square- as they say, I must "walk the talk..." 12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? 16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant ; you have freed me from my chains. 18 I will fulfill my vows

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 18:50

Saturday, October 22, 2005

Making Adjustments

We are in a period of adjustment. One of the main reasons we had for moving to Springfield, was to be more central to family. None live here, but we are a lot closer than Northern Vermont. Now our mothers have passed away. For the first time in many, many years we do not have to worry about or care for them. This is a big change. Our children and grandchildren are all very busy with their own lives. That is good. They are doing well. Another reason for moving here was that we have many friends still here from when we lived here before. We thought that would make for connections and opportunities for ministry in this area. Well, they all have moved on over the 6 years we were away and, while warmly welcoming us back, are also very busy with their own lives. The church scene has changed. Most local Pastors, now here, do not know me and, naturally, have their own agendas. The City itself has changed. We have changed. Old friends assume we are the same and assume we will join them in their various churches and ministries and pick up where we left off, now 7 years ago. Truth is, we have changed a lot through our experiences of recent years, including becoming older and slower. All of this calls for adjustment. We are not about to move again any time soon. We both miss one-on-one ministry, especially Millie. My main outlet has been writing for my Blog most every day, but that is very limited. One local ministry that we have been very interested in, is evolving and going in a different direction. I had high hopes for starting a school of sorts- my Re/formation Institute- another major reason for moving here. I have put a lot of time and work into creating lectures for the "Foundation Course" in Genesis. I now do not think it is going to happen. For one thing, typical Christians are not into the kind of study I do and/or they are already into other activities that requires their time and I am not connecting with college students or young adults (or young Pastors) , who seem to live in a very different world than I do. Actually, most people do, even other Christians. Looking at the CBD catalogs that come, I find almost nothing that interests me in the listings of authors and artists popular among today's Christians or in the programs or workshops offered by the Conferences here, such as their annual Vision NE "Congress". I am not complaining by any means- just taking inventory. I have much for which I am thankful. That includes time and opportunity to study and write. Something might happen tomorrow to change that [again], but that is what I plan to do. I am going to turn my 60 page Syllabus into a book. That requires focus. Currently, I am prone to read books and magazines about many, many things, often in response to the interests of others and current events in the world. That must be curtailed. Oh well, just thought, on this rainy afternoon, that I would put current thoughts down on "paper". I often write to find out what I am thinking. May the Lord bless you in yours.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:53

Spirit of Women

"Women of Worth", "Women of Faith", "Women of the Word" purport to be evangelical Christian organizations for women. "Spirit of Women" is not. It is an organization sponsored by Baystate Health System, this area's largest Medical Center. "Spirit of Women" offers programs and services dedicated to promoting women's health and well-being. I am sure they mean well and do a lot of good [They should probably change their acronym] They are having their annual Conference next month and are featuring a national speaker and author, promoted by a full page article in today's newspaper: Cheryl Richardson. Christians beware- Ms Richardson's so-called "self-help" books are all about "Grace". That alone is an oxymoron that should raise a warning flag. Her latest title is "The Unmistakable Touch of Grace" Why do I bother to tell you this? Because it is also unmistakable that Christian women will be misled by the title and this (wrong) use of the word "Grace". They will naively assume that the book and the lectures are about God and His Grace. They will be very wrong. To their credit, CBD does not carry the speaker's books, but they have a number with similar titles and a Google search reveals many churches and Christian women's ministries use names similar to "Touch of Grace". Definitions, as I am wont to say, are very important. Ms Richardson defines "grace" as "a benevolent force that is all around". Her testimony is how her life was turned around by grace. Her message is that all women can find meaning and purpose by becoming aware and receptive to this benevolent force which is everywhere and available to anyone with eyes to see and faith to accept it.

This is not what the Bible means by "grace" at all; but, this message sounds a lot like what I hear and read is very popular in Christian women's circles. There is no place or need for a Savior or Regeneration in this message. That is because there is no Sin either. But "Grace", in the Bible, is all about God (who is personal and not an impersonal "force", like electricity) who extends His unmerited favor to helpless sinners who deserve the consequences of their sins. And He extends that unmerited favor to those whom He regenerates and thus repent and come to faith in Jesus as the

Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

Christ (God's Prophet, Priest and King), which saving faith, itself a gift from God, manifests in discipleship. This is what "Grace" is about in the Bible. This is not what women attending the conference, or reading the "self-help" books of Ms Richardson, will learn. (Do you see now the oxymoron?) Granted, it is not the purpose of Ms Richardson or SOW to teach the Biblical Doctrine of Grace; but, it is mine!

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 11:03

Friday, October 21. 2005

The City wants help from the Clergy

In the face of a high and rising crime rate here in Springfield, City leaders including the Editors of the local paper (which frequently insists the "faith" has no place in the public square!) are imploring the Clergy to do more to help stop it. They suggest more church "missionaries" working directly with youth on the street, mentoring and advocacy with youth in trouble (especially those in the Juvenile Court system) and aggressively teaching Black and Hispanic History (!) There are many Christians, Pastors and churches already actively working with the youth of the City. It is good to be given encouragement to do more of the same. Are the City leaders and the Paper seeing the need for conversion to Christ? Are they burdened for the souls of the youth? Of course not. Granted, thankfully, some of the motivation for the City leaders' plea is humanitarian; but it seems obvious from interviews in the media, that the primary concern is economic. The City is perceived to be a dangerous place and this perception works against economic development. Cut down on the danger and the City will be able to attract more business.

Posted by Cal at 10:37

Left Behind

The latest "Left Behind" movie is showing in thousands of churches across the land. It is seen as a great evangelistic "tool". I do not intend to see it. I have not read any of the books in the series. In my understanding of Scripture, the end times scenario, in the books and movies based on them, is fiction. Fiction in itself is fine. I have a problem with it when it purports to be Bible Truth. The stories are based on an interpretation of Scripture called "Dispensationalism". The majority of Christians do not believe Dispensationalism is Biblical. The question is: How can something false be an effective "tool" for leading the unsaved to saving Truth? There is no question that seeing the movie will lead many to make a "decision for Christ". But, what value will that decision have, if it is not based on Truth? A good review of the movie can be found at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/reviews/leftbehind3.html>

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 10:19

Today's QT Thots

Romans 4.24,25; 5.1-5,8,9,11 God reckons as righteous those who believe, who believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead;

Heavenly Father, help me to realize anew that you are a miracle working God: a God who can raise the dead, a God for whom nothing is impossible, no obstacle too great

For Christ was handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification. Lord Jesus, I gratefully accept the forgiveness of my sins made possible by the shedding of your blood on the Cross; but today I need even more to realize that I stand before God clothed in your righteousness- justified- made possible by your resurrection. Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord, because of your work on my behalf, I have been reconciled with my God: the sin that was between us has been removed. Thank you that there is now peace between us. Through Christ we have gained access to the grace in which we stand, and rejoice in our hope of the glory of God. How wonderful to have free access directly to God the Almighty: I have His good-will.

We even exult in our sufferings, for suffering produces endurance, and endurance brings hope, and our hope is not in vain, Thank you for the re-assurance that one day I shall see Him in all His Glory; that this hope is not empty or unwarranted. Thank you for the assurance that all my trials and troubles have meaning- part of your plan to make me the person you intend me to be.

Because God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, given to us. God proves his love for us: while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Thank you for flooding my heart again with the assurance that you, Lord God, do indeed love me. I am convinced, in my mind, that You demonstrated that love at the Cross, but I am glad to

have the assurance of that fact deep in my inner being.

Since we have been justified by his death, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath. I face the future with assurance of full and complete redemption. I do not fear the Day of Judgment. I know I will be found to be righteous, accepted in Christ.

Therefore, we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have now received our reconciliation. Having all this assurance, I rejoice in your mercy and grace, Lord God. I marvel at who you are and what you have done. I EXULT in You!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:03

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

Burning Out for God

My inspiration this morning comes from reading about Henry
Martyr <http://chi.gospelcom.net/GLIMPSEF/Glimpses/glmps096.shtml> He is commemorated today in the Church
Calendar

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 08:44

Monday, October 17, 2005

Bankruptcy or Bondage?

Thousands rushed to meet the deadline to file for bankruptcy this weekend- before new rules make it more difficult for many to do that. I have always had mixed feelings about "going bankrupt" There is still a stigma attached to it. People should not take on debt they can not repay. That is a Biblical concept. The idea of knowingly piling up huge debt and then being able to have it cancelled doesn't seem right- or fair to me and multitudes of others who do pay their bills and forego buying things they can not afford. [I know exceptional unforeseen circumstances, especially medical, do happen.]As I thought about this- debtors must pay their debts themselves. Cancelling debts is not right- I remembered that my many sins are debts to God. I have voluntarily accrued them and will never be able to pay them off. God has cancelled those debts. I do not have to pay them. Is this, too, unfair? YesThen, I remember my debts are cancelled, because he Himself has paid them in full. Actually, he absorbed them. The debts were to Him. He paid himself off at the expense of His own humiliation and suffering as one of us. My debt was paid. This is fair [just], but not deserved. This is mercy and grace. It turns out, I am still a debtor for my sins- not to pay them, but to live for Him who paid them for me. Accepting what He has done for me, I belong to Him- "bought by the blood of the Lamb". I am not a debtor set free, but a debtor in bondage to the One who freed me.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 09:36

Today's QT Thots

Today the Church Calendar commemorates Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Martyr, c.107He might have personally known some of the Apostles. What we know of him is primarily the story of his martyrdom, from the letters he wrote to churches and friends as he was being taken to Rome for his execution. He wrote these words-"No early pleasures, no kingdoms of this world can benefit me in any way. I prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. He who died in place of us is the one object of my quest. He who rose for our sakes is my one desire. The time for my birth is close at hand. Forgive me, my brothers. Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life; do not wish me stillborn. My desire is to belong to God. Do not, then, hand me back to the world. do not try to tempt me with material things. Let me attain pure light. Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being.What grabbed my attention this morning was Ignatius' use of the phrase "birth to real life" in place of "death". I have long tried to say "passed on", rather than died. "Died" reinforces the concept that physical death is the end of the person experiencing it. We know that all who die, still live [albeit without Life Eternal]. How to reinforce that concept? "Passing on" could, but it is awkward. For Christians, we speak of "going on to be with the Lord" or "into Glory". Ignatius says that his death would be his "birth into real life". I doubt the phrase will catch on, but the concept is comforting. The comfort is not simply in the assurance of "real life", but that Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being. The emphasis is on the word "fully". We may have done and achieved a lot here on earth; but, only after we have entered Glory, can we know what it means to be fully alive. More than that- only then can we know what it means to be fully human.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:45

Sunday, October 16, 2005

Secular "Spirituality"

The latest copy of the AARP magazine came a few days ago. One of the articles is about "spirituality" and it recommends several websites to visit to learn more. A person does not have to be a Christian to be "spiritual" as defined in the article. In fact, many Christians do not seek or practice the "spirituality" that this article says many people are seeking. And many of those people are not interested in being Christians. Actually, there is some benefit to what the article is talking about: finding inner peace and quiet and thus removing stress and being healthy. Those can be rare qualities among Christians. They should not be. Many Christians could benefit by using secular techniques for relaxing and reducing stress. Of course, such secular "spirituality" is not salvation nor is it Christian prayer. It is not "mysticism" either. Beware, Mysticism. Mysticism is seeking literal union with the Divine. That is not possible. God has created us and there will always be an essential or intrinsic difference between us and God, between the Creator and His Creation. Ignoring or denying this, mystics seek to be absorbed into God and lose themselves in Him [It]. This is not Scriptural at all, but many through the ages have found the idea appealing. On the other hand, upon coming to saving faith in Christ, God the Spirit does come to dwell or abide within the Believer and we are to commune with Him there in our hearts. That is another matter for a different post.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 19:00

A Hard Chair for Christ

I mentioned a story on the Oremus site yesterday. They change the content daily so if you did not look at it yesterday, it is gone. But, here is my copy -Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky was born in Lithuania in 1831, went to Germany to study for the rabbinate, there became a Christian, emigrated to America, trained for the priesthood, and in 1859 was sent by the Episcopal Church to China, where he devoted himself from 1862 to 1875 to translating the Bible into Mandarin Chinese. In 1877 he was elected Bishop of Shanghai, where he founded St. John's University, and began his translation of the Bible into Wenli (another Chinese dialect). He developed Parkinson's disease, was largely paralyzed, resigned his position as Bishop of Shanghai, and spent the rest of his life completing his Wenli Bible, the last 2000 pages of which he typed with the one finger that he could still move. Four years before his death in 1906, he said: "I have sat in this chair for over twenty years. It seemed very hard at first. But God knew best. He kept me for the work for which I am best fitted."

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 18:22

Saturday, October 15, 2005

Sitting on a Hard Chair for the Glory of God

Here is the story of an amazing man and his amazing devotion to Christ with a great lesson for me---and you?
<http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f> (The story is at the end of the page)

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 10:33

A Halloween Meditation after a Funeral

We have been away and busy with the passing and Funeral of my mother-in-law this week, so I have not put much thought or time into posting anything. These events always bring out the best and worst in memories and feelings as we recollect the past or see people from the past, after many years. They are occasions to forgive and reconcile, although that often does not happen. Stuff comes to the surface- it could be dealt with, but is often pushed back down. Besides, how much can you (or should you) deal with during a Wake or the Reception following, in a room full of people. After all, there is the business at hand. But, we all know our time will come. Now, today is the time to catch up with the old friends that we promise over and over to visit. Now, today is the time to let stuff in the past go and to give certain people in our lives a second or third chance if need be. We all, hopefully, have changed. We are not, hopefully the same person we were back in high school or when we were newly wed or as young parents. Why do we keep people in a box that has long disintegrated? Especially, as Christians, we believe that God can change people, Circumstances and life experiences certainly can. Why then do we insist that no one has? or not, at least, first observe and listen to see if they have, before assuming that they are the same as we remember them from many years ago? Some, it seems, never learn. Some, it seems, are the same as ever; but not all. It always impresses me how impressionable we were as children. We call childhood our formative years for good reason. Much of our character and values, certainly our personalities, were formed then. For better or worse. Many of us carry wounds from those days, too. Our memories are so imperfect and so selective, but they are powerful; maybe because they have been replayed and reinforced over the years. Why go into any of this? It is Halloween. Many of us really are haunted by ghosts from the past. It is time, with God's help, to confront the skeletons in our closets. The next Funeral will come soon.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 09:42

Friday, October 14, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 77

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hands were stretched out by night and did not tire; I refused to be comforted. Could it be? The Lord sought to comfort me in my suffering and I refused His comfort? I'd rather be in pain, than be healed? Yes, it could be. Sometimes we seem to savor our suffering- there is some kind of satisfaction in that. Very strange. I think of God, I am restless. That is strange, too. Aren't we supposed to have peace and rest when we think of the Lord? How can I tell Him of my troubles and still be ill at ease and unsatisfied still? I ponder and my spirit faints. You will not let my eyelids close; I am troubled and I cannot speak. I consider the days of old; I remember the years long past; I commune with my heart in the night; I ponder and search my mind. Maybe the trouble is exactly this: I ponder too much. I search my mind too much. I must stop all this second guessing, all this analyzing (Why did I say that? What did they mean by that? Why did this happen? I should have...could have... Etc) Heavenly Father. Forgive me. Help me to shut up. Help me to allow You to speak- to get through to me- to have your way with my thoughts- to take over my emotions- to restore my mind Lord grant me you peace, again. Thank you, Lord

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:57

Tuesday, October 11. 2005

Two Women

Today's Church Calendar celebrates the lives of two women who died this day, 70 years apart. One gave her life to prison reform in the 18th century while the other gave hers as a nurse serving prisoners of war on both sides in WWI.

Their stories are great testimonies

<http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f>

Posted by Cal at 11:22

Monday, October 10, 2005

QT Thots

In the Church Calendar, today honors Paulinus, missionary Bishop in Northern England. In 625, "Edwin [a King] heard the preaching of Paulinus for many months, and finally consulted his advisors. Coifi, the high priest of the pagan religion, advised adopting Christianity, since he said that the pagan religion had not proved satisfactory. Another nobleman agreed, saying: "Life is like a banquet hall. Inside is light and fire and warmth and feasting, but outside it is cold and dark. A sparrow flies in through a window at one end, flies the length of the hall, and out through a window at the other end. That is what life is like. At birth we emerge from the unknown, and for a brief while we are here on this earth, with a fair amount of comfort and happiness. But then we fly out the window at the other end, into the cold and dark and unknown future. If the new religion can lighten that darkness for us, then let us follow it." The other elders and counselors of the king gave similar advice, and so in 627 the king and many of his chief men were baptized. Other conversions followed, and the Church in Northumbria flourished."- Oremus Today, we are really struggling with the reality of a loved one who passed on yesterday, without Christ. And what of the multitudes who were killed in the recent earthquakes in the Middle East and the mudslides in Central America. Many (most?) without Christ. Are our hearts broken for them? What will we do for those millions (and individuals) in our families who face the same future?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:43

Friday, October 7, 2005

More on Perfection

What I said in an earlier post today [below] can, and should be, nuanced. The "perfect" Christian is the Christian who is mature, but what is a mature Christian? We may well answer that a mature Christian is one who is solid in faith, grounded in the Bible with a good grasp of doctrine. We might further say that a mature Christian is one whose life is a good testimony, righteous, exhibiting character and virtue. All of that would be correct. The Apostle John emphasizes all of this, but adds something more: love. The verses we discussed earlier [below] mention perfect love, while our focus has been on a perfect person. What is the connection? And how do we become "perfect" (mature)? 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. God is love. Love comes from Him to us, from His presence within us. He wants that love to be complete ["perfect"] in us. That happens, as we share the love He gives to us. The more we share God's love, the more complete or mature ("perfect") God's love in us becomes. John makes clear that sharing God's love means laying down our lives on behalf of others in very practical ways. (3:16-18) 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this (our sharing God's love with others) is love perfected with us, ... (this means that) as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. The thought moves from perfect love to a perfect person. The latter is defined and characterized by the presence of God's perfect love for others in his heart and life. The mature (perfect) Christian is the one in whom God's love is mature (perfect). The mark of a mature Christian is this love. If we have all the other attribute above, but have not love, we are nothing (1 Cor 13)

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 19:40

Christianity without Church?

As those of you who read this Blog know, I have a real struggle with the institutional church. The current issue of International Bulletin, the best academic missions journal, this month features articles on the topic of a churchless Christianity. This is done in light of the fact that today there are 37,000 church denominations in the world and 300 ecumenical organizations. There are supposedly 2 billion Christians. Much of the explosion in growth is happening outside of traditional churches. One major reason is the association of "Church" with the West and people in the non-West want their own indigenous expression of their Faith. The other Missionary journal I receive came this week as well. The Evangelical Missions Quarterly, has an article "Doing Theology: an international Risk" and another entitled, "Missionary Teaching in a Postmodern Context". How do we do theology and teach it, in such a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural world? The short answer is "differently". The paradigms and models I am so familiar with are up for serious reevaluation and revision, if we are to do theology in partnership with Christians from another world and culture. Teaching must be "contextualized": I can not drive through a Barrio in Honduras and throw the Four Spiritual Laws booklets written in English out the window at the people. The same applies to how I do theology and teach it here in Springfield, if I am to reach people for Christ, if they are people who do not share my language, culture, education and values. Oh, the answer to the title question? No (but that will have to be another post)

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 14:22

Rocking my Boat

It is still possible to live in certain rural and small town areas of America and think that this is a Country of White people with a Western Heritage. Our local newspaper is running a series about the growing Latino population here and throughout the United States. This movement is primarily Spanish speaking people from Mexico, Cuba, Latin (Central and South) America and Puerto Rico. This, of course, is just the latest in a long history of population shifts. I watched a documentary this week about the wave of immigration into the USA from Eastern Europe around the time of WWI. Of course, our Country

started with waves of immigration from the British Isles and Western Europe. And early on, in Colonial days, there was the importation (not immigration) of Africans into the Land. There are 9.3 million Hispanic families [40 million people] now living in the USA. There are 80,000 in the Greater Springfield area. One person in 10 in America speaks Spanish, soon it will be 1 in 4. By 2050 or within two generations, Hispanics will be the dominant ethnic [non-White] group in the Country: 1 quarter of the population. Coming behind them, next, are Far East Asians. And there are an ever growing number of people from the Near and Middle Eastern nations. What consequences does all this immigration have for the Church and its missions and ministries? Multitudes do not come here as Christians; but, other multitudes do. They all bring their languages and traditions with them. Remember that the typical evangelical Christian in today's world is an impoverished, urban woman of color living in the Southern Hemisphere. As an older, white, middle class Western (English, no less) conservative male, all of this rocks my boat. It is scary and exciting at the same time. What is my place in this changing world?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:44

Perfection in this life? (Query following today's QT Thot)

Yes, that is what God commands and expects and enables. Of course, the definition of "perfection" is important. I defined it [please read carefully] in today's QT Thots as "complete and mature". The word in the relevant NT verses does not mean without flaw or error. God commands and expects us to become mature and not to remain "new born babes" all our lives.

<http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T4914>The QT Thot text in 1 John 2 (and also chap 1 and 3) teaches us that all, including the "perfect", sin; but, do not sin. Contradiction? No. Again, read carefully: the verbs involved are aorist, indicating punctiliar, one time completed action versus present participles indicating continual, on-going action. A "perfect" Christian will indeed sin [defined in 3:4 as lawlessness] on occasion, but that will not be normative, on-going or habitual behavior. Thankfully, when we do commit an act of lawlessness [note: pastorally speaking, we must distinguish between what the Bible calls "sin" from what society, or more often, our parents, said was "sin" as we grew up], the blood of Christ avails upon our confession of that act (1:9)

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 12:29

QTThots

1 John 2:1-17 Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, 'I have come to know him', but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, 'I abide in him', ought to walk just as he walked. In the great Commandment, the context for loving our neighbor is loving God. As we do the latter, we are enabled to do the former. Today's text is plain: to love God results in obeying His Commandments whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. What strikes me this morning is the phrase the love of God has reached perfection. Our love for God is not static, it is meant to grow, ie- to become complete and mature [the meaning of "perfection"]. Here is the explanation why so many obey God's Word so irregularly or inconsistently: their love for God is incomplete and immature. Whoever says, 'I have come to know him', but does not obey (the tense of verb, obey, means characteristically, habitually) his commandments, is a liar, ie- does not know or love God at all! Lord, may my love for You increase today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:43

Thursday, October 6, 2005

The Great Commandments

Mark 12:28-34'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." "Love your neighbor as yourself" is commonly interpreted as a command to love ourselves. Then, loving ourselves, we are to love others in the same way, ie- with grace and mercy (forgiving, accepting, affirming, supporting) Many of us rarely do the latter because we struggle with the former. "Love your neighbor as yourself" really means love your neighbor as though he were yourself: treat him as though he were you. Furthermore, "loving God" is not a matter of forgiving, accepting, affirming and supporting Him. It is a matter of serving Him. Thus, the command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves actually means to serve our neighbor as though he were us. And how are we to do that? By first loving God with all the fiber of our being. This will govern and shape what we do toward our neighbor. Serving others must be done in the context of serving God. When we are involved in serving God first, we are free and enabled to serve others and we will know what is the best way to do that.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 08:38

Wednesday, October 5, 2005

Jewish Holidays

Jewish people are observing New Years this week. It is supposed to be a time for reflection of the year past and resolutions for the year ahead. Sounds like what Gentiles do on their New Years. But for religious Jewish people, there is the added component of guilt and contrition for the "sins" of the past year. This is in anticipation of the Day of Atonement observed next week. The "sacrifice" intended to atone for the "sins" are prayers and promises made on that Holy Day. As Christians, we believe, as Hebrew Scripture itself teaches, without shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin. See Heb 9:22 That Blood is of the perfect Lamb of God, who is Jesus. Sadly, the prayers and promises made on the so-called Day of Atonement will not accomplish what they are intended to do.

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 10:50

But, what difference does being a Christian make?

The previous post [the next one down] has sources telling us that nominee Miers is a Christian; but does that really tell us anything specific about the positions she might take about anything in the public square? Hopefully, being a Christian means she is a person of integrity and honor. She will be honest. That is good. Many will assume that it also means she will be pro-life and pro-traditional marriage. Can we also assume that Christians oppose pork barrel legislation or are for Social Security reform or the new prescription drug policy?

<http://www.suntimes.com/output/novak/cst-edt-novak26.html> What is a Christian or Biblical policy about the role of government in our society? See comments on this Blog about Conservatism and its weakness in this regard- http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/2003_10_01_byzantinecalvinist_archive.html It is interesting that people on the Left insist that a Justice have no ideology, except their's. People on the Right also insist a Justice must have no ideology, except their's. Personally, I hope she has no ideology, except for a commitment to being a strict constructionist when it comes to interpreting and applying the Constitution. In my mind, that is the first, and maybe only, "Test" of any nominee. otherwise qualified to sit on the Bench.

<http://www.wisecounty.com/themuse/StrictConstruction.htm> A helpful over view of how the Constitution is interpreted is here -<http://faculty.ncwc.edu/toconnor/410/410lect02.htm> The same options apply to interpreting Scripture. Much of the debate and division in our country and churches is explained by the contrast of the first two options and the last option mentioned (structuralism or the "living document" approach) to both the Constitution and the Bible

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 10:31

Nominee Miers a Christian

"Miers is a woman of faith with strong Christian beliefs. To her, it has been "wonderful to be working for a president who is a believer and who acts on his faith." The president talks about his faith often, and it is important to him. It also is important to Miers. She brings her faith to bear on everything she does. It's not only a part of how she views issues, it also affects her willingness to serve and her desire to do well. She readily acknowledges that she can't do anything without the grace of God."

<http://www.christianstandard.com/articledisplay.asp?id=134> also-

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20051005-122400-8922r.htm>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:01

Monday, October 3, 2005

Charity and Corruption

On the news tonight was a story of a visit by former President Clinton to an assembly of school children in a Connecticut town. Mr Clinton thanked and praised the children for their efforts to raise money for tsunami relief in Sri Lanka last year. Children interviewed told of the bake sales and coin collections. A lot of hard work, well meant. If they google "Sri Lanka corruption", they will find many articles like this one, reporting evidence of wide spread corruption in the handling of millions of dollars contributed for relief and reconstruction. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KHII-6GP9B6?OpenDocument> There is a lesson here to be applied to relief and reconstruction efforts on our Gulf Coast. I hope the Connecticut kids do not become as cynical as I am about such matters.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 18:02

Is God a Republican?

Most evangelical Christians I know are, as I am, Republicans. They consider themselves conservatives. In reality, most of the latter are only cultural conservatives, who get very exercised over the so-called "family values" issues; but, care little about economics and are not fiscal conservatives (even though frugality and paying your bills while staying out of debt are very important Biblical, family values). Actually, many culturally conservative Christians are quite happy with big spending big government, even though the latter is contrary to what the Republican Party has traditionally, and now only rhetorically, stood for. Big spending big government is also contrary to what the Bible stands for. Hmmn, maybe conservative evangelical Christians need to rethink their party affiliation or work to change the one they belong to. <http://www.opinionjournal.com/diary/?id=110007351>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:07

Getting our priorities in order

Psalm 57

Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, and your glory over all the earth. Through the years, my focus has changed. Early on, I saw people as souls needing to be saved from Hell. I was a zealous "soul winner" and did a lot of personal evangelism. For a long time, I saw people hurting and in need: emotionally, mentally, physically, socially and my heart went out to them and the focus of my ministry was on serving them in practical ways. I have also, on and off through the years, put a lot of time and energy into planting and growing local churches. Today, in my Autumn years, I see that these earlier concerns were mis-directed. They focused on people. Oh, God, too, of course. But, the primary focus was people. Now my focus is on God. My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord; I will sing praise to you among the nations. I have learned and am convinced that when people focus on God, then their salvation and well-being will follow.

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 08:38

Bali Blast

One of our sons, an Anglican priest in Singapore, conducted a Funeral for a number of victims of the last terrorist attack in Bali.

Posted by Cal at 08:07

A Parable

Mark 12:1-12

Jesus began to speak to them in parables. 'A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watch-tower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. Finally he sent him to them, a beloved son, saying, "They will respect my son." But those tenants said to one another, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. Often, it has been asked whether Jesus would be recognized and respected, if he were to suddenly show up a particular [any] local church. Or, would the members say, "We know who he is and why he is here. Let's throw him out quick. This is our church and we'll run it the way we want." ?

Posted by Cal at 08:04

Q T Thots

Psalm 66 Bless our God, you peoples; make the voice of his praise to be heard; [God] holds our souls in life, ie- He has kept us alive. Thank you Lord, for a new day There are so many things that could trip me up today, things I could stumble over. Thank you, Lord, for this assurance that you will not allow our feet to slip. But I have learned by experience that life will not always be easy or smooth. In fact, I have learned the painful lesson that, in your love for me you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads we went through fire and water; All of this "tough love" from you has been part of your will for my life- necessary to shape me into the person you want me to be. Thank you, Father, for the trials, burdens and enemies that have come from you. But thank you, also, Lord- thank you that you brought us out into a place of refreshment. May I dwell in that place today

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:43

Sunday, October 2, 2005

The Black Family: 40 years of Lies

One of the best articles on the subject I have read http://www.city-journal.org/html/15_3_black_family.html

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:10

Guilt Trip?

We hear, from people contributing money for the relief of flood victims, "we must do something." Why? Is it really for the victims or is it for us? I suspect that much of it is to assuage our guilt- I suspect many give to make themselves feel better, more than to help others. More than a million people will attend the New England States Exposition (the Big E) again this year, where they will again spend many millions of dollars on entertainment. Down the road is New England's Six Flags amusement park. The Basketball Hall of Fame is just a few blocks from here. And last night was the gala grand opening of the new Civic Center downtown, which is there to bring millions of dollars into this area- more entertainment money. The Symphony Hall is being refurbished again. Tickets from \$25 to \$55 each will allow you to enjoy more entertainment. And then there are the millions being spent on the major league play-off games this week. The Yankees alone have a \$200,000,000 payroll to recoup. Sure, let's give \$20 to the hurricane survivors (or to end hunger in Africa). But wait a minute- you and I are committed to giving maybe \$200 billion dollars to Gulf Coast relief and reconstruction. No, you say, that is the federal government contribution. Wrong. We are giving that money out of our pockets. That is money taxed out of our pockets (more accurately- the pockets of our children) and doled out by the federal government, on our behalf, for those people. So we are doing our part, as well as enjoying a ball game or a roller coaster. What a country!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:06

Saturday, October 1, 2005

Happy Birthday

Today, we celebrate the birthday of our youngest child. She is 38 Today, is a belated birthday party for our youngest granddaughter. She is 13 Today, my wife and I are going to spend a diifficult day with her mother. She is 88 She is in the process of passing away, with only a very short time to go. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. I remember being struck by this lesson years ago, when my paternal Grandmother, whom I loved and enjoyed greatly, passed away and a few weeks later our first child was born. Our times are in the Lord's hand- oh, to appreciate the life [and loved ones] we have and to live it well, while we can-----and to be prepared to go into Eternity. The God with whom we have to do is eternal. He has no beginning or end; He is Life and that life, which He offers us, is eternal. It is not the same as timeless existence. Far, far more- it is the very life which is His, with all of its peace, perfection and meaning. Actually, believers in Christ have that life now, partially, in our temporal existence. But, one day, whatever our physical age may be at the time, we enter into the fullest experience of God's eternal life, which has no end. Now, that will be a day of birth!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 09:00