

Where is the message of our old Brethren? What is happening to our church today?

In searching the old church directory today, last updated in 2006, I was amazed to find myself in the disappearing group of "old brethren". I must say, it made me feel a little apprehensive, and at the same time, honored. Apprehensive because; I know my time is short, even though there are those yet older than me.

I Googled the life expectancy of a male in the U.S. today, and it says; 78.

Being 75.... needless to say, it made me realize just how close I am, now going on 76. Of course it did not make any guarantees either, so I could be closer than imagined. I thought about all the old ministers I have known well, Bro. Bob Tibbett, (my great uncle), Bro. Johnnie Case, Bro. Les Pfister, Bro. Clinton Smart, Bro. Claude Neely, Bro Ray Hamner, and Bro. Cecil Rossiter, just to name a few, and of course there were many more. I pondered the many times I sat and listened to them bring forth the message of the Lord, in the Spirit, and outside the mind of the man they were in real life, farmers, oil field workers, dairymen, etc.. If you had visited with them one on one, your visit would have been full of learning and fulfillment, enlightenment, faith, hope and strength. And when you went to see them on their regular day, as with uncle Bob Tibbett at his dairy, or Bro. Cecil in the cotton field, you still would have seen, just a regular man, wonderful, hard working, honest and sincere, but still just a man.

Can we still find these men today, full of the spirit of love, with only the soul welfare of the people at heart, and careful to speak only those things that the spirit gave them, taking no credit for themselves? As an old school teacher once said, of Bro. Clinton Smart; I taught this man when he was just a lad in school; where did he ever learn to speak as he does now? He sure couldn't have done that when he was in school.

Have we become so learned, so Googled that we feel we can do well within ourselves? Surely we wouldn't just Google up a good sermon for Sunday morning meeting, or maybe just tune in to our favorite TV minister, use his sermon, or modify it just a little and think; this is what God would have us to hear. After all, it might have sounded pretty good when we listened to it before we came to church, so maybe this will do for the day! Or would it?

Soon our congregation figures it out, and seeing through the façade of it all, and so finally they realize that they can just stay home and listen to the TV minister themselves, or Google up a good sermon, read it through, and be satisfied. Maybe they figure out that this is the same thing, which goes on down the street, at the bigger church, with the big basketball gym and lots of entertainment. Soon, they too began to think, all "Christians" go to heaven, as so many feel today, and the need to listen to all those rules and regulations are just not worth it. After all, "works won't get you there", "all you have to do is believe", we are "saved by the blood" and all the other "get you there easy" lessons we sometimes hear. But, will they? We heard it read in Matthew the other day, where Jesus said; Matt. 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said; Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

As time goes on, and I find myself in a younger and younger crowd, with leaders the ages of my children, the older ones gone on, and the message of "God loves you no matter what", and dress codes getting more and more liberal, sisters with their hair cut, so many going to the doctors, their children never missing a sports game they are involved in, but missing church without fear, years can go by and you won't be asked to go home with anyone for a meal, or even to visit for that matter, I ask myself, "Where is the message of our old Brethren"? So many are just too busy it seems, and besides that; there is a really good NFL game coming on at 1 o'clock, and I don't want to miss it for anything. I seem to wonder in amazement, and ask myself; what will our grandchildren and great grandchildren think when they grow up? What will be their stories of the old brethren of their time? What miracles will they be able to talk about? Who will be their favorite old minister of the past, if they even have one, and that, if they even still assemble? Will it still be called the "General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn", or will it be called by some other name.

Well, I guess time will tell, and as grandma would always say; it'll all come out in the wash.

Just thinkin;

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