

Getting a Fix on Sunday Morning

Sunday mornings in these modern times are strangely different from the way they used to be when I was a kid growing up in the 40's and 50's in Fairmount North Dakota. On a typical Sunday morning, one could hear church bells ringing, first over at St. Anthony's, Catholic, then the Lutheran, church, and finally at 11 the Methodist church chimed in.

But the reality was that by nine nearly everyone was up for church; there was enough traffic to warrant all three gas stations and Dyke's cafe being open for business. Only about thirty percent of the town's population stayed home, for whatever reasons.

But these days those numbers are almost reversed. One driving the neighborhoods of Wahpeton Sunday mornings, now encounters very little traffic at all. Most of the people seem to want Sunday to be a day they can sleep in. Somehow church-going has lost its attraction for a great many people, and, given these present perilous times, that's scary.

I know a little about staying home from church, because I had a season of exploring new age religions. During that time I only went to church if the preacher was brilliant enough to appeal to my stupid intellect and curiosity, but few people paid much attention if one of the flock wandered off for a time. Thank God, my mentor, Rufus Bellamy, opened my eyes to the dangerous deceptions beckoning "old souls" to perdition.

Another path a number of my friends took was sampling some of the controlled substances eschewed by our Methodist Church. And because of my mother's being a temperance leader, as well as my dad's hatred of drugs and alcohol for health reasons, the Pinkney kids were guided away from that life style.

But then the 60's rolled in with all the hippies worshiping "Puff, the magic dragon, and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds."

For the flower children Sundays were usually reserved for recovery- as Johnny Cash sang it: "On a Sunday morning sidewalk/ Wishing Lord that I was stoned/ For there's nothing like a Sunday/ Sunday morning coming down."

But thankfully, when the pain got greater than the fun they thought they had, "Waylon and Willy and the boys" discovered that the only real recovery from their addictions lay in the churches their wives prayed them back into.

So if you're one of the many who spend Sunday mornings home watching TV, take it from me, who learned it the hard way, tune in one of the great pastor/teachers still ministering, and start feeding your soul and spirit with the good news of the gospel of "amazing grace." Here are just a few that I know will reward you with a new "faith for today/ And bright hope for tomorrow."

The preacher who first set my wandering feet back on the right path was Ken Copeland. He focused completely on the power of the word of God to deliver people from evil. Then, by radio, I discovered Derek Prince, the brilliant Cambridge atheist professor, turned Christian, who demonstrated that the logic and persuasive power of Solomon, Jesus, and Paul was pretty much air tight. He became one of the greatest evangelists and Bible teachers who ever lived.

Then evangelists visited town from South Africa and Australia and their ministry got me healed of a bunch of chronic ailments and more importantly, got me reborn again into a new life in which church-going was and still is, absolutely, not a have to, but a love to. Now, out of gratitude, I support over a dozen ministries I know are saving millions of people globally. Here are just a few: Father Cedric Pisegna, Joyce Meyer, Pastor David Jeremiah, Pastor Jessie Duplantis, Pastor Creflo Dollar, Pastor Joseph Prince, Rev. Andrew Wommack,

Pastor Joel Osteen. and Pastor Robert Morris. Also, we support The Salvation Army, Voice of the Martyrs and “Zola Levitt Ministries.” These all urge their listeners to get into a good “Bible believing” church and prepare for the most exciting new life you will ever know. The worst days with Jesus are better than the best the world has to offer. And His best days offer treasures “exceeding abundantly above all you could ever ask or think.”

24-03-10- for the Daily News Gene Pinkney