



Pinewood Lutheran Church

24 Wilmington Rd.
Burlington, Massachusetts 01803

Office Phone: (781) 273-1610
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

PINEWOOD PRESS

July 2010

The Pastor's Diary:

Monday, p.m.

Well, I'm back from convention. A week away, with airplane travel and hours on the road each day provided me with time to cogitate. And I mulled around the issue of "Why people don't go to church and why they choose to ignore God in their lives?" Obviously the answers are as complex as the amount of people who walk down that road. But, certain issues stand out in my mind.

- First you have the ostriches. That is, those who bury their heads in the sand and just figure: "Don't worry, be happy." I guess they view acute illness or death as something that will never happen to them. The modern pop culture driven by "celebrities" seems to be their preoccupation. Considering the awful stuff that seems to happen to those "celebrities" you'd think they would ponder their own lifestyle. But, in a dumbed-down culture superficiality seems to be a mile wide and an inch thick....I wonder how the masses will react when something really bad occurs?....
- Next come the "too busy for God or church" types. Again, superficiality reigns supreme in their lives. If you truly believe that there is a God, how could you ever be "too busy for Him?" It's like saying: "I know I have to shop, there's no food in the refrigerator, but I'm just too busy, so I'll go hungry." (Yes, I know, there is always take-out. But, too busy means too busy to call for it.) To carry on the analogy, a whole lot of people are starving inside right now, thinking that they can "eat that God stuff later on." But, why starve when you don't have to? It's all quite ludicrous.
- Or, how about the "I'm too smart to fall for all that talk about God" crowd? Their pomposity hearkens back to the "Age of Enlightenment" in the 1700's when humans were considered the "measure of all things." Put in modern terms, it views human scientific achievement as the be-all and end-all of life. Or, "technology will solve every problem we will ever face." Well, technology hasn't solved cancer. It hasn't solved death. It knows nothing of what happens to the thinking, feeling person within our bodies when we die. Just because you cannot see something doesn't mean it doesn't exist. No one has "seen" a black hole (we postulate that light is trapped by its gravitational force, thus rendering "seeing" it impossible.) Yes, we can measure aspects of it, and we can postulate theories about it, but some things are unseen and yet real. I get a real kick out of those who denigrate the Christian faith because they say they cannot see God. I'd like to ask them: "Are you really **that** smart?" We cannot see subatomic particles, either, yet people routinely tout their existence, don't they? So, why not the Christian faith, the Christian God, and His "other-worldliness?"

- Another group could be called “those with an agenda.” On the plane I read an article about how popular it is to live together without being married. The usual platitudes about how marriage is commitment, they are committed, and they don’t need a piece of paper to prove it—all were used. Obviously such folks don’t like Christianity because they’ve heard about the 6th commandment, it crimps their style, and so they reject the whole Christian faith out of hand. After 30 years of life together with my wife, bound together by God and that “piece of paper” I’ll just say it: “Marriage is wonderful and it is also hard.” That marriage license is important because marriage should be difficult to get out of. Tough times come which split people apart. But, those tough times also pass—especially when both egos submerge themselves under the truth of God’s guidance. In Christian marriage especially, God is the glue that holds spouses together. His love for them in Christ backs up His total commitment to them. The “piece of paper” is but an earthly reminder and re-enforcer of this greater truth. I know, every love-struck individual thinks they are more special than anyone else who has ever loved. They think they are unique and breaking up will never happen to them. But, that’s really quite juvenile. Those who reject Christianity on the basis of some sort of agenda are all exhibiting juvenile behavior, that’s the bottom line. Life is bigger than the individual. Get used to it. And God not only gave life to us, He’s as big as it gets!
- I suppose the final argument against bowing one’s knee to God is this: “Well, if there is a god and he’s in control of everything, why does evil exist?” Let me turn it around a bit. Does love exist? Yes. Then why does hate also exist? Why can love be turned into hate?—See the divorce courts for proof. The argument against God’s existence based on evil’s existence is akin to saying: Since hate exists, love cannot. The point is: one does not automatically follow the other. As people, we must deal with reality as it is, not as we wish it to be. Yes, evil exists. Yes, God exists. Yes, God is Almighty by definition. And since He’s God, we cannot know everything about Him. If we did, we’d be gods, too. But, what we can and do know is that the ultimate evil: death, has been conquered by Christ on a cross via the power of His love. What we do know is: evil always seems to have limits—because God has set them. What we do know is: His grace, His undeserved love for us in Christ is the only constant in life. It is the life-preserver which never shifts or floats away. So, why not cling to it, give thanks for it, and weekly honor its Sender?

Now you know what your Pastor thinks about while airplane-bound. Mull my thoughts around in your head and perhaps when you talk to another who is a bit clueless about the real meaning to life, you can enlighten them through Christ, the Light of the world?.....