

May 8, 2012

## Attitude Adjustment

For me, attitude adjustment once was a not so secret code for I will meet you in the bar after a long hard flight, or a stressful business meeting, etc. It started to take on a new meaning for me when the neurosurgeon told me that my prognosis was not good. We all know that our time here on earth will end someday, but most of us seem to be in some form of denial for most of our lives. It's always in the future, and even those of us who know our eternal lives are secure don't spend a lot of time thinking about death, and what we will do with whatever time we have left here. I am describing my condition, hopefully not yours. This prognosis was the second time a physician had stood by my bed with the news that my condition was terminal. The first was in early 1952 after I was diagnosed with acute nephritis, (kidney infection) commonly known as Bright's disease.

Fast forward to December 21, 1994, the 31st anniversary of my wedding to Joan. We had lunch with one of our daughters, and we were in a festive mood. We had a glass of wine with lunch, and we had dinner reservations in our favorite restaurant, LaGrotta. My business partner picked me up after lunch for a quick trip to check on one of our shopping centers in Columbus, Georgia. The interstate speed limit was 65, but we had found that we could set the speed control on 72, and not worry about tickets. The sky was clear, and the warmth of the sunshine along with the nice lunch made sleeping conditions perfect for me. There was little traffic on I-185, and I was sawing logs in the right front seat, not aware that the driver had also drifted into dream land. We were on auto 72 MPH when we plowed into the car that was parked on the side of the road. As we were being placed in the ambulance for the rest of the trip to Columbus, the state patrolmen, the firemen, and the EMT guys all agreed that they normally saw fatalities in this kind of wreck. Our injuries were minor. I spent one night in the hospital, and a few days in bed at home. Joan and I agreed that God must have spared me for a reason. He must have something for me to do before he took me home. She irritated me down through the years as she would occasionally ask me if I had learned what He had for me to do, because I hadn't and I hadn't really tried.

Joan spends thirty minutes every day in a televised Bible study with Kay Arthur. In recent months, I have been watching with her. Kay is teaching Philippians now, and yesterday she opened the study with a question. If you were in your doctor's office and he told you that you had only a year to live, would you live differently? That's a paraphrase, but I felt that she was speaking directly to me when she went on to ask if my spiritual attitude would change, because after the neurosurgeon's prognosis, I

started seeing lots of things more clearly – or at least differently. I asked myself what my reception would be like in heaven. I am going to stand face to face with Jesus. Would He say “well done, good and faithful servant?” I think it would have been more like yes, you are on the list, come on in.

During the last three years, I have had time to read and reflect on lots of things. I’ve read dozens of articles and books on the financial meltdown of our economy. The reasons are complex, but can be boiled down to one word. Greed. I’ve seen the mainline church failing. I’ve heard the ordained say that all religions are just different roads leading to the same destinations, that it’s arrogant to think that Jesus is the only way. Preachers are building mega churches by tickling ears with a feel good “soft” gospel. I was not surprised when I heard Joel Osteen say that he “thinks” Mormons are Christian, because he draws huge crowds making people feel good about themselves. I was surprised when Andy Stanley the senior pastor of North Pointe Community Church, a mega church in Alpharetta, Georgia with five campuses seemed to go soft on homosexuality.

From the May 8 issue of the Christian Post:

‘... in an April 15 sermon he told the story of a divorced couple who formerly attended North Point together. They separated after the husband began a same-sex relationship with another man, who was still married to a woman.

The man and his partner wanted to serve as volunteers at the church, but Stanley explained that the two men were committing adultery since one of them did not finalize his divorce yet and thus could not serve as volunteers.’

I am seeing the greatest nation in the history of the world being one election away from becoming a totalitarian socialist state. The Supreme Court is under constant attack by the Executive Branch, and the Congress is being bypassed with executive orders.

But I am also seeing some good things. For example, last week the First Presbyterian Church of Ocean Springs, Mississippi voted overwhelmingly to leave the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) to affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), and Atlanta’s Church of the Apostles (COTA) will celebrate 25 years next Sunday. COTA is a mega church, but the founding pastor, Michael Youssef will never, ever, ever, compromise or stray from the gospel message.

Now about my attitude adjustment; I am going to spend whatever time I have left on space ship earth positioning myself – with God’s help – to hear “well done, good and faithful servant” when I meet Him. As I have looked at my life, I have faced the fact that even though I have had the blessing of leading some of my friends to Christ, there are others who I care for deeply that I have never witnessed to. They all know where I stand, but I am no longer passing up opportunities to share the good news.

My wife frequently cuts right to the bottom line. We will be in a social situation, and religion/church will come up in the conversation, and she will beg the question; “If you died today, would you go to heaven?” I am frequently amazed that even church going folks often give answers like “I hope so,” or “I think so,” or “I’m not sure. I’m doing my best”. The only right answer is “yes” .... What is your answer?

Since I started commenting about politically incorrect subjects like faith and politics, my blogs are no longer forwarded to the PCN email list. There are only a few hundred on my list, and as always I will remove your address if asked.

Tomorrow’s full body PET scan and brain MRI will determine if I will go back in the hospital next Monday for more chemo treatment. I solicit and thank you for your prayers.