



Goofy church stuff

by Clif Martin

That's the title of one of the four blogs that I write on the internet for the whole world to read. Only problem is, several millions of others are doing the same thing. The chances that anybody will read mine are pretty slim. So here are a few gems from my often cranky, caustic comments about what the churches are up to these days.

"Denomination" has become a bad word. Everybody wants to go to a non-denominational church. I guess that's because grandfather's church had a denominational name. That equals "tradition," and that's not a popular word, either. But I see a problem here. If a church declares itself "not your grandfather's church," where does grandfather go to church? Think about that.

There's a church not far from here that was the New Life Church. I don't have an issue with that if they don't want a traditional name. But they decided they need a name, so it became .the point. that's right, "dot the point." The assistant pastor says it's a visual metaphor.

Not far from me is the Dr. Martin Luther Church. I wonder how often the pastor must explain that it's not named for Martin Luther King, Jr. He was not a Lutheran.

Is there church someplace that's not populated mostly by folks who are recovering from a church that done 'em wrong and taught 'em bad stuff that they had to unlearn? Ain't no place for me in a church that advertises "church for people who hate church."

I like the idea of giving up something for Lent. Ashes on the forehead is OK, too. I can't agree with many friends who say that religious traditions get in the way of true spirituality. Sometimes they enhance it.

Do these powerful mega-church preachers have an alter ego? I feel a bit sorry for Robert Schuller. He had a good thing going, but he was beset with family squabbles and a huge debt. That happens a lot.

What an interesting fellow Paul was, whether you call him apostle or saint. I was raised Methodist and we don't talk much about saints. I don't know why. I like saints. I used to watch EWTN, the Catholic channel, a lot. I like feisty old Mother Angelica. I really liked Father Groeschel and I'm sad that he had to quit his TV appearances because of something he said.

John Spong, the darling of post-modernists, whatever that means, says Jesus was a radical feminist. The local Unitarian Universalists say He was one of them. Now you know.

Being introverted, hung up and not terribly sociable, I get real uncomfortable when the passing of the peace in church turns into a ten-minute session of running around, hugging everybody and saying things like "God loves you and so do I." It's all I can do to keep from saying, "I suppose God loves you, but I hardly know you."

All right, there you have some of my rants and raves. Next time I might share my blog about past popular culture, especially old time radio. •

Secret of faith

by Reverend R.A. Shackles

It is not that we think to "earn" love that as Christians we desire to achieve "great works." That has it all wrong. It doesn't work. The real secret is that as Christians, we come to know that, undeserving as we are, we *are* loved, powerfully and profoundly, by our God. In gratitude — *because* we are loved — it is our special joy to set ourselves to offering "great things" to glorify our God. And great things do happen. The love of God simply "works" that way. It is a work of a Christian to make our lives acts of loving God. It brings great things into our world. •

Worship on the Waterfront

(Submitted by First Reformed Church of Grand Haven)

Striving to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ through song, shared testimony and the Word, Worship on the Waterfront kicks off the 2014 summer concert series on June 22. All concerts are held at the Grand Haven waterfront stadium beginning at 7:30 p.m. A free-will offering will be accepted. In case of extreme weather or the threat of heavy rain or lightening, the location will change

This year's concert lineup:

June 22	Matt Maher
June 29	Buddy Greene
July 6	Newworldsong
July 13	Josh Wilson
July 20	J.J. Heller
July 27	Shawn McDonald
August 3	Sidewalk Prophets
August 10	The Hark-Up Horns
August 17	The Vespers
August 24	Peter Eide



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