

Challenges Ahead for FLCS

September 11th, 2022

It's 9-11 and we Christians need to find our voice in the world's spiritual emergency. A few true stories to wit.

Tim was a new Christian and Jim, the guy who had shared the gospel with him, was excited. Jim led a home Bible Study and invited Tim to tell his story. He thought it would take about 5 minutes. Instead it took the entire hour. Tim told of 18 incidents where he had met something that had arrested his attention spiritually, until finally Jim shared the gospel and he said, "I thought, 'Of course!'" In the end, Jim laughed humbly about how his part was just a small part of Tim's story.

She came to USA to be an exchange student and found out with horror that her new host family were devout Christians. "Well, I won't be going to church with you," she informed. "I'm an atheist." Her host dad was rather startled and didn't know what to say so he just blurted, "Well, uh, you should come for the tourist experience – see things Americans do." And so she reluctantly did. But she met a young woman who had similar experiences, and another friend who just wanted to be a real friend. And so she suddenly found God was speaking to her somehow in notions that crossed her mind and in words she heard in that little church. She is still a Christian today. "Okay," she confessed. "Our country before 1990 was communist and my mom was a closet Catholic. But I just thought it was like old superstitions. You won't believe how happy my mom is now! And me too!"

The couple came into the finance guy's office. "We are getting a divorce and we need to divide the money evenly." It rather floored the financial planner. They seemed such a nice couple. But now they sat down on opposite ends of the conference table. "I am sorry, I guess both to hear this and I have to explain that I can't do any kind of disbursements of an IRA or 401K until the owner dies. It's government rules. I can't touch your money." So that is the end of that, the finance advisor thought. That took 5 minutes and we scheduled an hour and a half. So hey, they are going to hear from me. "Have you guys sought any help in this? I mean before you crush your children's lives and your own? One of you doesn't have a sustaining job." Well, they had already filed and were determined to go through with it. Yes, they had seen counselors. "Not what I asked," he stated. "Counseling will always direct you to find truth inside yourself and I have no doubt you can do that. I'm asking if you have someone to help you find bedrock truth for your lives." The man shifted nervously, "Well we each have our own truth, and they aren't the same." The money guy was shaking his head. "No, call it whatever you wish but here's the real truth – it's going to ruin some lives. Listen, I have studied this relative truth stuff from top to bottom. Chaos theory too – how our lives are just accidents supposedly. We just fool ourselves with all this junk. I'm asking if you have seen someone like a pastor." Now the wife spoke up, "Oh, we aren't religious people!" But the FP wasn't to be put off. "You guys need some solid universal truth for your family. Christianity has the claim to absolute truth, family life, financial perspective, etc. You'd be smart to look closely at this before you make your decision." Well, they hadn't thought about it this way. "Do you have the name of a pastor?" And he did.

So what became of them, I asked. The advisor grinned. "I didn't hear from them for a while. Then one day got a call. They said they had both become Christians and are trying to work through things. Just keep our money invested. I jumped for joy."

The stories have important things in common for a vibrant church to be looking for. First, your witness may be simply a part of their future of faith in Jesus Christ. Second, you

need to say something, even when it isn't clear to you what the best words are. Third, people most often come to Christ gradually or in a tortured path. They must first get used to Christian things for awhile. Three things are required to instill faith – God's Word, His Holy Spirit, and you, the Christian. Since we don't know anyone else's mind, can't control the Holy Spirit, and don't know when a moment of faith will occur, we are just helpers with thoughts to share. But'cha gotta talk, love, and point to Jesus. Jim was just a helper. Host dad in a nearly clueless way let the Spirit select his words. The finance guy gave a rather unscripted counseling and the Spirit used it. All four, prompted to church, found God's Truth and Word. And in every one of these stories, the universal church of believers just waded in and got involved. *Involved* is the operative word. A living, growing church doesn't just sit in the back row. Jesus told his disciples, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

Te Deum Laudamus,
David Zimmerman, Pres.