

ADDENDUM

It is finished. The story is told. You had the courage to address it. Now what? ---- maybe something ---- maybe nothing. Not really. "Nothing" is not an option. For every stimulus there is a response, visible or invisible - --- immediate or delayed. You may be inclined to do something good, or you may be inclined to resist change, and cling to the status quo. Or, you may just be squirming. Our good intentions, our desire to follow a leader, and our church programming often get us into trouble. Man has a history of wanting and placing trust in leaders. Man's history is a story of use and abuse by leaders. The exceptions are rare. Just in my lifetime, millions of people have been enslaved and or exterminated by "our leaders". Reflect a moment on the advisability of following any of these listed leaders: Tutankhamen's reign, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong (Mao Tse tung), Idi Amin, Jim Baker, or Jim Jones!

These are but a few ----- the list doesn't include the host of major "players of the 1990s".

What I wrote, and what you read, may not be the same thing. I made a pointed effort to write a book about our Christian Witness. Whatever your slant is or has been, it is rooted in emotion and experience. It is something which you value. When people **suspect** that their beliefs are being challenged, they may become defensive, hostile, resistant, confused or elect to redefine the message. Any attempt to edit or improve anything, must involve change. In some circumstances, there are those who would put the spin of "church criticism" on this work. The implication, therefore, is that such is bad. Part of the programmed "Christian Church Dogma" is that we should never criticize the Pastor or the Church. I don't buy that. The way I read my Bible ---- Jesus didn't either! What I want to say is that it has not been my purpose to tear down something, but it is to improve something --i.e. our Christian Witness. If that is to be done, something must change. There are a whole lot of people who are not interested in change. Some of those people are not very nice, while others just don't like the discomfort. Some of the people who don't want change, do so because the status quo serves them personally.

The World has no shortage of opportunists. There are clearly people who operate within the guise of serving God, but are actually promoting themselves. These are people who are quick to point an accusing finger against a "voice of protest".

I invite you to step back and look at a panorama of human composition. Inside of us is what we sometimes call a God Sized Vacuum. Early life is dominated by sensory input and blind optimism to the extent that the vacuum goes unrecognized. After we have assembled enough pieces, there is the basis for recognizing that parts are missing. This then leads to an unspecified need. We may do all kinds of things in response. Mid-life crisis is an example of unspecified need. We may get divorced, change jobs, move away or change our image. Alternatively, we may fill that need. There are three distinct categories of filler ----- God, self, or others. History reveals abundant evidence of man's quest for God. Secondly, we have no shortage of narcissists----- in fact, many coin our current generation of youth as the "me generation". Self indulgence, instant gratification and "image", characterize this group. The third group is the "idol worshipers". Not to be confused with religious idols ----- these people have a worship of other people.

Of course they don't admit it! The idols of worship are often actors or singers, athletes, race drivers, political leaders, promoters, teachers and yes -----clergy.

If we let a chunk of meat represent each of the three categories, as nature will have it, flies will gather around the meat. These flies represent **opportunists!** There are always those who know how to use people to advantage. They know about the needs that people have, and can use that to gain favors, power and wealth. Leaders bring nations to war by manipulating the masses. Athletes are made into gods by the simple method of media hype, and making them obscenely rich. The opportunists are very successful at parasitizing the resources of society. Ideas are made into institutions. Institutions become bureaucracies. It happens slowly. There is a gradual escalation of rules, requirements and costs. In the arena of religion ----- Jesus came in **protest!** We don't have to order religious material from a catalogue, to be in relationship with God. This book has no order form. As the Author, I receive no fee. If I believe in it enough, as I do, I am willing to spend my own resources on the effort. Copies may be available in a store, for some price. Understand that I don't get any of that. Some will say that I am attacking the

Church! Well, that just isn't true. I'm not writing a book about the Church. I suppose I could: but, I didn't. I have written a book about "witness". I believe that the church community has been drawn down the wrong path on what Christianity is about. Its not about institutions, how good we look, rituals, paraphernalia, or hiring a priesthood to take us to heaven or do our work for us. Christianity is individual. Soul by soul we find, or fail to find **salvation**. We are asked to "spread the good news" ---- this we call witnessing. If churches don't do that effectively, then what is it that they are doing, and why? I've seen a lot of counterfeit religion. People are free to spend their resources in many ways. Much of what churches do is not bad. The bad part comes when irrelevant activity **substitutes** for what God asks of us. Improve is not the same as attack. I submit that any one who tries to hide behind a claim that this is an attack on the Church, has made a navigational error regarding his "God sized vacuum"! I remind you that what I have tried to convey about witnessing, can, and should, be done all by yourself. ----- No church is required. The whole idea is to gain converts ----- not create and engage adversaries. The second element of witnessing is to avoid doing those things which are destructive to the process. Institutions, in

order to maintain and increase power, as a matter of strategy, incorporate "themes which will sell". This has happened within the Church. The ideas of "Godless Scientists", "Evolution", and "Abortion", are themes around which people can be rallied. These themes are wrong - ---- they do not serve God! Political action is an effective avenue of support; but, ulterior leadership and ignorance can combine to produce ugly consequences. The scriptures do not promise paradise on earth, for the here and now. The scriptures do not direct the Church to politically engage the world. We are supposed to use our mind, not be mindless pawns . We have the option of being the witness that we are called to be. We also have the option of simply not lending support to movements which are not in the interest of God!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"Many receive --- only the wise profit".
"There is none so blind, as he who won't see".
"The Devil loves nothing better than intolerance of reformers". "The majority is usually wrong".
"Let my people go"! The Author believes that messages may have eternal value, while messengers come and go. To the extent that we focus on the messenger, we divert focus from the message. We do, in the real world, use "crutches" to help us understand what is presented to us. If we know who wrote something, we believe that it helps us to evaluate. That is true, only if the reputation of the author is established. This Author asks that you give little regard to his person. He asks that you process the ideas, apply your intellect with trust, test the message against the "Plan of Grace"; then hold it up to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit.

For those who might wonder if he claims to come from a "mother ship", which is hiding behind the moon, he will concede the following structural information to accommodate inevitable curiosity: He was born into a small stable

agricultural community, in Southern California. It was a community of many churches. He was familiar with all of the buildings, but nearly oblivious of the contents. To him, Christianity was only slightly more than a neutral influence. As a child, he liked to build things, solve problems, experience adventure and understand things. His heroes usually wore white hats. On the screen he revered Hopalong Cassidy and the Lone Ranger. In comic books, there were Superman and the Blue Beetle. On the radio, there were a host of other heroes ---- He prized his Captain Midnight Decoder Badge. He was a member of the Boy Scouts. As a small boy, he repeatedly studied the pages of the Book of Knowledge. Through college age, his perception of Christians was that they were generally mysterious, sometimes pious, not very competent and sometimes just plain weird. He attended several California Colleges, including UCLA and Cal Poly. He went on as a high school Biology Teacher, for nearly 30 years. After college, he developed friendships with some dedicated Christians. He found it baffling that these "capable individuals" were so profoundly inept at supporting their beliefs. For many years, he never encountered a Christian who could make a good case for Christianity.

At age 42, a lot of things had happened ---
--- he went to his knees to find Jesus. Following
that, he plunged into Church with hunger and
expectation. There were years of Bible Study.
There were 20 years of "church shopping" ----
trying to find that credible church experience ----
-- which never came. He came to realize, more
clearly, that the help, which Jesus promised to us,
would come from the Holy Spirit ---- not from
an "omnipotent" bureaucracy. He has felt
pressured to write this book, out of spiritual
obligation.