

Pastor's Corner – 4-5-2018
Everybody Said (But Nobody Did)

I was just entering my teenage years when my Mom and Step-Dad started attending the Seventh-day Adventist church. Prior to that we were a standard American family and I was a standard American kid. Friday nights were for high school football games, Saturday mornings were for cartoons, and Sunday mornings were for bacon and eggs. My friends were secular, as was my entertainment and music.

For the most part I enjoyed the transition into Adventism. It was kind of sad giving up bacon and some of my favorite cartoons were the ones on Saturday morning but it wasn't too long before I got used to Stripples and Sabbath School. One thing that did prove to be a bit of a challenge for me was finding music that was God focused that I also enjoyed. Church music just did not do it for me. I didn't grow up with hymns and they all seemed a little boring. I had never heard of southern gospel but I have a hunch that even had I known about the Gaithers, 15 year old Tyler wouldn't have been much of a fan. Contemporary Christian Music as we know it today hadn't really been invented yet. The closest thing to a Christian band that I would consider listening to was Petra which was just a poor imitation of the hard rock that I preferred. There was, however, one Christian group that I ended up really liking. I even bought their tape. The group was called Acapella and I had never heard music like it before.

I know that quartets are not at all uncommon in the church, but I wasn't a church kid. I was accustomed to the wailing of the likes of Axel Rose and not the pleasant harmonies of an acapella group. They're music was interesting and God centered and I listened to their tape over and over again.

One of the songs I really enjoyed was called "Everybody Said (But Nobody Did)". It's a humorous song with catchy lyrics and a light hearted feel. I can still hear it in my head today. I'm sure you know the song. Here are the words:

Everybody said that anybody could do
The important things somebody should do
Everybody knows that anybody could do
All the good things that nobody did

Well the preacher came to me and said what I ought to do
If I wanted to make my religion true
He'd do it himself but he really didn't have the time
He said that the duty was mine

Well the deacon came by and said give me a hand
If you want to be going to the Promised Land
Here is something that I don't have time to do
So I better give it to you

Well I'm too busy so I tell everybody
The work's got to get done by somebody
It could be done by anybody
But nobody, nobody, nobody did

The longer I've been in the church (especially as a pastor) the more I have realized that the situation described by this song is more often the rule rather than the exception. It's a good thing the song is upbeat, lighthearted, and fun because the reality it describes is actually quite depressing. As a

church it's all too easy to slip into the consumer mode of thinking. Many of us approach church as if God expects us to merely show up, pay up, and shut up.

The sad truth is that God expects far more from his people in this area than we are willing to admit. Did you know that God has never asked anybody to join a church? Instead, He asks us to **be** the church. There is an enormous difference between the two. You can join a club or an organization or a fraternity and that means that you pay your dues and then receive certain services or privileges in return. But when you unite yourself with Christ you don't join his church, you **become** his church. You **become** his hand and feet. You are, in a very real sense, the agency through which God works to reconcile the world to himself.

That's why the song by Acapella is so disturbing. It describes parts of the body who know their function but who refuse to fulfill it. We have a medical term that we use to describe cells that just sit around, do nothing, and interfere with the assigned tasks of the body. Those cells are called cancer. And just as our physical bodies suffer when cancer cells multiply, so does the body of Christ suffer when the various parts of his body sit idly by expecting everyone else to do all the work.

This brings us to the real point of this Pastor's Corner. Our evangelistic series begins in less than a week and God needs his body, every part of it, to be active. Every time I'm in a church that is preparing for an outreach program like this I have wistful dreams that the Body of Christ will be lining up in droves to volunteer to help. In my dreams I have people coming to me after church asking where they can serve. There's an enthusiasm and joy because we are about the Father's business and every part of the Body of Christ wants to be involved.

Thus far, my dreams have not come true. Instead I find that we have to twist arms, cajole, beg, plead, and bribe in order to get people to agree to be greeters or to pass out brochures around town. I've even considered giving a 20% discount on tithe for one month for anyone who will spend 3 nights in the children's program. Everyone seems to have a suggestion of someone else who might be better at the job than they are. * But nobody wants to do it themselves.** Sounds like the Acapella song.

Jesus assures us that the harvest is plentiful, but there is a shortage of workers. The truth is that there are actually plenty of workers, it's just that most of them are on a terminal coffee break. Rather than working for the harvest we sit back and expect someone else to do it. Everyone said, but nobody did.

Pastor Tyler

*Here are some of my "pass the buck" suggestions: "Check with the Academy. Don't they have to get community service hours anyway?" "This would be a great opportunity for our teens! Maybe check with the Pathfinders?" "Why doesn't the secretary take care of that? Isn't that why we have a secretary?"

**Some common excuses: "I'll help but first let me go and bury my father." "I'll help but first let me go deal with some family stuff." Oh, wait. No, those were excuses that people gave Jesus when he asked them to follow him. We wouldn't say those kinds of things today because we all know that Jesus taught that such people weren't worthy of the kingdom of God. We wouldn't be so foolish as to tell God that we're too busy to do his work...would we??