

A Rancher's Rumbblings, September 4, 2009

CLUNKERS, FRUSTRATIONS, AND TRUTH-TELLING

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You know, sometimes things pile up, and it's hard not to get frustrated and even angry. Then, when you look back on it, you get a little embarrassed, because you remember that there are people going through much worse problems – like facing death or serious illness, either themselves or their loved ones. But that doesn't make your frustrations any less real.

That's about how I've felt the past couple of weeks.

Two Fridays ago, my pick-up started right up until I stopped the first time. Then it would not start again. So I had it towed to a repair shop, where they replaced the fuel pump for \$850 while I drove Mother's '94 Oldsmobile for a few days. That wasn't too bad, since I had already been driving it quite a bit, because it gets good gas mileage.

Then I decided I might take advantage of the "cash for clunkers" program. Well, much to my disappointment, my old worn-out vehicles weren't "clunker" enough. Mother's '94 Oldsmobile did not qualify, because it gets 20 miles a gallon (the limit is 18 mpg) – even though it is 15 years old!

My 2002 Chevy ¾-ton pick-up didn't qualify, either, even though it has 217,000 miles on it and gets about 14 miles to the gallon. Why? Because ¾-ton vehicles don't qualify unless they're a 2001 vehicle or older.

So I continue to drive clunkers but can't get any cash for them.

Then the following Monday, I pulled a "clunker" of my own. Anyone who knows me knows that I have a habit of stuffing messages and notes into my front pocket to the point of overflowing – and carrying three different-colored pens all the time doesn't help it any! Well, on Monday, I went a bit too far. On top of all of that, I stuffed my Blackberry in there, too – or at least I thought I did! It promptly fell into the commode as I prepared to umm, use it.

(I'll pause here until you finish laughing.)

Since then it has moments of working fine and moments of being totally worthless, which it was most of this past Monday, while I was driving 607 miles in one day, attending meetings in Waco and Dallas, and then driving back home. I could see people calling me and even see their names, but I couldn't answer them; it was the same with email – I could read people's emails but couldn't respond to them.

To say that I was frustrated would be an understatement, not to mention that I realized my body is no longer capable of such a road trip without being totally worthless the next day.

But all of that is personal frustration, and I'll get over it. What I have a harder time getting over is the news I keep getting about churches that are leaving the BGCT because they are being told mountains of lies – and they don't give us a call 'til it's too late.

The latest such news came to me in an email while I was dealing with all of these personal frustrations. It contained a report from a church, explaining why they are leaving the BGCT to align with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. On the cover page, they wrote, "every effort has been made to make sure that the material is accurate."

Well, "every effort" apparently didn't include checking with TBC, the Baptist watchdog that exists to educate and inform. I read the report, and I can assure you that the material this church received is nothing but lies and misrepresentations and falsehoods twisted and turned to meet someone's presuppositions and someone's agenda. If this church had truly made any serious effort to find out the truth, they would have never written this report, and they would still be supporting the River Ministry, Hardin-Simmons (which is nearby), the BGCT ministries to children and the elderly, and on and on.

Reading something like this makes me wonder, "Can people really be so easily manipulated?" Obviously, they can.

But I am also asking myself, "Why are there no persons from this church on our TBC mailing list?" I firmly believe that, if the leaders of this church had been on our mailing list during the past 10 years, this church would have never left the BGCT – never even seriously considered it.

Which brings me to a few requests of you who are reading this:

- If you are a pastor reading this, please send us the names, addresses, and email addresses of your deacons and other church leaders.
- If you are an associational director of missions, please send us your associational directories so that we can add all of your associational leaders to our mailing list.
- If you are a layperson reading this, please send us the names and addresses of your church leaders and members of your Sunday school class.
- If you are a leader in your church or association Baptist Men or WMU, please send us the names and addresses of other key leaders in your organization.
- If you are a BSM director, please go ahead and send us contact information for your college leaders – they are our churches' leaders of the future, and they need to begin learning the truth about Fundamentalism now.
- If you know of a church that is without a pastor, please send us that information so that we can mail that church our "Help for Pastor Search Committees Packet."

Folks, this is not about politics – it's about being free and informed Baptists. As Christians first and Baptists second, we have a responsibility before God to seek the truth and refuse to be led astray by lies.

TBC exists to help Texas Baptists make free and informed decisions. It's not just our convention that is at stake here. It is the health of our churches and the future of our Kingdom work as Texas Baptists. We can't afford uninformed ministers, uninformed church leaders, and an uninformed laity.

Through education and truth-telling, we can stop losing churches to Fundamentalism today. But we can't do it unless TBC friends and supporters take responsibility for the future of Texas Baptists. There is no time to waste, and we can't afford apathy or complacency. Kingdom work is at stake.

Earlier this week, I got a new phone – now, whether phone, email, or whatever, I'm back in business. And not a moment to lose! Please pick up the phone today . . . or drop us an email . . . and give us the information we need for the sake of the *Lord's* business.