

LEFT BEHIND !!!

In the early part of the year 2003 I declared myself to be an unsafe driver. Thus, I "left behind" the pleasure and convenience of auto transportation. At about the age of 12 I learned to drive. The first vehicle was a model T Ford Touring Car. It had three pedals on the floor... clutch, brake, and reverse. On the steering rod were two levers... gas and spark. Pull both of these down and you could go tearing down the road at 15 to 20 miles an hour! I really miss driving. In over 80 years I have driven all types motor powered machines... farm tractors, motor-homes, and a wide variety of autos. But arthritis so damaged my right knee that I could not accurately control the functions of my gas and brake foot. So I left behind the pleasure and convenience driving a car.

Over the years I have noted that there are numerous things that we leave behind, or they leave us behind. Life turns into a sort of going forward and leaving behind process. As it turns out, not all of it is a happy process but it a sort of natural process and not necessarily loss and bitterness.

In June, 2006, the USA Presbyterian Church General Assembly meets in Birmingham, Ala. At the same time and place the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and The Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America will be meeting. There will be some joint activities together with joint worship services. This represents a most significant "leaving behind" of former conflicts and bitterness. This display of harmony represents a significant forward movement. It is time for the Presbyterian Church to put behind it a number of nagging, mission-detering conflicts and attitudes, and get with its

true high calling. The membership decline should become a challenge and a call for a soul searching examination of our current commitment.

The current "Left Behind" flood of books have made their authors extremely rich. At the same time they have stirred hopes and fears in millions of readers. 'Dispensationalism' of the Left Behind type is too definitive to be of great help to the person striving to know the truth that sets one free. We are reminded of Jesus Christ and some of the disciples traveling down the road. The disciples are pressing him for times and dates of 'the great final days...' He lets them know certain "last" things are not known, at least not for them to know or worry about. Their job is to be about proclaiming the 'way, the truth, the life' that he is preaching and teaching. Their job was to live so as to be prepared for the great 'final' events. That, it seems, should be our paramount concern today. The seven "dispensations" set forth by the Left Behinders are interesting but not of great concern to a person striving to live as a Christian.

An item that requires a great amount of 'leaving behind', these days, is that of reading and listening to the daily news! The art of spinning the news appears to have been perfected. The lie and the truth are melded into one well woven yarn! Journalists and commentators have become distorters of reality. Just leave behind much of what you read and hear! Some of it isn't worth reading or listening to. Always ask: "Why was this written or said?" Learn how to perceive motivation!

As a lad I heard my Father talk about the "Russellites". There was some dispensationalism in the Russellite faith but it did not affect my Father. He

knew about the Scofield Bible and its flavor of dispensationalism but he never seemed to get entangled with concepts. His faith was definitely Gospel based. The standards that guided his day by day living were those highlighted by the, "blessed are the..." statements of Jesus.

There are many things my dad left behind because he thought they should be left behind. I heard him say, "I do not drink whiskey because I like it too much..." All of us would do well to give some thought to what we have or have not left behind. Some things we will regret leaving behind, others we will be glad that we had the ability to put them aside.

Years ago I read a book entitled, "Is Your God Too Small?". The writer was trying to push church members beyond the 'Santa Claus' perception of God. These days science is pushing us to do that. Those scientists who are constantly probing the Universe are being forced to adjust previous concepts and deal with new data. The Universe is much larger than once perceived. The Universe is in constant flux. We have space 'explorers' out there that have been going on and on for years. They are revealing new information about the Universe in which we live. Did you ever stop to think about how many millions of people have lived and died on this earth? What about other planets?

When I get to thinking about things of this nature and then start thinking about 'practical' things: I say, "Yes, the filibuster must be left behind!" We elect a 100 senators to administer the affairs of the nation and they spend valuable time debating whether or not they should be "allowed" to waste valuable time filibustering!

I suppose we should all get a bit concerned about filibustering life away...

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