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Christian Perspectives ? Who do you follow?

I am in the process of building a garage at my house. We tore down the old Lean to garage last year and relocated the natural gas line. We had to chop down a large tree because it was rotting on the inside. (No sense building something new only to have the tree fall on it?) We drew up plans, checked building codes and setbacks and applied for a building permit. Because of the size of the new garage we had to have a foundation rather than a floating concrete slab. My oldest son who works in an engineering office came by and laid out the building site by putting in stakes. You could begin to see the outline of the new building. We then hired an excavator to come and dig a trench so we could pour the footings and build the foundation wall. The footings have to be below the frost line. The frost line being 3 feet, my trench was going to be 4 feet deep. It was a pretty exciting morning when the excavator showed up and started to dig: after all the prep work we were finally and officially on our way. But not for long?..

After only 2 or 3 big scoops of dirt, the machine hit something solid. After scraping away some more dirt it became apparent than we had come across an old foundation from a building that we had no knowledge of nor was it shown on our survey. Part of the old foundation ran exactly where my new foundation was to go. A quick call to the building department dashed any thought of using the old foundation. The new foundation has to rest on ?undisturbed or virgin? soil. By the time we dug up and removed the parts of the old foundation my trench was not 4 feet deep, in places we went down almost 8 feet before we hit undisturbed soil. I should add that our home is well over a hundred years old and as the gentleman who ran the excavator said: with these old places you're never sure what you are going to find. Anyway, our ?BIG? hole has been the talk of the neighborhood with friends and neighbors coming to check it out and shaking their head. At this time you might be wondering if there is a point to all this besides giving you a lesson in construction and the ?funny? surprises you might run across as a homeowner.

In my previous writings in this column I have wondered out loud why ?Christians? seem to have such a bad rep. Carl Medearis, the author I am currently reading, took a sample and ?street interviewed? 50 people and asked their opinion on Christianity. Somewhat to his surprise not one of the 50 people asked had much good to say about Christianity as an organized religion. Hypocritical, narrow minded, homophobic, intolerant and I am sure that some of you can add to the list. For many people in developing countries Christianity is unfortunately connected to blatant imperialism and colonialism. In the name of Christianity great evils were committed. We don't have to look far beyond our own borders to see the damage done: I think about the tragedy of the residential schools in our recent history. As Christians we cannot deny these truths and we have a lot to answer for.

The author then asked 50 different people what they thought about Jesus, without fail people had good things to say about the person of Jesus Christ: a great teacher and role model, a good person, he healed people, he was a person who stood for justice and truth. So it seems that Christianity is what mankind has made of Jesus' teaching. In a way Jesus is the ?Undisturbed Virgin soil? that we have built our footings and foundations on. But our foundations are definitely ?man made? structures. Is it possible that we become so preoccupied with our foundation walls that we have forgotten and ignored that we are anchored and resting in the undisturbed and virgin soil that is Jesus Christ.

I am sure there are contractors who can spend hours talking about the finer details of a foundation: poured walls with or without rebar, or a 10 inch or 8 inch block wall? or perhaps go old school and have a ?rubble? foundation?. The same way we Christians can endlessly debate finer points of theology and doctrine while losing sight of the person of Jesus Christ.

So where do you stand? Are you a fierce protector of the ?foundation?, rushing in to fix cracks and patch holes?? You might proudly point out the thick and immoveable strong and firm foundation.

Perhaps you have given up on your faith foundation: it is nothing more than a heap of discarded rubble from the past, buried and long forgotten. Besides there is no way yours can measure up anyway even if you tried?.

I wonder what would happen if we would take our eyes off our foundations and take off our shoes and socks so to speak and wiggle our toes in the undisturbed, virgin soil that is Jesus Christ. How long has it been since you were this close and intimate with Jesus?

Carl Medearis made some helpful suggestions when he spoke at our convention earlier this year. He challenged us to read the

Gospels over and over again and to tell the stories (parables) that Jesus told whenever we can. What do you think would happen if we used the words that Jesus used? What would change if we did what Jesus did? (He loved, brought hope, healed and restored) What would happen if the world saw ?Jesus? when they would look at you? Let us follow Jesus, becoming like Him and see what changes. It's worth a try don't you think?

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