

## A Great “Webb-Sight” at Christchurch

Last week we discussed “Eden Restored.” We talked about one of our members, Bob Eden who has returned beautifully to the Lord. This week I want to talk about another member, Gary Webb, who, like Bob was out of church for two decades before coming back at this local called out group of people called Christchurch Baptist Fellowship. The wordplay on our title today bespeaks the vision Gary received and what he and his precious wife, Dianne saw that brought them to us. I hope, as with last week’s writing, to use this to challenge us to keep being what God has made us here; for newcomers, to see what Gary saw and get on board. In Brother Webb’s words, speaking of Christchurch, he said,

### 1. I heard what I always heard growing up.

Being traditional in our approach is good. Dr. Wallace Cobb, veteran Baptist pastor in our area of Houston said to me once, “Christchurch Baptist Fellowship is what the Southern Baptist Convention was fifty years ago.” We are not trying to be to be archaic, stubborn or irrelevant. We believe that we should be aware of our times and we should be willing to use different methods when necessary. There are things, however, that are unchangeable with us. We have the same message of the Gospel, belief in the same Bible and uphold the same standards of morals and holiness as our spiritual predecessors of the faith. “It was good for our fathers and mothers and it’s good enough for us...give us that old-time religion!” Time does not change right and wrong! One telling testimony to the changing times was brought to my attention when we had a visitor come to our services with her teenager. As she exited the morning service she said with tears, “As we sang the old hymns, it suddenly occurred to me that my fifteen year old son has been in a Baptist Church for his whole life and this morning was the first time he ever heard a church hymn.” The Bible says, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:19).

More importantly, there is a subtle message across the land to water down the Word of God and don’t offend, lest we lose our opportunity to be an effective witness. This approach is not new; in Isaiah’s day we read, “*That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things...*” (Isaiah 30:9,10). We have observed so much compromise that hearing the Bible taught and preached has become precious because the vision of God through His Word is squelched. “*...And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision*” (I Samuel 3:1). The danger when the Word of God is not given its place of primacy is disclosed in Proverbs 29:18, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*” Another view Brother Webb gave me was:

### 2. The people here didn’t come down hard on you.

This is a great contrasting, yet complementary view of our Church. We have the same message and same morals, yet there is a Christ-like compassion here. The people know how to be pious, without being prudish. They know how to be intolerant of sin, but forgiving toward the sinners. When it comes to non-essentials, there is mercy. Romans 14:1-4 says, “*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.*” The Word is saying, if one is weak, we don’t invite them into our fellowship just to argue. If what we believe is right, God can convince them

because according to the Bible, He or she will have their opportunity to stand before Christ and give account. *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Romans 14:12).

Gary might not have seen everything eye to eye with us (although he did confide in me last week, that any differences would be minor), he was very appreciative of our people who loved him and as he said, wouldn't come down hard on you. In truth every member here has a unique individuality and we all would see things a little differently than another, but what bonds us is the things we have in common, that overwhelm any and all of our minor differences. Jesus said, *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:35). One of our oldest church members, Deacon David Messick said over two decades ago, "This church is a place of healing. It is a place where hurting people can come and find a home." In my opinion, his testimony is truer today than ever. Another part of this "Webb-sight" was expressed when Gary said,

### 3. The people here are sincere.

This is one of the finest statements that could ever be said about a church. It is an honor to pastor such a group of people! Many years ago I heard it said, "Be who you say you are, or stop saying who you are." Another saying is, "Your life speaks so loud, I can't hear a word you are saying." Sincere is an interesting word that means: from pretense or deceit. In the Greek language it carries the meaning: without wax. The ancient potters would examine the vessel that had just gone through the kiln and if it had a crack, the honest potters would place it on the shelf or cast it aside, not to be sold. The dishonest potters would cover the crack with wax then paint it over and set it out to market. The observing and wise buyer before purchasing a vessel would hold the vessel up to the light of the sun and if it had been "waxed," the light would shine through at the point of flaw. When God says, *"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ"* (Philippians 1:10), He is saying, be real; be "without wax."

God has blessed Christchurch with real people! And the beneficial boon is that as we grow, we grow with other people that are real. One of the great laws that God has placed into nature is described in the book of Genesis: *"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so* (Genesis 1:11). You will see *"after his kind"* used in Genesis 1:21,24 and 25. We see whales give birth to other whales, winged creatures give birth to other winged creatures, cows give birth to other cows. Life reproduces "after his kind." Without exaggerating, hypocrites birth other hypocrites and sincere people birth other sincere people. There are exceptions, but as a rule, even as water rises to its own level, so also people find their own kind and fellowship. Not to wear you out with old expressions, but I can't resist using this one here: "Birds of a feather flock together."

To say a word of commendation, speaking highly of our church and more so, of our Lord who resides as Lord and Head of this church, I congratulate you if you feel attracted to this fellowship. It is a strong sign that you, like they, are sincere and hold high core values and walk with God or desire to walk with God in spirit and in truth. *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24).

- Pastor Pope -

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