

F.L.Y. 2007 / Send in the Boys!

The youngest man ever to be elected Vice-President of the United States was on the horns of dilemma in May 1864. John C. Breckenridge, now Major General in the Confederate Army, had just issued a request for the Virginia Military Institute to meet him prepared for battle at New Market, Virginia. An urgent message from President Jefferson Davis said, "Do not, Sir, grind the seed corn of our country." Davis was interested in saving the young men from the consequences of raw warfare that had already claimed the life of so many southern youth. V.M.I. consisted at this time of young men between the ages of 15 and 17; the older had already been activated into the army. Some of the names betray the greatness of their not too distant past. Thomas Garrison Jefferson and Patrick Henry among others were grandsons and direct descendents of the founders of our country. The boys were soon to be joining in the ranks with Colonel George S. Patton, a graduate of V.M.I. and the grandfather of "Blood and Guts" George Patton of World I and more particularly of World War II fame. At the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864 there was a microcosm of America's great past and future. On this day, the "seed corn" was not ground, but rather planted in the heart of our history.

Breckenridge's worn, ragged and tattered 4,000 infantry was statistically no match for General Franz Siegel's 10,000 veteran men who boasted of the strongest artillery division in the war. General Grant was using Siegel to hopefully cripple the Confederacy. General Breckenridge, trying to protect the 257 V.M.I. Cadets who had marched 84 miles to be in the battle, had placed them in the third colonnade behind Patton. The first two colonnades had been devastated, now V.M.I. stood center in the field of honor. General Breckenridge hesitated, his major pleaded with him to send them in. History records that whenever the general ever mentioned this day until the time of his death, he did so with tears in his eyes. There was jeopardy now of losing the bread-basket of the Confederacy, the Shenandoah Valley which had kept General Robert E. Lee's troops alive. If New Market fell, the Confederacy would starve to death. With tears coursing his cheeks, John C. Breckenridge commanded, "Send in the boys and may God forgive me for giving this command!" The valiant boys of V.M.I. ran at full speed with the rebel yell that reminisced of the victory cry of The Battle of Manassas (famed early win of the south).

What happened next was phenomenal! Siegel's artillery attempted to cut the boys to shreds. Yet their speed and valor, even to leaving their shoes stuck in the mud of the rain-drenched ground was something Siegel had not counted on. The youngsters were not to be denied. Cadet O.P. Evans made it to the Union lines, mounted one of the cannon as though it were a stallion, and lifted the banner of V.M.I. into the air to signal to his comrades to advance. Ten thousand Union troops were in a state of shock and awe and began to run. The tide was turned; two hundred fifty-seven 15 to 17 year old boys saved the Confederacy for one more year. General Breckenridge rode his horse to congratulate V.M.I. and said, "Well done, Virginians; well done, men!" They went in as boys and came out as men. The Shenandoah was saved.

March 23 through March 25, 2007 we are inviting young men from around the country, ages 13 through 21 to come to a Christchurch Baptist Fellowship "camp in" to hear Dr. Steve Roberson and Dr. Eric Capaci among others to be challenged to lift up the banner of the cross and take the gates of Hell. We are suffering from a dearth of young people, especially young men, coming into full time service for Christ. And when we say full time service we are not saying we are trying to recruit only preachers, future pastors, missionaries and evangelists. We are saying whether you are going to be President of the United States, a lawyer, a doctor, a realtor, a computer programmer, an airplane pilot or whatever God wants you to be, we are emphasizing all to be full-time Christians in their service to God, country and the world at large. The name of our conference is taken from an acrostic, F.L.Y. which represents the phrase *Forming Leadership in Youth*. In symbolism we want our young men, whoever they are, to run, walk or crawl to this conference to learn how to listen to the voice of God. In order to do this, there must be a discipline of Bible Study, prayer and power over temptations. We are isolating the young men away from girls, the wrong crowd, computers, televisions, video games, iPods and cell phones. We are not

saying these activities are wrong, but there is so much interference in the world in which we live that we are trying to allow 44 hours for young men to contemplate the will of God for their lives. It is not that God isn't calling young men; it is simply they are not listening. *"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"* (Isaiah 40:30,31).

We don't want to stop with our conference; we hope to develop a networking of champions. We want to stay in touch and help reinforce accountability and nurture mentoring, not just with us, but with older men who have prayed the price, walked in the Word, and paid the price of cross-bearing and who are willing to encourage the young men in their own local fellowships. We want to seize the day! We want to say, "Send in the boys!" And God willing, we shall soon say, "Well done, men!" Hopefully you are saying, what can I do?

1. You can think.

"My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned..." (Psalm 39:3). The burden intensified when I was recently in a men's conference. It occurred to me that we as teachers, preachers and speakers were trying to help a lot of men who have "blown it" morally and spiritually to recover. We desperately need to keep this type of ministry going, but let us not leave the other undone. Think with me. Is it not better to mold a boy than to re-make the man? Our goal is to capture the hearts of the young men before they make the errors and sinful mistakes. *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation"* (Psalm 24:3-5).

2. You can pray!

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1: 5, 6).

Everybody can pray! I would solicit our ladies and all to pray for this conference with confidence that God will bless. By the way, girls, you will be benefiting from this conference, because our goal is to train young men to be the kind of gentleman that God and your parents would want you to marry one day.

3. You can come!

If you are a (single) male between 13 and 21 pray about coming. Make the effort. God willing, we shall keep the cost very affordable. Christchurch will bear the greatest brunt of the expenses. We are willing to do so because we believe the hour is late and the need to recruit sold-out believing young men is urgent.

For thirty-six years I have been preaching around the country to our American youth. I would love to see those whom God has given me the opportunity to influence at one central location to concentrate on perhaps a final time of dedication and revival before our Lord returns.

- Pastor Pope -

Back to Pastor's Word