

EXTRA! from the Creek

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the Church at Dyers Creek

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This week we're passing along to you
a page from the

CountyCulture Columns

Buglers and Disciples

June 25, 2008

Congress recently passed a law that seemed to fly under the radar screen of the media. The law entitles any deceased American veteran to have two uniformed military personnel present to fold and present the flag – and also to have "Taps" played on the bugle at the end of the service. Who would argue with such an honor? There's just one little problem. There are very few bugle players around these days.

This dearth of brass musicians caused the Congressional mandate to be mitigated: veterans still have the right to "Taps," but now it's allowable to be played on a CD player. And to keep this ceremony looking rather stately, a whole new "instrument" has been invented. This "instrument" looks like a bugle, but instead of brass keys and open airways, it's designed around a CD player. When the "musician" hits the "play" button on this phony bugle, a red and green light comes on. The "musician" then has five seconds to get the "bugle" into his mouth before the recording starts to play. Of course this "bugler" faces away from the mourners so they can't see the flashing lights being displayed inside the bell of the fake instrument. So what does all this say about our culture? Maybe that even when we try to do something sensitive and notable, we're all about appearance – that we quite often substitute style for substance, that we prefer the canned perfection of the fake to the real performance of a fallible, fragile human being.

When Jesus called His disciples, He didn't call them to a course survey or seminar. He called them to active practice. Notice that immediately after Matthew was called, he got up from his everyday life and walked out. And later that day his discipleship training progressed to the "invite everyone you know

and work with to dinner" phase. Has our discipleship gotten anywhere close to that level? Indeed, as Jesus called His disciples, healed those in need, and taught those who listened, He almost always asked for some kind of active response. Matthew – and Simon Peter and Andrew and James and John before him – were all asked to make an active move in order to accept their new status as a disciple. All of them got up. All of them left their established routines. All of them stepped out onto a new road.

Even the Pharisees who quibbled over Jesus' dining companions were asked to actively engage! Jesus gave them His directives and then challenged them to "Go and learn." Practically everyone to whom Jesus offered healing had to take some form of initiative: the hemorrhaging woman boldly reached out and touched Jesus, convinced by her faith that her action would bring her health and salvation and wellness; the little girl – already gone from this life – was touched by Jesus' life-giving hand, but she then struggled to her own feet while gripping that same hand.

The church has become a kind of "Sunday Spa" for the spiritually supine, and that's not right. How did we come to the conclusion that our faith – our discipleship journey – is little more than a weekly sit and soak respite equating to an exercise in pew potatohood? It's time to be real – to do real too! It's time to act! Let's get going!

Sources

Leonard Sweet. "A Call to Action" (June 8, 2008)

The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina (May 26, 2008)

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