

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

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"A NINE INCH CHUNK OF ALUMINUM"

I really like the internet; it is a source of vast information - but it is both true and untrue. Since I deal with the truth in my ministry, I try to check out information I receive. So, when I get e-mails from you (which I deeply appreciate), I try to verify the information as correct. This becomes doubly important when such communications can skitter back and forth across the fruited plain with such lightning fast speed.

For instance:

The Washington Monument stands slightly over five hundred fifty five feet tall in Washington, DC and is capped by a nine inch tall aluminum pyramid (the largest piece ever cast at that time). It was begun July 4, 1848; stopped in 1854 because of the looming Civil War; begun again in 1876; capped by the aluminum pyramid December 6, 1884; then finished inside and opened to the public in 1888.

On one of my many visits to Washington, I saw a rather sad looking photograph of an incomplete monument, only one hundred fifty two feet tall. It was, I understand, surrounded by union troops drilling, cattle grazing, and a slaughterhouse on the grounds.

A rather obscure Congressman named Abraham Lincoln attended the laying of the cornerstone; Tennessean James K. Polk was the eleventh President at the time; one of the members of the second building committee was future twenty-first president, Chester A. Arthur. Every state in the nation had contributed a memorial stone to be incorporated into the walls, which are marble, quarried from Baltimore Maryland for the first one hundred fifty two feet. This is

followed by three feet of marble from Massachusetts; and completed with marble from another quarry in Baltimore.

That aluminum capstone is of particular interest because of its inscription on one of its four sides. The north side has the members of the committee; the west side has all the various dates of construction; the south side has a list of names of architects, engineers, and mechanics.

But; that East Side! Oh yes; that east side of the capstone has only two words: "Laus Deo". I have long forgotten what little Latin I might have learned in Mrs. Asa Wilson's third floor, corner room classes up on "the hill"; but my sources (I told you I like the internet) say those two words say a mouthful: "Praise Be to God"!

The capstone's west side faces the Lincoln Memorial, the south side faces the Jefferson Memorial, the north side faces the White House; and the east side - well, the east side faces the Capitol Building, the various Senate and House Office buildings, the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Court building!

There they are - those two words on the east face of the capstone, five hundred fifty five feet in the air, looking down over the sixty nine square miles of the most powerful capitol city of the most successful nation in the world! There they are up the eight hundred ninety eight steps and fifty landings - looking down from the highest perch possible in the nation's capital - "Laus Deo" - "Praise Be to God".

By the way, when we ran up those steps - yes, you heard me correctly - while we were on our senior class trip (back in the dark ages), we barely stopped to look at all the prayers and Bible verses engraved in the various landings and stones - but they are there too! Tourists take the elevator now; and those prayers and Bible Verses are

quickly zipped by unseen. That capstone is never seen except by workers on the infrequent construction projects.

But, it is there; and God sees it; and He can read Latin - perfectly!

I wonder, however, if He is somehow impressed with our words: "Laus Deo" - "Praise Be to God" when He hears it mixed with all the rhetoric that comes from the occupants of these very buildings that are on the east side of the monument?

You think?

I am indebted to the one who sent me this very interesting e-mail; and to www.glassteelandstone.com for the clarifying and verifying details. Thank you; and "Laus Deo" - "Praise Be to God".

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