

# FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

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## "WHY DO WE DO IT?"

Hi friends,

This is a really busy time of the year, with Palm Sunday, Crucifixion Wednesday, and Easter Sunday and all the peripherals that go with those dates. It is a time on the Christian calendar that evokes wonderful memories; and calls for even deeper challenges to live that Christian life.

West End Baptist started doing "little Easter Dramas" several years ago (I think the first one was about fifty or more years ago). I was privileged to write it; it was called "The Rich Young Ruler" and "starred" Steve Harrison in the title role.

It was clumsy and flimsy; the special effects were really cheesy (the thunder was a piece of rattling roofing tin); but it got the message across; and a trend was started - that of presenting an Easter Drama on this weekend.

The sound track now uses "digital wave files" this year instead of the three miles of recording tape or even multiple cd's as in years past. The lighting controls and sound effects are digital; and we put the rattling roofing tin away several years ago.

Down through the years, several illustrious characters have been called upon to play the various villains we have used: Caiphas, Pontius Pilate, King Herod, Judas Iscariot; and even the prince of darkness. I think of Charlie Brown, Jimmy McNabb, Al Koenig, Joey Maes, Arthur Styles, Ben Stokley, George Hall, Jim Hillard, Charlie Kimberlin, David Henderson, Tim Thompson, Dwayne Huskey, Trey Youngblood, John David Bible, Danny Wester, Bill Ogle, Dale Brown, Bill McMahan,

David Hodge, Nick Ogle, Matthew Bradley; and - oh my, please forgive me, I'm having a senior moment with all these names.

We even brought in my friend, Ross Woody and his choir at Lincoln Avenue Baptist in several cooperative efforts.

So, why do we do it? Why do we write these dramas; and spend three months of Sundays in rehearsal? Why do we assemble a cadre of artisans to cut, paste, saw, hammer, build, paint, sew, design, shape, mold, form, type, hang, bolt, nail, cable, build up and tear down? Why do we disrupt our normal Sunday routines? Why do we underwrite such huge costs?

Why do we do it?

Because; it's Easter; and the Easter Message is vital to get out to everyone - everyway we can. It is the Message of The Risen Savior; and it is important to present.

I guess I got hooked on these dramas when I watched my mom directing the programs at the old Methodist Church downtown. Dad ran the lighting and my two brothers learned their lines. I was only in one of those programs - a little kid with no lines and a cameo appearance. That didn't matter; I wanted to be backstage anyway.

I got more experience working with my brother Bob (The Music Man) in some fair-to-meddling good work he did with the Kiwanis Kapers, Showboat, and the Theater Guild.

Anyway, I soaked it up; and about twenty years later, wrote my first drama; and we were off and running.

We are very serious about this; we are not "playing with the Gospel" as one preacher ignorantly said several years ago. We will present the message clearly

and plainly; and not use "encoded" DaVinci messages from a so-called "best seller" which was the rage of Bible illiterates.

It will be two hours well spent if you will make a special effort to come see it; and bring a friend. The program will thrill and challenge you with the beautiful Easter Message of "He Is Risen".

That's at the West End Baptist Church of Newport with a Matinee' Performance this Sunday at 2:00 (Palm Sunday); followed by three performances on Friday, Saturday, and Easter Sunday Evenings at 7:00 PM. The church is located behind the Cocke Farmers' Coop, next to Food City West.

*(Tom Mooty is Senior Pastor of the West End Baptist Church of Newport; and writes this column for publication in the Wednesday and Weekend Editions Thursdays of the Newport Plain Talk. Contact Mooty with your comments at 623-9056; P.O. Box 851, Newport; or e-mail at [tommooty15@gmail.com](mailto:tommooty15@gmail.com).)*