

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

(Column Number 2233)

"THE SHAKING STEEPLE"

It was a dark and stormy day in Newport; a day I used to dread when I was Operations Engineer at Newport Electric System when I just knew that phone was going to ring off the wall just any second now.

"RINNNNNNNNGGGGGGGGG!"

"Hello", I said as I picked up.

"Is this Tom Mooty?" the caller asked.

"Yes it is", I replied.

My name is (bleep) and you don't know me; but I just need to tell you that the steeple on your church (sic - it's not "my" church - but I knew what that person meant) is really rocking back and forth in the wind".

I thanked the person and looked out the window of my office; and, sure 'nuff; the wind was blowing and the rain was coming in sidewise; and our steeple (the top of which is sixty-five feet high) was really "cutting a rusty" as we used to say around here.

I mean, it was rocking and rolling from front to back and from side to side - big time!

It wasn't but a couple of minutes that my computer started dinging with messages as more and more people were driving on West

End Street or over in Food City's Parking Lot and wanted to inform me how our steeple was acting.

It was - how can I put this - not a purty sight!

So, I did the manly thing! I called on our faithful and extremely competent Maintenance Director - Zan Taylor. There wasn't any need to ask him to "take a look" - I had already "taken a look"; and the verdict was already in - we were seconds away from losing that reeeaaaallllly tall steeple. And, I reasoned, if we lost it, we could also lose a couple (if not more) stained glass windows.

It was - as I have already put this - not too purty good!

I've already wasted so much of your time; I don't have time to tell you how Zan fixed it; but, I need to let you know how much God is still in control. Oh, I realize God could have calmed the storm down; but, had He done so, we would never have gotten advance warning of such impending damage!

Later! Come back next time.

But let me tie it all up in a neat little five minute bundle of words! You see, as Pastor, I saw how that steeple was installed back in '84; how massive the super-structure had to be to provide a foundation for it - special beams and extra long 5/8" bolts anchored to 4x4 cross members up in the attic.

I read the specs on wind loads and other stuff because that steeple is exposed to the westerly winds that roar in here right across the parking lot. I was confident from day one and lost no sleep over it falling.

But, this was day thirteen thousand, eight hundred and seventy-nine and $\frac{1}{2}$ (more or less); and we were fixing to have to yell "Timber" or "Thar she blows" or whatever you yell when the steeple of your church is being blown away!

You see; I just happen to believe (as I said) that God is in control; and when we follow Him, WE WIN! In fact, as the song that Larry Strange sings for us practically every time he takes requests: "If I go or if I stay, I'm a winner either way".

I want to finish this; you'll be amazed at how God led every step of the way!

By the way; are you on God's Side?

Don't know how to get there?

I do; and I will share!

Tom Mooty serves as Senior Pastor to Newport's West End Baptist Church; and writes this column for the Wednesday and Weekend Editions of "The Newport Plain Talk". Address all comments to Mooty at P.O. Box 851 in Newport or to tommooty15@gmail.com.