

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

"I AIN'T CLEAN INSIDE"

A young lady responded to an invitation one Sunday; and told me: "I ain't clean inside".

Hey; I knew what she meant; even though the grammar was bad; and it was a joy to be able to help her find the victory that had been hers all along. Today, she works in her church; and is being greatly used in all phases of religious work. She is "clean inside" now; and God is using her.

I read about a couple standing in the lobby of a hotel. The husband excused himself for a moment; and when he returned, his wife was conversing with an elderly man. When the man walked away after a few moments, the man approached his wife, who was noticeably distressed.

"What did he say to you?" he demanded.

"He asked me if I had been born again", she replied.

"Did you tell him that we are decent, respectable people", he asked.

"He didn't ask me that. He asked if I was born again".

"Why didn't you tell him we attend church regularly?"

"He didn't ask me that. He asked if I was born again.

"Why didn't you tell him it was none of his business?"

She replied, "If you could have seen the earnestness in his face and concern in his eyes; you would have known that it IS his business!"

Seeing people born into the Family of God IS Jesus' business!

Seeing people come back into full fellowship with God IS His Business!

Jesus Himself confronted Nicodemus with the very same issue.

Most of the people who followed Jesus were common people; but Nicodemus was a "top dog" aristocrat, a "big wig" bureaucrat in Jerusalem; a "ruler" of the Jews, a Member of the Supreme Court of Israel - and here we are, you and I, listening in on a private conversation between him and Jesus Christ!

He was sincere, serious, solemn, somber, and sober; and Jesus dealt with him thoughtfully, respectfully, and patiently. The Lord Jesus had no time to waste on someone who was frivolous or insincere; but He could clearly see that Nicodemus meant business.

He quickly cut to the chase and told this man (who held the equivalent to our PHD), "You must be born again".

I once heard a preacher say, "I am not always right; but I try to be sincere". In fact, there's an old expression that says: "It doesn't

matter whether you are right or wrong, as long as you are sincere".

Well, Duh! Nicodemus was sincere. The couple in the hotel was sincere. That young lady was sincere - but all of them were wrong - sincerely wrong!

As a religious leader, a Pharisee; Nicodemus' moral life was above reproach. He was very careful to observe even the most minute detail of the moral law. Jesus did not say, "Clean up your act", because Nicodemus had a clean act!

"Big Nick" had a clean, moral record. But Jesus shot the wheels out from under his little red wagon when He said, "Morality and decency are great - but they are not enough to reach heaven! You must be born again".

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Tom Mooty serves Newport's West End Baptist Church as its Senior Pastor; and he is not really sure what a "Senior Pastor" is; but he is one! He is in his third term as Pastor and is entering his thirty-fifth cumulative year at this church and his fifty-seventh year in the Ministry. This Column was began in 1970. Contact Mooty with questions or comments.