

Have a Cigar

Last Wednesday as I worked in the office, a lady walked in with bright orange flyers offering them with a smile and firm handshake. She began her pitch with directed eyes of a strong and sincere saleslady. As she quickly handed me the action-compelling advertisement I looked honestly, hopefully, at the promised offering. It read:

“Medina Cigar Opening” –
Purchase 3 cigars and receive a free Roxor Cigar.
Purchase a box and receive a free Perdoma travel humidor.

Besides the fact that I did not have a clue of what a Roxor Cigar or Perdoma travel humidor, I tried to look educated having an inside smirk. “You can visit our website at www... and make sure you come by and enjoy the store and a cigar”, she continued.

To which I responded, “Well we are kind of in the opposite direction of purpose as we are a church and counseling ministry for those desiring to shed habits they feel are controlling them”. She quickly recovered with, “That is ok, you can come to the store and just enjoy the talk, fun, and maybe have... we are getting our liquor license and... (her tanned face is getting sun-burnt) Well, I think you could enjoy it”. I smiled knowing she felt like, “How in the world did I miss the 4 ft. sign on the window? How do I get out of here?” Not wanting her to be in cardiac arrest, I started asking sincerely about her business and life.

Short story... her husband and her, both policemen in Cleveland for over 10 years were beginning this endeavor. She was an undercover cop for drug deals, prostitution, gambling..., which I think may have been easier at this time than talking to a pastor about buying smoke and spirits. On the side, I am not discussing whether smoking and drinking is ungodly or an acceptable action. That’s beyond this.

She changed the topic to religion, a safer place for her, she thought. “I was, ahem... am a Catholic”. “What do you believe, she queried” I tried not to enjoy her moving to another topic only to realize another uncomfortable discussion (for her) is forecasted. I began to present the gospel through the difference in doctrine and practice of the two beliefs. “Do you go to Mass and do you give the communion every week”, she stumbled seeking to be informed. I love this whole communication. Literal and symbolic, works and faith, confess sin to a man or God, prayer and the Bible, priest and pastor, all were being patiently placed in the proverbial pot.

I sensed the continual prodding of the Spirit to graciously present God as the only Truth, Christ as the only Mediator, and the Spirit as the only Assurance. It really started to be comfortable, at last. God has a providential way of providing prodding that will produce promising possibilities, alliteration intended.

As I spoke I realized that we lived in very different worlds, apart, as God predicted in Christ. We are to be in the world but not of the world. God brings bridges to bear His gospel to an otherwise unusual encounter. I am prone to speculate that God laughs. I have felt this for years. This was fodder for laughter the whole day. But in back-thought, I needed to see my part in His plan. God had planned from the beginning of time, week, and day that she would come to the office and hear about pure salvation. What an encouragement for witness.

Every time this occurs I know God has designed it. They walk in, or God directs them to me. Fun-living. But it is true for you also. Today God brought someone or something to you which He wanted in His plan of presentation pleasures. The act may be interesting, like mine, or mundane but it is invested in you.

Well, I will probably travel by and visit the new endeavor of smokes and spirits. She had mentioned that she and her husband may visit The Fountain... I guess a soul washing needed, hopefully.

*So have a cigar, proverbially speaking. Look for the unusual smokes or spirits
that will grant you entrance to the hearts most needy.
And don't be surprised of the store or salesperson. God loves laughter.*