

Fun Faith

"Have fun in the Lord always, and again I say, "have fun." Guess what. This is the current "politically" correct American Christian's stance on this subject – ask no questions. Seriously. I do not agree with it. In fact, I'm troubled by it.

Ever since Betty and I moved permanently from Europe back to the States in 1993, I noticed a subtle carefree trend among fellow believers (in personal and church life) toward what I call *Fun Faith*.

This "Other Gospel" (?) has permeated our families and churches. And how many realize what is happening? Some pastors and Christian workers defend, justify and promote this nonbiblical concept. In some churches, fun has displaced the Holy Spirit. *Fun Faith* thrives in an environment of relative peace, prosperity, comfort and freedom. A fun-filled philosophy of Faith is hard to conceive, much less develop, in countries where conditions – political, economic and social – are harsh.

So, I ask: Is the Good Life good for good Christians? Can we handle it suitably as good stewards of God?

I believe in a balanced life. I know the worth of a "merry heart." I, too, like to have fun. I love humor. My Maker has a sense of humor. I have been accused of having a sense of humor. The dry kind. Even in the pulpit. Even in a Kiev pulpit. Even in a Moscow pulpit. However, I think we've gone far too far with fun in matters of faith. We've even discovered there's fun in **funerals**! In the past four decades, the laughter quotient at funerals has gone from occasional to hilarious. Isn't that funny?

Fun Faith is when everything in a Christian's life and ministry must be tethered to some sort of fun. But Christ's Church should be known for its prayer power and for the convicting, transforming work of the Holy Spirit – not for its fun ministries.

Financial, political and moral corruption is epidemic. One billion people are physically starving. The majority of souls are spiritually dead. *And we insist on having fun!*

Jesus never talked about the Calvary Road as being fun. He himself is called "a man of sorrows," not the man of a lot of laughs.

There is a time for everything... "a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Eccl. 3:1,4). In times like these, I personally find it easier to weep than to laugh, to mourn than to dance. Jesus said that when he would ascend from earth, his disciples would *fast* rather than *feast*. True Christianity is far from fun. Living for fun is inconsistent with the biblical Christian profile, characterized by self-denial, self-sacrifice, transitoriness, urgency, otherworldliness and the abiding joy of the Lord.

Anyway, I'm pleased to know I'm not alone in believing that America may very well experience hard times such as we've never known, including the possibility of a catastrophic and irreversible economic collapse, punctuated by persecution and awash with anarchy. A pleasure-loving church would be ill-prepared for such calamitous conditions. The worse part of it all would be the many spiritual casualties. "... when the Son of Man comes, will he find [true] faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). ◇◇◇