

HOOK'S POINTS

◊◊ Are we to pity the people who, through the centuries, drank water when they were thirsty as the Creator seems to have intended, having no expert doctors and dietitians to tell them how much water they should drink?

◊◊ This "Hook's Points" column is new for many of you. It has been a year since I published such potpourri. Let me welcome you who have subscribed more recently. There is no counter to indicate how many of you receive this. I am notified of new additions, but not by name, and the list is growing constantly. I am in awe that you would read my stuff. Your responses encourage me.

Much of this potpourri is light or "tongue in cheek" and some strays away from my usual doctrinal essays as I express opinions about other matters affecting us. It is sorta like a visit with you in which I do all the talking! Welcome.

You newer subscribers have missed many of my older essays, so I have been revising and republishing some of them.

◊◊ Once a woman in the congregation suggested that it would be good to put the schedule of services in the weekly bulletin that I published. I agreed, not wanting to embarrass her – for the schedule appeared on the front page of every issue! I am amused often by those who email me requesting that I change their addresses on my mailout list since instructions for it are in every issue. It is interesting that we tend to overlook things we see regularly. In our mental rut we tend to blank out the usual and see only what has changed. It is hard for us to see ourselves as we really are. And we become blinded to the inconsistencies in our traditional doctrine and constant practice in our congregations.

◊◊ Recently, I noticed a man chewing gum while partaking of the Lord's Supper. Was he adding an "unauthorized" element to the ritual?

◊◊ There's been a big outcry lately about governmental "wire-tapping," the monitoring of telephone messages from overseas. "Violating our Constitution," destroying our Bill of Rights," "invading our privacy," and "dictatorship!" we are hearing. Horrors!

Really? For generations the postal service has been authorized to open and read your mail. Until recently, all mail from the soldiers in combat was read and censored lest they revealed where their units were or other strategic information. (Now the media reveal it for them – with footage!) Mail of US citizens in prison has always been censored. Yet, I have heard no one screaming bloody murder about those invasions of privacy. The only difference is that one is written and the other is oral – well, one also is inflamed by partisan politics and the other is not!

Do you really think it makes sense to give criminals and enemies an advantage in avoiding being caught? If the Feds want to listen in on my phone conversations along with reading my mail, this is their invitation. I am doing nothing illegal or unethical which I want concealed, and I don't want to give criminals the advantage. Assignment of a stranger to listen in on my phone conversations would be the most boring job to be contrived. The only power the

Feds have is what we give them so, if they become oppressive, we can stop that by the ballot box in our glorious democracy.

◇◇ If Eve was made from Adam's rib, would they not have had the same DNA? How were all the variations introduced? Were there fence jumpers?

◇◇ The pope's remarks about those non-violent Muslims led them to show the world how non-violent they are by their peaceful demonstrations! Some of us had already gotten the hint as to how non-violent they are toward the Western world they terrorize and among their warring factions destroying each other. Peaceful people! ☹ They make peace by violence!

The Muslim claims for being a peaceful religion would be believable if each of their authoritative leaders publicly denounced all violence and exposed and punished all the terrorists and factional leaders among them.

They sorta remind me of a certain Christian unity movement. While claiming unity and calling for unity, they create divisions. They have splintered into competing, rejecting, sectarian groups as if division was the goal. Many of them reject anyone who tries to re-unite them. I'll let you guess who they are!

◇◇ Are you among the growing number turning to "natural" foods? Beware: Most people die of "natural" causes!

◇◇ This is a critical time in our nation. Two opposing world cultures are being agitated. A new kind of war is being waged by those of the Muslim religion intent on the destruction of the Western culture of us "infidels." The enemy is insidious, treacherous, and heartless in destroying women, children, and innocent citizens. They hide behind their own women and children and in their mosques knowing that we are too ethical to attack them there. They use our own media and freedoms against us. The war may be long-lasting and cost countless lives. We need to stop yelling at and accusing each other with political bias and start prayerfully working together. Pray for those leaders who profess faith and request your prayers that they have wisdom and courage to stand for right, and for God to over-rule the faithless and selfish who oppose.

◇◇ Thanks for staying with me through all the emailed "GRIT IN MY GIZZARD" issues. Give us a few more weeks to get the book ready.

◇◇ *"If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask God, who gives to all men generously"* (James 1:5). If you ask for wisdom, how do you know when your prayer is answered? Do you ask your wife, mother-in-law, or preacher? Or do you just feel it? If you feel it, what does wisdom feel like? If it is given by God, then should it not apply to all persons, like the writings of Peter and Paul?

◇◇ Preacher, are you paid by the week, picking up your check each Sunday? If so, you may be in for a shock on December 31. This year will have 53 Sundays. You will already have received your total annual pay on the 24th! That jolted me and played havoc with my budget after Christmas several years ago.

◊◊◊ In the earlier times of successful organ transplants, someone wrote that a strange reaction was being seen. Many of those who received those life-saving implants developed resentment toward the donors. How could that be? Only pride could foster such a reaction. Proud people do not want to give credit to anyone else for their well-being or success. Having to say “Thank you” and express continual gratitude is too humiliating.

Who else might fit that category? Indulged children?

Has our country ever rescued or helped other countries who came to resent us? Surely, that couldn't happen! And what of all the rich and famous citizens who gain their wealth and fame from benefits of our great country and then are so proud, ungrateful, and arrogant as to bad-mouth their country before the whole world? Shame! Shame!

◊◊◊ Unmitigated gall! That's an expression that continues to come into my mind as our media treats us to the bellowing and braying of Hugo Chavez. The boasted goal of the Venezuelan dictator is to bring the US government down. The government of this arrogant man owns Citgo Petroleum, sold at 7-Eleven stores operated by Southland Corporation and making \$32 billion in 2004. To its credit, however, 7-Eleven has just now terminated its contract to sell Citgo products. His country also sells us 1.5 million barrels of oil daily! This man has the gall to even come to our country and mock us while we enable it by buying his products. That says something about us also, and it is not complimentary.

How could he dare to come here and mock us and our President? Maybe our media and the likes of Cindy Sheehan and Harry Belafonte had led him to believe he would be expressing popular sentiment. The saddest part yet is that he received approval from some of our own people.

Venezuela and the Middle East countries have us over a barrel of our own making. Our oil production has been choked by environmentalists so that we are perilously dependent on imported petroleum and the favor of its producers. Our President has wanted to help remedy this by drilling in our great reserves in Alaska. Which is preferable, preserving the caribou for wolves and polar bears, as though drilling would harm them, or aiding the citizens of our nation?

◊◊◊ During the month of September, our web site <www.freedomring.org> received a total of 130,092 hits for a daily average of 4,336. We are a sort of cyberspace congregation sharing at a common table. May all be served and blessed.

My home town of Rochester, Texas is celebrating its 100th birthday October 13-14. I may be foolhardy, but I am planning to drive up there alone. My crowd will be scarce at best. Maybe I will see a few I can remember and many memories will be revived. []

(Cecil Hook: October 2006)