

The Wild Man

Members of the First United Methodist Church of DeLeon's "Wild at Heart" Study Group.

Next Meeting March 4

- Assembling playground equipment postponed, pending additional information
- Hike and Ropes Course may be on the horizon

Highlights

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Third Meeting

For our third meeting, the Wild at Heart Group relocated to the DeLeon High School Fieldhouse, working on the theory that there could be nothing more "manly" than the smell of old jockstraps.

As usual, we began to gather about 6 p.m., with Bobby supplying a grill and Greg providing a football (it just doesn't seem right to be at the fieldhouse without a football). As members

arrived, the football flew back and forth and "grillmeister" Mike began to work magic with sausages and tortillas supplied by Bodie.

Conversation flew back and forth, and despite the loss of at least one tortilla to the flames, everyone enjoyed the meal. Moving inside, the members took advantage of the athletic department's television and DVD player to watch a few film clips as we

began our discussion of Chapter Two, "The Wild One Whose Image We Bear."

We also briefly touched on how to make men more comfortable with prayer in public, and upcoming projects and possibilities.

Officially, we decided to meet next week (March 4) – to avoid a three-week hiatus around Spring Break, and to return to the Fieldhouse for that meeting.

Good Men

Everyone's cooperation with the meetings has been great! We've managed to have food, entertainment and activities, and no one's been overloaded. It's also made it very easy to facilitate the lessons, and provides us with something to do, rather than wait around to be entertained. By the way, in the hurry at the last meeting, I missed who's planning on bringing food next time. If you would, send me a reminder, just so I won't overload someone else.



Food – For some reason, the food is a very important part of our fellowship and meetings. If you get "tagged" to provide food, remember that the group's tastes are simple – anything above "cripple it and run it by" will work just fine, thank you very much!!

Jesus – “A Really Nice Guy?”

“How would telling people to be nice to one another get a man crucified? What government would execute Mister Rogers or Captain Kangaroo?”
--Philip Yancey

A major part of our discussion in this meeting was about the character of Jesus.

When we recalled the images of Jesus we’ve grown up with, mostly we remember the image of a bearded, long-haired “really nice guy,” often holding a lamb.

But there’s another part of Jesus that doesn’t get as much press.

He inspired men to follow

him, risking imprisonment and death. Hundreds listened to him and had their lives changed.

His words echo down through the ages.

And He wasn’t always nice.

“Now,” Eldredge asks, “is Jesus more like Mother Teresa or William Wallace? The answer is . . . it depends. If you’re a leper, an outcast, a pariah of society whom no one

has ever touched, if all you have ever longed for is just one kind word, then Christ is the incarnation of tender mercy. On the other hand, if you’re a Pharisee, one of those self-appointed doctrine police . . . watch out. On more than one occasion Jesus “picks a fight” with those notorious hypocrites.”

God has a battle to fight, and the battle is for our freedom.

“I’m going to pick a fight . . .”

Eldredge compares Jesus to William Wallace at the Battle of Stirling.

After centuries of domination by the English, the Scots have risen to fight. The Scottish nobles, however, are willing to compromise.

Outnumbered and starving, feeling betrayed by their nobles, the Scots begin to leave the battlefield when Wallace arrives and calls them to stand as men.

Wallace: Sons of Scotland, I am William Wallace.

From the crowd: William Wallace is seven feet tall.

Wallace: Yes, I’ve heard. Kills men by the hundreds, and if he were here he’d consume the English with fireballs from his eyes and

bolts of lightning from his arse.

I AM William Wallace!

And I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny.

You have come to fight as free men, and free men you are. What would you do without freedom? Will you fight?

From the crowd: Fight? Against that? No, we will run; and we will live.

Wallace: Aye, fight and you may die. Run and you’ll live -- at least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they’ll



never take... our freedom!

Wallace’s Friend: Fine speech. Now what do we do?

Wallace: Just be yourselves.

Wallace’s Friend: Where are you going?

Wallace: I’m going to pick a fight.

On more than one occasion, Eldredge says, Jesus “Picks a fight” with the religious leaders of his day.

The Pharisees are like the Scottish nobles – they, too, load heavy burdens on the backs of God’s people but do not lift a finger to help them.

When he heals the

woman on the Sabbath, the leaders are incensed, because he is performing “work” on the Sabbath.

“Does he tiptoe around the issue, so as not to ‘rock the boat?’” Eldredge asks. “Does he drop the subject in order to ‘preserve church unity?’”

“Nope,” he says. “He walks right into it, he baits them, he picks a fight.”

“Christ draws the enemy out, exposes him for what he is, and shames him in front of everyone.”

Into the valley of the shadow of death

We also watched a clip from another Mel Gibson movie, *We Were Soldiers*.

Cliff asked that we hear the words as if the Hal Moore character was speaking of Christian community, instead of the Seventh Cavalry about to ship out for Vietnam.

Speaking to his men, Gibson as Moore says,

"Look around you. In the 7th Cavalry, we got a Captain from the Ukraine. Another from Puerto Rico. We've got Japanese, Chinese, Blacks, Hispanics, Cherokee Indians, Jews and Gentiles -- all Americans. Now here in the States, some men in

this Unit may experience discrimination because of race or creed. But for you and me now, all that is gone. We're moving into the 'valley of the shadow of death' -- where you will watch the back of the man next to you, as he will watch yours. And you won't care what color he is or by what name he calls God.

"They say we're leavin' home. We're goin' to what home was always supposed to be. So let us understand the situation. We are goin' into battle against a tough and determined enemy. I can't promise you that I will bring you all home alive. But this I

swear before you and before Almighty God: That when we go into battle, I will be the first to set foot on the field, and I will be the last to step off. And I will leave no one behind.

"Dead or alive, we will all come home together.

"So help me God."

"That's what we're about in this group," Cliff said. "We are varied, and we are going into battle against a tough and determined enemy.

"And we will watch each other's back, and take care of each other.



Gibson as Hal Moore

Men and public prayer

We also watched a clip on prayer by Dave Murrow, author of the book "Why Men Hate Going to Church."

"Men are hesitant to bring prayer concerns to a group," Murrow said.

"They tend to go off alone and try to solve the problem themselves."

In addition, Murrow said, men equate space with safety -- gathering around and laying on hands may violate that need for space, while restricting movement.

In a group prayer situation, Murrow

advocates a rough semi-circle, with each pray-er simply touching the pray-ee as he is moved to, or not.

Long prayers also tend to be a problem for most men.

"Men appreciate brief prayers that get right to the point," Murrow said.

"The model prayer prayed by Jesus can be prayed comfortably in 30 seconds."

And the prayer need not be in what Murrow calls "Christianese -- King James English, or using many repetitions of the

Lord's name and plenty of "justs" thrown in.

"Men want to pray," he says, "They just want to talk to God like a normal person."

In an attempt to "try out" Murrow's theory, Cliff asked that we pray the meeting out in a new format.

Rather than calling on one person, he used a format from his backpacking trips with the Scouts, where each person recounted "Thorns and Roses."

"On the trips," he said, "we use it to call attention to good things that we might

otherwise miss, or to get problem out and dealt with before you kill the person you're sharing a tent with for 10 days."

"What I want us to do here," he said, "is do 'Thorns and Roses' to God -- with the Rose being something you're thankful for and the Thorn being something you're concerned about, or need some support for."