

When 'Dare to be different' becomes more



steve rains

• moments from calvary

The elevator ride seems like it was just yesterday. It was the fall semester of 1989 at the University of Wyoming. The elevator was packed with students headed towards class in the infamous White Hall. I boarded on this normal day from the 6th floor. Made my way onto the floating closet and began the decent down. Normal conversations were taking place amongst our fellow White Hallers. I was in the early morning zone. Thinking about the day ahead of me, wondering what was going to be the discussion in the morning Sociology class. As I stood there listening to the hypnotic soundings of the each floor passing by, suddenly someone spoke out, "Dare to be Different" what is that about? I hadn't really even realized what I had thrown on that morning as I headed to class. I am sure it wasn't ironed, but it was clean! With that statement suddenly I knew it was my shirt they were quoting. Suddenly silence took over that elevator ride as all eyes and ears were resting upon me now. I knew what was on the front of my shirt. I knew what I wanted to live for. I knew that I had a captive audience. You don't hear too many reports of people bailing out of elevators and living to tell about it!

With growing tension and wonder I slowly turned around and faced my fellow dorm mates. On the front of this walking billboard t-shirt (that

was me) was the theme of a summer camp that my church sponsored back in Colorado. It simply read, "Sold Out To Christ." Silence invaded that elevator that day. No sooner I had turned around to face my peers and allow them time to read my t-shirt then the doors opened to spew us out to head to the lecture halls of higher education. I love the quote from St. Francis of Assisi's, "Go out and preach the gospel and if you must, use words."

Years ago there were some students who dared to be different. Their experience was a little bit more intense than my elevator ride and t-shirt story. I know this, in order to make a difference, one has to be different. I always find it kind of humorous when I ask a person why they dress the way they do, or how come they have their hair dyed so many colors. The response usually makes me smile. It is usually something like this, "I am just being me. I want to be different." Then I look around and see their friends that look just like them. I think "different?"

I am not talking about being dif-

ferent in style or clothing or likes. I am talking different to make a difference. Three young Hebrew men in Babylon made a difference by being different. They were the only ones in Babylon who refused to bow down before a ninety-foot tall image. As a result, they were thrown into a furnace of fire from which God miraculously delivered them. The difference they made by being different was that the king offered praise to "the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego" (Daniel 3:28) and established a nationwide ordinance against defiling their God. They were the ones who refused to eat what everyone

else was eating because it went against the truths that were instilled in them before they were made to go to Babylon, and came out healthier than those who ate from the king's table (Daniel 1).

It is amazing to me that you don't find those individuals in Daniel asking God to get them out of their circumstances, instead you find them daring to go through there circumstances! I like what author Mark Batterson in his book "In the pit with a lion on a snowy day" writes, "Most of us blame our circumstances when things aren't going well just like we blame the ref when a game isn't going well. We look for external scapegoat. But maybe our problem isn't our circumstances. Maybe our problem is our perspective." Something to think about right? With the

grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, I dare you to be different! To live differently, to respond differently, and to go against the grain of mediocrity and passivity that can be so prevalent in our lives if we aren't careful.

Have a great weekend, and we

will be chatting with you next Friday.

Steve Rains is the pastor at the Calvary Gospel Church, Fourth and College. Go to the church's web site at calvarygospel.net or e-mail Rains at calvarycolumn@st-tel.net.

Vietnam Moving Wall coming to Hoxie in June

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica, known as the Moving Wall, will be in Hoxie from Thursday to Monday, June 12 to 16.

Built in 1990, the replica tours the country from April through November each year, visiting 15 to 20 cities.

The Hoxie Chamber of Commerce and Sheridan County Economic Development have arranged for a five-day display of the 240-foot-long, 8-foot-high replica. Like the original Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, it features all of the more than 58,000 names of U.S.

soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses killed or missing in action in the Vietnam War.

Opening ceremonies will be at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 12, with Angela Matthews, a contributor to Laura Pallmer's "Shrapnel in the Heart," speaking. Organizers plan an afternoon tea from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Friday, June 13, at the Sheridan County Library and a barbecue from 6 to 8 p.m. that night at the 4-H building in Hoxie, followed by a "retirement of the flags" ceremony at 9 p.m.

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