

January 21, 2011



Dear Friends

The Barmy Army have been in full chorus! Whatever you think about Cricket, one must concede a smile for their un-choreographed charade. Choreography? Now there's an idea.

During the fifteen years I was incarcerated in Adventist Schools, worship with singing at seven, morning and evening seven days a week, was the order. On reflection, I don't recall ever questioning why I should sing, nor do I recall ever getting 'the humph' about who led the singing. Some used charisma, some exploited musical dynamic, some had power of voice, some were comic, some had confidence others lacked it - but we sang. Since then, there has been a trend toward populist praise groups clutching their precious microphones, though I am not sure that we are the better for it.

Though this is the trivial observation of a man becoming increasingly grumpy, the principle extends to other theatres. I note that we are becoming reliant on the choreography of committee leadership and the wisdom of investigatory panels to solve problems. Indeed, I am frustrated by the lack of resolution in a series of episodes designed to reconcile grumpy old men. Consider the following blog:

"In my consulting work, I find the entities that have the hardest time making sorely needed changes are religious entities. I have concluded it is because most of what they do is somehow, in their minds, rooted in what they believe is divine direction. Ergo, how can you change? Posted by: Ed Reifsnyder

Ed, you are so right. When I first became a court appointed mediator, I was warned along with the rest of the class to avoid, if at all possible, mediating any church dispute. Christians are so set in concrete, they will very seldom compromise. Posted by: renie longfellow "

In truth, reconciliation like singing, really is a voluntary expression. It comes about when the choristers, all voices, in humility choose to chorus their confession. Peace, hope and joy may be emotional conditions, but they come about by personal election.

As it happens, January 21 is the birthday of a certain Alfred H Ackley, who penned the words often sung in those seventh hour vigils: "There are many troubles that will burst like bubbles"...."you can smile...", words that could have been written by a secular jingoist, were composed by a Christian Pastor who when asked by a grumpy attendant "Why should I worship a dead Jew?", wrote the melody "I serve a risen Saviour"

Australian cricketers may well be drowning their sorrows, but their public are demonstrating covenant resilience against the tide of devastating floods. By contrast, we Poms may gyrate to a sprinkler dance and whinge about.....true there are difficulties..... but what? Perspective is a choice!

Each new year we tend to overplay our resolutions, though each new day, we have the choice to cheer and to cherish. Thank you for your continued resolve to bring fresh perspective to perplexed people.

Cheers