

An Imperfect Saint!

by Dr. R. B. Ouellette

Taken from his works on "For What It's Worth"



Dr. R. B. Ouellette

When I was in college, a man came to preach in chapel who had a ministry reaching Roman Catholic priests and nuns. I do not remember the text or the topic of his sermon. But I'll never forget a story he told. He was driving his car, which sported a bumper sticker reading "Jesus Never Fails." His driving caught the attention of an officer of the law and he was pulled over. In a good-natured way, the officer, when he approached the driver's window, said, "Well I see your bumper sticker isn't true." The driver, with equal good nature, said, "Would you double-check and make sure you read it correctly?" The officer went to the back of the car, re-read the bumper sticker, came back, and responded, "It says, 'Jesus Never Fails.'" The driver held out his hand to the officer and said, "I'm Alex Dunlap; an imperfect saint."

Much of the criticism of independent, fundamental Baptists centers on the behavior of men who have been prominent independent, fundamental Baptists. Of course, some of this criticism is valid. Allow me, for the record, to state the obvious:

□ Adultery is wrong. In my opinion, a pastor who commits adultery forfeits his right to be a pastor. He certainly should not be sent to another church which is unaware of his failure.

□ Our preaching should be Biblical. ("If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." – I Peter 4:11)

□ God commands us to be kind and gracious (Ephesians 4:32)

□ Child-molesters belong in jail. Long before Michigan law required pastors to report child abusers, I called the State Police and told them about a man who had molested his young son. When the mother and son came to me, I urged them to go directly to the police. When they did not, I informed them that I would call the police myself. The man, appropriately, was sentenced to jail.

But may I state something which should be equally obvious? Most preachers I know have always believed – and practiced – what I have just stated. It seems to me that some disillusioned men have judged a position on the basis of a few people who held it. The "logic" goes like this:

"Person A" is an independent Baptist.

"Person A" has obvious and serious faults.

Therefore, the independent Baptist position has obvious and serious flaws. But no position should be judged merely by the people who hold to it.

□ Some pro-life advocates murder doctors who commit abortions. But I'm still pro-life.

□ Some who support traditional marriage are harsh and unkind in their treatment of gays. But I still favor traditional marriage.

□ Some who support lower taxes advocate armed rebellion against the government. But I still believe in lower taxes.

□ Some hunters are profane beer-drinkers. But I still like to hunt.

□ Some sports fans are rude and obnoxious. But I still like to watch a ballgame once in a while. I even buy a ticket to go see the Tigers play at Comerica Park every couple of years.

□ Some bald men are racist skinheads. But I (lacking any desirable options) am still bald.

Any movement or position must be judged by the Word of God. We must look at the facts, not the followers. We must make our decisions on the basis of principle, not on the basis of personalities. We must be guided by the Bible, not by the behavior of the few.

I'm R. B. Ouellette. - An imperfect saint!