

Shooting Snakes – By Lonnie Jones

I spoke recently at a place and told a story where someone referred to me as "Reverend". The circumstances weren't such that I needed to correct that and it really wasn't the point of the story. After the seminar a brother came up to me and wanted to discuss how and why I handled or didn't handle the use of "reverend"...after a forty five minute lesson on an entirely different topic this brother heard was one HIS knee jerk reaction phrases. He didn't listen to anything else. He only focused on that one phrase. (By the way the guy who called me "reverend" ten years ago is a good friend of mine now and we have many regular deep spiritual discussions. He no longer refers to me or any minister as a "Reverend"...but it wasn't the first thing he needed to be taught). In another instance I read from the Word the phrase "grieve the spirit" (not my words but a quote from the Word. Another brother, who is so afraid that someone might still think charismatic gifts still exists, missed the point of that lesson because he was stewing on that phrase. He waited until the lecture was over to take me to task on it. Maybe the point here is that I should use phrases differently. I really don't think so. It's like a story I heard. Several guys were out in a boat. They were fishing. One thought he saw a snake. They moved the boat and sure enough there was a snake in a tree on the shore. They killed it with a boat paddle. Later someone else thought they saw another snake swimming in the water. They chased it down and tried to kill it with the paddle. Soon they abandoned fishing and spent the rest of the day hunting snakes...of which they found none. It often so easy to stop fishing and start hunting snakes. You don't have to be very courageous to catch a fish; but it is pretty exciting to kill a snake. I think it's important to note here that they snake killers never told whether the snakes were poisonous or not. But killing snakes- even just hunting snakes is feels more productive than fishing when the fish aren't biting. God has called us to be fishermen not snake hunters. If you are catching fish and a snake tries to steal your fish or crawl into your boat you need to deal with it. Once you leave fishing for snake hunting you forget what your purpose is. Once you leave fishing for snake hunting you waste a lot of time. Many churches have traded in fishing for

snake hunting. It allows them to look busy and even make a lot of noise. But in the end it is not very productive. In fact, after a while, after they have beaten the surface of the water with a paddle in an attempt to kill the snakes the fish won't bite even if they start trying to fish again. Snake hunting seems to scare the fish away.

Lonnie Jones

Smores – By Lonnie Jones

They've been in my dreams. I've woken up thinking about them. I have odd times when they just pop into my mind. SMORES. If I ever take a group of people hostage try Smores and Mayfield chocolate milk before you send in the SWAT Team-- I think we can work something out. While camping in North Carolina-- Yeah that's where I've been and why there has been no updates on articles. While I was there I had a unique experience. I want you to understand that by admitting this people will wonder where I've been. (And I don't just mean North Carolina) I've had graham crackers before. I like them. I have had marshmallows before and I sort of like them. I have had truckloads of chocolate and I love it. Yet with all my travels and all my experiences and all my "adventures" I had never ever eaten graham crackers, marsh mallows and chocolate at the same time. If you combine them using the heat of a campfire they are not called graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows. When they are combined and heated they are called Smores. I don't know why they are called Smores unless it is because while eating them it is impossible to ask for more without saying "Mey, I mant smore of mis." Other than that I do not have any idea.

Okay so I admit that I've been calorically sheltered. The point is that alone graham crackers are just graham crackers. Marshmallows alone are just marshmallows and chocolate alone is well chocolate. But when those three ingredients are combined and heated and "eaten" they transform into a wonderful treat. Maybe that's the magic of cooking or the secret of chemistry. It's the process of combining the right elements at the right time that makes them greater than the sum of their parts. I don't want to trivialize important spiritual concepts by comparing them to smores; but smores made me rethink what I thought about unity. Unity. The theme is in the scriptures: Unity of faith, unity of believers, Pauline Head/Body Theology. I've always thought of unity in terms of people come together and we don't fight. We are tolerant. We get along. Of course I've thrown around the term of synergy and cohesion and bonding but maybe only with lip service. The unity that Paul talks about and that Jesus prays about is the "smores" kind of unity. It's not where we bring three

ingredients together and they don't clash but we bring the ingredients together and they blend, harmonize and become something different, new, unique and special. You get all the individual parts plus the bonus of combining them. It is the blending, the melding, the combining that causes the dramatic change. Smores are smores not because of what they do but because of what they become when the pieces are put together. The body of Christ is not just an organization but an organism. It's not just people but people and God and Christ and the Spirit. Then we have spiritual people. Remember when Jesus told the disciples the mark of being his was relational? They will know you are mine because of your love. That's the combination of synergistic unity. Attitude and not just action. True fellowship and not mere association. Harmony as opposed to just coexistence. See Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12. This is not about individual ingredients on the same shelf. It's about the ingredients leaving the individual boxes and wrappers and being heated and joined to become something brand new. A combination that exceeds the sum of the individual parts.