

THE “CORE” WILL TELL THE STORY

by Carl McMurray

I have a friend who built himself a beautiful home on the side of a hill. During one stay with him, I stood at his kitchen window and watched several mule deer amble through his yard. The house is spacious and the view is gorgeous, but there is one problem. A short while after moving into his new house, one corner of the structure began to sink. Now I don't mean the house began to settle, I mean it sank! The basement slab cracked wide-open and he was faced with some stiff repair costs in jacking and filling to save his house. If you ask him, he will laugh (yes, he's at that point now) and tell you that he should have taken core samples. Drilling for a core sample would have told him that the previous owner of the lot had dumped a lot of fill there and covered it with topsoil. You can't tell what's under the surface of a piece of property unless you check the “core.”

Churches can be a lot like my friend's building lot. The surface can be healthy looking with good soil and plants and a view that promises great things for the future. A church may seem friendly and her members talented, giving us a great promise of potential service to God. But, in both cases, the truth can only be known by getting a look at the “core.” It is a core sample that will tell if the foundation for a lot or congregation is bedrock or loose fill. It is the “core” that will actually tell the story of whether a lot or church will be useful as time goes by.

“Core” people are not spectators in a congregation—they are participants. They do not attend to watch a worship service; they work and plan during the week to make the service honorable to God and edifying to others. They volunteer, pitch in, show up, give, serve, encourage, hold up, promote, talk up, pray for, minister to, invite over, hug, laugh, greet, visit, help, take up slack for, call, clean, cook for, cheer up, raise up, and otherwise lay a bedrock of Christ likeness for a congregation to build upon. “Core” people determine if a church will be useful to God, or just look that way. The “meat” of an apple is sweet and attractive to our tastes, but it is the “core” of the apple that holds the power to multiply. The core is where the real life is. The core is where the truth will be found—not on the surface.

And I say all the above just to ask the question, what type of person will I (or you) be? Will we be the “core” that gives strength to the building or loose fill that might look great on the surface but gives way when pressure is applied?