

“Country Churches”

By Lex Shuler

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Out in our neighborhood there were several country churches. Most of them are gone, but a few still remain, many of them are inactive. That seems to be the norm for country churches. They sit dormant for a while then an inspired country preacher comes along and dusts off the benches and the revival begins. I'm not making fun of the process. I find it interesting. It actually demonstrates the resurrection process.

Most of these old churches were fundamental and had a strict nature depending on the ideals of the core congregation. My father told a story about how he and some of his friends that played instruments were invited to play at one of these churches. The four of them went to the church at the appointed day and time for the service and when they arrived, the preacher would not let one of them in because he had a fiddle. He said that the fiddle was the devil's instrument and he would have to leave it outside. The fiddle player was upset at that tone and the whole group left.

On a fishing trip to Oklahoma with my father-in-law, we were greeted on the street by a black man that knew Johnny from when he used to haul them to church meetings in the back of a cotton bale truck. His name was Lucius. Johnny asked if he was still attending church and he told him that they were having church meetings in homes and remarked that there was always good food at these meetings. He told Johnny that he arrived at such a meeting last week and he was late. He said that he was at the front door and the living room was filled with people listening to the sermon but he could see into the kitchen where the table was full of pies of most every flavor. Johnny asked, “What did you do then” and he said “Mister Johnny I just shouted and danced my way out to the kitchen.”

Another local church was revitalized by a fervent preacher and during the revival the preacher stated that television shows glorified sin and that members of the church would find favor with the Lord if they would remove those sinful boxes from their homes. Many complied and gave away or otherwise disposed of their televisions. After a few months they would succumb to convention and replace their TVs. After that if the preacher's sermon was directed to demon TV, some repented by putting the TVs out on the porch or in the barn.

My brother, Jack, and I concluded that if you saw a TV on the porch that meant the family had been to the revival last week.