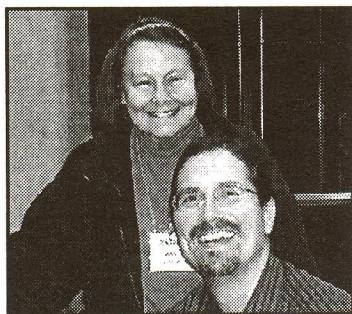


II TIMOTHY PROVIDES GUIDE FOR PRESENT-DAY APOSTLES



Dr. Marva Dawn and David Ludwig, Jr. were the main presenters for the Colorama II Lutherhostel held in October at Heartwood Conference Center and Retreat in Trego, WI. David touched our hearts while Marva challenged our minds.

II Timothy

Dr. Dawn is a writer, a theologian, and a teaching fellow at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. She shared what II Timothy has to say to us in regard to living in an uncertain, critical time. We live in an age of denial; we live with an attitude that life should be good for *us*. We want all our pain gone in thirty minutes. One of the prevailing philosophies of our time is retribution.

In five hours of study, Marva led us through the four chapters verse by verse. As we began, she suggested we accept the letters to Timothy as "canonical"--as letters chosen to be included in the Bible. As canon, these letters are *attributed* to Paul. We can

read 1st and 2nd Timothy as scripture, whether written by Paul, *or*, "as if" written by Paul, for the message that is there.

II Timothy 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

It is God's *will* that Paul--or anyone--is an apostle of Jesus. God's will is plain and can be easily known: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, care for the widows and orphans, love justice, do kindness, walk humbly before God.

The promise of life that is in Jesus is God's promise of eternal life. As it is *God's* promise, we can depend on it, because God keeps God's promises. Eternal life is a promise already made and kept.

By God's grace then, we live within His promise of eternal life as apostles of Jesus -- following God's will to care for others. (1.06 BILLION in the world today are under-nourished. 25,000 A DAY die of malnutrition.)

II Timothy 1:2a

To Timothy my dear son (or, beloved child). The "canonical" Paul wrote to Timothy to mentor and encourage him. This letter calls us to consider seriously our role as mentors of young people today. Who are the beloved children to whom we are passing on the faith?

Timothy lived during dire times; young people of today live during dire times. Few of today's young will be believers if we aren't involved in nurturing their faith. (85% of the pre-boomer generation are active Christians; 65% of the Boomers are; 34% of Generation X are; 18% of the Millennial generation are; and it is estimated just 4% of the current generation will be active Christians.)

II Timothy 2b

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

This verse calls us into the *Trinity*--into a relationship with God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit; God's grace, mercy and peace are exemplified in Jesus' death and resurrection, and brought to us through the Holy Spirit. (As an aside, Marva pointed out that it is not sexist to call God *Father*; it is incorrect to call God *Mother*. Jesus himself referred to God as Father, and Jesus had an earthly mother named Mary. An earthly mother and a heavenly father witness to both Jesus' humanity and his divinity.)

II Timothy 1:3-7

Note especially that the canonical Paul urges us to use our gifts (which change according to the needs around us!), not with *cowardice*, but with a *calm rigor of mind* (Marva's translation of verse 7).

Rigor of mind calls for discipline in our choices; it calls for us to live not by our emotions but by careful assessment so as to be good stewards, and to mentor youth in stewardship of their gifts and possessions. Marva notes that we tend to be driven by our feelings or emotions --for example in politics, or in spending, etc. She said that in the Bible, feelings are *not* spoken of as being located in the *heart*.

In the First Testament the Hebrews connected emotions with the kidneys. In the New Testament, the Hebrews connected emotions with the bowels. A reference to living in God's *heart* did not refer to our emotions but to God's *will*. God's heart is about God's will. If we are led by our heart, that means we are led by a *calm rigor of mind*--discerning God's will for our actions.

II Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Marva calls this verse *Principles for Evangelism*. What you have learned, you in turn pass on; and those whom you have taught then go on to teach others.

II Timothy 2:3-10

How do we live as evangelists? "Paul" uses three examples: the soldier, who follows his commanding officer; the athlete, who competes according to the rules; and the farmer, who must work within the realities of nature. Jesus is our commanding officer. Like soldiers, we do not get sidetracked in our following. Like an athlete, we have "rules" for "competing": to trust God so that God can free us to pass on the prize that is already ours--salvation.

We are also like the farmer. His hard work is necessary, but the outcome is not solely in his hands: weather, disease, pests, etc. affect his crops too. We plant *seeds*; but the outcome is not in our control. Nevertheless, we should not be afraid to plant a seed. Even in the direst of times God's will is not chained. Jesus' resurrection is completed.

