

Good Help Is Hard To Find and DEI Insanity



By Rob Pue

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In my previous message, I shared with you about how I grew up working hard on our family farm and starting my own lawn care business on the side; I told you about my first “real” job at the Holiday Inn and how I became the assistant manager of the entire complex at age 16. I also mentioned my work at the radio station, becoming Program Director by age 20 and working for a weekly county newspaper before opening my own photography studio.

There’s more to my story than I can tell here, but I’ll share a few more tidbits from my life. I was also the first member of our local AWANA club, and I enjoyed that very much. In fact, I memorized three years’ worth of Scripture in one year’s time and was the first to earn the “Timothy Award.”

Also, at age 12, I began my own little “newspaper.” It consisted of stories I wrote, and was first written by hand, copied on a Xerox machine and sent out to my “subscribers” – all of whom were extended family members. Eventually I acquired a mimeograph machine, and my little paper was going out to subscribers I didn’t even know, far and wide...even to writers around the country and in Canada who were much older than me and producing their own publications.

It was about this time that I learned our family history. The Pue family had the first printing press, and first newspaper

ever published in Ireland, starting in 1685. I also learned that in every generation as far back as I can trace, there's always been at least one person in our family involved in newspaper publishing and at least one person in Christian ministry. It seems that now, I'm the only one left, and have combined both vocations into one, though I've never had any formal training in writing, journalism or newspaper work.

I might also mention that in the fifth grade, our teacher gave us an assignment to write a report. The report could be on any topic, any subject and just had to be at least two pages long. Most kids scribbled a poorly written thing on both sides of a single sheet of notebook paper. My "report" was a commentary and explanation of the Book of John from the Bible. It was fifteen pages long, perfectly typed, included a cover page, a table of contents and footnotes, and I turned it in bound with a laminated cover. I got an "F" on that report, and the teacher wrote it in red pen, circled the "F" and then wrote "inappropriate for school" in big red, underlined letters. I doubt she even read it.

I've had a lot of jobs in my life. Let's see if I can remember them all. First, the Holiday Inn, then I worked at a camera store, while also serving as the head cook at a cafe. I worked as a clerk at a convenience store owned by an oil company. I was a studio musician for a recording studio for a while. Then, there was the radio station and the newspaper, and then I opened my photography studio.

I loved my job at the Holiday Inn but had outgrown it by the time I graduated from high school. The camera store job enhanced my love of photography. I did well at the cafe, preparing the "soup of the day," as well as planning, purchasing supplies and cooking daily lunch specials. The convenience store job was strictly for extra money, and often times I worked more than one job at once. The studio musician job came after I had recorded an album of original music with a band I was in.

I enjoyed the work at the radio station, but despite the fact that my own show there was popular and profitable, the rest of the programming was very “gray,” – “adult contemporary” secular music that really didn’t attract any listeners. I arranged to meet with the station manager and suggested that they needed to allow me to program our content based on a particular demographic. Specifically, those who had disposable incomes and would respond to advertisers’ messages. So, I suggested doing an “oldies” show. I also suggested we broadcast a Sunday sermon from a different church in our area each week.

These ideas were immediately rejected. They didn’t want to change anything, mainly because it would have taken time and work to implement these changes, but I was also told, “there will NEVER be any religious stuff broadcast here as long as I own this station.” I knew, then, it was time for me to move on. When the opportunity came to work for a newspaper, I was excited about it, but again, though I worked hard and was a great employee, they’d never give me an opportunity to write – my job was strictly graphic design and that was all it would ever be.

Now, here’s the interesting part about all the jobs I’ve ever had. Every single company I worked for, within just a few months of me leaving, went out of business. Every one. Including the Holiday Inn. I’m not saying it was because I always did the work of several people and contributed so significantly that the business couldn’t survive without me...but interestingly, none ever did.

The Holiday Inn, for example, had strict standards that the facility needed to adhere to in order to remain a Holiday Inn franchise. We had regular inspections from the corporate offices and when I worked there, I was in charge of making sure every department met the expectations. Under my watch, we passed every inspection with flying colors. Six months after I left, they had failed three inspections in a row and lost

their Holiday Inn status. The entire place shut down for a while and later reopened under another name. Likewise, the camera store, the recording studio, the oil company, the cafe, the radio station and the newspaper all were either sold or went out of business completely within six months of my departure.

And here's an interesting note about the radio station I worked at. Remember how I had suggested to the owner that they do an "oldies" show, and that idea was immediately rejected? Well, they went bankrupt shortly after I left that job, the station was sold, and it became "all oldies all the time!" Ironic, isn't it?

I built my photography studio business from scratch and operated it for twelve years and it was very successful. We had over 300 regular clients and I employed nine people. Our wedding photography was so good, I had couples coming from other states, because others had referred them and no matter what it cost, they wanted me. I don't mean to sound like I'm bragging, but we really were the very best. When God called me to start Wisconsin Christian News, I knew I couldn't do both, so I sold my studio. Then, I trained the new owner in every aspect of the work for a full year. I handed over the keys on December 31st, 1999. And then, in less than a year, the studio was out of business.

Recently, as I've become an "old man," people have asked me what will become of Wisconsin Christian News when I get too old to continue the work. Some get angry when I tell them that it won't continue...but the truth is, it won't. No one would put in the time and effort and work to do this job; and it's more than a "job" to me, it's a calling. I can tell you, the first thing a new publisher would do is to go completely "online" and discontinue the printed newspaper because it's very labor intensive and very expensive. It's not a money-maker, but rather, an outreach tool to the general public. Few understand the importance of this.

Yes, it would be much, much easier to simply publish our articles online. But it's the printed newspaper that reaches people on news racks in public places – those who have never heard the Word of God or understood the truth of the times we're living in, or who have walked away from their faith. Then they find our newspaper on a public news rack somewhere and eyes are opened, and hearts and lives are changed...and I have multiple boxes of testimony letters from people telling me that.

But God gets all the credit. Because every job I've ever had has taught me something of great importance and contributed to the worker I am now. Few understand the importance of diligence and hard work, or the concept of "failure is not an option." And when confronted by the impossible, few really understand, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."

I'm thankful to God for teaching me the value of hard work – even in times when that work doesn't seem to be appreciated or acknowledged. He's taught me diligence, excellence, and the humility to know I can always learn, grow and do better. Sadly, most don't know, value or understand those things today, and it's evident everywhere. Many just want a "free ride," an easy path, and expect the highest of wages for the least amount of effort they can put forth.

I learned that as an employer at the photography studio. I had a couple of great employees, but honestly, even back in the 1990s, most workers just weren't worth their salt. I had one office worker who would actually hide work. She'd ask to go home early or take a workday off, and I'd ask if everything was caught up. Of course, she told me "Yes, everything's done." Then, I discovered, multiple times, she had hidden piles of work that still needed doing – and I would be the one working late into the night to complete it. Good help was hard to find.

But I can't imagine trying to hire employees in this day and age. People simply don't want to work. I know a young man in his late 20s who's perfectly healthy and able to work, and lives literally two blocks away from a factory that pays excellent wages and always has a sign out front saying, "Now Hiring, All Shifts." They even offer immediate health insurance, vacation time and a signing bonus. But they can't find workers. This young man somehow stays home and collects government money. He spends his time playing video games and browsing the computer.

Recently, we needed a dishwasher replaced at our home. We purchased the machine, and it was to be installed three weeks later. When the installers arrived, they refused to install it because we needed a special bracket. I told them I'd happily go get the bracket at the store a mile away and be back within 15 minutes, but they refused to wait. When they came back three weeks after that, they refused to install it because, they said, the water inlet hose comes from the basement. Of course. Where did they think water comes from? Neither one spoke English and had to communicate with me through a translation device on their phone. I managed to talk them into completing the job, with me showing them where each hose attached.

Then they left and I tried to run the machine for a cycle to try it out, only to get an error message having to do with the water line. I assumed they had kinked the hose when they shoved the machine in there. Upon closer inspection, we also found the machine was still full of Styrofoam packing materials, and when I pulled the dishwasher out to check the water line, found they had not only kinked the hose, but completely folded it in half. Later, I checked the reviews on this company's appliance installers – at a major Big Box store – and found literally hundreds of bad reviews from all over the country, most reflecting my exact experience.

Delving deeper into this company, I learned that they're

deeply committed to their DEI programs. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion...but clearly their workers don't know and don't care what they're doing. My experience with DEI was frustrating. In other occupations it can be deadly. I wouldn't want to fly an airline with a DEI-hire pilot. Or trust a surgery to a DEI-hire doctor. Things have changed drastically in our workforce. The "Affirmative Action" programs of the 1960s have morphed into today's "woke" DEI agendas and they really are insane. People shouldn't be entitled to a job they're clearly not qualified for, simply because of their ethnicity or their sexual orientation, but that's where we're at today, and indeed, good help is harder than ever to find.

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