

## **Aug 13<sup>th</sup> AGM Message “You can’t just sit there”**

Larry Walters was born and grew up in Los Angeles. As a child he was known as a dreamer. He left school early with no qualifications and ended up becoming a truck driver after failing entry into the U.S. Air force because of his poor eyesight.

He spent his down time at his rented home out on the front porch sitting in his aluminium deck chair. While sitting there he used to look up into the sky at all the planes flying overhead and dream of flying a plane one day himself. He really did want to fly but could not afford the lessons. He would look up into the sky and think, “Just wouldn’t it be great to be up there, looking down on what’s here” until one day Larry Dreamed a Dream, and came up with a vision of how he could fly. And this is how he did it.

Larry took his aluminium deck chair and tied 48 helium weather balloons to it. He used Plastic milk bottles as ballast. He packed a lunch sandwiches, a six-pack of beer, and his trusty bb gun. This deck chair set up was constructed on the top of his car, which it was tied to. He got a friend to untie him.

Now Larry had a plan. He intended rise up a 100 metres or so in the air, float around for a while up there while looking down on the ground while still attached to a safety cable. And when he’d had enough he would simply shoot out the helium balloons one by one until he came back down to earth.

So his friend cut him loose and off Larry expecting to level out at 100ms and be held by the cable. When he was cut loose though he shot up, the cable broke at 100m and he simply continued to rise... up, up, up he went. Up, up, up, until he reached an altitude of about 5,000 metres, that’s 5km’s up in the sky where he enters restricted airspace floating across the flight path of jet airliners using LA Airports. The very first pilot to radio in to the airport control tower that they had just evaded a Guy in a deck chair eating sandwiches and drinking beer, armed with a bb gun at 5000 metres was immediately cited by the air traffic controller for dereliction of duty because he must have been drunk in charge of an airliner. Soon after many more reports came in with dozens of planes taking evasive action. Planes were then diverted from Larry’s airspace. While all this was happening Larry

was blissfully unaware of what was going on around him while he floated wondering how to get down.

Then all of a sudden things got worse. Larry began to drift out towards the Pacific Ocean. Meanwhile the Authorities were tracking him, even air force jets had been scrambled. The authorities had a big problem on their hands. They worked out that the air force couldn't shoot the balloons out without killing him. So what do you do with a guy in a deck chair floating around in restricted airspace at 5000 metres drifting towards the ocean?

By this time the media had picked up on Larry and there were cameras and helicopters showing him on live TV. The authorities were tracking him on radar. A helicopter observed him. Then Larry caught lucky break. An onshore breeze blew him back inland. The helicopter at one stage may have snagged him with a line. Larry then after shooting out a couple of balloons begins to descend, drops his bb gun, perhaps while grabbing for his last beer. He tangles a power line eventually crash landing near a park and people are rushing to him cheering from every direction – he was an instant media sensation!

The police get to him from behind to begin to arrest him just as a TV film crew got to him.

The Reporter asked him while he's being arrested, "Were you scared?"

"Not really", answered Larry.

"Would you do it again?" Hell No " said Larry.

Now let's just remember that Larry was a Dreamer.

The reporter's last question was " Why did you do it?" And Larry replied, "Well – You can't just sit there.'

Larry Walters is right – 'You Can't Just Sit There'... on the side-line watching, but never getting involved without becoming an active participant.

God has got something for you and me to do.

We cannot be on the side-line of faith in a small church like this hoping to grow the Kingdom of God without each one of us becoming a labourer for the LORD as apart of the team at Church here. You can't just sit there, turn up on a Sunday and warm the pews. There is more to it than that!

Christ's sense of Mission and Ministry should be in our spiritual DNA as born again Christian believers-men, women, youth and children alike.

The apostle Paul wrote...

## **1 Corinthians 12 Unity and Diversity in the Body**

*<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work...*

*<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

*<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*

*<sup>13</sup> For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> And so the body is not made up of one part but of many...*

*<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one is a part of it.*

Paul in the Bible is clear in saying that we all have a role to play in the body of Christ and that using our gifts for the kingdom is a fundamental part of that responsibility (1 Corinthians 12). But you say..

“I am too young” [from the mouth of babes at school]

“I am too old” [Pray, encourage, share wisdom, give]

“I am a (young) mother” [mm, play and café, elders, ]

“But I work (long hours...)”

“But, but” we can come up with all the reasoned excuses under the sun which is our human way, no matter how old we are, of putting God in a box and limiting the LORD’s ability to use us in our daily lives and use our spiritual gifts to his glory. To stifle our ability to dream and be creative in God’s service which will serve to have any Christain of any age just sitting there. Well - you can’t just sit there!

An amazing example of creative and thinking outside the box I want to share is this. In the war against ISIS, those working against their ideology and recruiting methods have failed miserably. All the while ISIS recruiting new fighters and committing acts of terrorism is a weekly occurrence. Even though they are losing ground fast in the Middle East, their influence expands across the globe because of their ability to recruit through videos and social media.

The American government attempted to make videos in order to put people off from joining the terrorists. Unfortunately, they were boring and no one watched them. But then a guy with a new strategy, Priyank Mathur, a former counterterrorism intelligence analyst for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security who

moonlighted as a comedy writer shared his creative vision. He found a way to combine his two interests in the fight against the terrorists. He recently reached out to East India Comedy (EIC), a group of stand-up comedians and sketch writers from Mumbai, to develop a video **“I want to quit ISIS”**. (YouTube EIC channel)

This sketch portrays ISIS as a normal-looking office where a young man attempts to leave the terrorist organization, only to be bogged down in bureaucracy and debates over the tenets of Islam with his manager. It's funny and does an excellent job of subtly pointing out the hypocrisy behind the terrorist rhetoric. It's since been viewed more than a million times in Southeast Asia—some of the most fertile ground for ISIS recruitment—and hundreds of thousands of times by people in other parts of the world as well.

Mathur wasn't sure the videos would ever get off the ground. "When you ask someone to make a video that criticizes ISIS or some other terrorist group, that's a lot to ask because you're asking them to put themselves out there and potentially in harm's way and no one wants to attract the ire of a terrorist group like ISIS."

Still, the comedians were just excited about the prospect of using their talents to make a real difference. One of the members of EIC, put it like this, "I think it's great that the government, some government is taking action and trying to do it in a very different way and that's what we like about it."

It's difficult to accurately gauge the impact these videos might have, but the number of views and the chance to take back a bit of the social media advantage ISIS has enjoyed up till now is certainly encouraging. Perhaps even more so is the excitement from groups like the EIC at the chance to use their talents to help in that struggle.

So then, as a Christian are you excited about the prospect of using your gifts and talents to make a real difference? Even though it might result in people not agreeing with you, disliking you, even rejecting or persecuting you? God has called us to take a similar approach with the talents and gifts that he has granted each of us. Scripture is clear that we all have a role to play in the body of Christ and that using our gifts for the kingdom is a fundamental part of that responsibility (1 Corinthians 12). In Larry Walters's words, "You can't just sit there!"

The problem many of us face is that we limit what God can do with those gifts by drawing boundaries and erecting barriers that were never meant to exist.

The comedians now helping to fight ISIS never dreamed that their talents could be used for that purpose, but because they were open to the possibility, they're now playing a meaningful role in that fight. I shudder to think how much more we could be doing for the kingdom if we were similarly open to allowing the God who was creative enough to fashion all of existence out of nothing to have free reign with our gifts as well, as individuals, and together, men, women, youth and children, as a church. We must never make the mistake of placing limitations on what our limitless Lord can do.

Have you given Jesus Christ free reign in your life today?

Will you give the LORD free reign in your life to use you, your passions, talents and spiritual gifts to build up and encourage the body of Christ?

All the while bringing glory to God as we see his kingdom come and His will be one!

“You can’t just sit there!” God Bless!