

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

September 16, 2014

Baptism In Prison

Tonight I had the privilege of assisting in two baptism ceremonies in the chapel. As one of the chapel clerks, I am expected to help out with anything that needs to be done for scheduled events. I really enjoy helping people make progress on their spiritual paths.

First, the Jehovah's Witnesses baptized 3 of their members. I know that many of the more traditional Christians look on Jehovahs as a cult but I don't see it that way. As I listened to their ceremony, two things impressed me - the sincerity of the speakers who were performing the service, and the requirement of total commitment to Christ as a precondition to being baptized as a Jehovah's Witness. I'll never become one of them but I can see how some people are drawn to that group (those that need to be told exactly what to think and do) and I also see how it often helps people who are adrift find some much-needed guidance in their lives.

The second service was a general Protestant service in which 14 guys were baptized. The choir was there to sing, the chaplain spoke a bit about the meaning and significance of baptism and each baptizee told why he was getting baptized. The chapel was full of Lord's loving energy.

The chapel's portable baptismal is big enough to completely submerged each person as he was baptized. We had extra clothes, towels and blankets, with a storage closet converted into a changing room. Everybody there pitched in and helped - setting up, cleaning up, and most of all, singing, encouraging and praising the Lord. Many people who have not had a spiritual transformation scoff at events like this. I can assure you, I had no intention of becoming a Christian until Christ called me as one of His own. Since then, He has brought so many blessings into my life I can't count them all and so much joy into my heart I can't help but to thank Him every day.

The Holy Spirit works through all of us and it was present tonight as those men made a public commitment to serving Christ and praising God.