

So many choices

May 27, 2008

Before I started writing a blog, I figured keeping it up would be the hardest part. How well I'll actually do at coming up with blog fodder remains to be seen, since this is only my second outing.

Oh, yeah, and fair warning: I don't promise to update this thing every morning. Unlike some people, I've got both (a) a pretty demanding day job and (b) a life.

But I'll do my best to post something new quite regularly. And I'll try my hardest to make it interesting, so visiting this spot will be worth your while.

First mental block

Where was I? Oh, yeah-the hardest part of blogging. Once I actually started thinking about blogging, I realized the first hurdle would be coming up with a title. Crikey, naming that baby is more complicated than everybody lets on.

Some of you know I've written a column-first in the Western Recorder and now, for more than a dozen years, in the *Baptist Standard*-called "Down Home." When I started, my daughters were 4 and 7, and my home life was full, busy and funny. (For several years there, I thought I was funny, because my column was funny. Later, I discovered my column was funny because little kids are funny. Unfortunately, we all grew out of that phase.)

A few friends suggested I call the blog "Down Home," just to maintain continuity. Problem is, that column's mostly about my-you're going to be surprised here-home life. Now that Joanna and I live in an "empty nest," coming up with a home-based column every-other week is about often enough. No matter how hard I plead, she won't give me more babies so I'll have more and better material for new columns. She keeps referring to my

request as "too great a sacrifice."

And although Topanga is the world's cutest dog, a canine can't support a blog three times a week. So, "Down Home" is out of the running.

With the easy answer blocked, so is my mind. This is getting harder by the minute. Sometimes, the blog may focus on breaking news. Sometimes, light-hearted stuff. Other times, news of the weird. And who knows, maybe even a whole lot of pieces about faith and life and how to try to be a serious Christ-follower in a world where things usually are more complicated than they seem. How can a blog title cover all the possibilities?

So many options

After staring at my computer screen for about 30 seconds shy of an eternity, I did what any embarrassed-but-desperate guy does when he drives off into the mud and gets stuck. I called (actually e-mailed) my friends to pull me out.

The replies ranged from the cute, to the profound, to the quirky, to the, well, crude. I know some of you out there are dying to know what kind of crude blog names a Baptist editor's friends would suggest. Well, guess.

One particularly clever friend argued that a blog title really is a brand, and the specifics don't matter. In time, people will associate the blog with the title and the writer, but they won't ponder the meaning of the title. He said I could name it after my favorite food, and nobody would care. So, how about it? "Pollo ala Mexicana," for the hottest dish on the lunch menu at Gloria's in Oak Cliff. Or maybe "No. 10," for the best chile relleno on the planet, from Matt's in Lakewood. Another possibility would be "Mama's Fried Chicken," from the kitchen table of one Margaret Knox. I'd gain 143 pounds because I'd get so hungry every time I had to write my blog.

At last count, I'd received 51 suggestions, and I still haven't settled on a name for this baby. Here are a few possibilities, along with comments:

- "Truth Be Told"-In my last "Down Home," I said this would be the title, but now I'm not so sure. A friend whose judgment I trust says it's a little too smug and self-assured.
- "Truth? Be Told"-The question mark adds a touch of humility. But it looks kinda awkward after "truth" and sounds weird after "told."
- "Faithcasting"-If only I could fish.
- "Mercy, Mercy Me"-Lord, I need it.
- "iMarv"-Cute, but the trendy "i" will be blasé soon enough.
- "Marv"-Well, that's me. And I've got a strange-enough name that it sorta stands out.
- "op-Knox-ious"-Another play on my name, and the "op" signals a blog is, after all, opinion. But folks who hate me would enjoy this one waaaaay too much.
- "Speaking Freely"-This title received a plurality of votes when I polled the *Baptist Standard* staff. I love 'em, but this one hasn't grabbed me. Yet.
- "Don't Shoot"-If you appreciate insider humor with a historical twist, this would be your fave. J.B. Cranfill, the first editor of the *Baptist Standard*, lost his job after he got in a gunfight while riding on a train bound for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Nashville a century ago. Some people call me cranky, but at least I haven't shot anybody. Yet.
- "But Some of My Best Friends are Baptists." True, but probably too long. Guess I could choose this title and shorten the everyday name to "BSMBFB."

Help

What do you think? Like any of these? Got a better idea? Tell me. Click on the response button. Register (you'll thank me later). And fire away. Waiting to hear from you.

Next time ...

How can the new *Baptist Standard* website help build community among Baptists? So glad you asked.