



## First Thoughts



What does the story of the three little pigs and Crosswinds have to do with one another? This may sound like the opening to a riddle but, actually it is one of the earliest analogies I used when asked to explain what Crosswinds is all about.

So, you ask, "What could this children's story possibly have to do with engaging the culture? I am glad you asked and encourage you to read this month's feature article for the answer.

I originally wrote this when we first started Crosswinds in 2008. Considering that at that time it was sent to only seventy three homes, whereas now we send to some 2,000, plus Churches, homes and businesses, I thought it worth repeating. (Hopefully, if you are a good old Southerner, the opening paragraph won't set you out in pursuit of barbeque prior to finishing the article.)

If you are interested in the need to be able to effectively communicate with others, be sure and read feature writer, Jeff Sutherland's cleverly penned, "No Te Preocupes". If you can't translate the title, don't worry. It will all become clear when you read the article.

I am amazed at the growth we have experienced at Crosswinds. Though we are only two years old we have expanded into Europe and Asia through our subsidiary organizations, Crosswinds Romania

and Crossties Asia. We have also expanded our U.S. operations through Second Avenue Forums, which focuses on life discussion groups and conferences, and Cross Swords, a developing ministry to military personnel. Our plans also include potentially opening an office in Washington DC that will deal with developing political/legislative policies that are impacting the culture.

We appreciate so much the generous support of those who have made a financial investment in our ministry during 2010. It is because of their faithful giving that we have been able to expand into other areas in the midst of an economic downturn. That you have helped us to grow during such times is truly a great encouragement.

As you consider your year-end giving, I ask you to consider investing a portion into the work of Crosswinds Foundation. As you can see, we are still building for the future. If you are able to help us at this time, just click on the donation link below.

Our staff and Board wish for you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a safe and joyous holiday season!

Blessings,

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## Three Little Pigs and a Barbeque Sandwich By Bob Waldrep

Do you remember reading or being told the story of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf? While driving to a meeting I began thinking about this story. Actually, I was driving past a barbeque restaurant and thinking about how great it would be to stop and get a pork sandwich - inside chopped, oozing with sauce, a side of potato salad and baked beans and....well, you get the picture. Barbeque pork naturally leads one to think about pigs, which can lead to reminiscing about those most famous of pigs - the three little pigs (or, perhaps, Porky the Pig for some readers). But, I digress.

Anyway, you know how the story goes: the three pigs each built a house to protect them from the big bad wolf; one built with straw, one with sticks, and one chose brick. Those made of straw and sticks were quickly disposed of by the strong winds blown by said wolf, as he "huffed and puffed and blew the house down"; however, the one of brick withstood the winds and protected the little pig that constructed it. The moral, of course, is to build with strong materials that will withstand the attack and protect you from that which would harm you.

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Birmingham, AL 35202  
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In other words, the building materials we use in life are important, as is the foundation that we build upon. Long before the story of the three little pigs, Jesus had taught this lesson to those who would follow him. He didn't speak of three pigs, but of real life situations. Here is how he put it:

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." MT 7:24-27 (NIV)

Realizing that we live in a day when many are building their lives on hay and stubble, Crosswinds Foundation was established, to help others recognize that the cultural winds are blowing and to provide a resource for those interested in helping to build our faith and culture with the best materials and on the right foundation - Jesus Christ - the one who is the "Foundation" of Crosswinds.

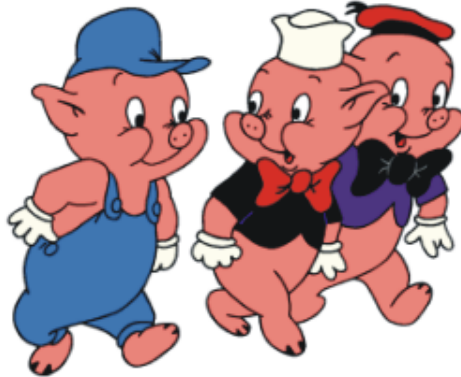
The cultural crosswinds we face are sometimes so subtle they are barely perceptible, slowly shaking us from our foundation and gradually altering our course in life. At other times they stand in such contrast to prevailing practices they cannot be missed. Both should be taken seriously.

Following are just a few of the statistical indicators reflecting the changing cultural footprints of Americans in the area of faith and spirituality:\*

- 92% believe in God, but only 56% believe that religion is very important
- 25% Believe God is an impersonal force (a basic tenet of eastern religions such as Hinduism)
- 70% believe many religions can lead to eternal life
- 40% see a conflict in religion and

- modern society
- 34% believe religion causes more problems in society than it solves
- 45% seldom, or never, read Scripture outside religious services
- 52% say the best determiner of right and wrong is practical experience and common sense
- 47% seldom or never share their faith with others

Were you aware of these culture shifts? As with the big bad wolf, it is not a question of whether the rains and winds will come; the question is: will the faith, beliefs, values and practices we hold dear, and pass on to our children and grandchildren, be able to withstand the cultural winds that blow against them? The answer depends on the foundation upon which we are building and the materials that we are using.



Jesus words are clear; believers are not simply to rest on the foundation but to build on it by living out his words in the culture. We should not fear the cultural winds but stand firm in their midst. And, while the winds can be quite strong, let us not forget that the foundation is stronger and will secure us in the midst of the storm and will allow us to prevail. The third little pig learned that lesson and so should we.

The big bad wolf huffed and he puffed but he could not blow the house down. Why? Because the foundation and building materials were too strong. Should our faith be any different?

Our forefathers established the "foundation for faith and culture" of this country on Christ and His teachings, so much so that we have long referred to

ours as being a Christian Nation. I think most would agree this is no longer the case.

For decades now, cultural winds have been blowing a new course - shifting the very foundation and fabric of our society. Beliefs and practices that forty years ago would never have been part of who we are, as a people, have now been mainstreamed into our society. One of the reasons for this is, somewhere along the way, the voice of the Church was lost to the discussion; thus, in many instances, these social, political, spiritual, and philosophical changes went unchallenged.

As believers, it is essential that we turn this around and again become intentional in shaping the conversation in the marketplace and to become the influencers of culture that Christ intends us to be. Jesus was very clear on this:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. MT 5: 13-16 (NIV)

We cannot be salt unless we are engaging the world. We cannot be light unless we are where there is darkness. We cannot secure our culture unless we learn the lesson of the three little pigs and build on a sure foundation.

And he huffed .... "And the rains came down"

And he puffed .... "And the winds blew" But he could not blow the house down ... "Yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

I ain't afraid of no big bad wolf...are you?

No? Then let's join together in the marketplace and live the truth of our faith.

\*Statistical data from Pew Forum, June 2008 (See "Culture Tracks" in this issue for more)



### "No Te Preocupes" by Jeff Sutherland

"Si me dieras el si!"

Loosely translated this means, "If only she would say yes". This is the only sentence I learned in my four quarters of Spanish other than, "Donde es el bano?" (Where is the bathroom), and "Yo quiero mas cervasas." (I need more beer). The latter two, I must admit, were closely connected as part of my college days. The former, however, proved to have much greater importance as it was a sentence I learned while attempting to woo my future bride into marrying me.

Fortunately God in His infinite wisdom convinced my bride to say yes because He knew I needed lots of help staying close to Him. He also knew she needed to be challenged by my foolish ideas.

In addition to my wife, I have also learned much from God through, more than 30 years of toiling in the soil, making sure the grounds and greens at the golf course were in good shape. Recently, I have seen evidence of this as He used my new amigos and fellow workers to teach me and them more about Him and His ways.

I didn't pay attention in Spanish class but I sure wish I had. I have a desire to communicate with those I work with not just to say, "Be sure and cut the greens on a 10/2 direction," (referring to the position of those numbers on a clock in relation to the position of the golf green),

or, "Watch out, the chainsaw is slipping from the limb toward your head." By the time my brain comes up with that translation my amigo is comatose and gushing blood and has been transported to the emergency room for an overnight stay for observation.

In fact, it won't be until I meet him at the hospital the following morning that I will have worked out the translation. There, I proudly announce the warning I should have given the previous day, "Seguir, la motosierra es deslizamiento de la extremidad hacia su cabeza."

It is difficult trying to communicate a



good Christian witness to my fellow workers when we speak different languages and come from different cultures; but I am trying. I have found one way to do this is through first speaking with my actions. For example, they will often ask if I can help them finish raking bunkers or help them move over the weekend. My answer is always,

"No problem," a phrase I picked up in Jamaica on our honeymoon.

They picked up on this and I soon found they would ride by me in their golf carts and yell, "No problem!" Sometimes, when I am tired, and having a difficult time pushing a fertilizer spreader or spraying greens for insects in a chemical suit, in the 100 degree heat of the day, they drive by and yell, "No problem," and laugh hysterically. Not exactly what you might want to hear; but I am finding that God has arranged it so I could spend one on one time with nearly every one of my new friends.

When I need someone to assist me with the spraying, one of them will work alongside me – a captive audience for my communication efforts – while his buddies point and laughingly shout, "No problem!" During our time working together day I would try to learn from them and they would attempt to learn from me. We would see a turtle and I would point and shrug. "Tortuga" my friend would say.

Animals, work and family were easy enough but soon we would move to more complex ideas, concepts and thoughts. On those rare 70 degree low humidity days when the sun rose among the clouds as if God were showing off, we would both look appreciatively at it and reply in unison, "Gracias Dios por un hermoso dia" (Thank you God for a beautiful day).

Continued on p. 4

### Culture Tracks

Statistical data reflecting the cultural footprints of Americans.

Following Statistical Data relates to the feature article concerning subtle and not so subtle shifts in moral and spiritual issues

- 92% believe in God, but only 56% believe that religion is very important
- 25% Believe God is an impersonal force (a basic tenet of eastern religions such as Hinduism)
- 70% believe many religions can lead to eternal life
- 40% see a conflict in religion and modern society
- 34% believe religion causes more problems in society than it solves
- 24% of population at some point has changed faith traditions– largest shift, 12% self-identifying Christians to atheism/agnosticism
- 51% believe abortion should be legal in most, if not all cases.
- 70% say divorce is morally acceptable (59% in 2001)
- 62% say sex between unmarried man and woman is morally acceptable (this was 53% in 2001)
- 55% say having child outside of marriage is morally acceptable
- 45% seldom, or never, read Scripture outside religious services
- 52% say the best determiner of right and wrong is practical experience and common sense
- 48% believe evolution is the best explanation for the origin of human life



We would enjoy our days together despite the hard work. Inevitably though, the questions would come. Things like "Why does God allow evil?" "If God is sovereign why are we responsible?" And my favorite, "What is the Trinity?"

Understanding the concept behind the Triune God is one thing. Explaining its mysteries to someone is something else entirely. Doing it with two people who know 50 words in common with only moments at a time for discussion is, in a word, difficult.

Like me, you have probably found that communication can be hard even in the best of situations. Language and culture can certainly become obstacles to overcome; however, we can find common ground to work from.

When the economy began to sour and housing dried up the chants of "No problem!" continued but when layoffs began, unemployment rose, and as the dollar devalued, raises stopped. As if this wasn't bad enough, the oil flowed into the gulf and onto our beaches. Suddenly, I found these same guys were looking to me

for answers. It was time for a new form of encouragement. It wasn't enough to be there to help, to support, to talk through problems, encouragement was needed. Real people needed real encouragement because times were tough. Those words came one day through a Hispanic friend who spoke the most English – the one who asked the Trinity question.

He realized it is not enough to just say, no problem, because there are many problems. Even if we are working through them, they are still with us everyday waiting to be tackled. He somehow understood not only what I was saying, but more importantly, what I meant. "No te preocupes!" he said. "You have no worries", he added in translation.

He hit the nail on the head. Those three words moved our conversation from merely talking about things to actually doing something about them. Why is it so different you ask?

No worries, conveys the message that regardless of the problems – and there are many today in your life and mine – I choose to give them to God. It means that

I won't worry about tomorrow because He holds tomorrow and He is in control of my life and all of my problems.

Are there things I could worry about? Certainly, just watch the news for five minutes and any thinking person can find plenty to worry about. Times are looking pretty grim and they appear to be getting worse. But I choose not to spend my time, effort and energy worrying about; rather, I choose to focus on what God has for me to do today: sharing with you, my friends, my amigos, "No te preocupes!" You have no worries except those you choose to hold onto.

No matter what language we speak or what culture we are part of, we can put our faith in Him, knowing that each day He will take care of our needs. He promises He will. Even when problems come, we can live without worries. As the Apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6-7

Now, that's good news!

## CrossTies Asia

A Ministry of Crosswinds Foundation



Dwight with Vietnamese Church Leaders

The ethnic Thai people are an unreached people group. Out of 64 million ethnic Thais only 200,000 are Christians (0.30 % of the pop.). There are vast areas in this country where there are no Christians. People in those areas have very little opportunity to hear the Gospel.

In Thailand 70% of ethnic Thais become Christ followers through their family members, friends and neighbors. Another 24% learn about Jesus through a Thai pastor or evangelist. The remaining 6% is through missionaries.

We believe the only way for this country to have a dramatic increase in the number of Christians is to encourage and help Thai Christians (Pastors and church members) become more effective at sharing their faith and spreading the gospel. Here are ways we help:

**My Hope Thailand:** We served as a call center for this project (sponsored by the Billy Graham Association) to promote, distribute materials and follow-up with Pastors. As a result of this evangelistic project - 40,000 church members shared their faith with 200,000 friends, neighbors and family members. 12,000 people made a commitment to be a Christ follower. 43% of the Protestant Churches in Thailand were involved with this project.

Currently, (11 months after the project) we are doing follow up research to determine how much of the "seed" that was sown fell on hard soil, rocky soil, weedy soil and good soil. We will finish our research this month and plan to publish the results shortly.

**Thailand Evangelism Committee:** Serve on this committee which consists of the leaders of the Protestant Churches in Thailand. The committee is developing a national plan called Vision 2020, to plant churches in every district in Thailand and grow the number of Christians to 1,000,000 over the coming years. We serve as the data center for this committee. We provide maps and data to pastors and mission organizations throughout the nation so they can be strategic about where they plant churches

**Every Home for Christ Thailand:** Serve on the board of this organization where we work with churches around the country to have their church members place Christian literature in every home in the nation. While they are doing this the church members are encouraged to share their faith with those they meet. Cell groups are formed in villages where people desire to learn more.

**Fellowship of Christian Business and Professionals:** Serve with a group of Christian Thai businessmen and professionals (doctors, lawyers etc). They have a passion to reach their country for Christ using the skills and resources God has gifted them with.

In October we helped them organize the "1st Thailand Talent Expo". This seminar encouraged Thai business and professionals to be involved with the task of reaching their country for Christ. About 3,000 people attended this event.

You can learn more through our website: [www.crosstiesasia.org](http://www.crosstiesasia.org)