



COLONY SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting ministries of the members of Colony

Bill Stein is a numismatist – a collector of money – no, that is not the same as a miser. It is a hobby and a business. Almost every weekend, somewhere in the United States you will find a coin show.

Bill works several of these shows a year. At these shows he also leads a Bible Study, ministering to fellow exhibitors and anyone else.

What is your Bible Study/organization called?

We have had a couple of names. We started with the Fellowship of Christian Coin Dealers, which I guess is our official name. But on the flyers we pass out I just call our meeting a "Christian Prayer Meeting". We want everyone to come.

Who attends?

Mostly coin dealers, but we have the public there too. In the coin "industry" there are a lot of Jewish people, we invite them all the time....some come!

Where does your Bible study take place?

Most of the coin shows are held around the United States. We have regular shows in LA, Orlando and Baltimore. Our last meeting was last Friday in Cincinnati. The meetings are Friday morning before the coin show opens from 7:30AM to 9AM

How did you begin leading this Bible study all over the United States?

Well this is a little embarrassing; I felt that God was telling me to do this for quite a while – but I waited and resisted. Eventually three others stepped up and started the prayer meeting about 6-7 years ago, then I kicked myself for not being obedient initially! The three that started the meetings are no longer able to travel with the shows anymore. So about 5 years ago, I started leading the meetings.

Why do you believe this ministry is needed?

Well that is question you will have to ask God. I don't know - I'm just following orders. But I can see – I can see a change in several people (including myself) as a result of our time together focusing on Him. Now I'm not so naive as to think that I'm doing this or our Friday meetings have changed the world. But I know the meetings give each us a very good outlook starting the day and the show looking to Him.

What does a typical study look like?

We never start on time. We will wait for everyone to arrive. At about 7:45 I'll open with a prayer. Afterwards, we share prayer requests and praises. Then we discuss very briefly new and old business and then the focus is our Bible study lesson

What are the difficulties/frustrations associated with this ministry?

Well there are many!

- 1) I don't make every major show, and that is an issue. We used to have a chaplain, and he did a great job filling in for me. But right now he is headed to Afghanistan. (We need to pray for him. He is my age, has never been deployed before and feels the weight of the world on his shoulders.) So leadership when I am not present is a little spotty.
- 2) Getting good material is hard for me. Working as much as I am, I don't have as much time to study and prepare good material as I would like. I can't believe how long it takes to put something together. So I steal from you and Dr. Charles Stanley a lot. I'm open for ideas here, I pray a lot about it.
- 3) Probably the most challenging thing for me is conducting the prayer meeting with all kinds of people from all kinds of religious backgrounds present. We have Catholics, Lutherans, non-denominational, Baptists, Presbyterian, and some Mormons attend! This challenges me - I am at times a little unstable on my fundamentals and do not know all the answers. However, God is growing me through all of this and He has provided a couple of senior smart Baptist helpers.

What are the victories?

It is hard to say. Most of the folks coming to the meetings are older men, and you know how we are....quiet, reserved, we don't share a lot. We have lots of praises seeing the answers to our prayers, but I don't think of those as victories. I have seen changes in several "regulars." It is great seeing God's work in the life of another. It is really nice to see other people's reaction to our meeting. A lot of folks can't believe we have a coin dealer's prayer meeting.

Share with us one God moment?

Probably the most moving was in Denver in 2006. One of the original founders was giving the message. A coin dealer came to our meeting, someone who had never come before. The man shared that the night before he was having major heart issues and was really scared. He said he prayed about it and God told him to come to our meeting...wow. We all gathered around him and prayed for God's help. The man was very emotional, and it was a very nice moving scene. We also encouraged him to go the hospital. All turned out well for him.

Why do you do what you do?

Well that is a good question. As I said, I'm following God's orders. Naturally, it is hard for me to talk to folks I don't know, especially when they come from different backgrounds and beliefs. So that challenges me and helps me grow. Most people that know coin dealers think of us as people think of used car salesman (actually we have some former used car salesmen). Most of these dealers are on the road a lot, some 50 weekends a year. At a show, on the road, there is a lot of drinking, drugs, card playing and sleeping around that goes on - the devil is having a ball! However, I was very pleased and surprised to find out that not everyone is that way. I just hope that our focus on the Lord at these shows helps people deal with the temptations of life, and I know it does.

What have you learned?

Another good question, I guess - that there are a lot of good Christian people out there. It is a joy the people God brings in your life even at coin shows. And, I have learned that God is faithful, He will bless you if you listen to Him. I knew that earlier, now I have experienced it. I wished that I would have obeyed him earlier when He first asked me to get this started. It is a blessing to serve God.