

To the Elders:

I woke up at 3:30 the morning after the town hall meeting. I had so many thoughts swirling in my head about the meeting, about the merger. Although the meeting started off a little rough, it turned out to be a civil meeting. Both sides had good points, I doubt anyone changed their minds. I tried to listen intently, and with an open mind.

The next morning, I sat down to do my daily Bible reading. We are in Judges – the story of Gideon. Gideon defeated the Ishmaelites with an army of 300 (not 30,000) – because God wanted them to know from where their victory came. Gideon knew that. The Israelites begged him to be their ruler, he said “I will not rule over you, or will my son. The Lord will rule over you!” He requested that each one give him one earring from the plunder. He collected 43lbs of gold.

Judg. 8: 27, “Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshipping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family”

We make idols out of good things. It is my opinion that we have made an idol of the Skillman building and the name on the sign. It’s either an idol of wonderful things in the past, memories, great people; or it’s an idol of worth and monetary value. God blessed Skillman with many gifts and Jesus told us what happens when we don’t use the gifts we have been given. We are not using this gift. We have about 60 members that meet on Sunday morning for an hour, and then go home. There is something wrong with that.

The “Save Skillman” group sent out a very lengthy email right before the meeting. These are a few of the suggestions they listed:

- a) A lease of the auditorium for The Hills’ use until another permanent solution is found (rather than simply giving them the building and property)
- b) A sale of the Skillman property to The Hills for “fair market value” or a reduced value for religious use and other restrictions
- c) With sale proceeds, Skillman could acquire other premises and retain its character and history and chart its own future according to the gifts and opportunities God has given this congregation.

I don’t think that is “Save Skillman”, but I am also not sure that should be our goal. As Linda Cornutt said so beautifully – we need focus on saving souls, not saving Skillman.

I ask you to prayerfully consider your answer-and ask yourself, has this building and the name on the sign become an idol for you?? Is this a trap?

Diane Dishman