

LESSONS (AND LAUGHS) FROM A TYPO
by Tom Wacaster

A couple of weeks ago I mailed out a “Tom’s Pen” that contained a typographical error that caused the sentence to make no sense at all. Originally the sentence read as follows: “Converted in early adulthood, this enemy of the cross because the most ardent supporter and defender of Christianity.” Of course one immediately realized that the word simply did not fit into the sentence; and the thought was quite incoherent. The word “because” should have been “became.”

Occasionally a typo can have serious consequences. The change of one single letter can change a positive statement into one that is negative. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” can take on a completely different meaning if we change just one letter: “Thou shalt now commit adultery.” Church bulletins are known for typos that raise an eyebrow now and then: “Thursday night - Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.” Even classified ads can take on a whole new meaning with a small typo: “Get rid of aunts: Zap does the job in 24 hours.” Or: “This is the model home for your future. It was panned by Better Homes and Gardens.”

I read the following online; whether true or not, it demonstrates the sobering reality of typo errors: “The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.” Another read: “The Senior Choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.” Well, so much for the lighter side of typographical errors.

Let’s go back to my typo for a closing thought. “Because” was replaced with “became.” But if we reduce the correction to its basic element, the three letters “use” were replaced with “me.” One of the great failures of many a faltering saint has been the attitude that God “use others.” “Use others to teach the lost.” “Use others to help the orphans and widows.” “Use others to knock doors.” The list is endless; the consequences are devastating. When we combine the incorrect letters from my typo with the correct letters, we get the submissive plea, “Use me.” While typos often leave a sentence incoherent, or provide a good laugh now and then, typographical errors can sometimes teach a hidden lesson; and even our mistakes can be teachers in disguise.