



In my opinion...

DEAN SAYS:

***It's the
right thing
to do***

"Preacher," the town drunk slurred, "every Sunday you climb up into that pulpit and pour your heart out urging the people to repent of their sins, accept Jesus as their Savior, and be reconciled to God. You proclaim, you plead, you cajole. And then, when the service ends, the people shake your hand and go right back out into their worlds, sinning just the same as always."

"Yes," the servant of God admitted with a sigh, "I guess that just about sums it up. But, what's your point?"

"My point, Preacher, is a question: Don't you ever get tired of preaching to people that won't do what you ask them to do?"

"Sure I do. But then I remember my calling. And, I keep on preaching because it's the right thing to do."

I have spent the better part of my life since 1965 pushing, prodding, pleading, forcing, cajoling, coercing, and convincing people to save their lives and property by implementing fire prevention and fire protection. It has been a real uphill battle. And, while this effort admittedly does not begin to equal the

importance of the Preacher seeking to save one's immortal soul, in terms of this old sod which we now inhabit for a season, it has some genuine significance.

The vision that drives me is a newspaper photograph from 1959 of one of my twelve-year-old friends from church being carried out of his gutted house in a rubber sheet. He and two of his brothers burned to death in a senselessly unnecessary fire. I clearly remember my reaction: anger—intense, thunderous, gut-wrenching anger. For even then, I knew that Alan Bromley and his brothers did not need to die.

I really didn't know what options I had, but I knew that someday, somehow, I would do something about their deaths. So you see, this crusade of mine for the last twenty-eight years has some root in a rational purpose. Time and again, when the resistance to my message reached a stalemate, I would take comfort in the fact that this mission of mine was and is the right thing to do.

Recently the Professional Alarm Services Organizations of North America (PASONA) hired nationally-renowned trade show designer Brett T. Carlson to help communicate its message at three major trade shows. PASONA wanted to make a clear statement of its single purpose: to promote the manufacture, installation, testing, maintenance, and use of codes- and standards-complying fire alarm and burglar alarm signaling systems. After hearing some of the background of how

PASONA came into being, and listening to some of the frustrations that accompany PASONA's unique message, Brett asked, "So why are you guys doing this? It seems like a lot of effort."

After listing a few of the reasons why we seek to promote codes- and standards-complying systems, one Board member summed up, "We're promoting complying systems because it's the right thing to do."

It struck me that in this point in history in which we live, we spend an awful lot of time apologizing for asking people to do things that are really in their best interest. For example, why should I have to convince someone in the alarm business to make certain the system he or she installs meets the appropriate codes and standards? Isn't there some foundation of business ethics that encourages the owner of a business to make every effort to provide a quality product or service just because it's the right thing to do?

Oh, I hear your laughter. "Naive," you say, "No street smarts. Don't you know there's just no percentage in doing the right thing?"

Well, no, actually, I don't know that. In fact I know the opposite. There is every reason to determine to do the right thing. Compromising quality never wins in the end. You may have some short term success, but ultimately cutting corners extracts a terrible price.

So I do not intend to stop doing the right thing. Nor should you. Nor should the folks who put PASONA together. They may find that not many will join their ranks, for not many will take the stand.

Or, just maybe there will be a legion of manufacturers, alarm service providers, private and public Authorities Having Jurisdiction, and users of alarm services who will decide that doing the right thing makes sense. If this legion bans together and joins PASONA, just think of the impact they could have. All over this land people would be specifying, designing, manufacturing, installing, testing, maintaining, and using codes- and standards-complying fire alarm and burglar alarm signaling systems because it's the right thing to do! □

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