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9.21.08 - 10:45pm

A Long Day at the Office

Signed on this morning at about 1:45pm (I realize 2pm is a little late for morning, just bear with my weekend schedule) in order to make it to church at DELETED. I was a little more comfortable with the layout (it being my second time there) but tried church on the left side this time, just to see if it was any different. It wasn't.

I IM'd the pastor, (deleted), across the room before the service started and asked him a few questions about the churches history. He told me that he started DELETED with his wife 3 years ago. His role was to deliver the message, her role was basically everything else. There were originally three singers (all women) behind them that just danced and praised the whole time in the beginning, but they no longer do that (which explains the unused microphones in the back). He felt it was God's calling due to the fact that there were too many people on Second Life for there not to be anything Christian related (there were no other churches at the time). After that I thanked him so he could begin the sermon.

I noticed, after reading Brandy's field notes, that most of the people that got involved in the sermon were women, even though there were men in the audience (I checked). Though admittedly, there were not as many men in attendance as women. Honestly, the women get EXTREMELY involved in "responding" to the service. Lot's of CAPS and !'s. If people did that in real life all the time I'd either be mortified to be around them or scared out of my wits. Maybe I'm just not used to such outward displays of God-love, even if only textually.

There was a woman in very revealing clothing standing next to me. It kind

of made me uncomfortable. I can't seem to get past my assumptions about what church SHOULD BE (or rather, what I've been taught it should be) rather than accepting what it is. I wonder if there is a church in real life where you can get away with that. Or if there is a church in SL that won't let you get away with that.

The sermon today was very political in nature. The pastor mentioned the government stealing companies before they foreclosed on people's homes and how 'true' Christianity will eventually be illegal. The pastor did point out that it didn't matter what your body was forced to do, it was all about how you felt and what you believed. Which is probably why no one is chastised for appearance. The Pastor also alluded to this being the beginning of "the time of sorrows," to which I assumed he meant the apocalypse. He said Jesus would be our peace and comfort in troubled times...

I was surprised at the obvious hints towards the economic status of the U.S. It must be mostly Americans that go to the DELETED, or at least the Pastor is.

He also mentioned that peace from salvation would allow us to "walk on water" like Peter. In fact, we could "walk on air," and "fly!" I was humored by that fact, considering you can actually fly in SL. Seemed appropriate terminology.

I find DELETED kind of uninteresting. The conversation isn't entirely thought provoking and I feel as though my only duty to the group is to show up as a number. In fact, there are always conversations about numbers in the congregation. When I asked my friend on SL, Raiden, to join me she said she would if "more people showed up." As though the quality of the service has less to do with what is said and more to do with how many people attend.

For the record, (Deleted) is not especially nice, at least not to me. During the fellowship meeting (which I attended after the service) she made a few snide remarks. She had the amazing ability of cutting me down with only her words. Seriously. Only text. When she walked in she said someone was being fussed at for not sitting in the pews correctly. I asked

if they were sitting up on the back of them, with the intention of saying that I did that all the time. However, Mariposa interjected before I could finish my thought with a, "Who really cares? It doesn't matter." And went on to rant about people care too much about appearance. I believe her direct words were "God looks at the heart, not the appearance, like man does." Although I like that quote, the context made it sound slightly derogatory. I felt like a small child being scolded. Maybe I'm just paranoid and insecure at DELETED.

Arella (a girl with wings) mentioned, "the world is a strange place." I asked if she meant SL or RL, to which someone else responded "both." The conversation continued with how some people wished RL were more like SL (especially the mute function). Arella was worried that that meant we would "mute God's voice as well." Conversation went like this:

[2008/09/21 12:32] DELETED: I wish that were possible in RL sometimes!

[2008/09/21 12:32] DELETED: Yes.

[2008/09/21 12:32] DELETED: lol

[2008/09/21 12:33] DELETED: LOL'

[2008/09/21 12:33] DELETED: Like Muting!

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: Yes... "Sorry, can't hear you, you've been muted." I'm afraid we'd all abuse that ability though.. lol

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: HeH I fear so!

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: oh dear would we be tempted to 'mute' God's voice too?

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: never!

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: I wish i could turn that up!

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: LOL'

[2008/09/21 12:34] DELETED: me too

[2008/09/21 12:35] DELETED: We tend to do that already, just part of the old man we're supposed to be crucifying.

[2008/09/21 12:35] DELETED: If we had the same features in RL...I would feel like I was playing God...There is a reason everyone has a mouth and ears.

[2008/09/21 12:35] DELETED: two ears; one mouth

[2008/09/21 12:35] You: Ben can you explain that? I didn't quite understand (the old crucifying part).

[2008/09/21 12:35] DELETED: to do more listening then talking.

[2008/09/21 12:36] DELETED: Well, the "old man" means the fallen human nature, the one that causes us to sin and go in a direction other than God's.

[2008/09/21 12:37] DELETED: Jesus said if we want to follow him, we should pick up our cross daily. That means to deny those fleshly, sinful desires and instead submit to the Spirit and Word of God.

[2008/09/21 12:37] DELETED: Unfortunately the very thing many struggle most with

[2008/09/21 12:38] DELETED: Yep. That's the biggest battle we face, the flesh and the Spirit are always at war.

It seems that in SL no one in the DELETED church really cares about what others look like or do, in fact, when posed with the question of dress code Mariposa said this:

[2008/09/21 12:33] Mariposa Psaltery: There is enough what you should or shouldn't wear in RL. none clothes not an opposition here since this is PG land.

So I guess WHERE you are and what you SAY in SL is more important to them than what you look like or act like. They separate how people dress from what they believe. I guess that means the avatar isn't 100% a representation of self or "soul." That could be why the pastor has long hair in SL, even though he thinks in RL that would be misrepresenting Jesus. That could also be why people continually ask me what my faith is when I'm there before giving their opinion on what I'm doing (such as the crazy "judging" lady.)

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