

From This Corner
Old Dog with New Tricks
Larry Baird

It has been said that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks. Not having ever owned a dog I am not sure of the truth of it. The reality, however, is that those who often make that statement are not referring to dogs. There seems to be some suspicion that as we age we have less of a capacity for learning or accepting new things. Being an aging baby boomer I am more sensitive to its nuances than when I was a younger.

The other day I was working at my desk in the office listening to some music on my new 4GB iPod nano. When Mary, my administrative assistant came in, she got this surprised look on her face and implied she was shocked to see me with such an advanced piece of technology. I am also pleased to surprise young people with how progressive I am in certain areas. I did not tell her I was listening to Erroll Garner: “Magician & Gershwin and Kern.” It’s a great album if you like jazz, but if you are her age you may not have listened too much to Erroll. While visiting our oldest son and his wife in Rochester before Christmas he introduced me to how you can buy music on the internet, download it to your computer, and then put it on an iPod. I was so intrigued by it my wife bought me the iPod for Christmas. I love it!

Technology, of course, has found its way into worship as well. The up-to-date thing these days is to have media interspersed in the worship experience. I have wondered whether or not if I ever serve a local church again I would use Power Point and media with my sermons. I think I might at least some of the time, although I still hold to the opinion that a good preacher can rivet people’s attention for fifteen minutes without electronic enhancement. But that is beside the point.

The truth of the matter is that in life we need to keep up with the times, and preserve the best of the past in the process. That is what I was doing listening to a great older jazz album on my iPod.

In considering this blend of time tested and new things two passages of Scripture come to mind. "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and forever." Hebrews 13:8 "Behold I am doing a new thing." Isaiah 43:19. Continuity and change. It seems to me that there is something to be said for both. So I think I'll continue to hang out with people who can teach me a few new tricks, and hang on to the things that are eternal. You might say I'm an old dog with new tricks, and proud of it.