

## Church Secrets

Christ the Redeemer Church  
August 23, 2009  
Brown Sunday/12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 6:10-20  
Rev Gary L. Smith  
[www.christredeemerchurch.com](http://www.christredeemerchurch.com)

*(Carla Roberts, recovering from her recent mastectomy and in the middle of her cancer treatments and now back at church, stood by me to serve Holy Communion this morning. She is such an inspiration to all of us, looks great, and is tacking this head- on in life.)*

“Also pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the *secret* of the Good News without fear.”

Secrets. What is meant by “secret of the Good News”? Nelwyn told me that she has invited friends of hers to come and visit our church. They asked her to describe to them why she is so enthused about her church. She is a distinguished and articulate Southwest Texas State University Professor Emerita. She tells them she really can not describe to them the church family and community...that they just need to come and experience what she can not describe. How can one describe Love? Her friends want to know what the secret is in her church. How can you describe the really Good Things in your in life?

“The good get tired of doing good before the bad get tired of doing bad.” That is a line that inspires me to keep on trying to do good in life. That is one secret in life...to try to not grow tired of doing good with your life. It is August. Hot. Dry. Dog days of summer. Summer is about over (hopefully as we continue to bake here in Texas!) and fall and football is just around the corner. We are about to turn the corner to fall. School is about to start. The new fall schedules are about to begin.

Due to her new job, I did not think that Lisa Dennis would be again leading a Girl’s Study for girls in grades 7 through 12 this fall. She has done it for two years in a row and this year she is now working full-time outside the home at the university. Why would she want to spend her time leading a Girl’s Safe Group where Lisa gives the girls a safe place to discuss teenage issues like school, relationships, dating, dealing with parents, lessons from the Scriptures, etiquette and manners, cooking, yard work, hospitality, shopping smartly, etc.? Why would she do that?

She knows, as this morning’s Scripture reading states, that there is a war going on for the control of people’s minds. If Lisa and others like her do not give our time to helping to shape the minds and hearts of our young people, then others will step in and shape them into ways that are not so wholesome and beneficial to society.

What is the secret to this church and to other churches that are doing good things for others? It is not that we are perfect people. I think that one secret in our church is that we are transparent enough in the way we do things that we have no secrets as a church to hide. God can deal with and creatively use honesty and transparency.

Secrets. I watched a CSPAN show this week about a Canadian billionaire who became curious back in the early 1990's about wanting to know if a Swiss bank had accepted some deposits illegally during World War II from Hitler and the Nazis...money that was illegally obtained and stolen from Jewish families and others during the Holocaust.

The Canadian billionaire was able, through his influence, to actually arrange a meeting with the officials at the Swiss bank. He said that two red flags went up immediately when he met with the bank officials in Switzerland. One red flag was that the bank officials never offered him a seat. The second red flag was that they immediately offered him 32 million dollars to just go back home and drop his inquiry. Silence money they offered him was 32 million dollars. They offered him no seat and they offered him 32 millions dollars to go home quietly.

He declined the money and went back home and ended up orchestrating the hiring of some college students majoring in History and Political Science to do summer intern work and investigate to see how much illegally obtained money was transacted during the Holocaust between the Nazis and the Swiss banks. Secrets were being researched.

People would love to know the secret of Mike Leach's coaching approach.

Mike Leach, head football coach of Texas Tech University, is on the front cover of this month's Texas Monthly magazine. He was featured on 60 Minutes last year. Mike is an anomaly in the college coaching world. Tech's football program, as you may recall, has never amounted to much over the years. But last year Mike and his ways shot Tech up to #2 ranking in the nation after they knocked off #1 ranked and undefeated University of Texas football team on Tech's home field. It shocked the football world.

Everybody wants to know what Mike's secret to coaching is. Funny thing is he is so transparent and funny in life that it is mind-boggling to try and figure out his secrets. He sat the bench on his high school football team. He never played a down in college football. He got a degree in law and is an attorney. But he wanted to coach football.

One of his secrets is that he has no playbook to speak of. That is unheard of! He just runs a few plays and has his players practice the same simple and few plays over and over again! He has no playbook. If any of his coaches and he agree to try a new play, they have to eliminate an old play in order to keep the system simple and easy to memorize. His sends as many receivers down field and all over the field as possible...he says if you can keep the defense confused they can never control you.

He has won college football games for the past 22 years all over the country with this crazy no-playbook approach. Everyone wants to know his secrets. He can not be figured out by anyone. But he just keeps producing winners on and off the field.

He is an entertainer also up in Tech country in Lubbock. He did the weather report on

local TV up there and warned folks of a serious and dangerous storm approaching. Then he added, “Don’t worry about it...all of you will be dead in a hundred years anyway, so live dangerously.”

He recruits football rejects...players that no other colleges want. He makes them believe in themselves and learn his simple system of practicing the basics in football. One player of his went on to play pro ball and returned years later to watch Mike’s Tech team practice. He said Coach Mike was running the exact same plays as he did 6 years earlier. Simplicity is one secret of his.

He even made a video on dating advice for college boys, counseling young men to take a girl out to dinner on the first date. “The girl will be forced to eat in front of you”, he said, “which is something that women hate, but if you can make them do it, the earlier the better, the more they converse and tell of themselves.”

Secret to getting to know another person is to eat with them.

Secrets.

Turns out that the Canadian businessman and his investigative team of interns came up with the figure of 1.2 billion dollars in just that one Swiss bank that had been obtained illegally from the Nazi regime. 1.2 billion dollars uncovered. 50 years after the Holocaust the secret money exchanges is being dealt with legally. Descendants are receiving at least some of the money stolen from their families over 50 years ago. Not being offered a seat and being offered Silence money offended a man who decided to seek the truth about war crimes.

While in a year of War College (Air Command and Staff College) in Alabama a civilian neighbor said to me, “What are you doing studying war? I thought you were a minister.” He had a good point. But life is a war often and it takes strong spirits to protect the weak and to shape the hearts and minds of our young people in order to teach them to be people who do the right things in life.

Lisa knows it takes time to teach young people about how to think and behave right in life, so she gives of her time for others to protect the Good Things in life.

What is the Secret to this church and many other churches around the world? How can you describe love, acceptance, hospitality, welcomeness, warmth, forgiveness, commitment, honesty, transparency, patience, trust, work, Hope?

Come and take the Bread and the Cup and enjoy getting to know each other around this Table. You really do get to know another human being when you sit down and eat with them. Mike is right. Tech is going to be worth watching this fall! Come and dine. Amen.