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Dream of A Carnival - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/23 10:11

By Brian Hupperts

I dreamed I went to a carnival billed as THE GREATEST CARNIVAL SHOW ON EARTH! As I pulled in to the lot, there were smiling greeters with flashlights who guided me expertly as I parked.

I exited my vehicle to the sound of excitement, the glare and flash of multi-colored lights and the screams of thrill seekers on the various rides. The cacophony was almost overwhelming. I followed the crowd of people who were happily murmuring about the various things they had come for: blessings, thrills, to be fed, to be entertained.

I had just paid the full admission price when someone started walking towards me from the shadows. While I could not quite recognize his face, I knew he was a friend. He said, "Why are you wasting your time and money here?"

"But," I stammered, protesting, "This is the greatest carnival show on earth." He was silent for a moment, then replied simply, "We'll see." And off we walked together into the charged, frenetic atmosphere that was the carnival.

The sights and sounds of merrymaking were amazing! This was a traveling show and it brought out the crowds. There were singers, actors, dancers, and those skilled at rhetoric, yet each seemed hell-bent on outdoing the next person. "Is this some sort of contest? Is there a prize?" I asked my guide. He replied, "Yes, it is a contest, but they already have their reward." I didn't grasp his cryptic remark and shrugged it off.

We walked down the midway amid the swarming crowd. There was so much competing for my attention that it was difficult to focus. There was a Big Top with the curious sign that read Trap Ease; perhaps it was a typo. The finely dressed ringmaster told jokes, made people laugh, and encouraged people to buy his videos and tapes "for a blessing," but I didn't hear the rest since we kept on walking. I wasn't sure why, but I began to be uneasy, afraid.

Carnies would hawk their particular game and attraction promising fame, wealth, beauty, and personal satisfaction if I would only step up and lay my money down. At the nudging behest of my quiet companion, we stopped at a game of Balloon Pop.

The fast talking carnie assured me that all I had to do was pop the balloons with a dart and I would win fabulous prizes. I paid the fee, took careful aim, and threw dart after dart but I kept missing. Was this game rigged? My friend then handed me a curiously bloodstained dart with the word TRUTH inscribed on it, and said simply, "Use this." I took it, aimed carefully, threw it and popped balloon after balloon. The carnie shrieked and finally excommunicated me from his booth—no prizes awarded. He accused me of cheating!

There was a trained Lion of Judah in a cage doing tricks for the ringmaster to the squeals and delights of the crowd. "Make him heal," yelled one. "No, make him bless me with money," cried out another. And the strange thing was that the lion seemed to be going along with it. However, as I got closer to the exhibit, I looked into the lion's eyes... It was not the Lion of Judah at all, but instead a killer lion stalking its prey, seeking someone to devour. He was a fraud, but he looked almost like the real thing. I jumped back and we walked away as the beast growled menacingly at us.

There is not space to tell of the baptismal dunking booth, or the house of smoke and mirrors that distorted reality through the haze of religiously themed rose-colored glasses. Especially disturbing was the Fortune Telling Prophet who, as his sign promised, would give you a guaranteed, genuine Word From God for an Activation Fee of \$40.00. I was ready to kick over his crystal ball, but my companion stopped me. "This is their festival, not mine," he said. We walked away.

The carnival was overcharging for the love feasts of corndogs and lemonade and I kept getting the feeling the food and attractions were supposed to be provided for free, but perhaps it was just a feeling. After all, business is business.

And then a wave of nausea began to rise in my throat as I took the spectacle in. It was like music without a melody, or a painting without color. There was a growing sense of violation. And suddenly, in the distance like a welcome breeze on a hot, humid day, I heard a quiet sound, almost like a chorus of voices rising in song. I turned and began to walk toward

nds the music, walking away from the beguilement and clang of the carnival.

My head began to clear and, as I was walking away, the lettering on the carnival signs began to rearrange to read, THE GREATEST CARNAL SHOW ON EARTH! "How do I get out of this madhouse? I am almost ready to hurl," I asked. My companion agreed, saying, "I am almost ready to vomit, too." He pointed me towards the Tunnel Of Love. As I walked towards it, I began to notice others quietly leaving the carnival one or two at a time, sometimes in small groups, walking away from the carnival following the drift of the music that led inexorably towards the little boats that rode the gentle waters of the Tunnel of Love.

As I stepped into the little boat, my companion spoke from behind, "I'll see you on the other side where we will dine together," and he was gone. And in the Tunnel of Love there was no fear. The clang of the carnival began to fade as the music and singing grew louder. It was, it was... worship, but worship as I had never experienced, for it was borne of passion and offered up in Spirit and Truth! It washed over me, cleansing me, inviting me to join my voice to the swelling chorus of adoration and praise sacrificed to the Most High God. And as the darkness began to fade as the Tunnel of Love gave way to LIGHT!

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