

## RECKLESS WORDS CAUSE DIRE STRAITS

British rock band Dire Straits stopped cranking out the tunes 16 years ago, but its ability to generate controversy lives on. The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) recently forbade radio stations from airing the rockers' song, Money for Nothing, due to a gay slur embedded in its lyrics.

The ensuing debate sparked realization in me of the sheer volume of commonly used words and phrases that I deem offensive. To my shame, I have frequently fumed in silence – that silencer being the very greenhouse in which offensive words flourish. But today, inspired by the CBSC's example (who would have thought), I choose to shake off the shackles of apathy and share the top three words/phrases that I find offensive.

High on my list is the F-bomb. I despise the word, though it appears to be gaining momentum amidst growing societal acceptance. I hear its nonchalant use on playgrounds and worksites, in movies and malls. For many, it is the tie that binds, linking erratic drivers, barking dogs and bone-jarring checks during a "friendly" game of shinny -- all united under the banner of a crude description of sexual intercourse. And that's what bothers me.

It devalues the gift of sex that God planned for a husband and wife to enjoy. That which is precious is treated in a careless manner; like hanging pearls on a pig or discarding diamonds in a ditch. The intimate expression of committed love deserves more than shoddy treatment such as this -- far more.

Careless usage of the name, Jesus Christ, is also a pet peeve. Revered figures of other religions appear to escape unscathed, but "Jesus" is muttered in moments of shock or during flashes of pain -- and it's rarely declared in gratitude or praise.

Come on, this is my Saviour you are slamming. I believe Jesus was God in an Earth-suit and that He died for my sin, a selfless sacrifice that I might know God personally. He's my Best Friend, Provider, Encourager, and Giver-of-Dreams. You may not believe with me, but at least respect the fact that my faith is something I hold dear. I don't dis your mother, father or girlfriend, why would you disrespect my Saviour?

And on that note, I'd prefer you didn't declare, "God damn" around me. Like its hillbilly cousin, the "F-bomb", it's frequently attached to everything and anything including, "those \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Yankees" and "the \_\_\_ \_\_\_ cold weather".

Newsflash, my friends: God's first choice is never to condemn, but to offer salvation, love and personal relationship to all -- even Yankees in frigid weather conditions.

St. John recorded it like this, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16,17)

Words possess power. Wise ones take note and wield them with caution. Fools alone allow tongues to flap unchecked, churning forth words without weight, syllables lacking substance.

What words tick you off? I invite readers to email me their top three offensive words/expressions along with a quick explanation of why they disturb you. I'll summarize responses in a future column -- stay tuned.

Speak carefully my friends. You never know who is listening and reckless remarks can most certainly result in dire straits.

*Barks is lead pastor of Nipawin Apostolic Church. He may be reached at [rodbarks@hotmail.com](mailto:rodbarks@hotmail.com)*