

Unusual Witness for Christ

BY REBECCA CONN

What does it take to be a witness for Christ? We are told in Matthew 28:19 "...go and make disciples of all nations..." One small, country church in Whitley County has a very unusual witness for Christ and it comes in the form of an 8-year-old Chow mix named Max.

This "man's best friend" has proven over the years to be more faithful than most church members. He may not be able to sing in the choir, preach a sermon to save souls or take up the Sunday offering, but the love he shows for this small, country church and its members is a rewarding witness in itself.

It all started when the daughter of one of the church deacons found a little abandoned puppy several miles from her home. Feeling sad and heartbroken over her discovery, she decided she would take care of the puppy until she could convince her father to let her keep him. After much debate, an agreement was made that the puppy could stay. So, Max, as he was called, finally had a home and the deacon's daughter took great pride in nursing the puppy back to good health.

Several months passed when the deacon's family received a surprising visitor. Max's original owners had returned and wanted their dog back. But Max would have nothing to do with them! The original owners realized, from Max's behavior, that they were fighting a losing battle and decided to leave him with the deacon's family.

Now, the family isn't sure when Max decided that church was a place he wanted to visit regularly. They just began noticing, over time, that certain things and activities became a part of his routine.

Every Sunday, the little country church would always ring the church bell to signify it was time for the service to begin. Max would drop whatever he was doing, even if he was eating, and run to the church to see what was going on. Max would do the same thing if he saw the church bus pass



by the deacon's house. He would be sitting on the steps of the church when the van pulled in ready for whatever service was going to take place.

The deacon even noticed that Max could tell whether or not the family was going to church on any particular day. When the deacon would leave the house, carrying his lunch box for work, Max didn't pay much attention to him. When he left the house carrying his tools or hunting equipment, then Max would be waiting at the truck to go help with work on the farm. But when the deacon left the house carrying his Bible, Max would get all excited and jump in the back of the truck waiting for his ride down to the service.

Over the years the church family has become very accustomed to Max being present at all of their services and they have treated him

just like they would any other member or visitor who happens to be there. Max has never jumped up on anyone or tried to bite. He just mingles among the people waiting on his back scratches or pats on the head. And when the services are over for the day, he will walk the short distance back home or hitch a ride with an offering church member.

Not only does the church treat Max just like any other member they make sure he gets to participate in whatever activity just happens to be going on. One of Max's favorite services has always been Vacation Bible School. He has never missed a night of Vacation Bible School in the past 7 years. I know this to be true because it is recorded on the attendance records. He attends missions, bible study, music, recreation and even snacks right along

with the children, and yes, he receives a snack just as if he were human!

One of the funniest accounts told to me about Max's service at the church had to be the time he attended a funeral. A construction crew was building an addition onto the church's fellowship building and Max was there supervising to make sure the job got done properly; his owner was also one of the workers, when a funeral procession arrived to have a graveside service. Max thought it was his duty to walk over to the hearse, escort the body and family up to the gravesite, and sit quietly with the family during the whole service. Once the grave diggers had the coffin covered he returned to his post as supervisor of the construction work. All the while, the construction workers were laughing but yet in awe of what they had just witnessed.

From all accounts, Max seems to really love and be dedicated to this small country church and the people who attend. So dedicated in fact that when his own life was in danger, the church is where he turned. His family's home is not very far from the church grounds and one day, while he was out visiting in the community, he was struck by a car. Badly wounded, Max drug himself the half mile to the church, even though he was actually closer to home. The church janitor arrived a short time later to clean for the Sunday services when she saw the wounded dog lying on the church steps. She knew right away it was Max and hurried to the deacon's home to tell him the news. Thankfully, the veterinarian was able to take care of Max's wounds and he has since completely recovered. Apparently Max knew that the church was somewhere he could go to get healed.

So, what does it take to be a witness for Christ? Through an example of man's best friend being active in a church body, continuing to care for others, and ultimately placing his life in His Father's hands. I can not think of a better witness.