

The Pastors Connection

Jumping on the Bed

Then because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" ...But many...ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them. Mark 6:31-34

One of the books I enjoy reading to our grandchildren is the story of a bunch of monkeys who create chaos with their energetic activity. The line that ends each page and rings in my head is "The Doctor said: `No more monkeys jumping on the bed!'"

As I write we have accomplished a rich and rewarding 250th celebration! Some of the one hundred (plus) guests who were present were neighbors simply fascinated by the reality that we have been a worshipping community longer than America has been a nation. Many of the guests were persons who grew up in this congregation who scattered elsewhere to live, work and worship and returned to reconnect. Their presence with us gave the weekend the feel of a family reunion!

One of the many highlights was the messages by John D. Roth. I heard choruses of affirmation for his clear biblical teaching that achieved dynamic representation of God at work. I also heard numerous comments that his presentations strengthened appreciation for our Mennonite Colleges. These acknowledgements warmed my spirit. In the 1980's I experienced deep integrity in the professors I had the privilege of sitting under during my three year M. Div. work at Goshen Biblical Seminary. No individual or institution is perfect; every generation has its challenges; but I found our scholars to be ones who "rightly divided the word of truth". It was truly a blessing to have the congregation I love testify to that same experience this weekend.

Any such event takes immense work. We would be remiss if we failed to express deep gratitude to the many persons who contributed. Note worthy is the work of Becky Yoder and Tina Essick and their team in the kitchen. We applaud the planning team of Lemar and Lois Ann Mast, Paul Kurtz and Ruth Stoltzfus! Their tireless creative energy and immense leadership sacrifice granted the rest of us places to contribute. Thank you to one and all!!

Together you were gracious hosts. Together we were enriched by story and song and scripture and laughter and tears. Through it all we were reminded that history has best impact when it is His story impacting our story.

It is also true that many of us were tired during and after the weekend. And I suspect I'm not the only one who is at greater risk of being grumpy with tired. Introverts need quiet space away from the crowd. Introverts will want to hear: "Our leaders are clear: 'No more big events yet this year.'"

The challenge of course is similar to what Jesus encountered when headed with his disciples towards a quiet retreat: the needs got there ahead of him and engaged his heart of compassion. So Monday morning Re-uzit staff and volunteers were back at their stations. The Masts were here putting documents away and returning our facilities to their usual order. Today Neighbors is meeting and our doors will open for another food pantry distribution.

In the text above Jesus' heart remained open to compassion; even as he aimed for balance by seeking rest. I pray we will do the same. We are created after-all as human "beings" not human "doings." But we are also commissioned to be "doing" the works of the kingdom. So alongside some jumping on the bed; find time to rest on it as well. None of us wants to declare "The Doctor said 'No more monkeys jumping on the bed!'"

Joyfully living His story with you, Pastor Bob