

From This Corner
Larry Baird

“Children, Go Where I Send Thee”

Brenda, my wife, and I have two sons. They periodically refer to Dad’s sense of humor. When they do I get the feeling they think it is strange, and at the very least a little different. Maybe it is. Anyway, there are a lot more serious things over which people claim to have no control. This is mine. For instance, frequently I will be working on something and a song pops into my head.

The other day Bishop Fisher and the cabinet were working on appointments and the song “Children, Go Where I Send Thee” completely overtook my thought process.

*Children, go where I send thee.
How shall I send thee?
Three for the Hebrew children.
Two for Paul and Silas.
One for the little bitty baby
That’s born, born, born in Bethlehem.*

Why this happens is a bit of a mystery to me, but if you think about it, there is a clear connection. This song has applicability to our appointment process. At the heart of our sense of Christian community in the United Methodist Church is the Scriptural understanding that God seeks us out to be in relationship with Jesus Christ and others. When we respond to that call to be in Christian community we also discover that God wants to equip us and send us forth to gather others in so that they too might become disciples of Jesus Christ.

For instance, God told Moses, “I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.” God asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah responded, ‘Here am I, send me.’ When Jesus encountered the disciples after the resurrection he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.”

The big story in the Bible, the major narrative, is that people get called and get equipped for ministry and mission. They then get “sent out,” oftentimes to places they would never had chosen to go themselves. Some pastors tell me appointments are just like that.

Consequently, it is not strange that this song should have overtaken me as we were making appointments. In fact, I think it would be a nice touch if when the cabinet contacts pastors regarding a new appointment we play a recording of Bishop Fisher singing, “Children, Go Where I Send Thee.” This would soften and prepare them for what would come next.

Tonight I have yet another Church Conference. Is that Willie Nelson singing, “On the road again?”

*On the road again,
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway.
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world be turnin' our way
And our way
Is on the road again.*

Do not mention this to Adam and Jordan.