

From This Corner

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Snow Days

It is the time for snow in our conference, and especially so on this corner. As a youngster, I always liked the snow. I have fond memories of sledding with my brother down what we called “the school hill” behind our house on Garland Street in Lyndonville. It was a short but fast run enhanced by the need to avoid trees, the neighbor’s raspberry bushes, and the other neighbor’s fence. Our “Flexible Flyers” had dents in the front metal guards from failure to maneuver about the trees. Our faces would periodically show the scratches from close encounters with the thorns of the berry bushes. He and I had trails mapped out of varying complexity like the maps you see of ski areas. We had the straight down run, and the daredevil run that required real agility to avoid head-on encounters with the trees. I can still hear my brother’s laughter as he rolled off after collisions and near misses. It was then a glorious, risky and exciting adventure. A tree might dislodge us from the sled and send us downhill on our bellies, forcing the snow up the sleeves of our snowsuits. A real miscalculation might send us directly into the raspberries and risk us “being hollered at” by Mr. Stalker, the owner of the berries and a fellow Methodist. To this day, I do not know whether this relationship made it better or worse. My sense is Mr. Stalker’s grace-filled Wesleyan perspective probably saved us from wrath more than once.

As time passed and I became a father, I continued my excitement with snow by celebrating the first snowfall of the year by grabbing one of my sons, putting on a recording of Leroy Anderson’s “Sleigh Ride” and dancing around like a fool with them on my shoulders. Brenda says that to this day the first snowfall evokes images of this spectacle. I suspect it does so because such “craziness” is not a usual part of my demeanor. This may be a surprise to you, but I doubt it.

These days I still like snow. The other afternoon the sun was out, the sky was blue, and from my office window there was a view that I can scarce imagine was any less glorious than the sight of the angel on that first Easter morning. “His face shown like lightening, and his clothing was as white as snow.” (Matthew 28:3)

There are downsides of snow, of course. Sometimes it makes travel miserable on the way to and from a Charge Conference. Sometimes it frustrates Brenda and me on our commutes back and forth. Nevertheless, generally, I believe snow is a good thing. The Bible, by the way, would seem to agree. Snow is variously used in scripture as an image of salvation as in Psalm 51:7, “wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Sometimes it is used as an image of refreshment as in Proverbs 25:13, “Like the cold of snow in time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him ...” or as in an image of the glory of Christ as in Revelation 1:14. “His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow ...”

Therefore, the next time it snows in western New York it occurs to me that there are various possibilities. One would be to go and have some fun. Another might be to recognize a “snow day” that cancels meetings and appointments. A serendipitous snow Sabbath could be called and we could do some reflecting on the twenty-four scripture passages that mention the white stuff. There is nothing we can do about when it comes or where it falls, so we might as well embrace it for all its worth. From this corner it seems like its worth a lot.