

FROM THIS CORNER

Taking Andy Fishing

Larry R. Baird

Fishermen like myself have our favorite stretches of streams, favorite pools, and frequently know where a lunker lies beneath an undercut stream bank. We are unlikely to reveal this information to others. Periodically we will find some hot spot infrequently fished and guard its location with a self-protecting zeal. We will not even share these locations with a fishing buddy if we know he or she is given to loose lips. We do not want to find everybody and their brother fishing the spot the next time we get a day to hit the streams.

It occurred to me that I might be reluctant to take Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, fishing with me. He seems to be the gregarious type who is happy to tell anybody about anything. For instance, no sooner did he find out about Jesus, than he had to find his brother and announce, "We have found the Christ!" Not only did he tell him about Jesus but also felt inclined to take him to the Lord. (John 1:40-42) Andy, I think, would write an article for the newspaper and reveal my fishing hot spots. He might even put up a sign pointing to the exact spot I had caught and released a trophy brown. I suspect he would even take a few by the hand and bring them to the spot where the fish of a lifetime is to be found.

On the other hand, I believe most of my prime fishing spots would be quite safe with many United Methodists. It has been my experience that these people can keep things to themselves. They can have the best church in a fifty-mile radius and not tell a soul about it. As I travel about the district, I hear pastor after pastor describe wonderful programs and ministries. I have heard them preach. I have celebrated with them in worship. I have said, "Now that is a church I would like to attend!" Yet as frequently, I hear them tell me about a congregation that just does not share what they have with others. They enjoy friendly, supportive Christian community. They frequently hear good messages from dedicated pastors. They may participate in a personally transforming small group. They may have gone on a life-changing mission trip to help those in need. They may have a faith in Jesus Christ that has sustained them and brought them through extremely difficult times, but they are reluctant to share what they have. These people would be safe with my fishing secrets.

But Andy? I'm not so sure whether I would invite him to go fishing, but I sure would like at least one of him in each of our churches. He just cannot keep a good thing to himself.

Evangelism and being invitational is not as hard as many of us believe. Most all of us have a friend or relative who needs what we know God provides in the Christian fellowship of our local churches. Most of us know the transforming, life-giving opportunity waiting when we get to know Jesus Christ. Most of our churches are one Andy away from coming alive. I know that is true. Are you like Andy who likes to share the best things in life? Go then! Tell your sister or brother. Take your friend by the

hand, introduce them to the people of the United Methodist Church, and together get to know Jesus, who is the Christ.

Wisdom is to know what to share and why. I'm still thinking about whether or not to take Andy fishing. What do you say?