

## **“WILD HOGS?”** **IT’S A STRETCH!**

This week saw ‘yours truly’ preparing a church service, or should I say *trying* to prepare one. My great difficulty was in selecting just the ‘right’ scripture which would speak to 117 years of Christian worship and endeavor; one that would not ignore recent difficulties which this group of Christians had endured; and one that would offer a strong element of encouragement for the future. Already I can hear Rev. Jean Wilson saying something like... ‘best of luck Ian,’ or: ‘rather you than me,’ and in many ways she is right as it is often a very difficult task trying to select scripture which speaks to our specific needs here in the third millennia. Difficult, but NOT impossible, and my dogged determination and many hours of sifting through reams of Old and New Testament writings finally brought me to the point of being satisfied with my selections.

Getting things *just right* in our lives takes patience, persistence and providence as there is seldom one pat answer that will cover all our needs. We are a complicated people living complex lives and a visit back to the big smoke of Toronto as I did yesterday, served to remind me why I now happily call myself a County person. Seven years ago I left behind the frenetic pace at which the people of the city live in order to ‘retire’ to a more sedentary way of living. But living at a slower pace brings its own challenges, and one of these is the altered ability to make decisions, as my journey through the Bible would indicate. Gone are the days of being able to...No, let me correct that and say HAVING to make multiple important decisions each and every day about things like finance, personnel, sales, revenues, travel.....did I just say TRAVEL.....??? YES Ian you did say TRAVEL.....decisions about travel..... And that takes me to the kitchen table last night with two friends pouring over maps of Canada and the United States and a blank piece of paper labeled: “Bike Trip.”

If you have managed to reach this point in your reading without moving to another page of the Mirror, I just know I have your attention. Pastor Ian, and two friends pouring over maps to plan a “Bike Trip!” Three guys some might have the temerity to suggest are just a little bit past their “sell by” dates, planning to set out on a big adventure across the freeways, highways and byways of Canada and the USA. Wild Hogs, John Travolta and friends watch out, WE ARE COMING!!!!

Now that’s the easy bit...the decision to GO bit. Here comes the toughie: WHERE TO GO? Have you ever opened a map/s of North America, pencil in hand and tried to decide where to go on a few days travel? It’s hard....its



REALLY hard because, thank God there are so many wonderful places within our reach, from even here on our little island in lake Ontario. It becomes an even more complicated decision when three “GREAT” guys are thinking through the possibilities, and none of them wants to be the one to make a decision. Friends don’t want to take the lead, and this found us at one moment cruisin’ across the Appalachian Mountains, and at another, safely ensconced on a ferry on Lake

Superior after being quite unsure of the ferry departure times.

I don’t like to get wet and neither do my biker friends, so the thought of running into some of the wet stuff on this trip forced us to eliminate the East Coast which one of my buddies, who is a dab hand at meteorological forecasting, (Dave Devall beware!) was able to point out was subject to low pressure areas at that time of year. Another sage comment came in respect of traffic conditions and the wisdom of perhaps avoiding the centre of Chicago at 4.30 p.m. on a weekday afternoon. These great gems of knowledge and co-operation flowed continuously, and the route for the trip gradually formed in our minds with the help of one of Pastor Ian’s somewhat strong espresso coffees to keep us on track with power thinking. We managed to avoid the need to break out into groups with our more difficult questions and the meeting ended with dates, outward route and the happy anticipation of getting together again, sometime in the future to dot some of the T’s and cross some of the I’s of our planning.

I know that you are anxious to know what scripture I finally chose for the good people of the church congregation. ☺ It was the story of Paul and Timothy’s second missionary journey across Turkey into what is now south eastern Greece. (You’ll find it in Acts 16:1-15) This journey was one in which the Spirit was the decision maker as Paul and Timothy ‘felt’ their way from village community to towns and cities, sharing what they powerfully believed was the greatest news the world had ever heard. They brought gospel into the lives of people, many of whom lived with great hardship, scratching a living out of a land that all too often did not cooperate. They brought the hope of better times to come and a way of thinking about life which eased the many burdens of the people, making them just a bit more tolerable.

As I reflect on the frenetic pace at which the peoples of our cities now live, I can’t help but think that out of the 168 hours in the week, one hour given up to spiritual matters on a Sunday would serve to ease the tensions and pressures of life, and perhaps bring back some meaning into what often seems like forced labour. Joining the

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