

REFLECTION

FAITH IS BEST LIVED ON OUR FEET

Faith lived on one's feet can be disrupting. It can make a powerful impact in the name of justice.

Bill Way, along with his wife, Heather Chubb-Way, have made five trips to Guatemala over ten years beginning in 2009. He labelled their adventure as one of Path of Non-Control. On their first trip their two daughters accompanied them on a two week stove building event in the highlands of Guatemala. Each team had a master builder and a translator. Fun, bonding, relaxation - a very different trip.

They had been introduced to the program - "Hearts and Hands" - by Bill's aunt. Here truly they were called upon to live their faith on their feet with a different language and within a different culture. "We learned to form a bond with people with no shared language who lived a simple life unlike at home. It changed each of us and the way we live our life - putting ourselves out there without control and design."

Pat Fryers began her segment with a little black tumbler in hand rather than a paper cup for water. "Having faith is not convenient. My faith, convictions and beliefs guide me. My choices are more deliberate. What's beneath my actions?"

In answering her question, she spoke of her appreciation of others who are prepared to disrupt their faith, to change their status quo. Going down memory lane, she said she was a law abiding, rules-following young person whose first social action was taking on the issue of "Second-hand smoke." Her Non-Smokers' Rights Group helped to bring changes (we've all come to appreciate.) Addictive Behaviours were her next focus as her profession took her into a setting where 50% of the staff smoked and 10 years later, it became a smoke free work place.

As a Union Steward, she was a bit of a rebel, enforcing a no-smoking rule as she conducted impaired drivers' seminars. Other injustices have caused Pat to speak up - sometimes like a pebble in a pond and, at other times, like a boulder.

During the past three years, she has been active in the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good (see Adult Spiritual Development Ministry page for detailed information). It was her "turn to contribute" and her focus was the Seniors' committee which sought to provide a broader spectrum of services for non-medical support to seniors — not just to low income individuals but for all seniors to live independently in their homes as long as possible. This focus brought her into meetings with Calgary's mayor and city council.

With the results of this focus coming to fruition, she is supporting the new initiatives of CACG. Her closing comment was this story. A shoe company interested in expanding into Africa sent an employee to investigate potential - he came back with the finding that "No one wears shoes. Halt the shipment."

Another salesman was sent to affirm his findings. His comment - "Triple the order. No one wears shoes." Being disruptive is Pat's faith on her feet. **A pearl is created by a grain of sand irritating the oyster.**

Colin Outtrim spoke of his struggle to initiate disruptive change with he being the first target. He liked Eldon's adaptation of the J.F. Kennedy quote: "Ask not what St. David's can do for you but what you can do for St. David's."

His work on the Edge Committee Initiative at St. David's has been an eye-opening activity for him. He referred to Rev. Peggy's reflection on August 18, 2019 where she discussed Pastor John Duckworth's version of Jesus overturning the money changers' tables in the temple. Jesus was unsettled, angry, wanting change. He went on to say that our United Church of Canada came from diverse groups and faced many obstacles as it is still undergoing. "We have kept the vision."

During the past year, Colin has learned a lot about the people of St. David's with their many views and directions. Some are leapers. Some are frozen and some are willing to explore options to thoughtful change. He asked, "How does faith guide our decisions?" Individually and as a church we are not alone. We listen, converse, act. How? By being disruptive, making change as needed but always with the vision in mind.

Jennifer McTavish, Affirming Committee of SDUC, spoke of the United Church of Canada Affirming Convention held in Calgary this summer and of the upcoming Pride Parade. It is hard to be queer, she said. Support makes such a difference. She pointed out the button she was wearing that said "You are a Blessing."

Being disruptive and being scared go hand in hand. She has chosen to be a companion to others at risk, encouraged to do the work of support. She referred to two main speakers at the conference. A Queer Pastor from USA talked about "queer grace" like the one coin found by the woman in one of Jesus' parables and said that the Bible can be read through a variety of lenses. The second speaker was a First Nation Cree who identified as Two Spirit. He gave a short history of gender roles and the origin of 2-Spirit, going on to say that his culture recognizes five genders.

Jennifer discussed how we listen and the importance of listening and sharing. Next week's Pride Parade will host a Wellness Oasis and St. Davidians have brought cookies to church today to be handed out at Knox United beginning at 9 a.m. All are welcome!

Special thanks to Bill, Pat, Colin and Jennifer. I hope I have captured the gist of your talk.