

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

(Column Number 2144)

"IT'S METHODIST FOOD, BUT LET'S BLESS IT ANYWAY"

Most of my regular readers of this column know that I was not born right here in Newport; but I was raised right here in Newport - as a Methodist!.

Yep, that's right; my mom and dad were members of the First Methodist Church where we lived. I was seven when we moved to Newport; and had seven years of perfect attendance Sunday school pins.

They joined the First Methodist Church in the beautiful - but old - building downtown. The Baptist and Presbyterian Churches were within spittin' distance of our Church and we shared various resources (like choir leaders and young people) with each other.

I became a member; and was there when the congregation moved to its present location on Third Street and Washington Avenue.

And so, I have many friends in that church and in that denomination - and many wonderful memories of growing up there.

Becoming a Baptist pastor is a long story - and you don't want to hear it now; so, let's just move on to my title for today.

I love my friends in whatever church they attend and worship. I like to tease and have fun on the way to heaven - you know - enjoy the trip.

So, when a member of our church passed away; and the burial was to take place in the Chestnut Hill Cemetery, it forced me to go kicking and screaming against my will into the presence of - some Methodists!!!!

Oh mercy me, what will I do????? How will I ever survive this ordeal?????

I am reminded of the old deacon who was giving the annual report in his Baptist church (we Baptists like to give reports); and he said (if you have heard this one - please fast forward through the next couple of paragraphs) - but this old gentleman reported: "Well, we didn't do too well this year. Attendance is down, giving is down, morale is down - but, praise the Lord, the Methodists down the street didn't do no good either!"

I can change the wording on that to tease with my Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, Pentecostal - or whatever - friends.

But, isn't that taking the "Christian Faith" to a totally illogical conclusion? What was wrong with that picture?

Anyway; we had the graveside service in the Chestnut Hill Cemetery by the Methodist Church - and they had the nerve to ask me to invite everyone to the fellowship hall to eat lunch - Methodist food!

Good grief, is there no shame? Is there no depths to which I will descend to get a free meal?

But, I faithfully and flawlessly performed my duties and invited everyone to "come and dine"; and then made my way like a sheep to the slaughter to the fellowship hall of the Chestnut Hill Methodist Church. Shucks, they even asked me to ask the blessing (or "say grace" or "bless the food" - however you say it - it's all the same) - and I did!

And then I ate! And you know what - I know you're not going to believe this, but it's true - with all the teasing about "immersing or sprinkling" the chicken - you know that food tasted just like "normal" food. It did! It did!

I'm telling you, the biscuits looked and tasted like - well biscuits, and the ham, and deviled eggs - and (I know you're not going to believe this) so did the coffee!

The same thing could be said about the conversation around the tables - it was just good conversation with both old friends and new acquaintances.

Hey, those ladies did well! They did it up right!

You know I have written this with tongue in cheek - you guys know that; but the point can be made that Jesus Christ died for us all; and whenever and where ever Christ is preached, I rejoice. Whenever and where ever Christ is held up, I thank God!

After all; aren't we sorta supposed to be in this thing together?

Tom Mooty was raised in Newport; and has served as Pastor to the West End Baptist Church for a total aggregate of thirty-four years. You are encouraged to contact Mooty with your comments at tommooty15@gmail.com.

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