

Musings



Response magazine is an official publication of the United Methodist Women. In their current issue I was surprised to discover an article about a trip my wife, Denise, and I took in the summer of 2014. The article was written by Joann Crawford, UMW President at St. Luke's UMC where I last served as pastor.

As an introduction, I have been a recreational cyclist off and on since the late 1970's. I started commuting to my work by bicycle when gas prices first hit a dollar! In the years since I have enjoyed bicycle-riding vacations in various southern states like Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, and of course, North Carolina. I always wondered, however, what it would be like to pedal across the United States. I thought it would be a great thing to do in retirement.

A few years ago my wife challenged me to not put off this dream. In so many words she was urging me to seize the moment. So, I requested a renewal leave from my congregation and they were gracious enough to make the time away possible.

At the same time I was pondering this very personal goal, I was also burdened by a global problem - that of human trafficking. For over a decade I have been growing in my awareness and understanding of this issue, and increasingly troubled as I wondered what I could do to address it beyond simply preaching. So, I met with my local UMW unit to see if they'd be willing to support my bike ride as a fund-raising effort for UMW efforts to stop human trafficking. They wholeheartedly agreed!

The rest is history. We raised over \$17,000 for the UMW's ministry to curb modern slavery while I was out climbing the Appalachians, crossing the Great Plains, and navigating the Rockies. The experience was truly once-in-a-lifetime and it was life-changing in so many ways. One thing I learned is to appreciate each day – to live in the present – indeed, to seize the moment. Another thing I learned is that people are extremely generous when they are made aware of the needs in the world.

As you engage the world as disciples of Jesus Christ, I encourage you to seize the moment. As Jesus reminds us, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own." The opportunities for ministry are often right before you. Don't put your dreams, or your convictions, on hold. God has prepared the way.

God's Peace,

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