

Many of our Lions are Kitty Cats, but the Peril Remains

Loving music promotes a fringe benefit that is sometimes greater than the listening enjoyment. Wonderful things happen when the memories so easily wrap themselves around a fragment of a composition, the melody, the lyrics, or both.

The church and my faith have been constant factors in my life, and many of these musical memories are from childhood Vacation Bible School songs. Some I seem to have known forever, but in other instances I can recall a particular time and place where the song blessed me in some unforgettable way.

That's the way it is with an old hymn "Dare to be a Daniel," by Phillip Bliss, one of the most popular hymnists of the nineteenth century. You know how occasionally a song or just the "hook" that you sang years before comes back to you when a word or sound reminds you of the song. You can't get it out of your head.

Vacation Bible School participants were taught the words, given instruments, and told we were "Daniel's Band." All seven of us sang to the top of our voice...David was best, Priscilla, Shirley, Gary, Jimmy and I followed David's lead. From childhood Sunday School and VBS, I knew all about Daniel. I knew King Nebuchadnezzar, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego...and that terrible fiery furnace. I knew when Daniel was only a boy, he was carried captive to a strange land. The Babylonians were wise enough to see that some of the young Jewish men had notable potential. Daniel and others were selected for special government service training.

Enemies of Daniel crafted a plan to appeal to the king's pride and vanity. They intended to rid him from leadership with a decree for all captives and natives to pray as Darius commanded. With the King's reluctant approval Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. His enemies sealed the entrance with the king's signet ring. King Darius spent a miserable, sleepless night. He was sad about losing his friend and most able public servant. Early the next morning, at the dawning of the day, Darius rushed to what he thought had been the place of execution. Peering into the den, he found Daniel safe in the midst of the hungry creatures.

None of the Community Church in Kingsmill magnificent seven knew how following prayer traditions would be tested. Nor could we know how confusing it would be to determine when and how firm stands should be taken. The late Rev. Peter Marshall was chaplain of the United States Senate. He once prayed, "*Lord, help us to stand for something lest we fall for anything.*" Let us all stand for loving our neighbors, loving all human beings, as we love ourselves.

Amen to that!

Peace always,
Ted