

Come on in, the water's Fine!

And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him (Luke 5:11, KJV).



Setting, Scene One: Growing up in Portland, in the early '40's, with many fathers still off at war or "working the shipyards," our mothers, then stay-at-home-Moms, were busy keeping ration-card meals on the table for us kids. SO, it was a wild and wonderful treat when the one mother on the block, who had a car and even knew how to drive, would ring up on the phone, BELmont 6-7208, and announce, "We're going out to the river!" By 9 a.m. we'd all pile in: three Mothers, six kids, blankets, picnic baskets, floaties and all, and head out to Blue Lake Park! That adventure was 11 miles east up the breath-taking Columbia River, and it was, since 1920, still a private park, complete with diving boards and handsome lifeguards. Once we had claimed our three-blanket spot on the two miles of warm, clean sand, my mates would all race to be first getting in. But wait... I was perhaps six, never had a swim lesson, frightened to death of the ten-foot-deep water, hot or cold... and the taunts would start: Come on in "scaredy! The water is fine!" Their taunts rang clear from yards away, as voices do echo, over the water.

Scene Two: SO, I guess I was just in the mood or a wearied state of mind, enough to be so very deeply touched by this life-long, familiar scripture and story related by Luke, of a voice rung out clearly to the beach crowd from a fishing boat. "Come follow me...I'll make you fishers-of-men." I'd never made quite this "connect!" Jesus began his ministry from a fishing boat, challenging unsuccessful, tired fishermen, the four of them, to quit cleaning their nets and go out and try it once more.

How, I thought, can a story and images of a priceless chapter seem so poignant and alive this foggy morning, as if for the first time? Pastor Dubke's voice rang out clear to me, as Christ's crisp voice to the throng on the shore of Galilee rang out over calm waters....

What was I thinking? That: The Oregon District Board of Directors meeting, just 24 hours ago in Eugene, with some thirty-plus hard-working officers gathered, had been challenged to plan and organize for our 2022 Convention against the odds of : Covid, trimmed finances, a re-location, last minute circumstances... and across the bow of our seemingly empty nets came a full slate of nominees to fill offices, a workable host-church, exciting options we'd not yet imagined all coming together... in a rousing catch full of blessings untold!

I had slid in beside Pastor Larry & Sherry Kribs, at Faith Lutheran, Monmouth, that next morning, to be carried away to that lake, and the explicit sounds of a voice so crisp and clear, from a boat pushed off by the future disciples, all four, offshore of the sea of Galilee.

"Come on In! The water of Baptism has made you redeemed! I shall teach you all how to become: Fishers of Men." It will all be just fine.

I pray for you all, great plans for Spring Rallies all over the Oregon District, success in last-minute fund-raisers to meet our Mission Project goals, and for all request and ardent prayers for the Convention plans as they move forward. Your Zone and Board officers deserve your prayers for the herculean roles they play. AND God bless our "ZOOMS!"

Respectfully Yours,

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