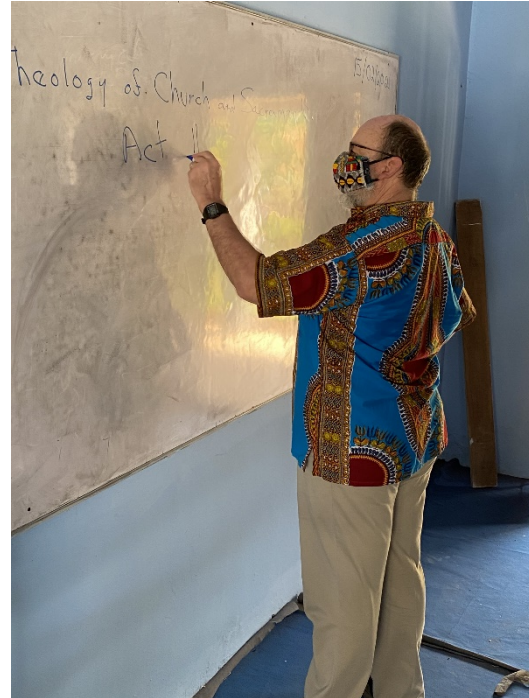


5 March 2021

Singing a Silly Song

It is not uncommon for me to include the use of songs in my teaching. These, of course, are not random songs but songs or hymns I believe share some aspect of the historical, theological, or spiritual sense of the text I am teaching. It then came as a bit of a fun surprise for the class and me as my mind wandered way back to a silly song sung by Mitch Miller of “Sing Along with Mitch,” fame. (For those not familiar with this program, it can be found on YouTube.)



Anyway, I was recently working with my Lay Ministry class assisting them in developing a theological reading of the book of Jonah. Both in the study notes I developed for the class and my class presentation, I stated that the book of Jonah has an abrupt ending. I thought not much about this but noticed a student raised his hand. “What is abrupt?” he asked.

I invited the class to turn to the ending of the story and made an attempt to explain abrupt with a couple of examples. At this point, I could tell the student, and the class, had a better understanding of the word but there remained a faint look of mystery on their faces. Abruptly, in the quirky manner my mind works, the old song came floating back to me. *Be Kind to Your Web Footed Friends*. (Also on YouTube)

Singing with gusto to the tune of the stirring trio of the *Stars and Stars and Stripes Forever*, I came to the lines, “You may think that this is the end. Well, it is!” Abrupt! The class erupted with laughter and begged me to sing it again. Naturally, I obliged.

The day’s lecture continued eventually coming to the closing line, “... and also many animals?” The class in unison said, “Abrupt!” We laughed.



Each day of class brings new and unexpected experiences. Often these experiences come about because of language or cultural differences. Then we need to divert from the lesson and create a *new* lesson where we learn from each other.

Will my students long remember anything I said about Jonah? I suppose one answer to that question will be

found at exam time. What I do know, they will remember *abrupt* and this story will be with them each time read the whimsical yet significant book.

Larry Colvin
Mission Co-Worker
Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary
Peki/Blengo, Ghana