

## Vacation

“Have we gone 25 miles yet?” I shouted toward the front of the car. Dad checked the odometer, “Yes, we’ve gone 25 miles. Why do you ask?” “I saw on a seat belt commercial that most accidents happen within 25 miles of home. I wanted to make sure we’re in the clear,” I replied as I unbuckled my seat belt with relief.

The year was nineteen-sixty-something and we were on our yearly pilgrimage to one of our grandparents’ homes—either Oklahoma or Nebraska. To my grade school way of thinking, the 25-mile danger zone for seat belt use made perfect sense. Dad and Mom thought it was funny.

Way back then before SUVs, we were packed into the cross-country icon called the *station wagon*. My brother Kerry and I were in the way-back seat facing rearward; Sisters Lisa and Linda were spread out on a blanket in the middle section where the seats had been laid down flat; Mom and Dad were in the front part where they took care of business and where Kerry and I were happily out of reach. From there, we would pump our arms in the universal “blow your horn” signal to every truck driver we saw; we’d read our *Mad Magazine*; and take pictures with the “110” cameras we had loaded with a fresh film cartridge so that we could document important things like cows and bridges.

Of course, I remember the destinations of those yearly expeditions but for some strange reason I have the fondest memories of the journeys. Despite all the fighting with my brother and sisters (remember we were out of reach in the way-back), the whining about how long it was taking; even the occasional stop for Pepto Bismol car sickness relief, I still think that getting there was the best part. I blame my preference for driving instead of flying on my parents’ homing instinct to return to their roots every summer.

Nowadays vacations are still opportunity for adventure, and we still take them with adventure in mind. We still look forward to them and make plans, and we have visions of what it will be like, and we strive to make it happen that way. But why do we have to get away from our everyday life to have an exploit? Why can’t life itself be a quest? Sometimes we have an experience that shows our everyday routines and expectations in a different light. Sometimes we realize that the things we do—even the everyday things—have cosmic significance. That’s when we know the truth of that old cliché *Life is a Journey*....

Lately, I’ve been noticing that life really is a journey, and we should be living it with *adventure* in mind. We are never too old, nor too young, to look forward to what happens next and to make plans. We need to have a vision for what it will be like and we need to strive to make it happen that way. Life is a quest that we are on together. Indeed, it has a destination—even better than Grandma’s house—but we should also enjoy the journey....

I’ve also found that, in life’s adventure, most of us are—metaphorically speaking—way past the 25-mile danger zone. Hopefully, we have not taken off our safety belt. Of course, I’m writing about our anchor against the tides; our peace amidst the storms; our seat belt on the highway of life; I mean Jesus. Stay connected—to each other and to our Lord! It occurs to me that a great way to do that is to get connected at church.... Here’s a good vacation destination verse from Matthew’s Gospel:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV)

Be the church, --pastor tony