

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE
Reflections
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

www.rmucc.org

March 2010

Soaring

By David K. Popham

Growing up in Kentucky, I anticipated the strong winds of March. The first breezes aloft were a signal for us kids to run to storage, or stores, or grandparents as kite flying season had arrived. By April the wind would be uncertain, but in March we could soar with the hawks and crows who rode the thermals high above the cornfields.

With the winds arriving my brother and I would rush to the store. Drooling, we eagerly combed the kite display. We checked new designs and the latest in high flying technology. It was a point of pride that our kites be an expression of ourselves cut free from gravity.

Out on the open hill top with the wind twisting our coats around us, we would launch our prized flying machines. The kids who flew their kite the highest or the longest held the boasting rights. Steadily we let out the lines, holding our breath as the kites climbed into the heavens. Feeling the tug of the string we accepted the invitation to let our imaginations soar. That is, until the sudden and dreadful loss of tension, signaling the kite was in a crash dive. If we ran fast enough the kite might regain altitude. But more often than not, the kite would lunge and spiral into the ground – proof that Newton was right all along.

From my time on the hill, I learned two important lessons about kites. First, it is the tension on the string that creates resistance and enables the kite to fly. Second, it is the weight of the tail that stabilizes the kite and enables it to rise as high as the string is long.



From these kite lessons I have been able to appropriate the deep wisdom of our faith. Real freedom is not unfettered do-as-you-please soaring. Rather true soaring is disciplined hope in the midst of struggles for peace and wholeness.

Soaring is not getting through this life without distress, but singing a spiritual in the midst of difficulty that leaves legs aching from dancing its joyous rhythm.

Soaring is not avoiding those things that leave us for dead, but rising with Lazarus and gnawing on the prime rib of life knowing it never tasted so good.

Soaring is pulling with all your strength on the resistance of injustice and imbalance, recognizing that it will lift you up and not drag you down.

Soaring is discovering, as Paul the apostle did, that “We have this confidence in Christ Jesus...”

Run hard. Run fast. Let the blast of your own sonic boom resonate through the resistance. Cornfields never look the same to those who have seen the tops of the clouds.

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