

When The Kids Came Home, What a Blessing

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Between June 19th and the 23,rd both of our children surprised us with an unforgettable visit, celebrating both Father's Day and, Mother's Day. It had been over ten years since Brett and Laurie's last visit from their Ca. Home, and this year they brought along both of their children and their wives.

Neither Brett's daughter Nicolette and her husband, Blair, nor Brett's son, Nathan and his wife Kelly had ever been to Minnesota. where Brett had rented out a beautiful multi bedroom lake place on Long Lake near Detroit Lakes.

Audrey and I sensed that they made the trip for us, since our days of flying out to California to visit them are over, both of us being over 80.

Their visit featured several happy coincidences; the first being that Matt Johnson, the owner of that delightful vacation place, is the son of Mike Johnson, who used to manage the student center at NDSCS, arranging the many activities there.

Mike is a gifted actor who appeared in several community theater performances. Mike is also a *turtle*, who endured several of our notorious *faculty fishing trips*. One was on Bigstone Lake, SD where he visited my

cabin on that lake. His son Matt says Mike's still healthy and living on another Minn. Lake.

Trying not to brag, let me say that Brett's kids married well; both to bright, talented and successful spouses. Nicolette's husband, Blair is 6' 9, and played semi pro basketball in Europe. He owns a gymnasium, where he trains young athletes in the fundamentals of several sports.

Grandson, Nathan, once a trim water polo player, is now 6'5, 250, and has a real gift for selling home restoration products like siding. His lovely new wife, Kelly, is a human relations consultant for a major hotel chain.

There's not a throwback in the bunch. All are friendly, humble, approachable and attractive people. Call it luck, maybe, but I call it God-given inspiration. Brett took all the mistakes I made in raising him and took the opposite approach in raising Nathan and Nicolette, and both grew up confident and blessed with uncommon common sense.

Now here's another surprise: I had brought along six fishing rods, some rigged for pan fish, and some for bass. They were baited with my home tied "twinkler," jigs for pan fish, and lime and white skirted spinner baits, for bass.

I had doubts that that tackle would ever get used, but I was wrong; our dock was good for fishing, and once introduced to the sport, the kids took to angling like bears to honey. All of them loved it; any thing they caught, whether a little sunfish, or a three lb. bass pike, brought shrieks of delight.

When we weren't all up in the lodge visiting, two or three of them were on that dock fishing. And later when 9 of us all of us got into that big pontoon, we had an unforgettable time, both catching fish and surviving a crisis.

Somehow, in being told how to navigate the pontoon, Brett had missed the part about avoiding shallow, mud-bottomed areas with mill foil and lily pads, traditional hot spots for bass. I was sitting back wards in the bow, so I didn't see how shallow we were getting. Then came the bad news; "we're stuck!"

We tried a lot of things, both Nathan and Blair got out to try to dislodge us, but nothing helped. Then I got an inspiration from the Holy Spirit, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." So I shouted out loud, "Jesus, Help us! I think we need angels." And someone said, "Amen!"

Amazingly, slowly the pontoon backed out toward deeper water. I told Brett to shift that 70 hp Mercury back and forth between forward and reverse, and a huge clump of weeds and mud rolled up. But, thank God, we were free and we sailed joyously back to our dock.

Here's an important revelation: On our own, we were hopelessly stuck, but, "With God, all things are possible." Always take Him along. Trusting in Him is best insurance faith can buy, "for the joy of the Lord is our strength."

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