



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Family Identify

I don't know if you've noticed, but a lot of my identity is tied up with Swede stuff. I remember Santa Lucia on December 13th every year – I don't really do anything about it, but I do remember. I remember St. John's day – about like next weekend – as Mid-summer. I remember Christmas Eve and pancakes, and coffee bread and sil (pickled herring) and lutfisk and other unmentionables that are part and parcel of our culture.

But I grew up in New England and that is also part and parcel of who I am – I can speak proper English, I know Hahvahd is a great college in Cambridge and Yay-ill is a school in New Haven. The 19th of April is patriots day and we know why (On the 19th of April in '75, hardly a man is now alive who remembers the famous day and year of the midnight ride of Paul Revere). We grow up “doing” the Cape, Plymouth and other denizens of pilgrims. Anything west of Massachusetts (which we can spell) is the Midwest and Chicago is like another country, it's so far away – and the people talk funny, too.

Now, obviously, some of my background is transferrable and some is not. But having said all of that, my culture is a part of me. Each of us carries a marvelous abundance of cultural items. It may be our manner of speech or our outlook on life. It may be what we learned from our neighbors and/or our early life experiences. It may be a lot of things – but all in all, our culture is part and parcel of who we are.

Obviously this offers a richness to this family of God we should celebrate as we gather together.

My hope is that you share the richness of your cultural background and your experiential background with all of us. God has given each of us unique experiences that we can pull into this family to make it richer. If you don't share your culture and talents we are all less for it.

There are times I wonder why God has put us all in this particular family together but I am thankful for it. I know that sometimes when we try to do things together we can feel there is a little friction. Sometimes things just glide along beautifully and wonderful projects get done. We are blessed with at least two wonderful cooks in this family who can cook for a lot of people at once, and they offer their services so that the people in many places are fed in times of need and/or thanksgiving.

Who we are and what we can offer in terms of talent and time is often the result of our cultural background. Don't hide any of it.

Rejoice that we have so many differences among us. It's amazing, but we may yet learn something new from each other as we move along together.

The United States is one of the few places in the world where people are so mixed up genetically. As we look into our heritage we may find Polish, German, French, Native American, West Indian or Indian or African heritage, Oriental or middle Eastern. It's really fascinating. It's what makes us "American" and brings us together in this land.

Our faith is the same. It may have different beginnings, but the basic faith is the same and that unites us in this place and in this particular family of God.



TMK

-- *Week of June 13, 2010*