My Most Embarrassing Moment

Watered-Down Faith

IN THE SUMMER of 1959, I was 14 and a helper at the vacation Bible school run by the First Methodist Church in Bowling Green, Ohio.

I worked in the kitchen to prepare refreshments for a hundred or so wiggly VBS attendees. Mel, our associate pastor and VBS director, explained how I was to get a count from each teacher, prepare Kool-Aid, add cookies and deliver the beverages and snacks on trays.

The hardest part was making the Kool-Aid. I had to figure out how much water to mix with the drink powder and sugar.

Everything worked well…until the third day.

I misjudged the amounts for the flavor of the day—root beer—and added 6 quarts of water instead of the 4 I should have added. Diluted root beer Kool-Aid was not a hit, and most of the glasses came back untouched.

While that was embarrassing enough for an immature teenager, I hoped time would erase my misdeed from the church's collective memory.

It did—until several months later, when Mel was preaching a sermon. "Our faith should be a dynamic and driving force in our lives, not something we approach casually," he said. "There was certainly nothing halfhearted about Jesus' message or example.

"And He asks the same from us. Indeed, when we only halfheartedly respond to His challenges, we live the kind of nonchalant and watered-down faith that we should find as distasteful and

unappetizing as…diluted root beer Kool-Aid!”

He continued as I shrank into the pew. Was everyone looking at me? Here I’d barely recovered from the notoriety when he used me as a sermon example.

—Anne Adams, Houston, Texas

Flew from Her Mouth

WHEN I WAS 7 or 8 years old, in 1938, we were living in a small house on a farm in Grant County, Oklahoma. In those days before electricity and air-conditioning, the house had a screened-in porch, as well as screens on all the windows.

The bright light from the carbide lights in the house produced plenty of lighting and attracted every type of flying bug. When a screen door opened, you didn’t dillydally. Small moths called millers would be through the opening in a split second. They’d immediately take up a flight pattern circling one of the carbide lights. Occasionally, one would pass too close to the flame and end up crashing down, as in a WWI dogfight.

One evening, our neighbors came over to visit, and the moths seemed to be more aggressive that night. Mother, flyswatter in hand, was frantically trying to reduce their numbers. Finally, in exasperation, she burst out, “These pesky millers are always coming in when you don’t want them, and you can hardly get rid of them!”

Everyone smiled, and then she realized what she had said. The family that came over that night was the Millers.

—Ivan Pfalser, Caney, Kansas