

A LITTLE SNOW, A LITTLE SLUSH: LESSONS FROM THE LAKE

It started out as a wonderful exercise in exercise, then...

My Monday started off with boldly forging out on to a frozen lake on my snowshoes in a growing winter storm. As I moved out across the snow finding my pace, I settled myself into enjoying the scenery and the solitude as the snow swirled around me. I was keeping the shore on my right and felt quite safe in spite of the growing storm. "Keep the trees in view as you circle the lake," I thought, "and you will be alright." With each footfall, my snowshoes would break through a thin ice crust on top of the snow and then settle into the soft powder beneath.

Then I began to notice something odd. After the initial crunch of the top crust of snow and the soft settling of the snowshoe, I was beginning to sense something else, something I could not quite identify, not quite a sound and not quite a feeling. Then I stopped and looked back. What I saw moved me to action: the line of tracks behind me were slowly filling with water. Not a good sign. I quickly turned right and headed inland, out of the slush and into the brush.

OK, actually into someone's back yard, but I was still just as disoriented. My initial circle tour of Round Lake had been derailed. I won't say I was lost; I was just lacking known, fixed reference points. Enter Google Maps. Enter an old, cold phone battery. I caught just enough map to plot my next move before the screen went blank. So I walked a while with the phone in my pocket warming, then I fired it up again and made a call. I spoke to our host, advised him of where I thought I was and got directions back to the cabin. I returned a little wetter, a little colder, and a little wiser.

Ministry lessons from the day: first, it is a good idea to look around as you move forward, checking your bearings against fixed reference points, like the never changing Word of God. Second, it can be helpful to look back to see if where you have been might give you a clue as to what you are headed into. Is something bubbling to the surface that you missed as you rushed by? Taking a pause to reflect each week is a good place to start. Third, standing on solid ground is not necessarily a good place to be if you are about to head in the wrong direction. Knowing where you are and having clear goals is a good thing. Fourth, there is nothing wrong with calling for help. Prayer and a few good friends can make all the difference.

In short it was an eventful day of learning that could have ended much worse. For those of you who feel like you are slogging forward in life and ministry and may need a little help, don't hesitate to give us a call. We are here to help you stay on top of the ice and on the right path.

In Christ,

Kelley Johnson
NCD Pastoral Care