

## The Un-Call

I decided to be a minister three years before God was ready for me.

This was in 1945, I was fifteen years old, and at summer camp at spectacular Ceta Canyon in far west Texas. You drive along this flat, oh-so-flat prairie and all of a sudden you drive down into Switzerland. Well, Switzerland-esque.

The last night was Commitment Time. There was emotion, lots of it, and graphic descriptions of eternal consequences, and I remember part of the evening was called the “faggot service” (yes!), wherein we were exhorted to cast our “chief sin” into the campfire, by writing it on a piece of paper which was then ceremoniously tossed into the fire. All of us were concerned that our wadded up paper wouldn’t get burned so we watched it carefully, and some of us edged up closer to shove the paper in with a foot.

There was also a heavy, heavy pitch for “full time Christian service.” When the challenge came about one’s vocation, I gave it serious thought, for the first time ever—and even gave God a chance to snag me. “If you’ll show me a sign, up there above that canyon rim, I’ll be a preacher,” I bargained, looking up at those sheer rock walls above us.

If an unwary jackrabbit had happened to leap before he looked, or even an iconic West Texas tumbleweed had blown over the edge, the forces of the minions of heaven would have been enriched by the addition of one arrogant and misguided Texas teenager that very night.

I waited, and waited—probably giving the Almighty four or five minutes to land such a rich haul... but nothing happened. Nothing.

I heaved a sigh of relief and went back to wondering if I

could retrieve some girl's wadded-up sin-sheet with the toe of my shoe.

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