

Running almost naked down a welsh mountain side

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When we go up to N Wales into the mountain to our cottage that is without electricity, and miles from any modern civilization there is a tradition that has developed. I learnt it from my Dad, but I am not sure how far back it goes.

We run up the hill beside the cottage first thing in the morning and get into the freezing cold Welsh mountain river naked. It hurts it is so cold. But it is the most amazing experience, just being out there on the side of the mountain, with no other human beings for miles and miles, and just being able to stand their naked and jump in to the river. We also jump out quite fast because of how cold it is, and then run back down the grass verge, past a few hill sheep, to the cottage for breakfast.

This half term break I was there and two of my boys came up the hill with me. My Dad wasn't there. Although I did get an email from him addressed to my boys, saying that he hoped we had been in the river:

"I hope you are still having morning swims in the pool led by your sporting Dad. It is very good for your bodies and helps create white blood cells which are disease destroyers. That may be why I hardly ever get ill."

So I went in, and the boys 'half went in', but they did their best. It's not an easy thing to do and it took me time to get into the tradition, and be brave and bold enough to completely immerse myself in the icy water.

As we ran down, back to the house, the boys were talking, and saying how they think this must come from my side of the family, and how grandpa is a real man to be able to just jump in without any hesitation.

And they were partly recognizing that I am able to do it because my Dad did it, and because I made the effort to go up with him to the pool when I was younger, even when I only 'half went in'.

And suddenly I saw the chain: here I was passing that tradition on to them, they are making the effort, and one day they will be able to jump in on a cold end of October day. Some of them did it in August, when it is almost as cold, but not quite as cold as late autumn.

And as we skipped a long back to the cottage, me with just a towel around my waist, feeling the blood pulsating around my body, stimulated by Cwm Mawr swims in the icy water, I felt inspired.



I realized what a beautiful thing it is to be able to experience this bond between three generations, passing something good on from one to the next. The freezing swim is not just a ritual, but an ability to unite the mind and body and do something quite difficult but nevertheless exhilarating.

IN faith communities there is always a strong hope that God's covenant will be passed on from father to son, mother to daughter, from one generation to the next.

In our faith we say that the number 3 is important. For a stool to stand and be stable it needs three legs. For God's lineage and blessing to be secured 3 generations need to become one (like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). And I guess that is what moved me running down that hill.

We all want to pass on something good to our children. But they will mostly just do what they see us doing, rather than simply following our words. If I had said "why don't you go for a swim like grandpa does, and I'll come and watch", they just wouldn't have been interested. But they want to do it simply because they see that I did it, and I did it because I saw my Dad do it. That is what makes it compelling.

When God gets to pass on his love to us, and we practice it in our life, and then we get to see our children practicing it, and they then grow up and get to also pass it on to those who are in their life, then God's will is accomplished. We can feel his joy, his relief, and his peace. Then we know what it is to be blessed.

Here are some readings on tradition:

John 5:19-20

19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.

Rev Sun Myung Moon:

The main thought of the Unification Church is the establishment of an ideal world. Tradition is needed for this. Generally speaking, he who does not know to love his home town doesn't know how to love his nation. Tradition is not changed or weathered by time and circumstances. The position of a heavenly descendant must absolutely be established.

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Let us not forget tradition. We have to establish tradition based upon our conscience.