

Hinton Rural Life Center
Celebrating 60: Embracing Our Roots & Sharing the Fruits

Reflections . . .

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HINTON
RURAL LIFE
CENTER

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." -- Matthew 17:1-4, NIV

We witness in this passage Peter, James, and John following Jesus to a high mountain. They receive a glimpse of glory. These three disciples were close to Jesus. They saw him in the presence of Elijah and Moses and the brightness of God's glory. It was clear to Peter this was special. His words of affirmation were simple: "It is Good for us to be here!" Peter was moved by this opportunity. It is good to have this experience, and he even offered to build a tabernacle for each of them.

While those three were in that great moment and witnessed a glimpse of God's Glory, there was a reality that they had to face. That reality was that they must return to their everyday routines. The difference for Peter, James, and John is a reality that I've experienced each time I have been to Hinton. The reality that, while in this great moment, I was encouraged and inspired because I had the opportunity to come visit in these mountains, in this wonderful space we call Hinton Rural Life Center.

My first experience was as a part of a team from the Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry. I was invited to share a workshop about rural ministry. The connection the ministry of Hinton provided was much more than I could have imagined in my first experience. I was so impressed with the mission, ministry, outreach, and the atmosphere of divine purpose.

I later returned on a personal note for a moment of reflection, as I brought my wife, Mamie, to see this great place. She was equally impressed, as we stood on these sacred grounds. Amazingly, there was more to come. Mamie and I planned two couples retreats at Hinton. These were mountaintop experiences that included groups from the churches I served in 2014 and 2015. God blessed us in powerful ways, and we continued to have requests for another couples retreat experience. I was reappointed that next year, and, because of the seeds sown, had plans of offering another retreat on these grounds in 2020. Unfortunately, those plans have been put on hold in response to the pandemic.

I recognize now that, each time I am at Hinton, I can say like Peter, "It is good for us to be here." I can also affirm the renewal and inspiration that meets me each time I am present at Hinton, returning home better equipped for the everyday ministry needs in my respective context. Thank you, Hinton, and congratulations on transforming lives for 60 years and counting. May you be a blessing for many years to come.
