

Holy Weekend

Of course we know last weekend was Easter weekend. For me, that means celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course, before a resurrection, there had to be a death. That is what Good Friday is all about. Now, some churches celebrate the entire week starting with Palm Sunday, going into Holy Monday – Holy Wednesday, following with Maundy Thursday, and then finally moving to Good Friday and Easter. My church starts with Good Friday. In the past, there had been Good Friday dramas of which I had been part. During two four-year cycles I played one of the disciples, and some years a member of the mob condemning Jesus. I kind of miss those times. Last year the church decided to do something different with a walk-through one could start at any time. I think I blogged about it. This year they changed again. It was still dark as the day of Christ's death was dark. It was touching to hear video testimonies of a few people, one of whom accepted Christ just last year on Good Friday from the walk-through. Besides the testimonies there were some songs, and a short message by our pastor. We left as usual in a somber mood. That would of course be remedied the following day for Easter Saturday. What do you mean you've never heard of Easter Saturday? Well, our church has a Saturday service every week, so the Easter service is naturally duplicated for that Saturday service. We have to change the words a little bit:

Christ the Lord is Risen Today Tomorrow... Ha-a-a-a-a-le-e-lu-u-ja.

Okay, not really. But it is still a little strange having grown up in a traditional church, sometimes I feel like altering the lyrics. So Saturday started with rehearsal at 1:45 until 4:25. Fortunately not all of it was singing so I had some voice left for the real deal at 5:00. We went through each choir piece at least three times, and the worship

set of five songs twice. It was nice to finally sing with the soloists. The main soloist has actually been in a Christian band and has been heard on the radio, and it showed (in a nice way). She sings at our church once or twice a year. By the end of the rehearsal I needed to sit down after standing for over two hours. It turned out to be the last time of the night I got to sit in a chair. More on that in a moment.

A little time out: Our choir I'd like to think is a little unique. We have women tricking into the tenor section and a couple of guys in the alto section. Women in the tenor section? Probably not entirely odd. Guys in the alto section? Well, the clever readers may have noticed that while I used the term "women" for the tenor section, I did not reciprocate for the alto section with the term "men." That's right, the two guys are actually kids. While the rules for the last couple of years stated choir members had to be at least 14, they had been singing for about a year prior to that rule, so they were allowed to continue. In any event, they did just turn 14 (they're identical twins by the way) so this was the first year they met the rules. Another factoid, but probably not so unique- I think the Alto section was as large as the other three put together. Simply huge.

Okay, back to the present. Following rehearsal, we grabbed our robes and had a bit of time to ourselves before having to line up. Just before lining up, about ten minutes before the service, it was announced to us that the worship center was completely full. Wow. There were multiple overflow rooms all in use by the time service started. All told, there were together 19,000 attendees at all the church's campuses- a new record I think. It might have been helped along by knowledge of our special guest. A former teen-idol from the 80's turned Christian, he now has a talk show on a Christian station and has starred in some Christian movies, the latest out last year. I had a moment I could cringe when our pastor asked how we all felt about that movie and there was much cheering. Now

you all know me by now with movies- do you think I saw it yet? That's right, I did not cheer because I had not seen it- it would have been a dishonest cheer. Of course our guest turned around just then and looked back toward my section of the choir. I hope he didn't see me and mistake my lack of cheering to not liking the film, I just haven't seen it. He thinks he might partner with the church in a marriage ministry, so we may see more of him. Feel free to make your guesses of who he is in the comments section. ☐

So following choir we returned to the gym which was our "green room." No chairs. They took every one of our chairs for the overflow rooms leaving us with tables to stand around. ☐ . Fortunately I still had kid's ministry to go to so the lack of chairs wasn't an issue- or so I thought. I got to the room and everyone was sitting on the floor. That's right, they took 4th and 5th grade chairs too. I wonder if all of children's ministry lost their chairs? What happened was all those overflow rooms needed those chairs for people to sit in. Well, we made do. It turned out that while the crowds in the church were huge, it didn't seem to translate to many more 4th and 5th graders. My own small group was all regulars.

So Sunday rolled around, and we had to be there at 7:30 to rehearse. Yuck. Well, it's only a few times during the year. The 9:00 service was not a full service. However, the pastor was at the other main campus along with our guest, so they may have had a much bigger crowd than normal. Every week, our pastor switches between the two main campuses on Sunday to preach live. The other gets a live feed or recorded video from Saturday night. The 11:00 service was back to overflow capacity, but not quite as bad as the night before, which in my mind was pretty odd. I would have thought that more people would have come on Sunday because that is actually Easter. Saturday is Easter Eve, if you will. So that was it, except for one more factoid: neither the main sermon nor the 4th/5th grade lesson were specifically Easter. For the

former, our pastor just started a new series, and for the latter we continued the series from the book of James.

So, that was my weekend. If I think of anything I may have missed, I'll add it to the comments. Right now I need to start getting ready for bed.