

I Love Yankees

As a pastor I try to jot a note to those who have visited our church and thank them for attending our worship service. I also try and arrange a time to get together with those thinking about joining our church. These days about half of those notes and visits wind up being to those who have moved here from the Northeast, often referred to as *Yankees*.

I have been at the church for nearly 10 years now, and I know that only 5 years ago, only about 10 percent of those notes and visits would have gone to *Yankees*. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of people moving North to South, and our beautiful valley is now full of people who don't talk like they are from around here!

What do I think about that? I am elated! I was born in Washington, D.C., so I guess I am kind of a *Yankee* myself. But I grew up in Charlotte, N.C. and married a girl from Chattanooga, Tennessee, so my phrases are punctuated with "ya'll" and "howdy." Three of the best years of my life were spent in Denver, Colorado, giving me wonderful western memories. And I have now visited 10 different countries or so, learning how and why others do what they do. The truth is, like the Japanese car made in Tennessee with parts from Latin America, I'm not sure what I really am!

But I am sure that God loves all kinds of people from all kinds of places. I am thrilled when I read in the Bible that every single language and tribe and ethnicity will be represented in Heaven (See Revelation 7:9). Isn't that wonderful? Jesus died for all kinds of people, and His gospel will be embraced by someone from every people group on earth!

It grieves me when I hear bigoted comments toward northerners from southerners. It grieves me when I hear hasty conclusions drawn by northerners toward southerners. I love seeing Civil War battles reenacted on our battlefields. But why must it be reenacted in our neighborhoods, passing prejudices on to our children? Can't we all get along?

We just celebrated July 4th, the birthday of our great nation. During the American Revolution, the soldiers adopted the term *Yankee*, used derisively toward us by the British, as a term indicating our national pride. After the tragedy of the Civil War, when Americans joined the WW I effort for the cause of liberty, we sang George Cohan's "Over There," which proudly

proclaimed that “the Yanks are coming.” In a sense, all Americans are *Yankees!*

I think the Valley’s big enough for all of us, and I am personally ecstatic that with some plants closing and others downsizing, the movement of people from North to South has meant renewed economic vitality for the Valley. That’s just another reason I love Yankees. I have even thought about taking an ad out in the papers for our church that says: “Wayne Hills Baptist Church, where our pastor loves *Yankees* (and *most* of our members do too!).”

Rev. Danny Campbell <><