

Spiritual Retreat

I accepted an invitation to participate in a family retreat hosted by a religious association, Creștini După Evanghelie, or “Christians According to the Gospel.” There were 40 attendees (including children), and I met two women who spoke English well enough to translate for me, and a few others who knew the basic greetings (hello, good morning, thank you). Here are some of my observations that I would like to share with you.

IS IT JUST ME...?

- I was relieved to receive a confirmation text that we have a mask and take care to ensure that hygiene and protection measures are observed. I was the only one who wore a mask.
- Children are so much easier for me to connect with. Adults tend to whisper amongst themselves and avoid my eye contact.
- I believe the “family” retreat was really a couple’s therapy retreat. The theme centered around the balance of each other to run their household and suggesting improvements for other couples.
- We watched the movie, *Fireproof*, with Kirk Cameron. It portrayed two sides of a coin for how men and women perceive the same communication problems. The decision to file for divorce really struck home for me.
- I was disappointed that there were no scriptural based activities provided for the children. They basically ran amuck on the secured grounds. They did not eat with us, nor did they participate in open worship, the movie, or any of the group sessions.
- My Romanian friends do not relay pertinent details about events, i.e. where we are going, what we are doing, how much will it cost, what I need to have with me.
- Being a city girl, I am fascinated with roaming cattle, horses and other farm animals. My friend had to hop out of the car to try to redirect a herd so we could continue on the road.
- Because there are mountain ranges in the USA, people assume I can hike up (and back down) a mountain unassisted wearing bus shoes (glorified aqua shoes, I definitely needed hiking boots). People kept saying to me, “You have mountains in the US, no?”
- Arriving anywhere 30-60 minutes late is a standard practice and considered to be on time. I live by arrive 10 minutes early or I feel that I am late.

We took a two personality tests and my personality animal resulted in a seal, whose mantra is similar to our “engine that could.” What I found interesting is that my Romanian friends pictured me as a lion, whose mantra is, “let’s do it now.” While I agree with that mantra, the actual traits I had self-scored the lowest.

The hymn, “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” comes to mind when I saw this rock on the river bank at the retreat facility.

On Christ the Solid Rock I stand

All other ground is sinking sand

The hymn is based on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders in Matthew 7:24-27.

²⁴ Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

May your journeys be founded in the rock of Christ.

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:3-4)

Please keep me in your prayers as the pandemic continues around the globe. My return trip back to the USA this summer has been postponed, and will most likely not occur this year. Keep your masks on!

Peace,

Ruth