

## Mrs. Lands Remembers

As applause broke out, several gave shrill whistles, not a few rapped their coffee tankards and water bottles with pens or pencils. Many pounded the backs of the seats in front of them with their bottles and tankards. Children squealed . . . a kazoo was heard.

At dinner, discussing the morning and the baptism, two or three older persons reminisced. Mrs. Lands, the oldest present, said her father once told her that people used to pray quietly for the person baptized and the congregation would join their voices in singing a song of encouragement to the newly baptized.

Another older adult expressed mild concern about striking the seat backs with Bibles. Someone mused about damaging the seats. Mrs. Lands said she thought that it used to be done by striking the back of the pew in front of you with songbooks or hymnals. “What’s a pew?” a teenage girl asked politely. “What’s a *hymnal!*” a teenage boy interrupted. Someone answered that a hymnal is a book of songs from a long time ago. The same boy grunted, “That sounds like school!” Only one or two persons heard Mrs. Lands softly say, almost to herself, “Precisely.”

In the conversation that followed, the word “reverence” came up several times. Bill Garner expressed concerns about striking seat backs with Bibles. He suggested it was more reverent to make noise by striking the Bible with the palm of your hand. Bill’s reference to “hands” prompted Jim Elliot to recall that he had seen his first post-baptismal “high-five” back in 2010 or 2015. Someone suggested that any well-intended and heartfelt action can be reverent.

It was finally agreed that reverence is simply a matter of taste. “You can’t teach taste, taste just reflects who you are,” said Fran Monroe.

“Or where you have been,” Mrs. Lands said softly, thinking about her father – and her grandchildren.