

A Smile

Linda Gommel

The other morning, I had just arrived at the store for the work-day, and as is my habit, I first went to the Deli Café to say hello to Sarah, the manager, whom I call Haggatha, since she calls me Baggatha. Or is it the other way around? Am I Haggatha, and is she Baggatha? Well, maybe sometimes, depending on who says it first. (These names are derived from the term "Hagbag", one of my favorites.)

We were talking about the aprons the gals wear in the Deli, how they look dirty even when just washed, due to the cooking oil stains. Just then, a man walked up and waited a brief minute while we finished up, and then I noticed him and felt bad, since we should NEVER make a customer wait while we talk to each other!

He was an older man, with long, straggly gray/white hair and beard, and he wore glasses. As soon as I turned around to say "Good morning", he looked directly at me and gave me the nicest smile and the warmest "Good morning" back. Who is this guy, I asked myself? Does he know me? I feel so awkward when people call me by name and I don't know their names and sometimes don't even recognize them!



Normally I wouldn't give a second thought to a guy with straggly long hair, but something about him transcended my normal negative image. Something about him seemed "quality", and something about his greeting spoke to me. I still don't know his name or who he is, although later I asked Sarah if she'd seen him before. Yes, she said, he's in here now and then, and she recognized him but didn't know his name, either.

I can't explain my amazement and pleasure at his greeting, except to say what Gommel, my dad, used to say: "It's the spirit, it's the

spirit, it's the spirit." Something in that man's spirit really touched me and communicated the smile and seemingly genuine care coming from his heart.

We breeze through our days, treating as reality those physical things we can touch, taste, or feel, when the only reality that matters is spirit reality, and especially (God's) Spirit Reality. Physical objects decay, wear out, break, die, and otherwise let us down. People naturally care most about themselves and then love the others of us in their lives as it fits in with motivations, aspirations, consciences --all spirit-based -- or what they can get out of us to benefit themselves. Some people do genuinely care about others, but even they inevitably let us down, even if only because of death or severe illness.

As I considered this strange tiny episode, I couldn't help but think of the way God connects with us, if we open ourselves to Him and let Him in. Just imagine how Jesus might look at you and greet you if you were to encounter Him personally and physically. Here is God Himself in human form, the Almighty, the Creator of the Universe, and your own Creator, and He would walk up to you, call you by your name, and smile with a warmth and understanding many times more powerful than I experienced in my brief encounter.

"Who is this guy?" you might ask. "Does he know me?"

Yes, He knows you, He knows your name, and He knows everything about you. He cares about you and what happens to you, and of everyone you've ever known in your life, whether your family or close friends, He alone will NEVER let you down. *Linda Gommel*

Truth from the American Thinker Website, Jan. 15, 2020

The following is excerpted from my favorite writer on my favorite website.

"Making America America Again" by Deana Chadwell

All thinking people in this country have concerns about the moral state of our nation -- the rampant sexual promiscuity and perversity, our willingness to accept lying, our lack of concern about drug abuse, to name a few examples. We know in our bones that no society can

succeed in that state -- no society ever has. . . .

Over three thousand years ago, God gave Moses a list of ten laws designed to help Israel become a successful nation. . . . A quick perusal of the Ten Commandments makes it clear why they were necessary. Belief in God. . . All morality has to have an authoritative origin. . . . The laws also protect family structure -- the basis of any society -- by demanding respect for parents and marital fidelity. They protect private property and the



sanctity of life. They prohibit dishonesty. . . the bedrock of human social interaction -- God first, family second, and third, a sure and steady respect for our fellow man. Christ narrowed it down to two: Love God and love others as yourself. You can run a country on that.

Yet in the last 50 years we've seen a surge of rejection and ridicule of these ideas. . .

It has been easy to relax those rules and to be oh so understanding of those who totally reject them. We've buckled nicely into this they-were-born-that-way acceptance of homosexuality. We (many of us) have loosened our hold on the sanctity of life, preferring instead misbehavior [without] consequences. It's much more pleasant that way. We've not been critical of corruption -- after all, it's easier to just look aside; these people are dangerous. We've opted for a phony tolerance in lieu of an honest assessment of each other's demeanor. We've ripped "Thou shalt not judge," loose from its moorings in Matthew and used it for an excuse to excuse all aberrant actions. We've elected pedophiles and crooks and, I suspect, murderers. We've left our children with sexual predators. We've given those children easy access to addictive and mind-destroying drugs. . . .

I've been using the pronoun we, and not they, for a reason. I suspect that at one level or another we're all a little guilty. We turn on our TVs, go to the movies, listen to the "music" of the day. We've stayed friendly and accepting of

people who have destroyed their marriages, of people who imbibe more than is good for them or their families, with people we suspect are addicted or attracted to one drug or another. We dress our daughters like we're sending them out on the streets. We've gone along with the demolition of our principles. . . .

So I'm worried. I'm buoyed up by the economic, political, and foreign policy successes of this administration and I'm thrilled with the positive response of so many of my fellow Americans, but it's going to take more than enthusiasm to pull this society back into shape. We are going to need the grace of Almighty God, the wisdom of His Word, the confidence of His faithfulness. We'll need His Golden Rule and we'll also need the picture of Him angrily throwing the money-changers out of the Temple. It's going to take humility, determination, and tremendous courage to make America America again.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

From the Web.

Apolitical Aphorisms

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.

~Oscar Ameringer~

Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.

~Doug Larson~

If you want a real friend that you can trust in Washington, get a dog!

~Harry Truman~



ON THE PORCHES AT THE STORE

SAT & WED, Jan. 25 & 29, 7A-Noon, DISPLAY OF BIBLE LITERATURE, by Jehovah's Witnesses.

ST. MARY HEALTH VAN
The health van will be not be here the whole month of January.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

TUES. FEB. 4, 5 PM.
at the Senior Center

- VV Daily Press Editor Matt Cabe will tell us about the status of the newspaper and how we can get local news in the Lucerne Valley Leader.
- Didi from "Youarenotforgotten" will discuss cat (etc.) hoarding and rescue issues in town -- looking for assistance.
- Bill Lembright on the County's approval of the Daggett Solar project and how it relates to pending environmental review and hearings on our industrial scale solar projects.
- Census work in town and announcements.

L.V. School Board Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 13, starts at 5:30PM.
At the Alternative Education Center,
8560 Aliento Rd up Highway 18.

- Lucerne Valley Market
- "Do it Best" Hardware
- Wash n Shop
- Crossroads Center

e-mail address: Market.Hardware@lucernevalleymarket.com
website: lucernevalleymarket.com

Proud to be a member of Lucerne Valley Chamber of Commerce

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Please, unless otherwise indicated, ON AD ITEMS NO MORE THAN 6 TOTAL (including all flavors or varieties) OF ANY ITEM, PER FAMILY, DURING THE AD PERIOD, AT THE SALE PRICE, except in produce and meat, which are limited to normal retail quantities, or which carry limits specifically stated. Sorry, we must reserve the right to further limit or refuse sales.

ON MULTIPLE PRICING, when purchasing items in quantities more or less than the multiple stated, the register is built automatically to charge the "each" price times the quantity. (Example: Price of item is 3/\$1. The price of: one = 34¢, two = 68¢, three = \$1, four = \$1.34, five = \$1.68, six = \$2.00).

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