

A New Face in Town

By Andrew Hilla

Hello! My name is Andrew Hilla and I am a new volunteer van driver for Meeting Ground. "New" is a relative term, I think that I actually began driving around the middle of October, but as they say, time flies when you're having fun! It is indeed an honor and a privilege to meet and to talk with, to come to know the wonderful people who ride with me in the van on Thursday mornings. Some of the regular riders like Butch, Joe, Elaine, Patience, Muhammad, Flo, Kim, and Nicole have come to know a little about me as well.

I am a recent graduate of Lancaster Theological Seminary, seeking ordination in the Presbyterian Church USA as a minister of Word and Sacrament. They know that I like to begin the morning by listening to the contemporary Christian radio station (95.1 FM), which switches to a talk show at 10:00am, giving others the opportunity to choose a station to listen to. I try not to preach during the rides because I have learned that not everyone is especially willing to hear about Christianity, salvation, and redemption. I do however, enjoy

sharing with my fellow riders my own experiences, trials, and joys, and how faith in Jesus Christ has made a difference in my life. You might say that I am in the driver's seat with a captive audience, what more can a preacher ask for; but rather than preach I try to witness when the opportunity presents itself.

This morning, as I was driving to Elkton, I passed a church that had the following message on its sign, "Count your blessings, not your problems." We often think first of all of the things that are wrong with our lives; we dwell on our problems and allow them to control us rather than us being in control of them. But I would suggest that this goes to an even deeper level, that as we struggle to be "in control," if we are doing so without God, we are resisting the will of the one who is really "in control" of our lives. **1 Peter 5:10** – "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you."

God is there to help us through our

trials, temptations, and struggles. He listens to us whenever we want to talk with him, he strengthens us through his presence, and he helps us overcome the evils of this world. God has blessed my life in so many ways, he has lifted me from some very difficult times in my life; and I would be more than willing to share those stories with anyone who would like to hear them!

This is not to say that I do not struggle with problems in my life today, we all have problems, but if we call upon God for help with our problems, our burden is lessened. **Psalms 145:18** – "The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth." **Psalm 50:15** – "Call on me (God) in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

I look forward to sharing a part of my life with the wonderful folks of Meeting Ground and invite them to share their lives with me as well. I thank God for this opportunity and pray that he keeps all of us safe in our travels. ☺

No debating this . . .

[Continued from page 4] informing Don I'd been harassing a local pastor. Don was to call the Police Chief back. I informed him I was Don and would listen to his message when I got to the next pay phone.

Although he didn't quote chapter and verse, the lawman said "Even Jesus said if you're not wanted, knock the dust off your sandals and move on." Truly he quoted Matthew 10:14 which states: "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town."

I hate it when us Christians start pulling verses out of the Bible to prove something. If the Police Chief had quoted the next verse (Matthew 10:15) also, he might have had to say whoops, as it

says "I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment for that town."

I said goodbye to the Police Chief, Shannon, and Teresa and hit the road praying hard for those two twenty something year old Christian women. I prayed they wouldn't succumb to all the logic of the older Christian Police Chief and pastor.

As I got to the exit ramp that led to the four lane I noticed the Police Chief was coming in his cruiser. He drove by slowly checking me out and I faked going down the ramp. After he crossed the bridge I stood and watched in the darkness as he drove a mile beyond, then turned around and came back. I went down the ramp and he spotlighted

me as he drove on by back into town. I took his spotlighting as "I'm watching you, boy".

After five minutes I headed under the bridge, laid my sleeping bag out and went to bed. I continued to pray every time I awoke for Teresa and Shannon's strength to keep the faith.

Praise God, the bridge didn't get the fifty percent thunderstorms, and the next morning I headed south to the town with the motel.

Praise God, Teresa's mom, Mary Ellen, stopped and offered her apologies that morning. And in the afternoon Teresa and her family stopped by with apologies, God's love, and all kinds of goodies to eat.

There is no debating this.

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Sometimes the sheep are way more in touch with the Lord than the shepherds. Matthew 10:16 and 17 state "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men, they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues."

Till the next time...
In Christ's love,
Don

Miles to date: 12,665
Money picked up along road: \$831.50
Unsolicited money given by motorists: \$1,967.38
Of 1053 nights:
434 nights cared for by God
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