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The number is 1-888-310-1122

"I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song" –Isaiah 12:2

Covid has exposed a layer of ugliness in our society. Some pay more attention to the fiction of social media than the facts of institutions sworn to keep us safe. Some abuse politicians. Others look for anyone on whom to vent frustration. Stress does that. But it doesn't mean we become that layer.

This anecdote took place in late August while returning from Grand Bend's No Frills with Miss Daisy (not her real name) who needed a ride to do some shopping. The traffic going north on Ontario Street had considerable space between groups of vehicles. When the last in a group passed, and there wasn't another vehicle for a considerable distance, I pulled into the northbound lane, being careful not to bounce around Miss Daisy's groceries; she purchased more than intended. By the time we were slowing down behind other vehicles at the Lake Road light, a grey Mercedes sedan caught up. The driver was scowling, and giving me the finger. That seemed odd. However, proceeding north towards the main intersection he followed much too closely, and when we reached the main intersection lights, still behind other vehicles, he gave me an uglier scowl and another finger.

I recounted my entry onto Ontario Street, and recollected that when I entered the flow, the space was sufficient that surely, he wouldn't think I had cut him off. There was also traffic ahead of us so it wasn't as if he was going anywhere fast. Maybe he was a disgruntled student from years ago; retired Vice-Principals live with that dread. Or maybe, he hadn't taken his medication. Or maybe there was a woman in the back seat whom I could not see about to have a baby. Or maybe he was trying to get to Tim's to use the washroom; I know that feeling.

When I turned into Grand Cove, he sped past, so obviously, it wasn't Tim's. He swerved sharply in front of me in one last show of contempt. Now, I was ticked. I felt the "layer" overtaking me. Dark thoughts passed through me, though Miss Daisy's presence saved me from doing anything stupid. I thought of W. C. Fields in "Road Hog", who got a Model T Ford, and ran people like that off the road. The "owee" in the front of our Volvo would be hard to explain to an officer, and harder to explain to Trish.

After fuming silently for the short drive to unpack Miss Daisy's groceries, I recognized an opportunity to become part of the solution instead of continuing the problem. While stepping in to a fray to defend a stranger from abuse is absolutely the right thing to do, most frays are better left to professionals. This realization was a shower of relief. The "layer" dissipated instantly.

I called the local OPP. A pleasant officer indicated that if something is an emergency, by all means call 911. But if something like this happens, the number is 1 – 888 – 310 – 1122. The make, model, and license number are helpful. A trained professional decides on the next step.

Trusting in those institutions is still better than the alternative.

Until next time.

Much love and be safe

Peter

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

