

STA September 17 & 24, 2015

From Tina: A street fellow carrying an ill-fitting red backpack turned his back to me and asked if I liked the tattoo which covered the back of his shaved head. "Jesus Saves" was emblazoned above a very large cross. He turned back around, he beamed with joy...his eyes sparkled... and I thought the crown was visible too, 'written' on his face. He told me he had a rap song about Jesus he liked to sing to people on the streets. "Would you sing it to me?" I asked. He did – smiling, singing, with the red pack bobbing around behind him while he moved to the music of his own song. I'd like to say he took a copy of Science and Health, - I think he probably did, but because I was caught up in the happiness he expressed and the gift he bestowed on me, I forgot to remember.

A lady passed by and said something I couldn't quite hear. I asked her to repeat it and she said again, "You should have a chair." A gift of thoughtfulness, don't you agree!

The other "Liz" - a substitute custodian, was making her rounds emptying garbage cans, sweeping, doing chores in the rest rooms. She stopped and asked me what the book was about. She said she wanted one for her daughter. She told me she belongs to the Assembly of God church and hoped there was something in the book about the Holy Spirit. There is.

A fellow named "Hobo" spoke of an experience he had at the nearby Reading Room. The attendant had treated him with such respect and kindness. (He is African American and noted that he has encountered much racism while living in the region.) He wanted to know if our church members studied Bible history. I told him we do, as we are led to, individually. I thought of the great Bible-study resources available in the RR and told him about them.

I know I didn't share a book with the next visitor – yet what she shared with me is worth reporting: she is a guide-dog trainer. A beautiful six-month-new yellow lab was obeying her every cue. We talked about a recent incident, which occurred on Vashon Island, a short distance from Seattle. While out exploring with her canine companion, Phoebe, the basset hound fell into a shallow cistern. There was some water at the bottom and also some rocks that provided a place for the dog to perch. She was trapped for a week. During that time her companion, a setter named Tillie, kept guard over her on the ledge. Occasionally Tillie would leave and go find people and try to "tell" them her friend needed help. (I am reminded of the Kathy Mattea song, "God is Watching" – in this case, "Dog is Watching.") A rescue finally happened. Both dogs were cold and hungry. The news of their story spread on social media around the world. The steadfast affection and caring exemplified by these canines stirred many a heart, including ours.

As she was leaving to ride the bus I asked the dog trainer if it was hard for a dog to use the escalator. She said she does not train a dog to do so – advanced training by others does occur as the dog learns its lessons.

Speaking of escalators – the ones at STA have been operating just fine lately. I continue to be glad that our little outreach space is located right at the top of the ‘up’ escalator.

“An escalator can never break.

It can only become stairs.

There would never be a “temporarily out of order” sign.

Just one saying, “Sorry for the convenience.”

Being designed to elegantly deal with the extreme failure case is probably an underappreciated design element.

But it really is one of the things that makes an escalator great.

Worst case, they’re stairs.

See how far you can get in a broken elevator.”

(From, *The Accidental Music of Imperfect Escalators*)

I think lots of bus station visitors would use the escalator ‘stairs’ if bright yellow barriers weren’t erected every time one ‘breaks down.’

Somewhere in this escalator observation is a spiritual analogy, one which could lead to a new way of looking at a so-called problem. Bible citation # 7 in this week’s BL states: “*We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen...*”

And it is so.

From Barb for 9/24/15:

My first shift in a long time started off with a man asking, “What is this? Scientology?” Nothing new there, it seems. We got squared around on that issue, and found that he was interested in the subjects of healing and spirituality, and was happy to take a book. He had been frustrated with his cell phone, which he said had been ringing all day with people wishing him a happy birthday (!). But he was fine with getting a handshake, warm wishes

and a book about infinite possibilities.

A sweet woman came to the table explaining that she already had a copy of “Science and Health,” but she hadn’t started reading it yet. What she really loved was the other lady that worked at the table—Tina, as it turned out. Well, if anyone is drawn to the book through someone else’s tender love, that’s just fine, and the dear woman will find her way into the book one day.

Smiling broadly and with two children in tow, a woman noticed our sign about overcoming addiction, and took a copy of the textbook saying, “You don’t hear enough about it these days!” (healing addiction). One man saw the same sign, earnestly leaned toward me over the table, and recited a long list of addictions and psychological problems he had been healed of . . . by God. I gave him a joyful thumbs up.

You never know what will bring a person to the table, but one man saw the poster picture of Mary Baker Eddy, and recognized it as being from an earlier era. That started his telling me all about his pioneering ancestors in eastern Oregon. He didn’t take a book, but we had a friendly exchange.

A tall, rough but good-looking man approached with a smile, but also a look in his eyes that momentarily suggested something impure. I just “un-saw” that, and worked to behold the perfect man (MBE). He said he was a recovering addict, and I remembered things Bob had said once to someone, correcting the notion that God’s child could be an addict. We talked for a bit, and he seemed genuinely pleased to take a textbook. We shook hands and it felt right.

God bless the dear lady who shared her anguish about her addicted daughter. Some truths from Genesis 1 were some comfort, and I’d ask that a little prayer be offered for any Moms in tears about their troubled offspring. She clutched a textbook to her with gratitude.