

## COUNTRY ROADS

BY ARVID HUISMAN

# A powerful refuge and strength

For many years a handmade plaque hung on my mother's dining room wall. It quoted Psalm 46:1 – "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

The message was understood but as a kid I did not give it much thought.



I grew up, left home, pursued a career, got married and started a family. I remembered the plaque, but it still wasn't relevant.

Difficulties popped up from time-to-time and I certainly prayed for help. Most of those difficulties seemed to work out favorably, but I seldom gave God credit for any of it.

While I don't consider myself egotistical, I admit that I assumed most of the credit for working through those difficulties.

Ten years ago this month, a challenge arose that I could not handle on my own. That old plaque in my mother's dining room spoke to me — "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." I needed that refuge and strength.

It all began late in 2012 when a mammogram found a small malignant lump in my wife's breast. The doctors told us it was caught early enough and we need not worry. A lumpectomy and radiation should take care of the problem.

Later the oncologist recommended chemotherapy to prevent reoccurrence of cancer. Cindy was reluctant to undergo chemo but we trusted the doctor's guidance.

To make a long and painful story short, she underwent one chemo treatment. The chemo treatment weakened her immune system which, unbeknown to us, led to diverticulitis which led to sepsis.

Throughout this experience we had prayed for a quick recovery and that's what we thought was taking place. Then, nine days after her first and only chemo treatment, she became violently ill.

At approximately 4 a.m. the next day, Jan. 21, 2013, an ICU doctor advised that all resuscitation efforts had failed and that Cindy was gone.

In the moments after we learned that my sweetheart of 43 years had passed away, I was an emotional mess.

As a young teenager, Cindy had come to faith in God and had lived her life with assurance of her eternal home. I suddenly realized that at that moment she was meeting Jesus and that thought gave me momentary peace.

Though I had turned to my faith many times in the past, I was now in a position to seek God's refuge and strength as never before. And I did.

Friends and family (especially my two children) were a great source of comfort. Our pastor and church friends were, too. Two friends who had previously lost their wives to cancer stepped up to walk me through this new stage of life.

It was, however, Divine comfort and guidance that truly saw me through the next months. I remember countless times when overcome with grief I simply asked God to help me get through the day. He did.

One of the most memorable examples of the power of prayer and the strength of God's grace came in the dark, lonely hours of the night.

I had read years earlier that when you awaken in the pre-dawn hours it is a good time to pray. In the weeks after Cindy passed away, I often awoke in the early morning hours. My mind worked overtime and I couldn't fall asleep again. I tried praying but I was so troubled I couldn't even come up with words to pray.

I remembered a passage from the Bible: "...The Spirit himself talks to God for us, while we cry and cannot say any words." (Romans 8:26; Worldwide English New Testament.) Trusting those words, I simply prayed, "Lord, you know what is on my heart; help me," and soon enough I was sleeping again.

Each week grew a little less difficult. Meanwhile, I was asking God for help multiple times through the day. Windshield time became a good time to share my thoughts and concerns with my Heavenly Father. He gave me the strength and peace to move forward.

I share these deeply personal thoughts not to draw attention to myself; I have failed God far too many times. Rather I want to remind you that God truly is a refuge and strength in times of trouble and to attest to His goodness even during the darkest times of life.

The fact is God is good... all the time. And I am so grateful.

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FROM THE EDITOR BY LAURA DRUMMY

## We rely on computers too much

I can remember when I was in first grade, my class and I were able to use a computer for the first time. It was a big deal to me as, at home we did not have a family computer because it was only to be used for the farming business.



The computers at school were the big colored Apple iMac G3 in a large lab for elementary students. During computer lab, we played pre-loaded educational games for math, reading and spelling and had to learn how to type on a keyboard.

I can still vividly remember having to put on these orange plastic keyboard covers over the keys to help us remember what letter went with what key. I hated it and would take it off between times when my teacher would walk back to her desk across the room. I would put it back on when she got up and pretended nothing had happened.

7-year-old me believed computers would never take off. To me, I thought

computers were hard to run and, at the time, I didn't know when I would use them. Flash forward to 2023, and oh boy, was I wrong.

I use my computer all the time today and spent half of my college education online because of the pandemic. I rely on using my computer and the internet to check email hour to hour, put articles in our system, do Zoom calls, research, and the list goes on.

It is a miracle how technology has changed society and how workplaces have worked since covid, but there is a kryptonite to this technology... no internet.

All the good things with computers can come crashing down, and work comes to a standstill. I recently had a day at work when our servers stopped working on a very important deadline. The day was full of me sitting at my desk watching my computer go through this scan for over three hours. It wasn't like I wanted to do that, but all my files and software were on my computer. I became very antsy and thought to myself, "what could I do?"

In deep thought at my desk, I won-

dered what it would have been like if we as a general society didn't rely on the internet in 2023. Would it still be the same in the 80s or 90s? Would smartphones be a thing? How would our norms have changed? I honestly cannot remember a time when we didn't rely on a computer for something.

It makes me think back to the "Andy Griffith Show" and if life would have been that simple. Maybe we would know all the characters from our neighborhood or even those we work with. Maybe we would communicate with people and actually take time. Maybe we would appreciate the little things more, and time would slow down.

As optimistic or fluffy as that sounds, I know our society wouldn't be able to go back in time. But through the outage, I was able to take the time to listen to my coworkers and hear about their personal lives. It also was time to unplug and remind myself there are more things to life than staring at a screen all day.

Yet the moment the servers came back on, I was scrambling to catch up because deadlines don't wait—how I miss Mayberry.

### Letters to the editor

The Linn News-Letter encourages readers to submit letters concerning any subjects of interest in the area. This can be done through mail, dropping the letter off at our office or emailing [tonews@linn-newsletter.com](mailto:tonews@linn-newsletter.com)

Letters to the editor must be signed with the writer's full name, address and daytime phone number. Only the name and town will be published.

Letters to the editor should contain no more than 350 words, and cannot contain libelous material — the letter will not be published if there appears to be questionable libelous material included, based upon the best judgment of the edi-

tor, and may be shortened to meet page space requirements.

Local authors and topics will be given priority. Mass mailed letters will not be allowed.

The week before an election, no new letters to the editor will be published for the election. The only letters relating to the election that will be run that final week must be a response to a previously printed letter to the editor.

All letters must be submitted by noon on the Wednesday before the publication date for consideration.

Letters can be held, edited or not run at all based upon the discretion of the editor or lack of space available.

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