

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

April 10, 2020



The Garb of an “Expert,” LinBrook Hardware, c. 1966

“Experts”

“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.” 1 Peter 4:11

In 1966, while attending college in southern California, I got a part-time job at LinBrook Hardware in Anaheim. Now, me in a hardware store is like a cat in a swimming pool. While Christie loves Home Depot, I groan (if silently) whenever she says, while we’re *already* in the car, “oh yeah, I need to stop by Home Depot...”

But, I got the job at LinBook and, on my first day (*this is an important detail*), they handed me an orange shirt, the required attire of all of the employees who worked on the floor at LinBrook. It was an odd choice if only because Orange County *jail* shirts were also orange. But there was something else that made it interesting, especially in my case. LinBrook advertised regularly on TV; they talked about their products, their special sales and their outstanding service, as most retail establishments do. But they ended all of their commercials with this: “*Look for the expert in the orange shirt.*”

Remember, I received my orange shirt on my first day. Therefore, by virtue of receiving the orange shirt, I was inducted into the little band of “experts” at LinBrook. This bore some interesting fruit, so to speak. I was assigned to various departments during my tenure at LinBrook and I did marginally OK until I was assigned to the garden department. I had the orange shirt so I was the “expert” there. Do you see the problem? A customer asks, “Is this soil enhancement product best for growing strawberries?” “Ummm... yeah... sure...” Being an “expert” in something I never even cared to learn about, was really difficult. It made me uncomfortable and I had to repent because I probably killed a lot fruit and flowers.

But there were a couple of other, more important lessons, that I learned. First, be careful about thinking yourself an expert because you’ve had some education or training in a certain area. When I was in training to become an “estate planning expert” I was feeling pretty good about myself. Then, I attended a conference and the keynote speaker said, “most experts are just little spurts under pressure.” That brought me down to earth.

Another lesson, though, has an enormous impact on our spiritual growth. Recently, in my effort to understand what keeps kids faithful, I’ve read a veritable plethora of books, articles and blogs, all by men and women who are thought of as “experts” in the fixed of theology or apologetics. The opinions of these “experts” are legion but only rarely agree with other “experts” in the field. People are often led astray by “experts” who they resonate with but avoid the “experts” that present an opposite view. So, confirmation bias is the norm.

As for me, I’m tired of listening to and reading “experts” who think they’ve got the Bible, Jesus and God all figured out. Give me a break. Micah asks, “Who is a God like you...?” (7:18). The answer? *Nobody*. God asks Job, “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2). Job had no answer. There is only one real expert that we should listen to and that’s Jesus. All the other stuff is commentary, some more valuable than others, but still just commentary. And the more I listen to so-called experts on the Bible, the more I appreciate Peter’s words, “if anyone speaks, let it be as the very words of God” (1 Peter 4:11). Yes, we need to interpret the words. But let’s be honest; as Mark Twain said, “it’s not the scriptures I don’t understand but the ones I **do** understand that trouble me.”

I had an orange shirt. Therefore, I was, in the eye of the ignorant beholder, an “expert” in Hardware as an 18 year old college student. How crazy is that? Let that be a lesson to us.