

# WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers

June, 2010, #47



Jerrie Barber and John Parker

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## Elders and Anonymous Letters

by Jerrie Barber

We appointed new elders at Berry's Chapel November 19, 1995. None of the four had ever served as a shepherd before. Every event, every situation was a new experience. They met often. They studied their Bibles. They prayed for wisdom to lead in an effective way.

In April of 1996, a new opportunity presented itself by way of the U. S. Postal Service. Each of the elders, five families in the congregation, and I received an anonymous letter. It was mean, inaccurate, and cowardly. It started with accusations against me. Then the writer got ugly. We he came to the elders, he attacked not only them but their wives and children.

The elders called for a meeting that night to discuss what their policy would be in regard to anonymous letters. They prayed. They discussed. They came to the



conclusion that they would do nothing. To answer publicly, either from the pulpit or in the bulletin, would play into the hands of a brother (I will tell later why I keep using the masculine pronoun instead of him/her indefinite) who was not following biblical principles in dealing with anger and frustration.

To give a response to an anonymous accusation is to express a willingness of the elders (or preacher) to give a public display of defensiveness and irritation. That reaction communicates, “Just write or call in an allegation and we will answer we don’t know who about we don’t know what.” (Often the stated problem is not the problem.)

Therefore the elders made a policy: we will not respond to anonymous letters. I think that is wise.

An observation: I don’t think anonymous letters are a good means of communication. However, here’s some free advice: if you want to write an anonymous letter and get by with it, get someone else to write it for you. Most people write like they talk. Anyone who knows you very well will know who wrote the letter. All five at the meeting that night came to the same conclusion of the author of the letter.

Next month, I will tell about a similar but slightly different policy I have with anonymous letters.

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## SHAKESPEARE’S *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

Extreme Behavior, Sublime Transformation

by John Parker

You’ve got a kid in school who’s stubborn, angry, and disruptive. How do you handle him? For one, good school people realize that wild behavior often stems not from a bad character, but from lack of self-esteem and the feeling nobody loves him. Show him his worth, and he may come around to be the class leader. But to get him to see his worth, and to recognize that he’s only hurting himself by his misconduct, you need a teacher or a coach who’s even tougher than the kid, one who can out amaze, frighten, and puzzle him until he’s in a frame of mind to listen.



In *The Taming of the Shrew*, we’ve got an out-of-control Kate whose feelings of rejection are causing her to terrify her father, sister, and sister’s suitors with wild tantrums. What she needs, and what she gets, is a man who first shocks her into attention, and who then shows her how much he can love and care for her. In the real world, we’re the ones who behave like rejected shrews, but God himself has arrived to shock us into seeing how foolish we’ve been, and then to show us how much he loves us, and how great our lives can become with submission to his love and will.

The Play

Baptista Minola, a wealthy merchant in Padua, Italy, has a problem: his elder daughter Katharina is a major league shrew. Throws things. Screams a lot. Terrifies men—especially the ones hanging around the house in pursuit of her younger sister Bianca, who apparently is sweet, gentle, and obedient to Daddy. These admirers include a young man named Hortensio, a repulsive old suitor named Gremio, and a newly arrived college boy named Lucentio, who quickly moves to the front in Bianca's affections.

But Baptista knows something about leverage: he won't let Bianca marry anybody until a husband is found for Kate, a Herculean challenge it seems.

Enter Petruchio, a buddy of Hortensio and a man who knows what he's after: a rich wife, regardless of her looks or behavior:

I come to wive it wealthily in Padua  
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

Seeing Petruchio as the answer to his problems, Hortensio quickly takes him to the Minola household to encounter Kate and her father in a straightforward bid for marriage and dowry.

Meanwhile, Hortensio and Lucentio vie in a ludicrous charade of disguises to get access to Bianca and win her favor. Before the servants can even get the refreshments ready she has subtly seized control of the courting procedure and settled on Lucentio. While sister Kate is precisely what she appears to be, Bianca is clearly not the docile, sweet, and obedient daughter everyone thinks she is.

Petruchio makes a quick settlement with Baptista on a dowry for his elder daughter, and then in a rollicking first meeting with Kate gives her the news:

Your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;  
And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.

Kate throws a few dishes in a token protest, but the careful reader may note that she is not quite as vocal in her objections as one might expect. Does she secretly welcome the prospect of a respectable marriage?

Petruchio has already planned his strategy for the taming of the shrew he is marrying. Simply put, he will pretend that she is the perfect lady, despite all appearances and acts to the contrary:

Say that she rail, why then I'll tell  
her plain  
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.  
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks  
as clear  
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew.

Further, he out-Kates Kate, scandalizing the wedding guests with his outrageous behavior at the ceremony; packing his bride off immediately to his country home, where on his own turf he will have the advantage; and using domestic props to carry his point to Katharina that she must behave reasonably in her role as a wife in order for the two of them to be happy.

While it's unclear whether Petruchio acts out of wisdom or out of a kind of macho practicality, he has hit on a profound strategy for affecting human behavior: show people what levels of excellence they can attain, and they will be moved to attain them. Later, Browning will say "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?"

Finally, in act 4, scene 5, on the road, which symbolically links the respective homes of the pair, they reach an understanding. When Petruchio outrageously insists that the blazing early-afternoon sun is the moon, and that an old man they meet is a lovely young girl, Kate comically agrees, submitting to her role as wife while at the same time outdoing her new husband in satirical behavior that preserves her identity and dignity. That's fine with Petruchio: he simply wants a quiet house and a reasonable working relationship as a married couple.

In the climax of the play, when the new bridegrooms engage in a traditional contest to determine who has the most obedient wife, Kate comes at her husband's bidding, delivers her famous speech on wifely obedience, and offers to perform a symbolic act of submission; instead, he kisses her. Happiness for Kate and Petruchio's marriage is assured, but the disdainful response of Bianca to the summons of Lucentio portends trouble for theirs.

*Shrew* was written when both Italy and history were at a crossroads between the ancient and modern worlds. The east and the past called for male dominance, female subjection, and arranged marriages. In Greece, Demosthenes is supposed to have said, "Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, and wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households." As for the Romans, Tacitus reported that "The true Roman married without love and loved without refinement or reverence," and

Plutarch added “a virtuous woman ought to be most visible in her husband’s company, and to stay in the house and hide herself when he is away.”

But by Shakespeare’s day the west and the future were moving more toward gender equality, albeit at a glacial pace, and certainly toward marriage for romantic love instead of for money or political alliance. The question of which arrangement—eastern or western—would produce the better results was, and is, complex. The two approaches are illustrated in *Shrew* by two delightful couples, Lucentio and Bianca, and Petruchio and Katharina.

At first glance, Lucentio and Bianca’s romance attracts us far more than Petruchio and Katharina’s. Lucentio falls in love at first sight (“I burn, I pine, I perish . . . / If I achieve not this young modest girl”), and she requites with a vengeance. Then they and their friends engage in a delightful course of deceiving Baptista (“See, to beguile the old folks, how the young folks lay their heads together!”) and eloping. Finally, however, they kneel in repentance before Vincentio, Lucentio’s father, and receive his blessing—plus, we’re sure, a mega-inheritance to go with Bianca’s dowry. All very sweet and modern, and seemingly a welcome contrast to the brawling courtship of Petruchio and Kate.

But just when we might assume that Shakespeare intends to picture the passing of the age of sexism and patriarchal tyranny in favor of witty and independent young lovers who can brilliantly and engagingly chart their own lives, we discover that in the end it’s the *other* couple—the one whose marriage was arranged before they ever met by dowry negotiation and parental consent—that end up with the better and happier union.

So what’s going on here?

*Shrew* is an early comedy (c. 1592-1594), and the comedies that come afterward feature the Bianca/Lucentio type of independent lovers such as Portia and Bassanio (*The Merchant of Venice*), Benedick and Beatrice (*The Taming of the Shrew*), and Rosalind and Orlando (*As You Like It*). Evidently Shakespeare admires their kind and isn’t trying in *Shrew* to hang on to fading marriage customs. But in this early play he begins a practice that runs through his career: without revealing his own preferences, he shows both sides of the issue and invites us to make our own choices. In *Shrew* he introduces an engaging and attractive couple in Bianca and Lucentio, but in their quick, rich-kid infatuation they run out and get married without knowing much more about one another other than what’s on the surface. Lucentio learns too late that his “young modest girl” can be as strong-willed and difficult as her sister, but unlike Kate she’s deceptive enough to hide these traits until after the wedding.

Petruchio, by contrast, knows exactly what he’s getting. He frankly seeks a rich wife, agrees to marry a major-league shrew in consideration of twenty thousand crowns on the barrel head and half of Baptista’s estate later, and sets in to tame this unwilling bride into a passable marriage partner. Now, this all may be a dated and, to many, even

an offensive arrangement, but it's open and frank, and for untold numbers of couples through the ages it seems to have worked well enough in most respects. This was the manner, for example, in which Isaac and Rebekah were brought together (Genesis 24).

The marriage brokering works well for Petruchio and Katharina too. Petruchio succeeds in taming his shrew, or at least well enough to meet his goals. And even Katharina is well served by the arrangement. Some readers believe that Kate's behavior is a reaction to being treated as an unwanted obstacle to her much-preferred sister's marriage: hardly a situation that would build a woman's self-esteem. Hence when a rich, macho man suddenly appears who wants to marry her and—will she nill she—is *going* to, she gets both her dignity back and also what most women want, a husband and a home of her own.

But in the process of this seeming business deal of a marriage another intriguing and much more warming event occurs. While Petruchio approaches his quest with a rather callous disregard concerning whomever he marries (so long as the money's right), he's unable to sustain that attitude. In his first words to Kate he comments on her beauty (2.1), and his regard for her grows even as they battle it out in the following scenes. The play has never succeeded by presenting Petruchio as an unfeeling wife-beater (he threatens once to cuff her if she hits him again, but never does); rather it pleases audiences only when a growing attraction between Kate and Petruchio appears through the smoke of battle.

The climax of their marital conflict is act 4, scene 5, on the road to Padua. Petruchio insists that Kate call the glaring sun the moon, or else they'll go back home to his former bachelor quarters. Finally, Kate complies, but in a satirical fashion so thinly veiled that Petruchio's bound to recognize her attitude:

Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,  
And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;  
An if you please to call it a rush-candle,  
Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

When Petruchio then changes and calls the sun the sun, Kate gets in her best shot:

Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed sun.  
But sun it is not, when you say it is not;  
And the moon changes even as your mind.

People whose minds change with the moon, the lunar planet, are called lunatics, and that's what Kate's calling her husband even as she submits to his will. Petruchio knows all this, but doesn't care much. All he wants is a workable relationship so that they can get on toward Padua and a peaceable life.

By Act 5 an attraction that looks a lot like love has developed. This scene transpires as the two stand watching the outcome of the Lucentio/Bianca affair:

KATHARINA	Husband, let's follow, to see the end of this ado.
PETRUCIO	First kiss me, Kate, and we will.
KATHARINA	What, in the midst of the street?
PETRUCHIO	What, art thou ashamed of me?
KATHARINA	No, sir, God forbid, but ashamed to kiss.
PETRUCHIO	Why, then, let's home again. . . .
KATHARINA	Nay, I will give thee a kiss. Now pray thee, love, stay. [Kisses him.]
PETRUCHIO	Is not this well? Come, my sweet Kate. Better once than never, for never too late.

Not Romeo and Juliet, maybe, but pretty promising considering how they started out.

We would hardly characterize the union of Katharina and Petruchio as an example of Paul's grand portrayal of the marriage relationship in Ephesians 5:21-33, but at least they're beginning to find their way toward a measure of that divine goal. Paul instructed, "Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." And again, "the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church." And again, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her."

When Paul tells husbands to love their wives "as their own bodies" and says that a husband who loves his wife loves himself, he pictures the wife as the husband's body: they've become one flesh. Their relationship, then, involves far more than just the question of the duty of the wife to submit to her husband: it defines *why* she's to do so. He's her head, and as his body she grows up into that head.

There's a union here, sexual and spiritual, and that union defines their roles. Neither Katharina nor any other wife is to be forced to surrender her dignity to her husband; on the contrary, she's to be honored and cherished. And though Kate and Petruchio are far from the ideal, some shadow of it is reflected at the close of the play.

After her climactic speech on the duty of wives to honor their husbands, Katharina offers to kneel to her husband and place her hand beneath his foot as a sign her submission, a staggering change from her former attitude. But Petruchio quickly

forestalls her from this demeaning act with a command/invitation for a far better symbol of their new relationship: “Come on, and kiss me, Kate.” Her willingness to submit is part of that now established intellectual and psychological union that will allow for a good marriage. And with that established, they may now enjoy the sexual union that is both symbol and part of the relationship. Petruchio’s last speech of the play begins, “Come, Kate, we’ll to bed.”

What about you and your spouse’s marriage? If a lot of real or psychological chairs and dishes are getting thrown around the house, maybe it’s time for each of you to ask some Petruchio/Kate type questions.

Husband, if your wife is a little shrewish, ask yourself whether she feels truly loved and desirable. You probably don’t need to charge in dressed like Petruchio at his wedding to get her attention, but let her know every day that you cherish her as your own body and that you’re trying your best to love her as Christ does the church.

Wife, don’t be a shrew: husbands hate that. Show and tell him that you love him and trust his leadership, and that you’ll submit to him as you serve God together. You’ll be joyful with his loving response.

God has a bride too (cf. Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14; Hosea 1:2; Ephesians 5:30-32; Revelation 19:7-9). And, like Petruchio, He does extraordinary and sometimes shocking things, as in Jeremiah and Hosea, to get his spouse’s attention. Christ, His bridegroom Son, plays Petruchio to us, the church, His Katherina. With divine affection, strategy, and improvising, He cajoles, woos, scolds, encourages, and compels us, His body, into that form and behavior which are worthy of Him, all the while proclaiming his love for us. And through all he reveals to us, his bride, what dignity and happiness we will enjoy if we yield and submit ourselves to Him.

In *Shrew* 2.1., alone with Kate for the first time, Petruchio persists in describing her to herself as pleasant, eloquent, mild, and beautiful, regardless of her appearance or behavior, and he decrees that this marriage will take place the next Sunday despite any denials or protests from her. When her family and friends enter he cuts off any debate by the simple ruse of claiming that she’s wildly in love with him but wants to continue to play the shrew in company. He’s headed for Venice, he says, to buy her beautiful and elegant wedding clothes.

At this point, interestingly enough, Kate is uncharacteristically silent. She may already have recognized that here is a man she can rail against and marry too.

But on the wedding day when the Minola household, the epitome of Paduan society, is all prepared at its best with every requirement of etiquette carefully observed, Petruchio comes riding in on a decrepit old horse and wearing worn-out clothes and equipment that he may have procured from the town dump. Challenged by the astonished Baptista, he replies

To me she's married, not unto my clothes.  
Could I repair what she will wear in me  
As I can change these poor accoutrements,  
'Twere well for Kate and better for myself.

And Tranio, a clever servant in the play, observes shrewdly

He hath some meaning in his mad attire.

Shakespeare is employing here what's known as sartorial symbolism: the use of styles or types of clothes to symbolize attitudes. Kate is outrageous, which Petruchio demonstrates to her by dressing outrageously.

Christ uses sartorial symbolism too. Emptying self of His glories as the Prince of heaven, he clothed himself in the inferior clothing of flesh to seek out his bride for Himself. And He had divine meaning in His attire:

***Philippians 2:5-8***

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:  
6 Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
8 And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

And Jesus, like Petruchio, was willing to be thought insane to accomplish his goal. In *Shrew*, Petruchio's own pretended brand of mad behavior extends even to the wedding ceremony, where, according to Gremio, he cuffed the priest; stormed around the church; drank a toast like a drunk in a tavern; then grabbed Kate

And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack  
That at the parting all the church did echo.

Deciding on a politic change of venue, Petruchio throws the protesting bride on a horse and hustles her over muddy roads to his own house, where he berates his astounded servants and orders dinner. Kate is starving by this point, but Petruchio erupts over the meat, unaccountably pronouncing it burnt, and declaring a fast for both himself and his bride, whom he proceeds to whisk off to the bridal chamber. Even there he finds an "undeserved fault" with the bed and dismantles it, preventing Katharina from sleep, and, most significantly, deferring consummation of the marriage until she's truly a wife.



***Ezekiel 16:9-14***

9 “Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12 And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14 Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord God.

Finally, Petruchio even insists that Katharina agree to his determination of the time of day, storming because she won't acknowledge that it's seven in the morning when it's really two in the afternoon; and demanding that she call the moon “sun,” and the sun, “moon.”

Outrageous? Surely.

Silly? Maybe not so much as might appear. Petruchio is saying that a new time is at hand, one of peace and happiness, rather than brawling and strife.

Jesus too announced a new day:

John 4:23

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

New wine, he said, couldn't be contained in old wineskins. Jesus is revolutionary: a new day, a new covenant, a new life for his followers:

Galatians 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The New King James Version

Finally, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and a new existence for his people.

By the end of the play, Katherine's not only tamed: she's transformed. She's aware of a new possibility for her life in her relationship with her husband, and she responds to it as a new woman. The Christian as well is transformed by his awareness of God's love.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is a prayer for all believers:

Ephesians 3:17-19

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The New King James Version

Because we are called we can respond to the love of Christ and be conformed to him:

Romans 8:28-29

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

As Petruchio is determined to marry Kate, so in an infinitely greater and higher sense Christ determined even before the creation to claim us as his bride:

Ephesians 1:4

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

The New King James Version

In loving response to Him, our husband, we too are tamed to submission, to obedience, and to service.

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## Shakespeare Quotations for Ministers, by John Parker

Know you not, master, to some kind of men  
Their graces serve them but as enemies?  
No more do yours. Your virtues, gentle master,  
Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.  
O, what a world is this, when what is comely  
Envenoms him that bears it!  
AS YOU LIKE IT 2.3



O good old man, how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world,  
When service sweat for duty, not for meed!  
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,  
Where none will sweat but for promotion,  
And having that do choke their service up  
Even with the having.

### AS YOU LIKE IT 2.3

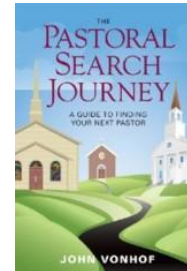
When I was at home, I was in a better place, but travelers must be content.

### AS YOU LIKE IT 2.4

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## Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

*The Pastoral Search Journey: A guide to Finding Your Next Pastor*, by John Vonhof, Copyright © 2010 by The Alban Institute



The church board should make every effort to conduct an exit interview with the outgoing pastor. Your pastor has served, possibly for many years, and has valuable insights about your church. Use the interview process to discuss the pastor's thoughts on the church body, leadership, giving, member participation, and future directions. This interview can be conducted by several board members or by the entire board. If you have started the process of forming a search committee, include the committee chair (page 6).

It could be said that your committee needs individuals who are both “head smart” and “heart feeling.” For that reason, committee members should rank high in five areas: spiritual maturity and sensitivity, ability to work well in a committee setting, listening and communications skills, discernment, and involvement in the ministries of the church. An understanding of leadership and administrative skills is also helpful. The search team should also understand the church's vision and mission. While search committee members will be at different levels in all five areas, all must have an enthusiasm for their task that will carry them through the long process ahead.

As the board considers people for the committee, it needs to select members who are respected, have the time to commit, work well in a group, and are known to keep commitments and assignments (page 8).

Remember that for every pastor who begins ministry in a new congregation, another church loses its pastor. Another search committee will be formed and the whole search process repeated. Your success in finding the pastor to lead you is a loss for his or her former church. That church also needs to be remembered in your prayers. As you grieved when your pastor left, its members too will grieve. Consider writing a letter to that congregation's board and search committee after your new pastor arrives, letting them know that you are praying for them (page 13).

All members of the search committee must adhere to strict standards of confidentiality. Talk about the necessity at your first meeting. Define what it means for the members. What can they tell their spouses? What can they tell church members who ask about the search? Who speaks for the committee? The names of pastors being considered must be kept in confidence (page 14).

The congregation needs to know the basics of what the pastoral search committee is doing. Not all the details need to be shared, but members do need to know where you are in the process of finding a pastor. A congregation that is uninformed is often confused or unresponsive. Tell members that you have reviewed “x” number of profiles, have scheduled interviews, and have moved “x” number of pastors into the next stage of the process. In addition, the search committee chair, or other key person, needs to keep the congregation informed with periodic status reports. This updating can be done with inserts in the Sunday bulletin, announcements in the Sunday morning worship service, postings on your church’s website and blog, e-mail messages, and your choices of social media. Remember not to compromise confidentiality standards (page 41).

Another important aspect of managing a congregation during the call process is dealing with the congregation’s grief over the departure of the previous pastor. When a pastor leaves a church, members and friends will have an array of emotions to deal with. Some may feel anger when they realize that the pastor is leaving, guilt if they feel some burden of personal responsibility for his or her departure, fear of what may happen to their church – or relief, if they did not pull away from the church and ultimately leave. This grieving process is normal (page 45).

It is important to know what you cannot ask. These include questions about age, physical characteristics, disabilities or chronic illnesses, and national origin. You may already have this information in the pastor’s profile, but only if he or she has voluntarily added it. The pastor may mention it in an interview, but federal laws govern what cannot be asked of any candidate (page 98).

The materials you send a candidate about your congregation and the way you present yourself in hosting pastors create an impression in the pastor’s mind. The candidate is forming opinions of how capable the leaders are, how friendly the congregation is, and whether the information you gave about your church is accurate. These impressions and opinions are an important part of the pastor’s decision – making process (page 113).

Presenting yourself in the best light also means looking at the church facilities and the parsonage. When the search process begins, another group might be formed to do maintenance work that has been put off in the church and the parsonage. They need to look attractive (page 118).

## Smile of the Month



For years a man's wife complained about her husband's leaving the cap off the toothpaste. Finally, on the night of their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary he decided it was time to please her, so from then on, he conscientiously twisted the cap back on the tube.

After a week, the wife eyed him suspiciously one morning and said, "How come you've stopped brushing your teeth?"

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## Barber Clippings

The opportunities continue to be encouraging and exciting. The *Learning to Love my Friend(s)* class with the elders, staff, and spouses is off to a great start. We are meeting from "house to house" and getting to know Jesus and each other better. The outlines for this study can be found on my web site, bottom of the page: [Leadership Classes](#) . If you should have questions about this class, how to conduct it, or the content of the lesson, feel free to contact me in any of the ways below.

This Sunday night, we plan to have our second Family Meeting. We will be reporting on the interim process. It will also be the first of "What Do You Think about the Preacher" nights. I look forward to criticism that will give me ideas about how or be a better person and how to do my work better.

For me, a highlight of each month in Cookeville is the monthly ministers' workshop. In June, we met at the Livingston congregation, hosted by Ken Williams. If you are in the area, we would be glad to have you participate. You can find more about that on my web site: [Upper Cumberland Ministers' Workshop](#) .

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John Parker

Jill and I leave Monday, June 14, to lead our tour of the English hymn sites. We have 21 in our group and will visit sites throughout England featured in my book ABIDE WITH ME: A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY THROUGH GREAT BRITISH HYMNS ([www.abidewithmehymns.com](http://www.abidewithmehymns.com)).

In May we attended the A Cappella music symposium at Pepperdine where I read a paper on Reginald Heber, writer of “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Last week I attended the Christian Scholars Conference at Lipscomb. Featured was Everett Ferguson and his exhaustive book on baptism in the early centuries.

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