

**Matt Kriger**  
**BARBER SHOP**  
 Airline Rd. Next to Fruitport Hair Design  
 Open: Mon. - Fri. 9:00 am - 5:30 pm



**CLARK'S CARPET**  
 3020 S. Mill Iron Rd. • Muskegon, MI 49444  
**231-777-2658**  
 • Carpet • Vinyl • Laminate • Commercial Tile  
 • Installation • Boat Rugs • Carpet Binding

**Michele's Rescue**  
 © michelesrescue.com • 231-798-4935

© Cats © Kittens © Dogs © Puppies

© SPAYED/NEUTERED

© VACCINATED/DOGS: RABIES

© WORMED/FRONTLINE

**HAVE AN UNALTERED ANIMAL?  
 WE CAN FIX THAT!**

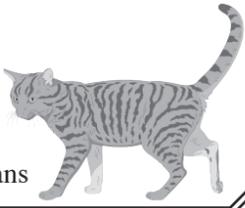
Donations accepted © Receipts given

**Critter Café  
 Rescue**

5818 Airline Rd.  
 (across from Fruitport #1 Fire Station)  
 865-6021

*Rescuing cats & kittens,  
 all breeds of bunnies, guinea pigs, ratties,  
 hamsters, birds, and all pocket pets.*

**Have needs for:**  
 Cat Litter  
 Carefresh Bedding  
 Wood Pellets  
 Food, Greens, Alfalfa  
 Crates  
 Volunteers  
 Pet Sponsors  
 Returnable bottles & cans



**West Michigan Spay and Neuter**  
 6130 Airline Road  
 Fruitport

Thousands of pets are **EXTERMINATED** each year in our area because there are **NO** homes for them.

Our mission of offering **high quality, low-cost spay and neutering** is to eliminate the **reproduction of unwanted pets.**

**CURRENT PRICES ARE:**  
 Male Cat...\$45  
 Female Cat...\$55  
 Male or Female Dog...\$75

**Please help us achieve our mission:**  
 1) Have your pets spayed and neutered  
 2) Tell your friends about our non-profit services  
 3) Sponsor a spay or neuter for a disadvantaged owner

**For information or an appointment  
 call 231 366-7067**

~We are proudly in partnership with  
 C-SNIP of Grand Rapids.~

**Got two coats?**  
 by Rev. R.A. Shackles



An interesting thought struck me recently when thinking about the Biblical admonition, "he who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none." Of course, one interesting aspect is how often people refer to this as "Jesus said" this. In fact, it was John the Baptist who, after noting that "the axe is even now laid to the root of the tree," the people asked what they should do. Certainly, we can believe Jesus surely would have fully supported John's answer.

However, that is not the point that occurred to me on this. It occurred to me that, as many have often noted, Jesus had a superb understanding of the human mind and will. Certainly, the idea of giving an extra coat to a man without any is absolutely within the whole scope and idea of Christian charity. It is a good enough reason that Jesus calls us to be generous to others out of such wealth that is ours, for fundamentally what we call our own is really a gift, a trust from God to be used wisely and well for others as well as ourselves.

But there is something else about this idea of sharing our good fortune with those in need. In encouraging us to share — as John put it — one of our coats, there is a gift that comes to both the giver and

**A blue Christmas**

*(This is based on a true incident)*

By Eric Wiggin

"She took the kids and moved in with her mother Thanksgiving weekend."

Pastor Ed raised a surprised eyebrow at Ralph Lunde and settled back in his swivel chair. "But you and Lucy have been in church together every Sunday since Thanksgiving — the kids sitting between you?" It was Christmas Eve, and a sheriff had served papers on Ralph at his office just before noon. Ralph had arranged a hasty conference with his pastor.

The pastor slid the divorce petition papers back across the desk to Ralph.

"Not ... of too honest, I guess." Ralph's words trailed off in despair.

"I understand. Nobody wants everyone to know their marriage is in trouble while there's hope of reconciliation." Pastor Ed sighed. "Will Lucy talk about it?"

"Her mind is made up, Pastor. She's seen the divorce lawyer — Frankenfield — and he agrees with her that she'd be better off without me. The attorney told her to sue for the house and custody of the kids."

"That's what he gets paid for." Pastor Ed remembered seeing Frankenfield's billboard ad next to Interstate 96. "Then you know what her lawyer said to her?"

Ralph fished a computer chip from his pocket. "From my answering machine — the calls were placed from her mom's phone, and the details are all there. But she won't take return calls from me." Ralph went on, admitting he'd spent beyond the family's means for years. Lucy lost her job right after Labor Day. From his own wages, Ralph had been able to keep up payments only on the car, boat, and snowmobile. Four credit cards had gone unpaid for several months, and Lucy had complained of intimidating phone calls from banks, a law firm, and a bill collector several times daily.

"Have you thought of disconnecting the house phone and just refusing to talk with those guys? You do have a cell phone." Pastor Ed leaned toward Ralph as he spoke. "Bill collectors work on commissions, and it's not in their interest to give you any breathing room. What's best for you and Lucy, or even for the bank, isn't an issue with them. They're professional sharks."

It was Ralph's turn to raise an eyebrow. "Would... wouldn't that be dishonest? I mean, like there's half a dozen messages from bill collectors on my voice mail every day when I get home from work. I answer them all each evening."

The pastor smiled. "What do you tell them?"

"That I'll pay when I get the money."

"Do they listen?"

"Well, no. They just want money, which I don't have. They often call back with the same demands half an hour later. New voice, same song and dance."

"There's no reason to deal with them by phone, Ralph. You have a responsibility to protect your wife from harassment. A certified letter to the head of their collections department, return receipt requested, will

the receiver. I am sure it was part of Jesus' reason for calling us to share. The realization came to me that when I share by giving one of my coats to another man, we both gain, for it creates a bond between us. Every time he wears it, he thinks of me and every time I see him wearing it, I realize what was mine is now his, but the warmth I once enjoyed I now know he is enjoying. In the Mystery of Divine Love, the coat belongs to both of us; the warmth is the same for both of us.

That is the point! There is a unity that is imparted in such a gift given in Christian charity. For that charity is not pity. True charity is, I have an extra coat; you are cold because you don't have one. I give you that coat and the warmth once mine is now yours. My heart is warmed; your body is given comfort. In the Mystery of Divine Love that coat becomes a scored bond of Christ's love between us. Jesus knew that Divine Love. He is that Love. So he calls us to share with our brother or sister because he knows now, by the gift, he is part of both of us in a special way.

A while back, I shared this way. I had a really nice winter coat. I liked it very much, but I had one I usually wore. I did not wear the other; I did not need it. So I took it to the Rescue Mission and they promised to see that a needy man would have it. Now, I wish I knew that man — because in the Divine Love that man and I have an act of Christian love in common, and between us. So when next you contribute a coat or any other gift for the needy, remember, there is then a bond brother or sister enjoying, sharing your love. •

stop the calls."

"I guess I could sell my boat and snowmobile — I'd have enough cash to pay one of the accounts in full."

"Now you're thinking. And without them to pay for, you could probably negotiate with one of your credit card banks to let you pay your balance off at a reasonable interest rate — five percent, or maybe zero."

Ralph ran his fingers through his hair. "Y'know, Pastor, I remember the ad that sold me that snowmobile. They made it look better than sex."

"The one where a woman in a negligee watches her man roar off into the night on his new Snow Devil?" Pastor Ed grinned wryly.

"Yeah. We weren't sleeping together, so I figured..." Ralph's voice trailed off.

"You've just named the two most common stated reasons for divorce. Fighting over..."

"Money and sex." Ralph cut the pastor off. "I read that somewhere."

"Did the writer explain that the money and sex issues are only what boils to the surface?" Pastor Ed reached for his Bible.

"Something called 'love'? I know what the Bible says," Ralph shrugged. "'Love is only lust disguised with a pretty name.' That's a line from a novel," he added. "A cynic's view, I guess."

"Is that what you think?" Pastor Ed frowned.

Ralph stared out the window. Across the street the lights of a store-window Christmas crèche — a baby in a manger to symbolize God's love for mankind — flashed red and green as shoppers scurried past, doing last minute shopping. In Ralph's mind all this hurried hustle and bustle seemed to mock the real reason for Christmas. Tears came as he considered his Christmas tree, where he and Lucy had, in love, placed gifts for each of their children. Tomorrow, though, Ralph would not have a Christmas. *Will they?* He wiped his tears with the back of his hand. "Long ago, Pastor, I understood that even as God loved me enough to sacrifice His Son, I was called to love Lucy enough to sacrifice myself every day for her, just as Jesus sacrificed Himself for us." (See John 12:25-26; Galatians 2:20.)

"What happened?" Pastor Ed laid his Bible aside. Ralph, he realized, knew the truth — he needed to return to it.

"I discovered that the woman who seemed so hot on our honeymoon had begun to resist my advances. So we'd fight." Ralph sighed.

"And?"

"I started spending money on myself."

"That'll do it every time," Pastor Ed agreed. "What number do I call to reach Lucy?"

When he got home, Ralph discovered Lucy had been there and taken the children's gifts from under the tree. He considered driving to her mother's home for a confrontation. Then he found her note:

*"Ralph, Pastor Ed phoned. He wants to see us together the day after Christmas. I do want us to talk, so I've written this before Satan convinces me to back out.*

*I love you, Ralph. I always will. Lucy." •*

**New! Fruitport Area News UPDATES**

Find out if something is happening in the **Fruitport Area** between published issues of the FAN! Go to our website:  
[www.fruitportareanews.com/updates](http://www.fruitportareanews.com/updates)