

## THE LAST WORD

**Terry Newland**

March, 2010

I recently joked that there was a time when I knew all the answers but nobody listened. Now, in my later years, people appear more interested in my answers, but I have fewer of them on the tip of my tongue.

My joke was one of those that spoke more truth than fiction. Back in the day, I rarely came across a question that I couldn't/wouldn't answer. I would even give people answers to questions they never asked. It didn't seem to matter whether I had any hint of knowledge concerning an issue. I either had the answer or sometimes I thought I was the answer. Seems pretty obnoxious now, but in those days it seemed wise. Do you know how frustrating it is to know the answers when no one is listening.

Over the years I find that life has turned upside down. People ask me lots of questions now. Some even ask in a way that implies my answer will be the right answer. Where were all these questions when I knew all the answers? Actually, I still have many answers, but now I don't think people should accept them as the only answer. I wouldn't in most cases. My first reaction is still to come up with some kind of answer. However, I catch myself more often these days, admitting that I don't know or that I'll need to think on it a while.

I've become one of those people who used to frustrate me, one of those people that don't want to listen to people with all the answers. People with all the answers now make me nervous. They don't seem to be listening to my questions. Their frustration has a familiar look to it. I remember that feeling of frustration and try to be patient.

I'm in a small group Lenten Bible study. At our first gathering a basic premise was offered as the foundation for our Lenten journey. That premise or declaration stated that Easter is the answer. Not an unusual declaration and one I have affirmed since childhood Sunday School classes. Yet, it grabbed me in a new way this time. I guess because of my ongoing evolution from one with most answers to one with many questions.

I'm not sure where my small group study is leading me, but I've gone off on a journey of my own. One might think that when I knew the answers (or thought I was the answer) I would experience a great deal of satisfaction. Not the case at all and it was more than the frustration that people weren't listening. I don't remember a sense of peace or feeling of contentment. Looking back on that time now it looks rather self-centered...all about me.

If Easter is the answer, then it isn't about me. If Easter is the answer it is about God, about God's love for me. More than me, it's about God's love for all. There is a deep and pleasant peace in that answer. That answer offers the sure and certain hope that brings contentment. I like that answer!

The Peace of Christ be with you!