

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By John F. Hall

For nearly a year, I've been sheltered in place at my home, listening as the pandemic continues to take its toll on America. As a writer, I'm rather late in the scheme of things. I've had one desktop computer crash and one old laptop malfunction. I saved one hard drive and a fan from the desktop. I'm using a hand-me-down desktop computer to type out this story. It has some issues, but it is functional. I feel that I am still making a difference by helping my son and staying connected with others by mobile communications and snail mail. When the pandemic began last year, I decided that I would attempt to write one story a week and snail mail it to extended family members and friends. I mail my stories to: Jade Hakes, Skyler Crisp, Lexie Crisp, Trish Cunningham, Audrey Lambert, Mike Herndon, and Dr. Daniel Butler.



I have my computer keyboard on a wooden desk that has an upper shelf. On that upper shelf I have my computer monitor and two small computer speakers. The desk is in my granddaughters, Andrea and Heather's former bedroom on the second floor of my old Antebellum farm house. I use a Lexmark black and white printer. Behind the desk is a window that gives me a view of my driveway. On the other side of the room is a window that gives me a good view of the fields in front of the house. On a small sewing table near the desk, I have another hand-me-down laptop computer. These computers work via WiFi from the downstairs router. I consider this room to be my writing studio.

Downstairs, in my living room I have my grandson, John-John's old gaming computer. It is one fast computer. I had my brother-in-law, Bruce Oakley, put in another fan to help keep it cool because it runs hot. It is wired directly into the AT&T router. The Gateway HDMI computer sits on a coffee table. The 22-inch computer monitor also sits on coffee with a raised stand. I put a Blue Light Blocking filter over the computer screen. It helps reduce glare, and gives some UV and retina protection. I have a small glass top end table next to the coffee table that holds the keyboard and computer mouse. The computer mouse is wired to the desktop. On top of the computer monitor I put a camera and on the base of the monitor I have a microphone. I attend two Zoom meetings a month with my Christian Fraternity Brothers.

My son, John is an independent contractor. He mainly works in the Nashville metropolitan area He does repair work for a company that owns over 5,000 rental homes in that area. He is called a "vendor." He mainly competes for jobs in competition with other vendors. The competition begins over the internet in a portal only open to vendors approved by the company. I may have only a second to click onto a work order for a job that comes up on the screen, the person who clicks on the work order first, gets to bid on the job. I'll call my son on his cellphone and he takes it from there. I sit in my recliner and watch the computer monitor and my 55-inch flat screen TV at the same time. Sometimes, I'll pull more jobs than he wants and he will tell me to hold off for a few days so he can catch up. Even at the age of 75 plus, I can still make a difference.

Steve Angrisano wrote the hymn, "Go Make A Difference." These are some of his lyrics: "Go make a difference, we can make a difference. Go make a difference in the world. First, we are the salt in the earth, called to let people see the love of God in you and me. We are the light of the world, not to be hidden, but to be seen. Go make a difference in the world. Second, we are the hands of Christ, reaching out to those in need. The face of God for all to see. We are the spirit of hope, we are the voice of peace..."

Bill Anderson and Rob Crosby wrote the country music song, "Did I Make A Difference." These are some of their lyrics: "I'm caught up in the push and shove. The daily grind, burning time, spinning wheels. I wonder what I'm doing here. Day to day, year to year, standing still. Somewhere there's a teacher with a heart that never quits. Staying after school to help some inner city kids. A mother who's a volunteer, a soldier in the fight. I can't help but ask myself when I lay down at night. I've been working hard to make a living and forgetting what true living is. Taking more than giving, something's missing Lord, how long can I go on like this? There's a lonely old man down the street. And I should be ashamed. I've never been to see him and I don't even know his name. There's kids without their supper in my neighborhood. Will I look back one day and say I did all I could? Did I make a difference in somebody's life? What hurts did I heal? What wrongs did I right? Did I raise my voice in defense of the truth? Did I lend my hand for the destitute? When my race is won, when my song is sung, will I have to wonder, did I make a difference? Did I make a difference?..."

Sometimes, we forget that we can all make a difference in the lives of other people. A simple word of kindness, a cell text, a card, a letter, and even sending a story in the mail, are some of the ways that this old man tries to make a difference in the lives of other people. David Foster, Richard Page, and Carole Sager wrote the song, "Thankful." The song can be viewed on YouTube. I recommend the video produced by notforglory with lyrics and Josh Groban singing the song. The producer of the video makes excellent use of still pictures with the lyrics. These are some of their lyrics: "Some days, we forget to look around us. Some days, we can't see the joy that surrounds us. So caught up inside ourself, we take when we should give. So for tonight we pray for what we know can be. And on this day we hope what we can't see. It's up to us, to be the change. And even though we all can still do more, there is still so much to be thankful for. Look beyond ourselves there's so much sorrow. It's way too late to say, I'll cry tomorrow. Each of us must find our truth. We're so long overdue. So tonight we pray for. What we know can be. And everyday, we hope for what we still can't see. It's up to us, to be the change. And even though we all can still do more, there's so much more to be thankful for. Even with our differences, there is a place we're all connected. Each of us can find each other's light..."

Looking out my second floor window at the fields covered with frost, I look forward to warmer days, and seeing family and friends. And know that I am thankful for all of you.

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:

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