

# FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

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## "It was a Dark and Stormy Night" (With apologies to Charlie Brown and Snoopy)

I am a reader! My teachers at Newport Grammar didn't have anything else to do but try to instill in "Tommy" the need to read. I remember it like it was yesterday, Mrs. McGaha's second grade class and it was time to read and rite and rithmatic (and spell, but I couldn't think of an "r" word for that, unless "ruminare" would work. No? Well, ok then!)

Anyway!

We were reading; and we all took turns reading out loud. My goodness, what was she thinking? Making the precious little children read out loud, and giving grades based on how we did? Think of the behaviorists and other forms of child psychologist experts that are rolling over in their graves at the thought of such cruel and unusual punishment!

Anyway!

We were reading - out loud; and, as I said, I remember clearly when it happened. I got a groove going; and actually read - out loud, and fast! My mind was actually looking at the words ahead of what my mouth was pronouncing - and it was wonderful! I could read; and I liked it! Look out people, Tommy Mooty can read and he is loose in the world!

I know what you are thinking. "Second Grade? Good grief, you waited until the second grade before you got your groove in reading?" Go ahead, ask me how old I was before I could play video games and kill mutants from Planet Mongo. Video Games? Mutants? Planet Mongo? What all that about?

Go ahead; ask me what I did while I was in kindergarten. Kindergarten? What's up with that?

Go ahead; ask me why I didn't watch Elmo and Cookie Monster teaching me my "abc's" and "123's". "Cookie Monster? Elmo? The only cookie monster I knew was when dad would get into the homemade toll house cookies and pour a glass of thick creamy milk from local cows from the quart size glass bottle from local Stokley's Dairy. Store bought cookies? Homogenized milk?

I guess I was slow, huh? Good grief, they now hit the ground running in first grade; and are taking advanced math courses before they are even old enough to have pimples.

But, I made it; and I still love to read. Hope you do as well; and that is the reason you are perusing these paragraphs and pondering these prognostications.

For instance, Charles Lowery recently wrote in *SBC Life* (used by permission) about the severe financial problems encountered by a Maine fishing village; and the city fathers were holding a discussion session when a stranger appeared and offered his advice and solutions to their financial problems. It was probably a "dark and stormy night" (at least I hope so, or I have wasted a perfectly good title).

Well! Who was this guy coming in here to put in his two cents? And, so, one by one, they rejected each idea he offered. Dismissing the meeting, they were all leaving - solutionless and clueless - when someone came in late and asked what advice "he" had offered. They assured the late-comer "his" advice was "no good"; and "besides, who is this stranger coming in trying to solve our problems anyway?".

Who was he? Well, the enormous vessel docked in the marina from which he had disembarked had "John D. Rockefeller, Sr." emblazoned on the side! He was the one person who could solve their problems; and they sent him away.

The Bible teaches that God wants to help us in and with our problems, if we will just get out of the way and let Him talk - and take His advice! He should not be a stranger among us; because He has the resources and the power the likes of which you have never dreamed.

Suppose I had told Mrs. McGaha I could read "well enough, thank you"; and never let her force me to read out loud; never allowed her to get me out of the box; and suppose I had convinced Fred Marvin and Josephine Celeste (mom and dad

to you "fereigners" that "ain't from around here") to get off my back, and quit bugging me to do homework.

Just think how horrible that could have been if the dominos had fallen away from my learning to read and write! Why, we would not have these little five minute segments of your Wednesday (or whenever you get one of those "round tuits") to spend together!

Perish the thought! Meantime, you keep readin' and I'll keep ritin'; and we'll leave the rithmatic up to the kindergartener down the street.

*Tom Mooty serves as Very Senior Pastor to Newport's West End Baptist Church; and writes this column for the Wednesday Edition of the "Newport Plain Talk". Your comments are always appreciated; 'specially the gooduns'.*