

## Moravian Women's Association- Devotional Paper – July/August 2024

### Fruits of the Spirit

*But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, **humility** and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a GNB)*

One of my favourite literary heroes is Atticus Finch in the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee. I would imagine that many of you are familiar with the story either because you have read it or you have seen the brilliant film version featuring Gregory Peck as Atticus. For those of you who are not familiar, I will provide a summary. Atticus is a lawyer in Maycomb, Alabama, USA between 1933-35. He is the single parent to Jem and Scout who think very little of their father's occupation. They don't consider it 'manly enough' unlike the occupations of other men in the town. Atticus defends a black man, Tom Robinson, who has been falsely accused of raping a white woman. This causes difficulties for the family but Atticus persists in doing what he considers to be the right thing. Atticus, is for me, a fine example of the final two fruits of the spirit – goodness and humility. Despite the risks, Atticus does what he knows to be right but there is never a sense in which Atticus displays any self-importance.

George Bailey, the main character in the film 'It's a Wonderful Life' is another fictional character who lives an ordinary life, making a big impact on the lives of others in his town, an impact he only realises when he is in trouble and an angel shows him how life would have been for people if he had not existed.

George and Atticus are of course fictional characters but there are many people who go about their daily lives in a good and humble manner, making a positive impact on many people around them. These are not the people who get the publicity, their stories are 'boring'!

### Read Acts 9:36-42

Dorcas or Tabitha, as she is also known is someone well thought of in her community. She uses her sewing skills to help the widows in her church. Widows at the time would have been in a very vulnerable position with no husband to look after them. If Dorcas had not been miraculously raised to life by Peter, it is very likely that we would have known nothing about her. Yet, by using her quite ordinary skills, she obviously made an impact on the lives of the women around her.

We all have gifts. As followers of Christ, we are called to use those gifts in the service of our fellow human beings. Sometimes, as with Atticus, it means we need to stand up for and do what is right even if this brings us trouble. More often than not, it will mean using our gifts for the benefit of others by quietly going about our daily lives, helping others with no thought of attracting attention or praise for what we do. We quite possibly won't even realise the impact using our gifts has had on the people around us.

### For Discussion

1. Can you think of any other people, fictional or non-fictional who display the characteristics of humility and goodness?
2. What impact have these characters had on your life?
3. What 'ordinary' gifts do you have which could be used or are being used for the benefits of others?