

Hobo's Pastor

by Ann Bogle

That Sunday three of us drove almost as a family to turn over a word processor the head of the family had used in writing his memoir, beginning with the loss of members of his Italian-Hungarian Jewish family during the *khurbn* and his survival after crossing the Alps on foot into Switzerland. We transported the word processor to Mason City, Iowa, where a man we expected would be a priest—found via Craig's List—met us halfway between Grinnell and Minneapolis. Al corrected our vision over lunch at Perkins. He was not a priest but a retired U.C.C. pastor who had searched to replace his word processor model, now past manufacture. He had resumed writing sermons by hand, and it was not going as well. He did not want to convert to Internet in buying a new computer. We talked through lunch about religions and history. The wretch in “Amazing Grace” is not a wretch though he feels like one, who comes to accept God's acceptance, Al said. Then lunch ended in keeping to our time table. The three of us traveled seven hours that day and Al traveled as far in the service of finding the right tool for his writing. In part, we were left thinking of Al's pastoral service to Britt, Iowa, Hobo Capital of the World, where a hobo had killed a woman he had promised to marry.

