

# Love Thy Neighbor in Service

## The Great Physician



"Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55 NIV). The words are some of the most powerful in the Bible. His name was Ronald R. Rolland, and his nickname was Shorty. We received a call from his pastor this afternoon (10/1/06) that he had died.

(Reprinted: 2003 newsletter)

Shorty was one of the first people we began helping almost five years ago. He along with Ted had been living in an alley between Marietta Street and Walton Street just up from Five Points in the heart of downtown Atlanta. They were both wheelchair bound, and had lived in the alley for approximately 13 years simply choosing life on the streets over anything else. They had a following of loving individuals that worked in the surrounding buildings who would come by daily to provide gifts of food, money and various types of clothing. Periodically

individuals would attempt to reach the two with a word about the Father.

Nothing seemed to move them from that alley. Both were heavy alcoholics. They would drink at all times of the day and night whenever the desire hit them. As a result of the gifts from others, being wheelchair bound and frequently in alcohol induced stupors; Shorty & Ted were often the targets of fleet footed thieves.

Ted had arrived in the alley via his Vietnam experience. He was a black beret (if there is such a thing) as he stated. The group was an elite fighting force in Vietnam as Ted tells the story. The Father calls us not to kill one another as the mental suffering of remembering those events can be crippling for a lifetime. Ted also suffered from being exposed to Agent Orange. The result was he periodically broke out in small sores all over his body.

Shorty came to the alley via a lifetime of suffering. He was taken from his parents when he was three years old after his father apparently hit him with a fire poker. He was raised in an orphanage. The orphanage

according to Shorty was a difficult place to be brought up. Being only 5' 2" now one can imagine all the taunting directed his way as a young child. Both Ted and Shorty solved the emotional suffering by drowning their thoughts in alcohol. Almost all-abusive drug and alcohol use that exists on the planet today is the result of individuals unable to face the pain of living daily sober.

### The Prognosis?

Incredibly Ted said he received over \$800 monthly from the Veterans Administration as a result of his Agent Orange disability. When we first met, Shorty indicated he was to receive years of back benefits on an SSI settlement and a monthly check. After investigation, both were telling the truth. Shorty ultimately received over \$8,000 in back benefits and a monthly check of over \$500. They were willing to make me responsible for the care of their money. We moved them off the street into an extended stay hotel just off Piedmont Road. The room was small but nice.

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However after living in that alley for 13 years along with the heavy use of alcohol simply moving indoors did not change any of their behavior. The room was destroyed within 30 days, and they were told to leave. This occurred three more times over a period of approximately one to two years.

A large part of the problem was that in the initial stages of the ministry the program was social and not based upon faith. As a result we would provide whatever an individual wanted including alcohol. (Incredibly stupid looking back.) At the time the idea was simply to provide whatever the individuals wanted (love thy neighbor as thyself) thereby befriending them and ultimately telling them about faith in Jesus Christ. Over time the Father revealed what a mistake it was not to make the order, faith first followed by action under the guidance of HIS spirit and direction from HIS word.

**F**aith is now the first thing discussed with the addictions being the second change that needs to occur in a person's life. The Father has revealed to us that the cure to homelessness is faith in Jesus Christ. However, we were unaware of the fact at the time of dealing with Shorty and Ted. Shorty finally left Ted in the extended stay hotel to be homeless in his alley. Hard to believe, but when Ted was drinking he was a mean drunk.

### What can you do?

We need your prayers! It is the most important thing you can do for the ministry.

*"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."*

(James 5:16 NIV)

LTN is committed to spreading the Gospel by Christ's example to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. To this end, LTN has designed programs with the purpose of helping clients build a relationship of faith in God, regain their dignity and eventually, regain their self-sufficiency. Contact us to learn more about the services and programs.

*Love Thy Neighbor In Service is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation (IRS#17053159005021). Gifts are tax deductible in accordance with tax law.*

We were able to get Shorty back off the street when placed with Ulysses Butler (Zeke) in a house near downtown. Zeke was also a homeless alcoholic, but would take care of Shorty's needs. Zeke was the first man to help with LTN in the office. He like Ted could be very mean when drunk.

After a period of approximately twelve months Shorty left the house and came back to his alley. Ted could not afford the extended stay motel on his own and also was back in the alley. So after approximately 1.5-2 years of consistent effort (without faith as the focus) the two individuals were right back where we had found them in the same lifestyle.

**T**he Father knows us and will provide us the desires of our heart (Psalms 37:4 NIV) if we will follow HIM. The one desire on our heart was that Shorty and Ted get off the street and have a relationship with HIM. In HIS time

the Father took care of matters.

**S**horty had another seizure and was taken to Grady Hospital. Heavy alcohol use can cause seizures. After some period of time at Grady he was placed in a Christian home that took care of his basic needs. The owners of the home finally contacted us to make monthly payments once the program that Shorty had been enrolled in terminated. We learned Shorty was doing better and periodically would see him next to his alley panhandling for something to do.

However, approximately two years ago we saw Shorty walking on a downtown street. Not only was he walking (out of his wheelchair), but also he had on a large wooden cross and was working part time in a church near the Christian home he still lived in. He says, "He loves the church and now has a faith in Christ." He no longer has a desire

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## Ultimate Victory Over Death

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to be on the street and as he says, "Does not need the alcohol daily like before."

Shorty spent his remaining days working part time at the church green house raising various plants. The plants were sold to raise money for the church. The news that Shorty had died was not a shock. He had been in the hospital several times for his weak heart. His body just could not take the years of alcohol abuse.

In years past the news of an individual's death was normally gut wrenching. However, after my coming to faith (accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior & receiving the free gift of eternal life) approximately three years ago, death is now seen in a totally different light. Shorty had suffered most of his life. His body was in pain from all the years of abuse and now after his death he is with the Father & Jesus. If ever someone was free it is Shorty. A joy and peace hit me about his death that I have rarely felt. I now look forward to

***Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***

**Matthew 22:39**

*Send me an Email*

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Please feel free to send John an email to find out more about the ministry. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your support of our ministry.

seeing Shorty upon my death (be it soon or years away). "Death has been swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54)

God bless you,

**John Chapman, Jr.**