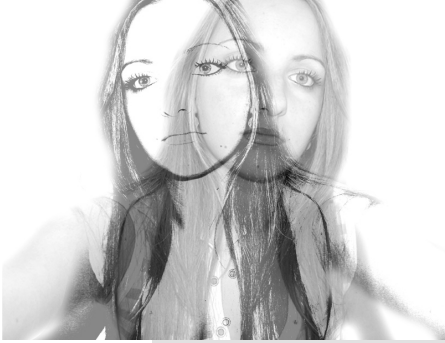


Love Thy Neighbor in Service

The Great Physician



Even when you can't, the Father can. We have had that experience downtown several times, but two occasions really stand out.

Situations come to pass in life that simply look impossible from a human perspective. Homeless individuals who have severe mental illness often are so separated from this world they can barely function. They fit the classic idea of a homeless person. They can look the part in every way. They will be incredibly dirty, smell horrible, just look pitiful and often talk to themselves. Everyone just walks by as if they do not even exist. One wonders if they know they exist. We have had two occasions to serve these type people in downtown.

Milton was his name. He was one of the first people we began to serve. Every day

money would change hands. Almost no conversation ensued. The conversations that did occur often made little sense. The process went on for approximately 2-3 years. Milton never bathed and was avoided if at all possible by most everyone.

We just kept giving every day with not much hope of expecting any change.

He would periodically disappear for several weeks at a time. Normally that meant he had been thrown in jail for some minor offense. Finally, he disappeared for approximately six months. The assumption was he was dead. This was too long to be a jail sentence. An incredible thing happened, however. We encountered him on the streets clean, well dressed and suddenly conversational.

My wife had majored in psychology in college and had told me Milton's problem was likely schizophrenia. I asked if he was ok or needed any help. He responded, "Yes" in a prompt manner as if he understood me. He had never responded that way in the years prior. I was shocked and wondered what

in the world had happened to transform the man. My wife had told me that if the right medication were obtained, individuals with schizophrenia could function.

The Prognosis?

We went to breakfast and I asked him if he was taking any pills. His answer was, "No". A few minutes later his answer was, "Yes" and he pulled out a bottle of pills with an address from a hospital in Albany, Georgia. The mystery had really gotten deep. How in the world did a man from the streets of Atlanta, Georgia end up in a medical facility in Albany, Georgia? After a day of phone calls, beginning with the hospital, a very unusual story unfolded.

Milton had grown up in Albany. He ended up in Atlanta homeless as an adult. He had a set of parents and a brother. None of them could afford or were willing to take care of him. Many years ago he had obtained a job cleaning office space at night with a janitorial company.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The owner of the company hired Milton after he recognized him as an individual with whom he had attended high school. One evening he asked Milton if he needed a ride home. Milton said, "Yes", and the man attempted to take Milton home. To his surprise Milton did not have a home.

The man ultimately took Milton into his home and let him live there and continue his work. Milton just disappeared one day and they did not know what had happened to him. He was taking medication at the time.

Individuals who take medication will periodically get tired of the medicines side effects and quit taking them. The results can be disastrous. Milton ended up on the streets, and that was the approximate time we began helping him. The same family had somehow been back in downtown Atlanta, seen Milton on the street, recognized him, had great compassion and taken him back to South Georgia where they now lived. After spending the day tracking them down, they told us that Milton wanted to come back to Atlanta for a few days including the weekend.

Knowing the possibilities that may disconnect Milton and the family again we hurriedly put Milton on a bus back to the

family. He arrived safely and they picked him up. To our knowledge he is still with them to this day.

The second life resurrection ended at the Love Thy Neighbor Easter dinner this past spring. Yolanda was her name. She was a classic schizophrenic. Her behavior and personality included being incredibly dirty, having little conversation, much staring and periodically being very angry. She was one of the most hopeless cases I have ever seen.

However, Kaz and Al, the two men most active in the daily operations at Love Thy Neighbor, would continue to engage with her exactly as Jesus called us to loving our neighbor as ourselves. She came to one of the ministry Thursday meetings at Techwood Baptist and proceeded to attack

another participant. This is the only fight to break out at any event or occasion we have been involved in over the entire 5-6 year period of operation. Fortunately, some very large men were available to hold Yolanda at bay.

Despite the fight, Kaz and Al hung in there continuing to serve her. Eventually she started getting better. How and where she got better I cannot tell you. She was finally able to tell us she had a father in Minnesota and we put her on a bus back to him. She told Kaz and Al that she would send them a card when she arrived.

When an individual can barely operate daily the promise of sending a card is generally ignored. To my surprise a post card from Minnesota came to my office. It

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.

Love Thy Neighbor In Service

41 Marietta Street
Suite 1020
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: 404-688-1638 (John Chapman, Jr.)
404-577-3152 (Ministry Office)
E-mail: jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net



Understanding Mental Illnesses

(Continued from page 2)

said, "To Kaz and Al I love you and hope to see you soon." The card, to my amazement and partial fear, was signed by Yolanda. When someone is placed with a family member we always hate to see them separated and coming back to us. Upon arriving at the Easter dinner I was shocked to see Yolanda. She was completely healthy having gained 15-20 pounds, clean, well dressed and as pleasant as anyone you have ever met.

Kaz told me later that he had known Yolanda several years earlier and she was a great person. Apparently she had gone to Florida and after the trip had experienced the mental problems. Upon the most recent return we helped her obtain a one room apartment and she now has full time work. She will be on her own within a few months.

Both stories could be attributed to chance.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matthew 22:39



jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net

Please make a note that John now has a new email address. We apologize for any problems this might cause but we look forward to staying in contact with you.

However, the family's response to Milton was specifically due to their faith in Jesus Christ as was the service of Kaz and Al. My view is the Lord was absolutely involved using people of faith wherever Milton or Yolanda's life might have taken them. Milton's recovery was specifically the result of the family being involved and Yolanda's recovery was the result of Kaz and Al being involved.

Both parties were responding to Jesus in what were clearly impossible situations. Where in your life does an impossible situation exist? Take the risk and respond the way Jesus calls you to. As we have learned in the ministry, the Lord will participate in amazing ways. It just takes time. Give Him your time and He will reveal Himself to you in a spectacular way.

May God bless you,

John Chapman, Jr.