

†.my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.



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HIS MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Vietnam, December 14, 1967—just before the first Tet Offensive. I was with Charlie Company, First Battalion, 25th Lightning Division, near Saigon. In the afternoon a Vietcong death squad hit us, leaving 10 dead. At sundown, feeling jittery, I went on patrol. Gribbit, Vigor and I set up a listening post about 500 meters from camp. At 1:00 A.M., I reported in: “This is Charlie, L.P. One. Lots of movement out here.”

The radio on my back crackled: “Get down...we’re going to fire.” Our guys started throwing rockets into the bush; the enemy started their own barrage. We were pinned down. “Oh, God! Get us out of here...please!” I prayed as I chewed dirt.

There was a thud, like someone punching my back. A grenade exploded. I felt blood trickling down my back. “We’ve been hit,” I radioed, “we’re coming in!” In spite of our wounds, we scrambled in the darkness through a field of claymore mines and bales of razor-sharp wire and stumbled into the arms of the arriving medics.

Three weeks later, when all three of us were out of the hospital and back at camp, my platoon sergeant called me in. “Coverdale, how did you guys manage to let the medics know you’d been hit?”

“Radio, sir.” I was surprised he should ask.

“Not with this, soldier,” he replied, holding up a twisted blackened box. It was the radio I had carried on my back. It had taken the full blast of the grenade, probably saving my life. And in doing so, the batteries, the crystal—every component—had been destroyed.

How did the medics get my SOS? I don’t know. But God does.

Thomas Coverdale
Yonkers, New York
Guideposts August 1983

REFLECTIONS

Benny

By Stan Manley

...my Shepherd editor

Benny was 16 when I first met him. A patient in a state mental institution, which had become his home for several years. A terrible mistake had occurred during his treatment with Electroshock Therapy.

The mistake had taken Benny back to that of a child, unable to speak, write or communicate in any way. Slowly he had progressed to the point of being able to take care of his personal needs, feed himself and follow instructions, but was still unable to talk or socialize with others.

I had taken a semester of college to work in my major, abnormal psychology. One semester turned into two, as I became Charge Aide of two wards at the hospital.

I had already taken a special interest in Benny and had observed the glaze that covered his eyes. This young face that had been void of expression for years touched my heart.

One afternoon while supervising a softball game between the two wards, I noticed Benny standing by a tree staring out over the ball field. Still no expression, but certainly interested in watching the game. One day something funny happened on the field and as I glanced at Benny, I caught the slightest hint of a smile.

The next time we had a game I asked Benny if he wanted to play catch. Surprisingly, he turned in my direction, his arms at his side, eager. I carefully tossed the ball and watched as it bounced off his chest. I would retrieve the ball and repeat the process over and over again.

This went on for several games, until one day I noticed a slight motion in his arms as I tossed the ball. Quickly, I encouraged him to raise his arms and catch the ball.

He kept trying until one day he did it, (Continued)

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(Cont) he caught the ball! It was all I could do to maintain my composure. Benny had just hit a home run!

There was an immediate change in Benny. He smiled when somebody told a joke. He still couldn't talk, and there was no socializing with the other patients or staff, but his progress continued.

The day came when I had to leave and return to college. Later a friend wrote to me and told me that Benny was a new person. He was talking, to everyone's delight, had a part-time job at a cafe washing dishes and was going home on weekends for visits.

The best news was that Benny was going to be discharged soon. There was a time when he had nothing to look forward to except spending the rest of his life in an institution. Now, a life of expectations and hope were his.

Over the years I have wondered about Benny. How he is doing, what he is doing. Does he remember playing catch, does he remember his first laugh, his first conversation, ...me.

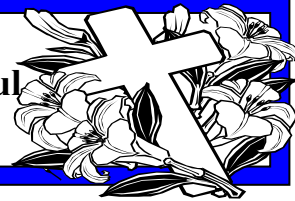
While thinking about Benny and telling his story, I was unsure of how I was supposed to close. As I prayed about it, one thought kept coming to mind. Somebody cared and reached out to try to make a difference. The opportunity just happened to come my way and I thank God that I responded.

There are people who have reached out to me, sacrificially, Why? Two thousand years ago a man named Jesus, while nailed to a cross looked my way and your way. Christianity has built within it an element called compassion. It is the cornerstone of salvation, touching people for Him in Christian love.

Love, like a magnet, will draw people to you who need help. Be quick to listen and slow to reject. The payback may be small but the rewards are eternal.

Stan Manley
My Shepherd Newsletter

MISSION STATEMENT:
To Encourage the Faithful
To Save the Lost.



For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

It's your responsibility, do it today



MY REDEEMER

As I made rounds in the hospital the last time I was on call, I checked with the nurses at the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), to see how they were doing, and to inquire about the patients. "Mrs. Peters is not doing well...her daughter is in the room with her now," I was told.

I thanked the nurse and approached the room slowly. When I walked in, Mrs. Peters' daughter was playing a music tape for her mother's enjoyment. The recorder sat right next to Mrs. Peters' head, but she was unresponsive.

I introduced myself, stayed about five minutes, and then moved on about five rooms to where Mr. Peters also lay in serious condition. The daughter would move anxiously from one room to another to see how both mom and dad were doing. Another chaplain told me the daughter's anxiety was partly due to their theology, for they do not believe there is a heaven. You must live life to its fullest now. When you die, that's it; there is no Redeemer; there is no redemption! So I'm left with mixed emotions: joy because I know that my Redeemer lives, and pain because they do not.

Rene Escalante

Come Ye Apart -1987

It's exciting
that we don't know
what the day holds,
but we know who holds the day.