



# THE GOOD NEWS



*The Chic Shaver Center for Evangelism Newsletter December 2014*

## Christmas and Cancer

Angels at Christ's birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

Paul in prison for preaching Christ: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

I have been reluctant to write this story in this newsletter, but people who know the story have told me that I must tell you the story.

Our son, Paul, lives in Muncie, Indiana, with wife Lori. He is 52 years old, and drives trucks in a six state territory delivering food to Kroger grocery stores. They have two children at home and two married daughters and three grandchildren living nearby. Paul and family are active in Harris Chapel Church of the Nazarene.

In late September, Paul phoned me to say he had developed a hole in his neck and his voice was raspy. He wondered if he should wait 'til new insurance kicked in, in January, or go to the doctor right away. Because he'd had cancer surgery before, I said you must go to the doctor now.

A biopsy revealed basal cell cancer in his neck, but it was very aggressive. Surgery was set for Thursday, October 23rd. Doctor's prediction: surgery will be ten to twelve hours, voice box may need to be removed, hospitalized twelve to fourteen days.

When the seriousness of his condition reached me, I went to prayer in a more specific way. I do not think I prayed even two minutes when the most wonderful, comforting peace settled upon me—a sense of well being. It was not an assurance of healing, or even of saving Paul's voice box—it was more "I (the Lord) will walk with you through this whole ordeal." While I prayed like this in a revival in another state, my wife, Nancy, prayed at home and peace descended on her. The peace has never left either of us.

Meanwhile Paul began experiencing God's dealings in amazing ways. He met a construction worker and asked "How are you doing?" He replied, "Great! I have Jesus!" "Yes" thought Paul, "that's the secret". In one of his truck deliveries, he was handing the needed paper work to a lady employee. She looked at him and asked, "Are you ok?" He said, "yes" but apparently did not convince her because she asked twice more. Then she said, "May I pray for you?" and prayed a fervent prayer for five minutes. Paul was amazed.

He asked his pastor, Jim Ballenger, for permission to sing and testify in the Sunday morning service, October 19. He sang, "Nothing Between My Soul and the Savior" and "Learning to Lean" and "Jesus Loves Me". He testified, "I'm the right person for this challenge" and "I can handle this best" and "I believe this will bring glory to God". Paul shed tears and so did the congregation. Then he knelt at the altar and prayed for himself (If there are any sins, forgive me), and then for his family. Then the pastor anointed and prayed for him. Nearly all the congregation gathered around the front to support him (usually 160 on a Sunday).

Others began requesting the pastor to anoint and pray for them. The pastor said, "God was all over the place". A lady visiting from Wisconsin said, "This is the most amazing church I've ever been to. If you will tell me of a church like this in Wisconsin, I will go to it".

On Wednesday, October 22, Nancy and I drove to Muncie. That night we videotaped Paul. It could be the last time we would ever hear his natural voice. He said he was not afraid and "I'm ready". He sang and shared his testimony of God's closeness. Then he sang a trio with his daughters. It seemed a remarkable peace had invaded Paul's life and he was so courageous. Next morning at 4:15 we left his house with Paul and arrived at Indiana University Hospital in Indianapolis at 5:30. Dr. Moore, cancer surgeon, and Dr. Mantravadi, plastic surgeon, described in detail what they would do. Paul was wheeled into surgery at 7:30am. Every 90 minutes a nurse came out of surgery to report to us on Paul. At 3pm, Dr. Moore reported to us, 8:40 pm, Dr. Mantravadi. Over 13 hours.

They removed cancer and flesh from his chin to lower neck, and the voice box was removed. Grafts were taken from chest muscle and tissues. Dr. Moore said he had never seen a case

<b>MINISTRY UPDATE</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>TOTAL ATT.</b>	<b>SEEKERS</b>
<b>Holiness</b>		
<b>Church of the Nazarene</b>		
Stilwell, KS		
Witness Seminar	12	
<b>Union Hill</b>	<b>236</b>	26
<b>Church of the Nazarene</b>		
Oneonta, AL		
Witness Seminar	13	
<b>Clausel Hill Independent</b>	<b>153</b>	20
<b>Methodist Church</b>		
Cairo, MS		
<b>Church of the Nazarene</b>	<b>406</b>	53
Monett, MO		
Witness Seminar	19	

like this. Paul now has a permanent laryngectomy. The doctors told us: We will get him walking, and teach him to breathe, to swallow, to eat, and eventually to talk.

The next day, we visited Paul in intensive care. He was covered with tubes and his neck was very swollen. But his face was so handsome, and he smiled. He could not speak but he gave us hand signals and wrote messages on a tablet. The nurse reported he had been walking with help and had been sitting in a chair for three hours. He was doing great. By the time we left, they were moving him to progressive care.

Meanwhile, Lori was sending out messages about Paul on Facebook—nearly all including the comment that the family expected to see God get glory in this whole experience. Over 200 responses came back from high school and college classmates to his church and athletic friends from his years of refereeing. Nearly all said, “We’re praying for you”.

As I continued to hold Paul’s situation before God, I felt prompted to pray for some individuals to take leadership in raising funds to cover the family’s living and medical expense during the period Paul will be off work. Within hours, a friend approached me and said he wished to raise funds. Paul’s church, Harris Chapel, established a fund and bought him an iPad Mini to help him communicate and a special reclining chair. Our daughter Rachel was in the stairwell at her workplace and twice heard, “My God shall supply all your needs”. Ten minutes later she received a long distance phone call announcing an unexpected and highly generous gift to the fund at Paul’s church. When the church passed on financial resources, Paul and Lori wept.

Paul came home the eighth day of his hospitalization, not the fourteenth. At this writing he is improving (written early Nov). I wonder how God will use this. I’m reminded Joni Eareckson Tada was never known in health, but after paralysis and disability she entered into a worldwide ministry showing God’s grace sufficient. Could the same be for Paul? He is living the closest to God I’ve ever seen him. And through every development, the peace has never left.

So, unusual as it seems, I’ve titled this “Christmas and Cancer”. But the predominant experience for Nancy and me and our family is “the peace of God”. Now isn’t that Christmas?

*Chic Shaver*

### An Open Space

Somehow, in the providence of God, I have no revivals presently scheduled for several months through winter and into spring. I take this to mean:

1. I’m to increase my writing for my long dreamed devotional book, emphasizing holiness in understandable language. I’ve written a significant number of devotionals since my last newsletter.
2. I’m to give increased attention to my beloved Disciples Sunday school class which I teach whenever I’m in town.
3. I’m to increase attention to family members with the goal of their spiritual maturity. I’m to be available to them in any special challenges they may face as just happened in Paul’s cancer crisis.
4. I’m to continue organizing my office and other home projects to be sure all my affairs are in order.
5. And where the door opens and invitations come, I will joyously preach the good news of Jesus Christ in revivals.

*Chic Shaver*

### Revival Without a Pastor

Monett, Missouri Church of the Nazarene had been without a lead pastor for nine months. Several pastoral interviews had yielded no result. But the church decided to go ahead with a November revival. Average Sunday morning attendance was in the 80’s. Here’s what happened:

- Sunday morning attendance was 85.
- Nightly attendance crowds averaged 80.
- One board member said he had been so discouraged he was ready to turn in his keys and quit the board. He said this revival “renewed our hope.”
- The board members and lay leaders worked together in tremendous ways to make all the details of the revival week to “work”.
- Jackie found spiritual help at the altar of prayer. She went home and phoned five friends and invited them to the revival.
- A key leader said the revival “brought encouragement to the fellowship, recommitment to a deeper spiritual walk and a renewed focus on outreach”.
- There was strong attendance from teens and young adults.
- 80 people were in the Tuesday night service. 125 attended Wednesday.
- 53 people sought God at the altar of prayer.

### CampMeeting

I am scheduled to be one of the speakers at the Iowa Holiness Association Camp, at University Park, Iowa, Sunday, June 14—Friday, June 19, 2015. Please join us.

*Chic Shaver*

### Because You Gave, We Gave

- Discipleship materials to leaders and pastors in Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Florida, and to Missionaries to the Middle East.

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