

BREEZEWOOD STORIES

“Craig” from Wisconsin, driving through Everett area on Turnpike during a cold but clear winter evening, saw a man approaching the road. Craig moved to the left lane giving him plenty of room. But for some reason the man kept walking, then hesitated for a moment, and walked again even faster toward the path of the truck. Craig hit the man with the right front of his bumper. He must have died instantly. Craig pulled over and called 911. No one else pulled over to help or inquire. The police did a full investigation and made a public appeal to identify the body. The man was identified, and the death was ruled a suicide. Yet, the 24 hours following the accident was pure trauma and memory replay for Craig. He was so upset he couldn’t drive. He managed to make it the 8 miles to Breezewood, and stayed all day recovering his composure. He was glad to share 4- 5 hours in conversation and prayer with the chaplain. It was an added strength that he is a practicing Christian. The officer on the scene later that week called Craig to again reassure him that it was not his fault, as the tragedy of suicide had been determined. We shared the same reassurance with him over the phone in subsequent conversations. I am thankful that God arranged for his care at a Travel Plaza Chaplaincy.

“Lisa” was born in England to a British mother and an American Naval officer prior to WWII. She came to the U.S. as a teenager yet maintains her British accent, and an air of sophistication. She has been highly educated and never wanting in material things. About 4 years ago she felt a calling to “prayer walk.” And so she has steadily and deliberately been walking and praying all around the country, attending churches, Bible studies, talking with Christians, and encouraging anybody who would listen that the Christian life is a serious life of prayer. She carried very little baggage, and was very pleased to receive our hospitality, meals, lodging, and even stayed a night in a local church sanctuary. The difficulty of her travels (ie: winter winds) produced an “edge” in her demeanor which alienated some local people, yet she did challenge me and many others with her simple message. After the 4 years of her wandering sojourn, I sensed it was time for her to settle for a while and recover from the grind of seeking “daily bread and daily shelter.”

“Mike,” a young man traveling from Canada had been estranged from his family had now decided to return home for Christmas. He arrived in Breezewood out of gas and hungry. We provided both, and he was on his way. One week later we received a Christmas card and thank you from his family who were so appreciative to us for helping their son get home for Christmas- they included money to repay twice as much as we had spent. We don’t expect people to repay what is our gift to give in the Name of Jesus, but it is a great encouragement to receive acknowledgement and thanks.

“Bob” came into the office wanting to share in Christian fellowship and study. He is a driver separated from his wife, who now cares for their five children. With mounting bills, a new career in trucking (he was previously a top-flight piano tuner), searching for an apartment, and trying to work a schedule to see his children on weekends, his life was spinning out of control. He needed to talk. He needed to talk about faith, about divorce, about loneliness, about his well to do in laws with whom he could not materially compete, about the desire for female companionship, about debt, and about a newly rented cabin apartment on a lake with T.V. and game boards and all the “stuff” to give his kids interest in spending time with him. Bob is deeply hurting, and trying to maintain the “upbeat” faith of a born again Christian-the victorious type. Sometimes life isn’t so easy. I am glad Bob is willing to talk with a chaplain, and remember the help from what may seem a distant and unconcerned God. I am thankful the trucker ministry in Breezewood could be an instrument to process all the emotional pain.