

"TURNING THOSE IN CRISIS TOWARD CHRIST"

Emergency Chaplains



February 22, 2019

Name
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Greetings in the Name of Jesus!

Over the past ten years our Chaplains have ministered to several thousand people during times of crisis with the presence, hope, and comfort of Christ. Thank you for being a part of this important ministry through your friendship, encouragement, prayers, and support. Many lives have been touched because of the faithfulness of so many partners behind the scenes.

In this newsletter, I want to talk with you about one of those partners who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the entire ten years that we have been in this ministry. This ministry partner has literally given everything...and I mean everything... that he owns and every ounce of his energy toward the work of Emergency Chaplains. That person is my son, Carl Thompson.

In October of 2007, after several months of praying, Carter and I made the decision to start the ministry of Emergency Chaplains. We were prepared to leave behind the financial security of a regular paycheck and benefits, fully trusting the Lord to provide. We were prepared to sell our house and use our retirement savings in order to fund the ministry. I had crunched the numbers. My 'research' showed that after three years of hard work the ministry would be fully funded.



L-R: Carl, Carter and Ralph Thompson

Jesus loves it when we pray. He loves it when we obey. But I have to tell you this... Jesus really doesn't care much about our 'research'.

Something happened just a couple of months after our decision to start Emergency Chaplains. Economists call it "The Great Recession" and say it lasted from December 2007 to June 2009. There was a tremendous amount of wealth lost and consumer spending sharply declined. Donations to churches, ministries and non-profits declined even greater.

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Carl dancing with his grandmother, Frances.

My ‘research’ had shown me that I would be without a salary for the first three years of leading the new ministry. The Great Recession flushed my ‘research’ down the toilet. It took seven years before the ministry was able to pay a salary.

It didn’t take long before Carter and I were feeling pretty defeated. It was taking twice the effort to raise even half as much money as we needed. We got together one night for a family meeting to talk about getting part-time jobs and selling the house in order to continue the ministry.

That’s when Carl Thompson stepped up to the plate. He dedicated every penny of his income from his job at LC Industries to take care of our household expenses. His sacrifice over the past ten years has allowed both Carter and me to dedicate our full attention to building Emergency Chaplains. Since then, the ministry has grown from just the three of us to more than 50 volunteers and three paid employees now serving in twelve counties across North Carolina.

Carl was not even a year old when he was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma—cancer in both eyes. His right eye had to be removed. His left eye was severely damaged by the tumor, leaving him legally blind. The radiation treatments caused neurological damage and profound hearing loss.

Doctors said that he would never do the things that normal kids do, like shoot basketball. The cancer would return. Statistically, he would die before reaching adulthood. Through the years, I’ve shot a lot of basketball with Carl and Lord willing, on March 25th, Carl Thompson will celebrate his 50th birthday. Jesus doesn’t care too much about statistics, either.

Paul wrote in *1 Corinthians 1:27* **“God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong.”** Even with all our wisdom and strength, Carter and I were ready to throw in the towel. We had been defeated by The Great Recession but God showed up! Jesus showed us His strength by using a man that the world would consider too weak to support our family and make it possible for our chaplains to touch thousands of lives over the past ten years.

Our Lord is the giver of good gifts and we thank Him for the gift that He gave us in the person of Carl Thompson. Would you help us celebrate Carl and his 50th birthday this year? Please feel free to send him a card or letter to this address and prayerfully consider joining “Carl’s Crew”. Our prayer is that 50 new donors will join the “Crew” by pledging to give \$50 or more per month. Funds will go toward the expenses of Vision 100 and the training of 500 new chaplains over the next five years.

I thank God for you and for bringing you to be a friend of the ministry of Emergency Chaplains. Please continue to lift us up in your prayers as we continue the work of going to those in crisis with the life changing Good News of Jesus!

Blessings!

Ralph

Ralph Thompson
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Emergency Chaplains

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