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Aloha,

September 2011

"It's all about relationships!" That is our mission statement at South Shore Fellowship. If you are blessed, you may have had one or more relationships in your lifetime that have impacted you and caused you to become a better person as a result. I've recently had quite an impact made on my life. I'd like to share my story with you.

He is a husband, father, grandfather, uncle, son, brother, and most of all a friend. His name is Tom. I first became friends with his wife, Pam, a few years ago and because we spent so much time together, I eventually got to know him, too.

One night at dinner Tom began to share with us his "God stories." Jack and I were amazed at what he shared and we became well aware that Tom and God were good friends. Tom commuted 80 miles one way to and from work. Jack couldn't believe he spent so much time in his car and commented on how awful that must be. He immediately responded, "No, it's wonderful. I have so much time to talk with God!

As the evening ended we told Tom he should write up his stories for his children and the grand children that would be born. Little did we know how important that would be. This past year Tom began a battle against an aggressive form of cancer and it was soon apparent that unless God stepped in and did a miracle, Tom would soon be leaving us. With Pam's help at the keyboard, he managed to get all the stories on the computer before he died.

We were with Tom on his last day on earth. Before we had arrived at the hospital and just before he sank into unconsciousness, he sat up in bed and began to throw back the covers, saying, "I have to go! I need to go NOW!" The nurse asked him where did he need to go? He replied, "To eternity!" In the days preceding his home going, he began to lay down any and every earthly thing that once had maybe mattered to him. Television no longer mattered. He only wanted to listen to the old hymns that he had learned as a boy in church. His focus became more and more on heaven and seeing his precious friend, Jesus.

It has only been a few weeks since Tom moved to eternity. Those that are left behind are grieving the loss of a special man. However, we are excited for

him and we can only imagine what he is experiencing in heaven.

At his memorial service Tom's God Stories were handed out to any and all who wished to read them. A few days ago I picked up his stories to read, once more. One in particular just gave me such comfort. I'd like to share it with you now.

MY FATHER GIVES ME A MESSAGE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE - by Tom Campbell

"I was working in the Viskase powerhouse sometime back in the 1990's when I received a phone call from my mother. She was upset and crying. She told me that my father was in the hospital and was having breathing problems. My father had suffered with Alzheimer's for a few years and as a result it finally began to affect how he could breathe. I got permission to leave work and tried to get to the hospital as soon as I could. Yet, by that time, rush hour had already begun and getting from my job to the hospital would require much more time. I tried to get past all the traffic but it became impossible to get to the hospital in any reasonable time.

When I finally arrived, I met my brother in the E.R. It was at the time that he informed me that my father had just passed away about an hour before. He then led me over to where my dad's body was located and my brother then walked away. A great sadness came over me and as I looked down on my father, I said, "Well, I guess that's it." I began to cry. I moved closer to my father's body and leaned over and kissed his forehead. I then said, "I love you, Dad." After a few minutes I walked out of the hospital and began my trip home.

I felt like anyone else who has lost a loved one. They are here on earth for a little while, yet death comes and for those of us who remain, life must go on. My dad and I loved the Lord and we spent many hours together, talking about Jesus. Death has a way that separates us from physical reality and for many that is the only reality that they understand or recognize.

In the days that followed, my family and I discussed what kind of wording should be placed on my father's gravestone. I thought of some Bible verses that would be appropriate, but I did not choose any of them. Around this same time I recall lying down

on my bed and falling into what I would describe as a deep sleep. During this time I had a very strange dream. In this dream I remember getting up from my bed and walking down the stairs of my home. I walked to the front door and observed all these people in our front yard. I didn't know what they were actually doing; yet all of them appeared to be having a good time. As I observed them, I suddenly realized that one of these people was my father. I quickly opened the door and ran out of the house. I grabbed my Dad and said, "Boy, Dad, am I glad to see you! He looked at me but he said nothing. He then reached for my front shirt pocket and pulled a small Bible from it. I recognized the Bible right away. It was a Bible my dad had given me when I was very young. He opened it to the very first page. On that page, maybe 35 years ago, he had written a message to me. The message said that I should never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; and the message encouraged me to continue to follow Jesus.

For the longest time he continued to point to that page. Finally, he put the Bible back into my shirt pocket. I had this feeling that we went some place to talk for awhile, yet if that did happen, I do not recall anything that would confirm that. Right after that I discovered that we were once again back in the original place where I had first met him at the beginning of the dream. I then spoke to my dad, and said, "Gee Dad, we could spend the whole day together." My father just looked at me and said these words, "I can't. I can't, Tom. I'm walking with Jesus now." He then suddenly ran to the front of this long line of people. They were all walking in single file and it was then when my father jumped in near the front of that line. As these people continued to move forward, they all disappeared into a white cloud and out of my view.

Shortly after that I woke up from my deep sleep. Some days later I found myself speaking with my mom and my brother. I told them about the dream I'd had and the topic came up again as to what to put on my dad's gravestone.

Now, all this happened many years ago; yet if you ever find yourself at Evergreen Cemetery located in Evergreen Park, IL you can see my dad's gravestone there. It reads, "John Campbell and just below his name you will find his words: 'I'm walking with Jesus now.'" Those were the last words I heard my dad speak to me and they came from beyond the grave.

I Thessalonians 4:13 - Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. (NIV)"

What comfort it brings to know that Tom is not only walking with his Dad but he is walking with his best friend, Jesus, now.

South Shore Fellowship Updates:

Sunday Morning worship has moved to 10am. We continue our sermon series, "Finding Jesus". This a verse by verse series through the gospel of Matthew.

Men's retreat Oct 14-15 at camp Tecumseh in Brookston IN. Call Pastor Jack if interested.

Friday September 23rd Men's Bible study at Caribou Coffee (Martin's, Stevensville) Call Dave Cowan for more info 269-449-2443.

Sunday September 25th Pastor Jason Nordgren from Anthem AZ will be preaching on Matthew 7:15-20.



Jason Nordgren (our eldest son)

Nordgren Family Update:



Josiah and Alexis have joined the parents club. Tsiantas (pronounced Chantis) Turner Koichi Nordgren, born 9-4-11 6 pounds 15 ounces, 19 inches long. We praise God for our 6th grandchild!

Aloha Ke Akua,

Jack & Maree,
Jack & Maree