

With Eternity's Values in View—October 2006

Two weeks ago I stood at his headstone in a mountain church cemetery in northern Georgia. The stone read: "A precious gift from God." Garrett was 13 years old when he went to Heaven almost three years ago.

That Saturday Garrett had played in a basketball tournament. Sunday blessed him with an active day of church and ministry activities. But early Tuesday morning, after a brief struggle with bacterial meningitis, he was with our Savior.

During the funeral, his Mom and Dad continued to demonstrate their love for the Lord. So well, in fact, some may have suspected the truth of his home going hadn't registered. I knew better; I've never seen a clearer demonstration of the abundant grace of God.

In the face of their deep mourning, Jim and Donna were steadfast. They didn't understand; how could they? And yes, they sorrowed, but not after the fashion of the world. By faith they rejoiced and even voiced testimony to the goodness of the Lord and their deep rooted peace due to personal faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord blessed; eight teens were saved at the funeral! After the service I had the joy of leading Garrett's grandfather to Christ. His grandmother also accepted the Lord that day.

Two weeks ago, Terri and I spent a couple of days with Jim, Donna, and 18-year-old Lauren. It was a blessed time. What a thrill to see their responsiveness to the Lord and to watch His grace working in their lives. In one of our many precious conversations, Jim quietly thanked me for openly talking about Garrett. I just smiled as I realized how normal and comfortable it was. He was a great kid and I loved him; besides that, now he's in Heaven!

I didn't say much as I stood on that hill, but many thoughts occupied my mind. It has been 11 years since we saw Jim and Donna accept the Lord. Donna reminded me that she still had the Burger King napkin where I'd written the plan of salvation on the day Garrett accepted the Lord five years ago. It was all sobering and very satisfying.

Think about it, Dear Missionaries; we have the confidence of knowing our work counts for eternity! Be encouraged as you're reminded that there is no more privileged or satisfying work in the all world. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* (I Cor 15:58).

Bill