

Youth Ministry



CLEVE STAFFORD
YOUTH MINISTER

One night, during the Civil War, an older man passed the bunk of a dying man, no older than seventeen years. This is the story as told by the old man. The young man said, "I believe I am going to die. I am not a Christian. I never had Christian training. I did go with a friend to Sunday School just once. A woman taught the Sun-

day School class. She read us something out of the Bible about a man — I think his name was Nicodemus. It was about a man who went to see Jesus one night. Jesus told this man he must be born again. The teacher said all people must be born again in order to go to heaven when they die. I have never been born again, and I don't want to die like this. Won't you please get the chaplain so he can tell me how to be born again?" The old man hesitated... "In those days I was an agnostic — at least, that is what I called myself. As a matter of fact, I wasn't anything but an old sinner." So I told the boy, "You don't need a chaplain. Just be quiet now. Don't worry, you'll be all right."

I went around the ward and in about an hour I came back to the boy's bed. He looked at me out of such sad, staring eyes as he said, "Wardmaster, if you won't get me the chaplain, please get me the doctor. I am choking to death." "All right, my son, I'll get the doctor," I said. I found the doctor. He came and mopped out the throat of the lad so he could breathe a little easier. I knew the boy was going to die. The boy was so sweet he literally climbed into my heart. He thanked me for my kindness. He thanked the doctor for being so good to him. In about an hour I came back expecting to find the boy dead. As the light began to fade from his eyes he looked up and said, "There is no use, Wardmaster, I've got to die, and I haven't been born again. Whether you believe in it or not, won't you find the chaplain and let him tell me how to be born again?"

I looked at him for a moment and thought about how helpless he was in the grip of death. So I said, "All right, my son, I will get the chaplain."
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