

DEAD MEN WALKING!

The terminal wing of the hospital may seem like an unlikely location for active evangelism, but that's where the "Last Minute Ministry" was born. The ministry began when a friend of pastor Chuck Kent asked him to visit his dying, 92-year-old great-grandfather in the hospital. The elderly man, Elwyn, was agnostic.

Chuck met with him and asked if he could share one of Jesus' stories. He told the story of the vineyard owner who hired people to work in the last hour. Elwyn was also in the "11th hour," and that day prayed to accept Christ. A week later, Pastor Chuck conducted Elwyn's funeral. One hundred family members and friends heard the gospel at the service.

When Chuck's daughters pointed out that there were others on the terminal floor that needed to hear the gospel, Chuck got special permission from the hospital to visit. He went room-to-room, asking each person if he could pray with him or her and then share the story of the 11th hour. In one month, he visited 15 people, 8 of whom accepted Christ.

During one of those visits, Chuck was called to minister to a comatose man who had only a few hours to live. The man was unable to speak or open his eyes. Instead, Chuck lead him through the prayer of salvation by having him squeeze Chuck's hand one phrase at a time. Two hours later, the patient died.

Commenting on the ministry, Pastor Chuck says: "We started it off not intending for it to be ongoing. But the church got excited; it took off amazingly. It's an easy ministry to see progress, because these people are getting ready to die." He added, "People on the terminal floor are a lot more realistic about eternity."

The truth is, life itself is a terminal illness. Unless the Lord returns, we will all leave this world the same way. Perhaps a good motivator for sharing our faith is to go through life seeing "dead people". In reality we are all "dead men walking" in need of knowing where we will spend eternity. Pastor Chuck isn't the only person with a last minute ministry. We all have one. Tell someone about Jesus before its too late for them and us.