

Love Finds a Way

by Sewell Hall

All Christians want to bring the lost to Christ. But each of us has some handicap which causes us to feel limited in our ability to do so. It may be a weakness of knowledge or difficulty in expressing ourselves. Perhaps it is a personality deficiency or even a lack of transportation. Whatever it may be, we tend to feel that it excuses us from responsibility. Actually, our most debilitating handicap is a lack of zeal. Once zeal is stirred, love will find a way to overcome all obstacles.

Take June McNeese as an example. Just 4 years ago, June held a responsible position with a Tennessee-based company which manufactured automobile hoses. She was, however, experiencing considerable throat trouble and the problem grew steadily worse, slurring her speech, until she could no longer function in the office. Doctors discovered that she had dreaded Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, more popularly known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease. Rapidly it began affecting the other parts of her body until all of her limbs were paralyzed.

Her speech continued to deteriorate until now only a constant companion can understand anything she says, and then only when she uses the simplest of words. Often she must spell out very slowly what she is trying to say. Meanwhile, her sparkling eyes and the few words she is able to get across reveal a mind that is still keen and active.

If ever anyone would be excused from "personal evangelism" it would be June. Without use of her lower limbs she cannot go on her own. Without her arms and hands she cannot write. And with her damaged speech mechanism she cannot talk. But June does not look for an excuse. She looks for a way.

When a nurse was employed, one stipulation was that she would take June to worship just as long as possible. Patti, the nurse who was chosen, found the services strange and the sermons very different from what she was accustomed to in her own religious experience. Soon she was asking questions which June found very difficult to answer with the communication problem. To add to the frustration, Patti could never seem to remember her questions when Joe Olson, a gospel preacher, came to visit.

Somehow June had to find a way to get those questions answered, either by herself or by Joe. But all she had to work with were her neck muscles. Then an idea! An electric typewriter! One was borrowed to see if she could use it. Her father cut a wooden dowel rod and placed a rubber tip on one end. Placing the other end of the rod between her teeth, June happily began typing some answers for Patti and typing questions for Joe when he came.

Patti was not easily converted. She had already changed religion once and she wanted to be sure this time. But little by little the truth, adorned by the life of her cheerful patient, did its work. Patti was baptized into Christ.

Patti is not her only convert. A Christian couple who were in error visited her on occasions. She loved them and longed to see them come closer to the truth. She successfully used her limited opportunities to teach them "the way of the Lord more perfectly." There are many others whom she hopes to reach before her time runs out. The limited life-expectancy characteristic of those with her disease makes her constantly aware, as Jesus was, that she is approaching a night "when no man can work." This lends urgency to her efforts.

Perhaps all of us would be more zealous and more diligent if we could only realize how short is the time each of us has to accomplish whatever is to be accomplished in this life. I visited June recently in her Tennessee home. I did not understand a single word she said. But, at her usual speed of 5 words a minute, she typed a message for me, perfectly capitalized and indented. "Dear brother Hall, I am very glad you could come to see me this afternoon."