

# Passed By on a Busy Road

On its front page, a newspaper displayed a picture that was very sad.

It was of a man who was a Vietnam veteran – and had been a paramedic in Vietnam – leaning on the door of an automobile stalled beside a busy expressway in a northeast region of our country. The story underneath explained the circumstances of why he was bent over that car and weeping.

On the way to work that morning, the woman who had been driving that car had a heart attack and had fallen outside the car as traffic zoomed by. The veteran happened along and stopped to render help. Being a paramedic, he gave her emergency treatment, and for some 20 to 30 minutes, he was able to keep the woman alive.

After 25 to 30 minutes, she died – in spite of all the immediate aid he was able to give.

The reason he was crying was this: The veteran told a reporter that during the period of 20 to 30 minutes, he beckoned everyone who passed on the highway to stop and summon help for them, to call an ambulance to come to the rescue of a dying woman. But, he said, “No one seemed to care.” And no one stopped.

This is a revealing story of the kind of society we are becoming. Obviously, people have their reasons for going on by, just as did the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Still, this story makes us uncomfortable. What should dictate our response to such stories of need? Perhaps, at minimum, two levels:

1. Being civil to one another is the least we can do. You most certainly do not have to be a Christian to extend common courtesy or simple kindness to a stranger in need.
2. The teachings of Jesus instruct us to go beyond what the ordinary person is apt to do. We know that there are people who do go that extra mile, who care just a little bit more. There are many Good Samaritans of every race and creed all over the world. Those who follow Jesus, however, are expected to do even more – to give love and compassion to those whom other people pass by.

And I am pleased to say that they show up regularly in the centers of Life Care and Century Park.

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-8).*

– Beecher Hunter