



## Pastor's Page

### **Going the Extra Mile**

I recently came across this true story told by an ex taxi driver: *Early one morning I arrived at a building which was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Hesitantly, I knocked on the door. "Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80s, stood before me, wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s film. She had a small nylon suitcase. The place looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware. "Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the kerb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want to be treated." "Oh, you're such a good boy," she said. She gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through the town centre?" "It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I don't mind," she said, "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice." I looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.*

*For the next two hours we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked, we drove through the neighbourhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newly-weds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. She asked me to slow down in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing. Then she suddenly said, "I'm tired, let's go now." We drove in silence to the address she had given me. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They looked anxious; they must have been expecting her. I took the suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair. "How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching for her purse. "Nothing," I said. "But you have to make a living," she answered. "There are other passengers," I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly. "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you." I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had got an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had hooted once, then driven away? I don't think I have done anything more important in my life.*

**"Then the righteous will answer him 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'**  
(Matthew 25:37-40)

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