

# **An Invisible God Visibly Present**

God's Spirit actively stirs the human spirit. I observed evidence of God's behind the scenes activity upon visiting a member of my church in the hospital. Joe, a 67 year old cancer patient, lay in a hospital bed adjacent to the church member. Before I prayed for my friend from church, I asked Joe, "May I pray for you too?"

"NO!" Joe snapped.

Surprised with his refusal I granted his veto and then prayed with my friend. Two days later I returned to visit patients in the hospital. I exchanged pleasantries with Joe and prayed for my church member. By the end of the week Joe moved to a private room. Liking the crusty old German, I sought him out. After greeting each other, Joe blurted out, "Preacher, do you believe in life after death? If so, why?" Before I could answer, Joe posed another question, "When you go to a funeral, you see the body of the deceased. Where has the life gone?" Joe asked shrewdly.

I replied, "Your second question answers the first question."

"No, it does not," snapped Joe in characteristic fashion.

Joe's inquiries are an example of the deep longing of people who resist the gospel. This incident shows how the Holy Spirit uses non-spiritual means to stir the inner thinking of people. Newspapers and television programming had carried accounts of near death experiences.

Here Joe and I discussed a common and unpleasant fact each of us face, death. A cancer patient facing death and needing to ask questions reveals the invisible ministry of a God who invites.

"Preacher," Joe announced with his strong voice, "You can pray for me."