

# Charles Thomas Shorten

SEPTEMBER 2, 2020



It is with a profound sense of gratitude to the faithfulness of God that we announce the entrance of Charles Thomas Shorten into the presence of his Savior on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at the age of 102 years.

Charlie was born December 5, 1917 in Toronto, Ontario. His family moved to London, Ontario which he called home. He is lovingly remembered by his second wife, Betty; sons, David (Kathleen) and Robert (Beverly); 8 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, Cecil and Lena; his brother, Reg; his sisters, Verna and Connie; his first wife, Winifred; and his sons, Ronald and Raymond (Susan).

Charlie served in World War 2, and served God for over 60 years as a missionary to Angola and in other Christian ministries.

A Memorial Service may be announced in the future. Memorial gifts can be made to Missionary Service Committee Canada. ([msccanada.org](http://msccanada.org))

A Private Graveside Service will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, in Red Deer, Alberta.

# Messages of Condolence

First: condolences to a wide network of family descendants, other related family, many friends and their kids, etc., etc. Death is final—until the Resurrection! May all of us find consolation on grieving journeys in response to Uncle Charlie’s passing.

I have above me on our study wall an inset photo of Uncle Charlie holding a newborn in front of the house we Northey boys grew up in. The small inset is overlaid on a London Free Press photo taken from the air, dated July 5, 1946. My brother Paul popped out into Uncle Charlie’s arms the next day. Well, at least soon after . . .

As far back as memory reports, Uncle Charlie has been a constant presence in the lives of us three Northey boys—Barry even with middle-namesake. Our dad died in July 1990 during his 81st year; mom passed in her 78th year, September 1992; Uncle Reg, the older brother died before he reached 80; Connie the sister died at age 8 of a deadly communicable disease. It seems so strange therefore to be remembering Uncle Charlie this way now, a whole generation or more after his generation of siblings and friends long since have died.

So Uncle Charlie clearly won out on the Northey-Shorten side (and on the Martin-Shorten side, and Streight(sp. ?)-Shorten side (?) ) of the family, in longevity. When he turned 100, Uncle Charlie responded to a Red Deer journalist interviewing him that he attributed the long-lived experience to “clean living”. Now I’d read just a few months before about a British centenarian, about to run a full marathon, who attributed his longevity to “a pint of beer and a cigar a day”. I think Uncle Charlie would laugh heartily at the juxtaposition!

In that vein: I have no idea how old Uncle Charlie was when people first began

noticing his constant puns for all seasons/occasions/whatevers. His ability to generate in-the-moment-on-target puns shall ever remain legendary! His stories were hilarious too: like when the make-shift change-room on the bank of the local Angolan river gave way as a startled already-dunked convert got rebaptized by jumping into the river again to safeguard his deer-in-the-headlights-naked challenged modesty! . . . (If I got the story right?)

Uncle Charlie ever demonstrated rock-solid “wisdom”, such as what Bob Shorten discovered when, visiting his dad on the mission field as a young adult, Bob you said you discovered that while you were a teen you knew your dad didn’t know very much about life, to your surprise your dad had gained a remarkable volume of sagacity in just a few short(en) years!

Uncle Charlie also met to study the Bible with me on a regular Saturday morning basis while home on furlough, after my baptism. That early spiritual formation with him is cherished.

Esther and I had occasion to visit with Uncle Charlie and Betty every time we travelled to Alberta. And before that, when I often travelled to Ontario with a mission agency, I invariably had delicious Sunday roast beef dinner with them. They too are cherished times.

So, farewell Uncle Charlie until we meet again in the Resurrection!

Love to you and to all the family and friends, from Wayne and Esther.

— **Wayne & Esther Northey**

Another Great man of God has moved to be with his Savior! To me he was an amazing example. I loved his humor and the joy thst he served his Lord. My love and prayers are with the family, all of you who faithfully cared for him. Aunt Betty I love you and wish I could share time with you, not shure how that can happen in this present situations but please know I am praying for you in tour loss. May the God of all comfort be with you.□

— **Janet Janzen (Taylor)**

As we think of our experience of Charlie, the few years we knew him, 'delightful' is the word that comes to mind. He was interested in others, always gracious in his comments and keen on knowing God and serving Jesus Christ. He will be missed.

— **Terry & Diane Wiebe**

Uncle Charlie was one of my favourite Uncles!! He had a wicked sense of humour - a great sense of humour, always enjoyed a good laugh at his own expense. I never heard a mean or disparaging word out of his mouth. He never talked down to you even if you were just a child. But what I remember most was the times early in the morning at Wildwood Bible Camp when Uncle Charlie, Doug Barnes and I would get together to pray for the day and people at the camp - precious times and memories. His Bible was the most worn looking one I ever saw because he read and studied it so much.

Much love to Betty and Bob and David and their families and to Sue and Sara Deane and Kyla.

— **Eric Long**

What a joy to all the family knowing that Charlie was not only a blessing to you throughout his long life on earth but he was also a tremendous blessing to all of us who knew him as well. So looking forward to his greeting us as we join him in paradise.

— **Sandy Macleod**

"Uncle" Charlie was a favourite of mine among the Angolan missionaries, from the early days of the Shortens visiting Chitau, to later visits in Westlock, to the opportunity of spending a summer back in Angola with Charlie, Betty, Bob, and my parents, and to occasional contacts after that. In 1975, everywhere we went together in Angola, Charlie would teach people to sing "Suku ukwahenda" (roughly translated from the kids' chorus "God is good to me") with all the actions, accompanied by Bob and me on our guitars. When we visited Monte Esperanca, Uncle Charlie went digging in the long-abandoned kitchen cupboards and came up with a non-descript fuzzy thing. He quickly carved into it to reveal some still-edible cheese! Uncle Charlie could always find the good in everyone and every situation!

— **Ross Taylor**

Remembering dear Uncle Charlie's kindness, generosity, and humour! Happy for him, that he's returned home. Love to each Shorten and Northey, friends from our youth.

— **Judy Demers**

We heard many stories about our uncle Charlie out on the "mission field". As a kid, I was not sure what grew in that type of field but he sent home leopard, lion and snake skins that my older brothers got to show at public school. How cool was that. He was Paul Bunyan in our eyes so I eagerly looked forward to meeting him when he came home on furlough. What a disappointment. He looked kind of regular and certainly not at all as I had imagined him. But he knew how to cook (rubbery) squirrel and grouse, cut up a moose, so he had some redeeming qualities. Any conversation wherein a cat was mentioned, invariably (as in at least 100 times) required some mention of a catastrophe. He told us boys a great joke forever remembered but I cannot risk censorship, so can't repeat it. He was the real deal for us, down to earth, faithful, entirely genuine and occasionally funny. He lived what he believed. He was the real deal; always respected; fondly remembered.

— **Barry Northey**

It was with sadness and yet great and eternal joy that we received the news that dear Charlie had left us here and joined his eternal family with his Lord and Master.

We met Charlie and his first wife Winnifred when they were home one year on furlough from Africa with their three young boys. We kept in contact with them and later when they returned from Africa to Canada we worked together serving the Lord at Forest Cliff Camp, Forest, Ont. where Ron was directing the boys camps and Charlie teaching the Bible lessons. What joy those days were. When we moved to Chapleau in 1967 and along with other believers began the establishment of Wildwood Bible Camp, Charlie and Winnifred saw the need of help and were very eager to come and serve the Lord there. They served in many ways, teaching the Word and also manual labour. In fact, Charlie and five other men enjoyed their first meal over a camp fire on the site of the future camp with only a mass of tall thick trees around them. To God be the Glory that from those days God brought into being the camp that now remains with the help and dedication of many, many of His people, including Charlie's two sons, Bob and David. Thank you boys for your labour of love, we have many pictures, one of you Bob peeling logs and David driving the tractor and loader.

After Winnifred was called home to glory and in the passing of time Charlie remarried dear Betty who also came along with Charlie to Wildwood each summer and her labouring in the kitchen with Verna will not and is not forgotten.

As for Charlie he was such a willing and helpful saint to have around the camp--- enjoying the children, mentoring adults, preaching the Word and physically helping to drag logs out of the bush for the log dining room or washing a pile of dirty dishes in the kitchen. It did not matter the job, there was always a willing hand from Charlie who saw what needed to .be done.

He encouraged our hearts so very much !!!!!

Charlie taught us many truths from the Word of God and there is one verse he added his own few thoughts to (he was not really adding to the Word). The verse is Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt "not heated with pepper"(Charlie's addition) that you may know how you ought to answer each one." This was something we have never forgotten and how important it is to obey what Charlie said. Our memories of Charlie will not be forgotten and we are looking forward to seeing him again in our new and glorified bodies, perhaps even to-day.

It is at this time we wish we lived closer to Betty and family but we do send our love and sympathy to you Betty at this time, also to Bob and Beverley, David and Kathleen and to grandchildren and great grandchildren. Love and prayers

— **Ron and Verna Millson**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/shorten-charles-thomas>

Printed on June 3, 2026