

CHAPTER 10 – A TIME TO BUILD UP

This chapter is a summary of sorts, covering the years of about 1989 through 2002. A variety of things made up the events happening in our family. I do not have records of my thoughts during this time, but we had a lot of family ups and downs adjusting to life without Stephen. We began this period with little to live on financially so we endured with less and learned to live within our means.

A great loss, such as Stephen's death was for us, has the potential to make or break a marriage and a whole family. For the most part these years were a time of struggle, a time of change and a time of drawing together as an even closer family unit.

A TIME TO WORK

Following the decline and end of the activity of our printing business, Roy began working for a security company as a night watchman and I took a job as secretary for the Denver Chapter of Child Evangelism Fellowship mission. Roy and I had been on the CEF board for some time before that.

For the next two years it was a pleasure to work with that ministry. Ruth was on staff with CEF for a number of years, so we had lots to share about the ministry.

In 1994 I was hired at Craig Hospital in Englewood as assistant to the woman in charge of volunteer programs, community relations and donations to the hospital through the Foundation.



**“This is Craig Hospital,
may I help you?”**

Craig specializes in rehabilitation for spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. It has ranked among the top hospitals of this type in the nation for a long time.

Craig Hospital has been an interesting and fun place to work for almost fifteen years. My work was a part time position five days a week. I also trained to cover breaks and lunches at the switchboard, breaking up my part time work into brief periods at several tasks.

About a year and a half later, I was asked to take more time at the switchboard and to work a few hours in the Business Office. I was happy to do this because I had come to realize the work I was trying to do there as a secretary was beyond my abilities.

After another couple of years, I was asked to take over the weekend evenings at the switchboard which turned out to be the perfect place for me.

The switchboard is located in the front hallway where everyone passes many times a day. I enjoyed seeing lots of folks.

This photo shows one Halloween in Administration. The Macarena? I don't remember seeing this on the job description!



**Denny, Judy, Kathy, Kelly, Vivian,
Karen, Scott, Gale (center front)**

A TIME TO LOVE



Tait, Vernon and Ruth all finished their school years during these years. We enjoyed a lot of interaction with their friends who were frequently at our home. Here in pictures with a few words, is an overview of the events of these times.



**Tait Nathaniel Smith
Class of 1992
Cherry Creek HS**



The first of our grandchildren is Madeline Shea Smith Gibson, born on July 26, 1992.



Tait & Allison with Madeline

Madeline is Tait's daughter by his girlfriend Allison, who lived on our street. Allison and Tait were in high school together. Since they were both so young, they did not marry.

Allison's parents, Joseph and Cindy Verret, are such fine people. They welcomed our family into their home and hearts and have been the best support for their daughter and our grandbaby. Allison did marry later, and she now has two more children, Celine & Adam Jr.



Madeline began school at our neighborhood school where our boys had attended, but eventually her whole family moved back to Louisiana. We think of Madeline's family as our own. It has been a joy having them treat us the same way.

Allison did marry later and now has two more children, Celine and Adam Jr.



**Allison, Cindy, Adam Jr,
Madeline, Joey, Celine**

These pictures spotlight our precious Madeline!





Now that he had a child, Tait wanted to improve himself and work toward supporting her. He thought it would be a good move to join the Navy. He finished boot camp as a member of the team that won the “Ironman” award for fitness.



All of us were able to travel to San Diego to see his graduation exercises in August of 1993. It was a proud day for Tait, but he was unhappy about being so far away from Madeline. In addition, the Navy experience was not a happy one for him. At the end of boot camp, the Navy gave the men the opportunity to resign from their enlistment and leave the military service. Tait chose this option so he could return home to be closer to Allison and Madeline.

Our children all had their own apartments and worked a variety of jobs during these years. So we were empty nesters for a while, until they moved home again. There were lots of things to learn about paying bills on their own!



Tait worked for a while at the My Twin Doll Company and for Christmas gave Madeline a doll that looked just like her.

Tait did not like snakes so getting him to pose with Vernon's pet boa was a challenge.



Our financial situation improved in 1998, when Roy was hired at Lucent Technologies trouble shooting phone systems as a Systems Support Specialist. This work was a real encouragement to Roy in regard to the use of his technical skills and his ability to provide for our family.

As each of the years in this chapter passed, each of us were growing in our confidence, happiness and ability to function again as normal persons. Whether any of the difficulties the children faced were caused by grief over Stephen's loss, I do not know. Roy and I struggled with self doubt, indecision, hesitancy and lack of motivation for several years. But God is so faithful, knowing us and understanding us so well! He carried us through these years slowly giving us spiritual growth as we mentored, nurtured and enjoyed our remaining children, their friends and Madeline.

Another major event occurred in 1999 when Tait was hit by a car. It was a hit and run accident at 9 o'clock in the evening in a heavy rain. He was living at home with us at the time and decided to walk to Blockbuster about five blocks away, to rent a movie.

While he was gone it began a heavy rain. Not far from our neighborhood is Fiddler's Green, an outdoor amphitheater. There was a concert that evening, but because of rain, the concert let out early. People were in a hurry to be on their way home, to get out of the rain and the traffic jam.

Instead of using the crosswalk, Tait ran across Arapahoe Road, a busy street of six lanes with a median in the middle. He paused on the median but did not see any car coming. He thought he had time to cross. Just as he was almost across the street, he saw a car bearing down on him. He tried to leap out of the way as it struck him, but it caught his right lower leg. He fell into the street.

Another motorist saw what happened and stopped in that lane to shield him from other cars. She called 9-1-1 on a cell phone. Other cars also stopped, including the one that hit him but after a brief pause it sped away. No one was ever identified as the hit and run driver.

Meanwhile, back at home, I became weary of waiting for Tait to come back from Blockbuster. Just three weeks prior to that I'd had some surgery so was still getting tired very easily. Although I had told Tait I would wait up for him, I just had to go to bed. We thought that he might have bumped into an old friend from school days and gone out for coffee. In a short time we received a call from the police about the accident. We were told that it looked like he had a broken leg but that otherwise he was okay.

We got dressed and rushed over to Swedish Medical Center to the emergency room.

Tait looked awful when we saw him! He was in terrible pain and his lower right leg was turned almost completely around backward! The surgeon on staff that night came by to see Tait, telling us he had to do another surgery first so it would be a couple of hours before he would be able to operate on Tait. We waited there with Tait until they took him away to surgery. I was so exhausted I was close to collapse. The surgeon said it would be a three hour surgery so we should go home so I could rest. He would phone us as soon as the surgery was over. So we did that.

That night the only thing done in surgery was to clean out the open wound where the bone had come through the skin, a compound fracture. The bone also had to be cleaned to prevent infection. The leg was then stabilized in the correct position and a cast put on it. Tait stayed in the hospital several days while he was watched for infection and treated for pain.

He was not a “happy camper”! However, he had lots of company, including his little daughter Madeline and her mommy Allison.



Tait enjoys some sunshine & cup of home brewed coffee while awaiting more surgery

Some weeks later surgery was done again to insert a metal rod next to the bone in the lower leg, being attached to the bone at the ankle and just below the knee. Tait was allowed to return home after a couple of days and was walking on both legs with the aid of crutches. It was strange to see him actually walking on that leg so soon! Of course the metal rod enabled him to do it.

Some months later surgery was done a third time to remove the screws that anchored the rod to the ankle. The rod was not removed. The rod could move a bit as Tait walked, which would aid in the healing process.

One thing Tait said was that he might break something else in his life, but because of the rod, he would not ever break that leg again!

Meanwhile, Ruth had been working with Child Evangelism. Then she worked as a nanny for several years. She attended Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, WI and graduated with a teaching degree.

She received an offer to teach school in Lancaster, California and relocated there in the summer of 1999.



Although it was not long after Tait’s accident, he went along with Roy to help with the move and was able to carry boxes, walking without crutches because of the rod in his leg!



**Ruth Glory Smith, 1998
Cardinal Stritch University**

After Madeline and her family moved to Louisiana, Tait decided he wanted to try California living. In 2001 he moved away to join Ruth in Lancaster. She was generous to help him get started in a new location and enjoyed having a family member with her. To start off, Tait found work at McDonald’s. It was a time of adjustment for him, living without Madeline close by!

Ruth made her home in Lancaster five years.

She made many close friends among the school staff and at church.



**Ruth portayed
“Strega Nona”
in a play at school**

Our youngest son Vernon married Adrienne Jean Scurlock (A.J.) in 1999. Their first child is a sweet little boy named Casey Steven Smith, born on July 20, 2001. His sister, Rachel Laine Smith, came along two and a half years later February 18, 2004.



AJ, Vernon & Casey



Vernon Matthew Smith
Class of 1993



Casey



Rachel



The grandkids
Madeline, Casey, Rachel



With both Roy and I working, we were able to make some needed improvements to the house and take some time for vacations.

One of the first things was to lay new floor tiles and replace the dishwasher. Working together on this project and a lot of other little ones gave us great pleasure.



For a birthday, we gave Roy a recliner. He later got me a glider chair, so we each had a nice comfy place of our own.

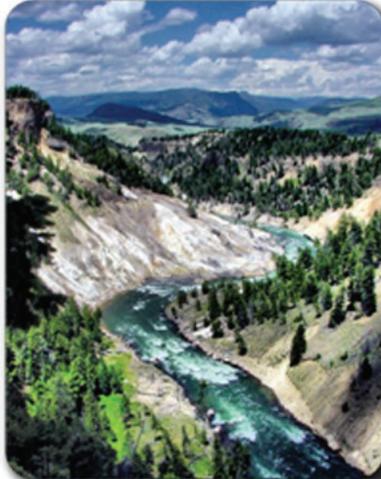


Our place in the digital world grew as our computer hardware multiplied like rabbits do! For a while, this was all in the living room. Later we moved it downstairs where Roy has been able to expand it to his heart's content and learn many new things. For my part, I wish computers were like sewing machines, never becoming totally obsolete!

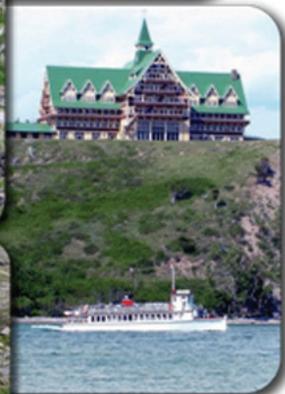
Roy and I had consistent 3-week vacations for long trips as well as some short trips that are memorable and added significantly to our time together.

A fancy new camera motivated Roy to stop and smell the flowers as he enjoyed taking lots of pictures. I often had to wait on him so carried along a book to fill my time.

Roy loves this picture of me enjoying the feel of the water from this spring near Hungry Horse, Montana.



Hitting the highlights, in 2000 we visited Yellowstone, Glacier, and Waterton National Parks. These parks are so wonderful, we want to share some pictures of them.



Along the Snake River in Idaho, at Glenn's Crossing, there is an annual re-enactment of a pioneer wagon train crossing of the river. We saw one wagon tip over; oxen going one way, passengers going another! All were rescued by men on horseback, but the wagon was a loss. The pioneers were a hardy people!

In 2001 we traveled to Louisiana stopping to see Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, the Alamo in Texas, and the Gulf coast with its beaches and lighthouses.



In Louisiana we enjoyed visiting with Madeline and her family. Joey, her other grandfather, took us in a boat ride on the bayou. He also gave us a tour of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge where we saw lots of wildlife, including this alligator.



Returning from there, we visited graves of Roy's ancestors, the Collins's, Crook's, and Smith's in Kansas. We saw the home of C.A. Smith in Wellsville and enjoyed remembering the history of the family during a lengthy visit at the library there. The librarian remembered the Smith's and showed us lots of family history on file there.



Janet & Forrest

In 2002 we visited in Phoenix with Roy's sister Barbara and their Uncle Forrest. We visited Roy's Mom's gravesite in Tempe. Then we traveled together with Barbara to Santa Barbara, California to see their cousin Janet and her husband Bob.

Getting Forrest to smile for a camera was a real chore but Janet was almost able to do so in this photo. What a great time we had visiting with them and then beach combing.

Knee replacements were not fun but very necessary for me. I was having some really severe pain in my knees, and since it was getting worse each year, knee replacement was done. In 2001 the right was done and then the left in 2002.



1 done, 1 to go!

The friends of our children have had a lot of interaction with us. What a blessing!



**Jeff
Tieman**



**Todd Steve visiting Vern, Allison, Tait
Tieman Evans friend
Cory Anderson & Misty**



Steve Evans



**Adam
Brungardt**



**Robin Michelle
Getz Owsley**

As I mentioned in chapter eight, after being away eleven years, in 1997 we returned to attending Holly Hills Bible Church. The in-depth teaching of God's Word in this church is what we desire most in a church home. As we consistently heard the truths from God taught from the Bible, our spiritual life in Christ grew at an accelerated rate.

Not that we have not grown in the other churches attended! We have been helped in many ways, and we are grateful for what each group of believers has meant to us. Indeed, we can see that God has used all the churches and friends we have been associated with to bless, encourage and correct us.

Looking back over this brief history of our lives, we can see many differences in the ways God has helped us come to know Him intimately. But the most significant way is by being shown Jesus Christ our Lord in the pages of the Bible.

We are very thankful for these blessings because the years covered so briefly in this chapter were difficult as we all adjusted to living without Stephen. Each of us making choices and decisions, not always the best ones, but we have grown and found our Lord faithful and loving at all times.

In conclusion, as happens to us all eventually, Roy and I and our siblings, have become the older generation. What a rootless feeling, a huge hole when someone who has been there throughout all your life, is no longer accessible to go to for wisdom or to share the things of our hearts!



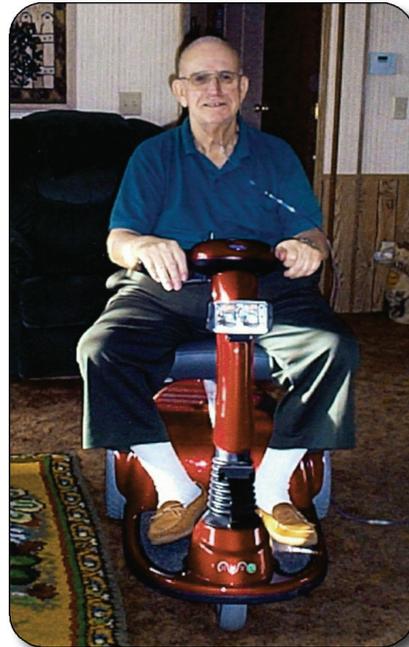
Mom Smith, 1989



Mom Berglund, 2002



Dad Smith, 1997



Dad Berglund, 2005