The background of the cover is a photograph of a beach. In the foreground, there is a wide, sandy beach with some darker, possibly wet sand or seaweed. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, creating white foam. The sky is a clear, light blue. The title 'OCEAN DEPTHS' is centered in the upper half of the image in a dark red, serif font.

# *OCEAN DEPTHS*

By

Gale D. Smith

# OCEAN DEPTHS

By

Gale D. Smith

*And what shall be the ending?  
I've touched the fringe of what Thou art,  
And Thou hast begun to show me, Lord,  
that is all transcending;  
I'm standing on the rippling shore;  
Love's ocean depths are all before.*

Miles J. Stanford – "Imag-ination 14" page 31 – (emphasis mine)

## FORWARD BY THE AUTHOR

It has been said that every life is a journey. Looking back on mine, it appears that the essence of this journey is change, for that is just what mine has frequently done.

Change comes because of our needs as well as our desires. Change can also come because of the needs and desires, or choices, of people around us.

I began writing at the suggestion of Lindy Molloy, but writing it has been a huge challenge with many emotions to face and analyze. At the time I had no intention of publishing this book, it was to be for my children.

A number of people have been wonderful helpers in the process of this writing. First, I want to thank Art Lowther, Nancy Peterman and Doris Anderson, all very dear friends who read the rough draft and encouraged me to publish for a larger audience.

I hope that whoever reads this may find something in these pages of value as food for thought or as an encouragement for some situation in life. My apologies for any errors that I may have made. Some of my memories may differ with those of the reader. I have tried to verify factual information on Wikipedia, but it is possible that is not always correct.

The chapter about our time in the country of Guatemala has been made more accurate by Don and Pat Rutledge, Harold Casper, Jim and Gail McKelvey and Bill and Margie Veith who were friends during that time. They have been so kind to answer questions via e-mail. David Luna, who is from Guatemala, has helped me express the beauty and charms of his native country.

Many people mentioned in this text have been wonderfully helpful with details. Thank you all very much, you have made this more interesting and have encouraged my heart with your confidence in regard to what the end product would become.

Special thanks go to my dear husband Roy who has listened to me talk about this for years. He has kept me going when I grew overwhelmed by the task, discouraged and thinking that the world can do fine without another book. He has worked hard to make it look good by formatting the text, putting in the photos and then producing the finished product. Without Roy's help and confidence in my ability to write, I would not have completed this.

Gale D. Smith - Centennial, Colorado  
gale@rgsmiths.com

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rgsmiths.com

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## CHAPTER 1 – EARLY YEARS

### MY PARENTS

Life began for me in Los Angeles, California on December 29, 1942 a year after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entry of our country into World War Two.

My parents, Vincent Ora Taylor and Doris Grace Bucknam, were both from the Boston, Massachusetts area. They both graduated from Braintree High School in Braintree, Massachusetts.

These two young adults were among the generation that was faced with the terrible responsibility and challenge of preserving freedom in the world at unbelievable personal sacrifice that I am certain is beyond our present ability to appreciate. Thank you, Father and Mother.



**Vincent Ora Taylor**



**Doris Grace Bucknam**

### MOTHER



**Gertrude & Carroll Bucknam  
wedding photo 1909**

My mother, Doris Grace Bucknam, was born on March 19, 1919. Her ancestors had come to New England at the time of the Colonies, several were on the Mayflower. Both sides of her family had been among the earliest settlers in Massachusetts and Maine during the 1620's.

Mother's father, Carroll Bucknam, was raised in Machias, Maine. His father had been a carpenter and undertaker, two vocations that usually went hand in hand at that time. Carroll, became a salesman, not wanting to take over the family business. His brother Will (William), became the undertaker when their father passed away. For a time Carroll sold pianos in Boston, Massachusetts where he met and married Gertrude Holden. Later he drove all over New England selling the flavored syrups used in soda fountain drinks.

Carroll and Gertrude raised their family of three daughters in the town of Braintree, which is near Boston. The girls were named Harriet, Evelyn and Doris, who was the youngest. The family attended the Congregational Church. Harriet, who never married, was my favorite aunt. Evelyn married her high school sweetheart, Carl Beane, and they moved to southern California where he worked with the gas and electric company. So Evelyn became the first in the family to leave New England since the time of the Colonies.

While raising their girls, Carroll was on the road much of the time. Summers he would travel as far as his home town of Machias, Maine, which is almost as far east as it is possible to go and still be in the United States. Doris loved to go along with her dad to stay with his sister Florence in Machias. When he finished his route in Maine, he would go back to Machias to get Doris and take her home with him on his return route to Braintree.

Of the three girls Harriet, who was the oldest, was the most prim and proper of Bostonian ladies. Harriet lived with a married couple for a long time but when they moved to a care center, she lived alone. Mother and I were the only other people who ever lived with her.

Evelyn was a practical joker, loving a good time. Her husband Carl called her Bucky, because of her last name, Bucknam. Mother said that Evelyn would get her down on the ground and tickle her unmercifully. I remember Evelyn as being a fun person who loved to laugh. She would often burp loudly when we were eating together as a family. Her husband, who was himself quite a proper gentleman, would be embarrassed saying, "Bucky!" Evelyn and I would laugh, she was great fun!



**Carroll's Girls  
Doris, Harriet,  
Gertrude, Evelyn**

Mother was always very shy and quiet. She did poorly in school because of this, to the point of being threatened that she would be held back if she did not stand up in class and give an oral report. She could not bring herself to do it, and ultimately was not held back. The teacher must have realized she never would do it no matter what. Mother did not make friends easily; she hated board games and playing cards. She was not a reader until late in life. She and dad made a number of hooked rugs, but she did not enjoy doing most crafts. One thing mother did better than almost everyone, was keep a clean and orderly house! She loved flowers, grew some perennials and some vegetables. She and dad had an RV in their retirement so they were able to travel, which she loved to do.

During the years when the girls were in their teens, the family spent summer vacations on the coast at Kingston, Massachusetts in a rental house at the beach near Cape Cod.

In September 1936 Gertrude died of hypertension. In those days, there was nothing that could be done for this high blood pressure problem. She died during my mother's junior year at Braintree High School.

After his wife's death, Carroll became so melancholy that he decided he did not want to live anymore, he would just give up and wait to die. Quitting his job, he spent his days sitting around waiting for his death. His daughter Harriet was the only one working, earning \$15 a week at the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company in Boston.

Because their income was so very small, Carroll was soon unable to make house payments so their home was repossessed. They had to move into a room in a boarding house. Doris wanted to work to help with expenses, but Harriet would not let her quit school. Somehow they survived several months on Harriet's tiny income until Carroll decided he was not going to die after all and returned to work.



**Doris  
Class of 1938**

When mother graduated from high school in May 1938, she took a job at the same insurance company where Harriet was working. The two girls rode a train from Braintree into Boston every day.

Their room at the boarding house had a small hot plate on which to fix food, but the evening meal each day was provided by Marjorie McKenna, the owner of the boarding house. In order to make a living for herself after the death of her husband, Marjorie had turned her home in Braintree into a boarding house. This was a fairly common practice in those days, as I understand it. Marjorie provided the evening meal as part of the housing arrangement, and ate with the boarders in the dining room like a family.

My grandfather Carroll eventually struck up a relationship with Marjorie, which led to their marriage in August 1942. Marjorie was the answer to his pain and they were very happy together. Marjorie became the grandmother I remember from that side of the family.

In June 1954, Carroll was hospitalized for some kind of surgery. In those days people remained in the hospital longer than is the practice now, being kept in bed a week or more, not allowed to get out of bed much. Marjorie visited him daily and he was doing very well. The morning that he was to be discharged, she arrived at the hospital but became alarmed when she discovered that his room was empty, even the bed was gone. A nurse told her that he had died of pneumonia during the night! They had not bothered to call to let her know that Carroll had developed pneumonia, nor that he had gone downhill so rapidly to his death!



**Carroll & Marjorie  
Bucknam  
Wesley & Karen McKenna**

## FATHER

My father Vincent Ora Taylor, born on January 8 , 1920 in Brockton, MA was the oldest of three children having a brother James and a sister Marilyn. Their father was James Ora Taylor and their mother was Ethel Williams. The Taylor family were Catholic but Vincent never practiced any religious faith as an adult.

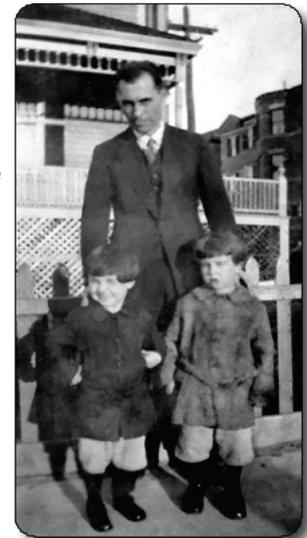


**Ethel Taylor  
James, Vincent**

I do not know much about the Taylor side of the family, except that the elder James was raised in Iowa. Ethel's grandparents had come from Ireland via Canada and settled in Boston, where Ethel was born and raised. James met Ethel in Boston when he was in the Navy.

Vincent graduated from Braintree high school in 1937, a year before my mother's graduation. Following graduation, he seems to have made a trip to Iowa to visit his paternal grandparents.

He stayed there almost a year, and then returned home to Braintree, arriving just in time to attend the prom for my mother's graduating class. He took her home after the dance, and from then on they began to date each other.



**James Taylor  
Vincent, James**



**The Taylor kids  
James, Marilyn, Vincent**

In October 1938 Vincent enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corp, Company # 1143. The CCC was a program begun in 1933 as a means of combating the high unemployment caused by the Great Depression. It focused on such things as conservation of natural resources, road construction, land erosion, wildfire fighting, and later on construction of military bases in the early years of WWII. The CCC members lived in camps, wore uniforms, and were under a military type of discipline. He was discharged from the CCC in March 1939 and returned to work in Braintree as an office clerk. Vincent's service in the CCC took place in Vermont.

Doris's father Carroll did not think much of Vincent, but the young people continued to date. After two years, Doris and Vincent were determined to be married and came up with a plan to accomplish this, but they would need it to remain a secret. They arranged a trip to the beach at Seabrook, New Hampshire over the 4th of July weekend. They each told their parents that they were going with friends. They did go with friends, but their friends stood up as the witnesses to their marriage before a Justice of the Peace on July 3, 1940.

Returning home from their weekend in New Hampshire, Vincent and Doris immediately had a very serious problem. Following the crash of the stock market and the high unemployment rates during the 1930's, there was a movement across this country to make it illegal for married women to be employed. It was felt that jobs should be made available to the many men who had families to support but were without work.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as the state is still known, the efforts of this movement were voted down but private companies were allowed to deny employment to married women. The New England Mutual Life Insurance Company where Doris and Harriet were both working, had chosen to have the policy for its employees. In order for Doris to get around the policy and keep her job, she and Vincent each continued to live at home with their parents, not telling anyone that they were married. This situation lasted for about four months.

As the months passed, Doris's father Carroll began to be suspicious that something was different between Doris and Vincent. One day as he was walking along the street in downtown Braintree he happened to see Vincent's father, James Taylor. He asked James if he had noticed anything different lately about their youngsters. James said yes, something did seem different. Putting two and two together, they were sure Vincent and Doris had been secretly married! Each of them went home to confront their offspring and get the truth!

The confrontation at the Bucknam house was quite emotional, with lots of yelling and crying! Doris's father forced her to go to work the next day and tell the truth to her employer which meant she no longer had a job. Both Vincent and Doris were put out of their parent's homes, forced to get a tiny apartment of their own with only a few items for household furnishings. It was a very difficult time for them financially.

Doris's father told her he did not want to see or hear from her ever again! The next months were a time when my mother shed many tears. She repeatedly went to her father's house to knock on the door begging to be forgiven. After six months, he could stand it no longer! He opened the door, took her in his arms and held her while they both cried.

## WORLD WAR II

A year and a half after my parents married, the United States entered World War II following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

It was a period of time that was to change the lives of most of the people in our country, indeed in many countries of the world, in one way or another.



**USS Maryland**

My father's brother James Taylor was on the battleship U.S.S. Maryland which was in Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack. During the December 7th attack, the Maryland was shielded from torpedoes by the U.S.S. Oklahoma which was beside it and took the full brunt of the attack, being hit by up to nine torpedoes. She was split open and capsized within twenty minutes. Thirty-two of the Oklahoma's men were rescued alive, but over four hundred were killed. The Maryland was hit by two bombs dropped by planes, which caused relatively light damage and some flooding. Four men on the Maryland were killed.

When our country entered the war and the men volunteered or were drafted into military service, women all across the country had to step into the jobs vacated by the men.

My aunt Marilyn became a riveter, a job for which she had to learn welding. Such women did much of the construction needed to build for our country a new fleet of ships.



**Lady Riveters – Marilyn**

Gradually, the three Bucknam daughters all moved to the west coast of the country. Evelyn had gone first because her husband Carl was offered a job at the utilities and gas Company in Los Angeles. His job there was such that he was kept out of the military. In early 1942 my parents traveled to California with a cousin in her car. They went to visit Evelyn and Carl but liked it there so much they decided to stay.

They rented a small apartment in Los Angeles and I was born there on December 29, 1942 at the Methodist Hospital. My mother, who was 5 foot 4 inches tall, was always a very thin woman weighing less than 100 pounds when I was born. The most she ever weighed was 134 pounds at the age of 66, just before her first heart attack and triple bypass surgery. As thin as mother was she always had high cholesterol.

During this time my father was working at Northrup Aircraft Company as a tool clerk and attending school. Knowing that he was due to be drafted at any time, he enlisted in the Army, entering the service in Los Angeles in early 1943. That summer he was stationed in Palm Springs, California in the Mojave Desert.



**Father & daughter  
Vincent & Gale**

Palm Springs was a small town, not the lovely resort that we know it as today! With so many men in training at the same time, not everyone could be housed on the base. Some families of the men in training were housed in one-room units at small motels. Nothing in town was air conditioned except the neighborhood taverns, so during the day, while the men were on the base taking their training, the women would gather with their children at the local tavern where they could sit over coffee and cold drinks. In the evenings the men, along with their families, would return to the cool of the tavern for dart games and dancing.

In the summer of 1944, Father was transferred to the Fort Brown military base near Brownsville, Texas where he was stationed for a year and a half. This too was a dusty, hot desert town, close to the Mexican border at the very bottom tip of the state of Texas. The soldiers and their wives would often walk across the Rio Grande River to visit the town of Matamoros in Mexico. Apparently Vincent was part of a “ferrying group”, a unit that worked stateside at shipping materials of all description to those engaged in the terrible combat in so many places across the globe.

At Fort Brown, we moved into a furnished apartment, where the former residents had put cockroach poison under the couches and chairs. My parents did not know it was there until one day I had white paste on my face around my mouth. They rushed me to the base hospital where my stomach was pumped. Mother rounded up all the poison at home after that, and we learned to live with the cockroaches.



**Gale in casts 1944**

When I began walking, my parents became very concerned that my legs looked bowed. Doctors at the base hospital did not know what the problem was, but felt that surgery should be done. So it was, that at one and a half years of age, corrective surgery was done to straighten my legs. Both legs were broken below the knees then reset in a way that straightened them.

I was put into a cast that extended from my waist down to my toes. A stabilizing bar was put between the knees to hold the legs still. It must have been terrible in the heat! But fortunately, I do not remember it. How nice to be able to forget some things!

After some weeks, the part of the cast from the waist down to the legs was removed. Now I could sit up as well as move my still-casted legs. Later the parts of the casts covering my feet were removed. Now I was able to walk stiff-legged in the remaining casts that covered only the legs.

When the last parts of the casts finally came off, I had lovely straight legs. My parents must have been very happy to have all that over with and to think that the problem was now taken care of. However, this satisfaction was short lived. Over the following years it gradually became apparent that my legs were slowly bowing again. What a disappointment and worry that must have been for my young parents!



**Carroll, Gale, & Doris**

In December 1944, being scheduled to be shipped overseas, my father was transported to Ft. Meade, Maryland where he waited with his group to go to Europe. Since mother and I could no longer be with him, we moved to Braintree, Massachusetts where we shared a small house with mother's sister Harriet.



I have two vivid memories from that time of living in Braintree. I remember standing in a tall, dark hall crying. Mother told me that next to our small house was a larger house, another boarding house, where a little boy my age lived. One day mother took me over to that house to play with him. She was certain they would answer so left me there in the hallway knocking on their door. But the family was not home. I was unable to get out of the house since I could not reach the handle on the front door. I cried and screamed until an elderly lady who lived on the third floor, and was unwell at the time, came down the stairs to open the front door for me.

My other memory from that time is of sitting on the floor under the table and looking up to see something live hanging over the edge of the table above my head. I began screaming "Big bug! Big bug!" Mother rescued me from the lobster that she had been about to put into a pot of boiling water for dinner. I've never been very fond of lobster, maybe that is the reason!

Just before father was shipped out to Europe the war there ended on V-E Day. Victory in Europe Day, May 8, 1945 was the date when the Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

My father's group was rerouted, traveling by train from Maryland to California. From there they were shipped out to the war in the Pacific. They traveled across the Pacific Ocean on a battle ship so full of men that they had to sleep on the open decks. Flying fish would occasionally leap out of the sea and fall on them as they slept, a rather disturbing experience for men already nervous about the possibility of meeting up with Japanese ships on the open seas.

Once they reached their destination at Manila, the capital of the Philippines, in May 1945 they waited for some time to be shipped to Japan as part of the invasion of that country. I do not know if they were engaged in any shooting, but the mission of driving the Japanese from the Philippine Islands was in process at the time of their arrival. Manila itself was liberated February 23, 1945, and was the second most heavily bombed city of WWII, after Warsaw in Poland. So in May the clean up of the ruined city was still being done.

Pictures taken by my father showed the bombed out ruins of Manila with human bones still lying in the streets. I don't think I ever saw those pictures because they were later torn out of the album, but the writing is still on the pages where the pictures had been.

Following the unconditional surrender of Germany, Japan had announced that it would never accept an unconditional surrender. Instead of that it would continue to fight to the very end. 67 of Japan's cities were firebombed in an effort to bring about Japan's surrender. Finally atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6th and 9th. The Japanese surrendered unconditionally August 15th.

V-J Day, August 15, 1945, Victory over Japan Day, was announced on the radio but the formal surrender was signed on September 2<sup>nd</sup> aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. It was not until after this that my father and other US servicemen were shipped from Manila to Japan. There my father spent six months in the area of Nagasaki as part of the occupying force.



**San Francisco WWII  
Vincent, Marilyn, Doris, James**

In addition to the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki where the atomic bombs had been dropped, I am sure there was across the country much sadness, families broken and suffering by the loss of their men in the war, financial hardship and the shame of defeat. Among the things father brought back with him I remember kimonos, a red and a blue; a ladies hand-held fan, a ceremonial sword and a Japanese flag.

Public transportation during those days of the mid 1940's included only bus and train. Travel by air had not yet come into use for the general public. That was a later outgrowth of the advances in air travel achieved during the war. All over the nation, civilians and returning soldiers alike were crowding buses and trains trying to get to other places, just as mother and I were, anxious to be reunited with someone from whom they had been separated by the upheaval of the war. It was a nation on the move!

Mother and I traveled by Greyhound bus from Massachusetts across the country to Washington State, where my father was to be discharged from the service. She always spoke of that 5-day trip as the worst nightmare of her life! There were no bathrooms on the buses, and rest stops were limited to only a half hour. In that short amount of time you had to use the restroom, eat and get back in the bus. The bus did not wait for you if you were not on board. Lines were long for the restrooms as well as for food. Often mother had to buy just a candy bar and run back to the bus because there was not time to order a meal or wait for it to be fixed. It was extremely difficult for women traveling with small children. Keeping them occupied, clean, fed, getting them to sleep, and keeping them quiet so others on the bus could also sleep. Most people, she said, were kind, considerate of the tired, restless children. But some were not.

As it turned out in the decades ahead, my mother never had opportunity to return to Massachusetts again until 1988, on the celebration of the 50-year reunion of her high school graduating class. By that time only three cousins out of her whole extended family were still living.

## MAKING A LIFE AFTER WAR

Father was discharged from the Army in February, 1946 at Fort Lewis, Washington. That August he re-enlisted, this time in the Army Reserve Air Corps, for three more years.

The three of us settled in a former military housing area named McLoughlin Heights close to Pearson Airfield in the city of Vancouver, Washington.

During the war many small houses had been quickly and cheaply built around military bases. These houses, which were sometimes referred to as "cracker boxes", now became homes for many of the returning soldiers.



Our first house, on East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, was one of these, a tiny plain brown cube of a house with a little front porch. Inside were hardwood floors that my mother kept sparkling clean at all times. In fact people said that Doris's floors were so clean you could eat off of them! All her life mother's house was immaculate.

Mother always loved Sweet Peas. I think that where ever we lived, she always had them growing on strings beside our house.

We moved a lot during those years, and in addition to that first little brown house, I remember two more houses where we lived in Vancouver. Memories from that time in my life include, a Fourth of July. Father had firecrackers, which he put under a coffee can. When the firecracker exploded, it blew the can way up into the air. Not a very safe thing to do, according to today's standards. I doubt that at that time there were any laws governing the use of fireworks by the general public.

It was common at that time to remove a child's tonsils and mine were removed when I was five. I remember being in a crib in the hospital. Mother said that I refused to speak for a whole week and she began to wonder if I would ever speak again.

For Christmas I was given a beautiful golden colored Cocker Spaniel puppy. Not long after, he was hit by a car and killed as he followed me across the small, neighborhood street. I was heart broken!

The chicken pox also made a visit to me while we lived in that house. What a mess I was! There is nothing quite like having cold calamine lotion dabbed all over your hot, feverish skin! It was a miserable experience, which I remember well.

Another memory from those days is that of my father teaching me to hitch hike. It was very common for people to hitch hike in those days since few had cars. Although I do not remember mother being with us that day, she may have been. Father taught me to put out my leg and pull my skirt up above my knee. A sure thing for getting any motorist to stop, and it worked! I think the very first car stopped for us.

In addition to all this, we had an earthquake! My father and I were sitting at the table one morning eating bowls of cereal. The milk in the bowls began to slosh from side to side. Father yelled, "Earthquake!", and ran out of the house dragging me along behind. At a neighboring house a little dog was so frightened, it got its head stuck between the boards of a picket fence while trying to get out of the yard!

Kindergarten began for me at Lieser School in 1948 at the age of six. The class photograph for that year shows me in the front row of children sitting on the grass, all of us with our legs crossed in what we used to call "Indian style". Now a days this is called pretzel style, or "crisscross applesauce". It is obvious in the photo that my legs had become quite bowed again even after only 4 years since the surgery had been done to straighten them. Lieser School still exists in 2008 as a day care center.



First grade was at Harney Hill School, on Brandt Rd. This school no longer exists but the neighborhood of Harney Hill does and houses there still look like the one we had at that time.

Watching old movies made during the 1940's and 50's, you may notice how many people were smoking, which was very popular then. Mother took up smoking because it was fashionable to do so, but she quit a few years later.

Mom worked at Jantzen Beach sewing the well-known Jantzen swimming suits. But Jantzen Beach was not just a factory for bathing suits; it was also an amusement park with a large swimming pool.

We had no car at that time so when our family went swimming at Jantzen Beach we walked across the river on the bridge made of steel grate. It was a frightening experience for me because you could see the water rushing along below your feet and it made me dizzy. Jantzen Beach is now a super-center with a large mall.

At some point we had a large black and white collie dog named Richard. I remember climbing onto the sofa and then onto his back to ride on him. He must have been very patient!



**Gale & Richard**

My father's desire was to become a teacher, so he enrolled in a small local college to prepare for that, but he had a drinking problem. Mother said later that she thought he had started to abuse drink during the time he was in Japan. As time passed my father was borrowing money from friends to get his drinks, and after a while his friends would no longer loan money to him.

Father's solution to this problem was to move away, find new friends and work in another place. He felt that the logical place for him to go was to San Francisco where his sister Marilyn was living. She invited us to live with her for a while, but mother did not want to move. She had a job and little Gale was now attending school. She refused to go with him. Off he went saying he would send her money as soon as he had work so that we could join him later.

Weeks and then months passed during which he did not send any money or even telephone. Of course in those days a long distance telephone call was quite a rare thing, usually done only in an emergency.

Meanwhile, mother had a hard time making ends meet for the two of us on just her income. After four months had passed with no word at all from him, she went to a lawyer and filed for divorce on the grounds of desertion. When the divorce papers were served on him at his sister's apartment, mother received an angry phone call in which he said that he would be at the hearing and make sure she could not take his child away from him. When the date of the court hearing came, father did not appear nor did he contest the divorce. Mother was awarded full custody of me and the divorce was granted on April 18, 1951 in Vancouver, WA.

I do not remember the events of my father leaving us or of the divorce. It is as if my father was there in my life for a short time, and then he wasn't. I have no memory of talking with mother but surely she told me something as an explanation for why he was no longer with us. Over the years he was rarely mentioned, and then only in a way that cast shame on him for leaving us.

I was never to see my father again. I grew up with a vague image of him as a bad person, someone to forget about. Looking back now, he had been in and out of my life because of his military service and then had left me again by choice. Perhaps I had chosen to "desert" him in return by forgetting him. In my mind he became like a dream, as if he had never been quite real.

Years later mother told me more about him when I pumped her with questions. To my surprise, she was not unwilling to talk about him. She said that my father was a person who loved to be in a social setting. He loved to dress well, to go dancing and to be out with his friends. I believe that mother later missed the social parts of the life she had with Vincent.

Mother was a very shy, self-conscious person. Vincent's friendliness would have given her entry into a group, breaking the ice for her, which would have enabled her to become more social along with him. But his friendliness was also the part that caused their marriage to fail, the socializing going along with drinking so that it became a divisive issue in their marriage.

Years later mother told me that she asked me when I was about 10 years old, if I wanted the photographs of my father that were in our photo albums. Apparently I told her I did not want them, so she tore them out of the albums, and cut him out of some pictures, like the one at the right. Consequently, I grew up with no picture of my father. The only picture in my memory was of a dark haired soldier dressed in khakis, but without a face! What does a child of 10 know of what she will want later in life?

There came a time after I was grown that I longed for a photo of my father!

Following the divorce, mother had a very hard time making ends meet, sometimes we had very little to eat. After a while mother and I shared a small 2-bedroom house with another divorced woman who had two children, a boy and a girl. Us children slept with our mothers and the arrangement helped both our families with expenses.



Other memories of that time include pretending that I was too sick to go to school one day so that I missed the school bus. Mother made me stay in bed all day, which was very boring so I never did it again. She must have stayed home from work that day which would have shortened her paycheck.

One time I got into trouble for climbing into my doll buggy, something I had been told not to do. I was small and could fit right into small places such as that. Mother threatened to take the buggy away from me if I did that again. Well, guess what? I did and she did!

There was a coal stove in the living room. Coal briquettes were delivered by truck, dumped into a bin outside, and then carried into the house in a bucket. The top of the coal stove was the perfect place to heat the coffee and the clothes iron if the electricity went off during a storm. The fire in the coal stove always burned down during the night so that the house was very cold the next morning. When we awoke, mother would turn on the gas oven in the kitchen stove. We would dress quickly, trying to catch as much heat as we could in front of the open oven door.

It was in 1951 while sharing the house with the other lady and her children that mother met a gentleman who was to become my stepfather. The other woman was dating a truck driver who brought along a series of different friends to meet my Mom. One of these fellows was Dale Berglund. Soon Dale was the only man who was coming around.

The summer after she met Dale, mother and I made a bus trip to southern California, to visit her sister Evelyn and her husband Carl and their daughter Gini, who was a year younger than I. Gini and I had great fun together on that vacation. I don't know how we paid for that trip.

## HOSPITAL DAYS

It was also during that year of 1951, that a gentleman who was a Shriner saw me, noticed my bowed legs and put mother into contact with the Shriner's Hospital For Crippled Children in Portland, Oregon. In more recent years, the word "crippled" has been removed from the names of all Shriner's hospitals because it is thought to be offensive. But the varying diseases of the bones, birth defects, and other illnesses did cripple many of us who were treated there. I was hospitalized at Shriner's twice for extended periods of time.

The hospital was a two-story building, and built into the side of a hill, so that the first floor was at ground level in the front and the second floor was at ground level in the back. The patient rooms were large wards with numerous beds in each ward.

These wards were on the second story with the girls' two wards at one end of the building and the boys' two wards at the other end, and "never the twain shall meet"!

The wards at each end consisted of two large rectangular rooms laid out in an "L" shape, one part of the "L" being the ward for older children, ages 12 to 14, and the other ward being for the younger children, and including a tiny nursery for maybe two babies at a time. At the corner of each "L" was the nursing station, so the nurses could see down the length of both of the two wards from their desk at the nursing station. All the wards opened onto the huge back yard with patios and paved walkways in the garden areas.

On the lower floor of the building was the outpatient clinic, the workshops for making braces, the physical therapy gyms and therapy whirlpool, the x-ray department, laundry and probably other things having to do with the physical plant. The second story held the kitchen, the gymnasium with a stage, the operating rooms, a lobby at the center and the wards for the children at the two ends.

My first hospitalization at Shriner's Hospital was in 1951 while I was in second grade at the age of eight. It was at this time that we were told the name for the diagnosis of my bone problem. It was being called Vitamin D Resistant Rickets, which I will now refer to as VDRR.



**Glenda & Gale**

Two other eight-year-old girls who had VDRR were also hospitalized at the same time I was. One girl was Jane Bond, or Janie, from Bend, Oregon. The other girl I remember as Glenda, but Janie remembers her as Shirley. For the purpose of this narrative, I will refer to her as Glenda. Janie and I were the same in that our legs both bowed outward away from each other, while Glenda's legs both bowed to the right. After being admitted, the three of us were hospitalized over a nine-month period for purposes of research and observation.

My first night in the hospital was frightening. The ward seemed big and strange. There were about 20 children in the younger children's ward where my bed was. It was a long rectangular room with beds and cribs lining the walls. The bed that I was to use was at the end of the ward closest to the nurses' station in the outer hall, and right next to the bathroom. As the night nurse put me to bed she warned me that no one was allowed to get up to wander around during the night.

Luck would have it that I woke up sometime in the wee hours of the night needing to go to the bathroom. But being afraid to disobey what the nurse had told me, I fell back to sleep. The next time I awoke, my bed was wet! When the morning nurse discovered my wet bed, she was disgusted that an eight-year-old girl like me would do such a thing. As I cried, I told her I had been afraid to disobey. She told me that was silly and I was not to do that again! I didn't.

As I said before, two other girls my age having the same medical problem that I have, were hospitalized at the same time I was. Since none of us had surgery at that time, we three were called "up-patients", meaning that we were not confined to bed. I remember playing jacks while sitting on the floor under a table and pushing each other around the halls in a big wheelchair made of wood.



**Danny Kaye & Janie, seated**

The three of us had the run of the younger girl's wing of the hospital and the large outdoor yard in back of that wing. In good weather we went outside to play. One game we often played was "Mother May I". Children who were confined to bed because they were in casts, were also taken outside. Their beds were pushed out the big French doors onto the patios so they could enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.

During the school year, there were two ladies who came every school day to give us grade appropriate lessons. Both of these ladies wore a uniform sort of dress made of a stiff aqua colored cloth which made a rustling sound when they moved. Funny that I should remember that cloth so well!

One visitor, entertainer Danny Kaye, was a real treat. He made everyone laugh with hand tricks, games and stories. Everyone loved him!

Nutrition was a big item, of course. Each afternoon after school, we were given a cup of eggnog to drink as a snack. I hated it! It didn't take me long to figure out a way to get around drinking it. Being an "up patient" I would go to the cart and get my cup when the nurse first began passing them out in our large ward. She would go from bed to bed around the room until everyone in all the beds had a cup of eggnog. If I was quick, I could take the cup into the bathroom, pour it down the toilet and return the cup to her cart without her knowing what I had done.

Either someone told on me, or she suspected what I was doing, because one day she caught me in the act. After that I had to stand next to her and drink ALL of it! UGH! To this day, I do not like eggnog!

Since little was known at that time about our condition, medical treatment for the three of us girls consisted of being given a variety of medications and then having blood drawn several times daily, to determine what changes, if any, the medications made in our blood chemistries. There was one day in particular that I remember because the man drawing my blood could not get the needle into the vein. At least nine times he poked me, “fishing around” for the vein while I screamed. Probably my veins had collapsed. He finally gave up and I remember it as an experience of torture.

The three of us were also x-rayed numerous times until we each had very large files of x-ray films. This was done to monitor any changes that might occur in the bones due to the medications. I remember the x-ray technician who was there in that position for many years, and I did not like him but I do not know why. Years later, Janie told me that she had liked him.

I remember some very nasty medicines! All three of us girls had trouble swallowing pills, so tablets were crushed and capsules were broken open. The powders from these were put on soda crackers for us to eat. It was a very evil smelling and evil tasting experience! I can still remember some of the smells and tastes if I try hard enough! Mother told me that I was sick with nausea and vomiting much of the time during those months, probably because the dosages were incorrect or even toxic, meaning they stay in the system and build up over time.

I do not remember the hospital experience of being sick. Instead my memories of that time are mostly good ones, with the exception of the odor and taste of some drugs and the constant blood tests. Believe me, blood tests today are a “piece of cake” by comparison!

When we were discharged from the hospital, each of the three of us returned to our homes with instructions to take Vitamin D every day in an oily liquid form. Research up to that point in time had shown that Vitamin D had some effect on the rickets in our bones. Because the taste was so awful, we were to camouflage the oil by drinking it in orange juice. But just like oil and water do not mix, oil does not mix with juice either. Instead the oil floats on top and as you tip the glass to drink, it floats away from your mouth to the bottom of the glass. This means it stays in the glass until the juice is gone, and the oil ends up being your last swallow! It was many years before I was able to drink orange juice without having a very strong imagination that I could smell and taste that oil!

During the following several years, each of us girls returned periodically to the out patient clinic for more blood testing and x-rays. For the blood draws we had to go without breakfast until after clinic visits.

By the time we finished waiting in the clinic lobby for our turn to see the doctor, had blood drawn and x-rays taken, we were starving!

Across the street from the hospital was a Diner, an old silver railroad car, which had been made into a restaurant. Mother would always take me there for a late breakfast after our appointment. That diner was the “silver lining” in the “cloud” of those clinic appointments!

In addition to our clinic appointments, all three of us girls were admitted to the hospital later for surgeries, but never again at the same time.

Because I never saw or heard from Glenda again, I do not know anything more about her.

Many years later Janie and I did have contact with each other again, but I will get to that part of this tale later. Suffice it for now to say that Janie had numerous surgeries in her future while I had only one.



**Waiting for clinic appointments**

## CHAPTER 2 – WE BEGIN AGAIN

### MY STEP-FATHER, MY DAD

During the nine months of 1951 that I was in the hospital, my mother and Dale were dating each other. They were married in Stevenson, Washington on Groundhog Day, February 2, 1952.

At this point, I would like to give you background on Dale's life and family. Dale Wallace Berglund was born May 23, 1930 in Isle, Minnesota a small town of only 500 people on the shores of Mille Lacs Lake, as the youngest of five children. He had a sister named Lavern and three brothers named Donald, Kenneth, and Milton. His parents Knute and Anna Berglund were of Swedish and Norwegian descent respectively and were each the first generation born in this country to immigrant parents.



**Donald, Kenneth, Lavern, Milton  
Anna, Dale, Knute**

Being born in 1930, Dale was too young to be among those who went to serve in World War II but his brothers all went off to serve their country. During the seventh grade Dale began cutting school and it wasn't long before he had dropped out entirely. He took a job driving truck on short runs for a man in their little town, but kept it a secret from his parents, acting as if he were going to school each day. When his father Knute found out what he was doing, he put Dale to work driving truck for him. He had to be up very early in the morning to collect the full milk buckets from the dairy farmers and take them to a dairy for processing and bottling.

During 1944 when Dale was 14, the family moved to Portland, Oregon where Knute began working for the Port of Portland as a longshoreman, loading and unloading ships. This may have been a good move for the family in regard to Knute having more lucrative work. Dale tried to go back to school, but didn't stick to it. He was becoming a rebellious teen, generally causing problems.

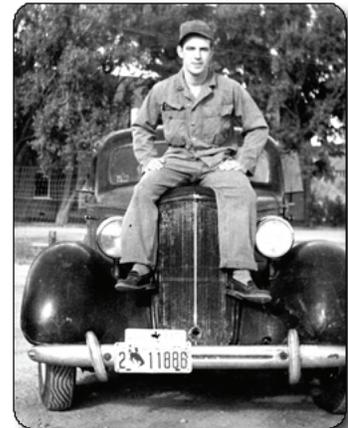
By the time he was 16, his family had become concerned that one day he would get himself into some kind of real trouble. They decided that the only way to prevent that was to get him into the military service. His mother and a sister-in-law used a typewriter to alter the date of his birth on his birth certificate from 1930 to 1928! That made it possible for Dale to enlist in the Army as an 18 year old even though he was really only 16.



**Dale with Equipment**

Off Dale went to boot camp at Geiger Field, an army base near Spokane, Washington. Thanks to driving truck for his father, Dale already knew a bit about the operation of large trucks. Now he was taught to operate bulldozers, cranes and other kinds of heavy equipment.

The work that was done while he was stationed there, turned Geiger Field into a civilian airport which is still the airport at Spokane, WA.



After the field was converted to civilian use, the military personnel were relocated to Warren Field at Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dale stayed at Warren Field until he was sent to Europe.

The war in Europe ended on V-E Day, Victory in Europe Day, on May 8, 1945, the date the Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. Dale was shipped over to Germany as part of the occupation force following the surrender, so he never had to experience combat.

With his knowledge and skill using heavy equipment, his work in Germany around the area of Munich, involved the construction of roads, repair of airport runways and land cleanup.



In later years Dale talked about his work with heavy equipment, but didn't say much about the other things he saw. Such as the concentration camps in process of clean up, the displaced persons, the battered forests, fields and landscape; the bombed out cities with their rubble and misery, the people maimed and homeless, nor the children now orphaned.



**Dale & Doris Berglund  
Dad & Mom, wedding day**

When Dale and my mother married, his parents were living in the northwest part of Portland in a section known as the St Johns area. Their home was on Tioga Avenue in the first block south of Fessenden Street. I stayed three days with his parents while mother and Dale went on a short honeymoon.

During their honeymoon, the very first morning at the Berglund's home, I awoke to the lovely smell of coffee and bacon! YUM! Making my way shyly to the kitchen I saw Knute and Anna sitting at the table. Knute was reading from a book. Anna motioned me to sit beside her on the red vinyl upholstered bench of the nook, which surrounded the table on three sides. We sat quietly as Knute continued to read and then he closed his eyes and began to talk.

I do not remember ever seeing anyone pray before. I had a powerful feeling then that there was Someone present, besides just the three of us, who was hearing those words! That moment is the first time I remember ever being aware of God. I was nine years old.

When they returned from those few days away, Dale's father Knute, said to him, "Take her home and feed her!". Which Dale did, being a meat and potatoes man, but somehow mother never did gain much weight.

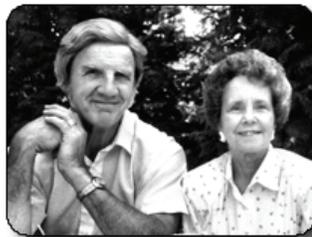
My life was suddenly full of good times, as there was now an extended family around me who made me feel welcome. I loved to listen to stories of the families of these grandparents and began to feel a bit as if I was also a Scandinavian like them. Dad's parents were now my grandparents. His three brothers and one sister were now my uncles and aunt. They became the family I felt were truly mine rather than the family of my father Vincent or the family of my mother, who all lived far away, and who were people I had no opportunity to know. In addition I now had nine new cousins! Suddenly I was rich in the best way possible; I belonged to a large extended family!



**Anna & Knute**



**Lavern & Willard  
Anderson**



**Milt & Mabel  
Berglund**



**Ardy & Don  
Berglund**



**Lou & Ken  
Berglund**

Dale was eleven years younger than mother, only thirteen years older than me. He had quite an adjustment becoming an instant parent to a child as old as I was. I will refer to my new step-father as dad now in this writing, although I continued to call him Dale for four more years. My last name never was changed from Taylor to Berglund. I do not know why Dale did not adopt me.

Mother and I moved from Vancouver, Washington across the Columbia River to Portland, Oregon where dad's family was living. At first the three of us lived very briefly in a couple of different apartments. At one of them we had a pinball machine in the living room which we fed wooden nickels so we could play the game.

Soon we moved into a small trailer house, situated on the large double lot where dad's parents lived. Our little trailer house was heated by a kerosene stove in the tiny living room. Since there was only one bedroom, I slept on the couch. The big yard was a wonderful place to me. There was a walnut tree and a cherry tree with a rope swing and a board for a seat.

When Grandpa Knute was not working he kept a large garden from which all the relatives were supplied with fresh produce. He had strawberries, peas, beans, corn, rhubarb, and potatoes. There was a grape vine on a horizontal trellis that we kids could hide under when playing. I loved helping Grandma Anna shuck peas and husk the corn.



**Grandpa still at it years later in WA**

Dad and all his brothers loved to go fishing in the rivers and streams that abound in the Pacific Northwest, especially Uncle Don. He was almost constantly after those fish! He would bring home a bunch of salmon and all the family would gather for dinner.

Grandma Anna had a huge goldfish. That goldfish always had the cleanest fish bowl I ever did see! There were only a couple of marbles on the bottom and Grandma must have cleaned it every day.

When someone talks about Grandma, most of the time mention is made of her having a sharp tongue. She did, I remember feeling it's cut twice. But my memories of her are ones of kindness and love.

She let me help her and showed me how things are done. She let me watch as she mended Grandpa's clothes or made a dress or apron on her treadle sewing machine. She let me practice using it. She wore an apron all the time unless she was having company or going out some place. It was a big cover up apron that had arm holes and buttoned in back. Her apron was a great carry-all. She would gather produce from the garden and carry it to the kitchen in the front skirt of her apron.

She let me put trash or a fresh piece of wood in the trash burning section of the stove in the kitchen. The stove had gas burners which could be covered over with circles of cast iron, turning the stove top into a big, flat piece of metal. There she cooked the large round circles of lefsa that she made at Christmas. Lefsa is Norwegian potato bread, rolled out very thin, and baked on a hot, flat surface. Then it is buttered and sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and folded in half. Repeat that sprinkling and folding again and again until it is quite small and then cut it into wedges shaped like a piece of pie. Yummy!!

Grandma taught me to knead bread and how to tell when it was kneaded just right. When it feels like your ear lobe, it's ready. Grating raw potatoes for potato dumplings was a fun chore at first. Until I scrapped my knuckles on the grater and bled into the potato mush as it turned gray from exposure to the air. Those dumplings were heavy as lead, but yummy and my uncles competed with each other to see who could eat the most!

The house had a basement that was half cement and half dirt. Grandma did laundry in the cement half with a wringer washer. I would help her pass the clothes through the wringer on the machine, letting them drop into two large sinks for the rinse, then through the wringer again to get the water out so we could hang them on the clothes line. Grandpa stored the potatoes and walnuts in gunnysacks in the part of the basement that had the dirt floor. I still remember the smell of the walnut husks as they turned black and slimy, rotting off the ripening walnuts in the gunnysacks.

Having heard tales from their parents of starvation in the old country and having lived through the Great Depression and two World Wars, Knute and Anna were very frugal. If the toast got burned in the toaster, Grandma would scrape the burned layer off and serve that toast at the table. If no one else ate it, she would.

She perked a pot of coffee at breakfast and if there was any left, she would heat it for the afternoon break from house and garden work. She liked her coffee HOT so brought it up to a boil! Grandpa didn't like his so hot so would carefully pour a bit into the saucer and lean down close to the table to blow on it and then slurp it up from the saucer. She would grumble and he would chuckle.

I loved being at Grandma and Grandpa's house with my cousins whenever possible. Grandma would read aloud to us. In particular I remember her reading Heidi and another wonderful book titled Treasures of the Snow by Patricia M. St John. Us girls would gather with Grandma on straight backed chairs around the furnace grate in the center of the living room floor. The heat coming up would warm us all over, just as the stories warmed our hearts, or sometimes made us cry together.

Knute and Anna attended the Temple Baptist Church in Portland. Church began for me then when I was first taken to Sunday school with them. I remember sitting through the worship hour next to Grandma. She would pull me close to her as I grew bored and restless. It was a comfy time for gathering some extra TLC. I learned to sit quietly and to sing along with the hymns. Music spoke to my heart, the songs becoming a part of me that I have cherished ever since.

While we were living in the trailer house, I attended third grade at a nearby elementary school, now called George Middle School. My only memory of that school was the taking of our class picture. Unintentionally the photographer humiliated me that day.

The class was positioned along a retaining wall outside with the girls in the front row. The photographer looked at us through his camera, came over to me, took me by the shoulders and turned me side wards.

It took me a few seconds to realize he had done that because of the way my bowed legs looked! Standing facing the camera straight on really showed the degree to which my legs were bowed. However, standing side wards did not hide the bowing and being positioned differently from the other children draws attention to me in the photo.



Looking at the class picture now, I recognize a few faces, girls who must have been my friends, but I have no memories of being with them in class or games we may have played during recess.

## A LIGHT HOUSE

For one month during the summer of 1952 following the third grade, we lived in a lighthouse! We had purchased a new home but it was still under construction.

The Willamette River Lighthouse was situated at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers northwest of the city of Portland.

Dad must have been in between jobs, and the Portland Port Authority must have needed someone to fill in until another lighthouse keeper would replace him.

The Willamette River Lighthouse was not the typical tall, cylindrical tower that one thinks of as a lighthouse. Its construction was octagonal, or eight sided.



**Willamette River Lighthouse**



There were two stories, the upper story being the living quarters with three bedrooms, bathroom and a stateroom or living room. The lower story had the kitchen, watch room, and a small workshop. There was a verandah most of the way around the lower level. The lighthouse stood on pilings up above the water with a long raised wooden walkway going inland to higher ground.

There was no light on top even though it was called a lighthouse. The reason was because the area is prone to rain and frequent fog, which made a light difficult to see from a distance. The fog signal was very important to warn ships of their closeness to the confluence of the two rivers. The fog signal was a large bronze bell on the veranda that

was struck by a clockwork mechanism. This signal sounded over and over the entire time the fog lasted.

Ships would enter the Columbia River from the Pacific ocean, travel east up river, then make a right turn to the south into the Willamette River at the junction of the two rivers where the lighthouse was situated.

There was a non-rotating lantern mounted on the lighthouse deck railing. This lantern was very bright, visible for over a mile away when it was not foggy.

The light would let the pilots of the ships know that they were approaching the junction of the two rivers where they would have to make the turn to enter the Willamette River.



**Cargo ship going past toward  
the Port of Portland**

When a ship was expected, the Portland Port Authority would telephone dad at the lighthouse to let him know that a ship was coming, giving him the expected time of arrival at the junction. When the ship arrived there, dad was supposed to telephone the port authority, which would then notify the longshoremen what time they were to report to work for loading or unloading the ship after it docked. Dad was also in contact with the ship's pilots by radio as they passed.

One night dad forgot to set his alarm clock for the expected arrival of a ship. The captain of the ship blasted us all out of bed by sounding the ship's horn! He thought that was some joke, ribbing dad about it on the radio. Once past the lighthouse, the ships traveled south to dock in Portland at the shipyards.

I remember that month at the lighthouse as an idyllic one and have loved lighthouses ever since. Those summer days were spent playing alone on the beach accompanied only by two dogs. I do not remember any houses on the shorelines near there.

The waters at the confluence of the two rivers are quite turbulent, which was demonstrated to me on one occasion when dad took me out on the rivers in a small boat with an outboard motor. As we crossed the point where the water from the Willamette merged with the water from the Columbia, it was very rough and frightening to me. The waters really crash into each other.

Several years before we were there, the Willamette River Lighthouse had been mechanized so there had not been a resident light keeper living there. I do not know why a resident light keeper was used again briefly during the mid 1950's when we were there. Another man came to live there for a short time after we left.

Not long after that an electronic monitoring system, which did not need a resident keeper, was put in and the lighthouse was completely decommissioned. Then a little while later, the empty lighthouse mysteriously burned down. Nothing remains of it today, not even the pilings that it sat upon.

Today the city of Portland has many miles of trails for hiking, walking and biking. Kelley Point Park is now where the lighthouse once stood, and is part of the system of parks and trails that has been developed for recreational use in Portland.

## A REAL HOME



**Our first home on Hodge Avenue**

After leaving the lighthouse in late summer, we moved into the first house we ever purchased. The next couple of years were the happiest of my grade school years. Our new home was located on Hodge Avenue, a short street only one or two blocks long, and was brand new, as were all of the other houses. Curbs, sidewalks and pavement were not put in yet. But our house was ready to be occupied, so we moved in. Several times daily we had to spray the yard with water to keep the dust down while the construction workers continued to complete the last few houses, lay pavement, and put in the sidewalks. I remember standing outside watering the dirt yard.

Earl and Gloria Glasscock, who had just one child, a daughter named Janice, moved into the house across the street from us.



Janice and I became best friends for the years that I lived there on Hodge Avenue.

Janice and I were inseparable friends. We never were in the same classroom at school, even though we were both in the same grade. That was all right, we did everything else together!

We walked together to Portsmouth School, took clarinet lessons together, played together, went to church together and took tumbling lessons at the local recreation center together.



**Gale & Janice -  
Easter**

Reading was always a favorite past time for me. One time I checked out the book *Black Beauty* from the school library when our class went there. The teacher looked at each of our books as we returned to our classroom. When she saw my choice, she insisted that I had to return it to the library as I could not read a book that was above my grade level! I tried to argue with her that I had already read a couple of chapters so could indeed read a book above the class level, but she made me take it back anyway. Later I went to the public library and checked it out!

Paper dolls were one of the favorite past times for Janice and I, each of us having a suitcase full of them. By the time we got them all laid out, each doll with its proper clothes, it was always time to clean up and go home! We each had a number of dolls with many clothes too.

We loved to play outside under a huge weeping willow tree in our back yard. The tree had a wide, strong limb that curved downward. This limb made a perfect “seat” and became our covered wagon where we sat to “drive” our oxen across the plains.

As young girls will, we danced around the clothesline pole and twirled all through the house, leaping off the sofa pretending we were ballerinas. We loved to roller skate using the kind of skates that clamped onto our shoes, and had leather straps around the ankles. We skated all around our neighborhood, our skate key on a string around our neck swinging from side to side as we skated along. Stopping was something I never was very good at, so had to roll into the grass or grab a bush or tree branch to keep from flying out into the street.

On Halloween the two of us would dress up in costume running all over the neighborhood gathering candy, homemade popcorn balls, apples, bubble gum, sometimes even quarters! We never had adults with us. The streets were perfectly safe. No one ever thought about candy or popcorn balls being unsafe!

At the end of our short street was one vacant lot. It seemed like such a huge place, growing tall grass and weeds. I remember burying dead birds there, having a memorial service over their little graves. Another girl lived on our street who was a couple years younger than Janice and I. Her family was the first to get a television set. There was a children's program on in the afternoons called Mr. Moon. The person who hosted the program wore a huge moon over his head. We went to her house for a while to watch television, but I have to say we were not very good friends to her. As soon as Janice got a television, we didn't go to her house or play with her any more! How mean children can be to one another!

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth on June 2, 1953 was shown on television and our family watched it at Janice's house. Lots of things were for sale with Queen Elizabeth on them, dolls, color books, paper dolls! We spent hours coloring pictures of her and her coronation!

The Miss America pageant, which started in 1921, began to be broadcast on television during those years. Along with most other little girls across the country, I think both of us girls thought we would grow up to become Miss America!

A local Evangelical Free church sent a yellow school bus around the neighborhoods picking up children for Sunday school. Janice and I rode the bus each Sunday morning for Sunday School and again each Wednesday night for the Pioneer Girls program. Pioneer Clubs still exist today. A quote from their web site, PioneerClubs.org, on the internet reads as, "...a Christ-centered mid-week club program for the kids in your church and community."

Janice's dad was a city bus driver during his entire career. He loved the public and they loved him! When it came time for Earl to retire years later, the people on his route gave him a retirement party.

While we were living on Hodge Avenue my dad tried his hand at driving the bus too. Sometimes Earl and dad would take us girls along to the huge bus barn where we got soda pop out of an ice machine and played pool at the billiard tables. Dad was not as enamored of the public as Earl was, so eventually gave up bus driving to get back into truck driving.

Minor league baseball was popular during those days. Our families were fans of the local team called the Portland Beavers, so of course Janice and I had to be fans too. Our dads sometimes took us with them to the games. Being a sports fan never really "took" with me, but Janice enjoyed it and today she and her family are avid baseball fans.

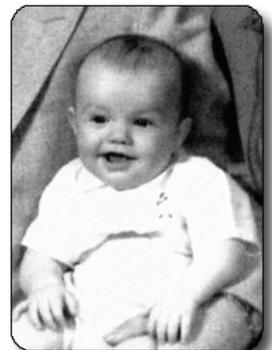


**Janice & Ron Hotrum**

was quite exciting to have a baby brother!

As the years passed into the future, Janice and I have remained good friends. The years have taken us far apart with only a few short opportunities to see one another. But the U.S. Postal Service has kept us in touch. Our letters have been our sounding boards as we told each other what was going on in our lives. We have been able to encourage each other and pray for one another for more than 50 years! Janice married a minister and their first son, Brian, was born when our first son, Stephen, was three days old.

Until the age of 11, I had been an only child and probably a spoiled one. Being the only one does not encourage a child to share or think about what someone else may want. This was somewhat remedied when my half-brother Keith Allen Berglund was born on June 28, 1954. It



Six days later on July 4, mother's father Carroll Bucknam, died of pneumonia in the hospital following a surgery. Mother was unable to travel to Boston for the funeral because of Keith's birth less than a week previously. I remember hearing mother crying as she lay in bed with the new baby. It is my first memory of any death.

These happy childhood years on Hodge Avenue were interrupted briefly by a ten-day hospitalization at Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland. I was confined in a private room for ten days for the purpose of trying out more new medications, followed as they had been at Shriner's, by numerous blood tests every day.



**Multnomah Falls**

During my stay in Doernbecher, Uncle Carl and Aunt Evelyn, my mother's sister, and their daughter Gini visited from California. Since Gini was too young to visit in the hospital, I was going to be unable to see her at all.

Much complaining by my mother and dad, finally convinced the hospital staff to let me have one eight-hour period to leave the hospital on a pass. It was such a fun day!

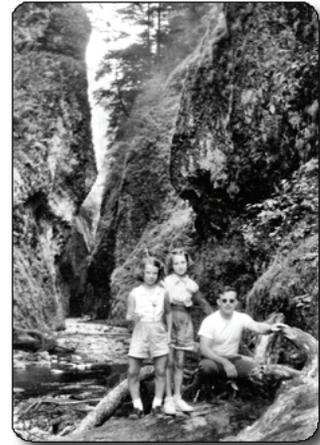
We took a picnic lunch to the Sandy River and lovely Multnomah Falls along the Columbia River. Multnomah Falls was then, and continues to be, one of my favorite places!

I will say at this point, because I am unsure where else to mention it, that my childhood had some hurtful times in it. But then everyone's does, doesn't it? Mine were mostly associated with moving

to a different home, a different neighborhood and a new school. Each time this happened, I had to meet new school children and was often called names such as shrimp, and bowlegged. Sometimes I was asked if I was born on a horse. Although my deformities were not anywhere near as severe as some people's are, I was very aware of them. I was not athletically inclined nor could I run well, so no one wanted me on their team. Instead, when teams were chosen up, I was the last person left that one team or the other got stuck with.



**Gale & cousin Gini**



**Gale, Gini, Dad  
at Sandy River**

In those days there were no advocacy programs for people with special needs. No IEP programs at the schools, no accessibility such as curb cuts, no foot stools for reaching drinking fountains or to keep feet from hanging all day while sitting at our desks. Today in our country, it is well known that parents can and should be the advocate at school for a disabled or physically challenged child.

When I quit growing, doctors told me that I had "lost" nine inches in height due to my bone condition, ending up at 4 feet 6 (maybe 7) inches tall.

The Endocrinologist whom I have been seeing for more than 20 years for this medical condition, Dr. Robert Eckel, has told me that in this disease the bone does not harden properly but remains sort of gelatinous, as all bone is when forming. So that is probably how the short stature occurs, the bone slowly squishing down into itself because of weight bearing, instead of growing longer.

## **SHRINER'S AGAIN**

In January 1955, shortly after I turned twelve years old and was in sixth grade, I was admitted a second time into the Shriner's Hospital where I stayed for almost five months, January through part of May. It was now the second time that my legs were broken for me, both at the same time, in order to surgically straighten the bones.

Imagine a "W" being cut through the bone and the upper and lower sections of the bone being separated from each other. Then the two halves being off-set sideways a "notch" so that each half of the bone had a point from which new bone would grow to fill in the notches. That is how the curve in the bones was straightened.

For several days following surgery I was isolated in a glass room called a cubicle. There were two of these rooms next to the nursing station so the nurses could observe us constantly. Mother was allowed to visit with me daily. Pain was controlled by hypodermic injections of painkiller into the large hip muscles about every four hours, alternating the shots from one hip to the other. After a few of those “hypos”, I dreaded having them because they hurt so badly, but the bone pain was worse than the “hypo” which gave relief from pain and escape through sleep. After about 5 days, I was moved into the older girl’s ward with the other 12 to 14 year olds and mother’s daily visits came to an end. From then on she could only visit during official visiting hours, which were for two hours every Sunday afternoon.

In the evenings we were allowed to have our beds pushed next to one another so we could play games. Often there would be a cluster of three or more beds all together. One night about a month following my surgery, the evening nurse became impatient with us at bed time. We were supposed to clean up the ward by putting games and books away, but like all kids, we weren’t always quick to do what we were told.

When we did not clean up as quickly as she wanted us to, the nurse began to grab at beds angrily jerking them away from one another into their proper positions. I was sitting on the edge of my bed with my heels resting on the next bed. When she suddenly pulled the other bed away from mine, my casted feet crashed toward the floor. Fortunately, I did not land flat on my face, but in a standing position with my arms flung out to each side, hands grasping the bedcovers on my bed. I hate to think how I would have landed if she had pulled my bed out from under me instead of pulling the other bed away from under my feet!

Turning quickly, and angrily, to grab another bed, the nurse did not see that I had fallen. I hung there speechless gripping the bed covers, as the other girls began screaming. When the nurse saw what had happened, she was horrified, of course. However other than being badly shaken, I was not injured. The casts held me upright and no damage was done to my broken legs. I think we had all been sufficiently frightened, and were probably asked not to tell anyone what had happened. Anyway, there were no consequences to the nurse. We continued to get our beds pushed together, but I think all of us were more careful about draping ourselves on two beds at the same time!

The experience of falling off the bed was educational in that we all realized it was possible to stand on casts! It was not long until I could sort of walk around the room by balancing on the feet of the casts and my toes. Those of us who had only our legs in casts became the “gophers” for those who had casts over parts of their bodies as well as on their legs.

Whenever there was not an adult around to do it, one of us would go around the room picking up things that were dropped or carrying things from one bed to another. The nurses did not want us doing this, of course, because it smashed in the bottoms of the feet on our casts, as well as the possibility someone could get hurt. The smashed bottoms of the casts looked ugly but did not bother the location of my surgery.

We got around discovery by having one girl, whose bed was near the door of the ward, be the “look out” to warn the rest of us when a nurse was coming toward our ward. That way we could scramble back to our bed and hop back up before getting caught. We did sometimes get caught and were scolded for it, but it didn’t really stop us.

I remember some of the girls who were there with me and will tell you about a couple of them now. One girl had a leg amputated below her knee. She did so well, was so brave; we were all amazed at her. She was our “hero”; we were so in awe of her.

Another girl was admitted for correction of clubbed feet, a condition where the foot is deformed so that it points downward and inward. It was a fairly common deformity among the children in Shriner’s so others who were in the hospital had the same surgery she’d had. Following the removal of her casts, she complained and cried terribly that she would not ever be able to wear high heel shoes without the scars showing. The rest of us were very impatient, even scornful of her, because we also had scars, and ours would always be visible too. She was experiencing an adjustment to her medical condition and its therapy. All of us were going through adjustments to our own experiences so were not very compassionate toward her. Again, how cruel children can sometimes be to one another!

Patsy was another girl who I remember so well. She came from a rural area in British Columbia, Canada. Patsy was in the hospital when I arrived and was still there when I left five months later. Patsy was born with two dislocated hips. One had been corrected surgically in the past. She had now had surgery to correct the second hip. Her cast reached from under her arms, down her body to the hips, and then down to completely cover the leg on the side where the hip had been operated on. Her other leg was free so she could fold it under her to use for balance and sit up on the side of her bed with the casted leg hanging downward over the edge. Patsy's bed was next to mine most of the time. Whenever I had visitors she would be included in our family group. I never saw her parents. They came when she was admitted, staying until after her surgery which was usually done a week after being admitted. They did not come again until she was discharged sometime after I had already gone home. Patsy was the same age as I, in fact we had been born the same day.

Curvature of the spine, known as Scoliosis, was a surgery often performed at Shriner's. The cast for this was very extensive, covering the entire body, the neck and enclosing the back of the head. The cast covered the thigh of one leg and the body was curved to one side. This cast was very bulky and heavy but the girls who had it got pretty good at wiggling around on their beds to join us in the activities we did together.

The hospital had a television, which we were allowed to watch for only one or two hours each evening. There were lots of jigsaw puzzles, coloring books, and crafts to fill our time, as well as our school lessons. The same two ladies, who had come as teachers when I was hospitalized as an "up patient" in 1951, were still coming daily as our teachers in 1955.

Saturday mornings the doctors always did their rounds. They came as a large group along with several of the nurses, circulating through the wards one bed at a time. Beside each child's bed they stopped to discuss the individual medical problem, the treatment for it and the healing progress of that child, sometimes holding up x-rays for all to see. Decisions which had been made about such things as additional surgeries, changes of casts, braces, and therapies were reviewed at this time. Dates for discharges were decided on or delayed during these rounds.

This was often a disappointing time especially if a girl was looking forward to having the casts removed or being discharged, and then being told that she had to remain for further surgery or that the bones were not healed enough yet to remove the casts. Because there was no privacy for much of anything in our lives, these sessions were always difficult for all of us. We heard everything that was said about ourselves, as well as about each of the other children. We saw and shared in the sadness and disappointment of this girl or that one, as well as the joy of another girl in the very next bed who was told she would be able to go home.

After lunch every Saturday, we had what we called Sunday school. Of course everyone attended because all of us were in one big room. Two elderly ladies (well they seemed elderly to me) came every Saturday to teach us a Bible story and help us memorize a Bible verse for that week. They used cut out figures of people and animals, which they moved around on a felt covered board to tell the stories. In later years I learned that this method of story telling is called "flannel graph", and learned how to use it myself. We learned songs and tried to earn prizes by learning to say the Bible memory verses.

Looking back after all these years, I am sure that this was a ministry of the mission organization known as Child Evangelism Fellowship and our little hospital class was what is known in CEF as a Good News Club.

Sunday mornings we were all given sponge baths, after which each of us received a clean dress! This was an exciting event in our week, one that everyone eagerly looked forward to. The clean dress we got each Sunday had to last the whole week! A long clothing rack on wheels, full of hanging dresses was brought into our ward each Sunday morning. After a while, we got so we knew which dresses fit us best without being several sizes too large. Each of us had favorite dresses and always hoped we would be able to get one of those before they were snatched up by the other girls who liked the same ones. It was a free-for-all of yelling for this dress or that one! More often than not we ended up wearing something we didn't really like and wearing it all week, like it or not! There were only so many dresses after all!

Sunday afternoons were the only visiting days. Our parents and other people, two persons at a time, could visit for two hours. That was all the time allotted and only once a week on Sunday afternoons. If more than two persons wanted to visit a patient, they had to rotate who came in so that there were never more than two persons visiting at a time. I remember waving and yelling out the window to Janice. You had to be at least 14 years old before you were allowed to come inside to visit. I don't know why. It was the rule and rules were not questioned as much in those days as they seem to be now.



**A clean dress & Sunday afternoon visiting hours with Mom**

During the two hours allowed each Sunday for our personal visitors, there were always large groups of Shriner's and their wives who would tour the hospital. They always came through the wards during the Sunday visiting hours, stopping at each bed to greet us children and hear from a staff member, a short summary of our medical problem and our treatment. These visitors were always kind to our families who were well aware that donations from these polite folks were providing, at no charge to us, the treatment we were receiving. I remember that the men all wore the red Fez hats so typical of Shriner's when you see them marching in parades. I doubt that it is any longer the practice of the Shriner's to tour the hospitals in groups. It is also no longer the practice to retain the patients in the hospitals for such long periods of time. For many years the Shriner's Hospitals have provided orthopedic and burn care for children and I think that most or all of the treatments are still received at no charge.

Every month there was a huge party for all the children having birthdays during that month. We gathered in the large gymnasium for the party. The boys and girls were brought from their separate wards at opposite ends of the hospital. The girl's beds were lined up on one side of the gymnasium and the boy's beds lined up on the opposite side.

It was our monthly chance to see the boys, try to find out the names of the cute ones, and look for them at the next monthly party. Of course, being bed-bound, we could not do much to get acquainted except wave at each other and giggle if we got a wave back! If one boy was not there for the next monthly party, we always knew he had been discharged.



Darwin Jones a hair stylist from a famous beauty salon in Hollywood, who styled hair for such people as Elizabeth Taylor, came with his staff one time. They did haircuts for all of us. My picture was in Portland's Oregonian newspaper after the haircut I received.

Many celebrities also came through the hospital to visit. I remember when Gene Autry and his horse Champion came. Or was it Hopalong Cassidy and his horse Topper? I don't think it was Roy Rogers and his horse Trigger, but it may have been. Yes, the horse was house broken! Really over the years it is possible that all three of these famous cowboy stars were there at one time or another. Danny Kaye and Lassie visited while my friend Janie was there.

Christmas was a festive time at the hospital, so I heard; I was not ever there during the holidays. As much as possible, scheduling for hospitalizations was organized to avoid having the children there over the Christmas holidays.

Only two children ever died at that particular Shriner's Hospital. One of these deaths occurred while I was there in 1955. Robin was a six-year-old girl who had Osteogenesis Imperfecta, commonly known as brittle bone disease. She had suffered many broken bones over her short life. It is a disease that causes many bone deformities. All the bones are extremely fragile, breaking very easily. Robin was in the younger children's ward and even though she was six years old, she slept in a crib. Those of us in the older girl's ward were sometimes allowed to have the younger girls come sit on our beds. We would play dolls or games together or read books to them. Consequently, we were acquainted with the patients in the younger children's ward. Late one night we were awakened by a commotion in the hall outside our ward. We were told that a child was ill and was being taken care of, so we were to be quiet and go back to sleep.

The next day was a very sad one for us all when we were told Robin's story. During the night, Robin had pulled herself to her feet in the crib. The side of the crib had not been securely locked into its upright position. As Robin pulled herself up to stand in the bed, holding on to the side of the crib, the side had suddenly gone down. Robin fell from the crib and was killed.



**Aunt Harriet Bucknam**  
**Mother's sister**

My mother's sister, Aunt Harriet used to write to me every week while I was in the hospital. She sent me lovely "story book doll" greeting cards. I loved those cards and acquired quite a collection. Each card was cut in the shape of a doll wearing a beautiful gown and a hat with a real feather sticking out of the top. I always wrote back to Aunt Harriet. We carried on a lively correspondence throughout our lives until her death in 1984.

Since most or all of us were bed bound, the evening and night shift nursing staff was small, consisting of maybe 2 nurses, one to cover the ward for the smaller children and one for the ward for older girls. Every Wednesday night was "candy night", a night we eagerly anticipated! Behind the desk of the nurse's station was a locked cupboard where candy was kept. Only on Wednesday nights was this cupboard unlocked and all of us were given a piece or two of hard candy.

It did not take us girls long to discover that one of the younger nurses was a soft touch! When she was the night nurse on duty in our ward, we could get her to give us more candy if we teased her a lot. This was strictly against the rules!

In a letter to Aunt Harriet, I told her about this nurse giving in to our teasing. A day or two later, a supervisor of nurses came to ask me if "the candy story" was true. I admitted it was, but wondered how she knew about it. After a bit I realized that my letters were being read before they were being mailed! Within a short time, the younger nurse came to me to ask how I could have been so disloyal as to write about it. She had lost her job! This episode made me feel terrible! I felt that it was my fault that she lost her job. After that I was much more careful about what was written in letters, and I think the other girls were too.

During the five months I was there at the hospital, my casts were changed twice, I think. Then I was fitted for custom made braces and went to the whirlpool for therapy at least one time. The braces were full length with a joint at the knee for bending, but they were kept in the straight position unless I was sitting. When I began wearing the braces, I was so excited to be walking again that I was on my feet most of the time walking very well, not needing the help of a walker.

A couple of days later, during the Saturday session of doctors rounds, I was told that I would be discharged on Wednesday. That was an exciting surprise, because most of the time one had to be in braces and therapy for another week or two before actually leaving. Discharges were announced on Saturday during the doctor's rounds but actually took place on Wednesdays, I would be able to leave that very next Wednesday. Maybe all that scrambling around, against the rules, on the feet of my casts had been good for me after all!

Over the next two years, I continued to return to the hospital to the out patient clinic for more x-rays and blood tests, but I was not ever admitted again. No one over the age of 14 was treated in that hospital. One had to go to some other facility if more treatment was still needed.

The Shriner's Hospital is no longer located in that lovely old building that was used for so many years. Now it is located on the Oregon Health Sciences University campus, and so is Doernbecher Hospital, which I mentioned previously.

In 1991 on a trip to Portland, I visited the old hospital site at 8200 North East Sandy Boulevard. The old building had been designated as a National Historic Building and was in the process of being remodeled inside into condominiums. Much of it had been gutted but as I was shown around by the caretaker of the property, I could still see the floor plan of the way it had been inside when I was a child.

## CHAPTER 3 – MORE SCHOOL DAYS

### MEMORABLE EVENTS

While I had been in the hospital, my family had moved from our home on Hodge Avenue. I am not really sure why but remember being very angry about it. This meant that upon being discharged from the hospital in May, the last couple of weeks of the sixth grade, I had to start attending a different school! I attended there for the next two years, through 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Kennedy Elementary School was a single-story building built into the slope of a hill so that there were three levels, each level a bit higher on the hillside. Rather than stairs it had ramps in the hallways, which were very easy to use with braces on my legs.



One memory from that school is singing the following song in the talent show with a group of seven other girls.

#### **I BELIEVE** - Author unknown

**I believe for every drop of rain that falls  
A flower grows,  
I believe that somewhere in the darkest night  
A candle glows,  
I believe for everyone who goes astray,  
Someone will come to show the way,  
I believe, I believe.**

**I believe above the storm the smallest prayer  
Will still be heard,  
I believe that someone in the great somewhere  
Hears every word,  
Every time I hear a newborn baby cry,  
Or touch a leaf, or see the sky,  
Then I know why,  
I believe.**

There were dances every month at the school for the seventh and eighth grades. At one dance we had a DJ from a local radio station. There was a drawing that night and I won a coupon for a free pair of shoes at the Nordstrom's store. Going up onto the stage to receive the coupon, the first thing the DJ said to me, with the microphone turned on was, "What are you doing? Standing in a hole?" I was very embarrassed, but not so much that I refused to take the coupon!

Many years later I was able to make contact via the Internet with girls who had been my friends at that school. Each one of them remembered me right away when she was told that I had started at the school with braces on my legs.

Today the old Kennedy Elementary School building has been turned into an upscale hotel. The classrooms have become guest rooms; there is a restaurant and an elegant "soaking pool".

Three memorable events happened following sixth grade, during the summer of 1955. The first was that our family got its first television. Because I had braces on my legs so that I was somewhat restricted in my activities, my parents thought it would be a nice thing for me to have television. Not that there was so much to watch in those days! Actually I got around well during the six months that I wore those braces. I even mowed the grass with a push mower! It was great to be out of bed, moving around and doing pretty much anything I wanted to.

The second memorable event of that summer was the birth of Troy Lee Berglund, a second half-brother, on July 4, 1955 when Keith was a year old. The boys were born in Portland and Janice's mother Gloria was the nurse for my mother at the births of both of my brothers.



Since we had only a two-bedroom house, there was a crib in each bedroom. I remember many nights when mother stood beside the crib in my room, trying to quiet a fussy baby so he would go back to sleep and she could return to her own bed. One baby awake could easily wake the other one with his cries.

Troy had asthma so there were a number of emergency visits to the hospital for him. I remember him being in an oxygen tent. My parents were advised to make our home as dust free as possible for Troy. Hence we had hard wood or linoleum floors most of the time, vinyl covered furniture and even plastic drapes at the windows.

The third memorable event of that summer happened on a rainy day. I was occupying myself in the basement by digging through an old steamer trunk that mother had kept for as long as I could remember. I came upon a Bible with a black leather cover, gilt edged pages, and dad's name embossed on the front in gold lettering. I held it with awe, as if I had found a great treasure, which of course I had. I was consumed with a desire to read it. But it was not mine so I put it back into the trunk. It was my plan to ask dad if I could borrow it to read. It took a couple of days before I got up enough courage! Finally telling him I had found it, I asked if I could borrow it. His reply was that he would not ever need it again, so I could keep it. I was ecstatic!

## THE FRINGE

Every night when I went to bed I read from those wonderful pages! My parents knew I had the Bible and yet, something inside me was afraid to have them know when I was reading it. Whenever I heard someone approaching my bedroom, I would quickly hide the Bible under the covers and pretend to be reading something else. It took me quite a while to stop doing that.

Why did I feel this way? Mother and dad did not attend church. Dad's parents went regularly, often taking me along, but any mention of us going to church as a family caused tension in the house. Although I was consumed with desire to read the Word of God, "religion" was a topic we all avoided in our house. We no longer lived near Janice so I had no friend as moral support or any bus to take me to church.

Because I did not really know what the Bible was about, I did not know how to approach reading it. All summer I skipped around reading in many places. Every night I read and every day I thought over what I had read. I was compelled to keep on reading. I was getting a mixed up picture of God as a judge who punished, then a picture of God loving us and giving Jesus to die for us. Back and forth between the punishment and forgiveness I went. It came through to me loud and clear that God is perfect and I am not. I was overwhelmed with the sense that I could not ever be good enough!

As I read in the New Testament about Jesus, I thought constantly about Him. I could not stop being full of a feeling that He was right next to me at all times! I began to pray hesitantly; awestruck by a growing realization that Jesus had died for me personally! Mixed with that was an agony of guilt as I thought of how sinful I was. Over and over I told God about my sins and asked Him to save me. I cried with grief over my sins and guilt. I thanked Him for Jesus and told Him that I knew Jesus had died for me. I do not know how long I went back and forth between sadness about my guilt and joy that God cared about me, whether it was days or weeks. But a time came when my heart was at peace. At the young age of 12, I knew without a doubt that God had done something in me, that somehow I was different!

This spiritual experience was a thing I could not explain, neither the words nor the understanding were in me to express what had happened. My heart was constantly filled with a great wonder that I had not ever known before. The following chorus of an old song expresses what I was feeling:

**Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul, - Thank you, Lord, for making me whole;  
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me - Thy great salvation so rich and free.**

Author unknown

What I had experienced is expressed in the Bible in Hebrews 6 verse 11 which says, “he that cometh to God must believe that He **is**, and that He is a **rewarder** of them that diligently seek Him.” This is what had happened to me, I had believed that God exists, that He IS. As evidenced by my constant reading and cries to Him, I had also believed that He would ANSWER me.

The idea of a reward was not really a concept in my head. I just had a desperate need for knowledge of Him as a Person. My prayers were cries for Him. I wanted escape from the guilt that I felt as an imperfect person who could not help but sin. In other words, I could not help but remain imperfect. Who is God? What does He think? What does He think of me?

What was I seeking? To find out who God is, for sure. To be free of guilt? To escape punishment? No doubt all of these were in my heart.

God is so much more than what we think He is! He is a rewarder! He goes beyond our expectations, to show us His glory and make us His own when we long after Him with our whole beings. God rewarded me then by giving me some knowledge of Himself in the form of a keen awareness of His presence in the world and in my life. I thought about Him constantly!

Thus it was that I began on the REAL journey of my life. A journey with God, a daily process of getting to know Him better all the time as I continued to read the Bible, and a process of growing up in the life of Christ which He had put within me. I have written these comments now, many years later from the perspective of having grown much in understanding of spiritual truths as they are stated in the Bible.

This little poem well states my position spiritually at this time.

**And what shall be the ending?  
I've touched the fringe of what Thou art,  
And Thou hast begun to show me, Lord,  
that is all transcending;  
I'm standing on the rippling shore;  
Love's ocean depths are all before.**

--Miles J. Stanford (Imag-ination 14 page 31 -- emphasis mine)

Eventually during continued reading I came across the story in the Gospel of John chapter nine about the man who was born blind.

Probably every person who has a chronic medical condition, at some point in life asks, “Why me?” I do not remember putting that question into words as a young teen, yet when I came across this story in the New Testament, suddenly my mind vibrated with a discovered answer to my unasked question.

The first three verses of the chapter read: “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” And so they were, because when Jesus healed the man, his life was entirely changed which demonstrated the love and power of God working on the behalf of one unknown man.

In the world of that day, I am sure the man was a beggar sitting by the road side, living on the generosity of those who passed by him. What a hard way to earn a living! In comparison to him, I had so much of this world's goods, and yet I too had to live with something that was a hardship in its own way. A light went on in my head, here was an answer to a question that had not yet really formed in my young mind.

If the works of God could be shown in me, then it was all right with me to have this bone condition! You may ask if I thought I was going to be healed like the blind man. No, that was not a hope I ever entertained. I loved God and was grateful for His love for me, and for the sense of freedom I now had from the guilt of sins. It was enough that He cared about me! I felt no need of getting any physical miracle.

## **I HAVE COME FROM THE DARKNESS**

Marian Wood Chaplin, - Copyright 1964 by Broadman press

**I have come from the darkness to the light of the Lord;  
I have come from the night to the day.  
He has guided my footsteps in the truth of His Word;  
By His love He has shown me the way.**

**In the light of His presence all temptations depart,  
And the shadows of doubt are cast aside.  
With the radiance of sunshine He has entered my heart,  
Where His Spirit of love abides.**

**I have come from the darkness to the light,  
To the light of redemption from sin.  
O my soul will rejoice in His might,  
For my Savior dwells within.**

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

(From the time mother began dating Dale, I had always called him by his name, as I stated earlier in chapter two, but have referred to him as dad up to this point in order to save on confusion for the reader.)

After mother and Dale were married, I continued to call him Dale. No one encouraged me to call him daddy. They thought I would come to it gradually in my own time as I stopped missing my real father. In contrast to this, as soon as mother and Dale married, Dale's mother told me in no uncertain terms that I was to call her and Knute Grandpa and Grandma. Not Mr. and Mrs. Berglund any more!

Now it had been almost four years and I was still calling my stepfather Dale by his name! I was used to it that way, never thinking about it and there did not seem to be a problem since no one told me otherwise. Everyone, including mother and Dale appeared to be used to it too.

Then one day early in January 1956, just a few weeks after my thirteenth birthday, I answered the telephone. It was a call from my father Vincent Taylor! It was the first contact he'd made with us ever since he had deserted us in 1950. He wished me a happy birthday telling me that upon my graduation from high school he would give me \$1000 for college. After a brief conversation with me, he wanted to speak to my mother.

Mother was in the basement putting cloth diapers in the washing machine. (Disposable diapers had not yet been invented.) She was visibly shocked when I ran down the stairs and told her who was on the phone. She told me to finish putting in the load of diapers. After the call, mother asked me if my father had promised me anything. I told her about the promise of money. She said that he had never kept promises to her before, so I should not believe that he would do any different for me. I don't think I ever did believe that he would keep that promise, because he had after all deserted me, which must have broken my heart when I was a child.

There was a tension in the house following Vincent's phone call. After a couple of days my mother took me aside to tell me that it was time for me to stop calling Dale by his name and to begin calling him daddy. It was a very strange feeling for me to do that after such a long time! Why did they decide to make an issue of it after so long? My only explanation is that they were probably worried the call from my father could result in tearing me away from the family they were building together.

That summer in 1956, I was invited on a trip with Aunt Evelyn and Uncle Carl and their daughter, my cousin Gini. Because Gini was an only child and wanted company her age, I had the privilege of going along with them on their vacation! Pulling a small camping trailer behind the car, we camped in Glacier National Park in Montana, and then Waterton Park, Banff, Lake Louise and the Columbia Ice Fields all in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. It was a wonderful trip!

Dad's employment always involved the operation of heavy equipment. He drove truck, dug swimming pools, operated cranes on dams, and twice he went into business for himself. Both businesses ended in bankruptcy. The first time, he hired out his own truck to carry loads on long distance hauls across the country. That became a problem for him and mother because she had to be alone for long periods working a full time job and leaving us three children with a babysitter. One load that he hauled I remember in particular. It was a semi trailer full of mustard seeds! Not in containers of any kind, just loose filling the whole trailer about halfway deep. What a sight!

During the summer of 1957 following the eighth grade, we moved to a wonderful three-bedroom house. It was a lovely yellow house on a corner lot with large trees bordering the property on two sides. Such large trees meant a lot of leaf raking, which I loved doing, in the autumn of the year. Wonder of wonders, the house came with an upright piano, which I worked at teaching myself to play. What fun!

This was marvelous; I finally had a room of my own! It was a two-story house with two bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. The boys and I had our rooms up stairs. While there was no school that summer, I took care of my two little brothers while our parents both worked. It was fun at first but soon became a chore.

I remember being mean to them, doing petty things such as grabbing a toy from one of them, pounding on the piano very loudly when it was their naptime, or letting them scream in their cribs for long periods of time. A sort of resentment was rumbling around inside of me because of having to take care of them all day. Looking back now, I think it must have been a huge adjustment from being an only child to having two little brothers.



Ulysses S. Grant, a four-year high school, at NE 33<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway was where I began the ninth grade in Portland. I remember riding the city bus and then walking across a park to the campus. But I have no other memories of that school, which I attended for only three months.

It was while living in this house that I remember having to keep track of whether I could read through my urine! Sometime along this period of years, medical science had discovered that in my medical condition, the kidneys do not do what they are supposed to in regard to phosphorous, which is used in bone building.

As a way of tracking the loss of phosphorous leaking from my kidneys, instead of being absorbed by them, I was to collect the first urine of the morning in a glass jar. Then hold a paper about the size of a 3x5 card on one side of the jar, look through the jar from the other side and try to read what was on the paper. The printing was in several sizes and I was to write down which size print I could read each day. The more cloudy the urine, the less legible the print, the more phosphorous was leaking through the kidneys and being lost in the urine output. This information was written down daily and then taken with me to the next clinic appointment at Shriner's. My daily dosage of vitamin D was then altered based on the results of these reading tests.

This way of testing did not last long for me because the family decided to move again. This time a really big move, all the way to southern California! At first the plan was that once we were settled there, I would begin clinic visits at the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. But somehow life got busy and we never did start going to the clinic at UCLA. Consequently I was out of the medical "loop" for about seven years.

Our move, which took place during the Christmas break from school, meant that we were separated from the large extended family that I had enjoyed for the past six and a half years. I consoled myself with thoughts of being close to mother's two sisters, Evelyn and Harriet, and going to school with my cousin Gini.

We drove from Portland, Oregon in a two-door sedan, the two little boys and I, and a bird in a cage all in the back seat together. It seems like we also had a cat, not in a cage, but I could be wrong about that. I especially remember the bump, bump, bump of the tires on cracks in the cement highway in California.

We moved into a rental house in La Canada, which is a suburb of Los Angeles in the foothills on the north side of the city. I was quite excited about living there because I would be able to attend the same school as my cousin Gini. However, for reasons I do not remember, we only lived in that house a week. We moved to the next small suburb called La Crescenta, to another rental house and different school district.

It was common then, as it is today, for the foothills north of Los Angeles to burn annually in wildfires. We were close enough to sit outside in the yard watching planes and helicopters dropping chemicals on the fires. It was interesting to watch the glow of the flames on the hillsides in the darkness of a hot summer evening. Houses were not built as high up into the hills as they are today. I think it was rare at that time for any homes to be in real danger.

## HIGH SCHOOL

In Portland, I had been in a four-year high school, but now in California the high school was only three years, so I had to do the second half of 9<sup>th</sup> grade at a junior high school, it felt a bit like being demoted! However, it was nice that the school was just across the street from the first house we rented in La Crescenta.

Over the next four years, I can remember living in six houses. However, all were in the same school district, so I was able to continue through the high school years with my new friends.

A few memories of that time include buying Aunt Evelyn a baby duckling one year when her birthday fell on Easter Sunday. I loved going to the feed and seed store and could not resist the ducklings! I got one for 50 cents and took it home to keep overnight until her birthday party the next day. I fixed a shoe box for it to sleep in for that night, but it made “poor baby duck” sounds that kept me awake. I finally put the little one into the pocket of my pajamas and the two of us slept just fine all night!

It turned out as the “duck” grew that it became a lovely white goose! It followed Evelyn around all the time, and kept her yard free of all bugs, but also made a terrible mess all over the yard with its droppings. The solution was to take the goose to Forest Lawn, a huge cemetery where there were many ponds, gardens and other goose friends to live among.

At one of the several houses that we had, I remember we purchased a small electric organ, with two keyboard levels and an octave of foot pedals. Ten free lessons came with the purchase, which I took advantage of. I tried to keep on learning by myself, but after a time the organ disappeared. The reason why that happened is among the many things I seem to have forgotten.

During these years, mother and dad separated for a very brief time. The only reason I remember for this was dad’s frequent drinking. He never lost a job or was violent when drunk. It is probable that there were other marital problems that I was not aware of.

During those four years I attended a small Covenant church because it was within walking distance of one of our houses. After we moved outside of walking distance, people in the church picked me up so I could attend. Once I got my drivers license, I was able to use the car on most Sunday mornings.

The church had a small youth group, so small that the four of us teenagers voted ourselves in as “officers” all the time! Singing in a choir for the first time was a great joy to me. My first and only opportunity to attend church camp came during my junior year of high school.

Since La Crescenta had no high school of its own at the time, students were bussed south to the city of Glendale where we attended Herbert Hoover High School, a three year school.

It was during my junior year at Hoover that I became involved in the Youth For Christ Club (YFC), which met on the campus. There I met the people who I now remember as my high school friends. Most of us in the Club attended the YFC rallies held every Saturday evening at The Church of the Open Door (COD) in downtown Los Angeles. COD was a huge church, seating 4,000 people and it was packed every Saturday evening for the rallies! What an exciting time, seeing so many young people worshipping the Lord together!

That year was one of changes in the way I viewed my social activities. As a young Christian, I felt that what I did for fun should be in alignment with what I believed. Now, later in life, I still believe this to be a good principal.

My main interests at the time were YFC, going to church, the friends I had made there, and the study of the Bible that I loved to read. So it was that I came to a decision to “give up” some activities.

I no longer went to any school dances, which was not really a sacrifice because I was not often asked to dance, nor had I learned to dance very well.

Among my Christian friends, I was accepted for who I was. It seemed that all of us were comfortable in our social activities, club meetings, and Bible studies. There was a camaraderie and acceptance among us, something that all people long for in their lives. I did not feel that I was missing anything by not going to school dances. On the contrary, I felt very much included and accepted.

During most of my junior year I dated a boy named Del, who was also active in YFC. But there came a time during the second semester that Del suddenly broke up with me. I was heart broken, but recovered pretty quickly. It was not very long before he had another girlfriend and they married after graduation the next year.

The teen years are a time when a person thinks about life and values, about the kind of person one wants to be, about what one believes and about one’s own mortality. One morning I distinctly remember saying to mother during breakfast that, “whenever we leave to go some place, we should give each other hugs and kisses, because we don’t know if we will die that day and never see each other again”. Mother was horrified! “Don’t even think such things, Gale!” was her response. But it was a thought that stayed in my mind for a long time even if I did not mention it again. It was to become all too true in later years in my life and the lives of those I loved. Death is a thing that comes to us all, often sooner than later. It is something we should talk about. Not talking about it does not prevent it from happening, nor does talking about it make it happen.

After my junior year of high school and during the summer of 1960, I had the wonderful experience of making another trip with Aunt Evelyn, Uncle Carl and cousin Gini. We drove the old Route 66 from Los Angeles along what is now I-40 through Arizona, New Mexico and the Texas panhandle, where we saw fireflies for the first time. At Oklahoma City Route 66 turned north heading for Chicago. Leaving Route 66 we continued east on the highway that is now I-40 all the way to Knoxville, Tennessee. From there our route was north to Washington D.C. through North Carolina and Virginia. What a wonderful opportunity they gave me to see our great country!



**Evelyn Carl Gini & Me**

It was while in our nation’s capitol that I had my first bad experience with the new style of high-heeled shoes, I think they were called “slings”. They were open toed slip-ons with no straps, just elastic in the arch, which caused them to make a slapping sound as you walked. While visiting the Capital Building, my foot slipped coming down some marble stairs. My knees buckled under me so that I slid down a number of steps on my shins.



I was able to stop myself by grabbing the spindle bars of the railing. I was quite shaken, but other than some bruises on my shins, very fortunate not to have been hurt!

We visited the Washington Monument, where Gini and I ran down the stairs after taking the elevator to the top; the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery where I was especially taken with the statue of the flag raising on Iwo Jima, the White House, the Ford Theater where Abraham Lincoln was shot, and the house across the street where he died.

From there we traveled on to New York City, where we visited an automat, a new kind of eatery, which was quite a novelty at the time. It was nothing but a room with tables, chairs and vending machines full of sandwiches, candy bars and sodas! We went up in the Statue of Liberty as far as the crown, the arm being closed off to visitors. That's all I remember of NYC!

From there we went into Connecticut and Massachusetts visiting relatives, seeing historic sights such as Plymouth Rock, the towns of Lexington and Concord where the Revolutionary War began when the "shot heard around the world" was fired on April 19, 1775, and the Toll House of cookie fame. In Boston we visited the old historic downtown area where some streets were still cobbles. I wore my silly sling shoes again and held up traffic on a busy street when one of my heels got caught in the cobbles so that I walked out of the shoe and had to turn back to get it!

On our return trip to the west we stopped at the mighty, awe inspiring Niagara Falls. Leaving that area, we had our first experience driving the New York-Chicago Toll Road system, also called the Expressway or Turnpike. This early system now includes portions of Interstates 70, 80 and 90 as well as other highways. One of our suitcases, which were tied on the top of the station wagon, was suddenly forced open by the wind as we drove. Gini and I were laying in the back reading and looked up to see clothes sailing through the air behind the car! Uncle Carl stopped and risked his life running all over the highway collecting our underwear! It really was quite funny, at least to us girls!

Our route on I-70 took us to the top of the Continental Divide in Colorado, where Gini and I played in patches of snow in July. Quite an exciting thing for two southern California girls! I could not know that day that in later years this location would become a special place for our family. The Eisenhower Tunnel at Loveland Pass did not yet exist to make crossing the mountains easier. Nor did the city of Vail, CO exist, although there was a highway through the Vail valley, there was not any civilization there yet. Construction on the town of Vail began two years later.

All the moving around that our family did over the years, meant a person changed jobs fairly often. In those days when filling out an application for a job, you often had to list all the places you had lived and worked over the past ten years. (It was still true at that time, that most people in this country did not move around as often as they do now-a-days.)

In order to be able to give that much information, mother kept a running list of the addresses of places where we had lived. Compiling my own list based on mother's, and including the times I was hospitalized as separate addresses for me, there had been at least 30 different addresses by the time I got married! I actually remember many of these residences. Isn't that strange, to remember houses, but not neighbors or friends?

A small thing happened one morning in twelfth grade that stands out in my memory like a neon sign. Getting ready for school I wanted to wear a particular necklace that day but was unable to find it. I looked everywhere until becoming so frustrated that I was nearly in tears. Deciding that it was a lost cause for that day, I prayed asking God to help me find it later. As I gathered my books for school, I pulled up the couch cushions a second time on an impulse, and there was the necklace! I had looked there before without finding it, so it seemed like God had directed me in finding it after I had prayed. It had become practice of mine to speak to God often about little things as they occur. Answers do not always come, in fact most of the time there is no answer, but what was driven home in my mind again that day, was that God is listening to me and is interested in every thing in my life.

He is aware of my frustrations, disappointments and short temper yet does not hold it against me. Over the years since that time, I have come to understand from the Scripture that what Jesus Christ did on the cross to save me has made me acceptable to God once and for all. I learned a very practical lesson that day about God's closeness to me in the small details of daily life. His love remains the same always! It causes me to love Him in return.

Because God was not discussed in our home, I had to learn of Him on my own, in church and at Youth For Christ. Some of the concepts in my thinking would need correcting and alteration over the years as I grew in my understanding of just what God has said in His Word and how it applies in life. We **grow** spiritually, how exciting!

In November 1960 during my senior year of high school, dad and mother separated for the second time. Mother, the boys and I moved into a small apartment in Glendale near my high school. We lived there only about a month. Dad was over to visit us frequently, often staying the night.

By Christmas my parents had decided to live together again. That was all right with me but, in addition they decided they had to move back to Washington State! Dad was unemployed at the time and the Navy Yard in Bremerton, WA was hiring.

Since this was my last year in high school, making a move back to Washington State was out of the question as far as I was concerned! The whole idea of a move was a very upsetting shock for me. I hated the idea and argued with my parents against it. I refused to go with the family. Mother was horrified! The family was in an uproar!

So far I had managed to have two and a half years of California's three years of high school at the same school. I wanted desperately to finish with my class instead of starting at a new school again when there were only five months left until my graduation.

Somehow my parents came around to discussing the possibility that I could stay in California. The main problem to be worked out if I was going to stay as I wanted to was where would I live? Somehow it was finally arranged that I would live with my closest friend, Dolly Geno. So it came about that my family left me there in Glendale, California and they relocated to Bremerton, Washington.

Normally I had always tried very hard to be compliant and not cause any sense of tension at home. I think that was the first time I ever rebelled against the wishes of my parents, actually arguing with them about a decision they had made.

## **A DIFFERENT SORT OF YEAR**

Dolly was the youngest of four children, the only one still living with her parents. She had a tiny bedroom in a tiny house in Glendale within walking distance of our high school. Dolly's parents were older than mine, her father was retired but working as a night security guard. Her mother was a nurse working from 7 p.m. until 3 a.m.

Dolly had a single sized bed, which we shared, always giving most of the bed to her big dog! We both had our driver's licenses and the use of a car every evening.

Since Dolly's father did not drive, we had to meet him when he got off work late, at eleven o'clock. While her parents were both at work, Dolly and I spent many evenings cruising all over the Los Angeles metro area. Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood was a favorite place, as were Griffith Park, Echo Lake, and Santa Monica beach. Sunday mornings we drove to Burbank to Calvary Bible Church that had been founded and pastored by Dr. Jack MacArthur, the father of the now well-known Dr. John MacArthur.

Dolly and I both attended the Youth For Christ club (YFC), which met in a school classroom, one day each week before school began. Every Saturday evening we drove to downtown Los Angeles to the YFC rallies. Young people from high schools all over the metro area gathered at The Church of the Open Door (COD) at 6<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets, which as I said previously was a huge church that seated 4,000 people.

The pastor of the church at that time was Dr. J. Vernon McGee, a well-known Bible teacher. Dolly and I were always among the crowds of teenagers attending the rallies there on Saturday evenings.

In the early 1900's the Bible Institute of Los Angeles had been founded. Using the initials of its name, the school became known as BIOLA. Its first campus was located in two 13-story tall buildings, one close on either side of COD.

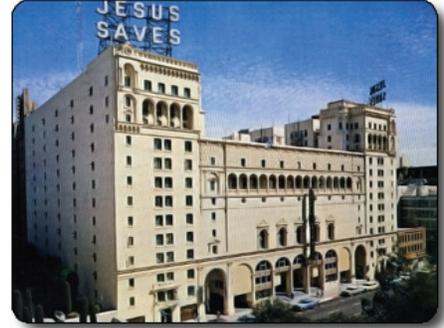
Both of these buildings were dormitory housing for students attending Biola. On the roof of each of these tall buildings was a huge neon sign that said, JESUS SAVES. Those signs were visible all over downtown Los Angeles. Biola's classes were held in these buildings as well as in COD.

By the time Dolly and I had begun attending rallies at COD in 1960; Biola had become a college, and is now a university. The student body had grown so much larger that more dormitory space was needed. A new campus was in the process of being constructed on land south of Los Angeles in a suburb called La Mirada. Since there were not yet enough dormitories for all the students at the new campus, upper classmen were the first to be housed there in the new dorms.

Underclassmen and those students with jobs downtown continued to be housed at the old downtown campus location. As students were gradually moved to housing on the new campus, lower floors in each 13-story building were being gradually let out as hotel-like housing for retired persons.

The first floor in one of the buildings had a hotel lobby and radio station KBBI, owned and operated by Biola. The upper few floors of this building were still used as housing for male students.

The first floor of the other building had a Christian bookstore and a lobby. Female students were still being housed on the upper few floors of this building. This arrangement was to figure in my life in the future, but I'll get to that later.



**Church of the Open Door (center)  
Biola College dorms**

Both Dolly and I enjoyed the Saturday night YFC rallies where we made friends with students from other high schools. Because the dormitories for Biola College were right next door to the Church of the Open Door, many of the college students also attended the YFC rallies there. Since they were a bit older than us, we looked up to them as role models.

Many of the speakers at the rallies were entertainers: actors, singers and musicians from Hollywood who were Christians. There were also missionary speakers from many places around the world.

It was always a very moving and inspiring event for us, encouraging us to continue in our young Christian faith. Since both Dolly and I grew up in homes that did not focus on church attendance, this became our church as much as did the church of Dr. Jack McArthur. The rallies and church taught us some of the basic principals of the Christian faith.

There was a group that met on Friday nights called Friday Night Fellowship, (FNF) made up of college and high school students, which was lead by the college fellows. Dolly and I began attending this group on Fridays as well as continuing to attend YFC on Saturday evenings. FNF became our real chance to get acquainted with the college students and to ask them questions about things in the Bible. Of course they did not know everything, but they certainly did know more than Dolly and I! There was usually a short Bible study or devotional given by one of the college fellows and a time of prayer as a group.

The FNF group had created its own radio program which the students made and paid for by their own donations at the Friday meetings. The program was titled "More Than Conquerors", a 15-minute segment that aired weekly on KBBI. One of the college fellows gave a short devotional message, there was special music, and someone from the group usually gave a personal testimony about what the Lord Jesus Christ had done in his or her life.

This program was recorded on Saturday evenings during the YFC rally, a convenient time since everyone was going to be at YFC. It was a simple matter to walk next door to the radio station to make the recording. It was at just one such recording session that I met the fellow who was to become my husband.

After attending FNF for some time, I was asked to speak on the radio program about how I came to have faith in Christ. On the night of the next recording session, I left the YFC rally to go next door to KBBI.

As I entered the recording studio I noticed a young man behind a glass window with earphones on his head. He did the recording for our program at the same time he was running tapes for the evening line up of programs which were going out over the air.

When it was my turn to speak, I guess it went okay, but I don't remember what I said. When the recording was over, as we were all standing around talking, the man who had done the recording interrupted everyone asking to be introduced to me. He introduced himself to me as a student of Biola and his name was Roy Smith.

It surprised me that he was a student, because I had assumed he was a professional. (Well, since he was employed there, I guess he WAS a professional!)

I was quite taken by the fact that he had made a point of meeting me! I went home that evening walking on air!

If I remember correctly, Roy invited me to visit him in the studio, and then it wasn't long until I began to go to KBBI regularly on Saturday evenings, leaving the YFC rallies to sit in the studio with Roy while he worked. He put pre-recorded programs on the air, played records of Christian music, read the news hourly, and read pre-written advertisements.



**Roy at console of KBBI**

We did a lot of talking during those programs, getting acquainted with each other. We had to be careful not to talk when he was on the air with the microphone "open".

As the school year progressed, my parents and I kept in contact by writing letters. They wanted me to be in Washington with them after graduating from high school. They planned to drive back to southern California to attend my graduation, and then to return home to Washington with me along. But becoming acquainted with students from Biola caused me to begin thinking of that college as the one I wanted to attend. In fact, it was the only college to which I made application for admission. Believing that I would surely go to Biola, I felt that it would be good to remain in Glendale after high school, work there all summer and save money to start college in September.

My parents and I had a telephone conversation about this difference of plans. As I stated before, most of my life I had been compliant, doing what was wanted so that there was no tension in the house. But this time I disagreed once again, as I had when they decided to move from California earlier that school year. We hung up the phone leaving the issue unsettled. A few days later, I received a call from dad telling me that mother was in the hospital for surgery. Dad never was good at explaining medical things and I did not know how to ask medical questions, so did not really understand what was going on.

Dad appealed to me to return to Washington with them and not upset mother while she was ill. Being afraid for her, I agreed to return to Washington with them. I did not know yet that God's plan was for me to go and that He would work out everything about college in His time. I was learning by experience, that the things we want in life might well be the things God has planned for us. But His ways of bringing them about often are very different from the way we think they should happen.

About a week before my graduation, Roy and I had our first date. I made a picnic lunch and we spent the day at lovely Zuma Beach. Because it was early in the season and too cold for swimming, the beach was virtually deserted. We had a wonderful time just talking, walking, and laying on the blanket reading from God's Word.

Since it was a Saturday, we had planned to attend the YFC rally in the evening but were so late returning to the city and we had not eaten dinner that we went out to eat instead. We ordered steaks, a very nice meal, which I knew was expensive for Roy as a student. I was unable to finish all the food. I felt miserable about it, pushing the last of the food around on the plate trying to decide just how I was going to get rid of it. Finally Roy asked me if I was going to finish it. Feeling like a heel, I replied that I couldn't. With a huge smile Roy asked if he could have it!

We had a great time together on that date. Dolly always said later that when Roy took me back to her house that evening, I told her I was sure I was going to marry that fellow. After we were married, Roy claimed he married me because he knew he would always get enough to eat. Ha ha very funny!

Part of the application for admission to Biola College, was a medical examination. Living with a friend as I was, I did not have a family doctor, although there was one doctor the family had taken my brothers to when they had ear infections or when Troy had asthma. I made an appointment to see him.

Since Dolly and I only had the car at night, I arranged to be driven to the appointment by Dolly's boyfriend Ron McDaniels. Ron was a Biola student who was, and still is, like a brother to me.

During the examination, the doctor realized that I had a problem. He told me that I was either pregnant or had a large ovarian cyst or tumor. But he did not do any further investigation to find out which it was! Knowing that I was not living with my parents and that a young man had brought me to his office, he probably assumed that I was pregnant. I was stunned.

I did not know then that he could have discovered which condition it was by doing a simple pelvic examination. Instead, he filled out the medical section of my college application and allowed me to leave his office without further advice. Leaving the office, Ron could see that I was upset. When I told him why, he became upset too. We did not know what to do next. The decision I made about what the doctor had said, was that it would be best to wait until my parents arrived from Washington and then talk with mother about it.

During those last few weeks of school, I worried a lot about how this could have happened to me. I had read medical books about how pregnancy occurred but had not ever talked to anyone about it. I was scared that maybe I was pregnant but how could it have happened without me being aware?

Furthermore, I did not want to upset mother by telling her anything about it over the telephone. My fear was that she would become sick again. Not understanding what had caused her to need surgery in the first place, now this made me feel responsibility for her health. It weighed heavily on me, so that I tried very hard to be agreeable and compliant in whatever was asked of me during those next weeks, including agreeing to return to Washington with my parents after graduation.

Looking back, it seems strange that I did not realize sooner that something was wrong. I suppose that any symptoms I may have had were mild enough to be ignored. I do not remember anything at all that was different about me physically, except that my school gym teacher did make a wise crack one day about me putting on weight in front! I ignored it because I did not understand what she was implying. It is probable that other students thought I was pregnant, but I did not realize there might be gossip about me.

Another odd thing about it was that Aunt Evelyn, mother's sister made my graduation dress but never said anything at all about my appearance. Although I do remember her making a small comment during a fitting, about the need to make the front of the dress a bit larger to accommodate my tummy.

Graduation day at Herbert Hoover High School finally arrived and 694 of us graduated in the class of 1961. My family had driven to southern California to attend the ceremony, after which we all traveled back to Bremerton, Washington the town where dad and Mom were renting a house on Perry Avenue, close to the home of my grandparents and to the home of Aunt Lavern. After retiring my grandparents had moved to Bremerton from Portland, OR to be near their daughter Lavern.



**Graduation  
1961**

## **A DIFFERENT SORT OF SUMMER**

Aunt Lavern was a lovely person whom I looked up to very much. As the days at home with the family began to pass, I found it very hard to bring up the subject of my health and my fears, and strange as it may seem, no one brought up the subject that I was looking as if I was in the early months of pregnancy! I remained fearful of making mother sick again as well as of possibly causing anger or tension in the family.

Then one day Aunt Lavern had an errand to run in the country and invited me to ride along with her. It is possible that mother arranged this little trip, with the intent that Lavern talk to me. Or perhaps Aunt Lavern had brought it up to mother. I do not remember what I said to Lavern about it, but do recall that she assured me mother's illness was definitely not going to get worse and that I should tell her about the problem.

I do not remember talking to mother at all, but within a few days the two of us were in the doctor's office for an examination and then having an abdominal CT scan. This was quickly followed by surgery to remove a very large ovarian cyst. The cyst had begun on the left ovary and then attached itself to the right ovary as well.

In surgery the left ovary was entirely removed along with about a third of the right one. This never created a problem for me later when I wanted to have children. I was told that whatever amount of ovary remains, takes over the full function of both ovaries. I was in the hospital for about a week. Some of my cousins came to visit me there, telling jokes and making me laugh which was not funny with an incision in my tummy!

While all this was going on, my acceptance letter arrived from Biola. Its arrival solidified my certainty that God would somehow provide for me to go to college! Surgery now behind me, getting back to southern California so I could attend college became my main focus for the remainder of the summer of 1961. I tried to use the days productively by reading, sewing, and praying about how God was going to get me to Biola.

As the summer wore on and I regained my strength, my parents advised me to start looking for work. That way I could save money and maybe go to Biola, probably not right away but maybe the following year, because they would be unable to help me financially. So that is what I did half-heartedly and unsuccessfully, but with confidence that somehow God's plan was for me to go for the start of classes in just a few weeks, not the following year! The desire to go to school was so strong; it must have been the only thing I talked about.

As the time for the start of the new school year drew closer, I was in contact with my friend, Ron McDaniels. He went to the college officials to tell them about my financial situation and asking if there was some way they could let me come to school. After being pestered by him several times, they finally said that if I could come up with \$100 as a deposit, they would allow me to attend classes, but with two provisions. First, I would not be allowed to move into the dormitory until I had a job and secondly, a student loan had to come through within the first three weeks of school. Ron passed this information on to me and I began to pray for \$100.

The house we were renting was new, not totally finished inside with drywall not yet up on all the walls. Mother had hung sheets on the 2x4's between rooms to provide for some amount of privacy. At night while lying in bed, it was easy to hear my parents talking and sometimes arguing about how in the world they could ever come up with even as much as \$100 to give me. Every night I laid in bed reading the Bible, praying, and trying to shut out the sound of their voices.

One night reading in Jeremiah, I came across verse 33 of chapter 3, "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not". Although I had already been praying, this verse gave me a jolt like lightening! I took it as a promise that God would somehow solve all the problems for me! In response, I told Him that if He would give me the \$100, I would take that as proof that He would provide everything else I would need to go to school when it would start in just a few more weeks!

I got out of bed, knocked on the 2x4 frame of my parent's would-be bedroom door and told them about the verse and about my belief that God was going to give me \$100. This news was met with complete silence. After that I never heard any more discussion or arguing, and I never doubted that God would do just what I was sure He had promised. My heart was completely at peace.

Within only a few days, our family made another move, about 60 miles away to the small town of Tumwater, where dad had been able to get work at a gas station.

Meanwhile, trying to discover how God would give me \$100, Ron began to approach people in California who had known me, including the Covenant church in La Crescenta where I had attended for four years, until I moved in with Dolly. He asked them to donate money to help me get back to California for school. He got no results anywhere.

Mrs. Erickson, the mother of one of the other upperclassmen at Biola, could not give me any money but offered to let me stay in her home until I had a job and could move into the dormitory. Mrs. Erickson was a widow who had one of her two sons still living at home. I knew her son Ken already, having met him at the Friday Night Fellowship group. Ken was attending Biola so I would be able to ride back and forth to classes with him each day during the time I would live at their home.

The weeks wore on and the first week of school began without me. But that first week was an orientation week for freshman students only, so actual classes did not begin until the following week. By this time Ron was desperate to come up with the \$100!



School officials told him it would be all right for me to miss that week of orientation, but I would not be allowed to arrive at school later than the start of classes the following Monday morning. The week of Orientation crept along. By the end of the week, Ron's mother was worn out from listening to him talk about how to get this girl to school! On Saturday morning she handed him \$100 and told him to get me there!

That same morning my family had plans to drive from Tumwater to Bremerton to spend the day at the home of Aunt Lavern. It was probably a birthday gathering for some family member. Mother asked me if I wanted to stay home in Tumwater instead of going along with them to Bremerton, so that I could be there if Ron were to phone saying he had the money. I said no, I wanted to go with them and if God had the \$100 for me then He would help Ron get a message to me somehow. With that said, off we went driving 60 miles to Bremerton.

The ease of making phone calls today may cause you to wonder why I did not just phone Ron to tell him that I would not be at home. The reason is that a long distance call cost extra money in those days so was something our family almost never did and when we did it was only for something very urgent.

The only thing I remember about that day is when the relatives were all sitting at the long dinner table in the evening. There was a phone call, which Aunt Lavern went to answer. She came back to the dining room saying that the call was for me. I went to answer with a firm feeling that it was Ron. Sure enough, he had traced me to my aunt's home! He said he had remembered me talking about relatives in Bremerton and that the surname of the family was Anderson. He had phoned as many of the Andersons as he had to until he found the home where I was visiting. Not an easy task as Anderson is a fairly common name!

Ron said that he had the \$100! Well, of course he did, I hadn't doubted that somehow it would be provided. He had also found out that the last bus out of Olympia, WA headed for Los Angeles would leave at 11 p.m. that night. If I were not on that bus, I would not arrive in time for school on Monday. If I was not there by that time, the school officials had said I would not be allowed to start classes.

Very excited, I returned to the dinner table where the extended family was discussing how Ron had managed to find me. I told them the story, saying that I had to get to the bus in a matter of just a few hours. Could we please leave right now to hurry home to Tumwater so I could pack my things?

That's when I was told that my parents did not have the money for a bus ticket! I remember feeling stunned. I am sure my face must have fallen into an expression of shock! A bus ticket? I hadn't thought to pray for money for that!

To have come so far with hope in my heart and conviction that my prayers would be answered, only to be told that my parents could not provide the price of a bus ticket! There was silence around the table. Suddenly my dear Grandmother said, "Oh for heavens sake, let the girl go!" She grabbed her purse and pulled out the needed amount of money, about \$35.

So it happened that we were racing down the 2-lane highway 60 miles back to our house in Tumwater. I packed as many of my belongings as I could in a couple of suitcases and we were off again to catch the bus. We arrived at the station just in time to board the bus as it was leaving. At the last minute my mother handed me all the cash she had, about \$15, and I was away on the start of a grand adventure!

## COLLEGE DAYS

At 7 A.M. Monday, after more than 30 hours of travel, the bus arrived at the Los Angeles bus depot. Ron was there to meet me and we headed straight to the Biola College campus in La Mirada, about 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. He dropped me off at the administrative offices and then dashed off to his classes. I spent the morning in the library taking placement tests for the English and math classes.

For the next three weeks while attending classes, I lived with Mrs. Erickson in La Crescenta. I did some job hunting in downtown Los Angeles near the Biola dormitories, but did not find work. The school had given me a deadline of three weeks to get both a job and a student loan. If I were unable to meet that deadline I would have to leave school. Not having anyone else in the family that was willing or financially able to co-sign on a student loan for me, Aunt Lavern agreed to do it. Without her doing that I could not even have applied for a loan.

The three-week deadline for getting a student loan was fast approaching. I was called into the dean's office on Friday morning of the third week and reminded that it was the last day for my student loan to come through so that I could remain in school. Not that I needed reminding! I was told that the morning mail had not brought a loan acceptance for me. However, there would be another delivery in the afternoon and perhaps it would be included in that. So we waited.

In the last mail delivery of that day, a check arrived covering a loan of enough money to pay for one year at college! It seems to me now that the amount was about \$1000. It covered my classes, housing in the dormitory and meals in the school cafeteria. I do not remember paying anything extra for those expenses.

I was now able to move into the downtown dormitory on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, and my new mailing address became Biola College, 558 South Hope Street, Los Angeles, CA. All I needed now in order to stay there was a job!

Mother's two sisters both lived in the Los Angeles metro area, Evelyn in La Canada and Harriet in Alhambra, near Pasadena. Harriet worked in downtown Los Angeles at the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company. One of her co-workers knew someone who was in management at the credit office of the J. C. Penney Company, only a few blocks from the Biola dormitories. She put in a good word for me and I was hired as a credit advisor. My hours would be part time Monday through Friday from 5 to 9 p.m.



So it was that every need was provided! Every prayer was answered! My faith in our heavenly Father's leading and guidance was even more firmly grounded as I saw Him overcome what seemed to be impossible odds at every step of the way!

Looking back now, I know that I was like a small child in my faith. Trusting, as a child trusts a parent, that God would do all these things for me. I was totally convinced that He wanted me in Biola that year, not the following year. My heart was certain that the time was right for me to be out on my own with God. I was convinced that if I did not go forward following His leading at this time, it was very likely that I would not go to Bible College in the future at all. Now or never was the feeling that had gripped my heart for the past months!

God gave me Ron, the blessing of a dear friend who was willing to go out of his way to do all he could to help me get to school at a time when I was unable to do anything to help myself. God also gave me Aunt Lavern, who was willing to co-sign the application for the education loan. He gave me Grandma who was willing to give me bus fare; an indication that she believed God was guiding me. And God gave mother enough cash in her purse at that moment to sustain me until the loan came through! Just as Jeremiah 33 verse 3 says, God was showing me great and mighty things!

My job at Penney's was that of Credit Advisor. What is a credit advisor?

There were quite a few of us working together in a large room. There were drawers full of 5x7 index cards, each having the credit card payment history of someone in the metro area who had a Penney's credit card. Whenever a customer wanted to make a purchase on their card, the cashier made a call to our office.

Upon taking the call, I would look at their payment history and make a decision whether or not to allow the customer to make the purchase on their card. If I declined the purchase, the sales person would not return the credit card to the customer. It did give one a feeling of power now and then, especially if the customer had not been making regular payments on their card.

That school year was not an easy one at all! In the first place, I had just had a major surgery only about eight weeks previously and I tired easily. Secondly, I had not ever worked before. The job was easy enough once I got on to it but the days were long for me and at work I was on my feet the entire time, which has always been painful for my legs. Sometimes I would be so tired; I would cry myself to sleep.

The daily school routine began at 6:30 in the morning. At that hour, all of us who did not have other transportation were taken on school buses from the downtown dormitories to the new campus in La Mirada, about 20 miles away. Breakfast was served in the cafeteria there before classes began. Classes were over at noon and we were returned by bus to the downtown dorms where we ate lunch in the basement cafeteria. That left me about 3 hours in the afternoon to study before being at work by 5 p.m. There were days when I was so tired that I fell asleep over my books, not the best way to get good grades!

An energetic, fun loving girl named Rhonda was my roommate. Rhonda did not work during the first couple months of the school year but then she became the secretary in the office of KBB1, the school's radio station. She was as ready to go to bed as I was by the time I arrived back at our room after 9 o'clock at night.



**Rhonda  
Reed**

There was a sort of unwritten agreement among the male students that the girls did not walk home from work unescorted in the evening. Always when we came out of work, there was at least one fellow there to walk back with us unless we had a group of girls together at the same location. It may have been there were times when a girl walked home alone but if so, neither Roy nor I ever heard about it.

Money was extremely tight for me with most of my small paycheck going toward paying the student loan. The school cafeteria served breakfasts and lunches on weekends, but was closed for supper both days.

Many of the students who lived downtown went elsewhere for the weekends, which meant there were fewer people to serve in the cafeteria. Those few of us who had to work weekends or had no place else to go, had to eat out for supper. I should not give the impression that I was totally without any other place to go. I had two aunts in the metro area that I did visit on some occasions.

There was a small restaurant on the corner of the block where we often ate or went just to drink coffee. Each of the booths had a small jukebox that took quarters. Because so many of the Biola students hung out at this place, one of the songs most often selected was The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. It was played over and over again! Possibly that song was the moneymaker for all the juke boxes in the place!

A couple of doors down the street was Jerry's Juice Bar where we could get made-to-order juice drinks plus all sorts of unfamiliar health food things. Further away there was a cafeteria with a buffet where we ate when we felt we could afford the few extra dollars. This was a wonderful treat as it was an "all you can eat" place! On one occasion several of us girls had our bill paid by Dr. Louis Talbott, an elderly gentleman whom we greatly respected. Dr. Talbott had a long history with Biola and was a frequent speaker on The Biola Hour, which was broadcast on KBB1 and many other Christian radio stations across the country.

Every student at Biola had what was called a Christian Service assignment, some form of Christian ministry and outreach to others. I worked with a couple other girls teaching a Release Time class for children at a public school once a week. This was very similar to Child Evangelism's Good News Club.

Immediately after arriving at Biola I began attending the Youth For Christ rallies again. It was the simplest thing to do since the dormitories were on either side of Church of the Open Door! Soon, I began again to leave the rally to go to KBB1 and visit Roy on his Saturday evening shift. We really enjoyed talking in between times that he was on the air reading the news, announcing a program or DJ'ing the music.

By the way, I forgot to mention that Roy had his amateur radio set up in his dorm room. He had strung an antenna wire between the huge JESUS SAVES signs that were on top of the two tall dormitory buildings by climbing to the top of each sign. The wire remained there, hanging over the Church of the Open Door, for as long as the buildings continued to stand.

It couldn't have been very long after the school year started that Roy mentioned his girlfriend when I was visiting him at KBBI. What girl friend? I had assumed we would pick up where we left off after the one date we'd had in June (silly me), and now he was talking about someone else. This hurt, and to make it worse her name was the same as mine! Her name was spelled G-a-y-l-e, so not exactly the same as mine, which is spelled G-a-l-e.

When questioned about his memories of this time in his life, Roy answered more or less in the following way:

Roy spent the summer of 1961 in Oklahoma at the Summer Institute of Linguistics taking training toward becoming a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators. He had known Gayle for so long and thought she was the one meant for him as a spouse. After our date before my graduation from high school, he found himself with two girls now in his life that he was attracted to! That summer he prayed for us both, asking for direction regarding which of us was the right one for him.

When I was not there for the start of the new school year, it looked like he was not going to have opportunity to get better acquainted with me after all. Then suddenly I showed up on campus drawing his attraction again, causing him to feel confused once more. As I visited him at KBBI again on Saturday evenings, he decided he would tell me about Gayle. But when that didn't scare me away, he felt more confused! I was making his life complicated!

Maybe at that point I should have quit going to the radio station, but Roy and I enjoyed talking together. The thing I enjoyed most about Roy was that he talked so freely about things from the Bible and about our Lord Jesus Christ. So I kept going over to see him while he worked.

We enjoyed sharing the deep, profound truths in the Bible which were challenging to our minds. We had so much still to learn of them, but what we understood so far was like a river of refreshing water to our souls, just as God promises us it will be in John 7:38. So I kept on going over to see Roy while he worked and he kept telling me about Gayle, whom he had known for a long time in his home church in Phoenix where their families had been friends for years.

As the Christmas holiday break from school approached, Gayle planned to ride from Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon where she was attending, to Los Angeles with another student who would drop her off at Biola. She would then ride home to Phoenix with Roy in his bright yellow pick up truck, Lizzy Belle.



Roy had told me that over the Christmas vacation he planned to ask her to marry him. When Gayle arrived I was able to meet her and, of course she seemed very nice even though I thought I was not going to like her! As they left on their trip to Phoenix, I felt that a page in my life was at an end. Roy would return to school in January after the holidays, as an engaged man.

Because I had to work my normal hours during the school break, I stayed at the dorm not going to visit relatives until Christmas Eve. There were other students in the dorms too, who had to stay around to work over the holiday break. One of the fellows was Dennis Brown, who worked at KBBI. We were already acquainted so began to spend much of our free time during the holidays with each other.

Each floor of the dormitory buildings had one telephone on the wall in the hallway. When it rang someone would answer and then holler to the person the call was for. The last afternoon of the Christmas break, the telephone rang in the hallway on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the girls' dorm where I lived. "Gale, man on the phone!" was hollered down the hallway to my room at the far end. It was Dennis calling me to meet him in the lobby downstairs.

I got dressed and went down. All Dennis said at first was, “Roy is back!”, the look on his face told me that he was not happy. Right off, I knew what Dennis was going to tell me, Gayle had turned Roy down!

The next day when classes resumed, we picked up our familiar routines. We met in the cafeteria for breakfast, about 6 or 8 of us sitting together. It was a quiet meal, all of us being in sympathy for Roy who as a quiet person was even quieter. Even though neither of us said it, I think both Dennis and I could already sense that a change was just ahead in our relationship.

The next couple of weeks dragged along miserably for the most part, until one afternoon after lunch as I was studying. There came a call for me on the hallway phone. “Gale, man on the phone!” was hollered down the halls for all to hear. It was Roy and he wanted me to come downstairs to have coffee with him. Now Roy was not the kind of fellow to call up someone else’s girl, so this was a surprise. Dennis was at work just then, on the air at KBBI, so of course, I went down to meet Roy!

We went to the restaurant on the corner where we sat in a booth playing the Hallelujah Chorus on the jukebox, talking, drinking coffee and doodling on napkins for a couple of hours.

Finally it was time for me to leave for work, but I felt that something was unsettled. I said to Roy that I was not leaving until he told me why I was there in the first place. He asked what I meant. “Well,” I said to him, “you aren’t the kind of a guy to take another guy’s girl out to coffee, so I want to know what are we doing here?” “I am interested in you,” he said very hesitantly. So it was that I now began dating Roy. Dennis remained our friend, was at our wedding and saw our first child when she was born.

There is an interesting sidelight about Dennis that I will include here. We kept loose contact with him for a number of years. Dennis stayed in radio, ending up in Lancaster, CA. We lost contact for many years after that, but I will jump ahead briefly here to tell how contact was renewed.

In July 1999, our daughter Ruth moved to Lancaster where she taught school for five years. Once when visiting Ruth there I looked up Dennis in the telephone directory but did not find him. Later in 2004 we received a phone call from Dennis. What a surprise after so many years! He was flying through Denver and hoped we could meet him at the airport. We were not able to do that, but he gave us a short update on what he was doing and that he still lived in Lancaster. He was in fact attending the same church that Ruth was attending but had not recognized her because he had seen her before only as a baby!

The reason we could not find him in the Lancaster phone book was that he was now listed under his middle name of Alan rather than as Dennis. The way that happened was this: he had stayed in radio, as I said, but had worked at two radio stations at the same time. When he hired on at the second station, he was not allowed to use the same name he was using at the first station, so he had to use his middle name. As time passed, he used his middle name more and more, even in the phone directory listing. By the time we talked with him he had left radio to work at NASA as a public relations person. About six months later we made a trip out to Lancaster to visit Ruth and met with Dennis for dinner.

Returning now to telling about the time spent in college, studying at Biola was a wonderful experience for me! Although I wanted to pursue music, especially voice, as a major, my parents felt it would be wiser to study to be a teacher. So I began with a basic liberal arts schedule of classes. I could have taken a music class but the use of practice rooms was additional money.

One of my favorite classes was the Old Testament Survey. In that class we were required to read each book in its entirety in one sitting. That was a difficult task on the longer books, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalms, and others! We could leave it long enough to go eat or use the bathroom, but otherwise we had to stick to it until we finished the book.

During the second semester my work situation changed. I was hired as an office clerk at the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, located in the Stattler-Hilton Hotel just a few blocks from the dorms. Aunt Harriet, mother’s sister, had worked at that office as a secretary ever since she left Boston to go west, in the late 1940’s.

Working there was a much better situation for me, working afternoons rather than evenings and working with my aunt. Sometimes I rode the bus with her to spend a weekend at her apartment in the city of

Alhambra. With evenings now free, I was able to take a required math course for 3 hours one night each week. I hated it! Math has always been my weakest point and I came close to flunking it! Somehow I managed to scrape by, or perhaps was passed on by the good grace of a teacher who could tell I was a mathematical hopeless case! Studying in the evening rather than in the afternoon was much easier. Possibly because a normal supper in the school cafeteria was much more satisfying than a snack from the vending machine, which was what I had been eating when working at Penney's.

Since I was now dating Roy, I began hanging out with him a lot. He was involved in a prayer group that met Friday evenings for prayer focused on mission work around the world. We had file folders full of missionary letters. Each person would take a handful of folders, go sit alone in a corner someplace and pray over the letters in each folder. It was a great opportunity for me to learn about missionary work as well as how to pray for missions. As the years passed, many of the young people who attended these prayer sessions became missionaries, scattered across the globe serving God and people groups everywhere by taking the Word of God to remote places.



It was not very long after Roy and I began dating that we just mutually agreed we enjoyed each other so much we could marry and be together all the time. Roy composed a letter to my mom and dad asking their permission for him to marry me. In a return letter they gave us their blessings.

I don't know what the rules at Biola are now, but in those days you could not announce you were engaged unless you had permission from the college administrative staff. We approached the dean and were given permission after some brief counseling. But we were also warned that statistically the odds were we would not have a successful marriage. Statistically people who come from broken homes, as I had, tend to make broken homes. However, we were young and in love and felt strongly that with the help of God and our love for each other, we could beat the odds!

Every year the college had a Spring Banquet at which a number of couples announced their engagements. I needed a formal dress for this occasion and managed to find a lovely pink and white one, which I put on lay-away. It took me several paychecks to pay it off. It was the prettiest, silkiest dress I had ever owned. I felt SO fancy wearing it!

The banquet was very exciting, made more so by the fact that we were announcing our engagement! Each couple announcing an engagement was introduced on the stage.

At the close of our freshman year of college, my roommate Rhonda and I, along with Judy Thieman and Barbara Befus shared an apartment near the school. It was a great, fun summer working, dating our boyfriends, and bumming around downtown. It was fun to have the guys over for dinner.

When school started, the other girls all returned to classes, but I moved in with Aunt Harriet to share her apartment. Roy and I had settled on December 7<sup>th</sup> as the date for our marriage. In order to start saving money toward our wedding, I did not return to school at the end of the summer. I continued to work at the insurance company. Harriet and I rode the city bus to and from work together. Over time I chatted with most of the people on that bus route, which amazed Aunt Harriet, who had ridden that route for years, never talking to anyone.



A word here in regard to leaving school after only one year, when I had wanted so badly to go there and God had made it possible. I think the real longing in my heart, in addition to getting to know God better, was to be in a loving and happy home. Looking back now, I understand that establishing that home was more important to me than getting more education. With Roy there was lots of conversation about our Lord, plus gentleness. I loved his family from the beginning and was very comfortable with them. I had been in love with Roy from the first night I saw him, never really considering anyone else as a possible husband.



## CHAPTER 4 – MARRIAGE

Dolly, the friend I had lived with during high school, and my dear friend Ron were married a month before Roy and I were.



Shortly before our wedding, my mother and Aunt Harriet gave a bridal shower for Dolly and me. On her way home from the shower, Dolly was in an auto accident with injuries such that she was unable to attend our wedding.

I was a month short of being 20 years old when Roy and I were married on Dec. 7, 1962. It was the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor so ever after we have always said the war started the day we got married!



**Ron and Dolly  
McDaniels**

The words “Peace On Earth” hung in big silver letters in the front of the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church in Downey, California. Many years after the fact, I was told that our wedding was probably the most unorganized of any wedding!

All sorts of things went wrong. The first was arriving at the church and finding those words “Peace On Earth” hanging up front! The woman in charge of putting up the decorations for Christmas programs in the church, was going out of town and that was the only day she could do it. No matter that someone had a wedding that evening!



**Rhonda Reed, Judy Theiman, Barbara Smith, Gale & Roy  
Paul Headland, Ron McDonald, Jim Kemp  
Keith & Troy, my little brothers.**

The flowers were late arriving, the photographer was late and disorganized, my hoop petticoat would not cooperate, the soloist was so nervous she could hardly sing, the pastor's comments were far too long, and my mother forgot to sit down, so everyone stood for most of the ceremony! Finally very close to the end, the pastor realized people were still standing and told the guests they could be seated!



By the time the reception was over it had begun to get foggy. We were to spend a week in a house at Newport Beach, but getting there in the thickening fog was a challenge. It was so thick that Roy had to open the car door in some patches to follow the lines on the road! We crept along carefully, arriving finally at our honeymoon cottage without any other problems. The use of the beach house had been arranged for us by someone Roy knew at one of the mission organizations.

Of course it was cold and dreary at the beach in December, even though it was southern California. With a good coat and some head covering, we enjoyed walking on the deserted beach. One day was spent at the San Diego Zoo. Mostly we stayed indoors keeping warm, relaxing together. It was a good vacation time for us, except when the “honeymoon” mouse decided to put in an appearance by zooming through the room! Each time it did, Roy had to try to catch it and then get me down off a chair. A little bit of excitement to liven up our first week as man and wife.

## MY HUSBAND

Now for background on the man who became my husband! Roy was born July 28, 1941 in Darby, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia where his dad was employed by General Electric. Roy has a sister named Barbara Kathleen who is three years older than he. This photo is an example of the family Christmas cards Bob made each year.



At the age of three, Roy became very sick with rheumatic fever. In those days there was not much that could be done medically, so treatment involved keeping the patient as calm and physically quiet as possible. Roy spent most of his day in his crib. I have it on good report that he drove his mom crazy calling to her for this and that so she had to run up and down the stairs all day!

In 1947 when Roy was 7 years old, General Electric transferred his dad to their office in California. They traveled with a trailer behind a 1946 Chevrolet, and had quite an adventure almost losing the trailer more than once. Their home was in the middle of an apricot orchard, in Los Altos, CA, not too far from San Francisco.



Roy who had always been technically inclined, began to dabble in electronics at a young age. He learned Morse code and built a crystal radio set as his first radio. By running an antenna wire up their water tower in the back yard, he was able to pick up stations broadcasting from San Francisco.



**Roy Bob Thelma & Barbara**

General Electric relocated the family again in 1953 to Phoenix AZ. By that time Roy was twelve years old and Barbara was fifteen. Being in high school, it was very difficult for Barbara to leave the many friends she had in Los Altos. She was not happy about moving!

In Phoenix Roy became friends with a neighbor who was also into radio. Roy became a licensed amateur radio operator in March 1955 as a sophomore in high school, with call letters of W7ZBK. Roy built his first ham radio from a Heath Kit. With the help of his dad, Roy put up his first radio tower in the back yard of their home. It was about 45 feet tall and built of a wood post with a wooden cross beam. Pipe, wire and insulators filled out the necessary items needed to make it work.

They dug ditches and buried wires in the yard in all directions. We have a newer version of this tower behind our house as this is being written.

The family was very active in Bethel Baptist Church where they attended in Phoenix. After they were old enough to drive, some of the young men, including Roy, used to drive south of town each Saturday to the small village of Guadalupe to work with Mission to the Migrants. It was a youth group type of ministry with Bible studies after volleyball and baseball games at the small Presbyterian Church.

Today Guadalupe has a population of 5,500 Native Americans and Hispanics. It has incorporated, with city limits of one square mile, land-locked within the Phoenix metro area. The church and baseball diamond are still there.

Roy attended Camelback High School, which had a course in aviation. Taking that course, he learned to fly and was licensed as a private pilot for single engine planes at the age of 18. In a class of 294 students Roy graduated from Camelback High School in 1958. He then went to Biola College where he pursued a course of study in Bible and Missions.

He began to work at KBBI, the school's station as an engineering assistant and behind the microphone. He was able to use this work as his Christian Service Assignment at Biola, and eventually became the station's chief engineer.

Roy graduated from Biola in January 1963, a month after we were married.



## MY IN LAWS

Robert and Thelma Smith, Roy's parents were the nicest people to have for family! I first met dad Smith in early 1962 at a hospital when we were all visiting his brother Millard who was very sick. Bob's first words to Roy when he saw me were, "Well, you told me she was short!"

While we were engaged, Roy and I made several trips to Phoenix from Los Angeles for visits at their home. We traveled in Lizzie Belle, Roy's yellow pick up truck.

It was a long hot drive across the deserts of California and Arizona. At the time there was no freeway, no rest areas, and towns and gas stations were few and far between.



**Forrest, Millard,  
Robert**

Robert Wesley Smith was born in July 1908 in Wellsville, Kansas. He was the middle son of three boys. Millard was the oldest and Forrest the youngest.

Roy's mom Thelma Doris Crook was born in May 1909 in Helmick, Kansas. Thelma had two brothers, named Charles and Norman, and a sister named Oneita.

Thelma was constantly making something for someone else. At the Conservative Baptist church they attended, she actively participated in the making of gift items sent to missionaries. She taught Sunday school for the kindergarten and primary children for over 40 years.



**Thelma and Norman**

Thelma had been a public schoolteacher until she began her own family. She told about teaching in a one-room schoolhouse with a pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room for heat in winter.



**Thelma & Bob wedding day**

Thelma was a dear, dear lady. I loved her as a best friend. We wrote letters almost weekly until she was too sick to write during the last couple years of her life. We always enjoyed doing things together.

Thelma always had handwork along everywhere she went. I tried to learn to do some of the things she was doing but ended up not completing most of the things I tried. It was more fun to be given something than to try to do it myself!

Dad Smith always worked for General Electric as an engineer, starting his career with the company in its Philadelphia office. Bob was not in the military during WWII, but was on battleships as a civilian working on GE power plants that ran the ships. In December 1941 he was sent to Pearl Harbor to work on a ship there. The ship he traveled on left the harbor just one day before the bombing there, but because of security reasons, all the comings and goings of ships were kept secret.

Barbara remembers they had gone to church as usual that morning, getting the news of the attack in the late afternoon. Thelma had Barbara standing on the dining room table to fix the hem of a dress when the news came on the radio that the attack had occurred.

Thelma fainted and four year old Barbara thought her mommy had died. She climbed down from the table and ran next door where two older ladies lived.

One of the ladies went to check on Thelma while the other kept Barb with her, trying to warm her because she was cold and wet from running to their house in the snow.

People everywhere listened constantly to the radio for news about the events as they unfolded into the first day of this country being at war. Families waited in terror for confirmation about the welfare of loved ones as each event in the war began to take place.



**Pennsylvania home**

It was not until several days later after the ship Bob was on had safely arrived in port on the east coast some days later, that Thelma finally got a call from him saying that he was alive and had passed through the Panama Canal arriving safely in port on the east coast of our nation.

During the years they lived in Phoenix, Bob traveled by car to many places in Arizona where there was GE equipment that needed electrical work. Any place in the Four Corners states that had large GE equipment, such as power plants, dams, and refineries; was a place where Bob went to help. At the time of his retirement in 1973, he had worked for General Electric for 43 years.

Dad Smith always did enjoy working with wood, building many useful things for others, for the church, and for their own home. For each of our two oldest children he built a desk and two bookcases. For the young people at church he made an air hockey table. Many of the built-in cabinets at the church were his handiwork. A large addition was put onto their home in Phoenix with plenty of storage cabinets that he constructed. Some of his wood work included cabinets and shelves that are in my kitchen still.

Whenever Bob and Thelma traveled he always had the trunk of the car loaded with tools. When coming to visit us they would usually stay about three weeks. After arriving, he would visit about a week before beginning to sketch out the plan of something he wanted to build. That would leave him only two more weeks to purchase materials and actually build whatever he had decided on. I remember more than once he did not complete a project by the time they had planned to leave, so they would have to stay longer.

Bob loved playing games of any kind, but especially word games, and puzzles. Every evening when we were together we would get something going. As the children got old enough, they joined the games with us. Computers were just coming into popular use in the 1980's and Bob taught himself computer programming at age 77. Like his dad, Roy has not ever been afraid to learn something new, enjoying a challenge.

## MY SISTER IN LAW

Barbara Kathleen, Roy's only sibling is 3 years older than he. She was the maid of honor in our wedding and she has been a dear friend to me all the years since. She is a very creative person, like the whole Smith side of the family. She has done some writing, some oil and water painting and other artwork, and especially enjoys doing crafts. She can do any craft you can think of!



Cooking is also one of Barbara's many skills. Her concoctions have been the hit of many a potluck dinner. Barbara was a special education teacher in the public school system. She used many life skills such as cooking to help her students learn concepts of math and reading. Her classroom was equipped with a complete kitchen.

Barbara lived at home with her parents most of her adult life. It was a convenient arrangement for them all. She was able to take care of the home and the pets whenever Bob and Thelma traveled. They would do the same when Barbara traveled. She was there to take care of them in their old age, which was a difficult and confining time for her, just as it was for them.



Here is a sample of some of Barbara's early writing from December, 1971

### HE GIVETH – Barbara Smith

So many gifts God gives to me  
 And all of them are free--  
 So many they are hard to list,  
 And yet, strange mortal that I be  
 How oft His bounty I resist!

He gave His Son for my salvation  
 Eternal life came with redemption.  
 He gives me work to fill my days  
 Provides a guide for all my ways--

He gives me rests and trials and tests  
 But this I know-- He gives what's best,  
 For testings help me gain His peace  
 E'en under stress I have His rest  
 And for each trial He gives His grace.

He gives me patience, friendship, love,  
 Forgiveness, too, comes from above.  
 He addeth faith to simple trust  
 He gives His Word, forever just.

He giveth health as He sees fit  
 And even wealth (a little bit!)  
 He giveth joy, He giveth LIFE,  
 He gives His calm to face all strife.

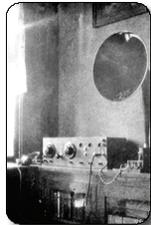
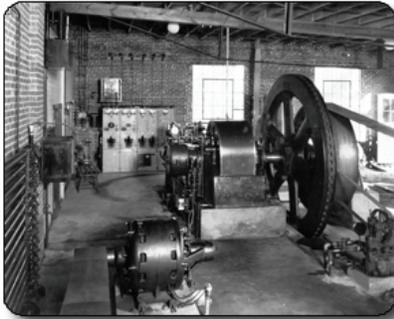
Flowers, sunrise, the sound of rain  
 Babies, music, and flowing grain;  
 The list's unending-- goes on and on--

But best of all-- He gave His Son.

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” - 2 Cor. 9:15

### ROY'S GRANDPARENTS

Bob's parents were Charles Avery (C.A.) and Nellie Smith. They had three sons Millard, Robert and Forrest.



**Charles (C.A.) & Nellie Smith**

C. A., as he was called, was a resident of Wellsville, Kansas. As a young businessman, he owned the ice and electric company, the phone lines coming into town, and had the first radio in town. He also built his own two-story home using rock. A tennis court was built on their large lot next to their home.



Nellie had trained as a nurse (shown in the center of this picture), but became a homemaker after their family began.

She must have been quite a seamstress since there are many photographs of the sons in costumes of all kinds when they were children.

Being interested in genealogy, C. A. had done much research of the family history. He had drawn fan-shaped family tree charts. All this was in the days of correspondence by paper letters and research without computers.

I have been very fortunate to be able to have copies of much of the family history that he researched.



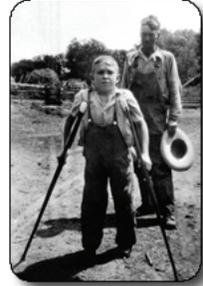


**Cordelia & LeRoy Crook**

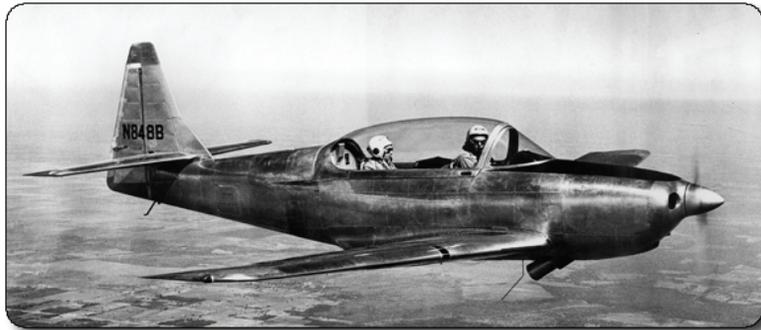
Thelma's parents were LeRoy and Cordelia Crook, who had four children: Charles, Oneita, Thelma and Norman.

LeRoy was a farmer and merchant, at one time owning a general store in Wellsville, where the Smiths lived.

At the age of nine, Norman was stricken with polio. Ever after he walked with braces on his legs and crutches.



Norman was the youngest of the four children in that family. He was a brilliant man who worked on top secret aviation designs with Ryan Aviation, Hughes Aircraft, McDonnell Douglas, and Boeing. Norman tried out his own designs by building many model planes, which he tested in the Arizona desert having Roy run to bring them back to him.



Norman was a skilled pilot as well, and flew often. He had special controls so he could both fly this plane and drive his car. Roy really liked Norman, and was greatly influenced by him.

## **CATCHING UP WITH MY PARENTS**

A note here to catch up with my family before we continue this story:

My parents had relocated from Washington State back to California shortly before Roy and I were married. They lived in LaCrescenta for the most part but lived for one summer on an alfalfa farm. The farm was located in Lancaster a desert town north of the Los Angeles metro area. Dad used to get up at 4 a.m. to work the crops early, before it got hot outside. It was there that my brother Keith fell in love with farming, even as a young boy of about nine years old. It was the desire of his heart ever afterwards to become a farmer.

Being close in age, the two boys were good playmates as children. Because they were still quite young, only ages 7 and 8 when I married in 1962, I was not close to home to watch them grow up. The family pattern of moving frequently continued in their childhood as it had in mine, so that they were raised in a variety of houses and schools, just as I had been.

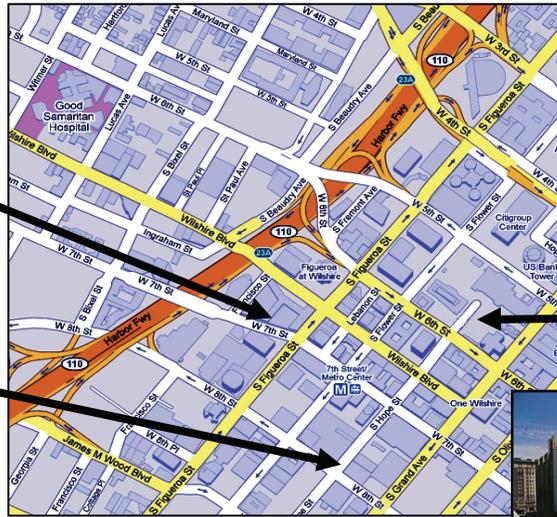
It seems like it was about this time in our history that mother began to work in Los Angeles at the same insurance company where her sister Harriet had been working for many years and where I had also worked during college.

To get to work, mother had to ride the city bus back and forth from La Crescenta to Los Angeles. One afternoon as she was waiting for the bus to return home after work, someone spoke her name. She turned around and found herself face to face with my father Vincent! They were both so shocked they could hardly speak! They were able to talk only briefly before her bus arrived. He told her that he lived in an apartment at 8<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets, only a few blocks from the Biola dormitories at 6<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets! Vincent was not feeling well so was waiting for a bus to go to the clinic at the Veterans Hospital. He thought it might be his kidneys.

Mother's bus arrived then so they did not exchange any other information. It was not until a number of years later that she told me she had seen him. When she did tell me, she said that he had looked so unwell she thought maybe he had died in the hospital, because she never saw him at the bus stop again nor did she ever hear from him again. There will be more information about Vincent in a later chapter of this book.

**Where Harriet, then me and finally Mom worked for an insurance co in Stattler-Hilton Hotel**

**Where Vincent lived 8th & Hope St**



**Church of the Open Door & Biola dorms**



Source: Map from Google.com

**Downtown Los Angeles**

## **MARRIED LIFE**

Our first home was a small apartment in downtown Los Angeles not far from COD, the Biola dorms and KBBi where Roy continued working after we married. The rent was \$50 a month. Our apartment had two main rooms, a living room and a dining room. In the living room a Murphy bed pulled down out of the wall. A double bed was hidden under cupboards and could be pulled out of the wall into the dining room.

Living across the hall from us were John and Arlene Kern, also Biola students, who had two small children. If they did not hear us stirring on a Sunday morning, John would bang on the wall between our two Murphy beds, and holler "Get out of bed you lazy bums, its time to get ready for church!" Sometimes we would do the same to them.

Roy was still in college when we married, graduating a month later in January 1963. After graduating he continued to work at KBBi and also took work at radio station KPOL in Hollywood, which aired middle-of-the-road music, or what could be called "elevator music". Often I would hear his voice on the PA system when I was out shopping at a store. Sometimes I could not resist speaking to a perfect stranger to tell them that was MY husband they were hearing.

Learning to cook, now that was a challenge! I knew how to fix very few things, but now had to come up with things to feed not only myself but a man as well! The only vegetables I would eat were corn, peas, carrots, spinach and beets and they all had to be canned. I hated all the other vegetables. Roy liked almost all vegetables but he had to have them fresh or frozen! YUK! He also loved tomatoes. He would heat up a bowl of nothing but stewed tomatoes. That was about the worst thing from my viewpoint! The one thing he did truly hate, was of course something that I loved, beets. To this day he will not eat beets in any way, shape, or form! Roy had to eat some pretty poor meals during the first couple years of married life while I learned to put meals together. Of course I had to learn to eat things that I had never been encouraged to eat when growing up. Both of us had some real adjustments to make in the food department.

Roy loved chocolate chip cookies and spaghetti and taught me to make both of these. His spaghetti is unlike anyone else's, full of stewed tomatoes of course. I have learned to make it and love it. Growing up our kids and their friends were all crazy about it. Their friends would often ask if we were having spaghetti for supper, then ask their parents if they could stay over to eat with us.

During our first year of married life, Roy was given a small Piper J3 airplane. The “string” attached was that he had to go to Arizona to get it and haul it back to Los Angeles. Ron McDonald, who had stood up with Roy at our wedding, went along with him to help with that project. Ron was from Phoenix and had attended the same church with Roy when they were growing up. The wings of the Piper were taken off the plane and mounted on a flat bed trailer parallel to the body of the plane.



**Ron, me, & Roy**

Since you cannot keep an airplane in your apartment, it was put at the airport in Compton, CA. The plane was in need of lots of repairs. Our small apartment was always full of plane parts that were being worked on. Even the ailerons were hung from the ceiling while the fabric coverings were replaced.

One “adventure” we had should be mentioned here. On weekends we went to the airport to work on the plane together. One day after some repairs had been completed, Roy wanted to fire the engine up and let it run. The propeller had to be started by swinging it around by hand while another person worked the controls inside. Since it was just the two of us, Roy put me in the pilot’s seat with instructions about just what I should do. I was to let up on the gas when the engine started causing the propeller to turn. I was not mentally prepared for this, so when Roy began swinging the propeller around by hand and the engine started, the noise was so loud I froze in terror!

Roy had to jump back out of the way of the propeller. He yelled at me to let up on the throttle, but I couldn’t hear him above the noise so remained frozen in place. He had to run around to the side of the plane, reach in and pry my fingers loose from the throttle. It was a good thing the plane was tied down with cables or I would have been airborne! So ended my single experience in the pilot’s seat!

Over the months, we realized that an airplane is similar to a boat. It is not a hole in the water that you throw money into, but a hole in the sky that you throw money into! It was a novelty we could not afford. The breaking point of the costs really came home to us when some vandals damaged it one night at the airport. Eventually we donated the plane to a small mission organization that trained pilots to serve in flight ministries to remote areas.

During that first year of marriage, Roy and I worked with the American Sunday School Union. We had quite a long drive from our apartment in downtown Los Angeles, well over an hour in each direction. We taught Sunday School and helped with a church service in a glider hanger at a tiny airport in El Mirage located in the desert North of San Bernardino.

El Mirage was just a small group of houses on the edge of a dry lake. The lakebed was so flat it was used as a runway with an airport for small glider planes. After a while we also helped at a tiny church south of San Bernardino in a town called San Timoteo. Those were challenging times that resulted in our spiritual growth. We were so young and really dependant on our Lord for every part of these ministries.

In addition to his full time work behind the microphone at KBBI Roy worked along side the chief engineer. It wasn’t long until the chief left the station to become a missionary in South America. Roy became the chief engineer for Biola’s two FM stations. The second station was in San Diego. It was quite a bit of work keeping everything running properly. The transmitter for KBBI was on Mt Wilson, just to the North of Los Angeles, so there was a lot of routine driving each week to make the rounds to each location.

At this time, problems of any kind always put me into a panic mode. Especially anything having to do with money! Whenever I was limited in the amount of money available to buy groceries, clothes, or other necessities, I would dissolve away in tears. These kinds of uncertainties made me feel frightened and vulnerable.

So where was my trust in the care of the Lord? As I have said previously, we grow in spiritual matters. That happens by doing. Trusting for such details as food on the table or a roof over my head had not really been something I had to do before getting married. Trusting for the big stuff, like how to get to college, was one thing. Trusting for the small details of running our home was a new kind of area to learn to trust God about. This now became another chance to learn by doing, and doing it well by learning to trust God’s care in this area of life too.

Then it was November 22, 1963 and in Dallas, Texas President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. This happened while I was home ironing and listening to a Christian radio station other than KBBI. The program was suddenly interrupted by the announcer saying, "The President has just been shot". He may have said it twice, but it was ALL he said!

I was shocked, wondering what in the world is going on? Surely it wasn't the truth? I tuned the radio to KBBI to hear the same announcement being given by my husband, with updates coming quickly as more information came across the teletype from Associated Press. It was a horrifying, heart-wrenching event! We grieved for his family, and our nation.

## OUR FAMILY GROWS

"Children are an heritage of the Lord", it says in the holy Scriptures. Roy and I always wanted as many children as possible. We were given the wonderful privilege of being parents and our children have been one of the most wonderful blessings of our lives! Fourteen months after we married, on January 20, 1964 our daughter was born in Los Angeles at the Hospital of the Good Samaritan. We named her Ruth Glory Smith.



I thought I knew about taking care of children from all the babysitting I had done for my brothers, but soon discovered that parenting is not the same as babysitting! Being totally responsible for the care and nurturing of a tiny little person is a wonderful and awesome thing! Roy's parents had come to visit us for the Christmas holidays. The plan was that his mother would help me out for a week or two after the baby was born. I had so much false labor in the later part of the pregnancy the doctor said the baby might come early. Fearing that they might get home to Phoenix only to have to return immediately for the birth of the baby, Bob and Thelma stayed on with us. The days dragged on seemingly endlessly, Ruth not arriving until the 20<sup>th</sup> of January. How happy we were to finally hold our precious daughter!

Knowing my bone condition could be passed on to my children, I began to suspect that Ruth had inherited it from me. The legs of newborn children often look bowed but they soon straighten. Ruth's legs continued to look bowed so that when she began to walk, I was quite certain she had inherited it, so I took her to the Children's Hospital. When the doctor asked why I had brought her, I said that I believed she had Vitamin D Resistant Rickets.

Since what I have is a rare condition, the doctor looked surprised and asked why would I think such a thing? It was not like this day and age of the Internet when people can search for information on all kinds of rare medical problems. Hiking up my skirt so he could see my somewhat bowed legs and the scars, I said, "Because I have it." He immediately left the room and returned with several other doctors. Doctors do not always have opportunity to personally see every rare medical condition during their days of training. So they take advantage of chances to expose each other to a case when an opportunity arises, such as this was.

After x-rays, blood tests and examinations, Ruth was started on a program of vitamin D, just as I had been while at Shriner's as a child. She returned to the clinic periodically for more tests monitoring the minerals in her blood.

A note here about this medical condition: Vitamin D Resistant Rickets (VDRR), is the older name. Now it is known as X-Linked Hypophosphatemia or XLH, a more accurate name for it. Hypophosphatemia means low phosphorous. X-linked means the mutation is carried on the X-chromosome.

Later, during the 1970's, I was introduced to the use of phosphorous in the treatment along with the Vitamin D. Some people started taking phosphorous as early as the 1960's while research was being done, but it was into the 1980's before it became widely recognized as the mineral that was lacking and most needed. Phosphorous is used in bone building and is absorbed from the blood by the kidneys. Our kidneys are unable to absorb the phosphorous so it is cast off in the urine, causing the bones to remain softer than normal. Thus we are generally short statured and have some bone deformities which vary widely from person to person.



## CHAPTER 5 – FOREIGN MISSIONS

On January 8, 1956, an isolated tribe of native people in the jungle of South America murdered five men who were missionaries. Exploration for natural resources had been taking business interests into the deep recesses of the forests of the Amazon basin for many years. Contacts between the native people, who lived there, and workers from various companies had frequently turned violent, causing fear in the hearts of both groups. This fear was the basis for the slaughter of the five missionaries when they tried to make friends with one of the groups of people. It was a great shock to people back home in the churches of this country, and indeed to the whole world.

Any reader who would like to learn more about this event can read such books as *Through Gates of Splendor*, *Shadow of the Almighty*, and *The Savage My Kinsman* all by Elisabeth Elliot; and *Jungle Pilot* by Russell T. Hitt. There are now a book and a film, both titled “The End of the Spear”, which recap the events of 1956 and update what has happened since that time.

This event moved many Christian young people to seriously consider training to become missionaries to isolated people groups all over the world. Since contacts with outsiders would continue and even increase in the future, indigenous groups were going to need many things to equip them to move into the modern age. The Gospel message of peace in Christ was just one means of helping them be prepared to take their place in the modern world.

The imagination and heart of the young man who was my husband, had also been touched by this event. Roy had taken flying lessons during high school in Phoenix. He was also a ham radio operator, electronically inclined by nature. He seemed well suited to pursue the ideal of becoming a missionary pilot doing the same work as that described in the book *Jungle Pilot*. Toward that end, Roy was pursuing a course of study in Bible and Missions at Biola College with plans of further training in aviation.

When I arrived at Biola in 1961, I too had heard of this event and read some about it, but I had not envisioned myself as a missionary to such native peoples. However, after Roy and I got together, it began to look like I would one day find myself in a foreign country, on a remote mission station maintaining radio contact with Roy, during flights he would be making to transport supplies and people in and out of remote villages in a jungle somewhere.

Within a short time of our marriage, we began filling out what seemed like mountains of paperwork in application to join the missionary group known as Wycliffe Bible Translators. Part of the preparation to go as a missionary with Wycliffe was to attend two summers of intense linguistic training. This would prepare one to create a phonetic alphabet for a previously unwritten language. Once that was done a dictionary of words could be compiled. The language could be described technically and grammatically. Later primers, booklets for beginning readers, could be written. By these tools people could be taught to read the language of their hearts, their mother tongue. Once their language became a written one, it would be possible for the Bible and other literature to be translated into their language.

Can you imagine not having the Bible in your own language? Having no educational materials, no medical information, no ability to write a letter to someone you love?

Roy had attended Wycliffe’s first session of the two-part course of linguistic studies at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, OK during the summer of 1961 while I was in Washington having surgery. This summer series of courses is known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).

Because Roy was aiming to be a pilot rather than a translator, he would not be trying to decipher an unwritten language. Hence, he was required to take only one summer at SIL. Instead he would need to take training in jungle aviation and maintenance of small aircraft. There is a training course for this at Waxhaw, NC called Jungle Aviation and Radio Service, better known as JAARS.

The essence of life here on this earth is change, or so I have come to believe based on my own experiences! Change comes by our own decisions as well as the decisions and needs of people around us.

## GUATEMALA

What I am going to write now about the lovely country of Guatemala is written more than forty years after we were there. Much of that time I have forgotten. Friends mentioned in this chapter have answered questions for me in the effort to make this information correct. I am so grateful to each of them! It is possible that I still have not gotten everything right and I apologize for that in advance.

Sixteen months after Ruth's birth we began to pack up our small household for a move to Norman, OK. There I would take the summer course at SIL which was required for our application to Wycliffe. While we were preparing to move, an urgent plea for help came to KBBI from radio station TGN in the country of Guatemala. "Where's that?," we asked ourselves getting out the atlas to find that Guatemala is the Central American country directly south of Mexico.

Radio station TGN in Guatemala City, a ministry of the Central American Mission (CAM) was in desperate need of a technical person to help them on a short-term basis. The mission was contacting Christian radio stations asking if they knew of anyone who could help them out on very short notice. Ed Yoder, the technician who was currently at the station, had a very sick daughter urgently needing to be seen by specialists in the United States. The family hoped to be in the US for a short time, maybe about three months, and then return to Guatemala with some kind of solution to the medical problems. The broadcasting equipment at TGN was old, in need of constant attention to keep it on the air. It was mandatory that a technician be found as soon as possible to stand in for a few months for this man.

Days passed while inquiries were made by the CAM in an effort to find someone who could go to Guatemala. But no one was found who was able to travel to a foreign country on such short notice. Eventually, the station manager at KBBI, asked Roy if he could possibly go since we were already preparing to move. But wait, we were not headed south, we were headed east!

While we were packing, the situation continued to become more urgent for the Yoder family in Guatemala to get their daughter to medical help. After several more days, we contacted Wycliffe to find out if I could delay attending SIL for one year, while we detoured to Guatemala as temporary helpers for the Central American Mission. Such a change in plans would interrupt the schedule already laid out by WBT in our training for participation in the flying ministry. Wycliffe agreed we could delay our training for one year until the following summer of 1966.

Thus it was that our lives took a different turn from what we had planned! The Scriptures tell us that mankind lays his plans but God directs the steps of those who trust in Him. The Christian can be flexible with a sense of confidence when he understands that God is the one who is really in charge and that He sees a larger picture than we are able to see.

Immediately we set about getting a family passport, needed shots and immunizations, and purchasing a shower curtain. A shower curtain? There were several phone calls to Guatemala to the missionaries we would be working with there. Telephone connections between Guatemala and the United States at the time were via radio to Miami, Florida and then by telephone lines across the U.S. The voice connection was quite broken up and intermittent making it difficult to have a conversation. We kept asking them what things we should bring, which was very helpful, but one item we heard repeated several times was a shower curtain. We did not know why that was such an important item, but it sure sounded like it must be! We were to discover that the house we would be using had no bathtub, only a shower. A shower curtain was necessary but not easily available within the country at that time.

The usual procedure for working with a mission involves making application, being screened, attending training that the mission may have, language school and raising funds for personal support. A period of time speaking in churches to raise this support is part of what the missionary usually does before leaving for any place of missionary service.

Our participation in the ministry of CAM and TGN was unusual in that we were not members of the mission and had not gone through any preliminary screening or other preparations that the Central American Mission had for its members. Because of the urgent need in Guatemala, our fund raising preparation was very brief.

The next Sunday we spoke in one adult Sunday school class at a church in Los Angeles. The class had been financially supporting the radio station for some time, so had already been praying about the urgent technical need there. The class decided right then to contribute monthly to our financial support.

The next day, Monday, we drove our Rambler station wagon, packed to the brim full of our household goods, to Phoenix. We stayed with Roy's parents and spent Tuesday unloading our belongings from our car for storage in their garage. Their church had us speak on Wednesday evening during the mid-week service after which they said they would help us financially.

So it was that these two groups provided about \$300, half of our monthly income. The remaining \$350 or so that we needed each month was given to us from funds the mission had set aside for emergency situations. The plan was that we would be needed on a short-term basis, maybe three or four months, until the Yoder family could return from the States to their ministry in Guatemala.

So it was that after only about ten days notice, Roy and I and little Ruth, headed for Guatemala! We left Phoenix with our Rambler packed with only the household items that we felt we could not get along without such as clothes, kitchen items and baby equipment. There was a problem with only one item when crossing the border into Mexico at Nogales, Arizona. The customs officials wanted a large sum of money as an import fee for a certain radio, a Heath Kit AM/FM which Roy had built. Rather than pay the fee we returned to Phoenix leaving the radio in storage at the home of Roy's parents. This event delayed our travel schedule by one day.

The following day we headed out once again going to the border crossing at Lukeville, Arizona where no problems were encountered with the crossing. At last we were on our way south through the Mexican desert. We had car troubles in the afternoon, but were able to limp into the city of Hermosillo to a repair shop. I remember being very nervous while the car was being repaired. This was my first time out of the United States and here we were stuck way out in the hot desert among people I could not even talk to! Roy could speak some Spanish, which he had studied in high school but his abilities were limited.

After repairs were done we drove to the coastal town of Guaymas, where we were able to find a motel for the night. I do not remember anything of what the area was like. The next day we continued south to Mazatlan. Staying in places with these names probably sounds very romantic to the reader, but actually these towns had not yet become the tourist attractions that they are today. The next day we traveled inland, bypassing Guadalajara and continuing to Morelia, a lovely colonial city in the mountains where we stayed that night.

Our travels the following day took us through Mexico City and eastward to the city of Puebla, where we had been scheduled to stay over night at the home of a missionary couple. However, because of our delay crossing the border into Mexico, we arrived at a time when they had to go out of town so were unable to put us up for the night. We found a small motel instead.

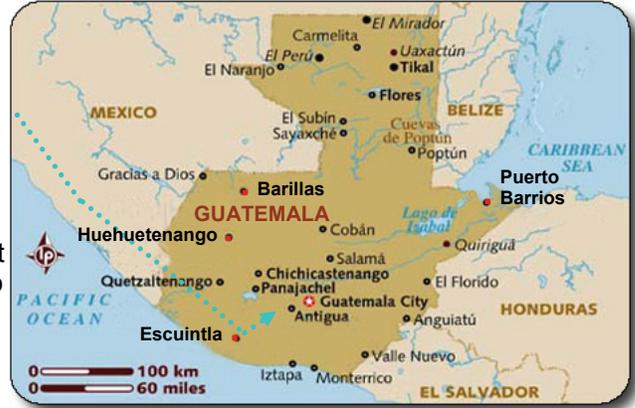
During that night I began to feel very sick, making travel the following day extremely unpleasant for me. I had all the symptoms of Montezuma's Revenge, which are much like having a bad case of stomach flu. Arriving at a small motel near Vera Cruz on the east coast, we decided to stay over a couple extra days at a small motel there so I could recover. I guess we had a room near the ocean but I was too sick to notice or care, so do not remember anything of the beach there. Two days of rest set me to rights enough that we could continue our travels.

Traveling from Vera Cruz south and west across the isthmus of Mexico, took us through our first sights of tropical vegetation and eventually to the border of Guatemala at the town of Tapachula. The building for the Guatemalan border station was off the highway a short way into the jungle. Because it was hot and humid we had our car windows open. Through the jungle we heard what sounded like music. It grew louder and louder as we drew closer to the station. Someone had a radio turned up full blast and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah was filling the forest with magnificent music! Such was our introduction to the country of Guatemala. It made us feel welcome and excited to be in this place where God had sent us on such short notice and so far from home!

We were at the Guatemalan border station for several hours while our car was investigated. Roy had to telephone Don Rutledge, the station manager of TGN, in Guatemala City so Don could confirm to the border officials that we were indeed going to be working there with them and with the Central American Mission.

From the border the highway ran south to the city of Escuintla. (Our friend David Luna, grew up in Escuintla and was attending high school in Guatemala City at about the time of these events. However, it was to be about 13 years before we had the privilege of meeting David, his wife Marion and their family.)

At Escuintla we turned east and climbed up to 5,000 feet to Guatemala City. By now it was dark and had begun to rain in torrents so heavy the windshield wipers could not keep the window clear. We crept along in the blinding rain arriving on the western side of Guatemala City at the home of the Rutledge family at about 10 p.m.



Before I continue with telling about our home in Guatemala City, I want to tell you a few things about the lovely country of Guatemala, which is called The Land of Eternal Spring. There are two seasons in the year, wet and dry. Wet runs from May to October and dry runs from November to April. During the wet season it rains daily in torrents. Most people carry plastic ponchos or other protective clothing. Others just drip-dry after its over. The topography is from sea level to over 10,000 feet. There are at least 33 volcanoes that are considered active. Soccer is the national game, played by probably every boy often in his bare feet. The Pan American highway runs through the country on its transcontinental course from Alaska to Chile. This photo is of the St Francis Church and Police Headquarters in downtown Guatemala City. The grounds and road access is quite different today from when we were there but the buildings remain.



**Tikal**

The ancient Mayan Indians lived in what is now Guatemala, as well as in southern Mexico. There are many ruins of cities with temples, homes and even courts for playing a ball game, probably similar to soccer. The ruins have been slowly uncovered from the jungle growth that reclaimed them over the centuries until they are now a big draw for tourism.

Perhaps the most famous site of Mayan ruins in Guatemala is Tikal which is located in the eastern jungle far from Guatemala City. We never had the opportunity, or perhaps never took it, to visit Tikal.



**Resplendent Quetzal  
national symbol of liberty**

## A MISSIONARY HOUSE

We were so late in arriving at the Rutledge's home that they had begun to worry that we might have taken a wrong turn and become lost in the rain along the way. After our brief introductions to one another, they took us several blocks down the street to the house they had arranged for us to rent. It was a wonderful little place, but we were too tired to take much notice of it that first night!



What do you think of when you imagine the house of a missionary? The house that had been so graciously provided for us to rent was not what I had expected to live in on the mission field! Located in one of the earliest subdivisions built in Guatemala City, it was a single story with 3 bedrooms and a bath. The dining room was part of the living room. There was a small, but very nice kitchen and an enclosed patio. The furnishings provided for us belonged to the Yoder family, who were taking their daughter back to the United States for medical treatment.

Attached to the back of the house was a patio and fourth bedroom with a half bath, which were quarters for a maid. Her bathroom had only cold water even for the shower. On the patio was a deep sink called a "pila", which was used for washing clothes by hand. This too had only cold water. The house was connected to all the other houses on the block with the patios in back separated by high walls with pieces of broken glass imbedded in the tops. The roofs were flat so that a person could walk from house to house along all the roofs. All windows were covered by grillwork to discourage thieves.

Each house had a tiny front yard enclosed by a high metal fence that we padlocked at night. The short driveway was long enough for just one car. The house was constructed of cement block, covered with plaster and painted a light blue color. The floors were all cement tile. We had never yet had such a lovely place to live. We were thrilled with our new home!

The house next to ours on one side was a small store. It was possible to purchase exactly what one needed at the moment, such as one or two eggs, a cup of sugar, one banana, or a small measure of cooking oil. Down the street from us a short way we could purchase tortillas at meal times, hot off the griddle in just the number we needed for that meal. Most items cost a penny each, or five cents for an avocado, twenty cents for a large papaya and so on.

The other wives talked to me about hiring a young girl to help with housework and childcare, which they had all done. A maid? Who, me have a maid? No, I was sure I could get along on my own. After all I was now a missionary and shouldn't waste money on something I could do myself! I felt pretty certain about it and so the other ladies finally decided they had to let me try it out. A couple of weeks scrubbing Roy's work clothes and bed sheets by hand were enough to teach me that I did indeed need a maid's help! The other wives knew of a young girl named Rebecca, who was in need of such work.

## SETTLING IN

Moving to another country was a real culture shock. So much was different. Having Rebecca working for me, I began to feel very wasteful. After a short time I noticed that she was very aware of things I threw away, such as plastic bags, but she never took them out of the trash. Suddenly I thought maybe she wished she could have them! I asked her if she would like some and she said she would, so after that I offered all of them to her.

There was a grocery store in the city, similar to a small super market, that had meats packaged in containers like what I was used to getting in the States. However, the heads and feet of the chickens were tucked into their empty belly cavities. Rebecca said she could put those in soup, so always after that heads and feet went home with her on the bus. Fish heads and fins went into soup at her house too.

We purchased water in 5 gallon bottles, which were delivered to our house by truck. We had to use this water for drinking, to brush teeth, for making ice cubes or gelatin dishes and to put into any recipe. I was taught to wash all fruits and vegetables in tap water mixed with a few drops of iodine. It must have been effective, because we never had another episode of Montezuma's Revenge.

Rebecca was used to doing the laundry in the pila, plus she was better than I at bargaining in the market place. When she came home from shopping her basket was loaded with wonderful fruits and vegetables, many of which were unfamiliar to us. She could cook which was a great help when I needed that. In addition to all this, Rebecca was a wonderful blessing for childcare because she loved our daughter Ruth.

Although Rebecca lived at home with her family, she would sometimes stay overnight to care for Ruth. It was necessary to arrange this a day ahead so she could bring her clothes for the night when she came to work the next morning. Using the maid's room was a real change for her since her home was a small hut with three generations of relatives living together. Rebecca rode the bus to and from work at 5 cents each way. We paid her \$15 a week plus bus fare, which we felt was too low and would gladly have paid her more.

But we were warned that if we did pay her more than the going rate, she would be in a bad way when we left. She would find it difficult to go back to the going wage. Neither Roy nor I had any practical preparation for life in a foreign country so were not prepared for the kinds of daily life things that would have to be decided. Our other missionary coworkers and friends became our tutors in this regard.

When we first went to Guatemala, Ruth was sixteen months old, just beginning to talk. As soon as Rebecca was hired to work for us, Ruth stopped talking completely. She did not say anything for I don't know how long! I was quite worried by this turn of events! I need not have worried, it did not last. When Ruth began talking again it was in a wonderful mix of both languages as if they were one. What a wonderful time of life to learn a new language. So much easier than when you are twenty- three years old, as I was!

During the early months we were in Guatemala, I attended an intensive study of Spanish at a school in the city center. Getting there meant a ride on the city bus each weekday. This study was interrupted when I became pregnant and had to spend three weeks on bed rest to try to prevent a miscarriage. Having a maid helping me daily with housework, cooking, shopping, and childcare made complete bed rest a possibility. Even so, the baby was lost, a sad second experience of this kind for us.

There was one doctor in particular who cared for those of us who were missionaries. Dr Rios made house calls to our home on several occasions and this event was one of them. Pat Rutledge was with me each time he came to act as interpreter even though he spoke good English, so there would be no misunderstanding between us about the medical discussion.

With our abilities in Spanish being limited, church attendance was something of a problem for us. During our time in the country, we attended three churches. We started out at Cinco Calles, the largest evangelical church in the city. Services were in Spanish and other missionaries attended there.

Then there was Union Church, an English language church for people more comfortable speaking English. There were people from many countries and many professions attending there. One couple was Mr. and Mrs. John Gordon Mein, the Ambassador from the United States. There were also missionaries associated with Wycliffe Bible Translators and other mission groups. Being among the folks from Wycliffe was a natural for us since we were making application to work with that mission.

A sad note here about Mr. Mein. Three years later on August 28, 1968 Mr. Mein became the first US Ambassador to be assassinated in a foreign country. He was killed during a kidnapping attempt by a rebel group when his official car was forced off a main boulevard in the capital and raked with gunfire.

As time passed, we became a bit better at Spanish and chose to fellowship mostly at Monte Carmelo, a small neighborhood church located next door to the home of Noe Reyes, who worked with Roy in the radio station work shop. It was a small one-room building. We went there probably the longest of any other church simply because we spent so much time with Noe and his family. We often went to their home after church for a yummy lunch. Guests, along with Noe and his wife Rebecca, were always seated first at the table, the children serving the meal and eating after the adults had finished. It was a lively meal, everyone who was not seated to eat would be standing around the table enjoying the conversation.



Noe and Rebecca had six children, all girls except the oldest, a boy named Ludin who grew from 12 to 14 years old while we were in the country. He grew up to become a pilot serving with rural missions in Guatemala.

Their youngest was Elvia, a 3-year old little girl, a great playmate for Ruth. Elvia was very dark and Ruth was very blond. The Reyes family called Elvia "la negrita", the dark one, and Ruth "la blanca", the light one.



Men working with Roy in the workshop and technical aspects were Noe and his brother Elias Reyes, and for one summer, Austin Anderson, an engineer and teacher from Moody Bible Institute. Noe worked with Roy the longer of the two brothers so that we became very well acquainted with him and his family.

## RADIO STATION WORK – TGN

Roy's work at the radio station began immediately the next morning after we arrived in the country. Roy was given a very brief introduction and overview of the station equipment by Ed Yoder the engineer, who was anxious to be on his way to the United States with his family. The Yoder family returned to the States within that first week, if we remember correctly.

Roy was quickly thrown into the work of the station, finding himself in the position of needing complete dependence on our Lord for guidance in how to do the work.



The station was on the air from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. each day but because of the advanced age of the broadcasting equipment, staying on the air was a challenge. The signal went off the air frequently, sometimes as often as two to four times during a 16-hour broadcasting day. Each time it failed, Roy had to drive eight miles to the antennae site to get the signal back on the air. Each time he was faced with failed equipment, Roy would pray asking God to direct his thinking in doing the repairs. He claimed the verses in Proverbs 16:3, which says, “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” Time and time again God revealed the source of the problems and the solutions as Roy trusted in Him for guidance in this task, which was so huge.

The antenna site was located out of the city, near the little town of Petapa, on a large piece of property with a building that housed the transmitting equipment.

Antonio Reyes, the resident caretaker of the property, and his family lived in a small house there. The property could not be left unattended at any time because of the possibility of theft or vandalism. Antonio had the on-going job of cutting the grass, which he did with a machete.



Radio TGN, which stands for Telling Good News, used a standard AM broadcasting frequency of 730 khz. Radio TGNA, Telling Good New Abroad, was on the 49 meters short wave frequency of 6.995 Mhz and radio TGNB is on the 31 meters short wave frequency of 9.505 mhz.

TGBA a small but vital radio transmitter was in Barillas, on 2.360 Mhz, called Radio Maya. It had a small range but reached out to pre-tuned radios using local languages which included the four major Indian languages of Guatemala; Quiche, Mam, Cakchiquel, and Kekchj.

In 1970 a new frequency was added using TGNC on the 90 meter short wave frequency of 3.300 Mhz. This allows them to experience less interference from other stations using the 49 band. The FM outreach has really grown, Roy left a FM transmitter on 100.5 Mhz, which has been replaced with a much more powerful model. Today all the stations are broadcasting from a 7200 ft high mountain just to the north of Guatemala City with a coverage all the way to the East coast of Guatemala, into Mexico, Honduras, and San Salvador. Repeaters rebroadcast as well to lots of communities throughout Guatemala. There have been lots of improvements over the many years since we were there.

As the first few months of our stay in Guatemala passed, the problems of staying on the air consistently were major. Lightning was a big problem, causing arcing between the tower and ground, putting the station off the air and damaging the tubes in the transmitter. This was solved by adding an electrical ground to the tower. Gradually the broadcasting equipment was made more reliable so trips to the Petapa site were reduced to only once or twice a week instead of several times daily.

Among his other responsibilities at the station, Roy had to climb the towers at the antenna property in order to maintain the antenna wires and change light bulbs. The heights of the main tower was 330 ft, the smaller one was 150 ft. In order to improve the signals, Roy and Elias Reyes, who worked for the station, tried experimental antenna designs, eventually settling on one design called a Lazy H.

Those of us from the USA who were working at TGN often met as a group in our homes for meals, fellowship, singing and prayer together. One evening shortly after we had arrived in the country, we were all together eating supper in Don & Pat Rutledge’s home, when suddenly we heard a series of three large explosions in the distance. The others at the table told us it was bombs! Somewhere in the city, there was trouble between the rebels and the army.

Although we saw soldiers around frequently, I think that night was the first time I knew that the country was under a martial law situation! It is possible to be that uninformed when you do not speak the language well enough to read a newspaper or understand much when listening to the news.



**Don & Pat Rutledge**

Roy says he knew before we went to Guatemala that it was under martial law, but does not think he really understood what that meant. For example: returning home very late one night after working on the equipment, Roy pulled up at our home, stepped out of the pick up truck to unlock our gate and found himself face to face with two soldiers, one of whom was pointing a machine gun at him!

Because of the martial law at that time, anyone driving after dark had to have the dome light turned on in the vehicle. That enabled authorities to see what was happening inside a vehicle when they had to pull one over and approach it. The dome light in our truck had burned out that night as Roy was driving along. He had turned on a flashlight and laid it on the dashboard, but it did not have a very good battery so flickered off and on as he drove along toward home. For that reason, these soldiers had followed him back to our house. They were very young men who appeared more frightened than Roy felt, which made him a bit nervous having a gun pointed at him!

When we first went to Guatemala, we drove a Rambler station wagon, which was our family car. The government was charging very high import duty fees on cars, the fee for our car was somewhere between \$1500 and \$2000. Since we could not pay such a price it was decided that Roy would drive it back to Phoenix and purchase a pick up truck to bring back. He was accompanied on the trip by Harold Casper, who helped at the station in the music ministry but whose main service was as the go-between for the mission in matters relating to the government.



**Harold & Juliene  
Casper**

Roy and Harold were gone a couple of weeks, staying at the home of Roy's parents. Dad Smith helped them build a box over the bed of the pick up which was then filled with things they wanted to bring back to Guatemala. The box was filled as full as it could be with transmitter parts for use at TGN and also for David Solt to use at stations operated by the Latin American Mission in the other Central American countries. Roy remembers the import duty charged on the truck as being 10% of what he paid for it, maybe about \$35. Because TGN had a "public radio" kind of relationship with the government of Guatemala, there was a minimum amount of paper work required to bring into the country things for use at the station. There was also import exoneration so things being used at the radio stations could be brought in duty free.



**Ed & June Yoder**

We originally were to stay in the country for about 3 months to help out while the Yoder family sought medical help in the States. But, things did not go quickly for the Yoder family as they went through medical tests for their daughter. It became apparent that they would not be able to return very soon to Guatemala. They needed to stay close to medical care for her. As it turned out later, they were unable to return to the ministry there.

So it was that, the mission asked us to stay on at TGN until we could be replaced by two couples who would be coming to work at the station after they would complete their two year course of Spanish study at a language school in Costa Rica. Roy contacted Wycliffe about this, which had its own schedule for our training program, to inform that mission about this further change in our lives. The three months that we had been scheduled to stay in the country was extended to almost two full years.

There were many aspects to the ministry of the radio station. TGN and TGNA are known as La Emissora Radio Cultural, cultural radio.

Literacy programs produced by the government were aired over TGN in a "public radio" relationship with the government.

The missionary staff created music programs with vocal segments accompanied by piano, violin, organ, and vibraharp, which looks much like a marimba.





There were various children's programs, a children's choir and an adult choir. Bible correspondence courses were offered over the air with many lessons being received by mail every day. There were also short wave broadcasts beaming Christian programs in English toward the United States.



In addition to the missionary staff of three couples at the radio station, here are a few pictures of the Guatemalans working in the office, and behind the microphone. Left to right, here are Ruth, Maria Velia, Paco, Benjamin, Jorge and Jeremias.



When we first arrived in the country, TGN studios were located in a rural area known as El Campo. Two months after we arrived there was a service of celebration in honor of the fifteenth anniversary of the station. A huge tent was put up, guest speakers came and a huge crowd attended.



Not long after that the studios were moved from El Campo to a location in the city, directly behind the Central American Bible Institute (CABI). This was quite a project!

First an existing building at the back of the CABI facility had to be remodeled to accommodate the offices and studios. Air conditioning and soundproofing were added.



Another section was added on to serve as a technical workshop.



Then, a high wall was added inside the existing walls around CABI to enclose the station buildings. A new entrance gate and guard house was added. The studios, offices, and workshop buildings were cement block construction, while the higher enclosing walls were of adobe bricks. Roy was in charge of all these modifications including the hiring of local men to do most of this work.

Every year a crew of men came from Washington State to work on various projects that needed doing. They were present at the time this construction was being done. What a great help they were!

Shown here is the before and after of the new entrance gate and guard house.



## RADIO MAYA – TGBA

The remotest radio station ministry of the Central American Mission was in the northern part of the country in a village named Barillas. This small station was TGBA, Radio Maya, and it broadcasts the gospel in several local indigenous languages. As mentioned above in the overview of CAM radio stations, TGBA is still in operation.



Traveling to Barillas was via the Pan American highway with a stop at the city of Huehuetenango.



There we visited the school for the children of missionaries who lived in rural areas and villages. Roy did some work on the electrical power regulator and food refrigerator there at the school. We enjoyed getting acquainted with the house parents and teachers, thinking that one day our own daughter Ruth might be one of their students. It was a good place to rest up before continuing on the remaining 89 miles of the long journey to Barillas along dirt roads with huge pot holes, mud, rocks and bumps. In those days it was about an 11 hour drive. Roy made the trip several times, Ruth and I went along on two trips.

The first time we traveled to Barillas was during a hard rain. It got dark long before we arrived and at one point we had to work our way carefully around a fallen tree blocking part of the road. It was touch and go, getting around it without plunging over the steep cliff on one side! David Eckstrom, who was traveling with us, got out in the rain to walk ahead and guide us.



Another time Roy's sister Barbara came to visit us from Phoenix, AZ and we took her along to Barillas. It was quite an adventure for her, as it was for us every time. I remember that particular trip as one of sunshine rather than of rain.

The Radio Maya or TGBA transmitter was in a small room at the base of the tower in this picture.

It rained a lot there in that mountainous part of the country, I read once that they get 270 inches a year, but Bill Veith has told me it may have been as much as 9 meters or about 367 inches a year! All that moisture made the dirt roads very muddy. Out walking once in the rain, Helen Eckstrom and I sank above our ankles into the muck as we tried to step on rocks where ever we could find one.

The 4 towers in use by TGBA then had an antenna that became untuned when it rained. So one of the first things Roy needed to do was replace the wire antenna between the towers with one that was not affected as much by all the rain. This provided a much better signal so the broadcasts could be heard a lot further away.



There were three missionary couples living in Barillas.



One couple was David and Helen Eckstrom, who were mainly involved in Bible translation, evangelism and teaching. They could hike many miles a day up and down the mountains right along with people who lived far from any roads at all and were used to walking many miles at a time. As of the time of this writing David and Helen speak and have done translation in five languages. In addition to Spanish which is the official language, in 1996 the Guatemalan government recognizes 21 Mayan language groups still being spoken in the country today.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics breaks those groups down even further so in addition to Spanish, it lists 51 languages still being spoken in the country at the time of this writing.

Jim and Gail McKelvey had only recently arrived from language school in Costa Rica. They were involved in the ministry of the Instituto Evangelica Berea, the Bible Institute which trained young men for ministry.



**Jim & Gail McKelvey**



**Bill & Margie Veith**

Bill and Margie Veith are another couple who lived there. Bill kept the radio station running and taught at the Institute. Margie did some music on the air and in the local church. Pastors who lived further out in the mountains would sometimes come into town for short Bible training courses, music lessons, shopping in the market and fellowship with other pastors.



Bill and Margie had built their home of cement blocks and corrugated metal for the roof. It was a comfortable, roomy house. A generator powered the radio station for broadcasting two hours each evening. Electricity for the house was available only during those two hours. The light from kerosene lanterns was used the rest of the time.

There were not always enough lanterns to go around, especially when there was company in the house. That's when Margie had to wash dishes in the dark. As I dried dishes in the dark beside her, I asked how she could tell if the dishes were clean. She cheerfully replied that she had learned to feel the clean. After all these years I remember that, and sometimes purposely do not look at a dish as I wash it. Its true, you can tell if a dish is clean by the way it feels.

People would come from more remote areas for medical or dental help and trading at the market. Sometimes a couple would ask Bill to marry them. I had the privilege to attend one such wedding.

The little church in Barrillas had two Sunday services, one in Spanish and another in the local Indian or indigenous language. When we entered the small church for the wedding, there were a few people sitting here and there on pews made of wooden planks. I did not see anyone who looked like they were getting married, so I thought the happy couple had not yet arrived. But sure enough, they were there, along with their little boy about 5 years of age and a baby. I was told that when couples living together according to their native customs in remote areas of the countryside become Christians, they usually want to be married in church. They do this when they get an opportunity to make a trip to any town or village that has a church.



Following the wedding ceremony a lady from the church opened her home for a small reception. In her small house we sat on low benches around a fire pit in the center of the dirt floor. Cups of coffee and sweet tasting bread were served to us. The bride appeared to be kissing her baby but then I realized that she was transferring chewed bread from her own mouth to her baby's mouth. Before this, I had not thought about what mothers do to feed their babies when there are no prepared baby foods available, no blenders to make your own baby foods and no electricity to run a blender if you did have one!

### **A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY!**



**Barber Shop**



**Carrying water**



**Carrying wood**

Guatemala is a land of volcanoes, of which a number are active, often creating earthquakes some almost unnoticeable, but others were pretty strong. Quakes were common enough that we ignored them most of the time.

Pacaya volcano is close to Guatemala City and has been belching smoke, steam, and streams of lava on a constant basis ever since 1965. One day a group of us drove as close to it as we could, then climbed up to a ridge near the crater. It was slow going in deep gritty lava cinders about the size of peas, called scoria. Our feet sank in ankle deep so that for every step forward we slid backwards downhill.



Roy made the climb with Ruth sitting on his shoulders. It seemed like we would not ever get to the top, but we finally did. We enjoyed sitting on the ridge watching the mountain perform. The sound was like that of a canon booming. Coming down was much easier than going up had been! We simply sat down in the lava and slid on our bottoms. Not a good idea to wear clothes that you cared about!

Today there are guided tours to take the many tourists to the best viewing places on the mountain.



Chichicastenango is a city famous for its mixture of Spanish and native cultures. The main plaza is where the market takes place. There are two Catholic churches, facing each other from either end of the plaza.

Chichicastenango was then and continues to be a popular tourist location.



Up a hillside in the woods we saw a place where chickens were sacrificed and candles burned. The shaman there offered to sacrifice and pray for good fortune on our daughter. We declined his offer.

The city of Antigua was the first capitol of Guatemala but was severely damaged by earthquake and floodwaters spilling from a lake on a volcano. After that, the capitol was moved to Guatemala City.



Antigua now is a lovely older city full of churches damaged by earthquakes. The ruins were in much disrepair when we saw them, but more recent pictures on the internet show that much restoration has been taking place over the years since then. Antigua is also a major tourist attraction.



To renew tourist status on our passport, several times during the two years we were in Guatemala, Roy traveled alone to San Salvador, the capitol of El Salvador. Ruth and I went along on two occasions. Whether Roy was alone or we all went, we stayed away a couple of days at a time visiting in the home of David and Georgina Solt, missionaries with the Latin American Mission (LAM) who were also in a radio station ministry. It was a hilarious experience being with this couple and their lively family of six children.

One of Dave's sons now has his own electronic equipment manufacturing company, and the transmitters now in use at TGN are his design. It is a small world we share!

Twice Roy had the chance to make trips with David through Honduras and Nicaragua to help him with maintenance work on the LAM radio stations in those countries.

## SOME OF OUR FREE TIME

Once we were able to take a short trip to Puerto Barrios on the east coast. There we played in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

On another occasion, Noe took Roy fishing in the Pacific Ocean. They did not catch anything but were able to purchase a large Bonita, a member of the tuna species, from another fisherman.



Mayan ruins abound in the country and are very interesting.

We visited these ruins at Zaculeu in the State of Huehuetenango.

Once a year we had opportunity to vacation at property used by the mission as a vacation retreat for its staff. This was at beautiful Lake Atitlan, a gorgeous blue lake surrounded by volcanoes, which many people consider to be the most beautiful lake in the world.



On one occasion the entire staff of the radio station and their families went to the lake together. It was a wonderful time of swimming, playing games, and fellowshiping as a group.



## PMT VISITS

Practical Missionary Training (PMT) was a summer of ministry and training for college students who were preparing to become missionaries. PMT and CAM cooperated together each summer in their ministries. Students participating in the PMT program, would arrive in the country as a group, then were scattered around into the homes of resident missionaries where they would live for three to four weeks at a time.



Ken and Mary Royer, a couple who had attended Biola College with us, and who had in fact announced their engagement the same night we did at the annual Spring Banquet, were the leaders of the ministry of PMT during our time in Guatemala. Ken and Mary now work with a group called Link Care, a counseling center specifically for missionaries and those in Christian ministry.

We had the opportunity of housing a young man from New York while he helped at the radio station. In addition to their time with CAM, the students also visited and participated in other ministries in Mexico and other Central American countries.



## THE LAST MONTHS

Roy worked on the radio equipment fixing as much as he could during our first year there. But as the days marched on into the early months of 1966, the age of the equipment combined with technical problems brought the mission leadership to a decision that a new 10,000 watt transmitter needed to be built. It was necessary for Roy to travel to the United States to purchase needed items for the project.

First the design had to be drawn up. Then a very long list of electronic items, wire, tools, and other things that were not related to electronics but which were needed, was compiled. This preparation lasted several months. All of this in addition to the on-going work of maintaining the station, kept Roy even more busy than usual.

But there came a day when he stayed away from work with an upset stomach. Roy has always been one to keep to his regular routine, plugging along, even when not feeling at his best, so staying home from work was a bit unusual for him. At first I did not think much about this change in his behavior. I was busy because Roy's cousin Carol Crook, a nurse, was visiting us. Carol had spent that summer in a medical ministry in Honduras. On her return trip to the States, she had stopped to visit us for a few days.

Carol and I were enjoying doing girl things together while Roy just sat around at home. After a couple of days Carol commented that he appeared jaundiced, stating that she was sure he had hepatitis. Sure enough, not much later, he began non-stop vomiting and his urine turned the color of coca cola, which we were told was a sure sign of hepatitis! Again, Dr Rios made a house call.

Roy was hospitalized for about a week with an intravenous line of fluids going into his arm. He was fed a bland diet including one item that seemed to be served at every hospital meal, a squash called “guisquil” (pronounced wis-keel). He came to dread seeing it. Guisquil was one vegetable that neither of us ever learned to enjoy!

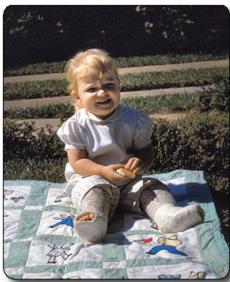
It was only a few weeks later that Roy flew to Chicago to begin collecting the items on the long list that were needed to build the new transmitter. Ruth and I stayed in Guatemala and had a number of dubious adventures while he was away!

## GALE’S ADVENTURES

One night there was a rattling of the front door, which was locked. It woke me up and frightened me out of my wits. I was sure some robber was trying to get in the house! With trembling hands I phoned Don, who lived about three blocks away. He asked if I had left the porch light on, which I had. He told me to look out the window and see if I could see anyone. I did not see anyone at all. When the sound did not occur again, Don concluded that it was probably a very large moth flying at the porch light! Yes, they do have very large moths there, known as hawk moths! One species having a wing span up to 12 inches wide.

By the time Ruth was a two year old, her legs had become quite bowed. The doctors at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, California had recommended the orthopedic surgeon who was seeing her in Guatemala. He had been educated in the United States, so when he recommended doing corrective surgery, I felt confident it was the right thing to do. It was the same course of treatment that had been given to me as a small child.

Surgery was scheduled for some time ahead and ended up taking place during the time Roy was in the States. I was able to stay day and night with Ruth for the entire time that she was in the hospital. Don and Pat sat with me through the surgery and were at the hospital with us as often as possible during that week. When we returned home, Ruth had casts on both legs.



It was while Ruth was in the hospital, and I was staying with her constantly, that some changes occurred in Rebecca’s life. She was unable to continue to work for me. Pat helped me hire another young lady named Maria. I could not have gotten along without Maria’s help! She carried Ruth as we rode downtown on the bus for check ups at the doctor’s office. She was a wonderful help at home anytime there was a need to carry Ruth.

Maria was a country girl, so coming to the city for the first time had some new experiences for her. Maria had never used a telephone. She hated to answer it when it rang, holding the receiver as far as possible from her ear, and then yelling at it. An elevator was a mysterious thing too. She rode in an elevator for the first time when she accompanied Ruth and I to a doctor appointment downtown. When I stepped into the tiny “room” she looked mystified. Not realizing that she did not know what the “room” was, I told her to get in. When the door closed behind her, she almost panicked but when it began to move she about died!

When Maria went to the market for me, she would buy herself a length of sugar cane to suck on. As she peeled back the outer bark, she would drop it on my living room floor, much like peeling a banana. We had to have some lessons then in what is appropriate for “city life”.

In our small kitchen there was a water heater about the size and shape of a portable dishwasher. It was just the right height for me to stack things on top of, as if it were more counter space. I was in the habit of making all our bread myself. One day I realized that the cement tile floor was warm there by the water heater so began setting the bread pans on the floor. The bread would quickly raise right up! I was able to get the bread baking done in record time. This went on for some time, probably for weeks. Then one morning while Roy was in the U.S., I awoke to discover the kitchen was flooding with warm water!

Suddenly I understood why the floor had been warm. The pipes running under the cement tile floor from the water heater to the sink had corroded producing a small leak of warm water into the dirt under the kitchen floor tiles. Slowly the leak had grown in size until now there was so much water that it was seeping upward through the cement floor into the house! It was creeping through the kitchen and advancing toward the living room. I hollered for Maria to wake up. We grabbed broom and mop and began to push the water out the kitchen door onto the patio that had a drain in the center.

I grabbed the phone and called Don who had to come all the way from the radio station to turn off the water. When Don arrived he hunted all over for the shut off valve for the water only to realize that it had to be under a huge pile of dirt on the sidewalk in front of the house! The streets in our subdivision had been dug up weeks before while new pipe was laid for the sewers. Of course this was not done a block or two at a time. No, they dug up ALL the streets in the subdivision at the same time and left them all dug up the entire time they worked on the whole area! We were able to drive our cars alongside the ditch and park on the few clear spaces in front of our houses, but there was not room to turn into our driveway because our gate was blocked with piles of dirt. We kept our cars outside the metal fences around our yards.

Not until several months later after all the pipes had been replaced did they cover any of the ditches back up with dirt! I did not have a shovel, so Don had to drive back to TGN to get one. Then he had to dig through the dirt piles in front of our house until he found the shut off valve in the sidewalk. Maria and I spent the entire morning sweeping water out of the house!

Once the water was turned off, Don hired a plumber, who had to break up the kitchen floor and dig down into the mud to get at the leaking pipe. The next step was to wait for parts to be shipped in from someplace. Maria and I stepped over the big holes in the floor for nearly a month until the pipes were finally repaired and the cement floor tile replaced. During those weeks we had cold water so could cook and use the bathroom but there was no hot water. We showered at the Rutledge's home three blocks away.

## ROY'S ADVENTURES

Meanwhile, Roy was very busy in Chicago. He stayed at the home of an engineer-teacher mentioned above, Austin Anderson, while he gathered many kinds of things. It was quite a mixture: wire, knobs, switches, lots of hardware, transformers, resistors, capacitors, motors, fans etc, for building the transmitter. A lawn mower for keeping the grass on the large antenna property under control, some tape recorders, another radio tower, and even a piano that had been donated by Moody Bible Church. The original builder of TGN transmitters, P K Myre, (on left in this photo) was the primary source of most large items but there were many donations by others.



To haul all of this, Roy had to purchase a large enclosed truck. He drove the fully loaded truck to Miami, FL. There it was loaded onto a ferry that traveled weekly across the Caribbean to the port city of Puerto Barrios on the east coast of Guatemala.

Since this was not a passenger ferry, Roy flew back to Guatemala City from Miami, arriving home after being away for nearly a month. It was another week until the ferry arrived in Puerto Barrios. It was then necessary to meet the ferry and drive the truck back to Guatemala City. So Harold Casper and Roy traveled together in a truck to Puerto Barrios.

There an armed guard of soldiers met them. At that time rebel activity was frequent and often severe in the rural areas in the eastern part of the country. It was necessary to protect electronic equipment, which would have been a desirable commodity for guerillas to possess or sell to finance their rebel activities.

While Roy and the others walked through the dimly lit hold of the ferry toward the truck, Roy suddenly stepped off into thin air. He fell approximately 15 feet down an opening where a metal ladder descended into the blackness of the bowels of the ferry. The other men heard him scream as he fell. He landed on a square platform, striking his back on a railing that enclosed it. If the platform and railing had not been there, he would have fallen much further and probably been killed.

This happened on the day of our fourth wedding anniversary. I almost became a widow that day! But God had other plans for us both, protecting Roy in the wonderful, mysterious ways He has as He works in our lives. Roy had some back pain from bruising but otherwise was unharmed.

The drive back to Guatemala City was made with an escort of a couple armed military jeeps and at least one armed guard riding with Roy in the truck. The trip was made safely, without any unpleasant incidents.

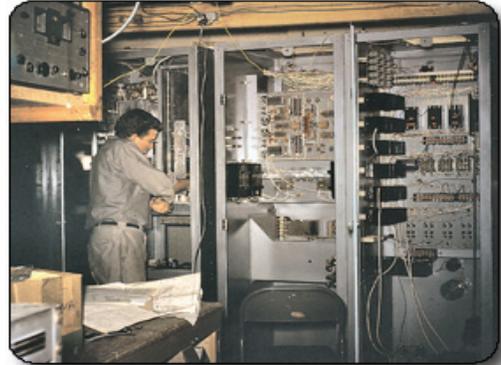


**Noe prepares sheet metal...**

After clearing customs, the real work began. Everyone at the station had a hand in some part of the unloading and unpacking of the truck, a major project in itself. Then followed the organizing of a mountain of materials and finally the construction of the new transmitter began.

The pressure was great to complete the construction of the new transmitter as much as possible and run important tests on it, so work was carried out for long hours every day, and late into the nights. Noe and Roy worked side by side, and Noe's faithfulness to that ministry reminds me of the verse in Proverbs chapter 17 verse 17 that says,

“A good friend sticketh closer than a brother”.



**...Its coming along. We're getting there...**

While all this was going on, our second Christmas in Guatemala arrived.

Antonio and his family who lived at the antenna site, wanted very much to visit with their family for the holiday. However, it was necessary that someone be at the site at all times.

So it came about that we spent Christmas day at the antenna site. I did not like the idea of being out at that isolated country spot for Christmas! It wasn't exactly my idea of the way one spent Christmas! I'm afraid my attitude was not very good! We had a campfire meal and Roy did some antenna work way up on the tower.



I remember trying to hold on to the ends of unruly wires so they would not become tangled while he worked. Ruth had a great time playing outdoors in the warm sunshine.

## GOING HOME AGAIN

As I mentioned before, two new families were scheduled to replace us as soon as they would arrive from Costa Rica where they had been in Spanish language school for two years. As the construction on the new transmitter began, we were already closing in on the date for them to arrive. Our family was scheduled to leave the country as soon as the two new technicians were given a brief introduction at the radio station.

On the last day of January Ruth bumped her leg quite hard while playing on stairs and cracked the right shin bone. She had to have another cast put on, which she wore for three weeks but came off in time for us to leave the country. It was a prelude to problems she would have in the future with healing bones.

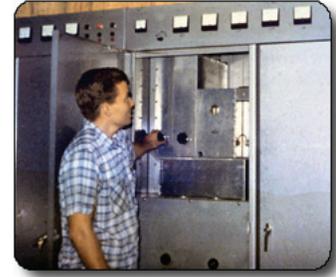
The construction of the transmitter was still not quite complete in January 1967 when the new families arrived from language school in Costa Rica to replace us.

In order to give our rental house to one of the new couples, we moved into an apartment in CABI, the Central American Bible Institute. We lived there while construction of the new transmitter went forward; the new men were introduced to the radio ministry and the construction of the transmitter, the broadcasting studios and the rural antenna site.



During this time, I was mostly involved with packing our belongings into 55 gallon barrels for shipment back to the U.S.

When the day came for us to leave Guatemala, the transmitter was still not complete. Although the construction of it was almost done, except for finishing touches, it had not yet been tested for use in broadcasting. Roy wanted to stay to see this job through to completion, but funds for our support had run out at the mission headquarters and the new men were eager to carry on the work themselves.



...cutting it close!



Our return to the U.S. in late March was by a propeller driven airplane from Guatemala City to New Orleans, a non-stop flight. The flight was a “white knuckle event” for me since I had not ever flown before. Another missionary wife Doris Cassell, the mother of Gail McKelvey, told me to remember that “underneath are the Everlasting Arms”. It helped some, but to this day I am still a chicken when it comes to flying.

From New Orleans we took a train to Dallas where we spent a few days at the CAM mission headquarters. After that we traveled to Phoenix, Arizona to spend a month with Roy’s family.

## A PERSONAL TESTIMONIAL

Our dear friend David Luna has been mentioned previously in this chapter as one who listened to radio TGN while growing up in Guatemala. Having dinner with David and his lovely wife Marion recently, David talked about the ministry of radio in his life.



At the age of 15, David was sent to Latina America, a Christian school in Guatemala City, which had been founded by missionaries, both American and Guatemalan. The boys and girls were in separate dormitories and had house parents.

David remembers listening to TGN at school and that the radio staff came to school retreats and chapel meetings at the school.

He says that the Biblical teaching on the radio, added together with church and the school, was very important in his growth in understanding of the Gospel and in bringing him to faith in Christ.

David feels that because of the programs of literacy, education and the good quality of music, TGN was a very popular station with many people including those who were not Christians.

Ludin Reyes the son of Noe, also attended Latina America and was there at the same time David was.

Eventually David and Ludin met again here in this country and have maintained a friendship over the years since.

Ludin became a pilot serving his country in missions along with his wife Becky who is a nurse.





## CHAPTER 6 – WASHINGTON STATE



April 1967 found us in Phoenix at the home of Roy's parents and sister. There was much to do sorting through all our belongings which had been left in their garage, and packing things in a small trailer to take to Washington State. It was our pleasure to speak in their church telling about the ministries being carried on via radio in Central America.

Coming back to the States, was a sort of culture shock in reverse. There is so much of everything in this country! The abundance of consumer goods seemed overwhelming. It took some adjusting to have so much available to us again. People had begun to install dishwashers in their homes, a luxury that I was sure I would never indulge in!

Because of our time at TGN, our main interest of possibly serving as members of a mission organization, had shifted from Wycliffe Bible Translators to the Central American Mission and the radio work in Guatemala. But we still had an application active at Wycliffe.

If we were to join Wycliffe, I would need the one summer of linguistic training required by that mission. Since we were unsure which mission we might end up joining, we decided to go ahead with the linguistic study, and we found that there was one session scheduled to be held in the University of Washington.

### SEATTLE

Dad and mom had moved to Lynnwood Washington, a bit north of Seattle, so as soon as we could we traveled north visiting friends and speaking at churches as we drove toward Seattle from Arizona.



At the time, Dad was working at the Port of Seattle at Pier 91, a government pier from which supplies were shipped to Viet Nam.

Dad operated the largest floating crane north of San Francisco which, if I remember correctly, was called the YD.

He loaded many a ton of ammunition into ships for that war effort.



We stayed at the home of my parents in Lynnwood for several weeks until the summer school session at the University of Washington began. Then our little family of three moved into a room in a fraternity house at the University. I attended my first session of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the linguistic training program associated with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Ruth attended the pre-school that SIL had for children of students in that program. Since Roy had already taken the course in 1961, he took employment at Boeing Field, in the Electronics Maintenance and Calibration department.



When the SIL summer session ended, we moved into a small basement apartment right across the street from Emmanuel Bible Church where we had begun to attend. It was also right across the street from Seattle's lovely Woodland Park Zoo. We loved taking a picnic supper across to the zoo, enjoying the lovely gardens and the animals in the evening hours.



During the year that we lived in that apartment, it became evident that we were not going to return to Guatemala. Two couples had replaced us at TGN for the radio ministry and there was another single man in training to go to the station. Consequently, we were not really needed in that radio ministry. In addition we were not members of the Central American Mission since we had gone there on such short notice as temporary helpers.

The next several years became a time of transition for us, meaning that we began to rethink our future. Although we still had a portion of an application for membership to Wycliffe in an active state with that mission, we were uncertain about following through on completing that application. We did a lot of soul searching; analyzing our two years of service in Guatemala, our training, our goals, our motivations, Ruth's probable future medical needs, as well as my own. We were trying to imagine just what our future could consist of if we were not to become members of either CAM or WBT.

It was a kind of emotional and spiritual time of turmoil for us. Were we sure missionary work was what we had been "cut out for", "called to be", "gifted by God to do?" What we began to long for was a nest, a home of our own where we could settle down, concentrate on our family and just be quiet until God would show us what life would have for us next.



In June 1968 with the help of Uncle Milton who was a realtor, we were able to buy our first home where we lived for the next four years, near Seattle's Greenlake area. That four-year period was the longest time that I had ever lived in one house.

Ruth began kindergarten at Fairview Elementary School.



**Our first home, in Seattle**

## **OUR FAMILY GROWS**

Now that we were settled into our own home and a routine of work, study, church and family life; we began to think about adding another child to our family. Because I had previously had two miscarriages, we reasoned that God probably did not want us to have any more children of our own. Plus an adopted child would not inherit the medical problem that Ruth had inherited from me.

Adopting turned out to be very easy for us. There were many newborns available at the time in this country. We went to a Christian counseling agency that sometimes had unwed mothers needing to adopt out their babies. We were told to expect it to take about nine months, as if we were having our own baby.

Eight months later, a phone call came suddenly, telling us that a baby boy had been born on August 13, 1968 just two days before, whom we could have the very next day!

Roy came home from work immediately and we fell all over ourselves getting things arranged at home, setting up the nursery, buying things we did not have yet. It was a very fast preparation for an addition to our family!

The next morning, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, we drove to the hospital to receive our dear little boy right from the nursery. We named our little son Stephen Michael Smith. Ruth was the most excited and best big sister any little boy could have had!



Our adoption became final after one year.

Our little “home nest” was fuller now, feeling more cozy all the time as the months slipped away. But to some extent it still continued to be a time of emotional and spiritual turmoil about the future. Longing for more contentment spiritually, we began to search for another place to worship and found Sunset Hill Bible Church.

The pastor was teaching a series about the essence, or character of God. Some things that describe God in the Bible are:

**Sovereign -- King or Ruler of all**  
**Omnipotent -- all powerful**  
**Omnipresent - present everywhere**  
**Omniscient -- all knowing**  
**Veracity -- truth**  
**Love -- loves always**  
**Immutability -- unchangeable**  
**Righteous -- perfect righteousness, morally pure, sinless**  
**Justice -- always just**  
**Eternal Life -- lives always**

This was not new teaching to us, but the in-depth series of lessons which went on for several months were what our hearts were hungry for at that time in our lives. As we focused in detail over a period of extended time on the wonderful character of our God, we discovered a deeper sense of peacefulness growing within us.

One of the members of the church was a gentleman closely associated with the Institute For Creation Research who taught a class at church about the Biblical flood. It was the first time I had heard creation taught in detail. I have always believed that God said exactly what He meant when He inspired the Word in written form, so was not ever really comfortable with the theory of evolution. But not being a person of science myself, I had to accept it. Now for the first time, I heard a man of science speak directly to that issue!

How exciting it was to find out that there actually were learned people who were studying the sciences and physical evidences and concluding that creation and the flood had happened just as God said it did in the Bible, in six literal 24 hour days. Just knowing that people were investigating it from the viewpoint of creationism, put my heart at rest. I would continue to trust that God says exactly what He means when He speaks to us in His Word. What a person believes on either side of this question is in the end a choice made in faith.

Being out of radio work after being focused in that direction for a number of years, was hard for Roy. He worked at Boeing for a year then took a job at radio stations KGDN AM & FM at King’s Garden, a large Christian center. It is now known as CRISTA. Being in radio, Roy was announcing the news throughout each day, sometimes having to announce events that were horrifying.

On June 5, 1968 he was on the air when the news came across the “wires” that Robert F. Kennedy, the brother of former President John F. Kennedy, had been shot at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles during a press conference in the hotel ballroom. Mr. Kennedy died 25 hours later at the Hospital of the Good Samaritan, the same hospital where our Ruth was born.



On July 20, 1969 Roy was at the microphone to announce the exciting landing of the Apollo 11 space craft, the first manned space mission to land on the moon.



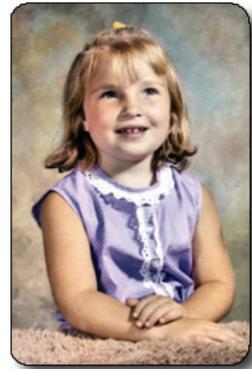
In addition to the news, most of the time KGDN AM broadcast back to back Bible programs, but the FM part used large tape decks automated to mix “middle of the road” contemporary music. This part of the ministry was centered around helping listeners come to know Christ.

Each evening a team of follow up personnel were on call for listeners who would like to be counseled concerning faith in Christ and His work on the cross for us.

Part of Roy’s ministry was the production and then airing of short 1-2 minute “fish-hooks” that contained provocative content as bait for hungry or troubled hearts to call the station for this follow up.

There was an ongoing response to this ministry because after the counseling, the callers often needed friends to support them in local churches.

These were growing years for Ruth, and her legs slowly bowed again, just as mine had. She was seen regularly in the medical clinic at Children’s Hospital in Seattle. It was at this clinic that we learned doctors in the United States had begun to delay corrective surgeries, except in cases of severe bowing of the legs, until children were older. This delay was in the hope of having to do only one surgery, rather than two or more of them.



Because I had not been in treatment since age 14, I was unaware of changes in treatment when surgery had been advised to us in Guatemala. If we had stayed in the States, it is possible Ruth would not have had surgery at the young age of two and a half. It saddens me to realize that our daughter was put through what may have been unnecessary pain.

This was the time of life when I began to really learn about what takes place in our bodies because of this medical problem and about new treatments for the rickets. Up to this time neither Ruth nor I had ever been prescribed anything other than vitamin D. Although we do not lack vitamin D, for some people as early as the 1940’s, large doses of vitamin D had been prescribed because laboratory tests showed that it gave some aid in treating the rickets present in our bones. Why the rickets occurred at all continued to be a mystery.

By the time we began going to the clinic at Children’s Hospital, medical research had shown that this problem is caused by an inability of the kidneys to function properly. It is called a “renal leak”. Due to a genetic mutation on one gene, the kidneys are unable to absorb phosphorous, which is important in bone and tooth formation and growth.

When this “leak” was discovered in medical research, our treatment was altered to include taking phosphorous along with the vitamin D. Treatment now consists of monitoring the blood and urine levels of various minerals and juggling doses in an effort to keep all at appropriate levels. Those levels can change even daily due to a variety of things, including our personal consistency in taking our medications. So we both began on a life-long schedule of taking phosphorous and Vitamin D and of clinic visits for periodic laboratory testing.

Eventually we were referred to Dr. David Baylink, who was doing research on our disease, at the Veterans Hospital in Tacoma. It was a much longer drive for us to go to Tacoma, but because Dr Baylink was using both of us in his research, we received treatment at no charge to us.

I had to purchase two forms of mineral powder in bulk from a drug supply house. The phosphorous powder was small clear crystals. The potassium was a gritty powder. These two compounds had to be weighed to divide them into small doses and the small doses stored in zipper type plastic bags. In order to use these, I mixed one bag of each powder together, added water and stored it in a jar. We drank several doses per day of this mix.

We discovered that weather was a problem of sorts in storing these drugs in plastic bags, especially the phosphorous which was rather unstable in its form. If it got too cold, such as when being stored in a cold corner of a cupboard, the phosphorous crystals would bind together into a hard lump. This wasn't too drastic, we just put in the needed amount of warmed water and the phosphorous dissolved into the form we needed for mixing it with the potassium.

The biggest problem was when we drove to Phoenix in the summer, taking several batches along in the car. If it got real warm, the phosphorous would turn to liquid and leak out of the bags! Such a waste of drugs we had a couple times.

There is now an internet website for those of us who have this medical condition. Even though I have asked about it, no one else on the website has ever mentioned having to purchase drugs in bulk and measure them out like I had to do.

## POMEROY, WASHINGTON

Pier 91, a government owned pier where my Dad was working, was closed in 1971 because of government cutbacks. The Army Corp of Engineers offered Dad a job as a crane operator in the construction of dams being built on the Snake River in eastern Washington. The family moved to the small town of Pomeroy south of Spokane, close to the border of Idaho.

Dad was involved in the construction and later operation of two dams, Little Goose and Lower Granite. His work included operating cranes and other heavy equipment as well as piloting boats for work on the river itself.

After my parents moved to Pomeroy, they became acquainted with a man who worked with Dad at Little Goose dam. In discussing their children Dad discovered that this family was acquainted with Janie Bond, one of the girls who had been in Shriner's Hospital with me when we were both eight years old! Small world!



**Garfield County  
Courthouse Pomeroy**

Through them, I was able to contact Janie and enjoyed several letters from her. Until in one letter, she mentioned the Little People of America and asked if I belonged to it. That was the end of my contact with her! No way was I going to let her drag me into any group of short people!

Now for a few comments about my brothers who were growing up.

Keith, who had always wanted to get into farming, met a local girl in school whose father was a wheat farmer. Keith's father-in-law taught him the art of wheat farming.

Keith has been chairman of the board of Pomeroy Grain Growers. As a member of the Washington State Association of Wheat Growers, he has lobbied numerous times at the Washington State Congress at the capitol in Olympia in regard to farming issues. In conjunction with Washington State University's agriculture program, he has participated as a member of the Varietal Release Committee which has released approved varieties of wheat developed for increasing production and resistance to insects and diseases.



**Pomeroy Washington - Wheat fields are  
mainly on the tops of the rolling hills**



**Troy, Mom, Dad, Keith  
& me at 1997 reunion**



**Troy, Gale, Keith  
1984**

Keith's wife Shelley was raised in this house. When her parents retired from farming and moved into town, Keith and Shelley raised their family in this home.



**Mark, Adam, Becky,  
Keith, Shelley**



**A combine at work  
during wheat harvest.**



**Too much wheat for  
the elevators! 1971**



**Dad, Uncle Kenny, & Keith**



**Keith has some really  
big machines!**



More recently, Keith and Shelley built this modular home with a porch that allows a view over the fields for miles

Troy worked at the local grocery store during high school. After graduating he took up an apprenticeship in meat cutting and became a butcher for WareMart. He later returned to Pomeroy and purchased one of the two small grocery stores in town.



**Berglund's Food City  
in Pomeroy**



In more recent years Troy has relocated and is now the owner of the only grocery store in the small town of Joseph, Oregon, two hours south of Pomeroy, Washington.



**Berglund's Family Foods  
Joseph Oregon**



**Troy, Brandon  
Janeen, Andrea**

Troy has been “Uncle Sam” on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, his birthday, in both Pomeroy and Joseph.



## JOSEPH, OREGON

Uncle Sam kisses Mom

Joseph where Troy lives is also a great community for Artists, especially in bronze. The town has a bronze statue on almost every corner! We visited one of the foundries and saw



some of the artist's work being transformed to cast bronze.



This transformation is also an art form in itself, and requires a team of gifted artists, each

working in harmony with the others, to see the process successfully through to a finished work that is what the original artist wanted.

The town has a population that is constantly changing for the seasons of the year and the special events planned around the holidays or celebrations. Each event causes Troy to stock his shelves with slightly different products to meet the needs of the people who come. He really works long, hard hours.

One major thing for Troy is butchering during the hunting season. He hangs the meat of deer, moose and even bear to age it, then does all the cutting and wrapping.



Troy's home in Joseph

Throughout the year he prepares lots of excellent sausage and we sure have enjoyed it.



Panoramic view looking southwest from Troy's porch

# ALASKA

Three years after purchasing our home, we were faced with a balloon payment which would be payable in full in 1972. As that time drew closer, we realized we would not be able to save enough money to meet the payment on the amount of income we had at the time. We decided Roy would have to take higher paying work overseas to make money fast enough to meet the deadline on the payment. He applied to take a job in Alaska working for International Telephone and Telegraph, ITT, and took some tests, which he passed with flying colors. However, because he was self educated in electronics rather than having a college degree, he was denied the job. That was a big disappointment and Roy did not know what else he should try to do.

A couple of days later a phone call came from ITT, saying they had reconsidered Roy's application and test results and had decided that someone who could learn on his own, what Roy had learned, deserved a chance to use it. So he was hired! He flew away to Alaska in early 1971 where he earned \$4 per hour with a guaranteed 54 hour work week minimum, to work for most of the next year, while the children and I remained in our home in Seattle along with a dog and cat. \$4 an hour does not seem like much at today's wages, but at the time it was a large amount.

Roy's first stop as a new hire was in Anchorage for a week of orientation. Then for 1 month of training he was flown to a site called Sparrevohn in the mountains west of Anchorage. It was a very remote place, the closest inhabited place being tiny Lime Village, about 60 miles away.



Following that training, Roy was stationed on Umnak Island in the west part of the Aleutian Island chain (population 39 at the 2000 census). The government site there was part of White Alice system, one of many sites built by the US military as part of the Distant Early Warning system during the Cold War.

There is much information on the internet now about the various sites, including photos. Roy was at a site near Nikolski a very small town with a school (shown here) for the kids and one church, Russian Orthodox. Most of the folks who live in Nikolski are Aleut Native Americans.



I shipped cassette tapes of services at our Seattle church to Roy. When not working he spent his few hours of leisure time listening to the tapes, playing pool, riding motorcycles over the tundra on the island, having movie nights provided by management and sleeping. He also enjoyed fishing during a seasonal fish spawning run.



According to the Internet, the Cold War officially began on September 9, 1945 and continued almost 50 years until the official ending on December 26, 1991 after the fall of Communism in Russia. Since that date, the White Alice sites have been in the process of being dismantled.

**Roy's accommodations were at a site just North of Nikolski**

Communication with Roy was by letter and a phone call about once every week or two. Telephone communication was to be used primarily by the military, so we talked infrequently and unscheduled.

Having Roy leave us to go to Alaska quickly became a major trauma for me. As he flew away, the children and I were left standing alone on the airport concourse. Although I gathered up my courage, I began to be fearful that our lives would never be the same again. Now I was the sole person responsible to write checks to pay the bills, take care of our home and yard, look after the children, be the disciplinarian, and be there for our children night and day. At some point in the first month I began to feel overwhelmed by the loneliness.



Several weeks later I decided (in between phone calls from Roy) to go visit my family on the other side of the state where they were living in Pomeroy. I would drive over and spend a week with them! A great way to stop being lonely! Impulsively I piled the two kids into our little Volkswagen bug and began our trip across the state. Eastward we went, over the Cascade Mountains and down the other side.

As we approached the crossing point of the Columbia River in central Washington, I began to notice that the car did not seem to handle properly. Pulling into a roadside gas station, I told the attendant that I thought my radiator needed water. He gave me a strange look and said, “Lady, this car doesn’t have a radiator!” My reply was, “Oh, ok”, and off I drove down the highway.

I apparently assumed that nothing was wrong except an over active imagination on my part! It has been said that God takes care of fools, and He took care of us. We made the rest of the trip without incident except for Steve getting carsick during one twisty section of the road.

We spent a restful, refreshing week in Pomeroy with the family. Meanwhile Roy called our home several times. Unable to reach us there, he became frantic! There was no way I was able to contact him so I always had to wait for him to call me. In a fit of loneliness and sadness, I had decided to make the trip in between his calls. Consequently, he had not known that we had gone anywhere. In desperation, he finally called Pomeroy.

The morning we left to drive back home, we got only a few miles down the highway before the car died. A kind lady in a farmhouse by the side of the road let me use her telephone to call Dad. He towed our little car back to his house, where we stayed for three more days while repairs were made to our car.

I do not remember now what the car needed. But I realized then how truly our heavenly Father had taken care of us. He had gotten us safely to Pomeroy rather than allow us to break down far from Dad’s help. In spite of an impulsive, possibly rash decision to travel across the state, I learned a lesson from the experience, that Volkswagen bugs do not have radiators!

There were many more things yet to learn while Roy was away. One of which was how to pay bills! Paying bills was a painful time for me every month. While growing up, I had not ever gotten an allowance or had money of my own to learn to handle. My only experience with money had been while in college for one year. During that time, the small paycheck I received from my first job, had gone into a savings account. I had withdrawn cash in the form of money orders to pay my few bills, so never wrote checks or learned to balance a checkbook.

After we married, I wanted Roy to take care of our finances. Every time he had tried to teach me to do it, I became confused and angrily began to cry, forcing him to complete the task. Now with him so far away I had no “out”! I had to try to do it. As the year wore on, I got the bills paid, but the confusion in the checkbook register got worse and worse. There was quite a mess for Roy to straighten out when he finally came home from Alaska!

A note of trivia here, while Roy was in Nikolski, the United States Department of Energy did a test underground of a nuclear bomb November 6, 1971 on Amchitka Island, an uninhabited island far toward the western end of the Aleutian chain of islands. It was the largest underground nuclear test ever done in U. S. history up to that time.

There had previously been two other bombs tested in the same manner on that island, but leading up to the third test, there was a lot of discussion in the news about it, with opinions flying around about terrible earthquakes and tsunamis being generated, which might cause disasters all around. I was nervous thinking about the possibility Roy might be killed because Umnak Island is not so far from Amchitka Island.

When the explosion occurred far beneath the ground, the blast was 400 times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan at the end of WWII. It generated an earthquake of 7.0 on the Richter scale, but there were no tsunamis and no damages. PHEW!

## TOGETHER AGAIN

Roy stayed in Alaska almost a year, which was long enough to enable us to meet our commitment to the balloon payment on our home. We were able to celebrate Christmas as a complete family, and what a wonderful celebration we had! It was wonderful to be all together again!

There was a period of adjustment to this change in our home life. I had to get used to letting Roy be head of the house again. Roy had to get used to the constant noise of the children as they played and the normal commotion of family life.

The new year of 1972 began with Roy job hunting again. He was able to hire on quickly at John Fluke Company, an electronics manufacturing firm, located then in Mount Lake Terrace, a suburb north of Seattle.



He also tried his hand at faceting gem stones, getting training and a special machine. We took a trip into Montana to try mining for sapphires and found several small ones. It was a time of experimentation, to see what might work for a home business. We tried decoupage of photos, and Roy even considered a TV repair business.



At John Fluke Co Roy was in the repair and calibration of test equipment for a short while and then moved into the testing and calibration of dc and ac sources. He enjoyed it and learned much at Fluke.

With Roy returned from Alaska, and our home and work routines back in place as a united family, we began to long for another child. We tried to contact the same Christian counseling agency that had helped us adopt Steve, but discovered it was no longer in business. The next step was to approach the Washington State Children's Home Society. The first step in the state process was to attend a group meeting for prospective parents. At that meeting we were told that if any couple had children already, or could have their own children, that they should leave the meeting. The agency was a year and a half behind in supplying newborns to couples whom they had already approved to receive them!

This circumstance was due to the passing of laws allowing abortion. The availability of newborns had dropped off almost completely. If we would like to adopt a handicapped child, then we could stay for the meeting. We left the meeting with a lot to think about. We already had children and yes, we could have our own. Taking a child with a handicap would be an unknown. If we had a child of our own that inherited my bone condition, then at least we would know what we were dealing with medically. So we decided to try to have a child of our own.

An appointment with my doctor was made at the University, and I spoke to him about the possibility of having another child. He did not think there would be a problem other than the possible need for a C-section and the chance of passing the XLH along to any child. He asked me if I would agree to appear before a group of student doctors so they could see the effects of XLH on my bone structure. I agreed to that and found myself in the front of a small auditorium full of doctors. The effects of XLH on my bone structure and height were pointed out to the audience.

Explaining my disease to everyone, my doctor said that since there is a 50-50 chance with every pregnancy that the child will inherit XLH, any child I conceived might or might not have the condition. He said that male children usually are more affected by the bone deformities of XLH than female children. With the use of an amniocentesis test the sex of the child could be discovered and all male babies could be aborted, thus avoiding the more severe complications that a male child would have IF he were to inherit the XLH. The test would not show if the child had inherited the condition, only what sex the child was. (Thus by aborting all male children, I could be aborting one that did not have the XLH!).

I was asked if I would like to take advantage of amniocentesis if I did become pregnant. Without hesitation, I declined the use of any such test or options it would afford me to abort a boy baby. Instead, I said that I believed God is in control and could send an egg that was unaffected by the XLH if He chose to do so. If He chose to send one that was affected, we would deal with that just as we were already doing for both Ruth and I. After a brief silence, I was excused from the meeting without further comment from anyone.



In a very short time we were pregnant again. I had no problems during the pregnancy, felt good and had lots of energy.

Dad and Mom Smith came every year for a visit. Grandma taught Ruth how to crochet and Dad helped with lots of small projects. We were able to improve the yard and add a swing set for the children!



**Grandma Smith taught Ruth to crochet**

## **AH, SWEET COUNTRY LIFE**

Moving around as often as we did during my childhood, gave me an urge to be on the go now and then. As we inched up on four years of living in the same home, the longest I had ever lived in one house, a very strong urge came upon me that it was time to move again! Add to this a desire on Roy's part to start a small worm farming business on the side, while keeping his job at John Fluke Company.

Worm farming? Supposedly a bit of money could be made in supplying worms to bait shops. We decided to look around at homes for rent with acreage, see if the country life suited us. Try it out for a while.

We began to take long drives in the country, looking at properties that were for rent as well as for sale. We made an offer to purchase one 10-acre place near Arlington, about an hour north of Seattle, but another family made an offer first and purchased the property.



**Our rental home in Edmonds**

Instead of buying a place, we decided on renting five acres north of Seattle in Edmonds. We would try out country life first, then buy a place if we liked that life style.

Our rental house was equipped with a dish washer in the kitchen! I wasn't too pleased about this at first, but it didn't take me long to give in to its "charms", thus deserting my earlier scorn of such a "luxury"! In fact my readjustment to the life style and conveniences of this country has taken place sufficiently that I have become a typical consumer.

As I said before, we had decided to try to have another child, thus our second son Tait Nathaniel Smith was born.

Delivery was very quick much to the surprise of the doctor who broke the water and then went to a dinner party near the hospital. He fully expected me to need a C-section, saying that he would return after eating dinner, take some x-rays, and do whatever was needed to move the delivery along.

He was gone only a very short time when I had a strong sensation to push. The nurse checked me, grabbed the bed and began running down the hall to the delivery room dragging the bed with her.

Roy had not planned to see the delivery, but with all the excitement of the moment, someone yelled at him to get a gown on. Thus he ended up being there to squeeze my hand during the delivery.

Tait was born within minutes. Although he was called, the doctor was unable to get back to the hospital fast enough to be there for the excitement. So much for needing a C-Section!

In order to find out if Tait had inherited the XLH, blood was drawn for testing. The results came back negative, showing that Tait was free of the XLH! I was so relieved that for two days I cried every time I picked up our sweet baby!



**Tait Nathaniel Smith  
born October 20, 1973**

Until that time I had thought that it did not bother me to have this disease. That whatever God had for me in life I was all right with. I discovered at this time that the possibility of passing it on to another of my children was bothering me more than I had known! Having it myself was one thing, passing it on to my children was quite another thing!

Meanwhile, after getting settled into our rental house, Roy set about starting our worm farm. He purchased one bin complete with soil and worms, then built several other bins.

Overhead he built roofs to keep off the rain and ran electricity to each roof. Lights were installed in each roof which would be kept turned on at all times. Worms come out in the dark, so to keep them in their “beds” there had to be light on at all times. The next step was to heat the beds. Roy built a waterbed kind of heating element that would lay in the bottom of a bin. If it was a success, he would build one for each of the bins.



**First worm bed, complete with bedding soil & worms**

The heating element was a rectangle of 2x4's with a zig-zag design of 2x4's inside the frame, like a maze. Roy nailed sheet metal to the 2x4's, sandwiching this maze in between the two pieces of sheet metal with a hose attachment on each end. The next step was to attach a hose and fill the maze with water. If it held, we had a simple heating system that would run from a water heater, through the maze, out the other end and back to be reheated in the water heater. If that worked, all of the maze-heaters could be connected together and the water cycled through all of them.

When the construction of the first maze was complete, the moment of truth had arrived. Now to run a test, Roy connected the hose to the one finished heater, turned on the water and we sat back to wait for the water to travel through the maze and out the fixture on the other end. As the minutes passed, a bit of water began to leak out around the nail holes in the sheet metal. Hmmm, we hadn't expected that.

Slowly the sheet metal began to bulge up, lifting the frame off of the ground. Suddenly water began shooting out of every nail hole like sprinklers! You should have seen the look on Roy's face! Well at a time like that, you either laugh or you cry. We laughed!

Back to square one. Roy was driving our little VW bug back and forth to work every day. One day he stopped at K-Mart and bought up a bunch of garden hoses that were on sale. He came home with the VW bug so full of hoses he could barely see out the windows. He hooked all those hoses up end to end, then to the water heater and made a zig-zag maze of it in the bottom of all the worm beds. A much easier solution to the heating problem. Now the warm water flowing through the hoses kept the dirt in the bins at a comfy temperature for worms.

The bins were filled with soil and we began filling trash cans with rabbit manure. You see, worms eat stuff like that. A can full of manure and then some water, could sit a few days and turn into a nice “gravy”. Worms love it! Of course, you have to stir it now and then. Every couple days this food was scooped out with a saucepan and drizzled over the dirt in the worm bins.

Since we did not hear any complaints about the “menu”, I am sure we had the happiest worms in that part of town. Every night when we went to bed, we made sure the lights were turned on over the worm bins, so our worms stayed down in the dirt, snug and warm in their cozy beds.



**Stirring manure “gravy”**

After some time had passed, we felt it was time to harvest some worms for market. As we began gently digging through the dirt in the bins that morning, we found almost no worms at all! Where were the worms? Panic set in! What could have happened? Then we realized the overhead lights were... not on! Roy hadn't turned them off, had I? No, I hadn't either.

OH NO, we discovered that the power to the lights had gone off overnight! With no lights on, our livestock had stampeded! Hundreds, yes, thousands had galloped off in the darkness without making a sound! Who could have imagined it? \$\$\$ on the run!

So much for worms.

Moving right along in this tale, we were to learn by experience over the passage of time that Stephen had a very high pain tolerance. This meant that by the time he got around to letting us know he did not feel well, he was really quite sick.

Stephen's medical issues began the week he was scheduled to begin Kindergarten. He came down with a flu-like illness one week before the start of the school year. He developed very severe bloody diarrhea and was hospitalized for most of the next week.

I do not remember that we were ever told a name for what the problem was. However, because Seattle has an international airport, we were questioned about possible exposure to cholera from people who had been to other countries, such as the Orient. But we did not know anyone who had traveled outside the country.

I believe now that this illness was a preliminary episode of problems he was to develop some years later.

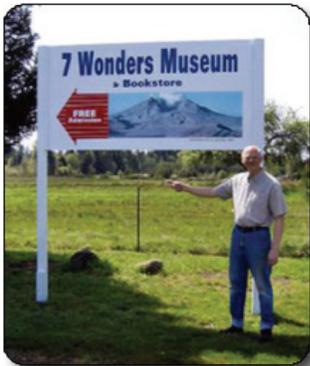


A major blessing at this time, was worshipping in Lynnwood Bible Church, a small church that was very close to our Edmonds home.

Our pastor and his wife were Lloyd and Doris Anderson. Our kids were close in age to theirs and really enjoyed playing together.

Lloyd and Doris have remained dear friends. Doris, who is a writer herself, has been a great encouragement to me in writing this story.

Continuing their ministry, Lloyd and Doris are the founders, stewards and staff of the Mt. St. Helens Creation Information Center and 7 Wonders Museum of Mount St Helens. This great place to visit and learn is located at 4749 Spirit Lake Highway, Silverlake, WA 98645.



The center is just off Interstate 5, on highway 504 going toward the volcano.

Friends helping them have put together a terrific web site at this url address, [7wonders.nwcreation.net](http://7wonders.nwcreation.net).

Generally open Monday through Saturday, 9am to 7pm, and Sundays, 12-6pm, you can drop by when visiting Mt. St. Helens or schedule a group tour or guided hike within the Monument. Call 360-274-5737 to schedule a group tour, hike, or presentation for your organization.



Lloyd also travels with his slide show. It is best to call before coming because occasionally they take a day off.

They also have a small bookstore of creation related materials for all ages from many sources, that includes gift items, CDs, and DVDs, as well as great books and pictures.

We love to visit with them as often as we can when we travel to Washington.

Mt St Helens sure looks different today after its major eruption Sunday at 8:32 AM May 18th 1980.



## BACK TO THE LAND

After two years in Edmonds, we received a phone call from a realtor who told us the property in Arlington on which we had made an offer two years before, was becoming available again. The family that had purchased it had defaulted on payments and was being evicted. The man of the family had disappeared. Some thought he had gone away to take up fishing in Alaska, which he had talked about doing. The property was to be put back on the market and if we were still interested we could make an offer.



**Our little house on Jim Creek Road, Arlington, WA**

So it was that we purchased 10-acres of property with a small house on Jim Creek Road, about 10 miles outside of Arlington, WA on the side of Ebey Mountain.

The house was in poor shape when we took possession because of damage the other family had done, mostly on the inside. We had quite a bit of clean up and repair to do to make it comfy.

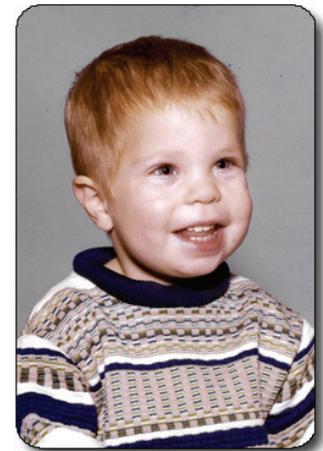
There was a small brown barn and a chicken shed on the lower half of the property along the highway. It was all in pasture except for the end where the house sat.

The upper half was hillside covered in thick trees and brush up the side of Ebey Mountain. A steep climb upward got you to a National Forest.

When Tait was about a year old, we became pregnant again. No questions were asked of us this time about if we wanted an amniocentesis test! My pregnancy was going very well but since we had just moved to this country location with no telephone installed as yet, the delivery of our fourth child was induced. Tait's birth had happened so fast, my doctor did not want me to be far away from the hospital when the labor would start. This birth was also a normal delivery, no C-Sections for me!

Since Tait had not inherited the XLH, doctors assured me it was very probable that Vernon would indeed inherit it. The odds were against another child being free of it. When Vernon was born blood tests were done but the results again were negative! Vernon had not inherited the XLH either!! We just chuckled; God can do what He wants, no matter what the "odds"!

I would like to quote just two verses of the seven in a song that touched my heart so profoundly in regard to being a mother. With each of my four children, holding the small new life in my arms has been a glorious experience, so full of wonder I could almost imagine catching a glimpse of the face of God.



**Vernon Matthew Smith**

### **MARY DID YOU KNOW? , by Mark Lowry**

**Mary did you know, that your baby boy  
Would one day walk on water?**

**Mary did you know, that your baby boy  
Would save our sons and daughters?**

**Did you know, that your baby boy  
Has walked where angels trod  
And when you kiss your little baby,  
You've kissed the face of God?**

**Oh, Mary did you know?  
Mary did you know?**



It was summer when we first moved to Arlington. Roy dug a wide shallow hole in the yard. The bottom and sides were covered with old carpet to keep the mud down and the hole then filled with water. It made a great “pool” that all the neighbor kids came to play in.

Our property was ten miles outside of the small town of Arlington.

Kindergarten, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade on up through high school were all bused into town to school.

Being in second grade, Steve attended Trafton School, a wonderful old building with only four classrooms.



**Trafton school**

The children from the rural area where we lived attended grades 1-4 here. It is a square building and has a bell tower on the top.

The school grounds had a small woods and creek running through it, a great place for recess! Each year in the Fall, the school had a fund raiser by holding a harvest festival with ears of corn, fresh off the stalk, donated by a neighboring farmer and roasted in a barbeque grill.

It was during the time we lived in Arlington that we went through a kind of “back to the earth” lifestyle. I made all our breads, pies, and cooked almost totally from scratch. On the mountainside we picked wild huckleberries. In our yard we picked blackberries and whatever we could salvage from our little garden that the slugs didn’t get to first! Ruth’s first employment was picking strawberries for the summer. Since that time, she has never liked strawberry jam. She says the kids would enhance the weight of their berry flats by putting slugs in under the berries! The slugs were probably quite happy to be embedded in something they loved to eat!

Fall is hunting season during which time we would often hear gunshots echoing off the mountains from someplace in the woods. One lovely fall morning I was sitting on the front porch when I heard a man’s voice yelling from the mountain, something about a dead man. Again and again, he called out for someone to call the police, he had found a body, he yelled. The police came, hiked up the mountain and sure enough, there was a badly decomposed body. It appeared that someone had shot himself with a rifle. The body was removed for identification. Later we heard that it was the man who had owned our property before us. He had committed suicide, not gone to Alaska to fish.

Steve was a child that had so much energy he could not sit still very long. He joined a soccer team in third grade. The parents car pooled getting the boys to and from practices. Steve and his friend Darrin were under orders to call us if for any reason they missed their ride after practice.

Then one evening it happened that they missed the ride. Instead of calling us, they decided it was a nice enough evening to walk home. Being afraid of strangers who might be driving by, they jumped down into the deep ditch beside the road each time a car approached. When they did not return, we began to worry about them so set out in our car to find them. Of course, we never saw them because they were in the ditch! Boy, were they in trouble when they finally arrived home after walking the 10 miles!

There were huge old cedar stumps on the hillside of our property, and all over the area around us, which were left from the days when the cedar trees were cut by hand with two or more men at a time on a long saw. The logs were then rolled down the hillsides on wooden skids and dragged by horses to a nearby mill.



These two photos of postcards found at usgarchives.org show the size of these trees.

There were five shake mills in the neighborhood, where they made shingles from wood cut off the stumps that were left all over the area.



Since we had a small wood stove in our house for heat, Roy would go to one mill periodically to get the cedar trimmings for us to burn. Steve's job was to bring in the wood. What a lovely smell!

People had tried to burn those stumps in attempts to remove them from the ground. A fire was started at the base of the stump and as it burned it went deep into the center, but even this did not make it practical to remove some of the bigger stumps.

Ruth and Steve would often play in the woods on the hillside where they found one old stump having a burned out center area large enough for them to stand up in. They spent many a happy hour in there scrapping away at the charred wood with paint scrappers, cleaning it up for an imaginary fort or house. They came home covered in black soot from head to toe. It was a wonderful play place!

Our house was very small, having only two bedrooms but we planned to enlarge it as time went by. In the meantime, we had to rewire the whole house, and put a wall down the center of one bedroom, turning it into two tiny rooms. Ruth had one side of the wall for her room, which she painted a hot pink. Steve had the other side, which he wanted royal blue. There was a bunk bed in that room so Steve shared his room with Tait. Vernon slept in a crib in the hallway.

The yard around the house was sloped downward to the big ditch that ran alongside the highway in front of our property. In an effort to make a more level yard, we put a sign out by the road asking for free fill dirt and were rewarded with many dump truck loads.

There were piles of dirt here and there dumped all over the front part of our property. We had to purchase a small bulldozer, a front loader tractor, and a few regular tractors to level it all.



**Ruth & Tait playing in a dirt pile**

These piles were great places for children to play!

Steve loved playing in the dirt with his trucks and Ruth was usually right there with him doing girl things with the mud.

One day as she was digging, she began to scream for Steve. He was delighted to find that she had uncovered a huge toad hibernating in the dirt pile! It was just sitting there looking at them, probably very groggy after being awakened so rudely!



**We had a front loader, tractors & a small bulldozer to move & level donated dirt in front**



During middle school Ruth experienced Osteochondritis Dissecans, another bone problem, in one knee. It is a spot of bone pulling loose or softening at the point where a tendon attaches to the bone. The tension of the tendon creates severe pain at that spot on the bone.

She had to take weight off the leg by using crutches for about two months. She knew she was ready to get rid of the crutches one day when she and Steve were catching tadpoles in the ditch beside the highway and she was able to do that without pain in her leg.



**Tara was the best watch dog!**



In this rural area we burned our trash, which became fun when we roasted hot dogs and marshmallows at the fire.

Dad and Mom Berglund came for a visit and Roy put Dad to work using a rototiller to start our garden. We have that Troy Bilt rototiller today and after replacing worn parts, it still works great 34 years later!



For a while we owned a 37 foot cabin cruiser! Because the owner was desperate to have someone take it off his hands, he sold it to us for \$300! It had been a Coast Guard shore patrol craft in the waters of Puget Sound during WWII. That fact was exciting, but the shape it was in was not exciting. At low tide the boat sat on land in a pool of mud. Roy was able to get it moved and up on supports so he could work on it. The work began and so did the expense. It was fun working on it together as a family, spending the whole day there. The kids loved playing in the cabin, taking naps on the bunks and eating in the galley, but there was so much work to be done and it was costing more money all the time. Eventually it was in good enough shape to use, so we put it to the test and motored our way out onto Puget Sound for a few hours. We made it back, but discovered we had hardly any rudder due to electrolysis damage.



**The White Spray, 37 foot cabin cruiser**

The most valuable part of the whole deal was that a gill net and a salmon fishing license had come with the boat when we bought it. Those two items alone were worth about \$5000! The fishing license could be used by Roy only twice a year during the salmon season, and then only if a Native American was on board at the time. (Native Americans could fish all they wanted to during the season.)

Since there was still lots of work needed on the boat, we felt we could not go on pouring money into it, so we sold it to a fisherman, along with the gill net and the license for \$3000. Quite a profit! So ended our dreams of a luxurious cabin cruiser and motoring gently around to picnic on sandy beaches.

The man who bought the White Spray from us got it into shape for fishing but then sunk it on the first trip out on Puget Sound when he ran into a dead head. A dead head is a log which is so water-logged that it is bobbing at a crazy angle in the water. He had to pay big bucks to have it raised and repaired again.

Western Washington State has no venomous snakes, but does have a plethora of garter snakes. They are small mostly black with a green stripe running the length of their bodies. Our pasture was full of these little snakes. Often they were seen on the roads, having been run over by cars. Our dog loved to catch them in the pasture, throwing them around like a toy until they were dead, no longer any fun to play with.

Tara was a lovely Sheltie/Shepherd mix, very gentle. She had belonged to our neighbor, but when they moved into town to a rented house they could not take her along, so we inherited her.

Tara was wonderful with the children! She stayed with them constantly. If either of the smaller children wandered too far down the driveway toward the highway, she would stand between the child and the road barking at the child, refusing to let him pass any closer to danger.



**Tait, Steve, Ruth, Vern plus Tara who adopted us**

The school bus stopped at every driveway where children lived in the home. Tara would wait for the bus with Ruth and Steve each morning. At the correct time each afternoon, she would go down the driveway to wait for their return.

Along with Tara, we also acquired a cow named Ellie that the neighbors owned. As a two year old, Tait called all cows "Ellie Moo". We kept Ellie and her almost grown calf, in the pasture and small barn that had two stalls. Ruth and Steve did the milking each day.

One winter evening they could not get her to go into the stall to be milked so called upon Roy for help. He tried to get her in the stall but to no avail. Finally, in desperation he twisted her tail. She took off running around the barn, dragging Roy behind her, sliding in the snow as if he were skiing. Ruth still laughs about that one. From Ellie's milk I experimented with making cheese and cottage cheese. From that I learned what Little Miss Muffet was enjoying when she ate "curds and whey". I also learned that it was a process not worth repeating, I'd rather buy such things at the store.

It was Ruth's job each day to feed the rabbits that lived in a hutch behind the house. There was a small, old, broken refrigerator back there with large bags of rabbit food in it. A few times as she was scooping out the feed, Ruth would put her hand on a slug. How she hated that! Then we would hear her screaming! Getting slug slime off your hand is a major problem because it sticks worse than glue, refusing to be washed off. How they got into those bags was a mystery. Roy tried plugging up all holes in the fridge but those slugs got in sometimes anyway.

If the reader is not familiar with the slugs in that part of Washington, let me tell you about them. They thrive in the damp, rainy climate. They are long, as long as 8 inches or more! Fat, as fat around as a big cigar. And slimy! They left long trails of silver goo on sidewalks and porches. They were everywhere in the grasses of the pasture and yard. We would encounter them in the garden, around the trunks of bushes, in the compost pile, under rocks, in nooks and crannies of all kinds, wandering here and there, often up the sides of the foundation of the house.



Steve loved to sprinkle salt on the slugs and watch them bubble until they were nothing but a slime spot. All sorts of slug bait is sold in stores so you can try to rid yourself of these pests. But one of the least expensive and most effective baits we found was a pie pan full of beer. They did seem to love that beer!



**Toby takes time out to chew his cud**

Another animal that we had was Toby, a large breed of goat called a Toggenberg. We needed him only to control the wild blackberries that grew all over the property behind the house, trying to take over the whole yard. Toby was staked out next to a section of briar patch by a long metal stake that was screwed into the ground and a long chain that allowed him quite a lot of range for working on the patch of briars.

Toby ate the entire briar patch including the stickers and the fat thick canes under the vines, and the berries of course. When he had it eaten down to ground level, he would begin to baa and baa until we moved his stake to a new patch.

One summer day as we moved him, he got loose and took off running toward the house. In he went through the open door, and up onto the couch! We had quite a job catching him and getting him staked again. Ruth has a vivid memory of being butted into a briar patch once when she bent over to screw his stake into the ground!

There is a saying that a goat will eat anything including cans. That isn't really true, but it comes from the fact that they eat the labels off cans. I don't know if it is the paper that they love or the glue holding it to the can. Once Toby gnawed the date tabs off the license of our car! Toby enjoyed standing on top of the car if we left it parked too close to him. If you want adventure in your life, get a goat.

We were getting honey from a local beekeeper and after a time, Roy became fascinated with the bees. He purchased one hive that he put out on the pasture. The kids would lay on the ground a distance from the hive to watch the bees fly in and out. They did not bother anyone as long as they were not bothered. Roy learned to harvest the honey, which we strained to get the dead bees out. Then we kept it in large glass gallon jars. Wonderful stuff!

One day, as Ruth stood on the porch, she began screaming (seems like she was always screaming, doesn't it?) that a bee had gone up her nose. She didn't know how to get it out. I came running but didn't know what to do either. So I told her to blow her nose real hard. Sure enough the bee came out with such force it landed on the porch at her feet! (Remember that if you ever get a bee up your nose.) Ruth did not get stung. Maybe the "fit" inside her nose was so tight that the bee was unable to sting her.

In summer Ruth and Steve loved to go swimming at Jim Creek, across the road, through a neighbor's pasture, down the hill and through the woods. Sounds like a long ways, but because of the narrow valley I was able to hear them yelling and laughing and Tara barking all the way up to the house.

Several times, Roy and Steve went fishing for salmon in a rented or sometimes chartered boat. They really liked going out into the Ocean from Neah Bay, a small town near the north west tip of Washington state. They caught some really nice fish and came back with some whopper tales about ones that got away



Washington State on the western side of the Cascade Mountains gets an average annual precipitation of 38 inches. We used well water for everything on our property. The well was a spring only 3 feet deep but had a constant overflow because there was such an abundance of water.



During the many long rainy periods, the mountain behind our house “wept” water downward, causing the yard around the house to become soft and mushy, like a wet sponge. The addition and spreading of dirt mentioned above to build up the level of the front of our property really helped improve this situation.

Since Arlington is quite far north of Seattle, Roy had about a 45-minute drive to work at John Fluke Company. The long drive was worth the time. We loved the country life and the elbow room for our children to play.

From our little front porch we could see Three Fingers Peaks.

At the end of the Jim Creek Road we lived on was the Jim Creek Naval Station. The Navy has transmitters there to communicate with our submarines around the world. The signal is focused toward the west through the narrow valley and passed right over us on its way to the ocean.



**Three Fingers Peaks, a view that is close to the perspective we had from our front door**

It was in January 1976 that Roy was sent on a lengthy business trip to Munich, Germany and to Holland.

He traveled with a large case of slides and teaching materials. He taught maintenance and calibration of the test equipment being used in the calibration labs of a military base near Munich. He also became acquainted with the Holland offices and manufacturing of John Fluke Co products there.

Another time he was sent on a trip to eastern Canada, Boston, and Washington DC. It was on this trip his case of teaching materials was routed to Mexico and did not catch up to him until the trip was almost complete! He managed to improvise, teaching the class without his visual lesson materials.

Sorry to say, we lived only two years in Arlington. Not long enough for either Vernon or Tait to have any memories from there. Over the years since, both Roy and I have wondered at times if perhaps we should have stayed there.



## CHAPTER 7 – COLORADO

Our next move was in 1977 to Englewood, Colorado a suburb of Denver. This was occasioned by a job offer from Barnhill Associates, a company servicing electronic equipment manufactured by John Fluke Company where Roy was employed. Roy was now to be the regional customer service manager out of the Denver office for the mid-western states area.



During July, Roy and I made a trip to Denver to interview at Barnhill Associates and to house hunt. We found a very nice home with five bedrooms! A virtual castle compared to the size of the two-bedroom home we had at the time!

The actual move was made over the Labor Day weekend in September. On our route to Colorado, we were able to be in Pomeroy for the wedding of my brother Keith to Shelley Burt, his high school sweetheart.



On the right is a recent photo of them.



This has been our home now for more than 30 years. Since I had never lived in any house more than four years, when we reached the four-year mark in this house, the old moving urge hit me again! I began to feel that we had to make a move of some kind, maybe to a bigger house. The kids were growing up, they had more friends around all the time.

Anything became an excuse in my mind to look at other places that were for sale. But as time passed, and we did not move, I became content to stay here in this good place that God has given to us.

We found Holly Hills Bible Church on the first Sunday morning that we were in our new home. Roy looked in the yellow pages for churches advertising they had a good teaching emphasis. After calling several and asking questions about the teaching, one finally sounded like what we were looking for. We hopped in the car, attended the services and stayed for 9 years. The lady who answered the phone that morning was Travis Lee, church secretary and mother of Doris Lowther.



Our church had lots of youth activities for our family during this time. AWANA was helping them learn Bible verses and stories, while having great fun. The basement fellowship hall became a sort of gymnasium play center and Ruth enjoyed helping out when she could.

Our kids went to Walnut Hills grade school only 3 blocks away from home. Our street was full of boys at the time so there were playmates. We had a huge garden in the back yard and when not planted the kids played soccer on the dirt. If they got muddy I hosed them off and sent them home at dinner time!



In 1979 a movie titled *The Black Stallion* came out in the theaters. The boy playing the lead role looked so much like our son, that Steve was asked by strangers if he was the one who had been in the film. There is such a likeness between the two boys that years later watching the movie is to almost believe that we are looking at Steve.

One of Ruth's closest friends has always been Robin Strauss who was deaf but has become hearing impaired now after advances in medicine made it possible. The girls learned some sign language just for fun, but Robin was able to lip read very well so did not use sign herself.



During the summer following eighth grade, Ruth had surgery to straighten her left leg. That took six months to heal. The next summer surgery was done on the right leg. That took seven months to heal. When that cast finally came off, it was cold and wintry. She was instructed to walk with one crutch to provide more stability.



One morning six weeks later, as she made her way to the school bus, she fell on some ice that was still on the sidewalk from a recent snowfall. As she fell she heard the crack of her leg breaking! A neighbor who was walking her two dogs was approaching just as she fell. When Ruth screamed, the woman's dogs began to growl at her. The woman told Ruth to stop screaming or her dogs would bite her! Still crying, Ruth said that her leg had broken. The woman told her to stop being silly, of course it hadn't! Then she stomped away dragging her dogs into her house.

Another neighbor came out of his house across the street, tried to help Ruth up but slipped and fell down pulling Ruth down again with him! The ambulance finally arrived to carry Ruth to the hospital where she stayed for three days. Another cast was put on and this time it took eight months for her leg to heal. After each additional trauma, the healing time lengthened for her. Experiencing corrective surgery turned out to be a very long and tedious three years for Ruth.



**Ruth, Class of 1981  
Randall Moore School**

All this difficulty combined with some learning disability, caused Ruth to fall further and further behind in school. After this fall, we took her out of the public high school so she could attend Randall Moore School of Denver, which had an individualized and accelerated program. With the help she received there, her progress rapidly improved to the extent that she graduated high school a year ahead of her class.

After Ruth's graduation, the 6 of us went on a summer vacation in a rented RV. It had a bed above the cab that the kids could lay on and look out the front while we traveled. We shot off fireworks in Wyoming, visited Yellowstone Park, had some time with the family in Washington and visited the ocean in Oregon and California, visited family in Phoenix and then come home via the Four Corners and western Colorado. It was a wild time of fun for us.

Our lives were quite busy during these years with music lessons, church, soccer and medical needs.

We were adjusting to the suburban life and enjoying it.



### Music lessons for everyone



A major medical problem began for Steve when he developed ulcerative colitis at about age 11. He had a very difficult time of it. At first the drug sulphamethoxazole was used to treat him, but he developed a terrible rash all over his body in an allergic reaction.

For more than a week he slathered himself with creams in an effort to relieve the itching, a constant torment for him.

The next drug of choice was prednisone which eventually brought the colitis under control. Frequent visits to the clinic, medication and tests finally paid off with healing after more than 2 years. When that was finally stable, Steve was slowly weaned off the prednisone.

On a ski trip with a group from church, he had a bad fall, breaking his leg with a spiral fracture. He was hospitalized for a couple days in a cast. He healed well and the next season he was on the slopes again, loving every minute of it. He later taught his two younger brothers to ski.

A broken upper arm was one of only two medical issues Vernon had while growing up. He fell on his elbow one day when riding his skateboard at a friend's house up a ramp in the street. Something he had been instructed not to do.

At about the age of 13, Vernon developed a pneumothorax which is a hole in the lung that lets air leak from the lung into the membrane that covers each lung. It causes chest pain and can cause the lung to collapse. He was playing the trumpet in the school jazz band at the time. In order to allow it to heal, he had to quit playing the trumpet. We were told it usually occurs in young males who use their lungs strenuously in such things as sports or playing musical instruments.



## FREE ENTERPRISE

The years of 1980 to 1981 became years of big changes for us when Roy's employer, Barnhill Associates sold the customer service center, where Roy was manager, back to John Fluke Company. The transition was to take about a year to finalize.



**Learning a new trade**

Roy had always thought it would be nice to be self-employed, so he decided to give it a try. So, in 1981 Roy started a small printing company, Acorn Press Inc.

He kept his job for one more year while he acquired equipment and taught himself how to print. At that time our part of unincorporated Arapahoe County remained mostly residential with lots of open space. There was very little, if any, competition for the printing industry.



With lots of hard work our little company was going well, growing at a pretty good pace and we had lots of customers! Gradually our house was taken over by machinery and jobs in process of being assembled.



**Tait collating pages**

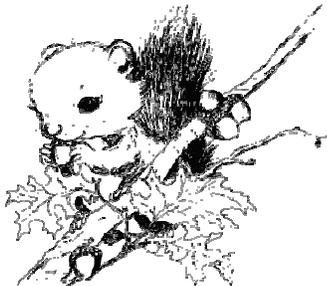
The entire family was involved in the work and even the neighborhood youngsters earned money helping us out.

Eventually we were bursting at the seams, had seven employees, 2 presses, a dark room and camera... well you get the idea, we had to move Acorn Press Inc. out of our home!



**Printing in garage, layout, camera, office, etc in the basement**

In 1983, we found a place within walking distance of our home, took out a lease for space and moved in. What a difference! Now we could leave the work behind and come home to a real home at night.



**Acorn logo drawn by Barbara, Roy's sister**



Moving in to the new location, dad Smith helped us rewire, build shelves for supplies and walls to provide separate places for offices.

We were really glad to have this location in which to work so close to home.



**Roy mounts the new sign**

When we were first doing the start up of Acorn Press, Inc. in 1981, we were given a grey and white cockatiel bird with yellow cheeks. Her name was Candy and she became a much loved member of our family. Candy had a cage that she stayed in at night but was loose in the house much of the time during the day. She loved to ride around on anyone's shoulder, and we got so used to her being there that we would forget about her. She came to the table when we ate, often going from plate to plate picking off a noodle or other tidbit for herself. She especially loved spaghetti.



**Candy loved ice cream!**

Another favorite was ice cream! Candy would land on a shoulder, then walk down our arm to take ice cream from our spoon. She seemed to enjoy putting her little parrot nose into an ear, close her eyes and mumble little "bird words of love" into our ear.

On two occasions Candy got loose outside. The first time Roy walked out of the house with her on his shoulder forgetting that she was there. When I got his attention, he was able to come back inside without her flying away.

The second time she got outside it was because I opened the back door without noticing where she was. She flew out and onto a telephone wire in the back yard. I tried to coax her down by taking her cage out, calling to her and rattling her food. But she just sat there for maybe a half hour.

The kids came outside with me, all of us watching and calling to her. Eventually she flew away over the house and up the street. We all took off running after her, but she was too fast for all of us except Steve. He was able to keep her in his sights and followed her into the back yard of a neighbor up the block. She landed high up in a tree there. He climbed carefully up the tree, getting as close as he could without scaring her away.

She sat watching him while he climbed, talking to her quietly until he got close enough to reach out and grab her. He stuffed her inside his T-shirt, scampered down the tree as fast as he could and ran home holding her against his chest inside his shirt. He was so excited and proud of himself! I was so happy I cried! Needless to say, we clipped her wings right away!

## WHAT IS GOING ON?

Continuing with Steve's history, shortly after the colitis cleared up, Steve developed a cough that did not go away. Over a period of months, he coughed more and more. Doctors at the University Hospital said it might be asthma, checking him numerous times, but he continued to slowly grow worse.



Early in the summer of 1983 our family made a trip to Warrenton, Missouri to the mission headquarters of Child Evangelism Fellowship. Ruth was to attend a training session there in preparation for a summer of ministry in children's Bible clubs in Scotland.



On the way to Missouri, we made a one night stop at the home of friends who had a small farm. Our children enjoyed seeing their farm and their several animals.

Following several weeks of training at the CEF Institute, Ruth and five other summer missionaries flew as a group to Glasgow, Scotland where they separated into teams of two persons each to live with local families and do children's Bible clubs in various cities.

After the rest of us returned home from our short trip to Missouri, and while Ruth was out of the country, Stephen was continuing to cough and going to clinic appointments. His cough worsened week by week. He was becoming extremely thin.



We felt like the doctors were grasping at straws trying to figure out what was wrong with Steve. They said perhaps he had a rare bovine allergy from exposure to the animals during our brief visit in Missouri, or perhaps Psittacosis, an allergy to our bird. The problem with it being a bovine allergy was that he had been coughing for many months, not just since our short trip to Missouri.

Steve had by now become so weak that he could no longer ride his bike. He had stopped going to shoot baskets with his friends at the local school. He lay around the house constantly. That was so unlike him! He was always very active, hardly able to sit still for any length of time.

I do not even recall now what tests were being done during his clinic appointments. All I remember is that each time we went to clinic they could not tell us anything conclusive and a return visit to clinic was scheduled for a week or two later. As the weeks passed, Steve ate less and less and began to vomit during meals because of nausea. Soon he was eating almost nothing.

By the end of July he could hardly walk because of weakness and shortness of breath. His doctor listened to his chest and checked him over a bit, then left the room, returning with another doctor. The second doctor, who had not ever seen Steve before, looked him over and listened for some time to his chest. They both left the room then, saying they would be right back. When they returned, they told us that Steve's heart was beating much faster than what was a normal speed! At that rate, they said he could have a heart attack soon.

Steve was immediately admitted to the hospital and put on oxygen. A drip of high calorie liquid food was put into him via a tube down the nose and throat to the stomach. At first Steve kept vomiting the liquid back up until the drip was adjusted to a very slow rate. He was so thin, down to 78 pounds yet standing as tall as Roy.

As he was monitored for two weeks in the hospital, tests showed that he had many more than the usual number of white blood cells in his system. The oxygen eased his heart rate and eased his shortness of breath, but otherwise he remained the same.

The doctors wanted to start him back on prednisone, but were afraid to do that in case what he had in the lungs was a viral infection. In the case of a viral infection, they told us, prednisone would be the same as putting gasoline on a fire. What was really needed was to get a lung biopsy in order to find out if it was an infection or not. Surgery was scheduled for August 14th the day after his birthday.

While all these things were going on, Ruth was completing her summer ministry in Scotland. She arrived home on August 13, which was Steve's 15th birthday and the day before Steve was to have surgery. Steve was so bored of sitting in the hospital day after day, that he was allowed to go with the family to meet Ruth at the airport. He had to go with an oxygen tank along. He was so thin and sickly looking, that Ruth was quite alarmed.



Open chest surgery was done on Steve the next day. An incision was made from almost the center of his back just below the bottom of the shoulder blade, around the side and curving along the ribs to half way across the front. While they were in there the surgeons took fluid from Steve's stomach for testing to find out what was going on there.

They discovered that his stomach was full of bile from the gall bladder. That was what had been making him vomit, causing nausea so badly he could not keep food down, not even the liquid diet he was receiving unless the intravenous drip was adjusted to very slow.

The biopsy from the lungs showed that the white blood cells in Steve's lungs were not caused by an infection nor were there any antigens from the bird as a cause. However, exactly what they were caused by remained a mystery. The only medication at that time that would control such a problem was what had been used for Steve all along, prednisone. So now, knowing that it was not an infection, the prednisone was immediately begun again. Steve stayed in the hospital for another two weeks while the nasal feeding tube continued to slowly feed him 24 hours a day.

Following surgery Steve slowly improved and we began to be hopeful again! We looked forward to bringing him home with us. He was sick and tired of being in the hospital. As his health improved, Steve became cranky with the nurses trying to change the tube down his nose so had begun doing it himself whenever it needed to be changed. He had also begun sticking his own fingers for blood because he said they often had to do it more than once.

There was a lot of discussion among the doctors during these weeks when Steve was hospitalized. We did not understand enough of it to determine what was conjecture and what was really true. This whole month in the hospital as well as the months of coughing which preceded it, were full of confusion and anxiety for us as we watched our son suffer. One doctor went so far as to tell us that even though we had gotten rid of the bird, try as hard as we might, we would never be able to get rid of the antigens that had caused the illness. They would remain in our house forever because they would be on everything! We could never rid ourselves of them even by painting over them.

The cause of his problem continued to be under investigation. Since parrots are known to cause just the condition that Steve was suffering, even though there were no antigens from the bird in his lungs, as a precaution, we had to give our bird away. The person who took the bird was Brian, Steve's hospital roommate, who was Steve's age. Brian was a kidney dialysis patient who had been hospitalized for some surgery. The next few days, imagination took over from what the doctor said. We envisioned our books, linens, clothes, drapes, carpets, walls...everything contaminated by something that would be deadly to our son if he ever came home again! Fear grew larger and larger in our minds, especially in mine. I soon thought that the only solution to our problem was a fire! Take off our clothes, walk out the door and set fire to the house and everything in it, if we ever wanted to be able to live with our son again!

The next time we were able to talk with the doctor I asked if he fully realized just what he had implied. He said that yes, he had thought about it and that we had to come up with a solution that was reasonable and livable... No doubt!

Because we had had a printing company in our basement, a team of medical people came to our home to investigate the inks and chemicals that were used in printing. They decided that none of it was the likely cause. They told us that the best course of action would be to scrub the house and everything in it as best we could. Upon hearing of this need, a number of ladies at Holly Hills Bible Church volunteered to help us with the project.

A team of dear women arrived one morning at the house, equipped with pails, scrub brushes and lots of elbow grease. Among them were Doris Lowther and her mother Travis Lee. They worked like troopers, washing down our walls, the insides of our closets, the furniture, the floors, every place they could get at. Scrubbing, mopping, dusting, wiping; they labored energetically on our behalf! We deeply appreciated their help. We could never have accomplished the task without them!



**Doris & Art Lowther**

Having said that, I have to admit that I personally was deeply humiliated to have other people sorting through my closets, finding our personal dirt. There can be times in life when we must learn that our pride and privacy are really trivial, unimportant matters. Our lives were not in our own control at this time in our history. They were in the control of whatever medical people told us we had to do.

As we neared the day for Steve to be released from the hospital, with our excitement mounting, we were told that Steve still could not return to our home! Even though our home had been investigated in detail and scrubbed, it had not been determined exactly what was causing his lung condition. The doctors felt that Steve would need to live elsewhere for a period of at least three months, maybe longer. We were horrified!

During that time, Steve would stay on the prednisone pills until his lungs recovered from whatever had caused the white blood cells, which are antibodies, to increase and attack his lungs. When Steve got to that point in his recovery, he would be slowly weaned off the prednisone pills. If he remained healthy after stopping medication and while still living elsewhere, it would mean that something in our home was indeed the cause. If that happened our home would have to be investigated further in the effort to discover what had made him sick. On the other hand, if he became sick again while living some place else, it would mean that the cause was within his own body, rather than from anything in our house.

Our hearts were broken and filled with fear that maybe we would end up losing our son to our environment after all. Upon learning of this development, two families in our neighborhood offered to have Steve live with them. The only way now that we could spend time with our son, was to sit outside on our porch with him or go to the home where he was staying to visit with him there.



One dear family who lived right across the street, Bob and Sandy Palmer and their three children Nicole, John and James, were to have Steve part of the time.



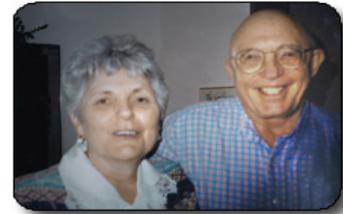
**Steve with Jon Odalen**



**Nancy & Bernie Odalen**

Steve's best friend Jon and his parents, Bernie and Nancy Odalen, offered to have him the rest of the time. Paul and Pat Giles had Steve with them on many weekends.

With these very generous arrangements in place, Steve was able to begin his freshman year at Cherry Creek High School.



**Pat & Paul Giles**

Being able to spend any time with our son over the next months was difficult! Sometimes he would come over to our house and we would sit out on the front porch together to talk. On a number of occasions the other families had us over for meals. The Odalen family hosted us for Thanksgiving Day.



Dave Berg, a friend from church, arranged for us to use a cabin in the mountains for a few days after the Christmas holidays so that we could be together with Steve in a different environment than our own home. It snowed a lot that holiday season, which is not always the case for Christmas in Denver!

In January 1984 Stephen was finally healthy enough to be slowly weaned off the prednisone pills, a slow process over several weeks. He felt good, was no longer coughing and we were all very optimistic that he would soon be coming home with us and would remain well in the future.

Steve continued living with the other families and we all counted the days for his return home. Before the month of January had passed, however, he began coughing again! Back to the clinic we went for more tests and were told that the reoccurrence of coughing (while he lived in a place other than our home) indicated that the cause of his condition was not in our house, which was a great relief to hear. Instead it was being caused by his own system, which was not so great to hear!

Having lived in places other than our home for the past six months, Steve was now allowed to return home, to his own room, and his own stuff, and his own family! It was a joyous event, even though it was tinged with a bit of fear of the future, which we avoided discussing within the family.

Steve began taking prednisone again, going to frequent clinic appointments and life returned to normal for us all as much as possible. Stephen continued to be checked in clinic frequently as this latest episode of coughing was gradually brought under control again.



**Family - Ruth's birthday 1984**

Eventually the University Hospital transferred Steve to the clinic at National Jewish Hospital, which specializes in respiratory conditions. He was seen there frequently and remained in good health for the next couple years, even after he eventually was able to quit taking prednisone.

Steve had now become a mouth breather, which is common among people with respiratory difficulties. He had lost a portion of his lung function and we were told that damage to the lungs would not ever heal.

There was one very brief episode when tests done during a visit to clinic showed too much protein in Steve's urine. The doctor mentioned the possibility that Steve's immune system might be attacking his kidneys. More tests would be done in clinic the following week. As we waited for that clinic date to arrive, we were once again immersed in fear for Steve's health. Because of watching the problems and sufferings of Brian, who had been Steve's hospital roommate who had no kidneys of his own, it was frightening to think of kidney problems possibly developing for Steve.

Much to everyone's surprise and huge relief, tests the following week showed the protein was within normal limits. Our God knows how much we can endure, as well as having a plan for Steve that did not include that particular complication at that time in his life. What sweet relief and gratitude filled our hearts at the lifting of that latest fear for our son!

The Summer of 1984 Ruth was helping with Child Evangelism Fellowship's Good News Clubs in homes in downtown Denver, one of which was in the home of Curtis and Mavis Holmes and their two children Jay and Marilyn.



**Ruth with Jay & Marilyn**

Ruth wanted more Bible training and after discussing Bible School options with Roy and others, she decided to attend New Tribes Bible Institute in Waukesha, WI for two years. Off she went in the fall of 1984, attending until the spring of 1986.

During her last few weeks at NTBI, Child Evangelism Fellowship asked Ruth to be part of their training staff in Colorado. She also worked with us part time for a year in the printing business, then taught CEF training workshops for the next 5 years.



I took this photo of my guys when we took a trip to the mountains on a cold summer day.

Steve's first car from working in a restaurant was in need of a bit of work to get running. Tait and Vern helped out in this project.

Steve would pack up and go for small trips to the mountains or show off the car with friends like Jeff Tieman shown here.



**Steve & first car with Jeff Tieman**



**Roy & boys get first car running for Steve**

Steve had friends over often and enjoyed camping out in the back yard a lot.

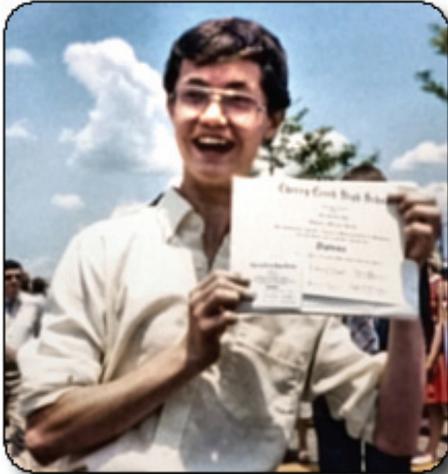


As the years passed there came a time at our church when most of the young people went away to college. Ruth was the only high school graduate who was still attending. Steve and one other boy were the only ones in high school still attending. Ruth and Steve went looking for a church with a program for young people and found Grace Chapel, which was then a small, new church. Ruth and Steve attended Grace Chapel for about two months in the spring of 1986, then we followed them. We had always gone to church as a family, being without two of our children was strange for us.

It wasn't long before Roy was helping with the sound system at Grace. As the next years passed, the church had a tremendous growth spurt. It became necessary to hold services in the gymnasium of Isaac Newton Middle School just across the street from the church.



Still it grew in numbers of people attending until finally there were three Sunday services at the school, in addition to classes for all ages and nursery. There were lots of activities to be a part of and the friends made there and fellowship we had with them is a treasure remembered.



**Stephen Michael Smith  
Class of 1986**

In May 1986 Steve graduated from Cherry Creek High School, possibly the best day of his life thus far!

For one month during the summer of 1986, Steve and Brad Bechtel vacationed in Saskatchewan Canada with Paul and Pat Giles who were there as missionaries.



**Paul & Pat Giles**

The boy's return flight to Denver was cancelled because Frontier Airlines had closed down that day! The boys were marooned at the airport in Regina! Paul and Pat had dropped the boys at the airport and begun their return trip to the north when they heard the news on the radio. Turning their car around, they drove back to the airport to help the boys get routed back home via Minneapolis on another airline.



**Northern Pike fish caught in two days by Steve and Brad Bechtel. Quite a catch!**

The winter of 1986 Steve worked in Keystone, a ski resort in Colorado. He lived in dormitory housing and was able to ski for free during his off time. In addition to the daytime skiing, Keystone also had the first night skiing in Colorado.

One drawback to working at Keystone was that Steve had to work on Christmas. So he was unable to be with us for the holiday. Roy's family in Phoenix wanted very much for us to join them for Christmas. But Roy was working so much in the print shop; he was unable to get away. We decided that Ruth and I would drive to Phoenix with the younger boys, Tait and Vernon. It was a very strange Christmas to be separated as we were!

Meanwhile, our printing company was having a more difficult time financially as the months passed. One reason was that there were by this time at least ten other small printing companies in our area.

By August 1987 we had to move out of our commercial offices. The overhead was killing us. We had to let most of our employees go too.

We moved the company back home, into the garage and basement where it had been when we first started. It was a very hard pill to swallow!



**Back in the home for Acorn Press Inc**

With the close of the ski season in the spring of 1987, Steve returned home from Keystone. Since he was unemployed now, he began to work with us in the family printing business. We were able to provide him with medical insurance, a difficult thing to come by sometimes when you have a pre-existing condition.

It was while all this was going on that Steve began to have pain in all his joints. During his regular clinic visits, tests showed that once again he had developed more than the normal amount of white blood cells in the blood stream and they were apparently causing arthritis.

The condition worsened as time passed. Sometimes Steve's hips and back hurt so badly he could not sit up long enough to eat at the table with the family. We had to serve him meals while he lay on the sofa or in bed. Some days he did not get out of bed at all. This was so unlike Steve, he was always on the move, never could sit still very long! He was put back on prednisone pills but again it was a slow process to clear up the problems.

Steve seemed to be getting depressed by the inactivity pain was forcing him into. However, not being one to complain when he was really in pain, he kept much of his discomfort from us.

In October, Jon Odalen was married and Steve was there in the wedding party as Best Man. We all enjoyed the wedding and the party afterwards was something else. It was held in a restaurant, the whole place reserved just for this party. We ate and sang and danced with the wedding party into the wee hours!

At the age of 19 now, Steve was usually going to clinic appointments by himself and paying all his own medical bills. He had a clinic appointment on Tuesday November 10. I think it was a day he looked the future in the face, perhaps for the first time. He came home from the appointment in a very somber mood. After some time, he came to me and quietly said, "as long as I live I will never get done having medical bills".



The doctors had told Steve that his knee joints were deteriorating so much that he would soon need total knee replacements. It was a real blow to a 19 year old who loved to ski.

My heart was broken for him. I could not deny that my fears for Steve's future were the same as his.

Two days later Steve died. It was Thursday November 12, 1987.

## CHAPTER 8 – A TIME TO WEEP

On the morning of Thursday November 12, 1987 Steve did not come to work with Roy in the shop as scheduled. We didn't think much of it right at first because he often rolled out late or not at all, if his joints were giving him too much trouble. After a bit, Roy went down to his room to check on him but came back upstairs saying that Steve was not in his room. We looked out the front window and saw that Steve's car was there parked in the front of the house. He had to be home.

Roy went back down stairs to check Steve's room again. Then he called up the stairs to me that Steve was in his closet and seemed to be dead. I told him to double check while I called 9-1-1. The operator kept me on the phone until the emergency people arrived, which kept me from going downstairs. They told Roy to join me upstairs and we were to stay there, not to come back down the stairs. Over and over as we waited pacing the floor, Roy kept repeating the phrase, "God never gives us anything we cannot bear", from I Corinthians 10:13. I began to tremble, God never gives us anything we cannot bear?

The emergency people quickly confirmed that Steve was indeed dead. A couple of the policemen asked us to sit with them in the living room and they began asking us questions. They took the names of Steve's friends. Windows and doors of the house were examined for possible forced entry, which might indicate a possibility of foul play. I am sure this is a routine exercise in the event of any unexpected death. No forced entry was found. But a large can containing a chemical that had been used in the print shop was discovered on the patio. It was a chemical that was no longer in use and had been put away in storage. A gallon jar was also found in Steve's closet on a shelf. Steve was lying on the floor of his large walk-in closet.

The jar was removed from the house for testing. Because we were not given much information by the police, medical people or by the coroner when he arrived, we thought that Steve had been very depressed and committed suicide by drinking the chemical. None of the authorities told us any different or offered any alternative speculations on what might have happened.

After we answered questions for the police and the coroner was finished with his investigation, Steve's body was removed to the coroner's vehicle and the authorities began to leave. We began to phone family members and close friends. The worst call we had to make was to Missouri where Ruth was attending training at the Child Evangelism Fellowship Institute. One of the staff there had the awful responsibility of pulling Ruth out of class and telling her that her brother had died.

Somehow arrangements were made for Ruth to fly home immediately. Norman Avery, who worked at Stapleton Airport, and his wife Eleanor, friends from church, came to our home so Norm could drive Roy to the airport to meet Ruth when she would arrive.

Norm wrote about that day, "I had dropped Eleanor off at your house and picked up Roy. I took him and Ruth back to your home. I do remember that Roy and Ruth were in the back seat of the little Toyota and they talked all the way back to your home. I could not stay as I had to go to an NTSB review on the CAL-1713 (plane) crash that had happened on Sunday. That took an hour or so and then I came back to your home and picked up Eleanor. Roy and I talked a lot on the way up to Stapleton (airport). We have always had good visits, despite the topic."



Norman and Eleanor were a comfort and source of strength for our family that day, as I am sure they always are to all who talk with them.

It wasn't very long until we had a steady stream of friends from church, neighbors, and the kids' school friends filling the house all day every day and late into the evenings. We asked everyone to sign our guest book and record for us there anything they had brought to us. It would be impossible for us to remember everything later to be able to write thank you cards. Many brought meals, bags of groceries, money and flowers. Others came empty handed but full of love, tears and hugs. Each one was a source of help and comfort to the five of us in facing those first days.

Paul and Pat Giles were home from their summer in Canada and Pat had broken her leg not long before. She was such a dear to sit by our phone for the next four days with her casted leg propped up on a stool. She took messages for us and informed those who called about what had happened. She listed all those who called, got phone numbers for us and even called some people for us to tell them about Steve.

On Friday, the next morning, we had to go to the mortuary to make the arrangements for a memorial service and for cremation. Paul Barnes, our pastor from Grace Chapel, accompanied us to the mortuary. As part of it, we were asked what we wanted to do with Steve's ashes. It was a thing we had not yet thought about. We sat there, our minds blank. Finally, I think it was our youngest son Vernon, who suggested that we take the ashes up to the Continental Divide to scatter there in a spot overlooking the ski areas. That sounded perfect, so we agreed we would do that.

After all the arrangements had been made, Pastor Paul told us that the church had decided to pay the entire bill for us! That was a huge blessing since we had no finances in place to pay for a funeral.

There was a viewing at the mortuary on Sunday afternoon. We were surprised how many folks came to that and how many brought their children. Steve had known and enjoyed younger children, siblings of his friends and other neighborhood children.

The memorial service was held the following day on Monday. My mother came from Washington for the service.



Dolly McDaniels, whom I had lived with during my senior year of high school, came from California. The day of the service was a cold one with snow on the ground. It was actually one of those very lovely, sunny but cold Colorado winter days. It seemed too bright, hard, a day too difficult to be borne. How could one get through it? The service was very difficult for us.



A further note about Dolly, she died about five years later from breast cancer. We had a couple of opportunities to see each other again before that time.

Pastor Paul Barnes from Grace Chapel and Hal Molloy from Holly Hills Bible Church both spoke at the memorial service. In addition Bob Strauch, the Youth Director from Grace Chapel and Herb Sanford, Steve's former Sunday school teacher at Holly Hills also spoke of their interaction with Steve. The service was followed by a very nice luncheon at Grace Chapel. Some neighbors and many friends from both churches were in attendance, many bringing their children to the service. Following that day both Ruth and I had very stiff necks from hugging so many tall folks!

As I said before, from the moment word got out about Steve's death, our house had been overflowing with visitors all day and late into the evenings. They stayed to visit with us, to share our tears and reminisce about our son. However, when the memorial service was over on Monday, we suddenly found ourselves alone with each other. No visitors came any more. It was too quiet, a time to face grief head on and try to put life back together.

For all of us life now became a nightmare!

Vernon vacated his bedroom next to Steve's room in the basement, moving upstairs to sleep with Ruth and sometimes in his sleeping bag on the floor of Tait's room. Being an avid reader, Tait took to reading aloud to Vernon. He often read a long time after Vern fell asleep.

We chose to close up Steve's bedroom in the basement, leaving it as it was at the moment. We just could not bear to touch his things, or to try to decide what to do with them. Roy went in there long enough to put all his clothes into bags. Donna Giles, daughter-in-law of Paul and Pat Giles, took all his clothes to wash for us.

## A TIME TO MOURN

The first holiday on the calendar that we had to get through was Thanksgiving, just two weeks after Steve's death. Roy's parents had purchased tickets for the six of us to fly to Phoenix to be with them for the holiday weekend.

I will never forget that flight. It was snowing, all flights were delayed and our plane had to be de-iced three times while we sat on the tarmac for an hour and a half waiting for our plane to have its turn to take off. Flying is not one of my favorite things to do, and being in a sad frame of mind already, I secretly felt that we were sure to crash in the storm! It was a miserable experience to sit there so long with one empty seat among us!

Meals and groceries that so many people had graciously brought to the house for us ran low as the days passed. The first things to run low, were the perishables such as dairy and produce. I made a brief trip to the King Sooper grocery store where I had shopped for ten years. Tina, the checker who rang up my items, asked after the family. I mentioned to her that Steve had died. Shortly after I arrived home, King Sooper delivered a very large, beautiful basket of fruits, cheeses and crackers to our home with a sympathy card tucked in. It was a very touching expression of their kindness.

Another event that we had to get through was our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on December 7<sup>th</sup>.



To help us celebrate and to show their love for us, the families of Steve's best friends, the Odalen and Wells families and their children, planned a party for us. We met at the home of the Odalen's where Steve had lived for a time after his lung surgery. It was a wonderful party with a lovely meal and gifts, but pictures taken at the time though



smiling, reveal the pain of grief in our faces and the heartache in the faces of our friends.

Even during the worst days of our lives we must earn a living! Having work to do can be a wonderful help in getting through our trials, but it can also be real tough to keep on working when you are burdened down! We had a large printing job for our church and were about half way through it at the time of Steve's death. The deadline on the job had to be met early in December. It was a cookbook with recipes from the ladies at church. It had to be printed, the pages collated in numerical order, holes for binding drilled on the left side of all the pages and the cover, and then each book had to be bound with plastic spiral binders.

As part of the Christmas holiday celebrations at our church, the ladies were having a Christmas dessert and tea with a program of special music and a speaker. The cookbook was to be available at the tea for everyone to purchase as Christmas gifts. Somehow with the help of our employees, our children, and probably a few friends we were able to complete the job in time for the tea.

Arriving at the church for the tea with the boxes of cookbooks, at the last minute I was asked to be a hostess at one of the many round tables set up in the fellowship hall. I would be the person from that table, to go to the kitchen to get the desserts and serve them to each lady at my table.

When I went to get the first couple desserts, I became confused about where my table was. My mind went blank and I could not think at all. I felt confused, sick and panicky. I spoke to someone close to me saying, "I can't do this, I can't do this!" Someone sat me down in a nearby chair and took over what I could not do. I sat all evening through the program unable to think clearly.

I don't know how I got home, if I drove or if they called Roy to come for me. I guess I was on overload with stress. Being the hostess at a table that night was just one thing too many! This episode may have been the first panic attack of the many that I had in the years to come.

At first we did not know what was happening to me when I began having anxiety attacks. A couple of trips to the emergency room explained it. I began taking antidepressant pills, which helped me function a bit better.

To live through a grief is to live through each day with the details that it brings. From time to time those details become more than a person can bear. Time or place may have no bearing on when tears may start or panic take over, as it did for me that night.

Of course, before very long there was another need to get groceries. We were running out of many staples. It was time to do a serious shopping. I went to King Sooper, stopping first at Tina's register to tell her how much we had enjoyed the basket, and thanked her for her part in the store sending it to us. She told me that a fellow named George who worked the produce department had made it up for us. She said that George understood our sorrow because his son had been killed accidentally. I went on my way, filling the grocery cart with all the things on my list.

As I looked over the meat display, I began to feel very shaky. As I looked at each package of meat, I put it back, unable to tell if it would be the right size for my family. Steve had been a huge meat eater. Now I had to downsize the amount to leave out what would be equivalent to his portion. Once again I couldn't think, panic gripped me tighter and tighter. I felt that I would start screaming any second. "Find George", my mind said to me. I took off, almost running toward the produce department. A man was there stacking fruit on a display shelf. "George?", I said. He turned, took one look at me and said, "What is it? Tell me".

I was able to say that my son had died and that we had gotten a basket. He said, yes, he had made it. I don't know what else he may have said, but it calmed me down. The panic lessened. I told him that there had been one fruit in the basket that had been our son's favorite. He said that, yes, he knew which one it was.

How could he know such a thing, I asked. He said he just felt that he knew because it had been his son's favorite too. "It was a pomegranate, wasn't it?" he asked. And it was! We talked for some while longer. He told me about how his fourteen-year-old son had been shot four years earlier by his best friend who was playing with a rifle.

After a bit, I was able to continue with my shopping and even to purchase some meat. I saw George only a few times after that. He was soon transferred to another store and I have not seen him again. I believe that our loving heavenly Father had George there at that store just at that time in both our lives, so he could be a help to me that day. Such is the compassion God has for those who trust in Him, often expressed in small details that mean so much at the moment.

It was about a month after Steve's death, maybe just before Christmas that the coroner came to our home to talk with us. He said that the autopsy on Steve had shown his system was clean of any illegal drugs but there were traces of the chemical that he had sniffed. Sniffed? We thought he drank it as a way to commit suicide. No, he assured us, it was not a suicide. Steve had been sniffing. The coroner said he had seen many accidental teen deaths by sniffing and that this had surely been another one.

Based on Steve's past medical history and after talking with Steve's friends, he told us that he was certain Steve may have been in physical pain that night so that he could not sleep. Steve may have remembered getting a "buzz" when using that chemical in the print shop and had then gone after it to sniff as a means of relaxing so he could sleep.

A big factor in the coroner's thinking, was that Steve had diluted the chemical with water, probably as a way to cut the effect it would have on him. Perhaps with his history of lung problems it had hit him harder than it might have hit someone else, taking his life when Steve had not intended that to happen at all.

This information caused us to experience some sense of relief, but also some mental confusion because now we had to rethink the event and how it had happened. We had to try to imagine all over again just what Steve had been thinking at the time and why and how exactly he might have felt and what he had imagined would happen as he did it. It was sort of like experiencing the whole death over again!

Christmas day was another painful holiday to be gotten through as best as we could. Gifts had been sent for Steve and we had purchased gifts for him, but now none of them were put under the Christmas tree. It was a subdued, unhappy event that we tried to enjoy, but mostly just endured.

Ruth had plans to move into her own apartment after the New Year, so her gifts included things she would need to set up housekeeping, such as a set of dishes. Watching her open those dishes is my only clear memory of that day.

Daily life has a way of forcing you to function, in spite of the pain that grief presses you down with as you draw each breath. I had other children and a husband. They needed clean clothes. They needed meals. They needed to do homework. I did what had to be done each day. It gave a semblance of normalcy in an abnormal time. Our children were suffering as deeply as Roy and I were. All of us were more or less shut up with our own grief, trying not to hurt each other by showing it too much. It was not a good situation.

There were details other than holidays to face along the way. For a long time I hated to go down to the basement, but the office for our print shop was there, so I had to work there. I avoided it as much as possible, working in the office as little as I felt I could get away with. The laundry room is there, so going down to do the washing was unavoidable.

Being down there alone was frightening. I was haunted by the feeling that Steve would come up behind me and put his hand on my shoulder, or jump out from someplace yelling, "Boo!" like the joker that he was.

I was so used to Steve being there with us in the house. I understand now why people sometimes think that a deceased person's spirit lingers in the environment after the death. Realizing how complete the separation of death really is, is a part of the grieving process I think, and that takes time.

It was six months, or more, before we gathered as a family to go through Steve's things. Each of us chose something to keep for ourselves, and the rest went to one of the charity organizations. We kept his camera, a very nice one, but did not use it for a very long time, more than five years. When I did decide to try using it, it still smelled so strongly of him that it was shocking to me. Fascinating, how our personal odor stays with our belongings for so long! A powerful sensual reminder of the person!

The last pictures of Steve that we have were taken at the wedding of his closest friend Jon Odalen who had gotten married a month before Steve's death.

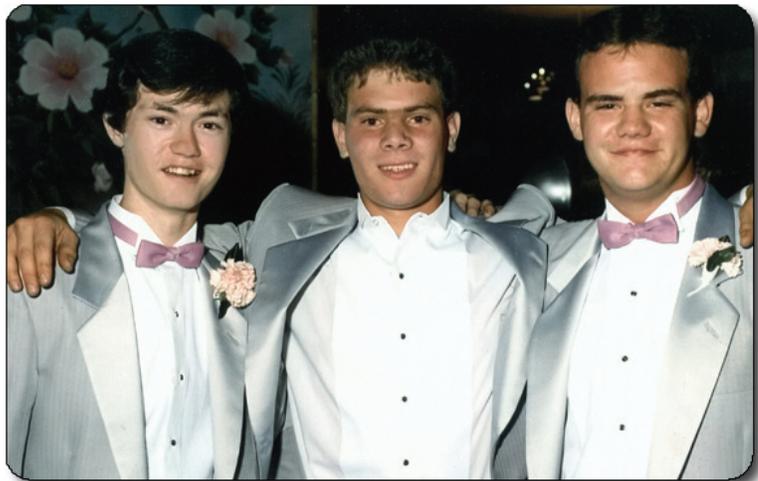
The picture shows Jon with Tim Hall and Steve, who was Jon's Best Man, standing with their arms thrown over each others shoulders. A copy had been made of that photo and put in a lovely frame for our family, but I could not bear to hang it on the wall!

Some months later, a friend saw the photo and scolded me for not hanging it on the wall so I could look at it and remember Steve.

But that was just what I could not bring myself to do. I didn't need anything to remind me of him, I thought of him constantly.

His high school graduation picture had already been on the wall for some time so that I was used to it and it didn't bother me. Something new on the wall would have caught my attention constantly; I just couldn't bear for that to happen.

It was a number of years before I finally hung the photo in a place where we were able to enjoy it.



**Stephen Smith, Jon Odalen and Timothy Hall**

At some time in the years ahead I came across the following poem:

**A CHILD OF MINE - by Edgar A. Guest**

**I'll lend you for a little time, a child of mine, He said.  
For you to love the while he lives and mourn for when he's dead.  
It may be six or seven years, or twenty-two or three,  
But will you till I call him back, take good care of him for me?**

**He'll bring his charms to gladden you, and should his stay be brief,  
You'll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.  
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return,  
But there are lessons taught down there I want this child to learn.**

**I've looked the wide world over in search for teachers true  
And from the things that crowd life's lanes, I have selected you.  
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,  
Nor hate Me when I come to call to take him back again?**

**I fancied that I heard them say, "Dear Lord, Thy will be done!  
We'll shelter him with tenderness; we'll love him while we may  
And for the happiness we've known, forever grateful stay;  
But should the angels call for him much sooner than we've planned,  
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand."**

We survived the Christmas holidays and in January 1988 Ruth moved out of our home, into her first apartment and Vernon took over her room. Looking back, I think the timing was wrong for Ruth to move. She suffered many lonely hours trying to tough it out on her own with her grief for Steve. There were a few times that she phoned in the night in tears, asking me to come to her. Getting up from my bed, I drove over, crawled into bed with her, and held her as we cried ourselves to sleep.



As the months passed, I began to attend a support group. It was a suicide support group called Heartbeat. As I said before, we had thought at first that Steve had taken his life, until the coroner told us he did not believe that was the case. So why did I decide to go to a suicide group? Because another couple from our neighborhood was going to it, and had invited me to go with them. Their daughter and only child had taken her life at the age of 17, just a year and a half before Steve had died.

Steve had known her in school. I had met this couple and their daughter and now had grown closer to them, sharing many of my feelings with them. I found that they understood me and all the thoughts that were running through my mind. I was able to empathize with others in the group who had lost friends and loved ones to suicide. I discovered that death by any means brings about the same sorts of pain and sorrow to those who are left behind.

A number of other things occurred during the first couple years after Steve's death, to complicate things and keep death in front of us.

There were two unexpected deaths within the Grace Chapel church family, where we were attending. A young husband and father committed suicide. Another man was bludgeoned to death while working in his office after hours late one evening.

We did a lot of printing for real estate agents from several companies. There came a day when one of our long-term customers committed suicide. Then some months later another realtor, who had been with us almost since we began in printing, did the same thing!

There never was a time in our lives before or since Steve's death that we were so aware of, and surrounded by, deaths as we were during those first several years. It seemed like life just kept producing more unexpected stress for us over the next couple years.

I will pause here to give you a summary of how our work situation was affected by all of this. The financial headaches at Acorn Press increased over 1988 until we had to end Acorn Press Inc to stop the accumulation of interest assessments by the IRS. We endured a seizure by the IRS of all our equipment. Not being a quitter, Roy got a loan from his dad and went to the IRS auction to purchase enough of the equipment to start up again. We re-incorporated under the name Acorn Printing, Inc.

Most of our customers tried to stay with us, but as the months passed we lost more and more. One of the main problems for the work at the time was that every time Roy worked on a job he would come across Steve's handwriting on earlier work orders. It was very hard for him to keep on working each time he encountered that and deadlines were not being met.

After a time Roy just needed to rest from doing the sound system for Grace Chapel. We left there after ten years, and began to attend Cherry Hills Community Church, a mega church. It was a place where we could be somewhat anonymous and just sit. We needed space to be quiet and think and not have to answer any questions people might ask about how we were.

Letting the printing die slowly, Roy took a job with a security company, working as a security guard for a number of years. This job was one with no stress attached. After driving himself night and day for years, Roy really needed an absence of stress! Eventually in 1998 he took tests for and was hired by Lucent Technologies, which later spun off Avaya, Inc. He worked there for the next eleven years using computer remote access to troubleshoot and repair the Avaya phone systems.

Getting back now to what was going on in my heart, God had always been my rescuer, my friend. He had done marvelous things for me. I had called to Him and He had answered me, showing me some of the great and mighty things that Jeremiah 33 verse 3 speaks about. He had been my confidant, my strengthener, my guide. Now suddenly He was different. Or so I thought! What I should have understood by that time in my Christian life is that God is not a Candy Man, who promises only lovely things to us in this life. In fact Jesus said, "In this life you shall have tribulation".

God had become a sort of "Humpty Dumpty" to me! He had fallen off the "wall" and lay all smashed to bits on the ground. I could no longer understand Him, I was afraid I would not ever get Him "together" again. And fearful that if I did, what would become of ME if He should fall off that "wall" again! Would I ever be able to arrive at a concept of God that was not subject to crumbling under the pressures of what earthly life might throw at me in the future, of which I was now, terrified?

My coping abilities, if you want to call it that, had all broken apart into nothingness. I was hurt and angry. I was now jealous of other Christians, whose lives seemed so perfect from my viewpoint. They would stand around after church talking about things that I now thought of as minor trivia, but what were in fact the things I had previously talked about with them. Such as what to fix for dinner, where they were going on vacation, the wonderful things their beautiful children were doing!

I couldn't take it. I pulled away socially. I couldn't relate to what they talked about as problems in their lives. My heart screamed, IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT REAL TROUBLE IS! Several times I got up and walked out of church because I wanted to scream the same words to the pastor as he preached about how God comforts and helps us in our troubles.

I had read stories of suffering and death, persecution and trials. But nothing had prepared me for this loss of Stephen. After many years, I can look back now and know that God had not become Humpty Dumpty, I had! I was grieving more than the loss of a very dear son. I was grieving the loss of the concept of God that I had created in my mind, and whom I thought I had come to understand.

Over the months, I felt isolated from people around me by the pain inside and the changes within our whole family. I became so sad, crying whenever I could get some privacy. In the shower was a good place; no one would interrupt me there. After the family was all sleeping I would often get out of bed, go to the dark living room or out to the back yard to cry and ask my questions of God. Sometimes the grief was so heavy; I would slide to the floor and lay prostrated pouring out my heart's pains to God. But the heaven was silent. It was as if my words, echoed back to me, not rising any higher than the ceiling or the clouds. Over and over I asked why. How had we failed? Why didn't you stop him, God?

Some people leave the church, turning their backs on God and their Christian faith at a time like this, why didn't I? I don't think I ever really considered that an option for myself. I continued to go to church to worship God with others because, whatever He might really be like, God is worthy of my worship just because He IS. Even if I don't like Him very much, worshipping God whom I could not understand was better than not worshipping God at all.

Mankind in general tries to make God accountable to itself. We think that God is like us. That He does things the way we do things. I would not have let Stephen do what he did, if I had known he was doing it. Why did God let him? Did God stand next to Stephen with His hands in His pockets and do nothing? I was so confused and angry! The inner turmoil wore heavily on me.

## THE FINAL GOOD BYE



**Now we are five**

As the months dragged along, we began to feel uneasy about not yet having taken Steve's ashes up to Loveland Pass in the Rocky Mountains to scatter them at the Continental Divide. Trying to decide on a date when we would all be available, plus discerning whether all of us were ready mentally to face doing it. Finally, we decided to go ahead and do it before the snows of winter hit the mountains again. We chose a day close to what would have been Steve's twentieth birthday in August 1988.

It was a very emotional experience for all of us. We were all dreading the action of doing it, as well as dreading the feelings that would arise within us. We had chosen the top of the Continental Divide on old Highway 6 that by-passes Eisenhower Tunnel. It is a spot that overlooks Loveland ski area and Arapahoe Basin ski area, both of which were places our boys had skied.

While working at Keystone ski resort, Steve and other guys had driven up to the Divide and skied down toward A-Basin on their days off from work. It is the spot where my cousin Gini and I had played in the snow 27 years before when we had traveled across the country by car with her parents.

When we got to the Divide, we felt confused and hesitant. Roy was able to think clearly enough to lead us all out into the grass away from the well-worn path. There on the mountainside he chose a spot. It is a good sitting place with a magnificent view. Roy said some words and we prayed. I do not remember if any of the rest of us said anything. Tears were shed, and no doubt all of us wished we were not there at all.

As the years have passed, the site has become very precious to each of us. We visit there almost every summer after the snows have melted off. The ashes being more like grit than fine ash, we are still able to find traces of them as of the time of this writing. Snow run-off, chipmunk and insect activity, and time are doing their work to slowly erase them, but this is all right because all of us know where the site is. We do not need a headstone.

## ON THE ROAD

Ten months after Steve's death, September 1988, my parents made a trip back to New England to attend mother's 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion. She had never been back to her childhood home since she went west after World War II. She planned to see some cousins, all that were left still living of her family, and wanted very much for me to go along. So I did. I am sorry now to admit that it was a sort of escapism on my part. It would release me from the daily grind and get me away from the sadness that seemed to hang over our home constantly. Actually, I had been secretly thinking about running away, but couldn't figure out how to do it without inflicting more pain on my family. Some way, something had to give! Here now was a chance to at least change my circumstances for a while. So I went with my parents on the trip and my family suffered badly without me there to coordinate the details of daily life!

We traveled for nearly a month in their large motor home. We saw so much of this country and I enjoyed it very much. We covered a lot of miles and I got a lot of naps along the way. No doubt I needed the extra sleep.

Our route took us through South Dakota to Mt Rushmore; North Dakota and Minnesota to the little town of Isle on Mille Lacs Lake where Dad was born and the home they had lived in. No family lived there any more so we visited the cemetery in Malmo to see graves of his ancestors. Then onward through Ohio and Indiana; Pennsylvania and New York to Niagara Falls; then north through Vermont and New Hampshire; and east through Maine to the small town of Machias where Mom had spent summers as a girl. No family was left there anymore so we visited the cemetery and she pointed out the houses where her relatives had lived.

Following that we traveled south to Braintree near Boston, where both my Mother and Father had grown up and attended high school, then on to Cape Cod where her high school reunion was held in Falmouth. That was an exciting weekend for her, seeing several old friends! Afterward, we went through Rhode Island and Connecticut, then New Jersey, Washington DC, across Chesapeake Bay by way of the under water tunnel, and finally to Virginia Beach, VA.

As the weeks of travel passed, I realized that I had slipped back into the role of the daughter. The emotional tensions that had been in the house when I was growing up were still there! I found myself trying hard not to say anything that would "rock the boat". I began to miss my own home and family more and more as the miles passed under our wheels. I realized that I could never leave my family; it would not only break their hearts but mine as well. Running was not an option as a means to get through grief!

More than anything else, I now wanted to be home! Rather than take a plane immediately however, I stuck it out a bit longer, so that I could meet one more of mother's cousins who lived in Virginia Beach. After a couple days there, I finally took a plane home. Dad said later that they had been amazed I stayed with them as long as I did. But my parents had not known all the battles being waged in my heart and mind as we traveled. God was teaching me things I needed desperately to understand about the life of our family and my place in our family group.

It was good to return home! I was glad to be there again, but at the same time, the grief and pain were still there. None of us had "gotten over" our loss of Steve. We were to discover that you do not "get over" such a loss. You learn to live in spite of it, just by living and healing coming bit by bit into your soul from God who loves to bless us. The healing takes time, something we wish were not true. We long for it to happen quickly, "OH, PLEASE!", even overnight! But such is not the case.

## A TIME OF FEAR

Sometime in late 1988 Tait, our second son, developed grand mal seizures at about age 15.

We first became aware of it when Vernon slept in Tait's room one night for a "sleep over". He was awakened by a banging sound caused by Tait hitting his head on a metal desk that stood against the head of his bed. Vernon came running into our bedroom to wake us saying, "Something is wrong with Tait!". As soon as I saw how Tait was thrashing in the bed, I thought it might be a seizure. We called 9-1-1.



Tait was taken to the hospital for tests, which showed a little bit of extra brain wave activity but nothing else. I do not remember being given any real information about his condition, or any medication being prescribed or being advised what to do to prevent any more from occurring.

Tait was always a very quiet child. He let others talk for him. He did not raise his hand to answer questions in school, even though he was able to do the schoolwork easily enough. Tait was not comfortable in groups nor did he socialize easily. His best friend was his brother Vernon, but with so many boys living on our street and spending so much time at our house he was never alone for long. Ruth too had friends who came over a lot. Our home was hardly ever quiet for long.

More than a year had passed. How could it be that Steve had been gone for so long already! So quickly, and yet so slowly had the months dragged by, full of pain and misery. It was in January of the new year of 1989 and now we discovered a very serious problem.

Stephen had been the older brother, teaching the younger boys so many things, sticking up for them if they were bullied by any bigger boys at the school bus stop. Now suddenly Tait, who was quiet and gentle by nature, had become the older brother. His “place” in the family had been altered by Steve’s death. This was a thing we had not thought about as a possible complication for Tait.



**The guys take up archery**

One evening in January 1989, I went into Tait’s bedroom to find out how he was doing on homework. He was sitting at his desk with books open. The cuff of his long sleeved shirt was unbuttoned, allowing his sleeve to slip down, away from his hand as he leaned on his elbow. There was a red line on his wrist. A cold terror gripped my heart as I asked him, “What have you been doing to your wrist?” He admitted to experimenting with slitting his wrists, saying that he missed Steve and wanted to go see him.

Tait had been carrying a knife to school in his backpack for several weeks. He had tried several times to cut his wrists in the boy’s restroom after school was dismissed. It had hurt more than he had thought it would so he had not completed the act. Thank you God!!

This discovery put us into a whole new kind of horror. All of us embarked now upon a road of counseling. Tait was hospitalized for three weeks, until the insurance ran out and he was discharged. He was better for a couple months but then began to slowly slide back down into depression again.



Eventually, he was taken to the Colorado State Hospital in Pueblo where he stayed for five months. We visited him there every weekend and were in family counseling sessions there. After some time, he was allowed out on short passes for a few hours. Later he was allowed weekend passes to come home. I do not remember if he had any seizures while in the hospital. It seems like we never talked about any during counseling.

There were many things to learn during all these months, for each of us in our family. I will not speak for my husband nor my children about what they learned. Those things are theirs to tell. What I will say is this. In counseling we began to learn to talk more openly as a family about everything instead of keeping so much to ourselves.

Speaking only for myself, I was learning that I could not guarantee my own faithfulness to God as a strong Christian, or that I would not doubt His purposes in my life. I was being reduced to my true weakness, forced to know myself. All my strength of will, all my determination, all my efforts at spiritual growth and private worship as a means to achieve comfort and mental peace were without result. My soul felt like it was being devoured.

For the first time in my life I realized the reality of what God meant when He wrote that Satan is like a lion seeking whom he may devour, as in First Peter chapter 5 verse 8. I knew I was not in danger of losing my salvation because of the promises in the Bible about this for those who put their faith in the death of Jesus on our behalf personally and individually. But I felt very vulnerable and became glaringly aware of my personal spiritual weakness as I doubted God’s goodness. I felt like I did not know Him any more. I lived in fear of what Satan might be able to cause to happen next in our family. It is very hard to keep on living with such terrible fear filling your mind day and night!

Now it seemed that in a long ago and far away past I had known God well, that I had been a strong Christian. Now I was faced with my own spiritual weaknesses in a way I had never been faced with them before. I felt that Satan was a very real and present enemy who was taking advantage of the pain in my life. What does a lion do? It picks out the weak and sickly, it stalks striking terror into the heart of its prey, and then attacks viciously to tear, mutilate and devour.

Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10 through 16 say that Satan has a variety of methods that he uses against us. I believe he hates those who love God, and does all he can to cause us to doubt God's character of love, His care for us and His faithfulness to us. I had a very keen sense that Satan wanted to destroy my personal faith and was taking advantage of the grief and events in our family to attempt to do it.

In the scripture our loving God provides us the way to overcome the methods and strength of this enemy of our souls.

In Second Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 11, we are told not to be ignorant of his devices so that he cannot take advantage of our circumstances. James chapter 4 verse 7 tells us to resist him and he will flee from us. These are "tools" for spiritual battles and they have been given to us in the Word of God.

Even so, in our human frailty, our strength to "use" the tools may be lacking. What to do for that?

I recognized that the happiness and joy I had known thus far in my Christian experience had been destroyed. I was filled with sadness and terror of what might happen next. What if another of our children died? Surely I would lose my mind; I could not endure such a thing again! A mother's concern for her children, which is natural, became obsessive to me.

Somehow I had to come away from these inner horrors of fear but knew I could not unless God Himself brought me away from them. There was no strength within me to rid myself of them. I could not manufacture any peace of mind for myself. My soul was in bondage to my imagination!

Fears would grip me at the sound of an ambulance. Driving the car alone, I would have to pull off the road to avoid causing an accident because of bursting into tears. Sudden uncontrollable weeping would grip me in the shower or anyplace where I was alone. Church was the worst place because there I could not get away; there was no place to go for privacy! I would retreat to the car to cry.

I would like to include here a quote from a book I read a number of years later. The author says so many things that put into words much of what went on in my mind and soul during the first couple years following Steve's death. In the following quote the author tells of Mee-Yan, another woman who grieved for her two lost children.

"When we're not sure about God—about his goodness, his love, or his control over our circumstances—when we begin to believe our lives are meaningless and beyond hope, when we lose the energy or the will to face another day, unbelief has set in. It confronts us every day in a hundred different ways.

It was the hidden battle Mee-Yan faced daily as she went about her business and attended to family matters. It assaulted her openly as she wept beside two small graves in an English churchyard.

Unbelief never travels alone but brings bitterness and other sins of the heart. It exposes us to all sorts of temptations, gives advantage unto all disheartening, weakening, discouraging considerations, and clogs and hinders us in our constant course of obedience. Like the bowler's lead pin, it has the power to make a lot of other things in our lives topple over. Unbelief drains us of hope and undermines our courage at the very moment we need it most. When this happens, it is time to shed everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles."

- from "When Life and Beliefs Collide", by Carolyn Custis James.

I had been reading in the Old Testament books of Job and Psalms for a while prior to Steve's death, using a red pen to note verses that seemed to describe depression. I had been in a mild state of depression to some extent even then because of the "on-goingness" of Steve's illnesses and our business troubles. It was amazing to discover how exactly the inner feelings of depression are described in the Bible, and how the Bible hits the nail right on the head when you are in the midst of that state.

I now went back to my "tool", the Word of God, to those verses about depression in Job and Psalms that I had previously underlined in red. I felt again the personal nature of them. Gradually the Word of God put within me a new assurance that God knows intimately my sufferings and that He could and would somehow bring me slowly through the darkness of depression and into a bright, new day of hope and joyfulness.

Slowly my prayers began to take on a different format. I began to ask God to restore to me the joy of His salvation, an expression that is found in Psalm 51 verse 12.

It became a time for me to examine my heart carefully and admit that I was full of doubt, anger, and a stubborn refusal to accept what cannot be changed. I did not like being "broken" like Humpty Dumpty. I wanted desperately to be whole and live in joyfulness.

In John 16 verse 24 Jesus is quoted as saying that we need only to ask and our joy will be made full! My life lacked joy in the worst way, but I wanted it!

During this process of serious introspection, I gradually came to appreciate in a very real sense, what it means to be "carried". I had never much liked the Footprints poem; it seemed maudlin, weak and sentimental. Our faith as believers in Christ, is supposed to stand on truth and wisdom drawn from the scriptures. Not on feelings of any sort! But as time crept along I began to have a growing sense that I was indeed being carried! Saying I believed this or that about God or any of His ways, was not enough to take me through the fears, terrors and sorrows that surrounded me at this time in life. I needed to be carried!

#### **FOOTPRINTS - version by Carolyn Carty**

**One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD.  
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.  
For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to him and the other to the LORD.**

**When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints.  
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life.**

**This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it,  
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way.  
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life  
there is only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me".**

**The LORD replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you!  
During your times of trial and suffering when you see only one set of footprints,  
it was then that I carried you".**

As I pondered how helpless and vulnerable I was I understood that God Himself was the One Who was sustaining me! Just as the poem says, that the one set of footprints in the sand truly were His, rather than my own. I truly came to understand what I had only thought I understood before, that God is the One Who is faithful to me, not the other way around. Being carried is truly a gift of mercy from our God!

At one point, I went out and purchased a new Bible, a different version than the King James that I had always used. Maybe it would help me to read in an updated English version, without the underlining and notes that I had put in the old one over the years. To start from scratch all over again, with no pre-conceived ideas or thoughts jotted down next to any verse.

That lasted for a time, but eventually I gravitated back to my old King James Bible. Coming back to it was like coming home. Now I am over the age of 60. It is torn and the pages are dog-eared. There are pen markings from my small children who scribbled on it while sitting beside me during church. I handle it gently; afraid it will not last the 20 or so years that I may have left in this life. It is impossible for me to leave it for another version for very long!

It was while these things were going on within me that we returned to Holly Hills Bible Church, where we had attended for the first ten years of living in Colorado. We had maintained some contact with folks there so it was like returning home to be among them again. We had truly missed them, and the wonderful depth of teaching from the Word of God that takes place there.

Things that I had read in the Bible over the years but never fully understood before now became alive to me. One is Philippians 4 verses 6 to 8 which says that we need to purposefully turn our minds toward things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; anything that is virtuous, anything that is praise worthy. These are the things our minds should dwell upon if we want to have good mental health and be free of depression.

However, it can be very hard to come up with such good things to think about when we are in a really tough spiritual battle! The verse is describing the character of Jesus Christ, which we can read about in scripture and thus focus our minds upon these good things. We cannot control, and often cannot change the circumstances that come into our lives. But we can control what we fill our minds with. It is all about our mental focus, and mine had for too long been very negative.

Christians are fond of I Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13 which says, “there has no (trial) taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be (tested) above that ye are able; but will with the (trial) also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” What a wonderful promise this is! But no where does it say that God will change the circumstances!

The circumstances of a death cannot be changed. Many other kinds of circumstances cannot be changed either. So what then, is the way of escape? I believe from my experience that the way of escape is God Himself. What He gives to the believer is a relationship with Himself; an intimacy of the spirit, mind and soul. He loves us so much more than we realize or are willing to accept. Thus we cannot understand that He can Himself be the escape from pain that we seek.

Instead we look for a tangible change in our circumstances but usually there is none. When I discovered the magnitude of the escape from pain that an intimate relationship with God gives me, THAT was the real healer of my broken heart and cure for my depression. Praise God, I can sing again!

Dear Reader, whoever you may be, if you are saying I was very weak, not fully understanding what the Word of God says to us, not trusting God as well as I should have, especially for someone who had been a Christian more than 30 years by that time! You are right. Yet perhaps someone who is reading this will one day find themselves in an unbearable place, a place that has no light, no safety, and no answers to some terror that has come into life. It is for that person that I open my heart and reveal my weakness.

Please do not stop reading, for the story is not done yet by any means!!

A wonderful truth in the Word of God became clear to me now! Romans chapter 6 verse 11 tells us to do something, “...reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

“Reckon”, what IS that? To consider a thing to be true, to rely upon it, to trust it. When the Word of God tells me something about Him, or about me, I am to consider it true and rely upon its truth! This is another “tool”, a major “tool”!

**This is the spiritual watershed, the great turning point in the life of the growing believer.**

**Knowing and counting upon the fact that he is “alive unto God in Jesus Christ”**

**— that he is free to turn his full affection and faith upon the risen Lord Jesus**

**— in Whom he is; yes, with Him where He is before the Father in glory.**

- from “Imag-ination 14”, page 29 by Miles J. Stanford

Alive to God! Free to turn my full affection and faith upon the risen Lord Jesus! Nothing between us, not even the sin of doubting Him can destroy that!

Dead to sin, the fact of it, the consequences of it, none of this can destroy what He has done for me and within me!

**“...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

- from Romans 8:37-39.

Reckon!! And depression flees!

### **THE LOVE OF GOD – by F. M. Lehman**

**The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell.  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin.**

**Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho' stretched from sky to sky.**

**Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure The saints' and angels' song.**

## CHAPTER 9 – A TIME TO EMBRACE

This chapter covers two things that have been an important part of my life. They were things that were hidden so to speak, in that they were not talked about. They were things I pushed to the back of my mind to forget and to ignore. As I grew in years and experience, I also grew in understanding that our loving heavenly Father allows no darkness, no places of secrets in our hearts. All is open to Him and He is able to bring all things into the light, bringing healing, peacefulness, freedom and even joy into our hearts where once there was hurt and denial.

### FINDING MY FATHER

At some time during the early 1980's I had become interested in family genealogy. Roy's paternal grandfather had done much research on the Smith and Crook lines. A distant relative of my mother had also done a lot on the Bucknam and Holden branches of mother's family. I was fortunate to get copies of much of the information they had gathered.

As I worked on the genealogy of our family I followed three lines; my mother's line, Roy's line and my stepfather's lines. As time went on, I decided to try to follow my birth father's line of Taylor, but had no intention of trying to make contact with anyone on that side. So much research can be done without personal contact. Eventually curiosity got the better of me! There were so many things I did not know.

Finally, I contacted the Veterans' Administration. Because my father had been a veteran, and because he was on the way to the Veterans' Hospital in Los Angeles on that one day many years before, when my mother had seen him at the bus stop, which was mentioned in chapter 4. I felt I could probably find out something about him from the VA. I wrote them a letter stating his name, and what little I knew of his vital statistics.

After about a month I received a letter back from the VA saying that they knew where my father was! If I would write him a letter and send it to them, they would forward it to him. That is the method used to preserve the privacy of a person who may not want to renew contact, yet which allows the person seeking contact to try to establish it.



So it was that in September 1989, I wrote a short letter telling my father about my family, and a brief account of our activities over the years. I also enclosed a photo of the six of us.

On a Tuesday evening, about a month later, a phone call came from my father Vincent. He said he had received my letter that morning and spent all day stunned, wondering if he should call me.

He said that he was sitting looking at an 8x10 photo of me taken when I was three years old. In which my hair was curly and I had on a pink satin blouse and a turquoise knitted skirt with little straps. I told him that I remembered exactly which picture he was looking at because I have a copy. All those many years he had kept the photo on top of his television where he could see it constantly!

Hesitantly he asked me if the problems I'd had with my legs had been his fault. Had I inherited it from him, even though he did not have it himself? With some degree of confidence based on what I had learned about it, I was able to tell him that it had not been his fault.

We talked about the day he saw mother at the bus stop and about his trip to the Veterans' Hospital during which he did not die after all. He mentioned that he had bussed tables in the dining room of the Statler-Hilton Hotel and I told him Aunt Harriet worked at the insurance company in that same building and had seen him a couple times as she took lunch there. He told me about another job he held in 1961-62 as a waiter at the California Men's Club, now known as the California Club. This was significant because the Club was right across the street from the Church of the Open Door and the Biola dormitory where I lived during that same year, my only year in college at Biola! We may have passed each other on the street and not known one another! What a shock for us both to learn!

My heart aches to think, that we were so close and yet so far apart! Oh the lost years!

**Our first apartment**

**Ruth born here**

**Where Harriet, then me and finally Mom worked for an insurance co in Stattler-Hilton Hotel**

**Where Vincent lived 8th & Hope St**

**Vincent worked in California Men's Club across the street from the Church of the Open Door & Biola dorms 6th & Hope St**

**Downtown Los Angeles**

Sources: Map & Men's Club photo from Google.com



Vincent was very honest with me on the phone. He told me of his drinking problem, saying that it was the cause of the divorce from my mother as well as the cause of the divorce from his second wife Rosita, with whom he was still in close contact. Vincent and Rosita had been married only five years when she had put him out. She told him she would give him another five years to the day to become a sober man or else she would divorce him. When that date arrived, she did just what she had said. Because he had not been able to stay sober, she divorced him.

However, they had remained friends and Vincent was included with her extended Mexican family in all holiday and birthday celebrations just as if he were still part of their family. In fact, two days from the time we were talking, it was to be their would-have-been 35<sup>th</sup>

anniversary if they had stayed married. They had plans to go out to dinner to celebrate, as they had been doing every year for 35 years!

Vincent and Rosita lived a couple miles apart, riding the bus to visit one another or to meet someplace. They had not ever had children, so I was the only child he had! There were no half-brothers or sisters for me to discover.

He told me about his brother James who had been in the Navy and his sister Marilyn, who had been part of a women's riveting crew during World War II, and what he knew of his family history. He enjoyed going to the horse races at the track in Santa Anita.

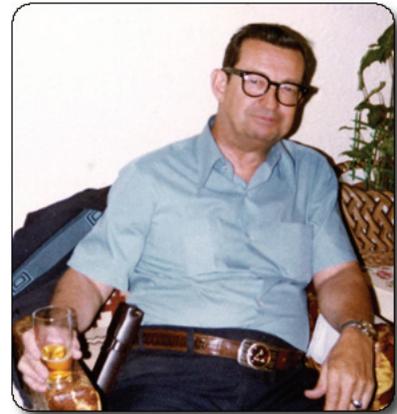
He frequented a certain local tavern where he knew everyone. He had become friends with all the tenants in the apartment building where he was the manager and collected the rents. He was having trouble with his health; his feet were often very swollen so that he could hardly walk. Other tenants would bring his mail to him and share their pizza with him sometimes when they ordered it.

I told him that I did not remember what he looked like. I had only a couple brief memories of him but no image of his face in my mind. On Wednesday, the next day, he phoned me again saying that he had spent the whole day going through his photo albums pulling out pictures for me. He had put a small package of them into the mail so I would probably receive it on Saturday. Our conversation was brief; I don't think either of us really knew yet what more to talk about.

The rest of that week I was torn with uncertainty. What had I done? Opened a can of worms? What would he really be like and what impact would this now have on us, on my mother and dad? Would there be trouble ahead? Would he want money?

Saturday the package of photos arrived in the mail. There were quite a few of them and in most he had a drink in his hand! So nothing was hidden from me. I saw not only what he looked like, but got an idea of the kind of man he was.

There were pictures of him at the races, dancing with the ladies, at Elks Club meetings and having a good time socially. All of which I knew from the few things mother had said and he himself had told me, but now I could see it for myself.



**Vincent Ora Taylor**

I was not sure how I felt. I waited, unsure what to do next. Should I call again? What would I say? Did I want further contact with this man who might become a drunken problem to us all?

The days began to pass and I did not hear from him again, nor did I call. I began to work on a longer letter telling about our family, collecting photos to send with it. I imagined that he probably had mixed feelings just as I did. He was probably waiting on me to make the next move. Monday through Friday passed without word from him. By now I was starting to feel that I had to call him, but I did not do it. Saturday and Sunday came and went; eight days had now passed since his photos had arrived in the mail.

Monday night I was out late. When I got home, Roy told me that a phone call had come while I was out. Vincent's ex-wife Rosita calling to say that he had died! What!? I couldn't believe it! I was stunned! I felt hurt, cheated. After 40 years, I had only just found him, and now had lost him already!

The next morning I phoned Rosita. She told me that the Thursday night anniversary dinner date they planned, had been canceled because Vincent's feet were so swollen he could not walk. He had told her on the phone that he had talked with me and sent pictures to me. She tried to call him again on Saturday, the day I had received the photos he sent, but his phone had been busy. She thought he must be talking with me. However his phone remained busy each time she tried to call throughout the weekend. By Sunday evening she had been quite worried. She slept very little that night.

Rosita had gotten up very early Monday morning, got on the earliest bus and went to Vincent's apartment. He failed to answer the door. She ran down the street to the local tavern and roused Hank, the owner out of his bed. He went with her to Vincent's apartment, but still no answer to the pounding on the door. So they called 9-1-1. The door had to be broken down. Vincent lay dead on the floor with the phone pulled down from the table and off the hook. He had died of a heart attack, probably sometime Saturday, the very day that I was looking at his photos for the first time!

After Vincent had been found, Rosita did not know how to contact me. She did not know my last name, phone number or address. For the next week she returned every day to Vincent's apartment building to get the mail. The police had sealed his apartment while his death was investigated, so she had no access to his papers or address book. Because they were divorced, there was nothing she could do about his remains or his belongings. The body was at the morgue and his apartment was locked up.

A week after he had been found, my second letter and pictures arrived in Vincent's mailbox and Rosita received it. Having our name and address she could now get our phone number from information. So it was that she finally reached us on the phone on that Monday night while I was out and Roy answered her call.

Rosita wanted desperately for me to come to California to take care of Vincent's belongings and arrange a funeral! What? I couldn't do such a thing! This was a man I didn't even know, who had rejected me! How could she ask such a thing? The fact was, being divorced from Vincent, she had no legal authority to touch anything of his or to make any arrangements no matter how close they had remained for so many years.

Since I was the only child, I was the only one with any legal authority! If I had not been located, the State of California would have taken over to settle all his affairs after a set length of time, 40 days I think. Vincent would have been buried in an unmarked pauper's grave at state expense. I told Rosita that I could not go out there to do anything and that the state would just have to take care of it all. She was not happy with that answer!

Another week passed. Then she called me again saying that his apartment had been broken into. His belongings were being vandalized, thrown into the garbage. I HAD to come and put a stop to it! She was beside herself in anguish! Roy and I discussed all this and finally decided that I had better go out there after all.

Up to this point I had not told my mother anything about trying to contact Vincent or that I had located him. As was usual for me, I was trying to avoid any unpleasantness that might occur for me with my family. Very gently Roy said to me, "Don't you think it's time you told your mother?" Of course, he was right. I phoned her, told her to sit down, then told her that I had found Vincent. Yes, I had found him and he had died already!

She could hardly grasp it, she was so shocked. The whole story came out then. Shelley, my sister-in-law, later told me that it had put mother in such an agitated state the family feared she would have another heart attack. That did not happen but what did happen was that she wanted to go with me to Los Angeles! Daddy agreed to let her go, but after considering it as an actual possibility, she decided not to go. (Sometimes just knowing we can do something, enables us to choose not to do it.)

Roy could not get away from the office to go on the trip with me, but Ruth was able to go along. We drove her little car, arriving in Southern California on Thanksgiving Day. We went first to the home of Ron and Dolly McDaniels, my old friends from high school and college days.

After the holiday, we drove into Los Angeles to Rosita's apartment. It was the first time I had met her. She was short like Ruth and I. She was friendly and put us both in her bed while she slept on the couch. She had not ever had a car, and seemed to enjoy riding with us in Ruth's. We visited Vincent's tiny apartment, which had not been broken into after all, but which the building owner had emptied, after the police seal was removed, because he wanted to get it ready for other tenants.

The owner of the building was a Korean man, in a largely Korean occupied section of downtown Los Angeles. He spoke broken English about how filthy and cockroach infested the apartment was! He had put Vincent's furniture in a storage room and trashed all the books, papers, photo albums and kitchen items.

Thus was lost any paperwork that should have been mine, photos of my childhood that he might have had, his military papers, etc. The bank papers had been kept, which was a good thing. I had to go to the Los Angeles county coroner, which does not have a viewing room, to get a copy of the death certificate in order to go to the bank to close his account. There was a grand total of just over \$300.

I gave all Vincent's furnishings to Rosita and others who lived in his apartment building and who, according to Vincent's words on the phone, had been his friends. I kept his two toolboxes, a jar of coins, an old paper ladies fan from Japan and his army cap with the stick pins in it. I did not arrange a memorial service, much to Rosita's disappointment. She said there were many friends who would want to come. Maybe there were, but I could not afford to do it on the \$300, which barely covered our travel expenses.

Instead of Vincent being buried in a pauper's grave, Hank the tavern owner, who had known Vincent for many years, told me to contact the Veterans Administration, which would take over the body and bury it properly.



**Ruth, Gale, Rosita**

I imagine that later he and his patrons at the tavern raised a glass together in Vincent's memory, I would have enjoyed being with them for that occasion and wish I had thought of it at that time.



**My father Vincent,  
I wish I had known you better!**

So it was that the VA buried Vincent, as they do all veterans who have no one to make arrangements (if they know about the death), in a marked grave at the National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. There was no graveside service, but I know where to find his grave, should I ever want to see it.

Hank told me other things about my father, speaking of him in a kind way. He was very helpful to me in getting through the things I had to do there.

I imagine that later he and his patrons at the tavern raised a glass together in Vincent's memory, I would have enjoyed being with them for that occasion and wish I had thought of it at that time.

Looking back now, I know that Vincent and I each gave the other something before he died. I gave him a peace of mind that my medical problems had not been his fault. Perhaps that had been a fear haunting his life all those years. I gave him knowledge about myself and about his grandchildren, whom he never met. I am sure he was grateful to know about them. In sending me photos, he had given me back his face.



**Hank & Ruth**

I now had a complete picture of him in my mind, a young soldier dressed in his khakis with a big smile and his Army cap on at a rakish angle. (Pictures of Vincent, his siblings and Rosita included in this book are all ones I received from Vincent and later from his brother James.)

## MEMORIES

Ruth and I took our leave of Rosita, spending another day in the greater Los Angeles metro area. See the map on page 2 of this chapter.

We revisited the apartment building where Roy and I had lived when Ruth was born. The building was in the process of being torn down, probably to be replaced by a new office building. Just down the hill from there, we went to 6<sup>th</sup> and Hope Streets where radio station KBBJ had been and where Roy and I had lived in the dormitories at the old Biola campus. The dorms and the Church of the Open Door were gone and where they had been there were just huge holes in the ground!

The Church of the Open Door, which had seated 4,000 people, like Biola College had relocated to the suburbs. Gone now, the beautiful sound of the carillon bells that rang out over the city each day at the noon hour. The bells have been moved and established as a memorial on the new campus of Biola University in La Mirada, California.

Gone as well from the tops of the dormitory buildings were the two huge JESUS SAVES signs that had been visible all over the area and to everyone traveling the freeways. Everything familiar to me that had stood there before was gone.

It was the end of an era! It was the end of a large urban church and a Bible college campus located in the heart of a huge metro area. It was the end of what had been a magnificent downtown testimony to the grace of God, a magnet for saint and sinner alike in the center of Los Angeles for so many years. And as well, it was for me the end of a tangible place that had given reality to the illusion in our personal memories.

Ruth and I spent a day locating some of the houses where my family had lived in La Crescenta. We visited Herbert Hoover High School in Glendale where I went and the junior high school I had attended, which is now La Crescenta High School.

We returned home to Denver with much to talk about, to think about and much for me to digest in thoughts and feelings about a parent, now gone, whom I barely had a chance to know.

I was glad finally that I had gone out to California.

I had found out that Vincent might have been too much of a drinker, but he was not the bad man that I had thought he probably was.

I was glad to have met Rosita, whom I remained in contact with for a few years. She would have been a stepmother to me if Vincent had contacted me while I was growing up. It would have been so easy to visit them and I would have known Rosita's extended family.

The trip was the end to a number of things for me. It was the closing of a door on what might have been with my father, on my past as a student and on the young couple that Roy and I had been as we started out in one small part of the greater Los Angeles metro area.

## A TIME TO GATHER

As I wrote previously, the Little People of America was a group I had heard of before. This group was not open to just any person of less than average height, it had to be short stature caused by some form of dwarfism, a concept that I thought of as awful, even creepy. It was not yet the era for support groups!

The death of our oldest son Stephen was a turning point in the life of each person in our family. Our family had gone to counseling for a while but when the rest of the family stopped going I continued to go. The therapist eventually got around to talking about other things in life besides just Stephen. One of which, was how did I feel about being such a short person?

In response to this question, I began to ponder and ask myself, probably for the very first time, what did I really feel about my short stature? As I thought it over, I began to realize that I really wanted the subject ignored. I wanted to see myself the same as everyone else. In fact, I had to admit to myself that years before I had broken off writing letters to Janie (who had been in Shriner's Hospital with me when we were children) because she had mentioned the Little People of America organization in a letter. I had not wanted her to talk to me about that group; I had been determined to have nothing to do with such an organization.

As soon as I admitted these hidden feelings to myself, I began to wonder what LPA was all about. As well, I began to be honest with myself about the creepy feeling it gave me to think about a group of short people! Eventually, I was able to tell myself that it was time to face my dread of dwarfs! I looked in the white pages of the phone book, called the number listed there for the Little People of America organization and attended the next meeting. It was January 1991.

The meeting was held at the home of a member of the group. Ruth went along with me; I really needed her moral support. The group was small in number that day, about eight people total. Several were average statured family members of little persons.

It was a pleasant surprise to me to discover that the little people there were just ordinary people! DUH! At the same time it was a kind of shock to both Ruth and I. For the first time we were speaking to standing adults with our eyes on a downward angle! Previously we had only spoken to standing adults on an upward angle and only to children on a downward angle. That may seem foolish to the reader, but for both Ruth and I it was a major event!

I believe that this same shock happens to other little people who attend an LPA meeting for the first time. In addition, the little person sees a mirror reflection of their own self in the other little people. It can be hard to realize just how other people "see" you when you are used to telling yourself that you look like everyone else. It has to do with one's self image; all persons have a mental picture of what they think they look like to others. Each little person, who has not associated with other little people before, has to readjust their own concept of how they look to the general public. Perception of self, as well as of others, is changed. It is usually a traumatic experience for a little person.

The Little People of America, Inc. now became a major force in my life and in the lives of our whole family. I attended almost every monthly chapter meeting. The people I met have become some of my closest friends, it became a time to gather new friends and to gain a new perspective of myself as a short statured person.

Living in Colorado, I became a member of the Front Range Chapter of LPA and District 10, comprised of the Four Corners States of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado. In August 1991 our district held a Regional meeting in Cheyenne, WY. At that time Wyoming was not a member of our district, but being close it was easy to include them in our activities. It was a small regional meeting with folks attending from other near by states. Even Janie came from Oregon!

Janie and I had not seen each other in 40 years! I was so excited to meet her when she flew into Denver! As I waited at the gate I began to wonder how in the world I was going to recognize her after all the years. When I saw her, the question was immediately answered; no one else except her came even close to my height! We had so much catching up to do!



**Gale & Janie**

In July of 1992 I attended my first national conference in San Francisco, CA. The annual national conferences last a full week. During that time there are many activities for all age groups. For repeat attendees one of the biggest attractions of the week is being able to see old friends, meet new friends, and spend hours just socializing at any time and any place, such as the hotel lobby or a hallway!

The hotel lobby is full of conference attendees the entire week. We sit around on the chairs, couches, stairs, and on the floor. For many sitting on the floor is much easier than climbing up into a chair! Once I heard a gift shop employee complaining in disgust, “Why do they have to hang around the lobby all the time?”. Because it is the best place to spot who is attending the conference! Everyone will eventually pass through the lobby going in or out of the hotel. It is a great way to find friends from past conferences, many of whom one gets to see only at conferences.

There are a variety of workshops throughout the Conference week, which are designed to be informative to all the various people who attend. Workshops are geared toward parents of small children, teens, adult little people, siblings of little people, accessibility at school and in public places, accessibility at home, how to inform classmates about a dwarf child at school, employment, financial assistance for schooling, psycho-social issues, medical issues in general, and so on. In addition there are smaller group meetings for specific types of dwarfism.

I have discovered that dwarfs are just like other people. I am not afraid of dwarfs now. There is even a kind of “dwarf pride” out there in the world! When a group of us walk to a local restaurant for dinner, people slow down in their cars to look. People walking past us in the opposite direction, turn around to stand and stare after us. We just go on our way, but we are not immune to the staring, finger pointing and smart remarks sometimes made in our direction.

All of these are things we talk about in workshops and group discussions. How do we feel about it? How do we respond to it? Do we hide away at home? Do we wear a chip on our shoulder for life? What do we say to the person who points?

What do we say when a child asks if we are a grown up or a child? What do we do when we turn around in a store to find a child standing very close behind us measuring him or herself against us? Actually children are the easiest to talk with. They are naturally curious, which generates their questions. They are not usually trying to be obnoxious. It’s a great opportunity to educate them, and their parents, about physical differences, if the parents don’t hustle them away too quickly.

On the other hand, educating the public by always having to explain one’s self, is a role that wears thin now and then! When that happens, a little person can sometimes seem cranky or even rude.

The LPA has a Medical Advisory Board made up of doctors around the country who specialize in various problems that affect little people. These specialists attend the conference each year donating their time and skill in advising families about kinds of medical treatments that are needed. Sometimes they bring members of their staff along with them.

For the first three days of each conference, a medical clinic is set up in the hotel so that families can schedule appointments free of charge with these wonderful doctors. Patients who want to see a doctor are to come to conference with their medical records, x-rays and test results in hand. These clinics are especially important to families with small children, many of whom do not yet have a firm diagnosis about which form of dwarfism their child has.

That may sound strange, until one realizes that so far over 200 types have been identified. The most common form is called Achondroplasia and is the form most people think of when they get a mental picture of a dwarf. Approximately 80% of all little people have this type of dwarfism.

As a dwarf child grows he or she often needs a series of surgeries to correct skeletal deformities. It is important in each individual case that surgeries are done at the most opportune times in the stages of growth. After seeing the doctors at the conference, the family will return to their local doctors at home armed with a better understanding about what steps must be taken for their little person's medical care. The Medical Advisory Board specialists are willing to discuss individual cases with local doctors by phone to help with proper treatments.

Quite a few people come to the conferences from other countries, many for the sports competitions. The Dwarf Athletic Association of America is in attendance at each conference. This organization pits the dwarf athletes against one another. It is the one time when they can compete with others who are on their own level in regard to size. The competitions are organized just like the Olympics with many of the same events including: track, swimming, weight lifting, javelin, discus, volleyball, table tennis, and so on.

Depending on which athletic events a person will be participating in, participants must have x-rays on hand and a signed permission form from their local doctor saying they can take part in the sports. This information is screened by doctors on site because some types of dwarfism have an instability in the vertebrae of the neck that if injured can cause paralysis.

Every night there is dancing until midnight. This is a very big item to everyone whether they are a dwarf or not. The children love to participate often getting on the dance floor as soon as they can walk. The dances are especially big with the young people, who look forward to having the dance floor to themselves after the children go to bed! The last night of the conference there is a banquet followed by the dance. The afternoon of that day is spent getting ready for the banquet. Ladies of all ages are excited when corsages are delivered to their hotel rooms.

Many people have said to me that they do not think of me as a dwarf. I understand that. Yet I do look different, you have to admit that. I am about 3 – 6 inches taller than most dwarfs, but I have some skeletal deformities that are similar to those of other dwarfs. Plus the medical condition I have is listed as one that causes dwarfism.

How do I feel now about being short? It's a blast, most of the time! The worst time is when I am in a group of average statured persons and the conversation is 6 inches above my head. Sometimes, I just gradually work my way out of the conversation and leave the huddle. It's not anyone's fault, people talk on their height level. Everyone does it, even little people!

In 1995 the National Conference was held in Denver at the downtown Marriott Hotel. Linda, Jan and I were the conference co-chairs and spent much of our time during the preceding three years putting that conference together.

But, since Jan and I were both working, Linda ended up doing most of the paperwork, making contacts and scheduling events. She was the one who really made it all come together.

Everyone in the Colorado chapter of LPA was involved in the work of making the conference happen once it began.



**Jan, Linda and Gale  
1995 Conference Co-Chairs**

Those three years were a difficult time for the three of us, with some heated arguments. The Denver conference, with 1100 attendees, was the first conference to have over 1000 people in attendance. The more recent conferences have been over 2000 in attendance, with the organization having to book two or more major hotels at a time.

Linda had a form of dwarfism known as Cartilage-Hair Hypoplasia (CHH), was just under four feet tall and married to a gentleman over six feet tall. Linda died from cancer.

Jan had Spondyloepiphyseal Dysplasia (SED), was also just under four feet tall and was single. Her courage to remain independent with her significant disabilities was a wonder to watch.

Jan worked all her adult life, being first employed in the small town where she was raised. Her job was to put the cinnamon into cinnamon flavored toothpicks! She had to soak the toothpicks in cinnamon water and then dry them before putting them in little cellophane packages. Perhaps you remember when those were available in restaurants.

Eventually Jan moved to Denver and was employed until her retirement at the Jefferson County Health Department at the triage desk.

Jan was my dearest friend in LPA. I would call her up making a date to meet for lunch so I could get my “Jan fix”, and she would get her “Gale fix”. Jan was from Nebraska, a great football fan! You dare not call her up when the Cornhuskers or Broncos or Buffs were playing. She would politely tell you she could not talk and then hang up on you!

Jan walked with crutches and had pulmonary complications periodically. The last years of her life she could not overcome this problem so always had to pull along a small canister of oxygen in a small wheeled cart.

I got pretty good at helping her lift this as well as other things in and out of her car. She had a battery-operated scooter, as many little people do, and a small electric lift to get it into her hatchback car. Everything she did took longer than the amount of time it took me. From her I gained a new perspective and appreciation for my own ability to perform daily tasks.

Jan had numerous orthopedic surgeries in her life and was in need of having both hips replaced again for the third time. But her doctor had told her that she should not ever have surgery again because of her pulmonary complications. So, she quietly and cheerfully endured the pain in her hips year after year.



**Roy helps Jan up the boardwalk at Easter Seals Handicamp during an LPA Chapter meeting**

She would on occasion tell me that she was struggling because of pain, but God always gave her ability to go on. I never saw her depressed or discouraged. She always would say there were others worse off than she was. Jan, the lion-hearted!

In 2002 Jan developed gall bladder problems. Again, she stoically endured as the discomfort got worse, until finally she could endure it no longer. She went to the emergency room and was admitted into the hospital for surgery. The gall bladder was so bad it was found to be gangrenous!

Jan went through the surgery just fine but developed pain on the second day. In order to determine the cause, a CT scan was done but during the scan Jan went into respiratory failure. Emergency measures failed to revive her.

Several times over the years, Jan and I had talked about heaven; saying that we hoped the mansions Jesus is preparing for us will be right across the street from each other. We had mentioned that again the night before her surgery. Her mansion must have been ready sooner than mine.

Another dear friend in our local chapter is Suzy. She was born with a very rare form of dwarfism, with only one arm and one leg. I do not know the name of the condition.

Suzy and her dwarf husband had two children, one a dwarf and one not. Suzy is very energetic and has been active in LPA for many years.

Suzy too is an amazing person in the way she leads a normal and very active life in spite of her challenges.



**Suzy, Gale, Linda and Jan  
Hanging out in the hotel lobby**



**Jan, Trisha,  
Roger & his sister Linda, Gale**

Being a part of LPA with the wonderful privilege of knowing so many fine people has had such a strong effect on my life. I often think of one or the other of these friends as I face a task that is a bit hard to perform. Little people have such determination in the face of adverse circumstances. Their courage and cheerfulness are magnificent.

It would be remiss of me not to say that some little people are not so courageous. Some do wear a chip on their shoulder all of their lives. Some never do persevere to achieve goals.

LPA is playing a role in the lives of many little people and their families to help with facing and overcoming challenges and reaching goals.

The Internet has been the main means for LPA to do this as more and more people are finding LPA via the internet, and more recently on television.

This also explains the rapid growth in attendance at more recent annual conferences.



**Getting clothes that fit  
is a challenge!**

## 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!

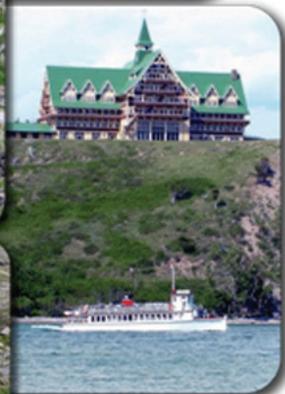
Roy and I had consistent 3-week vacations for long trips as well as some short trips that are memorable and added significantly to our time together.

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!



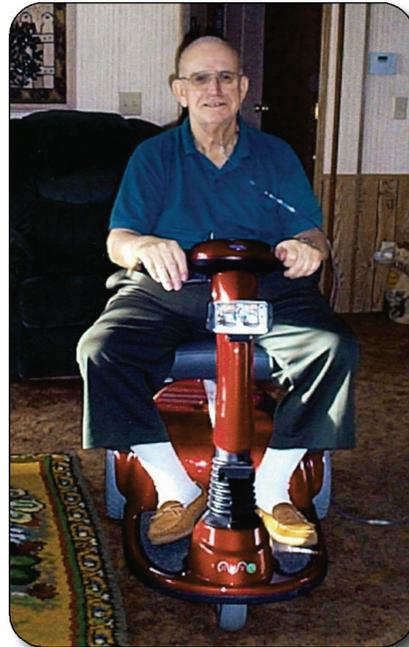
**Mom Smith, 1989**



**Mom Berglund, 2002**



**Dad Smith, 1997**



**Dad Berglund, 2005**

## CHAPTER 11 – A TIME TO LOSE

On April 19, 2002 our second son Tait Nathaniel died.



What to say at this point? How to tell the dramatic difference a second experience of the death of a child from the first experience? How to recount the hidden things of the heart that God did in *preparing us* for the experience and then in *walking with us through it* a second time?

Tait was 28 years old, still single, and living with his sister Ruth in her apartment in Lancaster, California. He was employed at a McDonald's restaurant, usually working an afternoon shift. He often watched television until late into the night, sleeping in the morning and then going to work for the lunch shift.

Tait's normal daily schedule was to go to work at 11 a.m. But on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April his schedule was quite different. He was to go in to work at 5 a.m. to unload a truck that would be delivering provisions to McDonalds. On the night of the 18<sup>th</sup>, he had been awake so long watching television as usual, that he decided to stay up the entire night without sleeping at all. He would go to work at 5 a.m. to unload the truck and sleep after that.

After unloading the truck, he returned home to the apartment at about 8 a.m., just as Ruth was leaving to go to school for the day. He told her he was going to eat some breakfast, get a few hours of sleep and then go back to work for his regular shift at 11 a.m. When Ruth returned home at about 6 p.m. following an after school meeting, she found him in his bed and immediately sensed from his appearance that he had died.

The history of seizures that Tait had, caused all of us to harbor a fear that something bad could happen to him someday. He was on medication to control the problem but a person can forget to take medication. It crossed all of our minds that if he were to miss a dose of medication, he might collapse crossing the street or that he might be injured by falling during a seizure. We had learned not long before his death that sometimes people die during seizures.

In later years I have been told that other things can bring on a seizure in spite of being on medication. Such things as: a difference in a daily routine, not eating regularly, missing sleep, or having an illness such as a cold. Sometimes people skip doses of medication trying to make the pills they have last a few more days until they get another pay check or until they can see their doctor. I suspect that is what Tait was doing.

But we will never know for sure exactly what brought on the seizure that took Tait's life. The thing we DO know is that God has said He has the days of our lives numbered in the book He has written for us, the Bible. In the book of Job chapter 14 verse 5, it says that **"...his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass."**

Nothing is outside of God's sight or His control. He sees the fall of a sparrow, as it says in Luke chapter 12 verses 6 and 7, **"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."**

Ruth immediately called 9-1-1. When the emergency vehicles arrived at the apartment complex, an elderly neighbor lady came asking Ruth to come to her home while the scene was investigated. The apartment manager came asking her how he could help and she asked him to call her parents.

Normally I only worked on Saturday and Sunday evenings, but that day was a Friday. Filling in for someone else that day, I had gone to work at 3 p.m. In the early evening, I called home to chat with Roy, as I often do when working. He sounded unnatural, very tired, even depressed. I asked what was wrong. He said he would tell me when I got home. I insisted he tell me right then as his tone of voice warned me something serious was wrong.

He said that Tait had died. I told him that I would be right home. No, he didn't want me to drive home alone; instead he would drive over to the hospital so I could follow him back home in my car. That sounded foolish to me since we were both feeling equally stunned why should he do that? I would be as able to drive one way by myself, as he would be to drive two directions. I was then able to convince him that I could drive home as easily as he could drive all the way over to meet me and drive back home again.

Somehow I stayed calm enough after hanging up the phone, to take the steps needed to close my time at work for the evening. Notifying the nurses upstairs that I had to close down the switchboard early and go home due to a death in the family was the first step. I was able to leave a voice mail for my boss explaining what had happened causing me to leave work several hours early.

I was able to drive home without becoming hysterical, arriving there minutes before our son Vernon and his wife AJ arrived to join us. Seeing Vernon was when I began to unravel emotionally. Such a mixture of grief and relief! Thinking of Tait's seizures, the only words I had initially were, "I don't have to worry anymore!". That one burden, pressing so often and heavily into my mind and heart, was suddenly gone.

This is HARD to write! Trying to remember what it was like at that moment. Trying not to be overcome by that same grief even as I write. Each one of us who were there together that night would probably describe it differently. Each of us must have differing memories of what it was like.

As we talked things over with Vern and AJ, and Ruth by phone, our first plan was that Roy and I would pack our things and start out driving to California immediately. We were mindful of Ruth being out there alone. This was the second time she was alone, absent from her family, when a brother died! We felt we had to get to her as fast as we could! We made a few phone calls to our employers, our pastor, and a neighbor to let them know what had happened and that we were going to California.

I composed a quick e-mail message to family and a few close friends telling about Tait's death and saying that we were leaving for California immediately.

We packed our bags quickly, but as we headed for the door, we realized that we were too tired to be able to drive very far. Changing our plans we went to bed, but because my mind was whirling, I was unable to sleep so got out of bed again.

In the wee, darkest hours of the night I sat at the computer and wrote the following words as a second e-mail message to the same family members and friends whom I had e-mailed a few hours earlier. It reads like this:

Dearest Ones, it is late and my thoughts are going out to each of you as the night wears on.

Roy and I got so late getting away toward California that we decided to wait until morning to go. Roy is sleeping already, he has been up since 4 a.m. I just can't shut my brain off yet.

It hasn't really set in yet, what this all means or WILL mean in the days ahead to Roy and I or to our two remaining children, or to little Madeline, Tait's 9 year old daughter. So far this feels different than when Steve died. Maybe it is because we have been down this road before. Maybe it is because Tait wasn't doing something foolish at the time. Maybe it is just because it hasn't "hit" me yet.

Vernon and AJ came over for a few hours this evening. We made coffee, cried together and laughed too. Laughed? Yes, about funny things from the past and other stuff as well. Vern has his young family to comfort him initially, but he will feel the loss of his brother more later I'm sure. No one came to the house because everyone thought we were leaving right away. That's good; it gave us time just for us. None of the neighbors were home this evening so even they weren't here. We've left a lot of messages on phones.

Ruth is staying with church friends tonight and maybe the next few nights.

The word has gone out like a whirlwind to folks who know us. But the word being passed is that we are on the road to California. So no calls coming in either. Quiet around here tonight!

My thoughts are about how each person will feel and what they will think. I am SO glad that I know Jesus Christ as my Savior from sin and giver of eternal life. And that I can trust my sons into His care. That's where they were all the time anyway even when they were little boys playing at our feet. I just couldn't see it clearly then.

I wonder if Tait has met up with Steve yet and is Steve showing Tait around up there? Maybe Grandma Doris has seen him by now too? And how about all the rest who have gone on ahead of us.....Knut and Anna, Willard and Lavern, Kenny, Roy's parents Bob and Thelma, .....others we could name. What a sweet thought!

I am finding that the life THERE is starting to look more inviting, the longer I live here.

A song keeps running through my head.. its from Handel's Messiah and from the Bible, Job 19:25-27: "For I KNOW that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I KNOW, That IN MY FLESH I SHALL SEE GOD, Whom I shall see FOR MYSELF and MY eyes shall behold, and not another."

How do I know this is true? My heart tells me it is and so does God's Word.

The Bible is called the LIVING WORD of God. It lives, it has life in it, the life is God's own and He makes our hearts know its true.

I would ask you to read it and know its truth yourself. Then you will be as sure as I am that I WILL see Tait and Steve, and all the others again IN MY FLESH, and I will see Jesus in His flesh, which when it happens will be even better than seeing Tait and Steve!

Because they didn't save me. HE did.

Pray for our family that the truths we have learned thus far will stand us in good stead as we live with the moments that are now and are yet to come. Good night for now, praying for the comfort of YOUR souls in the grace and mercy and love of God,

Gale

About 6 a.m. Roy and I started our long drive toward Ruth in California. At first Vernon was unsure about being able to make the trip out to California. But within 24 hours he and his family were also on the highway headed that direction.

I'll pause here to say that after Stephen's death, I had thought many times about what it would be like if another one of our children was to die. You may say, "How could you even think such a thing?"! The reality is that once it has happened you realize that it CAN happen again. The guarantees that we subconsciously feel exist for us suddenly are no longer there. We have a new sense of vulnerability. We know in a very real way now that anything can and sometimes does happen. Our lives in this time of mankind's history and in this country have had a minimum of this kind of trauma for most of us. Unlike many other people in the world who have experienced multiple losses in their lives.

Never having dealt before with the loss of anyone close to us when Stephen died, we were unprepared for the blow it was and the effects it had on the whole family. All of us were truly traumatized for a long time. Would this second experience be just as traumatic? I didn't know. Over the years following Stephen's death, a secret fear that I might not survive the inner trauma, or that I would loose my mind if we were to loose another child, had plagued me for a long time. Gradually, as God restored me to peace and joy, I had been able to let go of that fear until it was nothing more than a small shadow appearing now and then in the background of my mind. Now suddenly, I was faced with a second death that would force me to find out if that secret fear would become a reality!

Sometimes we try to imagine what a severe trial might be like and how we would respond to it if it did happen. But a trial of this nature does not touch only one person, it touches an entire family, and the effect it has on the other members of the family can complicate the effect it actually has upon one's self.

Getting back now to the story; as I said, Roy and I left very early for California. What we both began to realize as we drove along, was that we were in a great calm. I don't know how else to say it. Sometimes we talked quietly, other times we were silent. We were in pain but peaceful. Numb yet strangely content. We had a great sense of being cared for. Our main concern was for Ruth and Vernon. How would they do through this experience? And what of Tait's little nine-year-old daughter Madeline, whom he dearly loved? What would be the effect on her?

We discovered that our hearts were at peace regarding Tait. We were certain that he is all right, free from whatever things made his heart heavy, free from the threat of any more seizures, content to be with God and see His face. Safe in the arms of Jesus. We each felt a great personal loss, knowing we could not ever give him a hug, touch his face, or hear his laugh again. Yet we could not wish him back with us. Not back to the problems of this world, back to "the sins that so easily beset us", as the Scripture says of our moral failures, doubts and fears. We were full of the vision of the place where he had gone and the glories of life there in the presence of God! No, we could not wish him back from such a place, even to have a chance to hug him again!

There is a joyful chorus that we love to sing, maybe it fits what I am trying to say here:

### **I'LL FLY AWAY – Public Domain**

**Some glad morning when this life is o'er,  
I'll fly away;  
To a home on God's celestial shore,  
I'll fly away.  
I'll fly away, O glory,  
I'll fly away;  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by,  
I'll fly away.**

**When the shadows of this life have gone,  
I'll fly away;  
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,  
I'll fly away.  
I'll fly away, O glory,**

**I'll fly away;  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by,  
I'll fly away.**

**Just a few more weary days and then,  
I'll fly away;  
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,  
I'll fly away.  
I'll fly away, O glory,  
I'll fly away;  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by,  
I'll fly away.**

Roy and I arrived at Ruth's apartment on Sunday, Vernon and his family arrived on Monday. We immediately set about contacting her church to hold a small memorial service there. But the church was being used most of that week for various other activities. We could not hold a service until the following Friday evening. Suddenly there was time to kill, some days to be got through together somehow.



We made lots of telephone calls. Ron McDaniels, our old friend from high school and Biola days, drove north from the San Diego area to spend an afternoon with us.

We sorted through all of Tait's belongings, deciding again as we had for Stephen, what to keep and what to give away. It was a difficult task. A light in the darkness was the presence of Vernon's little son Casey, who was 10 months old, pulling himself up to stand, trying to walk around furniture. Watching him was a delight that we indulged in each day. His new young life was taking some of the edge off the pain of our collective loss.

By Thursday we had completed most of what needed to be done. We decided on a trip to Santa Monica beach where Roy and I had hung out so often during school days.

The drive on the freeways, now much more complex than in the 1960's when we had lived in southern California, seemed to me to be a night mare. But we got to the beach finally and enjoyed our time in the surf and sand very much.

We had dinner at a lovely restaurant right on the beach. By the time we started back to Lancaster where Ruth lived, night was falling.

Twice we got turned around on the freeways. Being tired from the long day in the sun, and with nervousness from the confusion of the freeways, I began to cry and could not stop.

We pulled in at McDonalds at one point to get coffee, which helped some, but I cried almost constantly for nearly two hours. So much emotion for a week, building inside until it had to come out and the freeways did it!

The next day we prepared for the memorial service to be held that evening in a classroom of Ruth's church.



**Vernon and Casey,  
touching the Pacific!**

We expected maybe 20 or 30 people maximum to attend, people who knew both Ruth and Tait at church and work. But we had not counted on the large number of people who had worked with Tait at McDonalds all showing up for the service. Several were weeping, saying what a kind person he had been and how awful they missed him.

We were shocked; we had no idea so many liked him so much! We had to set up many more chairs. We had made a display of photos of Tait and the whole family. A lady from the church sang and played her guitar. The pastor gave a short message about God's provision of salvation for us when we trust in His Son Jesus Christ. There were refreshments provided by some of the church people. Each one in our family got up to speak about what Tait had meant to us.

At last, the hurdle of the memorial service was over. The next morning we were on our way driving back to Colorado. Three cars this time in our caravan, since Ruth was driving her own car back with us. We planned to hold another memorial service at our church in Denver for those people who had known Tait in Colorado.

We arrived home on Sunday evening and held the service on Wednesday evening. Our little Holly Hills Bible Church looked to be packed full. The order of the service was much the same as it had been at Ruth's church. One difference in this service from the first one, was that when I stood up and got started talking about Tait I could not stop! I went on for some time feeling that I was being driven to say the things I said.

### **DAY BY DAY**

Words by Karolina W. SandellBerg, 1865

**Day by day, and with each passing moment,  
Strength I find, to meet my trials here;  
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,  
I've no cause for worry or for fear.  
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure  
Gives unto each day what He deems best—  
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,  
Mingling toil with peace and rest.**

**Every day, the Lord Himself is near me  
With a special mercy for each hour;  
All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me,  
He whose name is Counselor and Power;  
The protection of His child and treasure  
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;  
"As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,"  
This the pledge to me He made.**

**Help me then in every tribulation  
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,  
That I lose not faith's sweet consolation  
Offered me within Thy holy Word.  
Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting,  
Ever to take, as from a father's hand,  
One by one, the days the moments fleeting,  
Till I reach the promised land.**

In the years since Tait left us, my heart has not always felt the same peace that God gave me at the first. There have been many times when my heart feels broken with the loss of both Tait and Stephen. Such times are painful. I try to think of other people who have lost children to remind myself that I am not alone in this kind of experience and pain. Thinking about other folks helps some, but allowing myself to be sad and to grieve again for a bit, instead of putting on a smile and acting like I am okay, is the only thing that truly moves me forward to real peacefulness once more. Losing hurts, even if it was years ago!

When meeting someone for the first time, it is common to ask how many children they have. I have not always known how to reply to that question. Sometimes I say I have two children. Then, in the course of conversation it will come out that I actually had two more than that, which requires an explanation. Other times, I will answer the question by saying that I had four and two are now in heaven. That answer too requires an explanation. Either answer usually leads eventually to the necessity for an explanation.

It is also hard to know just *how much* information to give. Each time I have to decide how much I am willing to say, as well as try to gauge how much the other person really wants to know. Many times I do not get it “right”. It’s easy to give too much information. That was especially true during the first few years after Steve died when I was hurting so much. I was compelled to vent my feelings to anyone who seemed willing to listen.

We each dealt with our loss of Stephen in differing ways. I was not very happy with the way Roy handled his grief! Because he has never been a person who says much about his feelings, I felt isolated from him. Even going so far as to think he did not really care. I have since discovered that this kind of conflict is common among those who grieve. Because we think that others should grieve exactly the same way we do, talk about it the same way we do, we misunderstand the pain another person is enduring.

There is never a day that I forget to think about our two sons. However, I frequently do not remember that a day is actually one of their birthdays or an anniversary of one of their deaths. Remembering them often occurs quite suddenly, like a bolt of lightning coming into my mind. The pain of loss hits me again for a few seconds causing me to fling my mind toward the promise of God that we will all be together again one day soon. The amount of time between such experiences had gotten longer for me as the years passed following Steve’s home-going to heaven. But the loss of Tait’s presence with us had brought Steve’s loss all back, making that grief live fresh within me again.

So it was that I grieved for Steve again at the same time that I grieved for Tait. But God’s mercy is so great! The things I had learned through the first grief helped me with the second grief. I knew now what the pain of grief felt like, so was not as frightened of the intensity of the feelings of pain when I felt them again. The questions I’d had about God’s character and fairness had already been put to bed, so to speak. I did not wrestle with them a second time. I was able to face what was going on inside me, as well as whatever part of it may have been the attacks of the evil one, Satan, to undermine and disrupt again my faith and joy in Christ. Satan’s “fiery darts” had little impact through this second experience. I was able to say, “Oh no you don’t, not this time!”

I knew now that God would carry me again whenever I needed Him to. I had learned that such events were not “about” my faith. God had not taken my sons because *I needed to learn something*, or because I had been a poor mother. It was not because I had failed to pray often enough. I had not sinned so that I needed to be punished. Instead, it was “about” God’s plan for my sons as individuals. It was about the number of days each of them had for life on this earth. A number known ahead by God because He places high value on each one.

God does not waste hard things that come to us in this world. They come and He uses them as tools to help us understand the deep, profound things of His care for us. I think hard things also teach us to look up in anticipation of our future with God in Heaven, in that perfect place where no sorrow will ever touch us again.



**Now we are four**

## LOOSE ENDS

Over the next months we waited for Tait's cause of death to be determined and for the Los Angeles County Coroner to send us his death certificate. As I grew impatient with the passage of time, I talked with the coroner by phone several times. Besides being a very large, extremely busy department, he told me they had run tests but nothing conclusive was showing up as a cause of death, so they were still working on it trying to find out something.

Finally five months after Tait's death, I was able to send this e-mail message to family and friends:

**Sent: September 24, 2002**

**Subject: Cause of Death Determined**

**Hello everyone, I just spoke to the Los Angeles County Coroner about the results of all the tests in the autopsy on Tait. He said there was nothing at all out of the ordinary except the low level of his anti-seizure medication in the blood stream. They went back over everything again microscopically to be sure. So the cause is being listed as epilepsy, as we had thought. Now we just have to receive the death certificate from the mortuary that did the cremation.**

**It is good to have a final word on this, as it has been a long time coming and somewhat unsettling to not have a definite cause told to us. It took so long due to the fact that nothing was showing and they sent tissues out to other labs for testing and then re-did their own work.**

**I have spoken to people at work who deal constantly with brain injured patients who have seizures after injury. They have told me that for a person with seizures, any change in anything can bring on a seizure that can cause death. Such as: low levels of medications due to a need for a change in dosage or failure to take meds when its time to, lack of sleep, a cold or other illness, not eating properly or irregularly, etc. We know that most of Tait's seizures seemed to occur when he was under stress, as when working extra hours or having irregular sleeping habits. Many occurred when he was sleeping.**

**We are glad the waiting for this information is finally over. We are glad, so glad, to have had the years we did have with Tait. He was a special person, not just to us. We worried over him for several reasons, but saw him doing better as he grew older. We miss him terribly and will not get over his loss. But we find comfort daily in remembering the promises of our Lord that those who trust Him for their soul's salvation, are alive forever with Him and we will all see each other again some day. Not a fairy tale, but a reality. Life here is confusing, often there are not answers to the questions we ask in the privacy of our hearts, so we look away to the One who made us all and trust that He will do what He said He would and that one day soon our questions will all be answered, just as Tait's have been since he went to the place where the answers are and to the One who has those answers.**

**May our Lord God give you comfort too, and help you trust Him when there are no answers to something you face. May He bless you for your love of us and the prayers you have sent up for us.**

**Thank you, we love you, Gale and Roy**

The next summer during 2003, Madeline came alone from Louisiana to visit us for the first time.

As a family group, we drove up in the mountains to the Continental Divide to scatter ashes there again. This time we took two boxes of ashes, those of Tait and those of Roy's Dad. These ashes were scattered gently with those of Stephen which we had scattered fourteen years before and could still find after so many years.



**A 2009 visit to the site  
Gale, Madeline, Rachel**

Then, two years past Tait's home going, I sent this e-mail to a few friends and relatives:

**April 20, 2004**

**“My heart is full tonight of the grace of God directed toward me, as today I have had a keen sense of the loss of our dear son Tait just two years ago. Yesterday was the second anniversary. I had forgotten it completely, which I think is a good thing that my emotions not be dictated by a calendar on the wall, but then I received an e-mail from a relative about it.**

**In addition, in cleaning out drawers today, I came upon a photo of Tait as a toddler and lost my composure completely for the rest of the afternoon. However, a devotional booklet had such a profound text of scripture for today. 2 Corinthians 4: 17 which says,**

**“for our light affliction, which is but for a moment,  
works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”**

**It is the first time I have thought of my grief as being a “light” thing. And to contrast so sharply the glory of God that we have even now in our life in Christ and will have for all eternity in heaven with Him.**

**To think of that glory as a thing of substance with a weight so great as to press upon me so much more greatly than the pressure of the painful affliction that grief has been to my soul!**

**The comparison is mind-boggling! It has lifted me up in praise toward the One who loves my soul and gives me His own life! How can I keep from praising Him?**

**My grief is but for a moment, from God's perspective outside of time. But the glory that is mine and will continue to be mine, because I belong to Christ, is eternal!**

**My soul is at peace again.”**



**Now we are seven**



## CHAPTER 12 – A TIME TO SPEAK

The following words to a song I love may help to describe the condition of my heart now after more than five years since Tait left us, and more than twenty years since Stephen left us.

### **I WILL NEVER WALK ALONE**

By Dick and Marcia Schultz

**I will never walk alone,  
Tho' my foot steps fall unanswered,  
On this winding journey home,  
I will never walk alone.  
I cannot fathom love that burns so hot with grace,  
I long to see beyond the veil that hides Your face.  
Close as a heart beat,  
Closer than tears,  
So I press on because I know that You are here.**

**I will never stand alone,  
Even tho' my friends may fail me,  
In this hard fought battle home,  
I will never stand alone.  
I cannot tame the truth so kind and yet so wild,  
You have ransomed me to claim me as Your child.  
Love beyond reserve,  
Love without end,  
I seek to serve You and You seek to be my Friend.**

**I will never cry alone,  
Tho' my heart is torn by silence,  
On this sad, sweet journey home,  
I will never cry alone.  
In this hard fought battle home,  
I will never stand alone.  
On this winding journey home,  
I will never walk alone.**

One of my favorite things to put on toast is peanut butter. I love to slather it on real thick! Whenever I eat that now I am reminded of God's love for me. He slathers His love all over me to the extent that my mind and heart are comforted and full of joy in spite of the events of this life! I am grateful to have learned how huge His love is.

There is a children's song that says:

**Wide, wide as the ocean;  
high as the heavens above;  
deep, deep as the deepest sea;  
is my Savior's love.  
I tho' so unworthy still am a child of His care;  
for His Word teaches me;  
that His love reaches me everywhere!**

Even into the depths of grief and despair!

Thank you, God!

## EPILOGUE

So, in conclusion, after all the years, where am I today as a woman in my 60's? I am still calling unto the Lord. I am still learning His great and mighty things, which I do not yet fully know. He is still showing me that He is all I need, that He loves me in spite of my personal shortcomings or failures, and that He is faithful to me.

From my viewpoint, I see myself as still spiritually immature in many ways; frequently uncertain of myself among my peers. I am often still quick to be fearful, especially if anything is out of the ordinary in regard to my children or grandchildren.

But on the other hand, I am much more confident in faith as well as in daily life. I am not so frightened or angry as I used to be when things don't go the way I want them to. I am much more content to be who I am. There is more of a peace inside me in regard to myself than there ever was before.

Do I have regrets? Yes, some. I wish I had studied music in college and that I had continued on to graduate. My parenting skills did leave something to be desired. I wish I had been better at that. There should have been more hugs when we were a younger family, although my kids say they remember many. If I had it to do over again, I would do some things differently.

It's a wonderful blessing to be able to entrust all of the past, along with my shortcomings, into the hands of God and know that He can sort it all out. There is a wonderful hymn which says,

**“ I know whom I have believed and am persuaded  
that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him....”**

That which I have committed unto Him is all of the life, which has here been written about. The loss of my father, the constant changing of addresses, the surgeries, the illnesses, the parenting, the grief, the children separated from me by death, the children I still have who are such a blessing, and the sweet grandchildren who are the future; the work, the hardships, the uncertainties, the sins I have committed, the prayers sent up, the laughter, the joys, the financially hard times, the financially abundant times.....

God is larger than all of it. He has been sufficient for all I have ever needed. He has taught me a moment at a time, step by step each day, to know that He is trustworthy.

I have learned that the essence of life is change, physical change as we grow physically, as well as change in our place of residence and vocation, family and friends.

Spiritual change too, as believers in Christ we are being changed into His image. As it says in 2 Corinthians 3 verse 18,

**“but we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,  
are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,  
just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

My heart overflows in joy as I think about His comfort and restoration of my soul!

He has restored to me the joy of His salvation!

I sing because I am happy, I sing because I am free! I cannot be silent.

Hallelujah, He is worthy of my worship and praise!!



## **ADVICE FOR MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN**

What advice would I leave my children?

**“But GROW in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”**  
(Emphasis is mine.)

If you heed this advice, you will never regret it.

**“Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”**

God speaks to each of us personally. A friend once told me that he doesn't read the Bible, because that is what he pays the priest to do for him.

My children, don't expect someone else to read it for you, find out for yourselves what treasures God has hidden in it, put there just for you personally!

Remember, you are so special, so valuable, to me and especially to God! Yes, that's right, you are of great value to God! He would not give the life of His Son for a person who had no value to Him.

## **IN CHRIST ALONE**

By Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

**In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This cornerstone, this solid ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease.  
My comforter, my all in all,  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone, who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless Babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save.  
'Til on the cross as Jesus died,  
the wrath of God was satisfied.  
For every sin on Him was laid;  
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness slain;  
Then, bursting forth in glorious day,  
Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory,  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;  
For I am His and He is mine,  
bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand;  
'til He returns or calls me home,  
here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand!**



**“Here in the power of Christ we stand”**