

# My Life Journey

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# 1

## MY VERY EARLY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

JUST BEFORE I WAS BORN my father and mother were deeply involved in the early years of a thriving Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Toledo, Ohio. My father was the Sunday School Superintendent when the church was started in a storefront building in a deteriorating commercial area. Later, it was from this now very large missions-minded church, with a large missionary budget, that one of my father's sisters and one of my mother's sisters each literally gave their lives to missionary work in China. This missions-minded family relationship later did have, and still continues to have, a powerful, enduring influence on my spiritual life .

LATER, MY MOTHER became caught up in a powerful new Charismatic movement that was sweeping the nation with much emphasis on miracles... healing, and other dramatic evidences. Much of this was very real, but it was to become fertile ground for misplaced gift emphasis and even outright fraud. My father, a well-read, devoted Bible scholar, chose not to follow my mother, and our very large family became deeply divided over all this. Most of the children, as we grew older, came to agree with our father, finding no biblical mandate for some specific gifts or for identical dramatic evidence of our personal faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Regardless, our home ... and our parents became an effective Christian witness in the community and I deeply

appreciate my praying mother and father.

HOWEVER, My talented, well educated mother, a leader, had now become a dedicated "follower." Her church met in a large "upper room" on Main Street in East Toledo and as an infant I was carried up a long flight of stairs after the 3 mile trip by trolley car. The family had no automobile until about 1922.

Upon leaving the evening services... which were many, and long, I was usually sound asleep while carried down the stairs, to be cruelly awakened by the sudden chill and by the sounds of night-time Main street. No matter, for it was there in that Upper Room under the prayerful influence of my Godly mother that I



was dedicated to the Lord, and it was there at six years of age, in deep conviction, with tearful remorse and confession (of whatever) that I gave my heart to the Lord at the church altar during a lengthy adult "Revival" Meeting." The evangelist was a lady named Rose, I believe. Because of my dedicated mother, that church had a good, positive influence on me, but with

the years, I eventually found joy in fellowship and growth in my father's church and it's biblical ministry. Those were the early years of my journey.



# 2

## THE DEPRESSION AND THE CCC.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION began at the close of the “Roaring Twenties,” an economic period not unlike the 1990’s. In both of these time frames there was a tenuous prosperity held up by the balloons of lying, greed and massive financial manipulation and fraud by high officials in large corporations, sometimes with the full knowledge of prominent political leaders. The stock market crash on Black Tuesday (October 29, 1929) and the great depression forced multiplied millions into unemployment. Many lost their homes for because of a very modest mortgage balance due, and millions lost their personal savings in the stock market failures. I was a grade school paper boy at the time. I took my \$1.29 out of the bank just two weeks before our wise president actually was forced to close the banks.. Those were extremely difficult years for many of us. My mom and dad still had 7 of their ten children at home. My dad had a small business making and installing “weather stripping,” custom wooden screens, storm windows and storm doors.

THE DEPRESSION closed my father’s small business and we lost our modest fairly new home for lack of ability to pay anything on the very small mortgage balance, and we moved into a small home with “4 rooms and a path” on the edge of the city, next to the railroad. We had one of the last outside toilets in the city. They were illegal The out of town owner, friend of a lawyer my dad had done work for on his home,



allowed us to live there rent free in the damaged home when my dad agreed to keep the house in basic repair and keep it from being vandalized further. My industrious, honorable father found little work, so everybody helped. An older sister worked as a part-time waitress, and I continued with my walking “NewsBee” newspaper route with customers scattered all over. A good paying customer was a treasure, as I paid for my papers, even if an occasional “bad” customer didn’t pay me. I also sold the morning paper before school at a “street-car” stop and sold a competing daily newspaper, the “Toledo Blade,” on Saturdays, earning a handful of change. Any money we all had went into the common family fund. Families helped each other. I can still clearly recall the happy scenario when my uncle, my father’s brother, who had a good job, handed my dad two one dollar bills one weekend.

THE TOLEDO TERMINAL RAILROAD. The many coal trains from Virginia passed our house. The neighbor across the street and his sons would hop the train a long ways south and would move the large chunks of coal to the edge of the train car. When the train reached their home, they would kick the coal off the train, then down the tracks bank to their house, where they hid it

under the house. I watched them do all this. Railroad police would question all the neighbors with little success. I saw another neighbor being shot at by the police with a sawed off shotgun while running away, but the guy had a heavy coat on and was not hurt. Questioning the neighbors got nothing. On the other side of the tracks. A number of men got together and systematically stole coal from the moving trains and filled a dump truck with the coal and sold it. Those were desperate times for many people. We kids, I must have been 14 or 15 years old, would hop and ride these freight trains, going to a nearby town and back again. It was a thrill to sit on top of a swaying boxcar. I also recall pulling a friend from a freight train when he lost his footing and could not get away, still holding onto the train with one hand. A young neighbor boy was killed on "our" railroad, and a young coal thief who lived behind us was killed when he slipped beneath the train. I saw a R.R. Policeman shoot at this same guy with a revolver one time. The local burglar lived across the street, when he was not in prison. There were some nice neighbors, however. Those were very difficult times..

SOMEHOW, MY MOTHER AND FATHER managed to weather those very, very difficult years. It is a long, long and painful story. Someone has written a book about that time, entitled "We Had Everything But Money." For a family with no dependable income, the days were still filled with some kind of low (or no) paying activity. I remember a garden. It was a long, two mile walk. I raised rabbits and sold newspapers. But our weekends were special. Saturday was always a "wind-down day". ... as we prepared for Sunday. On the quiet Saturday night the entire family stood around the piano and sang, with my very gifted older sister at the piano. (We always seemed to have a piano, and older sisters.) This sister, Henrietta Bailey, became a life-long music writer, children's piano teacher, and a church pianist and organist. She eventually served in the Philharmonic orchestra in two large cities. The Great Depression no doubt somehow contributed to all of the above family blessings and a lifetime of mutual respect and appreciation.

AT THAT TIME welfare was coal and groceries, which we had to participate in for a few painful months. My industrious father was always pleased to do the minimum hours of county work in compliance. He and I, the oldest son in the original family of six boys and four girls, did the cleanup of the restaurant in the downtown Toledo, Ohio Lion department store on weekday evenings. My dad was a very good carpenter and when employment started to pick up he was able to find small part-time repair and maintenance jobs. I don't think, however, that my talented, creative and formerly successful father ever did recover completely from the struggle and suffering ... and embarrassment, of those extremely stressful, painful, and difficult years. Many, many people in the country were completely out of employment and income of any kind, and there seemed to be almost no prospect of improvement. There was often little money to buy food or to travel, even with bread at about ten cents a loaf, and gasoline at maybe 19 cents a gallon. This brought about a huge government welfare system, and all kinds of promises and programs by the political establishment, under the long time president Franklin Roosevelt. There was the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, (FERA), and the Civilian Conservation Corp program limited to young men, and designed strictly to help participating needy families.

IN 1936 I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, but there were few jobs available. My first job paid \$11 a week, as office boy for a commercial refrigeration company. I was paid the first week, but the firm went broke and still, 68 years later, I have never been paid for the second and last week. I accepted this, after all, we were in depression, everybody suffered. However, I was now 18 years of age and so I became eligible for the CCC. My family received \$25 each month and I was paid \$5 a month. It was a significant help to my family, and I was delighted with the ability to do so. The CCC program was semi-military, furnishing barracks housing, facilities, all the meals, clothing, and discipline.

CCC camps were scattered all over the country. They did a wide assortment of projects, including park and roadway improvements, the building of dams, sometimes many simple brush dams on a single ranch or farm, and the installation of cattle fence on farms and ranches. The land owner, by contract, furnished all the materials and the federal government furnished all the labor. One example was the clearing and cleaning up of a wooded area and the cutting up of the timber for fencing. Then there was fertilizer. Huge piles of wood, covered with lime, were set on fire to make fertilizer. Huge tree stumps were blown out of the ground with dynamite or twisted out of the ground by horsepower. One young man in my group was killed when a blown out stump went up and out a long, long way. . He just didn't run away fast enough. A large share of servicemen in WWII were CCC "boys," rather well prepared for military life. I believe my CCC, WWII, and Great Depression duty and discipline has been a blessing to me for much of my life, and is still beneficial to me after all these many years. There are absolutely no regrets.

*THE CCC WAS A VERY GOOD PROGRAM.* It was also an excellent answer for some of our growing depression social problems. One thing our culture needed then was hundreds of thousands of unselfish 18 year old young men in needy families who were willing to live and work under semi-military conditions and discipline for a very, very small income with their families receiving most of their earnings. Maybe someone needs to write a book about the amazing, but politically polarizing "immoral prosperity" of the 1990's. It's interesting that, according to officials of 30 major cities surveyed by the Conference of Mayors, "the strong economy (of the 90's) has had little impact on hunger and the homeless." The above book could well be entitled "We Had Nothing BUT Money." I repeat here the powerful words of William Bennett, "As the richest, most powerful, most envied nation on earth we lead the industrialized world in rates of murder, violent crime, imprisonment, divorce, abortion, teen suicide, cocaine consumption, and pornography production."

*THE GREAT DEPRESSION ENDED.* Some beneficial policies were born in the crushing years of the depression. Other policies were a failure. Herbert London says, "It's not enough to fill our wallets if our hearts are empty." Artificial employment at public expense and control can only do so much without excessive taxing and heavy public borrowing (as in wartime.) Therefore, many believe that it was the Second World War that brought us out of the Great Depression, not federal government policies, as much of the money for heavy taxes and borrowing for the war came from the private sector. Real, enduring employment and prosperity are always financed by the private sector with extra money someone is willing to invest wisely. Maybe we can learn something from those challenging 1930's. It is interesting that some of the world's most outstanding architectural achievements, including the Empire State building and the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge were built during the Depression. There was much time and labor available at modest expense. In any case, the Depression was a grave challenge to many, and a bright faith in Almighty God was a real blessing to my very large family, who were suddenly faced with an almost impossible set of circumstances. And we are grateful!

# 3

## The Teen Years... Challenge and Victory.

THE BIG PICTURE My Godly mother's church did rightly give prominent honor to the Precious Holy Spirit, a real need today, but my father and the rest of us, could not accept the heavy emphasis on dramatics... "seeing and hearing," as being evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. My father really tried to compromise with my mother in her new-found faith, but eventually, the family became involved in a large similar church that did not emphasize "speaking in tongues." Over the years our ailing mother became housebound with a very serious respiratory affliction. Of course, as we children grew older and married we each found a faith of our own. Someone gave me the devotional book "Streams In The Desert," written by the gracious Mrs. Charles E. Cowman. She and her remarkable, dedicated husband, who left an outstanding, well paid position in our nation to do so, became missionaries to the Orient. The widely published "Streams" was a treasure to me and had a deep influence on my life in those early years.

I COULD USE "Turbulent Teen Years" but that would not be fair, as I had dramatic spiritual challenge and growth into

stability during those years. They were also the Great Depression years, and it is remarkable that we survived as well as we did. There was agitation, but no disorder. My father, a very good carpenter, like millions of others, could not find a job. He had lost his small independent business and we lost our nice home for inability to make payments on a seventeen hundred dollar mortgage balance. An attorney, for whom my dad had previously done a lot of carpenter work, helped him make arrangements with a congressman in Washington for our family to occupy a house of his that needed repairs, rent free, simply for fixing it up and keeping it from further vandalism.

TEENAGE YEARS ARE A RISK. I was about 17 years of age, and apparently not very smart about many things. In an old trash dump I had found a rusty, miniature cast-iron cannon, about 6 inches long, with a 3/8" bore. I used black powder from old shotgun shells in it and fired it a couple of times. Then it didn't fire. I was putting in a new "wick" in the touch-hole with a small finish nail. Either a spark from the nail on the cast iron or the old smoldering wick came alive, and it fired. I was holding it in my left hand and it tore off much of my left little finger. Both my hands were burned and there was other damage to my left hand. The largest chunk of the cannon, found in the field nearby, was about the size of my thumb. The front porch siding was peppered with damage, and I bled profusely. It was like a small hand grenade, breaking into a hundred pieces. I also got hit in the face and in the knee. The damaged hand saved me from blindness or perhaps death. It was a striking lesson about consequences, as I regret that stupidity every day. In three major battle campaigns, in WWII, the Japanese army and Navy did less damage to me.

BUT I LOVED BASEBALL. So as soon as I could get the bandaged hand into a first-baseman's glove, I played a game with a "sandlot" team. I got on base and stole second. Then I actually stole third, sliding in with my little used left arm underneath me. You could hear the bones break, and with my left arm "dirty as sin" I went to see Dr. Smith. As the nurse washed off all that dirt,

the bandage on my hand was slightly bloody from the ball hitting my first base-man's glove. I could tell that she thought I was stupid. But Smith was our long- time doctor, who had one time did corrective surgery on one of my little brothers using our kitchen table as the "operating room." He also had repaired the damage to my left hand.



*THE HURD STREET CHURCH* In the community where we moved into the vandalized rent-free house there was a very small wood frame church which was occupied by various independent congregations. Sometimes only the church name changed... not the people. This church had a big part in my teenage social life and in shaping my church leadership future. In fact, there was so much moving taking place in that community there that only heaven knows how many

of the young people I knew in that community found decisive spiritual help in the ministry of that little church building during the many lengthy revivals that took place while we attended there.

*I WAS THE OLDEST* of the six boys in the large family and for several years the income from my newspaper route and another tiny income from cleaning up in a restaurant in the evenings after high school helped to support the family. When I turned eighteen most of my income from outdoor work in the Federal CCC

program was assigned to my family. That was spiritual growth! However, there are no regrets... none!

# 4

## THE JOY AND CHALLENGE OF SHARING OUR ALMOST 65 YEARS OF MARRIAGE WITH OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING GOD.

THESE MANY LONG YEARS had a very poor and very difficult beginning. There was no extravagance. I was driving a ten year old Chevy for which I paid only \$65. So a wedding ring, costing maybe six months rent, was never even considered. There were other “glitches.” My father could not be there, as he was working out of town. But our gracious Heavenly Father was there, fortunately... and soon, several miraculous providential events that only God could have designed made the big, lengthy picture the remarkable joy that it is today. It all begins with my registration for the military draft in 1940. My very low number was quickly pulled out of the Selective Service “fish-bowl lottery” more than a year before WWII. I immediately advised the Draft Board Chairman of our wedding plans, and he told me that if I advised them of our wedding I would then become ineligible for the draft. So, the long planned wedding went on as scheduled,

February 1, 1941.

THERE WERE A NUMBER OF OTHER “GLITCHES.” Kenneth McDonald, a young Pastor and good friend of ours, who was to officiate at the wedding, died suddenly with a severe case of mastoid infection just before the wedding. A gracious older minister, Rev. James Fortress, agreed to perform the wedding, which took place as previously planned, at Kenneth McDonald’s church in a village near Ann Arbor, Michigan where I had first met Wilma, my bride to be, at a Youth Rally, and where she had made her commitment to the Lord a few years before.



A FEW DAYS AFTER THE WEDDING we experienced a most devastating surprise. Because of an irreconcilable oversight by the Draft Board, (almost a year before WWII) I was drafted and was in a Mississippi army camp with my lovely bride’s photo in the lid of my footlocker. She was in a strange city, Toledo Ohio, where she knew only my family, with an old Chevy she was learning to drive. However, again in God’s providence, my father helped her get a job as a live-in-maid for a gracious doctor my father knew. The relationship with this very mature doctor triggered a series of events that proved to be a long term blessing for us. The rest is a long, complicated story. More on this remarkable series of events is elsewhere in my military history, but Wilma and I were totally separated most of the time for several long, lonely years. I eventually served in New Guinea and in the year-long costly battles to re-capture the Philippine Islands from the Japanese.

# 5

## WORLD WAR II

FROM 1940 TO THE CLOSE OF 1945, I had a most remarkable experience with the military draft and service in and related to WWII. I was drafted into the army long before WWII, honorably discharged; then drafted during WWII and honorably discharged in late 1945. I had a very low draft number and my primary physical exam in August, 1940 and was placed in category 1-A as a single man. I advised the Draft Board that I was to be married in six months. They said if I notified them I would not be eligible for the draft Our wedding was Saturday night February 1, 1941. On Monday I visited the Draft Board and advised them of my marriage the previous Saturday. He handed me my notice to report for induction, and said the decision was irrevocable. This was more than nine months before WWII. No married men were being drafted. It was a monumental and devastating surprise, and it was hard to accept that God was actually at work in our lives, using this as one of several miraculous solutions about future situations we did not yet know about. My draft into the army long before WWII was so early that I not only was issued a used WWI 1903 Springfield rifle, but a WWI “dishpan” helmet, and of course, the lace-up leggings.

THIS IS A LONG STORY, but fortunately, both my lovely young wife and I were committed Christian Believers, and this made all the difference. We trusted that the one-year of commitment would soon be past and we could start all over again. God would help

and guide us... and keep us.. So, within a few days of our wedding I was in Camp Shelby , Mississippi, a long way from the house we had rented for two months in Toledo Ohio. My wife, Wilma, knew no one but my family, and was just learning to drive my 10 year old Chevy.

THE WEEKS AND MONTHS eventually became years of complete separation for us. I was one of the very few married men who had been drafted very early.

This could be embarrassing and needed explanation if I met a young lady when I went to church in town on Sundays during my basic training. And some of the most friendly young ladies on the face of the earth went to church near Camp Shelby, Mississippi and served in the USO near Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Fortunately, they were also kind and understanding. But the Youth Social meeting on Sunday evening was more of a challenge. I became very homesick, and it appeared that there would be, and there were, months and years of loneliness.

There is a tree stump in the forest near Camp Shelby where more than one Sunday afternoon in those early months that I knelt and wept. . I promised God I would continue be an honorable, loyal, unselfish Soldier of Jesus Christ. And I knew Wilma was an honorable, unselfish Christian



Believer. Bless her heart. It would be a long commitment.

MY FATHER HAD DONE WORK for a well known doctor who needed a live-in-maid. It is remarkable that the doctor's home was close to the library, and it was a blessing that Wilma liked to read. It was an educational situation for this talented 19 year old young lady, who loved to learn. She suffered from vascular problems and the doctor knew of a new procedure for dealing with this, and this expensive surgery cost us nothing. A miracle... yes... we never could have afforded this surgery. Further miracle: In sixty years afterward, she still did not suffer from this condition. Miracles, yes... none of this would have happened had I not been mistakenly drafted into the Army so soon.. Further, much of my time was already served, so due to Wilma's condition I was transferred to inactive duty for a considerable period of time, but I was still in the army. After our baby was born, I was discharged, but soon picked up by the draft again. I eventually had been issued two Draft Board army induction notices, was issued two sets of Dog Tags, with the same number (35016058) the first pair was brass, the second, stainless steel, and eventually I was issued two honorable discharges for wartime service..

WWII REALLY GOT GOING THEN and I did serve in 3 major combat missions and saw more than a year of battle, mostly in the Philippines.. Another miracle... my rifle unit, Company A, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, the guys I lived with, ate with, and trained with for a long time...had long before been shipped out to the miserable Solomon Islands, where they suffered much. One of my good friends, Bob, bless his heart... a Christian gentleman, was wounded there by a machine gun bullet that shattered his helmet, cut up his face, but spared his life. My friend Jack, who helped Bob get back to safety, was later killed there. A photo, including Jack and I, is in my scrapbook. I often wonder what would have happened to me had I, an infantry rifleman, been there with them in the Solomon Islands.

MANY WAR CASUALTIES are inflicted during lengthy, night and day routine occupation. Much of it due to frequent artillery and mortar exchanges. WWII had now become a prominent part of my spiritual journey. One of my most serious prayers ever took place during a very frightening artillery exchange on rain-soaked Leyte in the Philippines near the village of Limon. We had moved forward past all the big guns, and beyond the big mortar launchers and then when we passed the little launchers that faced the sky... you knew the enemy was very close. Our Combat Engineer Battalion had been ordered to move across a river bridge and dig in on the river bank. We could see enemy running through a nearby forest when a tank, which crossed the bridge briefly, was shelling and spraying them with heavy machine gun fire.. The tank did not stay on our side of the bridge... we couldn't lose a tank! It is my "bridge too far" story. We could only dig a very shallow trench as the water was only 14 inches down, It was a sort



of grave-like foxhole 6 feet long and wide enough for two men. My buddy there always slept with two hand grenades around his neck. He was a Sgt by the name of Gates (did he eventually have a son named Bill?)

WAR IS RAIN, MUD, AND DIARRHEA It was raining. We put up a rain shelters. Suddenly an artillery shell came in and

exploded. We buried ourselves in those shallow trenches and shrunk to a fetal position. More artillery comes in. Enemy shells. A woof-woof and a thud... a second of absolute, , terrifying silence, then the shattering explosion as sharp shards of steel tore through our rain shelters. The unbelievably brave Medics were called as guys were hit. You also heard the close woof-woof of our own huge artillery shells which landed just beyond us... ..We hoped. Frightening. Sometimes there was a strange sound of a loose shell rotating ring.. It might fall short And I began to pray... quietly. I prayed first for myself, then... reality!. Will I live through the night? So, "Lord...please take care of my wife and baby!" But... the immediate crisis! As a true unselfish believer, I began forgetting about myself and I began to ask God to protect these guys around me. I seriously claimed the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalms: "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. ... "A thousand shall fall at your side,



but it shall not come near you." (There's a monument on Luzon to recognize the almost 1000 of my Infantry Division who were killed during a 6 week battle there)

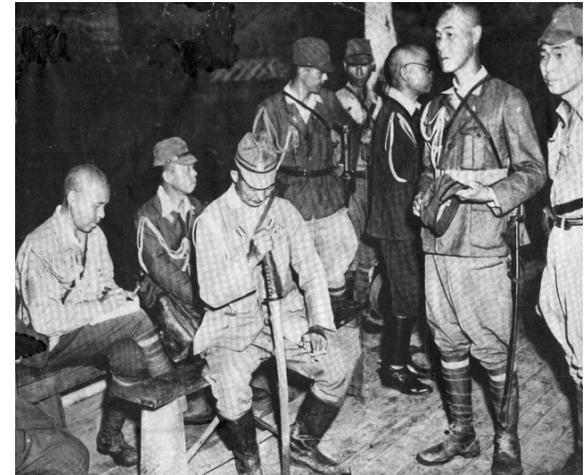
HAD WE GONE "A BRIDGE TOO FAR?"

The shelling is only at night I prayed for the daylight. Enemy guns can be seen by our spotter planes during the day. The night is long. In any case, we retreated back across that bridge at daybreak, and heard all that shelling at night from a slightly safer place. I later had to string a phone line along the ditch to our next position and saw the horrible death and devastation our huge artillery shells had done .My phone wire laying job did not go along the road far enough to come within the sights of a Japanese sniper that our patrol they ran into out there, but I did encounter a hiding Japanese enemy, who may have been wounded in the awful

battle just ended. He committed suicide with a hand grenade as our patrol went across the ditch to kill him. Few surrendered on Leyte in the Philippines. In my scrap-book I have a Japanese body flag I took from a dead enemy. They wore this flag while in combat.. Their billfolds also contained photos of girl friends and family. And they all carried condoms and suicide pills.

ATA RECENT SENIOR ADULT BREAKFAST MEETING,

while writing this, we were asked to tell about our best remembered Christmas. I was reminded quickly about my worst remembered Christmas.. It was



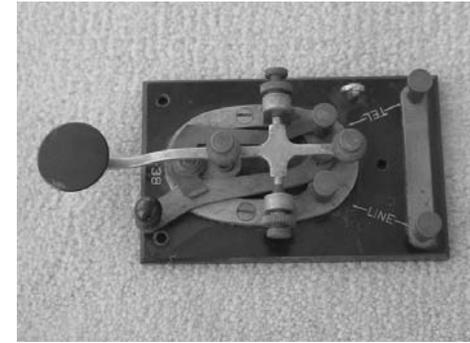
in December, 1944.. I was then a forward area radio operator in a combat engineer line company, during the long battle to take back the Philippine Islands from the Japanese. Wars don't go much further than the combat engineers. There was a brief time of quiet in a very fierce artillery exchange. And sometimes a shell from friendly guns ten miles behind us would not quite make it... frightening. But our artillery was far better, and the road and its rain-swept ditches were cluttered with dead from that Japanese Imperial infantry division. .It was Christmas. .President Roosevelt ordered that every serviceman in the war, wherever they were, would have a nice Christmas Dinner. My unit was on the main road... a dirt road, on the Island of Leyte. The several mile long road was covered with water much of the time, and I have no idea how long it took to get that chicken dinner to us. Mess kits were issued just for the one meal. In any case, it was good, and a real change from what we had been eating out of cans for some time. However, our stomachs were not quite ready for it

and many of us were suffering. The big green flies landing on our mess-kits came from we “knew where.” I used my mess kit lid full of good ole’ army orange marmalade to attract those flies. As usual, war again was rain, mud and diarrhea. That was my very worst Christmas day.

I AM GRATEFUL. I know that God answers prayer, but some men, with praying families, did not come home. In the Philippines, a fine young 21 year old First Lieutenant in my Combat Engineer company was killed when his squad stumbled into an enemy machine gun nest on a routine reconnaissance patrol, one of the jobs of our up-front combat engineers. He had a baby at home he had never seen.

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY was deeply enriched by war’s end and by my deeply etched coming home experience. This was charred by a letter from my older sister describing my mother’s funeral, followed later by a letter telling me that my mother had died suddenly. It was a surprise... she had been ill a long time, but she was only 55 years old. Four of my mother’s five sons in WWII got home for her funeral, but the Red Cross could not locate me. (We needed Tom Hanks) My 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was part of a large army that was holding the huge Japanese army in check high up in the mountains of Luzon. In my scrap-book I have a prize possession, a large copy of the photo of General Yamashita’s eight high ranking officers with their long swords. It is my understanding that officers in the my infantry division actually captured this top commander of all Japanese forces in the Philippines. We re-christened him “The Gopher of Luzon.” By miraculous maneuvers, our troops had set free the men, women and children prisoners, including many missionaries, from two prison camps on Luzon in a most remarkable fashion. Two of those missionaries there, a couple named Storey, had a 12 year old daughter who died from illness during their previous flight from the Japanese. They buried her there in those mountains and were captured when they came to visit her grave. They will see little Lola Mae again, and I will see my mother again... in heaven.

I HAD SO MANY EXCITING THINGS to tell my mother. I was now a Battalion Communications Chief, after a long time as a



lowly radio operator in a Combat Engineer Battalion, and I had been formally recognized and awarded for my service Not long before writing this, a Tucson cartoonist did one entitled “Medals earned by American Military families. It was at best a trivial opinion of military decorations, but it was also trivialization of the painful price paid by the families of those in wartime combat.. Especially painful to me was the “Lady of Iron”... born to worry,” a caricature representing the mother of a combat soldier, and thus my own mother. My mother had five sons serving in WWII. We all survived the war, but our ailing mother died before we got home. Further, my “my stay at home and worry” wife is a real hero. In my billfold is a treasured photo of her and our baby which I received from her during our year-long battle for the Philippines. But she does have her own military Bronze Star Medal in our scrap-book, an extra star sent to me about 50 years after the war. Attached is a note I wrote recommending her tremendous sacrifice in staying home, very much alone for years, with our first baby. She represents the many, many proud, gracious and sacrificial veteran’s wives. War has never been our nation’s first choice, yet often, out of the crushing and heartbreak of war-time experience many of our finest persons and their works have been born. These military medals often do have real enduring value and deep meaning. I remember.. I was there!

FIELD CEREMONY... AWARD OF MEDALS Several hundred men of the my outfit, the 114<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion, are standing at attention in the hot Philippine sun, against a backdrop of tall coconut palms on the beach of the China sea. We are part

of an infantry division to whom Yamashita, commander of all Japanese forces in these islands, had just surrendered to an officer of our Infantry Division. Facing them, set apart in two ranks,



about 22 of their buddies are being recognized for outstanding acts of valor and meritorious achievement during the long struggle just ended. No cheap heroes here. A few of them had even made the long hike and the vicious, strategic battle across the rugged Owens Stanley mountains of New Guinea and through the malaria infested jungles. Now... for all of us in the 114<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers, the dreadful nights of fear, the incessant rain, bottomless mud, the consistent diarrhea, and the ever present odor of death are over. With deep scars in mind and body, we're going home. No brass band, no thunderous applause. Just a hushed, reverent atmosphere of strong, mutual respect and a special kind of comradery known only to God... and these men. As the tall, highly respected commanding officer stands briefly before each of us... his warm hand-shake and kind words of deep appreciation

as he pins the appropriate medal on each worn, faded khaki shirt are being forever etched in our memories. The closing days of the war were a real joy. I had been monitoring the Tokyo English language broadcasts and one night an announcement was made that in a few minutes a broadcast was forthcoming that the Japanese were considering total surrender. I tied a wire to the area where there was a large gathering of our men and arranged for this announcement to be heard by the all of them. The area was suddenly immersed with joy and delightful conversation all night long! One of the last things I had said to my wife was that when the war ended I would know it sooner than most everyone else, as I was a radio operator... and I did, as surrender takes a day or two to confirm.

GOING HOME IS ANOTHER LONG STORY. Some of us in positions of responsibility were kept in place for a while, but it was a real joy to board a Victory ship in Manila Bay with my big Duffle Bag and a Japanese sniper's rifle from the combat area. There is some slight significance here as the Jap snipers loved to see radio operators in their sights. It was almost a miracle to get that rifle all the way home... on the ship for 22 days, the landing in Los Angeles, and the long cross country train ride...even though I had written permission for it. In the long voyage across the Pacific, there was a two day loss due to a bad North Pacific storm.

THERE WAS NO PHONE in the home where my wife Wilma was living in Toledo with a lovely elderly couple. So when this thin, not too well 6 ft. , 136 lb Sgt first class, with 7 pieces of fruit salad, a 3 year hash mark and overseas stripes on his uniform and a long Jap rifle stood at the front door at six a.m. it was a delightful surprise. I now had a three year old girl who did not really recognize me. When we sat down together on the sofa with our little girl standing between us with her arms around our necks, she exclaimed... "now I've got two of 'em!"

THERE WILL BE A HOMECOMING. In the Book of Revelation, Chapter 21, verse 1 concludes with, "there will be no more sea."

For many of us in WWII the sea meant separation, “a long, long way from home.” The massive Pacific is a huge ocean. The sea also represents trouble, restlessness, insecurity, and instability. We live in a troubled, tormented, suffering world. That’s why we need to read again and again Revelation 21, verse 4, which says “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” As believers we share our common and only hope.... it is the sure hope of final healing! Where “every sigh is hushed forever, and no burden is allowed to pass through”.

# 6

## The Camp Meetings, 1940's and '50's

THE CAMP MEETING was the one place where the whole family planned to go... “next summer.” For one thing, it was truly a retreat from what we thought, even then, were the daily demands and pressures of a job and the crowded city life. We felt that even a week or two, including the District business sessions, was well worth the time away from our job. Also, we got to hear inspiring messages from some of the most prominent preachers in our church denomination with the open call for many of us to a deeper commitment and a closer walk with God, to rejoice with the return of the “backslider”... and to share in the bright joy of the few strangers who came to know Him for the first time. We were also exposed to the inspiring and informational programs of the various denominational departments that we all supported, such as what we then called “Foreign Missions,” “Home Missions,” and the “Sunday School and Youth Dept. Families got to share in the joy of unhurried fellowship with the many old friends and some new friends that we would meet only once a year.

THE HUGE BARN-LIKE TABERNACLES were all familiar and easily remembered. The ground floor was either dusty or covered with straw. They were unbelievably hot and uncomfortable in the summer! Overnight accommodations were always a challenge. Some families literally camped out. Some homes and other places in the nearby village or city were

available. For obvious reasons, the limited number of on site “cottages” were often booked “forever” by pastors, staff people and other ministers, some retired. As an active layman in the large old original Ohio District Camp-ground near Springfield, Ohio, I well recall the time I and my family got the news that we were in line for a permanent sleeping place. Then the District was divided into East and West. We in Toledo, were thus moved to an old Campground near Coshocton, Ohio. After some years there, I became deeply involved in the fairly new Youth Camp ministry and was active in raising funds and in the building of two large new motel-like units.

THE ONE THING THAT STOOD OUT at thee Camp Meeting when I was a child was the outdoor Baptismal Service at a nearby lake or river at the close of the camp-meeting. A remarkable change that often took place as an individual came out of the water was their loud expression of freedom and victory! This writer made some life-changing decisions at the Camps and my wife and I were both baptized in a river as single adults at a Camp Meeting not too long before our wedding almost 65 years ago. Soaking wet, we drove away from the river in my 1930 Ford “Roadster.”

THE CAMP MEETING, during the years of the “greatest generation,” was an Annual Call for the entire gathering of people of a church district body to share together in a remote place for at least a week “alone with God,” in a rather closed communion. Camp Meetings had few, if any, strangers. There was, therefore, a special kind of unity, which of itself solved many behavior problems. There were usually no inside “enemies.” I never saw a posted or printed list of rules. Good behavior was implied and expected rather than imposed. It was remarkable how some of the teenagers like me accepted the challenge of the committed life. This unvarnished disciplinary experience helped me much later as a district youth camp leader for several years. We all knew why we were there.

THE OCCASIONAL MIXED ATTENDANCE of all ages is extremely valuable. Families were usually much larger then, and all these children were exposed to, rather than separated from, expressions of sincere praise and worship of God in this closed climate of implicit un-sanitized faith. There were, however, children's meetings, usually in the morning, and there was on occasion an outstanding children's minister.. In the old Springfield, Ohio Camp the young children were led a remarkable lady. I believe her married name was Nicholson.

THE OLD-FASHIONED CAMP MEETING did have challenges. It was not a summer cruise. The Camp Meeting was threatened with boredom when the restless "Feed Me," "Entertain Me", "Rat-race" mentality started to invade the church. If our culture has any massive-widespread-destructive weapons, they are alcohol abuse, crass entertainment... and food. However, we always looked forward to the pleasure of eating together in the "Dining Hall." The food was ordinary and inexpensive, and the fellowship was always a joy. Many of the kitchen staff were happy, pleasant volunteers, including some gracious pastor's wives. Nice people.

IT WAS OFTEN ASSUMED, even expected, that pastors of struggling churches were "victims." They "needed" us! This A basic faith in Almighty God is not just a part of our heritage, it is the foundation and birthright of our great nation. Every worthwhile enterprise in this country has its roots somewhere in this faith. Therefore, the bible believing, evangelical church in my neighborhood is not only our first line of defense against sin, suffering and heartbreak... for whatever may happen to the price of gold or gasoline... the church of Jesus Christ is still the only institution on the face of the earth that is absolutely assured a growing return on its investment in brick and mortar, plan and purpose... when it is mixed with deep, heartfelt concern for those who are touched by its ministries. What a joy to be, and since the early teens to have long been, a happy, active part of it!

fault-ridden posture, even by some pastors, helped to keep it that way. So Pastors and their families were often served all meals, without charge, and usually priority lodging. Another thing. In the old camp meeting days, the conferences were dominated by those in the ministry....in the absence of money they had voice and vote.... and prominence. (which paid nothing) It is also interesting that when the denomination gave more voice to lay people in conferences that this began to change. I well remember when this took place, and I found it a real joy to have opportunity to share happily as a layman in a limited way in Ohio. This writer is not without considerable knowledge here. As an active layman in a local church for many years, beginning as a teenager, I enjoyed working with a large number of pastors and under several fine district superintendents. Starting in the mid-life years, I was also a very challenged full-time pastor for a large chunk of my remaining years. My wife and I loved our people.

THE PASTOR OF A LOCAL CHURCH may well be more important, and often carries a heavier burden, than any other executive in our nation. The local church is not only where the "buck stops," but regardless of where the all the money finally winds up, it's effective basic promotion is most often initiated by the pastor of a local church!

THE ALTAR CALL. The music at the historic camp meeting altar invitations was quiet and unhurried, not a distraction. It's interesting that for many, many years now the Billy Graham Crusades have continued to use "Just As I Am" as the invitation song. Therefore, because of the large common witness, without distractions, the decisions made at the Camp Meeting Altar Calls were often unique and enduring. There was a clear sense of revival. Many, if not most of the adults who responded to these altar calls were not unbelievers... they were committed, believing Christians. They simply took advantage of this peaceful, Holy Spirit inspired climate to make a deep, unhurried decision and share in this large common witness.. Some, like myself, were

deeply involved in their local church but clearly recognized that they needed a much deeper commitment to be an effective worker and witness for the busy years ahead. I well remember, at about forty years of age, personally responding in tears to an altar call at the Springfield Ohio Camp many long years ago. Also, kneeling there in tears, was a very gracious, honorable young man, a seeker that I knew was currently and successfully involved in evangelism. And there was plenty of time in those traditional camps to honor and counsel these very sincere responders.

BEHAVIOR WAS REMARKABLY GOOD at those old camp meetings. One reason was that in that era it was one of the few notable and acceptable social events, even by much of the general population... and in those days there was much less promotion of selfish pleasures. Our nation's culture even tolerated the idea, if not the practice, of church - sponsored revival meetings. How wonderful it would be, with today's marvelous technology, if the church itself had the willingness and patience to prioritize the extra time, the extra money... and the desire, to recover the former Camp Meeting Enthusiasm of what Tom Brokaw calls the "Greatest Generation" so that large groups of us could share a lot more remote "Time Alone With God." Is the church also caught up in the "hurry-up" syndrome and in the priorities of this busy troubled world?.

GRACIOUS CAMP LEADERSHIP. Several District Superintendents stand out well in my memory. Rev .Ben Awe, his son Orville Awe, and the much appreciated (then Rev.) John Dunn. It was a joy to know and work with them.

# 7

## YOUTH CAMPS

SIX OF THE HAPPIEST, most rewarding... and the busiest years of my life, 1959-1965, were when I was a Director of Youth in what was then the Eastern Ohio District of The Pilgrim Holiness Church, shortly before merger made us “The Wesleyan Church.” Youth Camps were reasonably new, so I must have been appointed, as I think I was the only layman district youth director in the denomination at the time.

AT THAT TIME the Pilgrim Church then had only one General Superintendent, who was rather slow to accept the idea of a Youth Camp. There were various reasons for this some that seemed quite reasonable and understandable. To begin with, the fear of change is, of itself, not a happy thought for a lot of us. An



additional camp would cost money... younger people would tend to want and expect more physical activity and improvements. It meant more money from parents, who are also supporting the traditional camp each year. Would this jeopardize the regular camp meeting? This was not an unfair question, as the “old fashioned”

traditional camp, as such, did eventually disappear and, on the calendar at least, it was replaced by the Youth Camp.

HOWEVER, NOTHING QUITE REPLACES the traditional Family Camp Meeting, where the entire family shared together as an entire church district for a week or two in a remote area, for a quiet, purposeful time “Alone with God.” The total family continues to need this large fellowship in common, very close communion.

MANY YOUTH CAMPS have two completely separate age group camps. We used the same facilities for both groups, with a separate teaching program and sports activities program for each. We all had our meals at the same time and in the same dining hall and shared in the same general assemblies and in the called semi-military outdoor formations. We actually used taped military bugle



calls for all assemblies, which actually saved time, as each child in the 300 or so combined camp assembly knew exactly where he or she was to stand. This was all worked out on paper months before the youth camp. The assembly was always five ranks deep to correspond with the Monday through Friday scheduled activity days of the week, each day having a different colored nametag. On any given day the same color was assigned the various chore activities for that day. Any staff member could call upon any non active child with that same color for assistance.

IT WAS INTERESTING how the kids themselves came up with some good, helpful ideas. As they had to pick up the paper and other trash, one of them suggested that there needed to be more trashcans around the area. This worked well. More small benches and chairs were placed in the open space in the shade so that a couple of kids... or more could sit together and talk during the break periods. Some God-honored marriages my have found root there. They were not so likely then to meet behind buildings. A real necessity... This gave us better control, as did the bugle calls. At lunch time, class time, or for mail call , etc., campers hurried to the “company street” at the flag pole, supposedly in the same order each time. Again, this actually saved time. This way, if someone was missing, they knew... that we knew who they were.

The kids seemed to enjoy their time together in the dining hall. There was a snack bar. This was probably where they got the stuff they had in an occasional late night party. However, “lights out” did not include the rest-rooms and if they were fairly quiet nobody noticed. However, one night a staff member advised me there was “party” going on in the ladies rest room. It was, as usual a long day and I was tired. So I had a lady flush them out of the building. No idea then, but at least one of would somehow become a PhD with IWU. Only the Good Lord knows all the Youth Camp Teenagers who opened their hearts to His call.

QUESTIONAIRES are sometimes informational, so it was interesting that when we put out a sheet asking all of them what they liked the most about the camp that they indicated that it was their class instructor. Dining hall came in close. But as I recall vividly, one of the great joys for me was the absolutely gracious and efficient work of our Leadership Associates , under the gracious District Superintendent, Rev. Benjamin Awe, which included Pastor Bill Gilkerson, the gracious Ada White, and Pastors Duane Saylor and Carles Fletcher. The Kitchen and Dining Hall people were wonderful! And of course God was so good to us in this gracious, effective outreach to children and

other young people during those years.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION in my mind as to the immense value of the Youth Camp! We used our family annual vacation time to conduct the camps. For example, in addition to my full time job in the building trades, I conducted six annual Youth Camps, and did the late night promotional correspondence, the travel, and shared in the various trials and challenges that accompanied the youth camp, district youth rallies, and other district youth concerns. I prepared my speeches for the youth rallies sometimes with notes I kept daily on the dashboard of my busy service truck These Youth Camps were a blessing to my own family! Two of our daughters, one with a PhD, were educated in our denominational schools, are married to ordained ministers with doctorates, and are deeply involved in either the pastoral work or are prominent in our university ministry. These girls spent part of those six years in our youth camps, and our son, now very active as a lay leader and musician in our local church, followed me around as a very young child at the camp in those years. Even one of our 3 current Church General Superintendents attended these above youth camps as a young teenager. I wish there were some better way I could express my joy in giving you this report on those Youth Camp years.

# 8

## ***WORSHIP AND REVIVALS***

*SUNDAY, A DAY OF PRAISE, WORSHIP, AND REST.* It must always be a Day of Purpose! A kindly oasis in the desert of life... not just a bridge to a "weekday." In a very real sense it ought always to be a day when families, together with the church, agree to be "Alone With God." When I was a child, Saturday afternoon and evening was a wind-down time. Our father had us shine our shoes on Saturday. Any preparation for Sunday meals was done largely on Saturday. Saturday was in a real sense a preparation for the next day... Sunday, The Lord's Day... a day of celebration, praise, worship and rest.. Anything that could be done on Saturday was not done on Sunday. Appearance and attitude are important. Neat appearance cannot create worship, but it often does reflect a spirit of worship. Careless, purposely slovenly appearance and attitude can kill worship.

*SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE.* In former years, the Sunday morning worship service in our community churches WAS our nation's prime social activity. One evidence, I believe, is that almost every one of our Ivy League universities, beginning with Harvard, was originally a school for training ministers of the gospel. It may be a surprise to some that many of our local church pastors in those days were extremely brilliant and very well informed. In many churches the Pastor in the Sunday morning worship service was the prime source of outside information for many people in this country. No automobiles... we stayed home, but for many, many years, no TV... not even radio. There was the newspaper, but even here there was little or no proclamation of truth like they heard from their Godly pastor on Sunday morning... truth that transcended "human reasoning." Also, the pastor knew his people... the local church was what we now know as the very successful church cell group. With much less mobility, all churches were "neighborhood churches." Like the public school system, small has some disadvantages. On the other hand, for example, big can be a challenge. The heavily lobbied control of the Washington DC public School system, has given us an expensive, national disgrace. In truth, the well ordered, God designed family is the prime example of successful management and control. And good families give us good churches. Some good churches may accept the formidable challenge of becoming successful mega-churches. For several very good reasons, most successful churches will simply become happy, better "mega-cell groups." I shall never forget the statement: "he will never become a sergeant... he's too valuable and happy, as a private." In God's wise planning, every church has its own character and mission.

*"THE GREATEST GENERATION"* I was a "song leader" in a traditional local church for a long time. I had to be, and rather enjoyed being, the church cheer leader. My work was simple because the old traditional Sunday morning worship service was often a rather closed communion: It included three songs with all the verses... and a pastoral prayer. A good ministerial friend told

me that he always prepared and wrote out his prayer. He felt that his open talk with God was an important witness. Almost everyone was there because they wanted to be there! Even In the early 1930's there still were not nearly so many other options; no TV, not even radio, really, until about 1930. So... no "super bowl," and not as many people were entrapped in the expensive "feed me, entertain me" cult. Families spent more time together, including most meals. Home was a place you wanted to be... there was comfort and safety. There was not as much demand and desire or as many reasons to "get away from home." Often, the church was the social center of the community. Teenagers had fewer other voices calling. But they did have activities like those interesting church sponsored boy-girl "box socials." I recall one time as a young teen I had to trade away "Rose's" box (We all liked Rose) and I had to eat with "Ethel," that nobody liked. I promised (it was an agreement to get some guys to even come) Outdoors, we kids played games in the street and alleys. Alleys... a real "hide and seek" luxury. The rule of getting home when the street lights came on kept a lot of us out of trouble.

THE CHURCH WAS ACTUALLY EFFECTIVE POLITICALLY in those "traditional" days and women had a great deal of power. The church, more than anybody else, encouraged them to speak up. It's Jesus Christ, and His church, that has set women free! Leaving home just to "get away" does not bring freedom. My grandmother, Emma Wolfington, was free, and "more than just equal." She was one of those old fashioned neighbors who would not hesitate to visit and help a family sick with small pox. She was also very prominent in the Women's CHRISTIAN Temperance Union. The much maligned 18th amendment was by and large supported and promoted by the church, even in the Sunday morning worship hour, and was voted in principally by men, as women could not vote nationally until the 19th amendment. The church was more effective because men and women actually listened to each other in order to come up with the best... we still do at our house. The idea that prohibition does not work is

nonsense. Rape and Murder are prohibited. Multiplied millions of stop lights and stop signs are obeyed explicitly by most all of us. Why? We obey traffic lights and signs because the alternative is absolutely unthinkable. Further, while there was illegal alcohol abuse during "prohibition," no young person that I knew ever drank the stuff. Why? No reasonable person in that time would stoop so low as to entice a teenager to drink alcohol! The idea of Pastors not using their prohibitive influence politically in the pulpit is recent! It came from the same evil caldron of wickedness that has given us partial birth abortion and gay marriage. If the Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ does not speak out against wickedness, who will?

SOME CHANGES IN OUR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE WERE NECESSARY. For one thing, there have become so many loud, demanding secular options. However, when someone says they don't come to church on Sunday because it is the only free day they have to play golf.. . or whatever, we must simply tell them that if it was not for the Church of Jesus Christ there would BE NO Sunday.. No free day. And we ought to shout this loud and long. It's Jesus Christ... or else! There is really no enterprise more important in our nation than the church of Jesus Christ! We must never allow the Church to become just another charitable or custodial enterprise. But we do need to accommodate. There may be a practical reason why a family does not come to your church. They may be severely disabled... a continuing challenge They are willing to drive a long way to find an accommodating church. The "neighborhood church" has been a blessing for many very good reasons and our church ought to be available and of service to almost anybody who needs us.. and the world is full of suffering people who really do need us!

CHURCH MUSIC. The advantage of a worship team today is that you have a stand-out talented group who can relate to our now spiritually and physically mixed Sunday morning attendees. Some in the congregation don't sing at all. The Precious Holy Spirit is a "real gentleman" and He is very cooperative with both fast and

slow music (but not irritating noise). In the old traditional church, we used "hymns" more often in the Sunday morning worship service, and some evangelistic songs at night. Many of the hymns are priceless. Few people can remember in any detail a sermon they have heard, but many of us can clearly recall several stanzas of maybe 50 to 100 quietly sung hymns that contain and convey the deep truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

WE NEED, AND APPRECIATE heart felt, deeply spiritual motivation. Near the close of WWII, in my new position in a remote Philippine combat area, I was furnished a standard public radio. One night I tuned it to the drifting sound of a California radio station as it went off the air, and I heard, for the first time in a long, long time, the familiar "Star Spangled Banner." This 1<sup>st</sup> class sergeant, veteran of three major battle campaigns, wept like a baby! The "Star Spangled Banner" brought me home! "Tradition," of itself, is not the enemy. Of course, you can become so hidebound that you even resist necessary change. But the style and conduct in our Worship ought not to reflect a callous, noisy "hurry-up" culture. So we must not accept the unsafe attitude and nonsense that almost any change is both good and necessary. If this is true, then the sun, the moon, the stars, and even God Himself are in trouble. We are all aware that tradition can become dull and boring, but it can also be a warm friend, a stabilizing influence, and a source of real comfort, hope and cheer.... and improvable.

### REVIVALS

TO BEGIN WITH, The most powerful motivation for revival is seeing the need. The Gracious, Kind, and Precious Holy Spirit is ALWAYS waiting "in the wings" to hear our prayers and to bring revival. I distinctly recall my mother taking me out of school to attend a daytime revival prayer meeting about 80 years ago, when I was a very young child. The obviously unbelieving school

principal seemed puzzled. I wonder now, and I hope it was, the special meeting when, as a 6 year old little boy weeping profusely under deep conviction at a church altar, I first opened my heart to the Lord. The church, and my mother, were very, very seriously planning for soul-searching revival. Most of us don't really see the need for revival, and until we do there will not be revival. Scheduled dates on the calendar and announcements from the pulpit or in the church bulletin do not bring revival. I have to be careful here, as God is the author and promoter of planning, order, and organization. So it is important to communicate with God first in this regard. Churches who are serious about a planned revival have serious, repeated prayer meetings far in advance of the previously scheduled date for revival. No need, No heartfelt burden, No serious prayer, NO revival. Period!

MANY REVIVAL MEETINGS in other days were held in a large tent, about as neutral as you can get. In those days, individuals, including the anti-Christian curious, who would never "darken the door" of a church building would attend a "tent meeting," if only for entertainment. There was music, often only a piano.

The ground in the tent was usually covered with straw or sawdust. Temporary arrangements had to be made for electricity. I do not recall any outdoor plumbing arrangements ever, except for a very large program. The music and singing always included some old hymns but mostly gospel songs that were clearly evangelical. No promotional Sunday School Choruses were used. There was no obvious trivia. The idea being that they were not there just to promote or finance a church enlargement or building program, they clearly had the heavy, priceless value of souls in view. I do not ever remember hearing what I thought was a very poor revival meeting sermon. The speaker always appeared to be under a heavy burden for the redemption of eternal souls. Much prayer goes up on behalf of the evangelist. The enemy is also at work in such a meeting.

THE INVITATION. My left shoulder still hurts, but I did catch that long football pass near the goal line. As a teenager, I clearly remember playing sandlot baseball and football on a large field in my neighborhood. I also put a home run through a neighbor lady's window. My dad made me pay the 33 cents for the glass he put back in. We'll meet this woman later. They put up a large tent on our sports field for a revival meeting. In thousands of such meetings, multiplied millions have given their hearts to the Lord. I also clearly recall the "altar call" one night there at our football field tent. The invitation song was slow and quiet and very much

PLANNING IS NECESSARY. Talented, well paid, successful, and very busy gospel workers are needed, but it is important to remember that God Himself seems to "change His mind" and /or "accommodate." There are scriptural examples. Moses, earnestly and very unselfishly, begging for God to forgive "His chosen people." We have Noah and the flood. Our kind, Heavenly Father allowed the Godly, wealthy, and very successful Job to become absolutely miserable. God apparently has, and is still willing, to interfere with man's schedule. The longest "revival meeting" I can recall was more than a month, every night. It was a small neighborhood church, which had a poorly paid pastor with a full time job. He was saved from alcohol addiction. He was a humble man and his wife was a jewel. This account is not ideal, but this is not uncommon. I was young then with no good job, facing the usual teenage challenges. As a sincere believer, I was deeply moved and encouraged in this meeting, and I think I attended every night for weeks. Was I helped in the first week or the last week? As I recall, it is likely that a number of my teen friends in that community were also changed forever. There may still be a church somewhere in this "hurry-up" world that does not schedule the close of a revival meeting. So... schedule, but allow God to interfere. And some of our churches and other institutions have in recent years allowed revival to really interfere with a lot of important people and things. (Nevertheless, not as I will... Matt 26:39) When we are really serious about our eternal welfare, and

on purpose. The first seeker, a young girl, went forward and knelt at the altar. Suddenly, a woman, not her mother, went up and pulled her away from the altar. I have often wondered if the young girl ever had such an opportunity again. I hope that we who are Christian believers continue to recognize that this cruel, widespread battle between eternal life and eternal death is an extremely violent and vicious one. It appears that committed Christians in this sin-sick world have become clearly, openly... and, even politically, the world's enemy! But then, this is nothing new. Jesus says... they hated me... they will hate you! the eternal welfare of others, all of our church services will bring encouragement, guidance, peace, bright hope and Revival.

# 9

## MY MINISTERIAL JOURNEY

IT IS A JOY TO WRITE THIS. Like many of you, I had a wealth of background for the possibility of becoming a dedicated, active worker of the urgent, wide-ranging outreach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My father, though always with a full time job as a carpenter, had an active part in every church where he was involved, usually as Sunday School Superintendent, and even as an interim pastor, actually rescued a couple of failing churches in Ohio and West Virginia. I have great respect for my talented, industrious father. His sister, Myrtle, gave her life as Christian Missionary Alliance missionary, serving many preparatory years of study in their school, in Nyack, NY and in nursing service here in United States before going to China, where she had a ministry of rescuing little girls that were abandoned, and created a school for them in Hong-Kong where she ministered for 33 years until captured by the Japanese in WWII. She came back to the United States on the fully lighted repatriate ship, the Gripsholm, during WWII, then returned to China after the war until driven out by the Communist regime, who closed her school. This remarkable, resourceful lady, who lived into her nineties, had

a deep influence on my life. Aunt Myrtle, bless her heart.

MY MOTHER was for a long time the only one in the large family who had any college education... (Defiance College, in Ohio). My praying mother one time asked to be a Sunday School teacher, but was told that with her ten children she already had a Sunday School class. However, I can still recall my mother's conversation with a troubled neighbor, so she did have this very limited ministry in the community. The last time I saw my mother was as she waved goodbye to me, (one of her 5 sons in WWII) from a bridge over my moving train as it left Toledo Ohio for a Mississippi army camp. She died before I got home, and the Red Cross could not locate me in the Philippines for the funeral. I had so many nice things to tell her. I will see her in heaven. My mother also had a sister, Catherine, who gave her life to missionary work deep

into China, where she married and where they had a very frightening experience hiding from the powerful opposition leader during the rebellion there. My Aunt Catherine was a very talented violinist. She was also sponsored by, and studied under, the Christian Missionary Alliance Church college in Nyack, NY.



**Myrtle Bailey, sister of James**  
*Missionary to Hong Kong*

MY FIRST CHURCH RESPONSIBILITY.. and accountability, as a young teenager was in the counting of all those pennies and other small change as Sunday School treasurer in a very small

independent community church. I also distinctly recall buying and delivering flowers to a bereaved family a day or two *after* the funeral, the first of a good many judgment failures in church responsibility, almost 70 years ago. I could not march with all my Toledo Waite High School graduates in 1936, because as a student in the advanced radio class I was assigned to set up the microphone for the various speakers. So, this was the beginning of my “life on a platform” somewhere, and my wife and I have both spent almost all of our lives since the teenage years in some kind of church support ministry. In fact, I met her when I was helping her set up her electric Hawaiian guitar on the platform in a youth rally. Of course there were all of those years that I served, usually in the church pulpit, as a “song leader” in a local church. This was an important part of my life’s ministry because in this role it was my heavy concern to set a positive atmosphere and climate for the coming message of the pastor. It also meant that I was expected to be there for most of the services. So a whole lot of our almost 65 years of married life has been actively spent in some kind of church activity.

*I LOVE THE CHURCH* and my various relationships with the church have been a blessing to me.



During a great deal of the time during all those happy years, it has been my privilege and responsibility to serve the church in a variety of

ways. After WWII, we became members of what was then “First Pilgrim Holiness Church “in Toledo Ohio under the faithful pastor

Brown and his lovely wife. We worshiped in a residence there for some time. We became deeply involved in this church and I became the song leader and Sunday School Superintendent there for years. I installed the heating system in the new basement church, and finished it later when we built the superstructure. When this building was completed a building fund “auction” was held. The church pews were “sold,” etc, but there was still one \$600 plus item, a large stained glass picture window, showing Jesus as Shepherd, on the front of the church. My wife and I agreed to “take” it.. A wise investment!. What a joy it is for us to visit Toledo and drive by that old church, and see “our” witness window.

*A NUMBER OF YOUNG MEN* who found help in that church went to our colleges and into the full time ministry from that church, including Kenneth Whitescarver, who lived across the street from the church. I recall Kenneth because I believe I was kneeling next to him at the altar when he gave his heart to the Lord. I also remember kneeling by Nate Cohen, a Jewish business man, when he gave his heart to the Lord on a Sunday evening.. He had lunch with my wife and me at our home at noon that Sunday, together with the lovely Marie Calabrese, his secretary, who invited him to church, bless her heart. Then there was the time when, as Sunday School Superintendent, I offered a real silver dollar to any child who would bring a non-attending parent to Sunday School. “My parents will never come,” said little Susie, “is it OK if I bring my grandmother. I agreed, and her grandmother, who had long been absent from the church, came ... and after being away from the faith for 40 years, opened her heart to the Lord again that day. There are some interesting and alarming stories there, like the murder -suicide on the corner across from the church. I had knocked on that very door.

*THE LOCAL CHURCH BOARD,* on the advice of the then Pastor Sherwood of Toledo First, recommended me for a “local preacher’s license.” I appreciated this, as a few years later, while still a “layman,” I was appointed

and served as District Youth president of the Eastern Ohio District of the Pilgrim Holiness church for six very busy, happy years, while still holding down a busy full time job.



While serving as district leader I addressed youth rallies regularly, and this might well have been my most fruitful ministry. I did a page for the monthly District Letter and thus began a long ministry of doing newsletters and other promotional writing. I belong to that special comradeship of veterans who used of the old A.B. Dick mimeograph machine.... “ink up to your elbows”... and for years, late into the night, I prepared, and “hunt and punch” typed, without that important left little finger, on a very old royal typewriter with a crooked “e,” and I made and fixed errors for years on many of those unbelievably frustrating, miserable mimeograph stencils!

I HAD PART in the promotion and fund raising for two very basic motel-type structures for church camp overnight housing, which were used by both the Youth Camp and the Annual District Conference and Camp

Program. I really did enjoy working with District Superintendent Benjamin Awe. Brother Awe could be very frank with me. It was a large district, so we had its usual challenges. I recall him saying to me on the camp one day, “We have fifteen churches in difficulty and... if they would only listen to me...” One of the other advantages of being a “layman” was the pleasant relationship I had with the district pastors. I was really no threat to any of them! The churches where I spoke were friendly and there was good attendance Youth Camps were not accepted everywhere for various “good” reasons. Even our General Superintendent, Dr. L.W. Sturk, did not appear to be all that enthusiastic about the youth camp idea at that time. One dear lady called me long distance with tears apologizing for her attitude. She had kept some people from one of my rallies. She was really a gracious, lovely woman. We actually made some progress in uniting the church for the Youth Camps program. We had about 300 young people each year.

DURING THESE OHIO YOUTH CAMP YEARS I served on the board of directors at one of our church institutions, the old Eastern Pilgrim College. Some prominent leaders there had a good influence on my ministry. I will never forget the enthusiastic Tommy Holshouser, the talented EPC promotional Agent. Then there was the gifted Melvin Dieter, a leader in the school, and a notable WWII veteran. EPC Board Chairman Rev. Leonard Drury and his wife, Beatrice, members of Tom Brokaw’s “Greatest Generation,” were excellent examples of talented, faithful and consistent Local and District church leadership. They had two gifted sons who haven given their lives to the gospel ministry. EPC was Alma Mater of many young people now in the various ministries, including our own two oldest children, Janice (Bailey) Goodell, wife of pastor and missionary Dr. Gary Goodell, and Sharon

(Bailey) Drury PhD ,with IWU. Sharon is the wife of Dr. Keith Drury, now an IWU professor and author of several books many of us have read.

### THE BIG MOVE TO ARIZONA

WILMA AND I DID NOT COME TO ARIZONA to pastor a church. We were very happy and enjoyed the many years in our married life's busy lay people in our church in Toledo Ohio and in out youth ministry in the church District. When we loved to Arizona, we sold our property in Toledo with the prospect of having a sizeable down payment on a nice new home in Arizona. In fact, when we came here we looked around and selected a property we wanted.... part of our dream that would never come true. I was now almost 50 years of age and needed a secure future, not any new challenges.

WHEN BY INVITATION we moved to Tucson, Arizona, my wife Wilma and I became a members of the old, established First Pilgrim Holiness Church in Tucson, Arizona, shortly before the denominational merger with the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

We had no significant church responsibility right away, so for a very brief period I was engaged in a program which included visits to the mining industry. One evening, while I was in Douglas Arizona in Motel room number "0" (first time ever in a "0" motel room. The Gideon Association will love this.) I picked up the Gideon bible that was on the table next to the bed and turned by chance to Isaiah Chapter 35, which included these words: "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, 'be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance... he will come and save you.'" And it concludes with these words, " they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." This passage refers to another era, but it spoke to me. These are words that any pastor could speak to his people, any place, at any time. God was calling me into full time ministry... in room number "0," Douglas, Arizona.

HOWEVER, a few days before Room "0," God had spoken to me. I had been happy with my previous employment when we lived in Toledo, Ohio. The interesting challenges were with people as well as with the equipment we serviced and repaired. I worked hard, and sometimes long hours, and was called out on inconvenient occasions, at any hour of the day or night... and on holidays. My employer came to my church one Sunday morning to send me to a troubled situation... it may have been a very ill client without heat in bitter cold mid-winter. Then there was the call are 4 a.m. when the customer could easily have waited till morning. This went on for years. Now, in my new situation in Arizona, the Lord seemed to say to me, "You have for years been giving first class, first rate commitment, and your time and efforts into temporal second and third class problems... why don't you give this kind of total dedication and commitment to the most serious, most urgent, and by far the most devastating catastrophe on the face of the earth... the continuing ruin and possible eternal loss of so many of the hearts, minds, and souls of men, women, boys and girls.

I NEVER MADE THAT CALL at the mining company plant in Douglas, Arizona. I left room "0" early in the morning and went straight home to tell my wife the decision I had been called to make. We did not come to Arizona to pastor a church, and had sold our property in Toledo with the idea of having a large down payment for a nice new home in Arizona. In fact, we had already sort of selected a nice new home with a two car garage and a white picket fence... part of our dream that would never come true. I had also applied for a civil service position at the large Tucson area Davis Monthan Air Force Base in a technical-mechanical job I was very familiar with and had the acceptance papers to complete and return to the base office. I was now more almost 50 years of age and needed a secure future... not any new challenges.

MY PREVIOUS WORK in Toledo, Ohio for many years was in heating and air-conditioning... I had learned this building trade,

as a teenage apprentice, during the late years of the great depression, and survived being a young pawn in the vicious labor-management struggle when jobs were very hard to get. I served 4 years of apprenticeship, worked as a design sheet metal worker, and later as on site service mechanic, where the customer was sometimes more of a challenge than the equipment. It was there that I got some of my best education in preparation for the full time pastoral ministry. I attended factory training schools about the equipment. And I was getting more training for the full time pastoral ministry. During one of the final question and answer periods there I asked: "What is the one thing we service mechanics should look for as the cause of the equipment failure and breakdown." The very capable teacher was an electrical engineer. His answer was really only one word, "dirt." It was also very theological. It is the same thing that causes people problems, dirt, neglect, abuse, and lack of respect.

IN THE MEANTIME, my church denomination officials had made efforts to start a couple of new churches in Tucson, Arizona with what appeared to be the "baseball field of dreams" concept, "build a church and the people will come." Within days of my return home from Room number "0" my wife and I were assigned to one of these churches where the people really did not support this idea. The church was failing miserably and the Arizona District Superintendent Rev. John Dunn, a precious Brother in the Lord, with whom we were to become great friends, assigned Wilma and I to rescue this failing church. . To make a long story short, with God's miraculous help and blessings... "we did." But it took years and the details are interesting. I promised them we would stay, and we did... there are some very nice people and a very nice end to this story. Several previous pastors had left this church, mostly for very just financial reasons. The church was 2 years behind in its building fund payments with an "in house" church loan program. To my knowledge, there was absolutely no money ever budgeted for a full time pastor. In fact, as I was briefly by default the immediate church treasurer, I discovered that the total annual church offering income that I checked was

only \$1901, for all purposes.. A good church treasurer is a blessing, and in our door to door visitation, we found the Davidson family. Frank, our treasurer, was a Marine veteran, (Semper Fi) He was so faithful and dependable, and I wish I could show the whole world the 3 legal sheet hand-written letter that his wife Polly wrote to me at 3 a.m. when she discovered that we were retiring after so many years with them. What a joy to know, love, and appreciate your precious people.. We eventually had a lot of lovely people at our church for years.

THERE ARE TEARS on the altar of that church where I spread the treasurer's books out to ask God's help and guidance.. The gracious Supt John Dunn did everything he could to help us and I believe we did get a very modest time limited salary from the District of about \$125 a month. The church soon contributed a token salary of \$10 a week, as I recall. ( we loved our people, our neighbors, and our lengthy, disciplined ministry there, but



frankly, in 1966-7, "if we needed to buy much of anything extra, or eat out at a restaurant, the money had to come from our nice down payment ability to buy that nice new house with the 2 car garage and the white picket fence." (After all of these years, Wilma still misses that house. She is a treasure. A negative attitude from her may well have cost the denomination that church.) We had to depend totally on God, certainly not the current congregation which usually had usually consisted of about a dozen children and about half that many cash-strapped , older adults that somebody, often my wife Wilma with our new 1965

Chevy Impala, brought to church from the village of South Tucson. And occasionally a couple of “snowbird” families. Fortunately, after a year or two, things began to improve. Though we still had very slow growth in dependable income, in two or three years we became the “fastest growing” Sunday School in the District, earning me a Stetson hat from the District. But it was a long, up-hill challenge!. There simply had to be Peace and Bright Hope! We completed the existing Sunday School Classroom building and we built a 30 x 60 ft. Annex which would be used for the Child Day Care Center we had for 11 years.. We also built a steeple on the church, the materials bought with money from a children’s group of a church in Pennsylvania.

THE CIVIL SERVICE JOB at DMAFB. I had applied and had the acceptance papers. I never followed up on this, even though in the immediate situation there would be financial security for me. We would become happy and secure in our nice new home with the white picket fence. I am sure there are excellent churches that would never be in existence today if some gracious, unselfish pastor had not gone bi-vocational. But the choice for us was simple. I had been a church lay member a long, long time and realized that this church absolutely needed a full time pastor immediately. I had promised them we would stay...and we did. Full-time for seventeen years.. There were some tragedies, there were exciting victories. A number of remarkable young men and women... maybe a dozen, who attended that church while we were there, are now pastors, pastor’s wives, a commissioned minister and other workers. Now veterans in the preaching and teaching of the gospel. My wife and I have been invited to a number of our former church ceremonies. The now very successful church recently gave us a special invitation to attend the dedication of a larger, better church facility. The District Superintendent told the congregation in effect that “this church would not be here today if it were not rescued by these two people in 1966.”



I have also served in this Arizona District as a secretary, treasurer, and in most other district offices other than District Superintendent.. May I mention here that while a pastor must occasionally be absent from his own church to care for business in the district or general church, he returns to his own church as a wiser, better-informed and more effective local church pastor. It was also my privilege to be a part of the National Association of Evangelicals, serving on the Arizona State board and as president of the Tucson Arizona Chapter.. I had the privilege of giving the invocation at the Southern Arizona Republican conference at the election campaign of President Reagan. I served as a substitute “Call to Action” speaker at the first Anti-abortion march and rally in Tucson. Recently, in my not so active life, the good Lord gave me some gracious encouragement. . He seemed to say that He never expected me to be a “Billy Graham,” but that he also never expected Billy Graham to be a “me.” God has a ministry for every one of us. I really enjoyed my ministry as a layman, and have absolutely no complaints or regrets about being suddenly drafted by God for a specific purpose. The Lord has been real good to Wilma and me.

# 10

## THE PASTOR'S LIFE LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES

SOMEONE SUGGESTS that fear is a darkroom where the enemy of our soul takes us to develop and enlarge our negatives. But...“God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Timothy 1:7)

YOU CAN'T FIX THE WHOLE WORLD, I have spent much of my life trying to do so. I wish I had learned earlier that each committed believer ought to have one the many ministries in his own church. When I became a pastor, I quickly... and painfully, discovered that I could not fix and maintain the whole church all by myself. I was reminded of this when I stopped in Alamogordo, New Mexico to use a shopping mall rest room. The toilet flush tank continued to lose water. I did what we all know that almost anyone could do, I bent the tank ball rod slightly and the running water stopped. There are multiplied thousands of toilet tanks losing water across the country. I am not going to continue to

interrupt my divine calling in order to fix the whole world's “toilet tank leaks.” In like manner, there are many, many trivial material chores and even ministries that cannot and should not wait until the pastor notices them or fixes them. His attention is continually demanded by a hundred or more important and more urgent ministries.

FOR A LONG TIME, in many communities in our nation, the church pastor was the best source of “outside” information and the most reliable source of information on political issues. Therefore, many of our nation's original schools of higher learning were church related and they majored in, and some were even created for, the training of Ministers of the Gospel. How unfortunate that, in some cases, human reasoning by itself has now actually made “higher” education a challenge to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! This is where biblical evangelical colleges and universities and many of our church district leaders have been shining for years now!

THERE ARE SOME THINGS that can only be gained by experience. A local church pastor cannot be too well prepared. It was therefore a very wise thing that the General Church Conference has for a long time now required a period of actual on site pastoral experience previous to ordination. Special needy situations required some of us to have this valuable benefit of years on site church leadership experiences long before ordination. Let me say this, however. It may very well be that much of my own most effective church ministry was during those many pleasant, joyous years as a day after day, year after year active lay church member with a day job, and this previous experience proved to be a great blessing to me in the years of full time pastoral ministry.

THE PASTOR'S WIFE. In all the years I have served the church in various capacities, I do not recall that my wife was ever in serious opposition of my call in this work. In my long view back over the years I now know that her opposition would have had a



terminal effect. She would not engage in or encourage gossip. During my 17 years as a full time pastor, she never thought she was an outstanding pastor's wife, but even though the church may have for some reason voted me out of office, they would not have voted her out. But she still misses that nice new house with the 2 car garage and the white picket

fence that we decided not to buy when God called me into the full time ministry to rescue a struggling church in 1966. We served our church as a team.

The Pastor's wife really needs the support of group therapy. The Pastor's and wives retreat was always a joy for us. Our oldest daughter is a pastor's wife and our youngest daughter has had experience as a pastor's wife, and some of you may recall the ministry she conducted for pastor's wives called Yoke-Mates. She is now an executive in the Adult and Professional Education program at Indiana Wesleyan University. Much could be written in appreciation of the faithful pastor's wife.

THE PASTOR'S CHILDREN. Our own children are a blessing to us. A long time ago I made the statement from the pulpit that some of our own children are leaving the church, and if we pastor's only reached our children for the Lord, what a big help that would be. I don't say that anymore. Children have a God-

given will of their own. We cannot make that choice for them. Some of the finest men and women of God, including pastors, are suffering the pain of a child that is outside the church. Our children, especially a child of a pastor, are under heavy attack by the enemy. The devil does not like pastors. Our own youngest child, a son, was in high school in the late 1960's, very difficult days for teens. He left the church building after graduation, but he never left his God honoring father, mother, and his two sisters. We felt that he still respected us. About twenty-one years later, Dr. Orville Butcher asked our District area Men's Retreat to write down the name of a person we wanted to see in the Men's Retreat the next year. I could only think of one name and I wrote it down. If I could find that scrap of paper now I would like to frame it. At the next year Men's Retreat our son was sitting next to me. Some years later, as I write this, he has just concluded his work as director of the Annual Men's Retreat. I guess this is one of the reasons that I keep... and strongly suggest, a written Daily Prayer Journal. Write down your prayer requests!

THE "SMALL" MINISTRY. Someone has suggested that God must really love the small church because created so many of them. However, it is interesting that even the largest churches take advantage of the very effective small group concept. But God does love the small church. While the small church may be a small challenge, a big church, with its much outreach, is surely a huge responsibility. God knows best and for various good reasons he does not call every pastor to the bright challenge and heavy burden of a mega-church... for which most of us who have been pastors are grateful. Further, every church has its own mission, and its own character. Every Servant of the Lord has a unique ministry. For example, it's interesting that the first three individuals that come to my mind are women. Who wouldn't want the reward due to Charlotte Elliott, who wrote "Just as I am," or the gracious, blind Fanny Crosby, who wrote so many of our songs and hymns, or the unbelievably gifted and extremely devoted writer, Frances Havergal? Dr. F.B. Meyer, a gracious

biblical authority, says... “I want you to understand that God chose for you your lot in life out of myriads that were open to Him, because just where you are you might realize your noblest possibilities.” Then why do I “fail” sometimes? I “fail” for the same reason that God sometimes “fails.” It is because, as Pastor Rick Warren says, we live in a broken world.” So, like God, we trust and work with people who also are in this broken world.

*DIFFICULT PEOPLE.* There are difficult people. There is, of course, the “personality clash.” But it was one of my frustrating experiences to find that some of the most gifted individuals in my church could, if they would, become a faithful, enduring blessing. I can think of several individuals with whom I have had unfortunate heated exchanges, yet today, years later, when we meet we are always delighted to see each other. One very talented lady in our church that did not want to take the responsibility of teaching a class had a brilliant, gifted daughter who suddenly became bi-racially pregnant. It seemed like a “lose...lose situation.” The mother, and later the girl, talked with me and I gave them my assurance of our church’s gracious care and support. The bio-father may be in prison, again. The baby has become a delightful, active Christian young lady. The mother married someone else and is very successful. She is always happy to see Wilma and I, as does the grandmother.

*WRITING - AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY.* The Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, was given to us by men under the powerful influence and direction of the Precious Holy Spirit. Some of it was not written by eye-witnesses, but long afterward. Much of the New Testament was written as personal letters, and many of these letters were written by the same person. Therefore, I consider my many years of various writings as an extremely effective part of my ministry. In my early retirement years, I served as District Secretary of the Arizona-New Mexico District, which included writing a letter to the pastors. Today, as a volunteer, I write and mail a newsletter to the Senior Citizens of the church where I am a long time member. At present I also

continue to write a letter, a sort of ministry, to my very large family circle. (I am one of the ten children in the James A Bailey, Sr. family.) I have also written a number of articles that appeared in our denominational magazine, including a the subjects of “Divorce and the Church,” “Heaven,” “Drug and Alcohol Abuse,” and a Prayer for our National Election.”

One of my most recent mini-ministries is the writing of bookmarks, now laminated, with a message about the value of the local church on one side and a message to the individual on the other. Some of them are simply for encouragement to the faithful in the work of the church, some are encouragement and a prayer for the ill, (several nurses and doctors have them) and many are written as a call to Peace With God.

*WRITE THAT LETTER* Years ago, when living in Toledo, Ohio, I got a phone call at 4 a.m. from the Coroner in Columbus, Ohio. He had the body of an unidentified man who had been killed while trying to hop a slow freight train in the railroad yards. Along the tracks were several hand-written letters with my return address on them. They were dirty and obviously had been unfolded and re-folded several times. Maybe I might know him. Was I a caring, friendly contact? His treasured possession of those letters indicated a positive response. And we all know that the Lord is faithful.

*I LEFT HOME A QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE* and drove to Columbus, Ohio with my sister and her husband, Cliff. When we got to the Coroner’s office, the man said to my sister, “I don’t think you want to see this.” So Cliff and I went into the cold storage room and the man slowly pulled out the long drawer, revealing the broken body of my much younger brother Clarence, only 34. He was easily identified by his large shock of blond hair. His feet has been cut off and he had a huge cut on his backside where a broke wine bottle in his pocket had sliced him open. He had bled to death in that dirty railroad yard. A WWII Navy Veteran, he apparently was on his way to Cleveland, Ohio,

according to a postcard I had received from him about that time. He had been devastated by our nation's most abused drug, alcohol. He was brilliant, had been an engineering student at the University of Toledo, was a good sketch artist, and he had an excellent touch of the piano. The last song I heard him play was "What a Friend we have in Jesus." Only the good Lord knows the prayer on my younger brother's lips and/or in his heart as he lay broken, bleeding and dying in that dirty railroad yard. The last words I remember from his latest postcard was, "It's a jungle out there!" I would usually give him several self-addressed postcards whenever he left "home."



*THE HOMELESS* It seems like there have never been so many. My wife and I, in our retirement years, moved into the northwest area of Tucson Arizona that could be called a middle class neighborhood. We had planned to help with the new church our denomination was at that time planting in this rapid-growing area. We live about one-half a mile from the Union Pacific East-West main railroad line. It is still winter here and two or three different men are sleeping outdoors, within a block or two of our nice warm home. They sleep under a large bush, under a large culvert, or

against a dumpster wall at a convenience store. It is an very poor life. I believe they sell newspapers at a nearby street corner. Some homeless are alcoholics and drug addicts, many are simply society dropouts for various reasons, including people we used to keep in institutions. But there is a third highly unfortunate segment on the streets that deserve our sincere concern. It is the "working poor" who are no longer working at all. Even basic living expenses are so high that many who are working are often only a paycheck or two from total bankruptcy. My heart really goes out to some of them. This can be a real challenge to the church. ... Then there was my younger brother.

*THE MODEST CHURCH WE SERVED SO LONG* was only a few blocks from the nearby railroad yards. In fact, as our church was also across the street from a large Tucson park, I regularly got visits from transients on Saturday evenings while I was doing the church bulletin in my office near the sidewalk. This would make a long story, including the couple that drove in and interrupted a church committee business meeting to give us their sad story. There was a child, and the lady was very, very pregnant. I had not yet learned to say "no" often enough, and we took them into our parsonage, not knowing there were also two dogs in the station wagon. which we had to keep in the fenced-in playground in our Child Care Center. There was my gift for purchase of gasoline, and they ate with us. The couple got into an argument and this very pregnant lady, with the possibility that her "water would break," went to sleep on our nice, large, newly refinished sofa. In the process, the husband (whatever) showed me a phony minister's license, and "wanted to serve as my assistant." The pregnant lady gave us to understand that she was a "Hell's Angels" woman and that she and her "husband" were running from them. I cannot recall how we got rid of them, but she had her mother telegraph money, and after we gave them some more gas money (he showed me a loose connection on the gasoline line where they "lost all their gas we had bought them") they left... still very pregnant.!

And I had an education! I later learned that these transients often went through the phone book pastoral listings until someone helped. Then there was the WWII veteran pilot, who appeared to be brilliant and reasonable. I took him to dinner, then drove him to the edge of town to thumb a ride to wherever.... and gave him money for breakfast. In the morning he was back at our church, sleeping between the buildings wrapped in a rug. Then there was the bum that visited me often on Saturday nights. He did not appear to be an alcoholic, and I gave him various kinds of help, other than just money.... sun glasses, a jacket (someone would steal his). He eventually told me he had a daughter in Colorado. I encouraged him to visit her there and he did. It was a long time after that, when one day a car appeared in our driveway. It was my bum! He had found work and was getting along OK. Bless his heart, I wonder what he is doing now. These are a few of many. However, it's a broken world, with much suffering.

INTERUPTION IS A WAY OF LIFE for the community oriented church pastor, much of it from nice, dear people. Fortunately, we had long before planned a very simple lifestyle, and we were not being killed by stress. There was this precious lady from a Catholic background, who always called me (from the Sunday dinner table) to tell me why she was absent from church today. Why, then were we so reluctant to leave that church when retiring? We loved our church... we loved our people. But I was tired, and at 65 was getting to what we called old at that time.

I AM NOT THE FINAL JUDGE If I had to...(and I do have to)... admit my most enduring temptation, it would be to make rather hasty judgments. The problem here is that I almost never have all the facts, and I have neither the ability, nor the authority to make a final personal judgment on anybody! This is a huge concern for many of us. So it is a problem with an impossible solution. Of course, you and I also do not deserve the love, grace and kindness that God offers and gives to us. We'll have to leave it there. And it is often frustrating. But we live in a suffering, broken world and we must not encourage our church people to major in critical

defensive judgment.

FORTUNATELY, or in the opinions of some, unfortunately, I was willing to work with my hands on some various church improvement projects. It is never wise, maybe ridiculous, to assume that the pastor is most effective when he working on some physical structural improvement on the church buildings. However, there are churches that would not be in existence today if some willingly stubborn, but capable pastor did not do a whole lot of the physical work on them. In some cases, there simply is a lack of faith, and yet in too many cases, as James tells us in Chapter 2, , the simple lack of "effort" proves that there is no "faith" either. It definitely takes both! With my limited abilities, I designed and with both volunteer and professional labor, built a much needed 30x60 fellowship hall, which included Sunday School Classrooms, and which was later used also for our Child Day Care Center for working mothers in our community. I installed the heating and refrigerated air conditioning system in this building with the kind cooperation of a generous Christian business man, who allowed me to use the machinery in his shop to do basic work with the flat metal sheets we purchased from him. with other volunteer help I was also able to do all the electrical work and much of the plumbing work and the roofing on this building. There are absolutely no regrets, none, but I would never again want to serve a church that required so much of my time and physical labor. It is never the best, but we were assigned to that church to rescue it, and there was almost no local financial ability to do so. It is a very successful church today.

I SHOULD MENTION THE SIGN. Signs are important. One gentleman, when I told him where our church was located he said, "Oh yes," that's the church where Christ is the Answer." (A sign on the rear of our church) Our new lighted sign in front of the church gave us the ability to make announcements and write various memos. Our most unusual sign experience was when we found that someone had smashed the glass with his fist as the broken glass was stained with blood. The message read: "Jesus

Christ, The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.”

ONE OF MY MOST SATISFYING EXPERIENCES at that suffering church was in the design, construction and installation of a six sided church steeple and its bell-fry base. It took a long time, as the nice very capable gentleman carpenter who helped me with the steeple base moved away long before we finished it. The installation was a real joy, as the young Vietnam Air Force veteran who helped put it on the roof had been our song leader in our early struggling days with that church. After many years with a utility company, Larry is today a pastor of a church in our eastern seaboard. We shared in the coming and going of a number of Vietnam GI's and we also shared in the deafening sound of the F-14 fighter planes that flew directly over our church. The answer we gave to people on this noise was that we were delighted they were OUR powerful aircraft! I miss hearing them. One finally did crash nearby and took out a grocery store in a mini-mall. Oh, almost forgot. We installed large sound speakers in the steeple base with played music on occasion, and on Sunday mornings at church time we played the taped sound of Wilma's childhood church bell, thousand s of miles away.

YOU NEVER KNOW who might walk into your church in Tucson It was a delight to see the man and his wife who walked into our church in Tucson one Sunday. He was an associate of my employer long ago when I was a in an apprenticeship. It had been many years!. He and his wife were “snow-birds” and they continued to come to our church after that many times each year till he died. They seemed to enjoy our “homespun” ministry. I believe we were a help to them in their later years.

MY SERMONS I love to preach God's simple, but powerful and magnificent Truth! It must be a real chore to spend a lot of time preparing something that you are not really sure is the truth. Of course we give our opinions, but it is so deeply gratifying to sense the presence of God's Precious Holy Spirit , sealing the message you are giving. Obviously, your people can really sense this, also.

For one of the most powerful ministries of our Gracious Holy Spirit is the confirmation of bible verses and other truth. Therefore, I probably never really felt that the preparation my sermon was complete...it always seemed to me that there was something still left to be said. Inasmuch as most of my messages were preached long before I had a computer, a lot of them were reduced to “scraps of paper” pieced together with scotch tape ... some of it handwritten. In fact, before I was a “preacher,” I spent several years deeply involved in district area youth work, and addressed Rallies each month as a layman. My “day job” service truck usually had scraps of handwritten paper on the dashboard in my preparation for these area youth rallies. My favorite message was “It is a Good Land,” from the Book of Numbers Chapters . 13 and 14.It is a message of bright hope and promise! I reviewed, rewrote and re-used this message many times over the years. It was a joy!

YOU NEVER FORGET THEM

It's a long list, but I will mention a few. These gracious, specific young people were a joy. Many churches have long ago stopped their Sunday evening services for obvious reasons. It was probably the wisest thing I ever did at that church. But we used the change to do the small group concept with our young people. We had them meet in our home, which was across the street from the church, and therefore not



connected in any way with the church building. Most of them walked. There were roughly about a dozen regulars, maybe more. We celebrated birthdays, which always involved eating a delightful cake made by one of them. We sang, we played the “battleship” game on paper. We read from the bible, a lot of time in the Book of Proverbs, as I recall. Lot of practical truth repeated there. The most consistent teens in that program I recall as the “Sunday Night Seven.” I believe all of them are today deeply involved in church leadership activity, Mike and Cecil are full time ordained church pastors, Linda is brilliant Commissioned minister, and at least one is a pastor’s wife. Pete, an outstanding Christian, is a Command officer in the Air Force, and both he and his remarkable wife Lisa, have been deeply involved in various local church leadership, and they both were a real blessing when they were teens in our church. I officiated at many of these gracious young people’s weddings.

I DO WISH TO GIVE CREDIT to some adults who were a blessing to us: Frank, a Marine veteran, and his gracious wife Polly. They were invited to our church on a door-to door community visit by my wife Wilma. She handed Frank a church bulletin through the window of his truck as he was leaving home. The whole family were in our church the very next Sunday, father mother, and three young children, young Pete was one of them. They had actually been looking for the proper church. Our church and this family were a common blessing. Another young mother, Jackie, brought her daughter our Vacation Bible School. This mother came to the VBS recognition meeting and eventually to regular church attendance. Her VBS child is today a pastor’s wife. The mother became a gracious staff member in our Child Day Care Center. We helped some people in very difficult circumstances. There were miracles. Julie.. not her real name, drove into our church parking lot by “impression.” She was suffering, addicted to prescription drugs. She found help and continued in that church for many years. Only a few of the joys and challenges that Wilma and I and these precious people of that

church shared. We loved God... and we loved our people.

YOU WIN SOME and you lose some. A real heartbreak! I can think of five young men, teenagers, tragic losses spiritually... and physical. With the heartbroken families, helping them pick out clothing for the funeral, etc.

WE PROMISED THE CHURCH and the District Superintendent that we would stay with this dying church, and we did. On our first visit to the church we drove our almost new Chevy Impala onto its dirt parking lot, where a new building now stands. Years later we drove away from the church newly located, newly paved parking lot in a very good used Chevy Camaro that we got when our new Chevy became old. We drove that old Camaro, for which we paid only \$1600, for 16years, and then we got more than twice what we originally paid for it. It was so dependable that we had driven it until it became a collectable... God at work! In many matters we do not know God’s Will... one of the great joys of simple trust in Him. Romans 8:28-29.



WHATEVER... GOD HAS GIVEN WILMA AND ME A LIFE OF PURPOSE... THERE IS NO REGRET !

# 11

## THOUGHTS FOR MY OWN GENERATION

AS I REACH RAPIDLY toward 87 years of age, with all my faults, failures and ailments, I am very grateful for peace, right hope and the delightful renewal of child-like fascination! I enjoy the presence of the precious Holy Spirit of our Lord as a permanent resident in my heart and life. God has been very good to me and I love Him! I enjoy the presence of this precious, priceless lady God gave me almost 65 years ago. She has been good for me and I love her. Our three gracious children have been a real blessing to us and we love them. I love the world-wide fellowship of Believers. I appreciate the friendly church where we are members, and Pastor Jon and Connie Farmer, from whom I have learned a lot. I love you precious people of this church. I see many of you every day in my Prayer Journal. God bless each of you with Peace, Victory, and Bright Hope!

HOWEVER, as someone has rightly observed, “though the mass of men worry themselves into nameless graves, here and there some selfless souls forget themselves into immortality.” There are many long, untold stories. Some time ago, I read a letter from a gracious, sincere, long-time pioneer missionary, who loved the Lord and His work. However, I thought I sensed a thinly veiled desire for some kind of modest recognition, and I was reminded of what the military chaplain had said to us homebound WWII

combat veterans: “Don’t expect your family and friends to understand the fear, the misery, and the deprivation of living for months in “the valley of the shadow of death.” He then told us, “you saved them from all that.”

PERHAPS YOU WERE A PILLAR IN YOUR CHURCH... Maybe since your early years. You may have picked up children and others for Sunday School for many, many years, played the piano in a crisis, taught Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and CYC. Maybe you managed an ill-equipped Nursery, led the Junior Church... or cleaned the building. You may have served on... and on and on as a treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, led the song service or headed up the Missionary Society. You may have fixed church roof leaks or whatever, mowed the lawn, serviced the sprinkler system, and worried about the heating, plumbing and sound system. Or you cleaned and drove the old church bus, hanging a lighted bulb over the cold motor every Saturday night, so it would start early Sunday morning. You knocked on community doors and helped with the church bulletins and newsletter mailings. You may have even “hunt and punch” typed and corrected those ancient, miserable, frustrating mimeograph stencils.

YOU MAY HAVE LOVINGLY SERVED your local church in many other ways, have been a lifetime tither, and gladly gave vacation time to serve in the Youth Camps. Some of you have borne the pressing, brightly challenging burden of the Pastorate; lived in the trenches “where the buck stops”... and actually starts, for all kinds of church opportunities and ministries. Or you may have patiently shared with your spouse in all these lonely concerns. In addition, you may well have also served in the higher, heavier burdens and responsibilities of the wider denominational fellowship.

AS A YOUNG MAN I REALLY LOVED BASEBALL. For obvious reasons, I don’t play on the church softball team. Worse yet, they really don’t want me on the team. So I also often find myself in

retreat and in appreciation of quiet, familiar and comfortable things that “have been,” like the old heavy hymnal, slow and quiet music, the old marked up King James bible, the happy mixed age Sunday School assembly singing “Happy Birthday,” and the whole family seated together in their “Sunday Best”... and the old red caboose at the end of a long “choo-choo” train.

LOOK! FOR OBVIOUS GOOD REASONS there are a lot of doors that are forever closed to those of us whose physical capacities and other abilities are limited by reason of age. Nice certificates, and other recognitions are buried in our filing cabinets, and a number of citations and a few treasured momentous still hang on the wall, including a Sunday School attendance pin with its long trail of years, and maybe some faded campaign ribbons and medals from the “big war.” I have a telegraph key on the wall like the one I used in the Philippine campaigns in WW2, with one of my two sets of dog tags hanging on it: ( 35016058 “Protestant”) Some of us have boxes of notes, outlines and tapes containing what we thought was worthwhile spiritual guidance that answers questions that nobody is asking us anymore. Tom Brokaw’s “Greatest Generation,” for various “good” reasons, is not always on the same wave length with recent generations, so we may sometimes find ourselves graciously, politely, and safely in retreat to the company of those with like feelings, views and sometimes with strong, stubborn, but “very good” opinions.

LET’S FACE IT Many of us were born during or near the First World War. Some of us lived through the era of the deadly, world-wide flu epidemic, were challenged by a number of what were then deadly and crippling childhood diseases. Quarantines were announced with callous discrimination by huge, appropriately colored Health Department placards on our front doors. Our generation lived during the unique prohibition era, which gave us better social behavior than we have now, and we experienced severe “going without” during the 1930’s expansive, long-time Depression. A lot of us sold newspapers on the corner, many of us delivered the papers in residential areas. Some of us worked on

ranches, forests or parks in the semi-military Civilian Conservation Corps, where, by our agreement, almost all of our earnings went directly to our needy family.. Many of us served in or otherwise experienced the various sacrifices and heartaches of WWII. We married for life.

MANY OF US need to do ourselves a big favor and start writing a lengthy, detailed autobiography. A host of pleasant things, amusing things, and some painful, but deeply cherished learning experiences will appear out of the “woodwork” of our lives. We will likely find that circumstances, and most people have been very kind and fair to us. God has always been good to us, so that even a collage of the difficult days has now become much like the covering on a small child’s loveable rag doll, badly worn, but ugly and unreal only to those who do not understand.

YOU AND I ARE THEREFORE among the happiest, the most privileged, and the most blessed people on earth, for we have now accumulated a huge variety of treasures in the attic of our memories. Our old letter files have now become fragrant flower gardens, for some people, like lovely blossoms, continue to give pleasure just by being, or by having been, pleasant friends. In this manner we all may actually continue to bless the lives of every person upon whom we have touched. We may also be extending our witness and ministry through our dedicated sons and daughters.

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS that come with growing old. For most of us our basic needs are usually minimal, and we have long ago learned the difference between what is important and what we only thought was important. Further, we have long ago burned old bridges, and the fresh perspective achieved from enduring experience on the high road with the long view simplifies many problems. Can you and I offer anything to today’s generation? Yes, we certainly can, and we do. For many of today’s social and financial safety nets, and a lot of today’s

technical and medical marvels were born and forged .out of the crucible and conflicts of our strenuous years. Much review and sorting out of mandated absolutes took place in those years.

NOT A GREAT DEAL IS EXPECTED OF US, but there are a whole lot of things that w can do... some we must do. And God IS using you and me. Our personal ministry will always be within reach, “at our doorstep.” But the pressure to compete, to perform, to personally produce, is gone forever... thank God. It is far more important to be... than to do. The world.. .and the church really needs a few people who are not over burdened... not in a hurry. We have more time to BE a family, and the BE a neighbor. And we continue to be clearly fixed sign posts at the many dangerous crossings and confusing forks along the highway of life. We must also be friendly, welcoming “lights along the shore,” for someone’s ship that has been guided through the fierce storm by the giant lighthouse in the general direction of our safe harbor may be lost on the nearby treacherous rocks along the shore if the “lower lights” are out. Together we can provide a vast composite experience to give guidance and to serve as a mighty gyroscope that is absolutely necessary to hold society... and the church, on an even keel in a troubled world that is awash in vicious and violent turbulence. (Ed)